

3 Prime minister asks pension fund to scrutinize its ex-chief's works



20 Musical inspired by Greek myth wins at Tony Awards



24 Pak ex-president Zardari arrested on graft charges



27 Portugal defeat Netherlands to win first Nations League



Hashem calls to deport 2m expats, slap remittance tax

Abdulsamad slams KOC for failing to meet production targets

Car video busts fake cleaner



KUWAIT: Responding to a social media video showing an Asian man wearing a cleaner's uniform getting into a vehicle and driving away, the interior ministry's PR and security media department announced the suspect was arrested within a few hours after the video was posted. During interrogation, the suspect confessed that he works as a private driver for a family, and that he impersonated as a cleaner to beg. A case was filed and the suspect was referred to relevant authorities pending deportation. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Safa Al-Hashem yesterday called for expelling around two million expatriates from Kuwait over the next five years in order to make Kuwaitis a majority in their home country. "Reforming the imbalance in the demographic structure is an urgent necessity and a national requirement, because it is illogical that citizens are a minority in their home country," Hashem said in a statement. The lawmaker, who has been vehemently campaigning against expatriates for the past few years, called for reducing the number of expatriates so as to make Kuwaitis more than 50 percent of the population.

Currently, Kuwaitis constitute less than 30 percent of the 4.7 million population - they number 1.4 million against 3.3 million expatriates. To achieve Hashem's call, expatriates must be reduced to under 1.4 million, which means expelling some two million foreigners. "We are not against any honest expat whose skills are needed by the country, but we are against crowding, unproductive expatriates who have not left any breathing space for Kuwaitis," said the lawmaker. During the Eid holidays, Hashem lashed out at expatriates for "littering" the beaches in the country and called in statements to local newspapers for imposing charges on them, or barring them from the sea.

Hashem, who is a member of the National Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee,

said there is a draft law ready in the Assembly proposing to impose a five-percent tax on all remittances by expatriates, which reached some KD 20 billion in the past five years. She said the bill must be approved quickly to contain those transfers, which have negatively impacted the national economy. The lawmaker also wondered why Egyptians are launching a campaign against Syrians living in Egypt, accusing them of taking over their businesses, while they protest strongly when similar calls are made in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, head of the budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said yesterday that Kuwait Oil Company has continued to commit violations, and as a result, has failed in meeting the scheduled increase in the production capacity of oil and gas. He said KOC will not be able to meet its targets, which were set at 3.5 million barrels per day in 2015 and 4.0 million barrels per day in 2020, adding that the company's actual production in the fiscal year 2017/2018 was only 3.1 million barrels, recalling that production from the neutral zone with Saudi Arabia has been suspended.

The Assembly is preparing for debating a grilling against Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf over alleged mismanagement of foreign investments and violations in the country's finances. The grilling was filed by MPs Bader Al-Mulla and Riyadh Al-Adasani, who vowed to reveal plenty of information about the country's budget and investments.

News in brief

Qatar: US needs Palestinians on board

LONDON: Qatar said on Sunday that there was a disconnect between the Palestinians and the United States over a US blueprint aimed at ending the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, warning that a solution could not be imposed on Palestinians. The US blueprint is seen by Palestinians, and by some Arab officials and politicians, as a plan to finish off the Palestinian cause. "As far as we see, right now there is a disconnect between the Palestinians and the US," Qatar Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said told reporters in London. "Our position remains very firm: We are going to support any plan that the Palestinians are willing to accept." — AFP

Hezb bomb case in UK kept 'hidden'

LONDON: Radicals linked to the Iran-backed Hezbollah movement were found to be stockpiling bomb-making ingredients in London in 2015 in a case that was kept "hidden from the public", the Daily Telegraph reported yesterday. Following a tip-off from a foreign government, British police and the MI5 intelligence service discovered thousands of disposable ice packs containing three tons of ammonium nitrate, the report said. One man was arrested in a series of four raids in northwest London but he was later released without charge after what the paper said was a "covert intelligence operation" that was not aimed at seeking criminal prosecution. — AFP

Trump-Macron friendship tree dies

WASHINGTON: The photo of Donald Trump and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron planting an oak tree in the garden of the White House symbolized the friendship shown by the two leaders. But relations between them have since frayed, and the tree, a diplomatic source said this week, did not survive. The French president offered the young oak to Trump on the occasion of a state visit to Washington in 2018, and the two shoveled dirt around it. But a few days later, the tree was nowhere to be seen, having disappeared into quarantine. — AFP

Pope wants to visit Iraq in 2020

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis said yesterday he wants to visit Iraq as early as next year in spite of the security conditions. "An insistent thought accompanies me when I think about Iraq, where I want to go next year, so that it can look to the future through peaceful and shared participation in the construction of the common good," Francis told a Vatican audience. The pope voiced hope that Iraq "does not return to the tensions which come from the never-ending conflicts between regional powers." — AFP

Cars 'abandoned' in co-op parking lots will be impounded

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Vice Chairman of the Union of Cooperative Societies Khaled Al-Hudhaiban warned about security

threats posed by vehicles abandoned in various co-ops' parking lots, noting that vehicles will not be allowed to be parked for over three days and that surveillance cameras will be installed to monitor the parking areas. Hudhaiban said some expats park their vehicles in co-ops' parking lots before departing Kuwait for vacations, adding that this will not be tolerated and that the municipality will be contacted after three days to act.

Manager of cleaning at the Capital municipality Meshal Al-Azmi said KD 135 will be collected as a fine for leaving vehicles parked in co-op parking lots, including charges for removing the vehicle and safe-

guarding it, and KD 1 per day of impoundment. "Such vehicles will be deemed abandoned," he added, noting that the municipality will ask co-ops to provide them with the license plate numbers of vehicles parked for long periods.

Azmi explained that the municipality usually pastes warning stickers for 24 hours on vehicles displayed for sale and for 48 hours on abandoned vehicles before removing them. He added owners will have to contact the municipality within a maximum of three months to pay the fines and retrieve their vehicles before the municipality offers them for sale in public auctions.

Iran warns over 'economic war'

TEHRAN: Iran's foreign minister warned yesterday of the consequences of waging "economic war" against the Islamic republic through US sanctions, saying those conducting and supporting it could not expect to "remain safe". "One cannot expect an economic war to continue against the Iranian people and that those waging this war and those supporting it remain safe," Mohammad Javad Zarif said at a joint news conference in Tehran with his German counterpart Heiko Maas. "The only way to decrease tensions in the region is to stop the economic war," he added, noting Germany and the European Union could have an "important role" to play in defusing the situation.

Iran signed a landmark nuclear accord with Britain, China, France, Germany,

Russia and the United States in 2015, leading to sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. But the US administration of President Donald Trump has imposed sweeping sanctions on Iran and, according to Tehran, waged an "economic war" against it after walking away from the deal.

Germany's visiting foreign minister said his country would do its utmost to ensure tensions do not escalate. "There is war in Syria and in Yemen, fortunately not here," Maas said. "We want to do everything we can to keep it that way" for Iran. "Nevertheless, the tensions here in the region are worrying, and we fear that single events can trigger developments that end in violence, and we want to prevent this under all circumstances."

Maas met Zarif in Tehran, and both said they discussed the future of the nuclear pact and regional issues, although their news conference appeared tense

Continued on Page 24

6 escape death for rape, murder of Indian girl

PATHANKOT, India: Six men were convicted yesterday over the notorious 2018 gang rape and murder in India of an eight-year-old girl from a Muslim nomadic tribe that provoked horror and stoked inter-religious tensions. The six men from the Jammu region of northern India escaped the death sentence, however, with three defendants given life imprisonment and the others five years in jail. Sexual violence, including against children, is rife in India and outrage over the Kathua case, named after the district where the atrocity happened, contributed to the government introducing the death penalty for child rapists.

According to the charge sheet, the girl was abducted while she was out

grazing horses and taken to a village in Jammu, the Hindu-dominated part of the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir, on January 10 last year. In an ordeal lasting five days, she was sedated and held in a Hindu temple, repeatedly raped and then strangled and bludgeoned to death. Investigations suggested that the girl was targeted in order to strike fear in her nomad community and drive them out of the area. Yesterday a seventh man was acquitted while an eighth person, who claims to be underage, faces a separate trial.

Among the three convicted for rape and murder and sentenced to life were village head Sanjhi Ram and special police officer Deepak Khajuria. The others were found guilty of taking bribes and destroying evidence. Prosecutors said that they would study the verdict before deciding whether to appeal. The family, who were not present at the trial, had hoped that all six would be given the death sentences, prosecutors said.

Continued on Page 24



TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani meets German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas yesterday. — AFP



PATHANKOT, India: Indian Punjab Police escort Sanjhi Ram (center), accused for the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir, as he comes out of court yesterday. — AFP

Local

Saudi, Jordanian kings, Oman's Sultan pay respects over PM mother's death

Amir, Crown Prince receive senior state officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and senior officials receive Saudi Minister of State and Advisor to Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, Prince Dr Mansour Bin Miteb Bin Abdulaziz. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. With the attendance of His Highness Sheikh Nawaf and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir received Saudi Minister of State and Advisor to Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz, Prince Dr Mansour Bin Miteb Bin Abdulaziz. The guest conveyed condolences of the Saudi monarch and those of the Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman on the passing away of Wadha Ali Al-Munir; mother of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak. The reception was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan

Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received a message of condolences from Jordanian King Abdullah II, in which he offered his sympathies over the death of His Highness the Prime Minister's mother. In his reply, His Highness the Amir thanked the Jordanian king for his heartfelt condolences, wishing him continued health and prosperity. His Highness Sheikh Jaber also received yesterday a telephone call from Jordanian King Abdullah II, who condoled with him over the death of his mother. In reply, His Highness the Prime Minister thanked the Jordanian king for his sincere condolences, wishing him continued health and prosperity. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received a cable of condolences

from Omani Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al-Said, expressing deep sympathies and heartfelt condolences over demise of the mother of His Highness the Prime Minister. His Highness the Amir sent a cable of thanks to Sultan Qaboos in which he expressed his appreciation for Sultan Qaboos, wishing him good health.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Amir received Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, and Chairman of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council and the Cassation Court and President of the Constitutional Court Judge Youssef Al-Mutawaa. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and Judge Youssef Al-Mutawaa. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Judge Youssef Al-Mutawaa.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Judge Youssef Al-Mutawaa.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with India's Ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar. — KUNA photos



Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qouni.

Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister meets envoys

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with India's Ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar to discuss many areas of bilateral relations between both countries, in addition to regional and international developments.

Jarallah also met with Egyptian Ambassador to Kuwait Tareq Al-Qouni yesterday. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral ties and the latest regional and international developments. Furthermore, Jarallah met with Charge D'affairs of

the Embassy of Libya to Kuwait Ali Al-Alous where they discussed areas of bilateral relations between both countries along with regional and international developments. In addition, the Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister held talks with Nepal's Ambassador

to the Gulf state Durga Prasad Bhandari, focusing on bilateral ties and current happenings around the world. Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar attended the meetings. —KUNA



Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Charge D'affairs of the Embassy of Libya to Kuwait Ali Al-Alous.



Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Nepal's Ambassador to Kuwait Durga Prasad Bhandari.

Local

Kuwait's Prime Minister asks pension fund to scrutinize its ex-chief's works

Kuwait pension fund files new complaint against wanted ex-chief

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah has instructed the Public Institution for Social Security (PIFSS) to continue looking into all works done during its former director-general's term of office. His Highness the Prime Minister has also ordered that all violations in this regard be taken to the Public Prosecution, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said in a statement following a weekly Cabinet meeting.

PIFSS had said yesterday that it has lodged a fresh complaint against its former director general on grounds that he misappropriated public funds. The measure aims to protect public funds and is connected to a case involving the pension fund's investment in Abraaj Holdings company, read a PIFSS statement. PIFSS has asked Abraaj Holdings to investigate any suspicious transactions with a link to its former director general, with the statement citing its incumbent chief Mishal Al-Othman as saying that the pension fund remains hot on the heels of the suspect. "We have closely monitored this despicable crime committed on our funds as we seek to unravel the network responsible for this," Othman said, vowing to use any evidence against the suspect. In 2016, Kuwaiti officials accused him of using his position to embezzle vast sums of money, subsequently sentencing him to a 10-year prison term in absentia. An international arrest warrant has been

issued against the former PIFSS chief.

At the onset of the meeting, the Cabinet listened to a briefing from Minister of Finance Naif Al-Hajraf on a complaint lodged by the PIFSS against its former chief as it was found out during a review of Abraaj Holdings company activities that he had obtained commissions and other benefits from entities linked to him.

The Cabinet then approved draft decrees for Kuwait-Malta cooperation in higher education and scientific research, Kuwait-Jordan cooperation in weather forecast and Kuwait-Dutch cooperation in air services.

The ministers also consented to a draft law on Kuwaiti-Egyptian security cooperation, a draft law on Kuwait's joining of a joint agreement for the safe disposal of radioactive waste, and a bill on trade navigation cooperation between Kuwait and Morocco. The Cabinet decided to task the Directorate General of Civil Aviation to speedily coordinate with the

Ministries of Interior, Finance, Health, the Customs

Directorate-General and Kuwait Airways Corporation to take measures for uplifting operational capacity and facilitating passengers' movements at Kuwait International Airport.

It charged the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) to coordinate with the competent authorities to minimize effects of the recent spread of locusts in southern Kuwait and avert its recurrence. The Cabinet decided to task the



Coordination to minimize effect of locust spread

Ministries of Interior, Finance, Health, the Customs Directorate-General and Kuwait Airways Corporation to take measures for uplifting operational capacity and facilitating passengers' movements at Kuwait International Airport.

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Durra to sign new recruitment deals with Cambodia, Philippines

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Manager of Al-Durra company for domestic helpers Saad Al-Munai said since he took over in March, he has been coordinating with foreign ministry advisor Anas Al-Shaheen to facilitate recruiting domestic helpers from Cambodia, adding that a special meeting will be held soon to discuss this matter. Munai added that Al-Durra will sign a contract with another agency from the Philippines within two months to increase the number of laborers at competitive rates. Meanwhile, informed sources said the Kuwait-Philippines joint committee will meet soon to reconsider some articles of the agreement signed last year on domestic helpers, including the legal measures taken against violators on both sides - employers and workers.

Delayed payments

Well-informed sources at the manpower authority said in an attempt to resolve the problem of delays in the payment of monthly salaries at a number of private companies, the authority insisted on making various companies deposit their workers' salaries by the 8th of every month to avoid suspending their files.

American journal chooses Kuwaiti's PhD thesis in top 9

KUWAIT: The American Libraries journal has selected a PhD thesis prepared by Kuwaiti female teacher



Kuwaiti teacher Dr Riham Al-Shahin

Dr Riham Al-Shahin as part of the top nine theses in 2019. Dr Shahin is the sole Arab academician in the honorees' list, Kuwait University (KU) said in a statement yesterday. Her thesis tackles data buildup and user experience on electronic sites of national libraries. The study sample covers libraries from various nations. Elated Shahin dedicated the achievement to the dear homeland and the KU. She hoped that her study would contribute to enriching e-sites at Arab libraries. — KUNA

Servicemen arrested on rape charges

KUWAIT: Detectives arrested a policeman and a soldier for raping a Kuwaiti woman. A police source said the woman, who is wanted for financial debts,

was arrested and handed to a policeman for processing. Meanwhile, a soldier present there made a plan with the policeman to blackmail her, but she was able to escape. The soldier then chased her, pulled her in the car and raped her. The victim complained to police, so both suspects were arrested and transferred to the prosecution at the orders of Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah.

Domestic violence

A Kuwaiti woman lodged a complaint against her



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

Ministry of Finance (state properties department) to coordinate with the Ministry of Interior, the Environment Public Authority and PAAAFR to take rapid legal action to prevent fishermen from using chalets in Doha for fishing purposes in Kuwait Bay. Internationally, it decried the recent terrorist attack on

a security checkpoint manned by Egyptian government security personnel in Al-Arish, expressing solidarity with Egypt and supporting any measures the Cairo authorities may take to safeguard the country. The government re-affirmed rejection of all forms of hateful violence and terrorism. — KUNA

Filipina workers told to take reduced pay or leave Kuwait

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Take it or leave it! That was the instruction of a Kuwait-based Filipina recruiter to nine female workers who entered Kuwait through legal means but complained their contract was changed when they arrived here. The recruiter advised the women to sign and accept the new contract rather than go back to their country of origin.

"The reason we applied for overseas jobs was because of the promise of a higher salary. Even if we want to go back home, I don't think it's practical to leave. What we want is for the company to follow the provisions in the contract. We had accepted and signed a contract with KD 180 as salary. But for the last two months, we are receiving only KD 120 because the Filipino recruiter told us to take the offer or leave Kuwait. This means we'll have to complete two years before we can demand the rightful amount," they said.

The women showed Kuwait Times a copy of what appeared to be a contract which they had signed earlier

in the Philippines, bearing the amount of KD 180 plus KD 25 in food allowance. "However, when we arrived in Kuwait, they told us to sign another contract of KD 180 without the additional KD 25 in food allowance. But none of those contracts were followed - KD 180 salary plus KD 25 food allowance or the KD 180 one without the food allowance. We only got KD 120, and the Filipina recruiter told us to take it or leave. So it means KD 120 will be our salary for the duration of our contract," they protested.

Kuwait Times asked whether they had an understanding for paying a recruitment fee and deducting it from the salary. "No - we paid an amount equivalent to a one month salary. That was our placement fee. We don't expect salary deductions anymore because we paid fully," she told Kuwait Times. When the Philippine Embassy was contacted for comment, Teresa Olgado, Assistant Labor Attache and currently the officer in charge of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Kuwait, said the people involved, including the company, can be criminally liable for contract substitution and failure to comply with the provisions in the contract.

"They will be charged not just in Kuwait, but the agency in the Philippines could be held liable too. They'll be closed down if the contract substitution charges are true," she said. The workers were waiting for their new civil IDs to lodge a complaint at the Philippine Embassy against the company and the recruitment agency.

Council approves 'smart parking for SMEs' proposal



KUWAIT: Municipal Council members attend a session yesterday. — KUNA

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council agreed to refer to the Cabinet a proposal made by member Abdul Aziz Al-Mojel concerning encouraging small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs to build smart park-

ing spaces for further study and approval. Meanwhile, the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development announced receiving 315 applications and funding requests since the online service on the fund's website was launched in May.

husband for beating and confining her. The complaint was made after she was able to escape from the house. The woman asked police to rescue her from her husband's custody, before being able to escape while he was in the bathroom. She claimed that a dispute took place between the couple, so he beat and detained her. The husband was told to come to the police station for questioning.

Fugitive caught

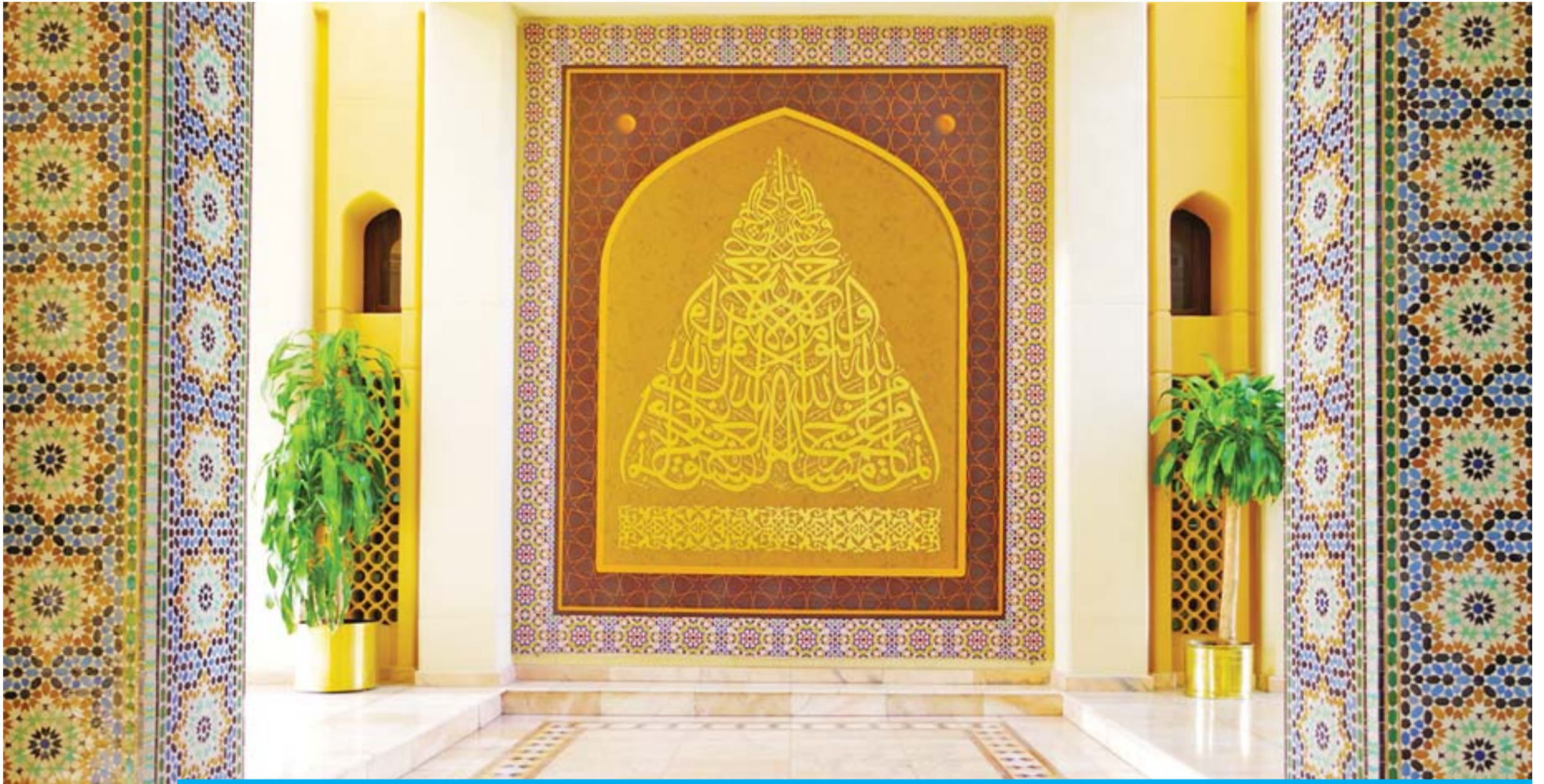
A bedoon man was sent to the central prison to

serve a four-year jail sentence after he resisted arrest and attempted to escape. The charges he was sentenced for include drugs use and thefts.

Suicide attempt

An Asian domestic helper was rushed to Jahra Hospital after attempting suicide by ingesting insecticide. The house owner called police for help, so they went there along with paramedics. They took her to hospital, where doctors performed gastric lavage. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Local



KUWAIT: The beauty of the interior design of Kuwait's Grand Mosque. — Photo by Ahmad Al-Shawaf (KUNA)

Finance Minister's interpellation marks 101st in parliament history

55 interpellations submitted in the last 10 years

KUWAIT: The interpellation submitted by MPs Dr Bader Al-Mullah and Riyadh Al-Adsani against Finance Minister Dr Naif Al-Hajraf, which is set to be debated today, will be the 101st grilling motion in the history of the National Assembly. In the last 10 years, 55 interpellations were submitted. The following is the chronology of previous motions of interpellation in the last three legislative terms.

18 interpellations

The thirteenth legislative term saw 18 interpellations: On June 8, 2009, an interpellation was submitted against Interior Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. On November 11, 2009, an interpellation was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. On November 18, 2009, interpellations were submitted against Minister of Public Works and Municipality Dr Fadhel Safar as well as Interior Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. On November 19, 2009, an interpellation was submitted against Sheikh Jaber Al-Khaled Al-Sabah in his capacity as Minister of Defense. On February 23, 2010, an interpellation was submitted against Minister of Information and Minister of Oil Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. On May 30, 2010, an interpellation was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. On November 30, 2010, an interpellation was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. On January 24, 2011, an interpellation was submitted against Interior Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. On March 22, 2011, an interpellation was submitted against Minister of Housing and Development Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah. On March 29, 2011, an interpellation was submitted against Minister of Oil and Minister of Information Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. On March 30, 2011, an interpellation was submitted against Foreign Minister Dr Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah. On May 10, 2011, an interpellation was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. On May 15, 2011, an interpellation was submitted against Minister of Housing and Development Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah. On May 22, 2011, an interpellation was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. On June 23, 2011, an interpellation was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. On November 15, 2011, an interpellation was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah. On September 30, 2012, an interpellation was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

20 interpellations

The fourteenth legislative term saw 20 interpellations:

On October 31, 2013, a grilling motion was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

On November 3, 2013, a grilling motion was submitted against Health Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah. On November 11, 2013, interpellations were submitted against Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Minister of State for Planning and Development Dr Rola Dashti as well as His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh



Assembly to debate grilling today

Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. On November 14, 2013, interpellations were submitted against Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs and Minister of State for Planning and Development Dr Rola Dashti as well as His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. On November 17, 2013, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of State for Housing as well as Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Salem Al-Othaina. On November 28, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Thekra Al-Rashidi. On December 19, 2013, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Naif Al-Hajraf.

On January 26, 2014, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Water and Electricity Abdulaziz Al-Ibrahim. On April 24, 2014, a grilling motion was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. On November 23, 2014, a grilling motion was submitted against Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr Abdulmohsen Al-Med'ej. On March 23, 2015, a grilling motion was submitted against Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce and Industry Dr Abdulmohsen Al-Med'ej. On May 11, 2015, a grilling motion was submitted against Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah. On October 13, 2015, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Social Affairs and Labor as well as Minister of Planning and Development Hind Al-Sabeeh. On November 15, 2015, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Public Work and Minister of Water and Electricity Ahmad Al-



The National Assembly.

Jassar. On December 14, 2015, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Health Dr Ali Al-Obaidli.

17 interpellations

The fifteenth legislative term saw 17 interpellations: On January 15, 2017, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. On April 12, 2017, a grilling motion was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. On April 16, 2017, a grilling motion was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. On April 26, 2017, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Services Yasser Abul on October 18, 2017, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah.

On January 11, 2018, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Social Affairs, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh. On March 7, 2018, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi. On April 16, 2018, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister

of Oil and Minister of Water and Electricity Bakheet Al-Rashidi. On April 19, 2018, a grilling motion was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. On April 22, 2018, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Social Affairs, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh. On June 27, 2018, a grilling motion was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

On September 25, 2018, an interpellation was submitted against Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi. On November 12, 2018, an interpellation was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. On March 5, 2019, a grilling motion was submitted against Minister of Commerce and Industry as well as Minister of State for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan. On April 18, 2019, an interpellation was submitted against Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. On April 23, 2019, a grilling motion was submitted against Information Minister and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri. On April 30, 2019, a grilling motion was submitted against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Kuwaiti MPs OK revised tender bill

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti parliamentary committee yesterday gave the thumbs up to fresh amendments introduced to a draft law bearing on public tenders. The changes encompass the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development's joining of the Central Agency for Public Tenders' board of directors, along with membership term and grievance period, MP Salah Khorshid, head of the parliamentary financial and economic committee, said to reporters following a committee meeting. A relevant report is to be submitted by the committee to the parliament next week for voting in the second deliberation, Khorshid added. However, the parliamentary committee in question put an insurance regulation legislation on the back burner for a sitting due next week, he affirmed. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Members of the parliamentary financial and economic committee attend a meeting at the National Assembly yesterday. — KUNA photos



(From left) MPs Faisal Al-Kandari, Salah Khorshid, Safa Al-Hashem and Omar Al-Tabtabale attend the meeting.

Local

Alghanim Industries sponsored youth environmental initiative

Led by INJAZ Kuwait alumni Agrivage and Re-Al

KUWAIT: Stemming from its deep-rooted belief in empowering youth and supporting a new generation of business leaders, Alghanim Industries, one of the largest companies in the region, sponsored an environmental initiative by two Kuwaiti start-ups. The two INJAZ Kuwait alumni projects complement one another: Agrivage handles food waste and turns it into compost, while Re-Al collects recyclables. The two companies gathered food waste and recyclables from 250 households across Kuwait throughout Ramadan.

Omar K Alghanim, Group CEO of Alghanim Industries, praised the efforts of the two sponsored teams, saying: "We are proud of our talented youth. It is always exciting to see them tackle major problems with creative and comprehensive solutions, all the while demonstrating the ways they can give forward to our community. These businesses began with an INJAZ Kuwait program, and are now thriving and looking for ways to pay it forward."

He went on to say, "At Alghanim Industries, we are passionate about supporting youth reach their full potential. When young innovative leaders work together, they make a real difference in our society and signal a brighter future for us all."

Faisal Al-Mutawa, representing Re-Al, noted that this initiative allowed them to help households create new environment-friendly habits. "We had very positive feedback from our interaction with participants in this program on a daily basis. Many of them told us that by sorting the waste of their household into different categories every day, they became more conserva-

tive about what to throw away and what to re-use," he said.

Agrivage is the winner of the INJAZ Kuwait Company of the Year Award 2017, and the winner of the regional INJAZ Al Arab Company of the Year Award for the same year. Re-Al, on the other hand, has won the INJAZ Kuwait 2018 Company of the Year and INJAZ Al Arab 2018 Product of the Year title.

INJAZ prepares students in three principal areas: work readiness, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship. Engaging local business leaders to act as volunteer mentors, INJAZ bridges the gap between the classroom and the real world. In its signature program, a six-month experience culminates in a business competition where program participants pitch their business ideas to a panel of judges drawn from the private sector.

Founded in 2005, INJAZ Al-Arab has achieved extraordinary success, impacting more than 3 million students across 14 countries in the Arab world. More importantly, the impact is growing: in the 2017-2018 academic year alone, INJAZ Al-Arab served more than 360,000 youth.



Alghanim Industries Group CEO Omar K Alghanim



A vehicle used in the youth environmental initiative.

Kuwaiti society relieves Syrian refugees in Jordan



AMMAN: The Kuwaiti Humanitarian Relief Society has concluded a large-scale campaign to support Syrian refugees in Jordan as part of a year-round philanthropic program. Khaled Al-Shamri, the society director general, said yesterday that the campaign kicked off in late fasting month of Ramadan and proceeded till Eid Al-Fitr's holiday.

Clothes were given to 600 Syrian children, he said, explaining that the kids got the dresses through paid coupons where they picked

the suitable garments at stores. Clothes were also distributed to 700 children at refugee houses in the northern province of Irbid. The society, for the sixth consecutive year, has held an entertainment festival for 1,500 Syrian refugees settling at randomly built camps in the border region of Mefreq. The campaigns included entertainment activities and awarding contests.

As a standing state policy, Kuwait has been aiding millions of Syrian refugees, scattered in

several countries, namely states neighboring Syria. Large sums had been allocated for the Syrians during conferences hosted by Kuwait. Owing to its generous aid for the needy in the region and across the world, Kuwait has been designated by the United Nations as a 'Humanitarian Center.' The Gulf State's Amir, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, has been honored by the international organization with the title 'The Humanitarian Leader.' —KUNA



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ANNOUNCEMENT

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'Handpicked successor' elected Kazakh leader

Outrage at acquittals in rape cases sparks calls to fix Japan law

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TRIPOLI: Libyans swim off the coasts of the capital Tripoli. —AFP

Shutting up shop: Libya war squeezes Tunisia

Fighting between rival Libyan groups is killing off trade

BEN GUERDANE: Standing in his one-room store between tables stacked with brightly coloured t-shirts and jeans, Fathi Mars gestures in despair. "If the war continues we will shut down," said the shopkeeper. It's a common refrain in Ben Guerdane. The town in Tunisia's impoverished south has for decades served as an entrepot for goods, smuggled or imported, 35km across the border from Libya.

Since the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, however, conflict in the neighboring country has decimated business. Around 700 stores have closed in the past eight years as supplies dwindled and prices soared, according to a local traders' association. The stalls' skeletal remains pockmark the town's streets-rusting and buckled metal frames once heaving with goods for sale.

The financial fallout from Libya's war is another blow for Tunisia. The North African country helped inspire the broader Arab Spring uprisings with its overthrow of autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali in 2011. But while Tunisians now have democracy, financially they are struggling. The Tunisian economy shrank 13 percent between 2017 and 2011, according to World Bank data, and youth unemployment, which helped drive the revolution, is still among the highest in the region at around 35 percent.

Austerity measures, high inflation and the impact on tourism and foreign investment from periodic attacks by Islamist militants have taken a heavy toll, prompting protests in April in the central town of Sidi Bouzid, where the 2011 revolution started. Libya used to act as a pressure valve for the Tunisian economy, a place where thousands of Tunisians went for work each year and a source of cheap goods they could sell back home. But the violence has damaged the flow of products and people.

Local grievances
 Ben Guerdane's so-called 'Souk Libya' - a labyrinth of low-slung stores selling clothes, televisions and microwaves, some still in boxes with the names of Libyan import firms-has been under pressure for years. Its problems deepened after Khalifa Haftar, the commander of Eastern Libya forces, began an offensive in early April to take Tripoli from soldiers loyal to the internationally-recognized government.

The fighting nixed a trade deal between Tunisia and Libya which would have allowed travelers to import consumer goods worth 10,000 Libyan dinars (\$7,140) to Tunisia, reversing the limits and arbitrary bans previously put on imports by armed groups and officials representing the Libyan state, traders and officials in Ben Guerdane said.

As officials were working out the details of the agreement, the Tripoli war broke out, putting talks on hold as western Libyan communities controlling the trade routes focused instead on fighting. "The people of Ben Guerdane depend on what is happening on the other side of the border," said Fathi Abab, head of the city council, who was involved in the trade negotiations. "We agreed on a new deal but war broke out. It has not been implemented."

Lacking the economic development of Tunisia's northern tourist regions, the south of the country is a popular recruiting ground for Islamist militants. In 2016, they tried to seize Ben Guerdane with the help of homegrown

jihads but were thwarted by Tunisian security forces. Most adults in the ramshackle town of 100,000 don't have a regular job, according to a local labour union and without income from trading, tensions rise. When Libya closed the main Ras Jdir crossing into the country for more than two months last year, Ben Guerdane residents demonstrated.

"If border economies further deteriorate without the creation of alternative livelihoods, further protests in border regions are certain, as we have seen repeatedly in the past few years," said Max Gallien, a political scientist who has researched cross-border trade and smuggling in North Africa. "They are drawing on a rich and serious legacy of local grievances. It's important to take them seriously."



South Tunisia depends on trade with Libya

Out of mode
 Regionally, the renewed conflict in Libya threatens to disrupt oil supplies, drive increased migration across the Mediterranean to Europe, and scupper U.N. plans for an election to end rivalries between Libya's parallel administrations. Tunisia is not the only country hurting economically. Egypt used to send workers to Libya while its southern neighbors Chad and Niger have also benefited in the past from trade and smuggling, according to Libyan businessmen.

Traditionally, Tunisian traders have been able to exploit a lucrative gap between high prices at home, where the government has been increasing taxes, and low prices in Libya, where little or no import duties or taxes are paid on

goods, and food and fuel have been heavily subsidized. But imports of goods into Tunisia have been in decline for more than three years as rival groups in Libya jostle for supremacy. Armed groups controlling the border and trade routes have imposed their own duties or banned supplies.

The Libyan dinar, under pressure from the conflict, nosedived in 2017 compared to the black market, driving up prices and prompting the central bank to devalue the exchange rate for commercial and private transactions the following year. Traders in Ben Guerdane said the cost of importing items such as Turkish carpets and trousers made in China from Libya had doubled in the past three years.

Tighter Tunisian border controls, designed to keep militants out, have also hit petrol smuggling networks, as has a campaign by Libya's state oil firm, NOC, to halt the illicit fuel trade. In addition, the Tripoli government last year stopped subsidizing food which made the smuggle of wheat and pasta less profitable. Imports from Libya to Tunisia by land fell to 3,500 tons in April this year from 4,188 tons in April 2010, according to Tunisian customs data. These figures do not include the large volume of goods that are smuggled across the border.

Another measure of the drop in trade is the near halving of the number of people travelling across the border to 101,978 in April 2019 from April 2010, according to Tunisian statistics. Traders from Tunisia often go on day trips to Libya to do business. In Ben Guerdane, Mars, the clothing retailer, has tried to replace Libyan goods with wares imported from Turkey, China and other East Asian countries but they are more expensive and don't fit the "Souk Libya" model. He last got supplies from Libya two years ago, pointing to some jeans on a table. "You can't sell them as they are out of mode," he said. —Reuters

Beating Boris: Race to replace UK PM kicks off

LONDON: The contest to replace Theresa May as Britain's next leader formally began yesterday, with candidates lining up to define themselves against the "bluff and bluster" of frontrunner Boris Johnson. Eleven Conservative MPs are vying to succeed May, who quit as the party's leader on Friday over her failure to take Britain out of the European Union on time. She remains premier until her replacement is chosen, likely in late July, and they will automatically enter Downing Street.

The race is dominated by Britain's looming EU exit on October 31, with leading Brexiters Johnson among those talking tough on the need to renegotiate the divorce terms or leave with no deal. The bombastic former London mayor has been keeping a low public profile but is campaigning hard behind the scenes, and his rivals tacitly acknowledged he is the one to beat. "A serious moment calls for a serious leader," Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt declared at his campaign launch, a thinly veiled jibe at his jocular predecessor.

Hunt opposed Brexit in the 2016 EU referendum but said that the Conservatives- under pressure from populist eurosceptic Nigel Farage's new party- must deliver on the result or face "annihilation" in the next election. He received a boost with the endorsement of eurosceptic Defense Secretary Penny Mordaunt, although he is likely to anger some in the party by refusing to rule out another Brexit delay. Former Brexit minister Dominic Raab

meanwhile warned that Britain's EU exit would not happen with "bluff and bluster".

"I'm the conviction Brexiters with the plan, the discipline and the focus to lead us out by the end of October," he said, while also attacking Johnson's plans for a tax cut for the rich. Environment Secretary Michael Gove, who like Johnson was a figurehead of the 2016 referendum, was also launching his campaign yesterday with a promise to be a "serious leader". But he is battling a scandal over his admission that he took the illegal drug cocaine on several occasions two decades ago.

'Heavy heart'

May, who took office after the referendum, was forced to quit after failing repeatedly to get her EU divorce deal through parliament and delaying Brexit twice in the process. Brussels says it will not renegotiate the terms, which cover Britain's financial settlement, the rights of EU citizens and the Northern Irish border. But many of the leadership candidates insist they will try. Johnson has won praise from US President Donald Trump for threatening to walk away with no deal at all. But he drew a rebuke from Paris on Sunday for saying Britain may withhold the multi-billion-euro divorce payment May has agreed, its liabilities from four decades of EU membership. "Not honoring payment obligations is a breach of international commitment equivalent to a default on its sovereign debt," a source close to French President Emmanuel Macron said. Asked about "no deal", Hunt said: "I would be prepared to without a deal if there was a straight choice between no deal and no Brexit, but I'd do so with a heavy heart."

He claimed at the weekend that he had received encouraging signals for renegotiating the Brexit deal from German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In response, a German government spokeswoman referenced a previous remark by



LONDON: Conservative MP Boris Johnson leaves a house in London. —AFP

Merkel that the deal cannot be reopened, although a declaration on future ties could be. Health Secretary Matt Hancock, Interior Minister Sajid Javid and the Conservative Party's former leader of the House of Commons Andrea Leadsom are also in the running among several others.

Nominations closed at 1600 GMT yesterday, and 313 Conservative MPs will begin voting on Thursday. They will hold a series of secret ballots to whittle down the field to a final pair, who will be put to around 160,000 party members. Previous contests have thrown up some surprising results. Gove dramatically withdrew his backing for Johnson during the 2016 leadership campaign, causing the ex-mayor to pull out, only to falter himself, clearing the way for May. —AFP

Man on a mediation mission: Japan's Abe heads to Iran

TOKYO: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe heads to Iran this week on a rare diplomatic mission, hoping to ease tensions between the Islamic Republic and Tokyo's key ally Washington. Tehran is locked in a bitter standoff with the US after president Donald Trump withdrew from a landmark nuclear deal last year. Washington has now reimposed sanctions and shifted troops to the region, putting military and economic pressure on Iran, including by forcing US allies like Japan to stop purchasing Iranian oil.

Japanese government officials say Abe will not present Tehran with a list of demands, or deliver a message from Washington, and instead want to position Japan as a neutral intermediary. That could prove useful, said Michael Bosack, special adviser for government relations at the Yokosuka Council on Asia-Pacific Studies. "Japan carries none of the historical or religious baggage of other potential mediators... (and) has demonstrated its willingness to go its own way on Middle East policy," he said.

"These factors better position Abe for engagement with Ayatollah Khamenei and mean that Japanese-proposed options could allow hardliners in Iran to entertain proposed off-ramps, without the potential fallout that could come from accepting "Western" solutions." Abe will meet President Hassan Rouhani and the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on the June 12-14 trip - the first time a Japanese prime minister has visited Iran since 1978, a year before the country's revolution.

Against that backdrop, Japan is hoping to lower the temperature, officials say, with Abe winning Trump's blessing for the mediation trip when the US leader visited Tokyo last month. "We believe it is extremely

important that, at the leadership level, we call on Iran as a major regional power to ease tension, to adhere to the nuclear agreement and to play a constructive role for the region's stability," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said ahead of the trip.

Intermediary

Iranian commentators said Abe could ferry messages between the two sides. "Mr Abe's visit comes right after meeting Mr. Trump in Japan, therefore the Americans are interested to use this channel," Ebrahim Rahimpour, a former deputy foreign minister, told Iran's Shargh daily ahead of the trip. Iran will "announce our rights and stances and the other side can announce the messages that could be the US president's message," he said. But while Japan has long-standing ties with Tehran and warm relations with Washington, experts say Abe has little leverage with either side and mediation will be an uphill struggle. The trip by the Japanese PM "faces substantial obstacles and is unlikely to bear fruit," said Tobias Harris, an analyst at Teneo consultancy group, in a note on the visit. "While Japan has good relationships with countries on both sides, these relationships do not necessarily translate into influence," he added.

'Shuttle diplomacy'?

Japan is not just the messenger - its own interests are also at stake: before US sanctions were reimposed, Tokyo imported around five percent of its oil from Iran and it would suffer from rising crude prices. The trip also offers Abe a rare role as international statesman, particularly given Tokyo's disappointing recent diplomatic track record.

Efforts this year to resolve a long-running standoff with Russia over a string of disputed islands have run aground. And Japan has also found itself out of the loop on perhaps the most pressing diplomatic challenge in its backyard: North Korea. Abe "needs a diplomatic stunt as he faces an impasse on Russia and North Korea," said Tetsuro Kato, political science professor at Tokyo's Waseda University. —AFP

International

Rising misery; Ethiopia struggles to stem ethnic tensions, clashes

Hunger levels have become a 'catastrophe'



CHERQO, Ethiopia: Photo shows the remains of a burned house after an ethnic conflict at Cherqo village, Southern Ethiopia. —AFP



CHERQO: Teketel Memhiru - an Internally Displaced People (IDP) sits in front of his house burned during an ethnic conflict at Cherqo village, Southern Ethiopia. —AFP

CHERQO: More than a year after his house in southern Ethiopia was razed to the ground, his coffee plantation destroyed and cattle stolen, Teketel Memhiru is still too terrified to return home. The 22-year-old is one of hundreds of thousands of people uprooted from their homes by ethnic clashes in a burgeoning domestic crisis the Ethiopian government is battling to contain.

"I witnessed a neighbor of mine hacked to death and another neighbor was burnt alive in his house. I'm scared to go to farm my agricultural plot for fear of attacks," said Teketel, an ethnic Gedeo who says he came under attack by Oromos - the country's largest ethnic group.

Officials insist that what became the world's biggest internal displacement crisis in 2018 is under control, and that more than a million people have returned to their homes. However those working on the ground - speaking anonymously to avoid a government backlash - say the displaced are being forcibly returned. They warn that the dire humanitarian conditions are only set to get worse.

"Peace is not restored. I didn't meet a single person who wants to return under these conditions. People are really scared. It will get more difficult," an aid worker said. The worker said that in May local officials and soldiers had entered the camps and ordered people to leave. Most people however had just disappeared once again into a fatigued host community and were living in utter "misery". In addition, hunger levels had become a "catastrophe". "We believe levels of violence and displacement will continue," said the worker.

Reforms open Pandora's box

Since coming to power in April 2018 after two years of anti-government unrest, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed - himself an Oromo - has been hailed for his efforts to end the iron-fisted rule of his predecessors. He has embarked on economic reforms, allowed dissident groups back into the country, and an easing of control has seen Ethiopia jump 40 points in the 2019 press freedom index.

But the loosening of the reins has had a far darker side, as years of tensions between ethnic groups who are divided into nine autonomous regions, have boiled over - usually over land and resources - leading to deadly violence in the country of over 100 million people. One of the hotspots is along the borders of the Gedeo district - which is part of the vast Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region - and West Guji in Oromia.

The verdant, rolling hills of this southern region, are where some of the world's best coffee is grown. It is also the most densely populated part of the country, with residents facing a critical shortage of farmland. Tensions have long existed between the groups, but last year the Oromo of West Guji attacked the Gedeo living on their side. The clashes led to the world's

largest displacement crisis, with over a million mostly ethnic Gedeos displaced, according to government figures.

Similar violence erupted in 2017 between Somalis and Oromos in the southeast Somali region, also displacing around one million people and leaving hundreds dead. And last month dozens of people were killed in clashes between residents of northern Benishangul Gumuz and Amhara states. "None of these conflicts are entirely new, but several of them have flared at a larger scale than we've seen in the past," said William Davison, the International Crisis Group's senior Ethiopia analyst.

He said there were multiple factors at play stoking tensions. These include the weakening of the once all-powerful ruling EPRDF as a result of years of protests and infighting, an economic slowdown that has hit the poor hard, and a shake-up of the security apparatus under Abiy. "There has been a loosening of control which has led existing disputes to take on a new dimension," said Davison.

Add to this a poorly functioning ethnic federal system, opportunities presented by the political transition, and competition for resources in an impoverished nation. Abiy's opening has led to ethno-nation-

alists staking different claims, but at the same time he is loath to lean back on the repressive tactics once used to deter and crack down on intercommunal violence. "Abiy has been clear his government is disinclined to use past methods and send in police or soldiers to apply lethal force and conduct mass arrests on the spot."

'We have seen no peace'

Ethiopia's Minister of Peace Muferiat Kamil last week said that all displaced people would be returned to their homes by the end of June, and officials have denied forcing anyone to return. However in the town of Yirgecheffe, a stadium housing thousands of displaced people was cleared out by police ahead of a visit by journalists in late May, another aid agency official said on condition of anonymity.

"The government pushing people to return to their home communities prematurely will only add to the ongoing suffering," the US-based Refugees International said in May. According to World Vision, only 145,516 people have returned home from Gedeo and hundreds are still lining up for food aid.

"There's a concern that there hasn't been anything like sufficient reconciliation to be confident about the safety of people returning home," said Davison. Teketel is one of the lucky ones, having managed to set up a small shop in Cherqo village in Gedeo. But he longs to return home to farm his land. "We have seen no peace since Abiy came to power. Peace is the most important thing for a human being, not only to farm, but also to cultivate and eat what is farmed." —AFP

“ I witnessed a neighbor of mine hacked to death ”

Nechirvan Barzani sworn in as leader of Iraqi Kurdistan

IRBIL: Nechirvan Barzani was sworn in yesterday as Iraqi Kurdistan's second president, succeeding his uncle and veteran leader Massud Barzani whose son Masrour will likely be nominated premier today. Nechirvan, the 52-year-old deputy leader of the Kurdistan

Democratic Party, was elected as president on May 28 after seven years as the region's prime minister.

He is the Kurdish region's second president after his uncle Massud, who served in the role from 2005 until he quit in 2017 following a controversial independence referendum. Yesterday, the younger Barzani took his oath of office during a sleek ceremony at Arbil's Congressional Palace. In his address, he appealed for better ties with federal authorities in Baghdad, and said his government would also prioritize the well-

being of constituents in the region.

A set of speeches followed his swearing-in, with the first slots going to Massud and then Iraqi President Barham Saleh, who hails from the opposing Patriotic Union of Kurdistan which boycotted Barzani's election. Among those in the audience were Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and several foreign envoys, but not Iraq's Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi. Born in northern Iraq in 1966, Barzani spent part of his life in Iran and speaks fluent Kurdish, Farsi and English.

He has had a long political career in the Kurdistan region, serving as its vice prime minister, head of government and prime minister since it won autonomy from federal authorities in 1991. Observers expect the new president will nominate his cousin Masrour - the region's current national security advisor - to replace him as premier. The nominee will be announced at 11:00 am (0800 GMT) today, according to parliament speaker Vala Fareed. The premier-designate would then have 30 days to form a government. —AFP

'We want water,' say residents as Abidjan grows drier

ABIDJAN: Every other day, Kouakou Marie Laure wakes up at 1 am to fetch water for her family. The mother of three carries a bucket on her head back and forth to the nearest affordable water source, a couple of kilometers away, about a dozen times to replenish the family's 200-litre tank. The water usually lasts through two days of drinking, bathing, cleaning, and washing clothes.

Laure, utterly exhausted by the end, often isn't finished until sunrise. Then she must leave again to work a full day as an assistant at a nearby school. "Sometimes I don't have enough energy and we just have to survive without much water for a while," said the 39-year-old, sweating in Abidjan's harsh midday sun. Her concrete block home, shared between four families,

lies in Abobo, a deprived district with extremely limited infrastructure and scant running water in the northern part of the Ivory Coast's largest city.

Rapid population growth, increasing urbanization and climate change have made it more difficult to supply water in Abidjan, and led to chronic shortages, residents and experts say. "Since the 1970s, climate change has led to a fall of around 10% to 20% in rainfall, meaning that the underground water reserves that the city relies on are not being replenished and have reduced," said Bamory Kamagatè, a water scientist at Nangui Abrogoua University in Abidjan.

Deforestation, urbanization and farming also have reduced the quality of natural water, he added, while "uncontrolled growth" in population has increased demand. The Ivory Coast's fertility rate is 4.8 births per woman, one of the highest in the world, according to the World Bank. In 2015, 40% of West Africans lived in urban areas and the United Nations projects that will reach 60% in 2050.

A UN report published in March found that water use globally has risen about 1 percent a year since the 1980s and today



ABIDJAN: Ivorian Muslims offer prayers in front of a mosque in Adjame neighborhood of Abidjan. —AFP

more than 2 billion people live in countries experiencing high water stress. By 2050, global demand for water is set to continue growing, by up to 30 percent, it

said. "Stress levels will continue to increase as demand for water grows and the effects of climate change intensify," the report noted. —Reuters

Nigerian gangs kill 43 in attacks

KANO: Gunmen on motorbikes killed 43 people in waves of attacks in northern Nigeria, police said yesterday, the latest violence by criminal gangs raiding villages and stealing livestock. The string of attacks, carried out overnight Saturday to Sunday in Nigeria's far northwestern Sokoto state, saw the gangs ride out from forest hideouts, speeding into villages and unleashing their weapons. "They opened fire on the village indiscriminately," said Abdullahi Dantani, from the village of

Satiru, where 18 people were murdered. In Sokoto state's Rabah district, gunmen rode into four villages - Rukunni, Tsage, Giire and Kalfu - massacring 25 people. "Twenty-five people were killed," said Ibrahim Kaoje, Sokoto state's top police officer.

"Several domestic animals were rustled by the attackers." Four people were arrested in connection to those attacks, Kaoje said, "including a female informant of the gangs, who was disguised as a mad woman." In a separate wave of attacks in Satiru village, in Sokoto's Isa district, the raiders shot 18 people, and then stole animals. "We lost 18 people in the raid by the gunmen, who came into the village on motorcycles," said Satiru village resident Umeh Na-Ta'ala.

The gangs have long been a scourge of rural com-

munities in northern Nigeria, raiding villages, stealing cattle, burning homes, looting food, and kidnapping for ransom. The communities have taken up arms to defend themselves, although the vigilantes are often accused of extrajudicial killings of suspected bandits.

President Muhammadu Buhari condemned the killings, expressing "deep shock and sadness" in a statement issued late Sunday. "Perpetrators and sponsors of such dastardly acts (will) be held accountable," Buhari vowed. Human Rights Watch yesterday warned of a "dramatic uptick in banditry, kidnapping, and killings" in the northwestern states of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara, which borders Sokoto state. "Security forces have failed to respond effectively to threats to people's lives and security," HRW said. —AFP

News in brief

Bomb scare at train station

STOCKHOLM: Police in the southern Swedish city of Malmo yesterday shot a man at the central train station who claimed to have a bomb, police and witnesses said. Police said the shooting occurred shortly after 10 am when officers responding to emergency calls confronted a man acting in a threatening manner. Local media quoted several witnesses as saying that the man, aged around 40, had thrown a sports bag on the ground and shouted he had a bomb. After police approached the man he continued to behave threateningly, spokeswoman Evelina Olsson told. "A situation developed which required a police officer to fire their service weapon," Olsson said. The man was taken to hospital while the train station was evacuated and the bomb squad was called. Police said investigators are waiting to question him. —AFP

Brazil bus accident kills 17

SAO PAULO: A bus carrying 40 people crashed into several cars killing at least 17 people in southeast Brazil Sunday night, according to firefighters and local media. The fire brigade in the Campos de Jordao area, about 180 kilometers (110 miles) from Sao Paulo, confirmed to AFP that the accident was caused when a bus overturned, hitting other vehicles. Media reported at least 17 deaths and a video shot by a witness shows a car involved in the accident turned into a tangled mass of scrap metal. About 41,000 people died on Brazil's roads in 2016, according to estimates in the World Health Organization's 2018 global road safety report. —AFP

Algeria detains car tycoon

ALGIERS: Algerian authorities yesterday detained an automobile tycoon linked to ousted president Abdelaziz Bouteflika on charges of corruption, one of his lawyers said. Mahieddine Tahkout "was detained along with his son and two of his brothers on charges of corruption and money laundering", lawyer Khaled Bourayou said. The decision to detain them came a day after they were questioned by an investigative judge, the official APS news agency said. Private media said Tahkout, who holds several foreign car dealerships, was accused of "undue privileges" under the rule of Bouteflika, who was forced to step down in April after weeks of protests. Tahkout and the family members run the Tahkout Manufacturing Company (TMC) which assembles vehicles in Algeria for South Korean carmaker Hyundai. —AFP

International

Nazabayev's handpicked successor Tokayev elected Kazakh president

OSCE observers blast vote as undemocratic

NUR-SULTAN: Kazakhstan's interim president Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, chosen successor of veteran ruler Nursultan Nazarbayev who retains sweeping powers, has won a snap presidential election which observers say was tarnished by violations of basic freedoms. Nazarbayev, who ruled oil producer Kazakhstan for almost three decades, handpicked the 66-year-old career diplomat as his successor when he stepped down in March. In a power-sharing arrangement, Nazarbayev, 78, remains chairman of the influential Security Council and leads the ruling Nur Otan party.

With Tokayev winning nearly 71% of the vote in a race against six rivals largely unknown to Kazakh voters, opponents denounced the election as unfair, prompting public protests despite Kazakhstan's restrictive laws on freedom of expression. Monitors from Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said "a lack of regard for fundamental rights, including detentions of peaceful protestors, and widespread voting irregularities on election day, showed scant respect for democratic standards."

Protests

During Sunday's vote, police arrested 500 people at rallies in Almaty and Nur-Sultan, the capital city that was renamed after Nazarbayev at Tokayev's suggestion. Yesterday the number of protesters was much smaller as

hundreds of police gathered at the Almaty park where Sunday's rally took place. A Reuters correspondent saw police detain a few dozen people.

The Kazakh state closely controls domestic politics and public discourse. The vast majority of local media does not



Police detain protesters for a second day in a row

criticize Nazarbayev, and social media and online messaging platforms were restricted during Sunday's election. Commenting on the OSCE criticism, Tokayev said it was "just one of the international organizations" monitoring the vote and "we should not focus on the assessment of this particular organization". "I know ... how they compile these reports and how politically prejudiced they can be

depending on which country they work in," Tokayev said at his first post-election briefing.

Markets upbeat

Tokayev promised to work on improving Kazakhstan's business climate and said he would meet major foreign investors - such as Western oil companies who have pumped billions of dollars into the resource-rich nation's economy - next month. Kazakhstan's sovereign dollar bonds rose to record highs in reaction to Tokayev's win as investors saw it as mitigating some, but not all, political risks. "We're in an interim holding pattern that has the potential to go on for some time with Nazarbayev in his old age holding the reins in the background and Tokayev minding the shopfront," said Christopher Granville, managing director at consultancy TS Lombard.

"There's no evidence of deeper fissures within Kazakhstan society but there's a desire for change and renewal, which the current holding operation does not really deliver on." Nazarbayev's eldest daughter Dariga became the speaker of the Senate in March, the post previously held by Tokayev, prompting speculation she was next in line to become president. Members of Nazarbayev's family also control some key business assets in the nation bordering Russia and China, such as Kazakhstan's largest bank, Halyk. — Reuters



NUR-SULTAN: Kazakh president-elect Kassym-Jomart Tokayev speaks to the media during a press at Ak Orda Presidential Palace in Nur-Sultan yesterday. — AFP

Russia celebrities and media protest against journalist's drug bust

MOSCOW: Three of Russia's leading newspapers took the unusual step yesterday of publishing identical front page headlines to protest over what they suspect is the framing of an investigative journalist on drug charges. Ivan Golunov, a 36-year-old journalist known for exposing corruption among Moscow city officials, was detained by police on Thursday and accused of serious drug offences which he denies.

Russian journalists critical of authorities have led a dangerous existence since the 1990s - sometimes threatened, physically attacked, and even murdered for their work. But the crude way supporters say Golunov was set up has triggered an unusual show of media unity and an uncharacteristically swift response from authorities nervous about social unrest at a time when President Vladimir Putin already faces disquiet over living standards.

Police say they found drugs in Golunov's rucksack, and he faces between 10 and 20 years in jail if found guilty. Fellow journalists and members of Russia's cultural elite suspect a fit-up by corrupt officials wanting to silence him. Golunov's lawyer says he was assaulted and punched by police officers, something they deny. The three leading daily newspapers - Vedomosti, Kommersant and RBK - all carried the same headline yesterday in a rare show of solidarity: "I am/We are Ivan Golunov."

In a joint statement, they said evidence against Golunov was shaky, cast doubt over the legality of his detention, and demanded a review of police behavior. "We expect law enforcement agencies to scrupulously observe the law and demand maximum openness when it comes to the investigation," the statement said. "We demand the law be respected by everyone and for everyone." Journalists protested outside Moscow's police headquarters on Friday and over the weekend to demand the case be dropped.

Celebrities and even some high-profile journalists at state media have spoken out for Golunov, criticizing either the accusations against him or the harsh manner of his detention. In what some supporters saw as a small victory, a court on Saturday rejected a request to hold Golunov in a pre-trial detention facility and ordered instead that he be held under house arrest for two months while he is investigated.

It is unusual, given the gravity of the accusations, for a court to agree to house arrest and the decision was seen by supporters as a sign that authorities were nervous at the outcry. State TV on Sunday broadcast a program in which police operatives defended their evidence, but the same program also said that the police's actions needed to be checked. The Kremlin said yesterday that the way Golunov's case had been handled raised many questions. "We are closely following how this case unfolds and all its nuances," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. — Reuters



MOSCOW: Russian investigative journalist Ivan Golunov, charged with attempted drug-dealing, sits inside a defendant's cage during a hearing at a court in Moscow. — AFP

For US voters, age matters more than sexual orientation

NEW YORK: In a sign that a presidential hopeful's sexual orientation has diminished as a concern for voters, Americans are more likely to say they would reject a candidate older than 70 than a candidate who is gay, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll yesterday. The national opinion poll, conducted with the Williams Institute at UCLA ahead of the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising and the birth of the LGBT rights movement, highlighted a steady trend toward acceptance of gay politicians.

The survey also called attention to one of the challenges facing President Donald Trump, who will be turning 73 next week, as he seeks re-election in 2020. Democrats will select their nominee from a field that so far includes 24 candidates and a record number of women and non-white candidates. Among those running are two septuagenarians - former Vice President Joe Biden and US Senator Bernie Sanders - as well as Pete Buttigieg, the openly gay mayor of South Bend, Indiana.

A decade ago "it was controversial just to see a presidential candidate who's supportive of gay rights," said Andrew Flores, a government professor at American University in Washington, DC. "Now there's a gay candidate who's actually running for the office. So there has been a vast change in what the country views as accept-

able." Overall, the poll found that 48% of adults in the United States said they were "much" or "somewhat" less likely to support someone for the White House if the person was older than 70, while 34% were less likely to vote for someone who is gay.

And 12% said they were more likely to vote for a gay candidate, compared with 11% who said they were more likely to support a candidate who is over 70. The poll measured the public's general acceptance of various demographic candidates. "People might say in a poll that they want a younger candidate, but that may not be what will actually determine their vote," said Kyle Kondik, a political analyst at the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.

Stonewall's legacy

Acceptance of gay and lesbian politicians has grown over the past 40 years amid a worldwide movement for LGBT equality. Historians trace its genesis to the Stonewall Uprising in June 1969, when gay people protested police harassment at a gay bar in New York's Greenwich Village. Despite this trend, as of 2007, Americans were still more likely to want a septuagenarian in the White House than they were a gay or lesbian politician.

This year Reuters/Ipsos and other national polls including Gallup and Public Opinion Strategies showed that public preferences had flipped as Americans became much more supportive of gay candidates. Events underpinning the shift included the 2010 repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" rule that banned openly LGBTQ people from serving in the US military and the 2015 US Supreme



CHISINAU: Supporters of Democrat Party of Moldova (PDM), ruled by Vladimir Plahotniuc, sits on the porch next to the government headquarters in Chisinau city yesterday. — AFP

Moldova crisis deepens as new president calls for snap elections

CHISINAU: Moldova plunged deeper into crisis yesterday as a new, acting president dissolved parliament and called elections just after lawmakers appeared to have formed a government following months of wrangling. One of Europe's poorest nations, the ex-Soviet state has been in political chaos since a general election in February failed to give a clear majority to any party. On Saturday, parliament approved a new government based on an unprecedented alliance between pro-Russian and pro-European forces.

The Socialist Party of then-president Igor Dodon agreed to work with the pro-European ACUM alliance and freeze out the previously ruling Democratic Party, led by the powerful oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc. The parties said the state was being held "captive" by oligarchs, adding that the country was "wallowing in corruption". However, the coalition was formed after the Constitutional Court ruled Friday that fresh elections should be held.

On Sunday, the court suspended president Dodon and appointed Pavel Filip, the former prime minister from the Democratic Party, as interim leader. Filip said Dodon had been suspended because he had refused to sign off on parliament's dissolution. The new acting president immediately called a snap vote for September 6. The European Union urged "calm and restraint" and said in a statement it was "ready to work with the democratically legitimate government".

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini called on Moldova to "respect the rule of law and guarantee democracy". The US urged "all Moldovan parties to show restraint and to agree on a path forward through political dialogue," saying that the "will of the Moldovan people as expressed" in the February polls "must be respected without interference." And neighboring Romania's President Klaus Iohannis called for "responsible dialogue of all political forces."

'Desperate step' usurps power

Thousands of supporters of the Democratic Party held a rally in the centre of the capital Chisinau on Sunday, attended by Filip. The party bussed in large numbers of people amid a heavy police presence. In a speech, oligarch Plahotniuc said: "We will go to the elections set for September 6 and win the trust of the public."

He said Dodon was "not worthy of occupying the post of president." Filip said the Democratic party had not wanted snap elections but "in the current parliament, there is no one to work with." Dodon meanwhile said he was also considering the option of calling on Moldovans to take part in "peaceful protests". He called his suspension a "desperate step" and an attempt to "usurp power". The suspended president complained Sunday that the Democratic Party did not want to "peacefully hand over power to a lawful parliamentary majority and a lawful government."

"We have no choice but to appeal to the international community with a call for it to act as a moderator in the process of peaceful handover of power," Dodon said. The Constitutional Court has already suspended Dodon several times in the last two years when he refused to back laws or appoint ministers. Moldova, once part of Romania and later a Soviet Republic, contains a Russian-backed break-away region called Transnistria. — AFP



PHILADELPHIA: Former US vice president Joe Biden greets supporters during the kick off of his presidential election campaign in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. — AFP

Court decision in 2015 that same-sex marriage is a right guaranteed by the Constitution. Trump also has presented himself as an ally of the LGBTQ community.

Buttigieg may be part of the reason for the shift in acceptance, Flores said. "It's now a reality that there's an out gay candidate, who's a Democrat, who may become president," he said. "You may see a greater level of legitimacy among Democratic voters because of that." Democrats, who will decide whether to nominate Buttigieg at state voting contests in 2020, are clearly more supportive of gay presidential candidates than Republicans. According to the poll, 20% of Democrats said they were more likely to vote for a gay candidate, compared with 6% of Republicans. — Reuters

Cuba's overseas medical brigade a 'repressive sham'

WASHINGTON: A great source of pride for communist Cuba is a medical corps that has fanned out across the globe for decades to help people in troubled or poor countries. But don't tell that to doctor Orazal Sanchez, who spent much of his professional life in this brigade and grew disillusioned with what he saw as a system of oppression that is heavy on ideology and bogus solidarity towards host countries. It was during a posting in Botswana's Kalahari desert that he finally quit after becoming fed up with heavy-handed rules like being forced to surrender his passport and being encouraged by supervisors to inform on colleagues.

And even after he'd left the medical corps, he still felt oppressed by the Cuban government, which prevented him from returning home and refused to hand over his certifications, meaning he had to start his career all over again. "The sad thing is that we are still slaves. We think we are free, but so long as we have family in Cuba, we continue to work for the system," said Sanchez, 40, an endocrinologist.

Sanchez and two other former doctors in the program who spoke to AFP using pseudonyms shared similar concerns about the corps, one of the flagship initiatives of the revolution led by the late Fidel Castro since its creation in 1963. Today it is one of the Cuban government's most lucrative programs, bringing in \$11 billion in revenue between 2011 and 2015. As of the end of 2018, 34,000 professionals worked for the corps in 66 countries.

Last month, an advocacy group called Cuban Prisoners Defenders together with a political group, the Cuban Patriotic Union, filed a complaint before the International Criminal Court (ICC) over the program. The lawsuit before the ICC includes public testimony from 64 doctors in the program and 46 others who spoke privately. The suit, in which the three doctors who spoke to AFP are plaintiffs, accuses former president Raul Castro and the current president, Miguel Diaz-Canel, of crimes against humanity for running a program that acts as a form of modern slavery.

Medical staff who refuse to join an overseas mission suffer terrible consequences in their careers, the doctors said. Meanwhile Havana views corps members who leave the program as traitors, and uses the threat of reprisals against relatives back home as a form of long-distance torture.

Delia Estelles, 37, said while serving in Guatemala she suffered sexual harassment, was subjected to forced political indoctrination and had to contribute money to the Cuban communist party, all while surviving on next to nothing because her salary was so small, as most of what countries pay for the doctors is collected by the Cuban government.

Estelles took refuge in a now-defunct US program called Cuban Medical Professional Parole. She was admitted to the United States under the program, but wasn't able to bring her family, who remain in Cuba where shortages of basic goods are common. — AFP

International

China backs Hong Kong extradition law, opposes 'foreign interference'

Hong Kong leader refuses to scrap extradition bill despite rally

BEIJING: China yesterday strongly backed the Hong Kong government on a controversial bill that would allow extraditions to the mainland, and voiced opposition to "outside interference" following a massive protest against the legislation. Organizers said more than a million people marched against the law, bringing central Hong Kong to a standstill at the weekend as the semi-autonomous city's pro-Beijing government battles a major political crisis.

Critics of the proposed legislation say it would erode precious freedoms in the city, and leave dissidents at the mercy of Beijing's opaque justice system. Beijing was unmoved by the protest, with foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang saying it "will continue to firmly support" the Hong Kong administration. "Second, we firmly oppose any outside interference in the legislative affairs" of the city, he said at a regular press briefing, adding that "some countries have made some irresponsible remarks about the amendment".

Chinese state-run media earlier slammed the Hong Kong protest organizers for "collusion with the West", and pointed to meetings between Hong Kong opposition figures and senior US officials. The Chinese-language edition of the nationalistic Global Times dismissed Sunday's mass demonstration, one of

the biggest shows of public anger since Hong Kong was returned to Chinese rule in 1997. "It is very noteworthy that some international forces have significantly strengthened their interaction with the Hong Kong opposition in recent months," the paper said, describing the exchanges as "collusion".

The editorial pointed to meetings between Hong Kong opposition figures and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, as well as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Hong Kong's pro-Beijing chief executive Carrie Lam struck a defiant tone in the wake of the protest, refusing to scrap the extradition bill. The law's opponents have called for another demonstration on Wednesday.

'Hoodwinked'

The English-language China Daily said in an editorial more than 700,000 people had backed the legislation through an online petition, "countering a protest by about 240,000 people" - the more conservative attendance figure given by police. "Unfortunately, some Hong Kong residents have been hoodwinked by the opposition camp and their foreign allies into supporting the anti-extradition campaign," the state-run paper said.

Geng also pointed to the petition in support of the bill. Coverage of the protest was muted in mainland China, with the state

broadcaster ignoring the protest on Sunday's main evening news. The official Xinhua news agency's English-language service repeated the city administration's position on the law "in response to a public procession". Searches for the demonstration on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform yielded no results, and instead showed older content about unrelated events.

A mainland student in China told AFP his WeChat social media account was suspended for two days after he posted a picture of the protest in a three-person group chat. "I feel awful, it's my first time being blocked," said the student, who did not participate in the protest. A 50-year agreement between Hong Kong's former colonial ruler, Britain, and China means the city is guaranteed freedoms of speech and assembly unseen on the Chinese mainland.

But activists and opposition politicians are increasingly warning that these liberties are being eroded as Beijing tightens its grip on the city. The proposed law would allow extraditions to any country with which Hong Kong does not already have a treaty, including mainland China. Supporters say the law is needed to stop the city becoming a safe haven for mainland fugitives, but critics fear Beijing would use the law to go after its opponents.



HONG KONG: Riot police shout at protesters during clashes after a rally against a controversial extradition law proposal in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

A defiant tone

Meanwhile, Hong Kong's pro-Beijing leader yesterday refused to scrap a controversial plan to allow extraditions to the Chinese mainland, a day after record crowds came out to oppose the proposal. Striking a defiant tone after the city's largest protest since the 1997 handover, chief executive

Carrie Lam said the legislature would debate the bill tomorrow as planned, rejecting calls to delay or withdraw the law.

The decision sets her administration on a collision course with opponents who decried her stance and called on supporters to rally outside parliament on Wednesday or hold strikes. — Agencies

Why is HK extradition plan so controversial?

HONG KONG: Hong Kong witnessed its largest protest since the city's 1997 handover to China on Sunday as hundreds of thousands came out to oppose plans to allow extraditions to the mainland. The crowds wanted the city's pro-Beijing leaders to scrap the proposals - but there is little sign of that happening, and the issue has plunged the city into a political crisis.

What's the law all about?

The city's government is pushing a bill through the legislature that would allow extraditions to any jurisdiction with which it does not already have a treaty - including mainland China. They say it is needed to plug existing loopholes and prevent the city from becoming a bolthole for fugitives. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam says safeguards are in place to protect the city's free speech, and to ensure political cases will not be affected by the extradition law. She also argues that the law meets international standards for human rights, and that only serious crimes that carry sentences above seven years will be considered.

Why do people object?

Fears centre on getting tangled up in China's opaque and politicized courts - whether it be the city's 7.3 million inhabitants or those just passing through the air-

port. A broad cross-section of society has opposed the legislation, including lawyers and influential legal bodies, business figures and chambers of commerce, journalists, activists and western envoys.

Then on Sunday some one million people marched against the bill, according to organizers, in unprecedented scenes. Hong Kong's appointed leaders are increasingly perceived to be doing the bidding of Beijing, and there is little trust in their assurances that the law won't impact the city's prized independent judiciary or its wider freedoms. Jimmy Sham, convener of the group behind Sunday's protests, said young people felt "powerless" in the face of a "brutal" government.

Doesn't China run Hong Kong?

Yes. But under the 1997 handover agreement with Britain, China has agreed to a 50-year deal where Hong Kong is able to retain key liberties, such as freedom of speech and an independent judiciary. The city's courts and rule of law, built around the British legal system, are key to the financial hub's economic success.

What's the rush?

The idea of Hong Kong being a bolthole for fugitives had never been high up the political agenda. But after a Hong Kong man murdered his girlfriend while on holiday in Taiwan and fled back home, local authorities seized on the case to call for an overhaul of the law. Despite confessing to Hong Kong police, authorities were unable to extradite him because the two territories do not share an agreement. The extradition law was born, covering any place Hong



HONG KONG: Police gather at a rally against a controversial extradition law proposal in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

Kong doesn't have a specific agreement with - including mainland China for the first time. But critics say the Taiwanese case is a Trojan horse to please Beijing.

Does the bill have supporters?

Certainly. Outside of Hong Kong's local government, the bill has received public backing from senior party officials in China and state media. A petition run by a group that supports the bill has collected more than 800,000 signatures, while the Hong Kong government has a comfortable majority of lawmakers who have say they will back the bill. But proponents have not managed to get people onto the streets in anything like the numbers seen in Sunday's opposition protest,

making it hard to gauge genuine public support.

What's going to happen next?

There are no signs of the tension diffusing. Yesterday Carrie Lam refused to delay or scrap the extradition bill, and said her administration had already made major concessions to protect human rights. Hong Kong police said they will track down protesters behind violence in the early hours of yesterday morning. But opponents of the law have also doubled down, announcing plans for fresh protests on Wednesday alongside calls for a city-wide strike. And Beijing has added its own rhetoric to the mix, attacking "foreign forces" for trying to disrupt a "sensible, legitimate" piece of legislation. — AFP

Outrage at acquittals in rape cases sparks calls to fix Japan law

TOKYO: Miyako Shirakawa was a 19-year-old college student when she was raped by an older man. She said that when the attack started, her mind went blank and she froze up. "When I became aware, he was on top of me," said Shirakawa, 54, now a psychiatrist who treats sexual abuse victims. That type of response "is a common, instinctive reaction - it's a form of psychological self-protection," added Shirakawa, who became pregnant because of the rape, which she didn't report to police, and had an abortion. But under Japanese law, not fighting back can make it impossible for prosecutors to prove rape.

Legislators revised Japan's century-old rape law in 2017 to include harsher penalties and other changes. The reforms, however, left intact controversial requirements that prosecutors must prove that violence or intimidation was involved or that the victim was "incapable of resistance." A recent series of acquittals has revived outrage over that legal standard, which Shirakawa and other critics say places an unfairly high burden on victims, deterring them from coming forward and hurting their chances in court if they do.

They say the law must be revisited to make all non-consensual sex a crime, without exception, as it is in other developed countries such as Britain, Germany and Canada. "Discussing sexual violence from the victim's viewpoint is a world trend, and it's time to reform the Japanese legal system and society that cannot do that," said Minoru Kitahara, an author and activist who is among the organizers of protests against the recent rulings. One such ruling came in March, when a court in Nagoya, central Japan, acquitted a father accused of raping his 19-year-old daughter.

According to a copy of the verdict seen by Reuters, the court recognized that the sex was non-consensual, that the father had physically and sexually abused the victim when she was younger and that he had used force. But the judges concluded that doubt remained as to whether she had no option other than to submit. The case is under appeal. "The verdict was extremely strict about proving psychological incapacity to resist," said Tomoko Murata, a lawyer who handles sexual assault cases.

Activists are holding monthly demonstrations in



TOKYO: People cross a street in Tokyo's Ginza district yesterday. — AFP

which participants grasp flowers as a symbol of protest. "The media are reporting about the verdicts and the protests. The increase in the number of people who think that this situation is wrong will give strength to those who cannot speak of their own suffering," Jun Yamamoto, head of sexual assault victims group Spring and a victim herself said. In May, Spring presented the justice ministry and Supreme Court with demands for legal reforms.

Silenced by fear

The #MeToo movement has been mostly subdued in Japan, and only 2.8 percent of sexual assault victims tell police, often for fear of being blamed themselves and publicly shamed. Many tell no one at all. A report last year by the government's gender equality bureau showed nearly 60 percent of female victims of forced sex kept it to themselves.

"My patients are afraid, and there are many who feel it is impossible to make a legal case, so all they can do is cry themselves to sleep," Shirakawa said. Murata said the acquittals would further discourage victims from seeking help from the legal system. "In dealing with police, prosecutors and courts, the law is so strict

and a guilty verdict so difficult that the victim begins to suffer," she said. "The repercussions of such verdicts are huge."

Behind the legal burden, experts say, is a traditional view that women are responsible for protecting their chastity. Japan's rape law was introduced before women could vote and its main intent was to protect family honor and pedigree, legal experts say. "The idea is women must resist to the very limit. That is at the heart of this kind of ruling," Murata said. "And there is still the view that 'No means Yes.' It is not yet the common view that a woman's agreement is necessary before having sex."

Reforms

The 2017 reforms widened the definition of "forced sexual intercourse" to include anal and oral sex, thus including men as victims; lengthened the minimum prison sentence to five years from three; and enabled prosecution even if the victim did not press charges. It also dropped the requirement that rape of a person under the age of 18 by a parent or guardian must involve violence, intimidation or incapacity to resist to be considered a crime.

Proposals to do the same for adults failed partly because of concerns that doing so would lead to an increase in false charges. Critics say there's no evidence that is true - the social, psychological and legal barriers to prosecuting a case are too high. "Proof the sex was non-consensual would still be required, so I don't think false charges would increase," Murata said.

Justice Minister Takashi Yamashita, asked about the calls for reforms, told a parliamentary panel last month that his ministry would assess the current situation and consider what action to take. But he gave no deadline for a decision. "We must cautiously consider the impact of completely removing the requirement (to prove) violence or intimidation," he said in reply to questions from an opposition lawmaker. When reforms were enacted in 2017, parliament called for a review after three years, and activists hope the public outrage will bolster pressure for additional changes.

Some members of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling Liberal Democratic Party are taking an interest in the topic, forming a group called "Caucus for a Society Without Sexual Violence." "I felt that the verdicts were unbelievable, impossible," Chihiro Ito, 29, a victim of attempted rape who is a member of Spring said. "But there are also positive aspects for Spring. The view of ordinary people, the decent reaction that in common sense terms, these verdicts are wrong is spreading in society," she said. "It would be good if that triggers debate in society and leads to reform." — Reuters

Angry Haitians demand president's resignation

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Several thousand demonstrators marched through Port-au-Prince on Sunday to demand the resignation of Haitian President Jovenel Moise over allegations of embezzlement. Led by dozens of protesters on motorcycles, the mostly youthful demonstrators filled city center streets in a rally organized by opposition parties and civil society groups.

Amid a heavy police presence, the marchers erected barricades of burning tires, and at least two buildings near the departmental police headquarters caught fire. There were also clashes near the presidential palace, but no immediate reports of injuries.

"We demand that all those squandering (public) funds be tried and punished, their assets seized and turned over to the state for serious development projects, and that the president resign and turn himself in," said Velina Charlier, a protest leader. The judges of the High Court of Auditors said in a voluminous report last week that Moise was at the center of an "embezzlement scheme" that had siphoned off Venezuelan aid money intended for road repairs.

Venezuela's Petrocaribe aid program has been plagued by allegations of corruption since its establishment in 2008. The judges' report laid out a litany of examples of corruption and mismanagement. The magistrates discovered, for example, that in 2014 Haitian authorities signed contracts with two different companies - Agritrans and Betex - for the same road-repair project. The two turned out to have the same tax registration number and the same personnel.

Moise, before he came to power in 2017, headed Agritrans, which received more than 33 million gourdes (\$700,000 at the time) to do the road work, though the company in principle did nothing but grow bananas. The Petrocaribe scandal gave rise to parliamentary inquiries in 2016 and 2017, and public protests goaded the High Court of Auditors to examine how the \$1.6 billion in Venezuelan funds were spent by succeeding Haitian administrations.

Opposition parties, who contested Moise's 2017 election, urged their supporters on Sunday to demonstrate peacefully. At least seven Haitians died during violent protests in February that led to the fall of the government. But no new cabinet has been appointed, no budget has been approved, and there is no certainty when legislative elections will be held. This comes amid a continuing economic crisis, with an inflation rate above 17 percent, the country's currency devalued, and many Haitians lacking basic necessities. — AFP



PORT-AU-PRINCE: A man assists a demonstrator bleeding from a wound on his head and lying on the pavement during a protest march against the ruling government in Port-au-Prince. — AFP

Analysis

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Firms cut employees' access to Huawei, muddying 5G rollout

Some of the world's biggest tech companies have told their employees to stop talking about technology and technical standards with counterparts at Huawei Technologies Co Ltd in response to the recent US blacklisting of the Chinese tech firm, according to people familiar with the matter. Chipmakers Intel Corp and Qualcomm Inc, mobile research firm InterDigital Wireless Inc and South Korean carrier LG Uplus have restricted employees from informal conversations with Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker, the sources said.

Such discussions are a routine part of international meetings where engineers gather to set technical standards for communications technologies, including the next generation of mobile networks known as 5G. The US Department of Commerce has not banned contact between companies and Huawei. On May 16, the agency put Huawei on a blacklist, barring it from doing business with US companies without government approval, then a few days later it authorized US companies to interact with Huawei in standards bodies through August "as necessary for the development of 5G standards." The Commerce Department reiterated that position on Friday in response to a question from Reuters.

Nevertheless, at least a handful of major US and overseas tech companies are telling their employees to limit some forms of direct interaction, the people said, as they seek to avoid any potential issues with the US government. Intel and Qualcomm said they have provided compliance instructions to employees, but declined to comment on them further. A spokesman for InterDigital said it has provided guidance to engineers to ensure the company is in compliance with US regulations.

An official with LG Uplus said the company is "voluntarily refraining from interacting with Huawei workers, other than meeting for network equipment installation or maintenance issues". LG Uplus issued a statement to Reuters that there was no formal policy within the firm about limiting conversations with Huawei. Huawei did not provide comment.

5G Slowdown

The new restrictions could slow the rollout of 5G, which is expected to power everything from high-speed video transmissions to self-driving cars, according to several industry experts. At a 5G standards meeting last week in Newport Beach, California, participants privately expressed alarm to Reuters that the long-standing cooperation among engineers that is needed for phones and networks to connect globally could fall victim to what one participant described as a "tech war" between the United States and China.

A representative of a European company that has instituted rules against interaction with Huawei described people involved in 5G development as "shaken". "This could push everyone to their own corners, and we need cooperation to get to 5G. It should be a global market," the person said. To be sure, several workers at smaller telecoms firms said they had not been told to avoid discussions with Huawei at standards meetings, and many vendors continue to support existing deals with Huawei. It is unclear how much further communications with Huawei have been curtailed in the tech industry, if at all.

"There's been a lot of misunderstanding from what I'm seeing and hearing from clients and colleagues, as far as what the (Commerce Department) restrictions actually entail," said Doug Jacobson, a Washington-based export controls lawyer. He said that companies prohibiting their employees contacting Huawei was "excessive, because the restrictions don't preclude communication, only the transfer of technology."

Huawei, whose equipment the United States has alleged could be used by China to spy, has emerged as a central figure in the trade war between the world's two largest economies. Huawei has repeatedly denied it is controlled by the Chinese government, military or intelligence services. China, US, and European companies have split before on standards for Wi-Fi, cell networks and other technologies, and the tit-for-tat over tariffs between Beijing and Washington has increased fears of another bifurcation.

Huawei is a top player at various global organizations that set technical specifications. As one of the world's biggest manufacturers of devices like smartphones, and the vital parts of networks such as routers and switches, Huawei will need to be at the standards-setting table to ensure a seamless customer experience when 5G networks become prevalent, engineers and experts said. Engineers and system architects representing their employers at meetings of the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP), a global consortium of industry associations that aims to set 5G specifications by March 2020, often take formal, general discussions into smaller, less documented sessions as they try to find agreement with rivals. — Reuters

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



This picture taken during a media tour shows an outside corridor leading to individual cells made for physical exercise at the Tokyo Detention House yesterday. — AFP

Tokyo prison opens doors to answer critics

Perhaps the most famous recent inmate at the Tokyo Detention House, ex-Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn, is no longer resident, but the prison has thrown open its doors hoping to answer critics. The facility has no bars on its windows, gleaming floors and the latest medical equipment - all put on display on Monday before journalists to rebut critics who say it is a tool in a "hostage justice" system, where the accused are held potentially indefinitely to encourage them to confess. "We think the conditions are good," said the warden, Shigeru Takenaka, as he led visitors around the facility in Kosuge, whose modern buildings were completed in 2012 and can house up more than 3,000 detainees.

At the moment, the facility is only at 60 percent capacity, with 1,758 occupants, a population that until April included Ghosn, who has been held at the detention centre on two separate occasions as prosecutors investigated him on allegations of financial misconduct. His first stint lasted 108 days from his shock arrest on November 19. He won bail in March but was re-arrested shortly after and spent another 21 days at the facility before being freed a second time. He remains in Tokyo on bail facing four counts of financial misconduct, which he denies.

Packing a projector: US activists stage light invasion

The plan of action was nothing new; its outcome was. Soon after sundown, the activists made for the heart of the US capital, set up a powerful projector then shone a giant, illuminated message onto the dim flank of a government building. "Discrimination is wrong" read the giant letters projected onto the side of a Congressional office building. What happened next was a first for the activists and helped ignite debate about whether light projection equals trespass.

"A sergeant rolled up and said we were under arrest," said Robby Diesu, who was manning the projector in the Capitol Hill neighborhood, part of a collective called DC Action Lab. "I've had numerous interactions with the Capitol Police and have never had one just arrest me." The 31-year-old told the Thomson Reuters Foundation as he recounted his March arrest.

Light projection as a form of art and means to protest has been on the rise over the past decade as the technology has become more affordable. Used also for mainstream advertising and high-impact entertainment stunts, it appeals to activists who want to convey a big message quickly, effectively and cheaply. Since Donald Trump became president and galvanized grassroots protest, light activists have focused their anger on Washington, D.C. - "protest capital of the country" - said Diesu, who guessed he had been involved in some 300 projections.

As the trend has taken off, so has debate over whether light projection constitutes a new form of property trespass, or even amounts to a "light invasion", as one court wrote. For Diesu, who said activists take care to stay on the right side of the law, the situation seemed preposterous. "We've projected on the Supreme Court, various embassies, other agencies and private enterprises ... and it's never been a problem," he said. "This question about trespassing - that just seems silly," said Diesu, who was not charged in the March incident. "With projection, I just turn it off, and it's gone."

Legal ambiguity

In the United States, the use of light projection for protest purposes started to take off in 2011, with the rise of the left-wing Occupy Wall Street movement. A half dozen people outfitted a cargo van with a projector as a "propaganda tool", said Emily Andersen, a member of the Illuminator, as the group is known today. She said the van would drive around beaming "99 percent" - a reference to perceived economic inequality and a call to join the months-long demonstration, which soon spread nationally.

"From there, the messaging got better or more pointed, and then other groups would get involved

and wanted to use our projection to further their causes," she said. "So now we get involved in a variety of issues to raise awareness." Over time, techniques evolved. The van would stop and project rather than move, or members would use folding tables for projections, she said.

They now teach fellow activists, unions and groups on college campuses how to project. But the legality remains unclear, and in some instances, members were arrested or had equipment confiscated. "I never know when we're going to get shut down," she said. "It's hit or miss. Most of the time, we'll be asked to move along."

The key figure in the capital, Robin Bell, also got going in 2011, but ramped up significantly after the election of Trump. The first projection that made big waves was in 2017, when he and others projected "Emoluments welcome" on Trump's luxury downtown hotel, a reference to a debate over whether the president was benefiting financially from his position. At first, he would carry a letter from a lawyer saying that as best as they can tell, they were within their rights to project light. But the letter's tentative tone speaks volumes.

"There really isn't a definitive answer to where it begins and ends, and that's what we're literally figuring out now: How do we communicate in a public space, and how do we do that with this specific technology?" Bell said. The technology did not exist when the laws were written, but Bell saw "little difference between me standing in front of the Supreme Court and holding a sign, versus projecting on a wall."

'Not traditional sites'

The legal gap needs plugging one way or another, said University of Virginia associate law professor Maureen E Brady. "There really is a need for guidance here," she said, noting that social media was awash with confused activists. As yet, there have been surprisingly few legal decisions dealing with what is an increasingly common issue, she said. Most legal thinking has been guided by a 19th-century opinion that stemmed from a raucous party, in which the court found that unless light was sufficiently harmful to sleep or damaged buildings, it was not legally actionable.

Other cases have established that people should be able to control what message their property communicates, and that free speech does not mean people can speak from another's property, potentially including that of the government, Brady said. In a key case from 2016, a court ruled that union members who had been projecting messages onto a business amid a dispute were not trespassing.

Brady notes that property law offers another route for clarification: whether the action can be considered a nuisance. Either way, she expects legislation or more legal cases that will offer greater clarity on the issue in the next few years. For now, the arrest has left a minor - if lasting effect. "We're going to avoid Capitol Hill to a certain extent," Diesu said. "But the night we got the equipment back, we were out projecting again - it won't stop us overall." — Reuters

'Balanced' meals

During his detention, Ghosn reportedly lost weight and struggled with the rice-based prison diet. He was unable to communicate with his family, missing out on calling his daughter on her birthday. His family and lawyers decried his treatment and the conditions of his detention, but officials at Kosuge present the facility as a model, kept scrupulously clean and well-ordered by its more than 800 employees.

But for the locks on the doors and the uniformed guards patrolling the corridors, it could be a hospital instead of a prison, with a population that is 90 percent male and made up of around 40 nationalities. "The menus are prepared by nutritionists, they are balanced," said Takenaka. Meals are centred around a bowl of rice, served alongside a main dish of vegetables and fish or meat and a bowl of soup, and offered three times a day.

Officials say the quantity depends on the activity levels of detainees, 84 percent of whom are between 20 and 59. "Those who are on the larger side or do exercise have the right to larger portions," added Takenaka, apparently baffled by the foreign criticism of the facility. Like many prisons, the facility also has its own shop, where visitors can buy snacks, magazines and other items to give detainees.

Preventing suicide attempts

Officials say there is no violence at the facility and disputes between detainees are rare - even those who occupy the 200 cells that are shared, with six people to a 22.5 sq m space. Most of the cells - 1,800 - are individual, where detainees have 6.5 sq m or slightly more if they have a Western-style bed instead of a Japanese-style floor mattress or futon. The rooms are spare - a toilet and sink, a shelf, bedding and a small table. "Everything is designed to prevent suicide attempts," Takenaka said. "For example, the shelving is bent so that nothing can be attached to it."

Two or three times a week, detainees can wash in a facility similar to that at a mid-range Japanese hotel, with shower and a tub for bathing - also spotlessly clean. And they have access to an open-air space for exercise of 30 minutes a day, if they choose. Ghosn spent most of his detention not in a cell but the facility's medical centre, which is staffed by nine doctors as well as nurses and open 24 hours a day. Takenaka had no comment on critics who say detention at the facility is a means of extracting confessions from suspects, but said conditions at the centre maintained a balance. "They need to be good, but not so good that living conditions in the prison are better than those of people living outside," he said. — AFP

'Nobel for food' winner tells world to eat more veg

With poor diet now topping smoking as a health hazard, the world must put good nutrition over empty calories, especially in emerging Asian economies, according to the winner of a prestigious global prize dubbed the 'Nobel for food'. Seed breeder Simon Groot - an octogenarian whose family has cultivated seeds for hundreds of years - said the world must tackle malnutrition by boosting vegetable and crop varieties. This was particularly pertinent in Asia, he said, as it was growing in wealth and its people were increasingly opting for starchy, high-calorie rice and meat over nutritious vegetables.

Poor diet has overtaken smoking as the world's biggest killer, according to the latest Global Burden of Disease study, causing 20 percent of deaths globally in 2017. "As populations become more wealthy and as the standard of living goes up, particularly in the rural areas, they start eating more rice, which nutritionally is not a very good thing," said Groot, founder of Dutch East-West Seed. "It's really happening in Myanmar now, where income is going up. And it's happened in China where they are moving towards more meat consumption," he said.

Myanmar's emergence from nearly half a century of iron-fisted military rule less than a decade ago brought glitzy malls, smart phones, fast food and Western hotel chains. Its people eat an average of 155 kg of rice a year, according to a 2016 survey by the country's rice federation and Yezin Agricultural University, ensuring Myanmar has one of the world's highest rates of rice consumption. Experts say if the world is to fight a growing malnutrition crisis, agriculture must shift from producing calories, through staples such as rice, to growing nutrients, such as fruits, nuts, vegetables and pulses.

Growing pains

It is a fight that Groot has waged for more than 40 years, having helped millions of small-scale farmers in Asia grow nutritious vegetables to improve their livelihoods. Groot, whose work has since expanded to Latin America and Africa, on Monday won The World Food Prize, founded in 1986 to recognize those who advance the quality or availability of food. As a sixth-generation seed breeder, Groot, 84, said he started East-West Seed at 47 years old when he noticed small-scale Asian farmers often struggled with low-quality seeds.

"For a farmer, the reliability of the seeds is so crucial," Groot told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a phone interview. "He's not attached to his fertilizer supplier or his pesticide supplier, but he is emotionally tied to his seed supplier because that determines the quality of his crops." Groot said poor yields meant that many would struggle to make ends meet, leading to poverty and poor family diets. Millions of smallholders in Asia miss out on new, resilient seeds that could improve yields in the face of climate change, according to the Netherlands-based Access to Seeds Foundation.

Diversification could help fight malnutrition globally by bringing little-known, nutritious foods into the mainstream, which could help to withstand hostile climates and disease, said the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Historically, farmers cultivated at least 7,000 different plants to eat. Since the 1960s, they have focused on higher yields, using fertilizers, chemicals and new irrigation methods, said Britain's Millennium Seed Bank.

Groot said his organization would keep prioritizing small-scale farmers to help them grow a diverse array of vegetables, no matter what his competitors do. — Reuters

Business

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A Vietnamese vegetable vendor waits for customers at a wholesale vegetable and fruits market in Hanoi at dawn on June 7, 2019. —AFP

New tariffs if there is no meeting with Xi: Trump

Hanoi to curb fake 'Made-in-Vietnam' goods aimed at dodging US tariffs

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump yesterday said he still expects to talk with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping at the upcoming G20 summit, warning he will impose new tariffs if there is no meeting.

"Yes it would," Trump told CNBC television when asked if a failure by Xi to come to the summit later this month in Japan would lead to the huge new tariffs kicking in. But Trump said the meeting was "scheduled" and "I think he will go." "I would be surprised if he didn't go," Trump added. "I think he's going, I haven't heard that he's not. We're expected to meet." A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, meanwhile, said last month that he had "no information at present" on Trump-Xi talks. Trump has been trying to strong-arm China into a major change on trade policies that the president argues have for decades put the United States at an unfair disadvantage.

The two biggest economies in the

world seemed to be close to striking a bargain until talks stalled last month. Washington says that Beijing walked away at the last minute, while the Chinese side has signalled it is increasingly prepared for a long fight. Trump has already imposed 25 percent duties on \$200 billion of Chinese imports. China has responded with punitive tariffs on \$60 billion in US goods.

Trump says he is ready to slap tariffs on a further \$300 billion in Chinese imports if no breakthrough is achieved. The G20 summit will take place in Osaka on June 28-29.

Vietnam cautious

Hanoi has vowed to crack down on manufacturers illegally using "Made in Vietnam" labels on items destined for America to dodge punishing tariffs as the US-China trade spat drags on. Exporters have started shifting production from China to Vietnam to avoid 25 percent

levies imposed by US President Donald Trump on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods. But Hanoi said some manufacturers are illegally claiming their goods—including textiles, seafood and agricultural products—are from Vietnam when in fact they originate in China. The trend has "affected the reputation of Vietnamese businesses and goods", said Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh, quoted in an official report published Sunday on the government website.

"We will increase the punishment to deter cases of goods claiming to be Vietnamese goods entering other markets," he added, according to the report. The report said Vietnamese customs officials had uncovered dozens of cases of incorrectly labeled goods destined for the United States, Europe and Japan. The government called for more stringent inspection of exports to those markets and said Vietnam could be punished by the US—one of its leading trade partners—

if it failed to stem the problem.

Vietnam has long been a manufacturing hub for cheaply-made goods from Adidas sneakers and H&M dresses to Samsung smart phones and Intel processors. Those exports have soared this year as Beijing and Washington have escalated tit-for-tat tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of goods.

In the first three months of this year, US imports from Vietnam reached nearly \$16 billion, up 40 percent from the same period last year, according to US trade data. Nearly half of all American companies working in China have said they are considering shifting production from the so-called 'Factory of the World' as a result of the trade dispute, according to a poll by the American Chamber of Commerce in China. Trump raised the tariffs last month after trade talks broke down, prompting Beijing to retaliate with higher duties on \$60 billion worth of American products. —AFP

China exports grow despite US tariffs, but imports slump

BEIJING: China's exports unexpectedly returned to growth in May despite higher US tariffs, but imports fell the most in nearly three years in a further sign of weak domestic demand that could prompt Beijing to step up stimulus measures.

Some analysts suspected Chinese exporters may have rushed out shipments to the United States to avoid new tariffs on \$300 billion of goods that President

Donald Trump is threatening to impose in a rapidly escalating trade dispute. But yesterday's better-than-expected export data is unlikely to ease fears that a longer and costlier US-China trade war may no longer be avoidable, pushing the global economy towards recession.

China's May exports rose 1.1 percent from a year earlier, compared with market expectations for a modest decline, customs data showed. "We expect export growth to remain positive in June, likely supported by continued front-loading of US-bound exports, but it should then tumble in the third quarter, when we expect the threatened tariffs to be imposed," economists at Nomura said in a note to clients.

"Therefore, we believe Beijing will likely step up its stimulus measures to stabilise financial markets and growth." Business distortions related to April's cut in the value-added tax (VAT) may also have eased,

helping export readings, Nomura added.

Analysts polled by Reuters had expected May shipments from the world's largest exporter to have fallen 3.8 percent from a year earlier, after a contraction of 2.7 percent in April.

While China is not as dependent on exports as in the past, they still account for nearly a fifth of its gross domestic product. Trade tensions between Washington and Beijing escalated sharply last month after the Trump administration accused China of having "renege" on promises to make structural changes to its economic practices. Trump on May 10 slapped higher tariffs of up to 25 percent on \$200 billion of Chinese goods and then took steps to levy duties on all remaining \$300 billion Chinese imports. Beijing retaliated with tariff hikes on US goods. Trump has said he expects to hold a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping

at a G20 leaders' summit late this month, but analysts such as Capital Economics believe the chances of a lasting trade deal are receding as both sides appear to be digging in for a long battle.

Trade sanctions are spreading from goods to services, Capital Economics noted last week, with China issuing a warning to citizens about risks of travelling in the United States and US lawmakers pushing to tighten visas for Chinese students. Damage from the trade war along with a broader softening in global demand will make 2019 the worst year for trade since the financial crisis a decade ago, with only 0.2 percent growth, according to economists at ING.

China's trade surplus with the United States, a major irritant for Washington, widened to a four-month high of \$26.89 billion in May, from \$21.01 billion in April, yesterday's data showed. —Reuters

Russia warns of 'great risk' of oil overproduction

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday warned of a strong risk of global overproduction of oil that could lead crude prices to drop below \$40 a barrel. "There are really great risks of overproduction today," Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said during a meeting with Saudi counterpart Khalid al-Falih in Moscow.

"We have to analyze everything... in order to take a balanced decision in July" he said, referring to a key meeting of the so-called OPEC+ alliance between OPEC members and other oil producing countries including Russia. The alliance is set to meet in Vienna in the beginning of July according to the Saudi minister, to decide whether to extend an agreement on production levels.

Russia has agreed with OPEC member countries on cutting production of crude to build up prices after the crash of 2014-15. The 25-member alliance agreed to cut output by 1.2 million barrels per day from the start of this year after oil prices dipped by more than 30 percent late last year.

"Prices can drop below \$40 and even down to \$30 a barrel," Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov told lawmakers yesterday, quoted by Russian agencies. Novak also said that such a scenario "cannot be ruled out." "A lot depends on the situation on the market in the second and third quarter, from the balance of supply and demand, and how the situation develops with uncertainties, trade wars, and sanctions pressures on several countries," he said.

"We are working to take preventative steps to avoid the scenario that was discussed," Falih said regarding the prospects of prices falling to \$30 a barrel, in translated comments. Massive drops in exports by Iran and Venezuela plus the agreed output cuts implemented by the OPEC+ group since January, have cut supplies. US President Donald Trump has urged OPEC to boost oil production in order to tamp down rising prices. — AFP

Al Mulla Automobiles opens Middle East's first Mercedes-Benz boutique in Kuwait

Mercedes-AMG GT 4 Door Coupe and new GLE unveiled at the event in The Avenues



KUWAIT: Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East hands over the inauguration certificate to the Al Mulla management at the first Mercedes-Benz boutique in the Middle East at The Avenues.



KUWAIT: Interior of the Mercedes-Benz boutique

KUWAIT: Al Mulla Automobiles, the authorized general distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, inaugurated last week the first Mercedes-Benz boutique in the Middle East at Kuwait's largest shopping destination, The Avenues in the Grand Plaza. The opening event also included the unveiling of the two newest Mercedes-Benz models, the Mercedes-AMG GT 4 Door Coupe and the all-new Mercedes-Benz GLE.

The event was hosted by Talal Anwar Al Mulla, CEO of Al Mulla Group, in the presence of the management of Al Mulla Group and Al Mulla Automobiles Co, as well as representatives from Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East in Dubai (MBCME), and the media. Following the inauguration, guests were taken on a tour of the boutique and given the first hands-on look of two special vehicles, the Mercedes-AMG GT 4 Door Coupe and the all-new Mercedes-Benz GLE.

Covering a total area of 390 square meters, the opening of the new Mercedes-Benz boutique comes as part of the expansion strategy set by Al Mulla Automobiles in an aim to promote the luxurious and technologically-advanced experience of the international brand. The boutique has the capacity to display up to five cars simultaneously, while displaying Mercedes-Benz's cutting edge technology and digitalization elements, and. The boutique also displays the brand's Lifestyle Collection crafted to effortlessly complement the taste of its customers and incorporate design, technology and impeccable standards that reflect the level of excellence that customers expect from Mercedes-Benz.

Speaking of the opening, Talal Al Mulla, CEO of Al Mulla Group said: "The Mercedes-Benz boutique at The Avenues was designed with the brand's world-class concept in mind to ensure we enhance our customer's journey as they discover the latest vehicles and lifestyle items, in addition to being the brand's hub for social engagement. "Our focus at Al Mulla Automobiles is to ensure that our products and services satisfy the expectations of our customers, while providing a unique retail experience at our showrooms and boutiques as we expand our services."

Commenting on this occasion, Sascha Van Ryseen, Head of Distribution Network, Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East, stated: "It is a pleasure to be here for the opening of the first Mercedes-Benz Boutique in the region. At Mercedes-Benz we are currently trying to change the traditional way of selling automobiles, with a completely digitized customer journey. With the Mercedes-Benz Boutique, we have designed a new format full of emotions, which aims to enable our customers to simply enjoy their time with our brand."

The Mercedes-Benz boutique at The Avenues will also be the heart of the brand's commercial and social events and programs. From introducing new cars to launching products and services, the boutique is ideally located to cater to customers and their families in an easily accessible location in Kuwait. Since the beginning of its partnership with Mercedes-Benz, Al Mulla Automobiles has ensured it exceeds the level of services expected from its customers through

revamping the showrooms and service centers to provide the level of service that matches the excellence of the Mercedes-Benz craftsmanship.

Feel the speed of the AMG GT 4

The all-new Mercedes-AMG GT 4-Door Coupe, the brand's flagship model, has recently arrived to Kuwait and is on display at the Mercedes-Benz boutique in The Avenues where customers can discover the car that seamlessly embodies the racing heritage, as well as the brand's vision for the future with a car that delivers power, driving fun, and everyday utility in a way few cars can match.

The Mercedes-AMG GT 4 Door Coupe comes with a striking silhouette and dynamics. The expressive design with the low bonnet, dominant front and muscular body language emphasizes the sporty genes of the four-door Coupe. The model delivers a top speed of up to 315 km/h and driving dynamics that cuts an effortlessly superior figure. The Mercedes-AMG GT43 4 Door Coupe', GT 53 4-Matic Coupe and GT 63S Coupe' allow for a completely new driving experience.

The GT 4 offers an extensive portfolio of exterior equipment packages, which can be used to add different highlights in terms of design and does not compromise on performance. The output of the AMG 4.0-litre V8 biturbo engine has been enhanced further for the new Mercedes-AMG GT 63 S 4MATIC+. It delivers 470 kW (639 hp) and a maximum torque of 900 Nm, which is available over a wide engine speed range from 2500 to 4500 rpm. Acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h in 3.2 seconds clearly illustrates this, as does the maximum speed of 315 km/h.

Explore the new Mercedes-Benz GLE

The new Mercedes-Benz GLE is not only exceptionally dynamic and more comfortable on the road, it is also more competent off the beaten track than ever before. Its exterior design exudes strength and charisma and at the same time sets a new aerodynamic best value in its segment with a cd value = 0.29. The interior is even more spacious, the second row of seats is electrically adjustable as an option and a third seat row is available on request. The new driver assistance systems further increase the level of active safety. The infotainment system has larger screens, and optionally comes with a full-color head-up display with a resolution of 720 x 240 pixels and the MBUX interior assistant, which can recognize hand and arm movements and supports the driver's and front passenger's operating intentions. The new Mercedes-Benz GLE has a wealth of innovations. For example, the active suspension system E-ACTIVE BODY CONTROL on a 48 volt basis is a world first. While the driving assistance systems take another step forward with Active Stop-and-Go Assist.

The GLE's control and display concept blends an elegant impression, value appeal and intelligence. It systematically pursues the aim of interaction between humans and technology - through gestures,



Al Mulla Group management poses for a group photo



KUWAIT: The exterior of the first Mercedes-Benz boutique



touches and voice control. The instrument cluster and media display have a new dual design on a 12.3-inch high-resolution Widescreen Cockpit. The control systems are customizable and intuitively comprehensible through restyled representations and control feedback.



Business

ITS wins 'Best Technology Solutions Provider to Islamic Finance' award

Awards ceremony at CIS Islamic Banking and Finance Forum in Tashkent

KUWAIT: International Turnkey Systems Group (ITS), the leading provider of comprehensive sharia-compliant financial solutions announced that it has been awarded the "Best Technology Solution Provider to Islamic Finance" at the CIS Islamic Banking and Finance Awards, which was held on the 2nd May 2019 during the CIS - Islamic Banking and Finance Forum in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The prestigious CIS Islamic Banking and Finance awards are a signature initiative of Al-Huda Center for Islamic Banking and Economics (CIBE) and are aimed at recognizing industry leaders and highlighting best practices in the Islamic finance industry, with the ultimate objective of promoting social responsibility, sharia authenticity and a steadfast commitment to the growth and elevation of

global Islamic finance. Commenting on the award, International Turnkey Systems (ITS) COO, Muawiya Abu Jubain, said: "ITS is fast becoming the globe's preferred Islamic finance technology solutions provider; equipping Islamic banks and financial institutions with innovative technology solutions that elevate their operations and deliver an exceptional customer experience, and this award is testament to the Group's strategic success and satisfied customer base and also underscores ITS's growing brand equity throughout the Islamic banking and digital finance space."

The ETHIX range by ITS is the Company's flagship solution which provides multi-channelled corporate and retail products and services in Islamic finance and investment, including core banking, trade finance,

branch automation, digital banking, dashboards and reports, in addition to other pioneering products and services. The solution is built on robust technologies designed to support financial institutions as they strive to reach operational excellence, accommodate growth, and achieve cost leadership in financial services.

Abu Jubain added: "The Islamic financial services industry is riding a wave of transformation and banks and financial institutions are looking for cost effective solutions that will help them to succeed in the age of Fintech. This market demand has created an influx of technology companies, however ITS, with its extensive track record delivering digital solutions locally, regionally and internationally, and evolved product and service offering, remains the trusted market leader."



Abu Jubain receiving the award

Raytheon and United Technologies announce merger

WASHINGTON: Raytheon and United Technologies announced on Sunday that they will merge, creating a behemoth American aeronautics and defense company.

The new company, Raytheon Technologies Corporation, will be created via an exchange of shares between the two firms, with the merger expected to conclude in the first half of 2020, they said in a joint statement. "The transaction will create a premier systems provider with advanced technologies to address rapidly growing segments within aerospace and defense," the statement said.

Raytheon is best known for its Patriot air defense systems, which gained fame during the first Gulf War, and its Tomahawk cruise missiles, often the first weapons fired from US navy ships in recent conflicts.

United Technologies (UTC) is a big player in the aeronautics industry with its Pratt and Whitney engines, which are used in civil and military aircraft, including the F-35 multi-role stealth fighter, considered one of the most advanced combat aircraft in the world. The Wall Street Journal first reported that talks have been under way between the two pillars of the global aeronautics and defense industries.

'Merger of equals'

This "merger of equals" will be concluded after United Technologies holdings Otis elevators and Carrier air-conditioning and building systems are spun off, the statement said. Separating those assets—a task involving some 500 people—should be completed by the first half of next year, the statement said. The UTC merger with Raytheon would transform the two companies into a single conglomerate with varied but well-established brands, each in the top tier of its specialty.

The statement said UTC's CEO Gregory Hayes, the merger's architect, will assume the leadership of the new group, while Raytheon's CEO, Thomas Kennedy, will become chairman of the board.

Two years after the merger is completed, Hayes will take over as both CEO and board chairman.

Hayes has led UTC since 2016 and oversaw the \$23 billion acquisition of Rockwell Collins, another big name in the US defense and aeronautics sector.

Thanks in large part to Rockwell Collins, which became Collins Aerospace, UTC posted good results in the first quarter of 2019. Collins Aerospace makes parts for aircraft engines, internal and external lighting for aircraft, seats, brakes, landing gear and pneumatic, hydraulic and electrical equipment. It also offers maintenance services for aircraft. Rockwell Collins' sales rose 71 percent to \$6.51 billion in the first quarter of 2019. During his presentation of the quarterly results, Hayes expressed optimism about the outlook for the rest of the year, stressing that the mix of civil and defense products had put UTC in a strong position.

Massive defense group

The UTC-Raytheon merger will create one of the biggest defense groups in the world, even if its \$168 billion market capitalization based on Friday's share prices is reduced by the coming UTC spinoffs. Boeing was valued at \$199 billion Friday, Lockheed Martin at \$100 billion and Europe's Airbus at 94 billion euros, or \$104 billion. In 2018, Raytheon had sales of \$27 billion and earnings of a little less than \$3 billion. For its part, United Technologies posted sales of \$66.5 last year, and earnings of \$5.3 billion. — AFP

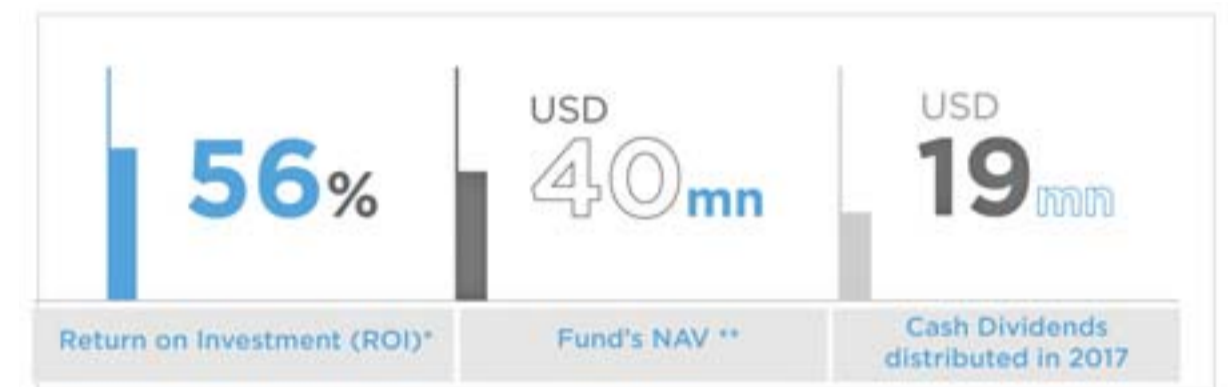


KAMCO: Kuwait Education Fund attains 56% returns on investments

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced that Kuwait Education Fund (under liquidation) (KEF), a private equity fund aimed at supporting and developing education in the private and public sectors in Kuwait, has recorded a Return on Investment (ROI) of 56 percent since the Fund's inception on April 11, 2007 until it was fully liquidated on 25 November 2018.

KAMCO, in its capacity as the fund liquidator, reported that in addition to the impressive returns yielded, the Fund also distributed cash dividends of \$19 million to the unitholders in 2017, representing proceeds from partially exiting some of the Fund's investments. Which is in line with the unitholders' strategy to liquidate the Fund's assets and retrieve its capital in full.

KAMCO liquidated Kuwait Education Fund (under liquidation) pursuant to the unitholders' resolution issued in the Fund's unitholders Assembly held on October 31, 2018 (fund termination and liquidation), as per the announcement published in issue number 1420,



* Since inception on 11 April 2007 until fully liquidated on 25 November 2018.
** NAV as of 25 November 2018; the date of liquidation.

dated November 2018 of the official gazette, Kuwait Al-Youm. After finalizing the liquidation process KAMCO held the Fund's final Assembly on May 13, 2019, to present the Fund's liquidation process and the Fund's final accounts to the Fund's unitholders. As on 21 May 2019, the Capital Market Authority had cancelled the Fund's registration from the Funds register at the Authority.

KAMCO explained that despite the difficult and volatile economic conditions during the financial crisis, the prudent investment decisions taken by KEF's Fund Manager and the successful exit strategies that target securing the Fund's capital, have contributed to the profitable returns on investments to its unitholders. The

Fund's Net Asset Value (NAV) as on November 25, 2018 (the date of liquidation) stood at approximately USD 40 million, the net proceeds were distributed to the Fund's unitholders within three months of liquidation date.

The Company expressed its satisfaction for achieving outstanding exit proceeds for KEF's unitholders in spite of the challenges facing the financial and regional markets, and extended its gratitude to the Fund's valued clients for their confidence and trust in the Company. The Kuwait Education Fund was established with the objective of investing in distinct educational programs in Kuwait and abroad, while preserving capital and earning returns from unique investment opportunities.



QINGDAO: A customer looking at an imported Renault car in a showroom at the Qingdao, free trade port area in Qingdao, in China's eastern Shandong province. — AFP

Renault warns Nissan it will block governance reshuffle

TOKYO: French carmaker Renault has warned its alliance partner Nissan that it will block the Japanese auto firm's plan to overhaul its governance structure, Nissan confirmed yesterday, a move it called "regrettable." The French group's decision came as France's finance minister Bruno Le Maire said a proposed merger between Renault and Fiat-Chrysler remains a "good opportunity", despite the withdrawal of the offer by the Italian-American carmaker due to "unreasonable" political resistance from Paris.

Last month, Fiat-Chrysler stunned the auto world by proposing a merger with Renault that would-together with Nissan and Renault's other Japanese partner, Mitsubishi Motors—create a car giant spanning the globe. But the deal collapsed suddenly last week.

"A merger project with FCA remains a good opportunity," Bruno Le Maire told reporters in Tokyo Monday, adding that any merger would have to ensure the "durability" of Renault's alliance with the Japanese auto firms.

But in the latest sign of deteriorating ties between the alliance partners, Nissan said in a statement earlier Monday that it had received a letter from Renault "indicating intention to abstain from voting" on plans to overhaul its governance structure.

The move would mean the proposed changes fall short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass. "Nissan finds Renault's stance on this matter most regrettable, as such a stance runs counter to the company's efforts to improve its corporate governance," CEO Hiroto Saikawa said in a statement. Renault's decision, first reported by the Financial Times, was taken over fears the proposed governance

changes could reduce its influence, the paper said. Nissan wants to introduce several governance committees intended to improve oversight and, it says, prevent the financial misconduct allegedly committed by the alliance's former chief Carlos Ghosn, currently awaiting trial in Tokyo.

But Renault reportedly fears the overhaul will reduce its influence in Nissan, and ties between the partners have already frayed since Ghosn's arrest and skepticism at the Japanese automaker after proposed further integration in the partnership. A spokesman for Renault, which is Nissan's largest shareholder, had no comment.

Merger plans?

The proposed merger between Renault, its Japanese partners, and Fiat-Chrysler would see a combined group that would be by far the world's biggest, with total sales of some 15 million vehicles, compared to both Volkswagen and Toyota which sell around 10.6 million apiece. But FCA pulled the plug on the deal suddenly last week, saying negotiations had become "unreasonable" due to political resistance in Paris.

On Saturday, Le Maire told AFP that Paris might consider reducing the state's 15-percent stake in Renault if it led to a "more solid" alliance between the firm and its Japanese partners.

But he also said Renault should focus on shoring up its relationship with Nissan before pursuing mergers with other firms. "Otherwise, everything risks collapsing like a house of cards," he warned in the interview on the sidelines of the G20 finance ministers meeting.

Le Maire declined yesterday to comment directly on the latest developments in the Renault-Nissan spat, but urged reconciliation. "The management of Renault and the management of Nissan must resolve their difficulties and misunderstandings as soon as possible," he said yesterday in the Japanese capital, where he is meeting Japanese officials after this weekend's gathering of G20 finance ministers. Any merger between Renault and Fiat-Chrysler must also preserve manufacturing jobs in France and protect the "durability" of the French automaker's partnership with Nissan, he added. — AFP

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 9th June 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 2nd June until 6th June 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:

Amal Lazim Ahmed
Ibrahim Khaleel Ibrahim Alramzi
Najat Mahdy Murad
Nafel Othman Nafel Alazmi
Fatima Abdulkareem Mohammed Al-Saqer

Gulf Bank's second Al-Danah quarterly draw for the prize of KD 250,000 will be held on 26 June 2019 and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 will be held on 25 September 2019. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2019 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.



What's On

DWC luncheon for new Chad Ambassador



The Diplomatic Women's Committee held a luncheon in honor of the newly appointed Ambassador of Republic of Chad, Mrs. Batoul Zakaria, to the State of Kuwait. The purpose of this invitation was to acquaint her with other lady ambassadors and the wives of ambassadors of the African republics accredited to the state of Kuwait and to the Board of Directors of DWC.

In the presence of DWC chairperson, the ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic Mrs

Samargiul Adamkolova and the Advisor of the Committee Madam Narjis Al Shatti, elaborated the role of the Committee in establishing a bridge of friendship and cooperation considering all aspects between the Diplomats in Kuwait and the Kuwaiti community in all its institutions. At the end, they wished the newly appointed ambassador a blessed stay in her second home of Kuwait and hoped for great success in her work as an ambassador in Kuwait.



CBK celebrates labor workers during Eid Al-Fitr

In line with the social programs launched by the Commercial Bank of Kuwait to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan and

Eid Al-Fitr, the Bank celebrated Eid Al-Fitr with cleaning and construction workers. The Bank presented gifts to the workers at their work sites. This initiative comes within the framework of comprehensive social responsibility programs dedicated to providing assistance to various groups in society.

Amani Al-Wara, Deputy General Manager of the Corporate Banking sector, said: "this campaign is increasingly important because it takes care of the cleaners

and construction. They are worthy of care and attention due to their role in building buildings and protecting the environment. We at CBK also feel we have a duty to strengthen ties between the bank and various segments of society." The workers in turn expressed their great thanks to the family of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, praising its role in providing material and moral support to the often neglected parts of society.

Recipes

A flavorful, flourless chocolate cake without all the fuss

Incredibly rich and impossibly smooth, flourless chocolate cake is elegant, refined, and universally beloved. But recipes for this intense, deeply chocolate dessert typically require complicated techniques. Our take on this indulgent cake minimizes fuss without sacrificing flavor or texture.

We began by gently melting chocolate and butter in the microwave before incorporating the remaining ingredients. In the absence of flour, we called on eggs for structure, cornstarch for body, and water for a moist, smooth texture. Vanilla and espresso powder underscored the chocolate flavor and deepened its impact.

Ensuring a crack-free surface was as easy as straining and resting the batter before tapping out bubbles that rose to the surface. Baking the cake in a low oven produced a perfectly smooth top. This cake needs to chill for at least 6 hours, so we recommend making it the day before serving. An accurate oven thermometer is essential here. We prefer this cake made with 60 percent bittersweet chocolate; our favorite brands are Ghirardelli and Callebaut. To slice, dip a sharp knife in very hot water and wipe dry before and after each cut.

FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE CAKE

Ingredients

Servings: 10-12
Start to finish: 1 hour 45 minutes (Plus at least 6 hours to chill)
12 ounces bittersweet chocolate, broken into 1-inch pieces
16 tablespoons unsalted butter
6 large eggs
1 cup (7 ounces) sugar

1/2 cup water
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
1/2 teaspoon salt

Preparation

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 275 F. Spray 9-inch spring-form pan with vegetable oil spray. Microwave chocolate and butter in bowl at 50 percent power, stirring occasionally, until melted, about 4 minutes. Let chocolate mixture cool for 5 minutes.

Whisk eggs, sugar, water, cornstarch, vanilla, espresso powder, and salt in large bowl until thoroughly combined, about 30 seconds. Whisk in chocolate mixture until smooth and slightly thickened, about 45 seconds. Strain batter through fine-mesh strainer into prepared pan, pressing against strainer with rubber spatula or back of ladle to help batter pass through. Gently tap pan on counter to release air bubbles; let sit on counter for 10 minutes to allow air bubbles to rise to top. Use tines of fork to gently pop any air bubbles that have risen to surface. Bake until edges are set and center jiggles slightly when cake is shaken gently, 45 to 50 minutes.

Let cake cool in pan on wire rack for 5 minutes; run thin knife around edge of pan to loosen cake. Let cake cool on rack until barely warm, about 30 minutes. Cover cake tightly with plastic wrap, poke small hole in top, and refrigerate until cold and firmly set, at least 6 hours or up to 2 days. Remove sides of pan and slide thin metal spatula between cake bottom and pan bottom to loosen, then slide cake onto platter. Let cake stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving.



The perfect snack: Yogurt, fresh fruit and crunchy granola

Creamy Greek yogurt, fresh fruit and crunchy granola make a delicious and wholesome start to the day or a great afternoon snack and layering them in a glass makes this simple combination feel like a special occasion.

Greek yogurt makes the creamiest parfait, but there's no rule against using another kind of yogurt. You can use regular yogurt, but since it is thinner than Greek yogurt (extra liquid has been drained from Greek yogurt so that it's really thick and creamy), the layers may not stay as well defined. We like the color contrast between plain (unflavored) yogurt and the fruit, but if you use sweetened or flavored yogurt, skip the honey.

YOGURT AND BERRY PARFAITS

Ingredients

Servings: 2
Start to finish: 10 minutes
Prepare Ingredients:
1 cup plain Greek yogurt
1 tablespoon honey
1 cup raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, and/or sliced strawberries
1/2 cup granola
Gather Cooking Equipment:
Small bowl
Whisk
Two 8-ounce glass tumblers
1/4-cup dry measuring cup
1-tablespoon measuring spoon

Preparation

In small bowl, whisk yogurt and honey until smooth. Spoon one-quarter of the yogurt-honey mixture into each glass. Top with 1/4 cup berries, followed by 2 tablespoons granola. Repeat layering process with remaining yogurt, berries, and granola. When you're done, you should have 2 layers of yogurt, berries, and granola. Serve within 15 minutes or granola will start to become soggy.

A cookie in a skillet? Sure, you're skeptical but try it

A cookie in a skillet? We admit this Internet phenom made us skeptical until we tried it. Unlike making a traditional batch of cookies, this treatment doesn't require scooping, baking and cooling multiple sheets of treats: the whole thing bakes at once in a single skillet.

Plus, the hot bottom and tall sides of a well-seasoned cast-iron pan create a great crust on the cookie. And this treat can go straight from the oven to the table for a fun, hands-on dessert or you can slice it and serve it like a tart for a more elegant presentation. What's not to like?

We cut back on butter and chocolate chips from our usual cookie dough recipe to ensure that the skillet cookie remained crisp on the edges and baked through in the middle while staying perfectly chewy. We also increased the baking time to accommodate the giant size, but otherwise this recipe was simpler and faster than baking regular cookies. Top with ice cream for an extra-decadent treat.

CHOCOLATE CHIP SKILLET COOKIE

Ingredients

Servings: 8
Start to finish: 1 hour
1 3/4 cups (8 3/4 ounces) all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
12 tablespoons unsalted butter
3/4 cup packed (5 1/4 ounces) dark brown sugar

1/2 cup (3 1/2 ounces) granulated sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon salt
1 large egg plus 1 large yolk
1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips

Preparation

Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 375 F. Whisk flour and baking soda together in bowl. Melt 9 tablespoons butter in 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Continue to cook, stirring constantly, until butter is dark golden brown and has nutty aroma, about 5 minutes. Transfer browned butter to large bowl and stir in remaining 3 tablespoons butter until melted. Whisk in brown sugar, granulated sugar, vanilla, and salt until incorporated. Whisk in egg and yolk until smooth with no lumps, about 30 seconds.

Let mixture stand for 3 minutes, then whisk for 30 seconds. Repeat process of resting and whisking 2 more times until mixture is thick, smooth, and shiny. Using rubber spatula stir in flour mixture until just combined, about 1 minute. Stir in chocolate chips. Wipe skillet clean with paper towels. Transfer dough to now-empty skillet and press into even layer with spatula. Bake until cookie is golden brown and edges are set, about 20 minutes, rotating skillet halfway through baking. Using potholders, transfer skillet to wire rack and let cookie cool for 30 minutes. Slice cookie into wedges and serve.



Health & Technology

NASA to open ISS to tourists and business ventures from 2020

NEW YORK: NASA said it will open up the International Space Station to business ventures including space tourism as it seeks to financially disengage from the orbiting research lab. Price tag? Tens of millions of dollars for a round trip ticket and \$35,000 a night. "NASA is opening the International Space Station to commercial opportunities and marketing these opportunities as we've never done before," NASA chief financial officer Jeff DeWit said in an announcement made at the Nasdaq stock exchange in New York.

There will be up to two short private astronaut missions per year, said Robyn Gatens, deputy director of the ISS. The missions will be for stays of up to 30 days. As many as a dozen private astronauts could visit the ISS per year, NASA said. These travelers would be ferried to the orbiter exclusively by the two US companies currently developing transport vehicles for NASA: SpaceX, with its Crew Dragon capsule, and Boeing, which is building one called Starliner.

These companies would choose the clients — who will not have to be US citizens — and bill for the trip to the ISS, which will be the most expensive part of the adventure: around \$58 million for a roundtrip ticket. That is the average rate the companies will bill NASA for taking the space adventurers up to the ISS. Neither Dragon nor

Starliner are ready. Their transport capsules are supposed to be ready in late 2019 but the timetable depends on the results of a series of tests. So the private missions will have to wait until 2020 at the earliest. The tourists will pay NASA for their use of the station, for food, water and use of the life support system. That will run about \$35,000 per night per astronaut, said DeWit. That does not include internet, which will cost \$50 per gigabyte.

'Tenant, not landlord'

The space station does not belong to NASA. It was built along with Russia starting in 1998, and other countries participate in the mission and send up astronauts. But the United States has paid for and controls most of the modules that make it up. The new space tourists to the ISS will not be the first: US businessman Dennis Tito had that honor in 2001. He paid Russia around \$20 million for the trip. Others followed in his footsteps, the last being Cirque du Soleil founder Guy Laliberte in 2009.

Since 2011, Russian Soyuz rockets have been the only way to get to the space station. And they have transported only space agency astronauts, in addition to Russian cosmonauts. There are usually three to six crew members on the ISS at any given

time. Right now it is home to three Americans, two Russians and a Canadian. Russia plans to resume tourist flights in late 2021.

The policy change announced Friday includes the opening of parts of the ISS to private sector companies for commercial and marketing activity. This would include startups developing techniques for building materials in conditions of weightlessness. Fiber optic cables, for example, are of extraordinary quality when manufactured in microgravity. The idea is to develop the space economy in the hope of seeing the private sector take over the ISS, which the United States hopes to stop financing in the late 2020s. "We want to be there as a tenant, not as the landlord," NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine said in April. The agency wants to free up funds for a return to the moon mission called Artemis in 2024 and for sending the first humans to Mars, perhaps in the 2030s. But it remains unclear if commercial activity in earth orbit is profitable because it is still so expensive to get up there in the first place. In the end, NASA appears to have changed its stance in order to meet its huge budget needs. When Russia announced it was taking Tito to the space station, NASA was at first opposed to such a mission. And it ended up sending the Russians a bill for his stay on the ISS. — AFP

China to set up system to safeguard tech security

BEIJING: China plans to establish a system to ensure "national security" in technology, state media reported Saturday amid an expanding trade war with the United States which has snared Chinese tech titan Huawei. The powerful National Development and Reform Commission has been tasked with establishing a list system to "more effectively forestall and defuse national security risks," the Xinhua news agency said.

Xinhua did not elaborate or state whether the move was linked to the trade war but said "detailed measures will be unveiled in the near future". Washington and Beijing resumed their trade battle last month when trade talks in the US ended without a deal and US President Donald Trump raised tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese

goods, which Beijing retaliated with its own tariff hike on billions worth US goods. The trade war has stepped up in recent weeks with Washington's move to blacklist Huawei over national security concerns, threatening the firm's global ambitions. The US Commerce Department placed Huawei on an "entity list" on grounds of national security on May 16, a move that curbs its access to US-made components it needs for its equipment. A 90-day reprieve was later issued.

"Based on what I know, China is building a management mechanism to protect China's key technologies," Hu Xijin, the influential editor of the Chinese daily Global Times, said Saturday on Twitter. "This is a major step to improve its system, and also a move to counter US crackdown. — AFP

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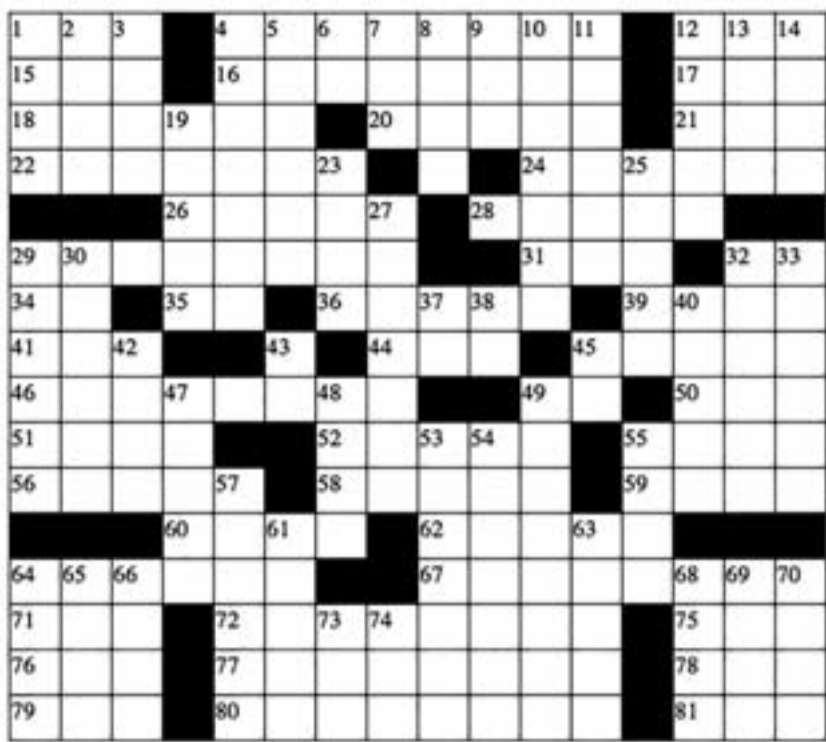
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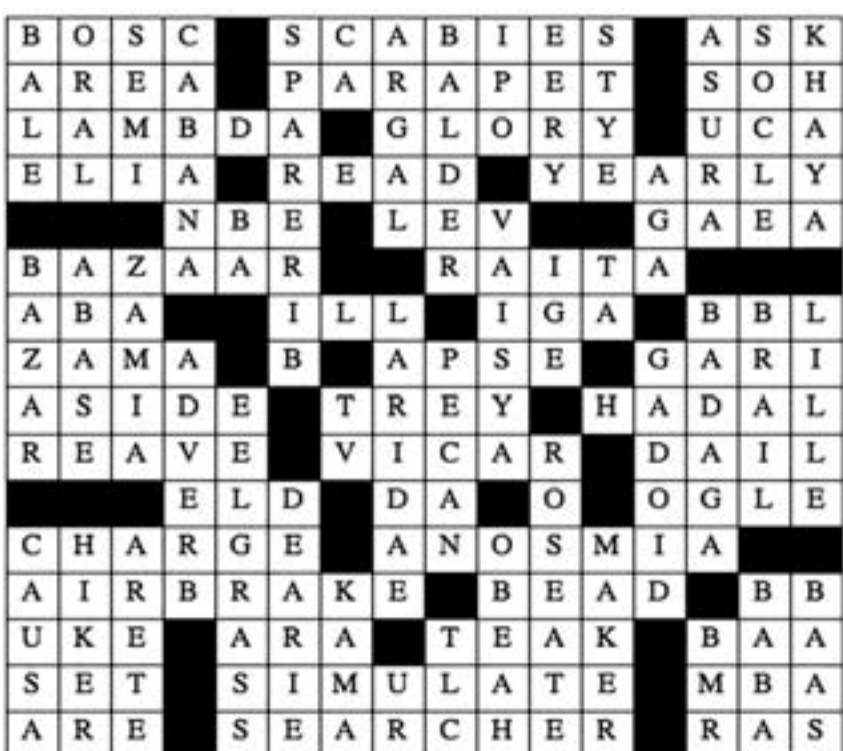
ACROSS

1. Support resembling the rib of an animal.
4. A genus of herbs and shrubs belonging to the family Euphorbiaceae.
12. A unit of heat equal to the amount of heat required to raise one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit at one atmosphere pressure.
15. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
16. Something resembling the head of a nail that is used as an ornamental device.
17. An implement used to propel or steer a boat.
18. Of or relating to or near the tarsus of the foot.
20. A Bantu language spoken in southern coastal Tanzania.
21. A user interface in which you type commands instead of choosing them from a menu or selecting an icon.
22. An abstract or general idea inferred or derived from specific instances.
24. A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
26. Collect or gather.
28. Being three more than ninety.
29. The condition of being unable to perform as a consequence of physical or mental unfitness.
31. Not divisible by two.
34. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
35. A white trivalent metallic element.
36. The capital of Morocco.
39. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
41. The last (12th) month of the year.
44. Tag the base runner to get him out.
46. Expanded in scope.
50. (British) Your grandmother.
51. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
52. The sacred city of Lamaism.
56. Greek mythology.
58. 100 butnits equal 1 dalasi.
59. A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
60. Other than what is under consideration or implied.
62. Register formally.
64. United States swimmer who in 1926 became the first woman to swim the English Channel (1903-).
67. Be iridescent.
71. (informal) Roused to anger.
72. Make urban or city-like.
75. Headress that protects the head from bad weather.
76. A master's degree in business.
77. A diacritical mark (two dots) placed over a vowel in German to indicate a change in sound.
78. The compass point that is one point north of due west.
79. Edible tuber of any of several yams.
80. Any ameba of the genus Endamoeba.
81. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).

DOWN

1. A training program to prepare college students to be commissioned officers.
2. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
3. An outlying farm building for storing grain or animal feed and housing farm animals.
4. Relating to anemia or suffering from anemia.
5. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
6. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
7. An advanced law degree.
8. A name for the Old Testament God as transliterated from the Hebrew YHWH.
9. Liquid excretory product.
10. A French variety of green bean plant bearing light-colored beans.
11. Extinct small mostly diurnal lower primates that fed on leaves and fruit.
12. Italian lawn bowling (played on a long narrow dirt court).
13. The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
14. In or relating to or obtained from urine.
19. A large number or amount.
23. A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
25. Duck of the northern hemisphere much valued for the fine soft down of the females.
27. A German machine gun.
30. A temporarily organized plan for matters to be attended to.
32. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
33. A genus of tropical American plants have sword-shaped leaves and a fleshy compound fruits composed of the fruits of several flowers (such as pineapples).
37. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
38. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
40. Of or relating to or associated with the moon.
42. A sudden very loud noise.
43. 1/10 gram.
45. A state in midwestern United States.
47. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
48. A river in central Europe that arises in northwestern Czechoslovakia and flows northward through Germany to empty into the North Sea.
49. One related to the mother's side.
53. United States feminist (born in 1934).
54. Of an industry or technology.
55. A large bundle bound for storage or transport.
57. Make a more or less disguised reference to.
61. Any of various brown and yellow finches of pats of Europe.
63. A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
65. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
66. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
68. A neutral middle vowel.
69. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
70. An inactive volcano in Sicily.
73. A piece of furniture that provides a place to sleep.
74. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is a time that choices you make concerning your living situation could leave you in a bind. Think long and hard before you act and look for alternate solutions to any problems you are dealing with. You may feel isolated and as if you are not getting the support you need now. A desire for a social life may come over you. Be sure to choose your company wisely. Remember when it comes to friends, quantity is never better than quality. Good times could go south quickly this evening if you make the wrong selection of company. Try to clear your mind and make an attempt to connect with one of your longtime true friends this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

There are times when you look in the mirror and you really like what you see. Today is the day for that. You may not only like what you see but you truly like who you are. Your better qualities are shining through today. You may find you have a special bond today with an older person in your life. You are able to enjoy spending some time with this person and even see them as a mentor. This is a great time for socializing with friends and sharing experiences. This could be a very enlightening time for you.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

A feeling of peace and stability should come over you today. You have made wise decisions and feel really good about yourself and the position in life you find yourself to be in. You wish to be free of a feeling of want that haunts you. Acquiring material possessions should satisfy this craving. A shopping trip may be in order. Retail therapy can never hurt. You will enjoy spending your time with a group of friends this evening. Smiles and laughter are to come.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your energy level is through the roof today. There is also a lot of energy and behind your words and thoughts. Your mind is sharp, but your tongue may be sharper. Conflict could arise from the what you say, and how you say it to others. Frustration may set in when you find an obstacle in your path today. Use this high energy to leap right over it on to the next project. Use this energy in a positive manner and you will find this to be an extremely productive day.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

It may seem as if the stars are shining down on you. Everything seems to work in your favor. People are starting to take notice of all which makes you unique and different. Some may find you quite eccentric. You may find someone close to you seems to really understand the way you choose to express yourself. This support is much appreciated and gives quite a boost to your self esteem.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have set your focus on providing a strong foundation for your family life. You crave security and the one that will be by your side for a lifetime. You find yourself in a serious mood where deep conversation and planning will help to insure the stability you crave. You are serious about your future and who you want to spend it with. The seeds you plant today will develop the roots of the reward you seek. You are focused and determined to lead a healthy, happy life. You make your health a priority now, a gym membership, meal planning, or making plans to exercise as team, is where your focus is. This is great start to making your plans a reality. You know exactly what you want, and you will make it happen.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You long to be the center of attention. This is a driving force that keeps your ambition and dreams strong. This could be a very romantic time in your life. Someone close to you may tend to express great admiration and strong feelings for you. You may feel as if you are being put on a pedestal and this will satisfy all that you have been longing for. You may find this feeling puts you in a dreamy state. A time that is difficult to focus. You may be feeling as you are floating on air. You have long craved this type of attention and once you experience it others may find it difficult to bring you back down to Earth. Libra, you are on top of the world.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find it difficult to communicate with your superiors or someone in authority. Not everyone has the same views and thoughts concerning issues that present themselves to you today. You can be right or you can be happy. Choose happiness today and let someone have their way. Your energy is best spent concentrating on your family. This would be a great evening to spend some time with your siblings or neighbors. A good laugh and the support only you can receive from them is what you need.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

To whom are you listening? If all the people around you are saying what you want to hear, you may want to change venues. New acquaintances may give you the insight you need. You don't grow if you only listen to those who agree with you. You want to be challenged. That can only happen if you listen to people whose ideas and opinions are different from yours. You may have to seek them out.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are experiencing a great time of peace in your world. You are stable and your emotions are at an all time high. You may find much comfort in music. Popping those headphones in your ears seems to make you more productive, rather than distracted. You may find this is a time of great material gain in your life. You have worked hard and believe you deserve the best this world has to offer. It is a great time for you to spoil yourself. Enjoy some of the luxuries life has to offer.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You seem drawn to all that is romantic. Social relationships seem to fall into place and become routine for you. You find yourself at the same little hangout, with the same friends, night after night and you begin to feel comfort in this routine. Music will play a comforting role in your life now and this may be why you enjoy the time spent winding down in the evenings. You may find yourself feelings as if you want to satisfy a need for acquiring material possessions. You work hard, and you are beginning to want to spoil yourself with the finer things in life. Don't be surprised if you find yourself at the dealership wanting to upgrade your ride.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may find yourself focusing on that which intrigues you. Seems you find broadening your horizons as a priority. You are seeking answers. You have a yearning to broaden the horizons and want to gain as much knowledge as possible. Pisces, you want to be in touch with the universe on a grander scale. You are full of curiosity. Travel and furthering your education may be two avenues that would assist you in accomplishing these goals.

Wordsearch Puzzle

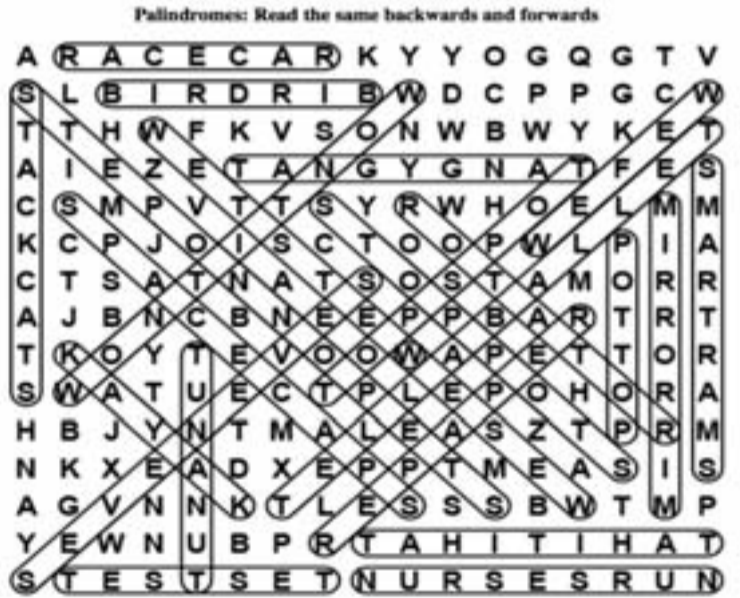
Parkinson's Disease - Word Search



- | | | |
|------------|-------------|-----------|
| AGONIST | EARLY ONSET | POSTURE |
| CHALLENGE | EXERCISE | RED TULIP |
| CHARCOT | FLEXIBILITY | RIGIDITY |
| DISORDER | FREEZING | SENSORY |
| DOPAMINE | GAIT | STAGES |
| DYSKINESIA | IDIOPATHIC | TREATMENT |
| DYSPHAGIA | LEVODOPA | TREMORS |
| | NEURON | |

Yesterday's Solution

Palindromes Are Cool! - Solution

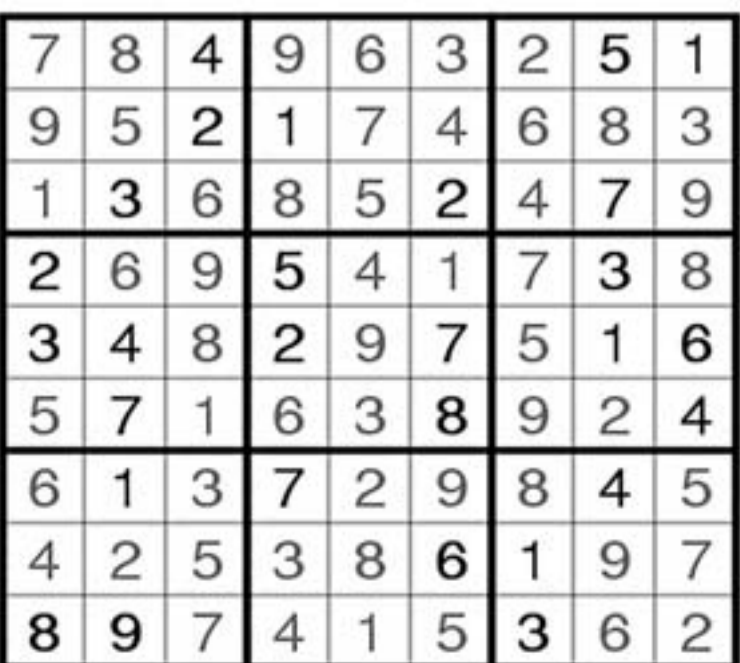


- | | | |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| BIRD RIB | SEVEN EVES | TELL A BALLET |
| KAYAK | SMART RAMS | TEST SET |
| MIRROR RIM | SPACECAPS | TOP SPOT |
| NURSES RUN | STACK CATS | TUNA NUT |
| POT TOP | STEP ON NO PETS | WE FEW |
| RACE CAR | STOP POTS | WE SEW |
| REPAPER | TAHITI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

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019



US actor Taylor Mac attends the 73rd Annual Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall on June 9, 2019 in New York City. — AFP (See story and pictures on page 20)

Around the world in seven years: Taiwanese cyclist's odyssey

It was four years ago when Jacky Chen embarked upon a challenge after quitting his job as an electronics engineer: riding his bicycle across the world. The 40-year-old Taiwanese man has now traversed the Americas, Europe and parts of the Middle East, sleeping in his tent or finding places to rest his head through apps like Couchsurfing. In recent days, Chen has been in Jerusalem, taking in the sights and plotting his next rides on his red and black Merida Wolf 3 cycle.

"This is an adventure," he said of his reasons for setting out on the journey, which has so far taken him to 64 countries and across some 54,000 kilometers (33,750 miles). He hopes to visit 100 countries and travel 100,000 kilometers before he's done and estimates it will take him

about another three years.

Speaking at Jerusalem's Mount of Olives, a panoramic view of the Dome of the Rock and the Old City in the distance, Chen said he prefers not to do much research on places before his arrival so he can have his own initial impressions.

"This city surprised me," he said of Jerusalem, holy to Christians, Muslims and Jews and the epicenter of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but which also has a modern side and a population of nearly 900,000. "It is a big city but it is historical." Some of the toughest moments he has had so far involved travelling through snowy weather, he said. But in terms of danger, Chen said he has experienced very little apart from nerve-wracking moments when cars and lorries pass too closely to him on the road.

He began in the US state of Alaska, has seen Machu Picchu and Paris, and now heads to Jordan before crossing to Egypt and cycling down the eastern side of the African continent. He will then move on to Asia to complete his odyssey.

Chen is by no means the first to set out on such a trip. In 2017, Scottish adventurer Mark Beaumont set a world record by cycling around the globe in 79 days. But Chen isn't after a record, preferring adventure over accolades. "The amazing thing is always the people I meet," he said, with the words "I am Jacky. I come from Taiwan" written on the back of his shirt. — AFP



Taiwanese cyclist and world traveller Jacky Chen poses with his bicycle on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock.



Taiwanese cyclist and world traveller Jacky Chen poses while lifting his bicycle on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock yesterday.



Taiwanese cyclist and world traveller Jacky Chen poses with his bicycle in the Old City of Jerusalem. — AFP photos

'First Lady' of NY graffiti now a businesswoman

When she began painting graffiti on New York subway cars at the age of 15, Lady Pink stood out as one of very few women in that illegal and dangerous subculture. That was in 1979. Now, in her mid-50s, this petite woman with long, dark hair and hailing from the Amazon jungle in Ecuador has been making an above-board living from her art for decades and proudly declares herself a businesswoman. She has been called the "First Lady" of graffiti. "New York was ruined. There was a lot of crime and corruption, and everything looked terrible. We adolescents set out to beautify the city," Lady Pink—real name Sandra Fabara—told AFP in an interview in the Bronx, where she is painting a mural on the wall of Casita Maria, a community center for young Hispanics.

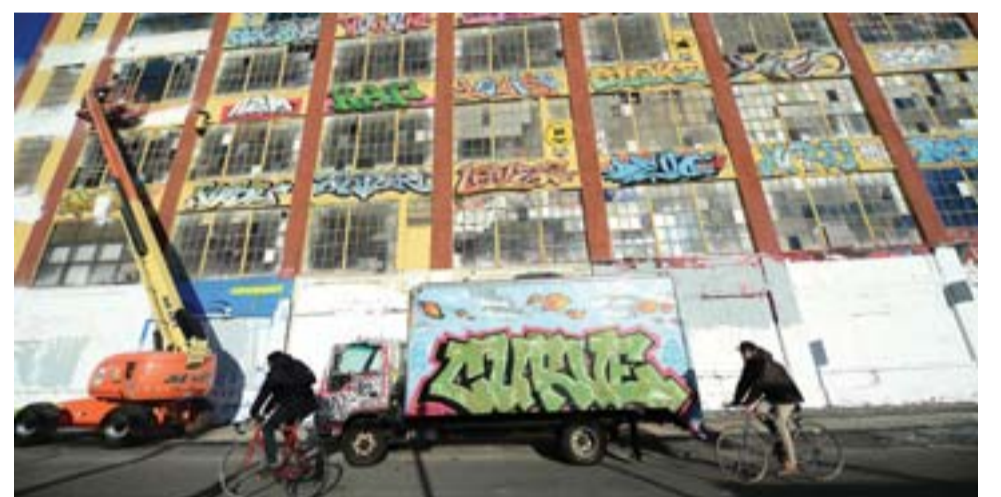
Whereas the teen-aged Fabara had to dodge the authorities as she practiced her craft, she now is being guarded by a policeman while she paints, because an angry neighbor made a death threat against her. Fabara was featured in a classic film about graffiti, "Wild Style" (1982), and is one of 21 street artists whose work adomed-before being whitewashed in 2013—the outside of a factory-turned-canvas in the Queens borough that was called 5Pointz. A court ruled last year that the artists should receive \$6.75 million in damages for the loss of their work; New York law protects public art of "recognized stature."

But the owner of the building, who eventually tore it down to build luxury condos, appealed and there is still no final verdict. "The judicial system has never been very fair with graffiti or street artists. I do not expect it to be now," said Fabara.

Adventure by Night

Lady Pink got into this kind of thing when her first boyfriend, a graffiti artist, was arrested. He was then sent to live with relatives in Puerto Rico, which left Fabara heartbroken. She started painting his name on the walls of her school, and eventually his graffiti buddies took her in and started teaching her technique. "I would crawl out the window with a bag of paint and go to the roughest neighborhoods of New York in the middle of the night, all alone, to meet up with my friends and go to an even worse neighborhood where they park the trains. We would go into the train tunnels and dark alleys where God knows what awaits you," Fabara said of the period, from 1979 to 1985.

"It was the scariest and funnest thing I have



In this file photo New York's graffiti iconic spot "5Pointz" stands defaced with white paint covering most of the art work, after the building was painted white in New York.

ever done. But you should not glorify graffiti. It is extremely dangerous, and there are guys who have died," she said. She said it has become even riskier since the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. "For painting a subway car you are more likely than anything to get shot in the back. People will think you are a terrorist."

Overnight fame

Of her success, Fabara says she met the right people at the right time. She began to exhibit her work in galleries at the age of 16. She said she was invited to parties with artists like Andy Warhol, Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat, and was included in books and movies. "There was a lot of energy and chaos in the early 1980s and graffiti had just come to the surface. It was a whirlwind of activity. We were elevated to celebrity status overnight."



Artist Lady Pink, "The first lady of graffiti," paints a mural at Casita Maria.



Artist Lady Pink, "The first lady of graffiti," is interviewed by AFP at Casita Maria in the Bronx borough in New York. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Awards



English playwright Jez Butterworth (left) and the company of "The Ferryman" including Laura Donnelly (third right) and Fionnula Flanagan (2ndR), winners of the award for Best Play for "The Ferryman," pose in the press room during the 73rd Annual Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall in New York City.



English playwright Jez Butterworth, winner of the award for Best Play for "The Ferryman."



US actress Ali Stroker, winner of the award for Actress in a Featured Role in a Musical for "Rodgers & Hammerstein's Oklahoma!." — AFP photos

MUSICAL INSPIRED BY GREEK MYTHOLOGY WINS AT TONY AWARDS



US actor Andre De Shields, winner of the award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical for "Hadestown."

A musical inspired by Greek mythology and a play about the conflict in Northern Ireland were the big winners Sunday at the Tony Awards, the highest honors in American theater. "Hadestown" was the big favorite of the 73rd annual awards with 14 nominations and in the end it took home eight gongs, including best musical. The show, a modern take on the underworld myth of Orpheus and Euridyce with jazz and folk, arrived on Broadway in April after an unusual 13-year journey.

From its 2006 origins in Vermont as a musical show without choreography, it has become a hit album and an off-Broadway show in London and Canada. "If Hadestown stands for anything, it is that change is possible. That in dark times, spring will come again," producer Mara Isaacs said as she received her Tony. "The Ferryman", written by Jez Butterworth, was also among the favorites this year with nine nominations and ultimately won four Tonys, including best play.



Stephanie J. Block, winner for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Musical for "The Cher Show".

Directed by Sam Mendes, who won as best director of a play, it depicts a day in the life of a rural family in Northern Ireland in 1981 at the height of "The Troubles". Its large and colorful cast of characters includes a baby and a goose.

British actor James Corden, master of ceremonies at the event broadcast from Radio City Music Hall, opened the



The company of "Hadestown" poses in the press room with the Best Musical Award .

awards by extolling the virtues of live theater against streaming. While his humor was apolitical, others spoke out during the three-hour show. Bryan Cranston, who won best leading actor in a play for his role in the "Network", adapted from the satirical 1976 film about a TV anchor, dedicated his award to "all the real journalists around the world." "The media is not the enemy of the people. Demagoguery is the enemy of the people," the "Breaking Bad" star said, taking aim at President Donald Trump who frequently rails against unfavorable media as "the enemy of the people."

While the entertainment world is frequently accused of downplaying the contributions of women and minorities, Broadway tried to redress the balance a bit on Sunday. Actress Ali Stroker became the first wheelchair user to win

a Tony for her role in the musical "Oklahoma!" but Rachel Chavkin, director of "Hadestown", was the only woman directing a musical this year. "There are so many women who are ready, so many artists of color who are ready," Chavkin said in her acceptance speech. "It's not a lack of preparation, it's a lack of imagination on the part of a sector supposed to imagine how the world could be." —AFP



US actor Bryan Cranston, winner of the award for Best Actor in a Play for "Network."



Bob Mackie, winner of the award for Best Costume Design of a Musical for "The Cher Show."



US stage director Rachel Chavkin, winner of the award for Best Direction of a Musical for "Hadestown."



US actress Celia Keenan-Bolger, winner of the award for best featured Actress in a play "To Kill a Mockingbird".



US singer-songwriter Anais Mitchell, winner of the award for Best Original Score for "Hadestown."



US playwright Robert Horn, winner of the award for Best Book of a Musical for "Tootsie."



English actor Bertie Carvel, winner of the award for Best Featured Actor in a Play for "Ink."



US actor Santino Fontana poses with the award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical for "Tootsie".



Colombian choreographer Sergio Trujillo, winner of the award for Best Choreography for "Ain't Too Proud - The Life and Times of the Temptations."



English actor James Corden and wife English television producer Julia Carey.



US actor Jake Gyllenhaal and English actor Tom Sturridge.



US dancer and choreographer Camille A. Brown.



Winners of Best Musical "Hadestown" on stage.

Winners

- Best play**
"The Ferryman" by Jez Butterworth
- Best revival of a musical**
Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!"
- Best musical**
"Hadestown"
- Best revival of a play**
"The Boys in the Band" by Mart Crowley
- Best performance by an actor in a leading role in a musical**
Santino Fontana, "Tootsie"
- Best performance by an actress in a leading role in a musical**
Stephanie J. Block, "The Cher Show"
- Best performance by an actor in a leading role in a play**
Bryan Cranston, "Network"
- Best performance by an actress in a leading role in a play**
Elaine May, "The Waverly Gallery"
- Best book of a musical**
"Tootsie," Robert Horn
- Best original score (music and/or lyrics) written for the theater**
"Hadestown," AnaO's Mitchell
- Best direction of a musical**
Rachel Chavkin, "Hadestown"
- Best direction of a play**
Sam Mendes, "The Ferryman"
- Best performance by an actor in a featured role in a musical**
Andre De Shields, "Hadestown"
- Best performance by an actress in a featured role in a musical**
Ali Stroker, "Oklahoma!"
- Best performance by an actor in a featured role in a play**
Bertie Carvel, "Ink"
- Best performance by an actress in a featured role in a play**
Celia Keenan-Bolger, "To Kill a Mockingbird"
- Best choreography**
Sergio Trujillo, "Ain't Too Proud"
- Best orchestrations**
Michael Chorney and Todd Sicksafoose, "Hadestown"
- Best scenic design of a musical**
Rachel Hauck, "Hadestown"
- Best scenic design of a play**
Rob Howell, "The Ferryman"
- Best costume design of a musical**
Bob Mackie, "The Cher Show"
- Best costume design of a play**
Rob Howell, "The Ferryman"
- Best sound design of a musical**
Nevin Steinberg and Jessica Paz, "Hadestown"
- Best sound design of a play**
Fitz Patton, "Choir Boy"
- Best lighting design of a musical**
Bradley King, "Hadestown"
- Best lighting design of a play**
Neil Austin, "Ink"



James Corden perform on stage.



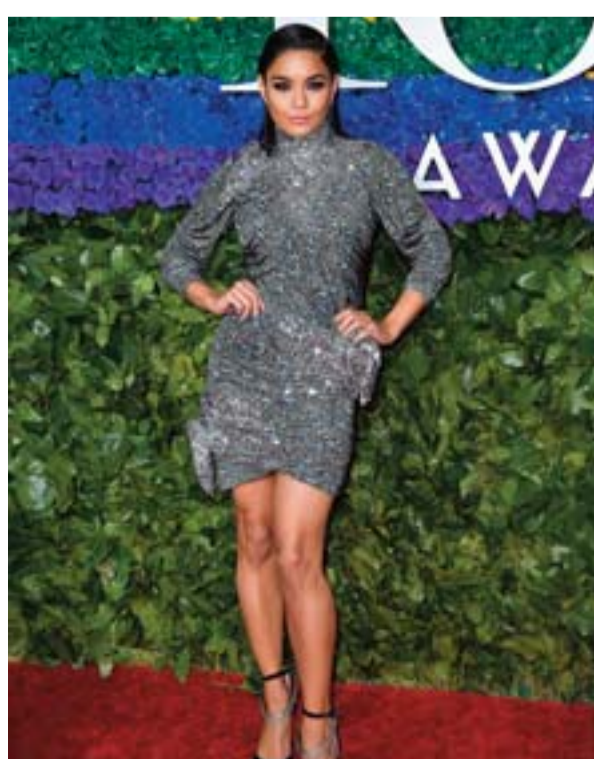
(From left) Nevin Steinberg, Jessica Paz, Bradley King, Rachel Hauck, Michael Chorney and Todd Sicksafoose winner of the award for Best orchestrations for "Hadestown."



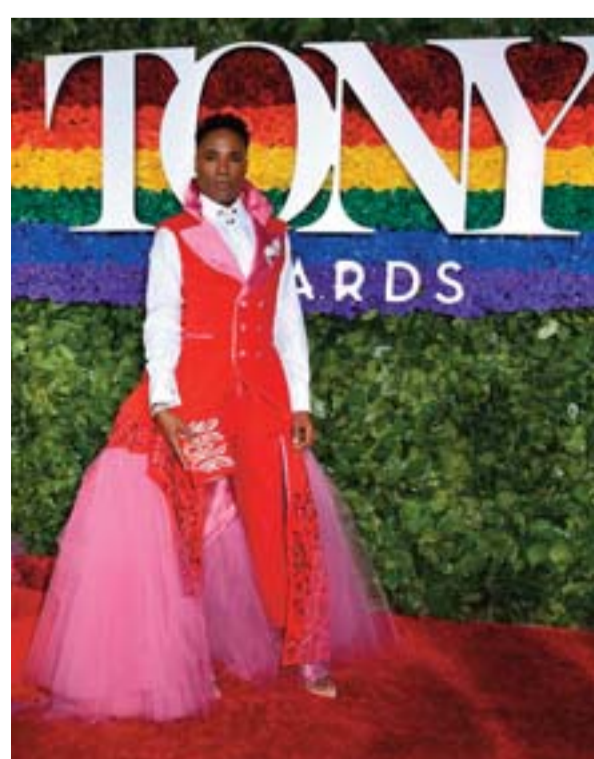
US actor Darren Criss.



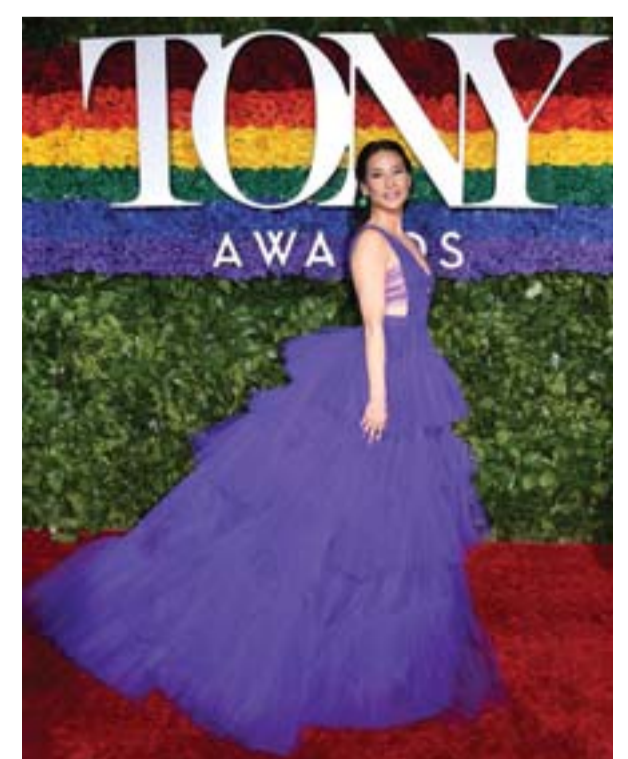
(From left) US actor James Harkness, US actor Jawan M Jackson, US baritone Otis Williams, US actor Jeremy Pope and US actor Ephraim Sykes attend the 73rd Annual Tony Awards.



US actress Vanessa Hudgens.



US actor Billy Porter.



US actress Lucy Liu.



In this picture Kalash women wearing traditional dresses dance as they celebrate 'Joshi', a festival to welcome the arrival of spring, at Bumburate village in the mountainous valleys in northern Pakistan. — AFP photos



A Kalash woman wearing a traditional dress takes a selfie with her friends during a break as they celebrate 'Joshi'.

'IN A ZOO': PAKISTAN'S KALASH BATTLE TOURISM DELUGE



A Kalash woman wearing a traditional dress holding her children poses for photographs as she comes to dance to celebrate 'Joshi'.

In a remote valley in Pakistan dozens of Kalash minority women dance to celebrate spring's arrival-but as a gaggle of men scramble to catch them on camera, the community warns an influx of domestic tourists is threatening their unique traditions. Every year the Kalash—a group of less than 4,000 people confined to a handful of villages in the north-greet the new season with animal sacrifices, baptisms, and weddings at a festival known as "Joshi". As celebrations kick off, tourists with phones jostle to get close to Kalash women, whose vibrant clothing and headdresses contrast starkly with the more modest attire worn by many in the conservative Islamic republic.



A Kalash woman wearing a traditional dress smiles as she celebrates 'Joshi'.

ners of their choosing "in the presence of their husbands". Another calls them "beautiful infidels", saying "anyone can go and marry any girl there". "How could that be true?" asks Luke Rehmat, a Kalash journalist. "People are systematically trying to defame the community. They are fabricating stories... when a tourist comes with such a mindset, he will try to experience [it]."

In the main Kalash village of Bumburate a hotel manager estimates that about 70 percent of Pakistani tourists visiting his establishment are young men, who often inquire about where to "find girls". According to tourists who spoke to AFP—most of whom were men travelling in groups—their primary

Afghanistan—are now one of the smallest religious minorities in Pakistan, according to Akram Hussain, the director of a local museum. A recent survey put their number at just 3,872, living in three remote valleys. "We are going to die if we are not supported," says Hussain. Kalash traditions, Hussain argues, can be expensive. Weddings and funerals require families to kill dozens of animals for the festivities, driving them into debt, forcing them to sell off land and leave their ancestral homes.

Cases of forced conversions to Islam of Kalash women have also been reported, while the increase in tourism has pushed some in the community to shun traditions like Joshi, according to several residents



A Kalash woman wearing a traditional dress knits clothes outside her house after celebrating 'Joshi'.



Kalash women wearing traditional dresses dance as they celebrate 'Joshi'.



A Kalash women wearing a traditional dress looks on as she celebrates 'Joshi'.

"Some people are using their cameras as if they were in a zoo," said local tourist guide Iqbal Shah. Known for their pale skin and light-coloured eyes, the Kalash have long claimed ancestral links to Alexander the Great's army—who conquered the region in the fourth century BC. They worship many gods, drinking alcohol is a tradition and marriages of choice are the norm—unlike in the rest of Pakistan where unions are often arranged.

However, the community is far from a liberal beacon. Members of the community often wed in their teens, with women poorly educated and expected to perform traditional roles in the home. Stories about the Kalash are nonetheless frequently fabricated, and this has been amplified in recent years by the proliferation of smartphones and social media.

'Defaming the community'

One video viewed 1.3 million times on YouTube, proclaims the Kalash "openly have sex" with part-

interest in exploring the Kalash Valley was to learn about a new culture. "We want to be part of this festival but it doesn't mean that we want to mix up with girls," says tourist Sikander Nawaz Khan Niazi from Lahore. But friction has been increasing in recent years.

In Bumburate, posters now call on visitors to seek permission from villagers before photographing and signs warn tourists not to harass women. "If they don't respect us, we don't need tourists," says Yasir Kalash, the vice president of the local hotel association. "If they respect... our culture and traditions, we must welcome [them]." Regulating tourism is a cumbersome but vital task for the Kalash, with money from the industry increasingly providing an important source of revenue for the community.

'We are going to die'

The Kalash—who once inhabited a vast territory stretching from the Himalayas in Kashmir to northern

who spoke to AFP. Others have begun wearing veils to hide their faces from the prying eyes of outsiders. "We don't wear veils as it is not our custom, but some wear them because people take pictures of them from all sides and it makes them feel ashamed," says Musarrat Ali, a high school student.

The ongoing erosion of the culture at the hands of outside forces is tragic, says Sayed Gul, an archaeologist from Bumburate. "They don't want to participate just because of these cameras and this insensitivity," says Gul. "If these things are continuously happening ... maybe in a few years, there are only tourists, there are no more Kalashis to participate and dance in the festivals." — AFP



Kalash women wearing traditional dresses celebrate 'Joshi'.



Kalash women wearing traditional dresses dance to celebrate 'Joshi'.



Kalash men and women wearing traditional clothes dance as they celebrate 'Joshi'.

Chinese artists set new records at Paris auction

Paintings by two of the "Three Musketeers" of Chinese art, Chu Teh-Chun and Zao Wou-Ki, have set new records, going for nearly 10 million euros (\$11.2 million) at a Paris auction. The abstract work "Synthese hivernale C" by Chu went for more than 5.17 million euros—five times its estimate in an Artcurial sale late Wednesday. The Chinese-born painter, who like his fellow modernist master Zao spent most of his life in France, was the first ethnic Chinese member of the French academy of fine arts. He died in Paris aged 93 in 2014. With Wu Guanzhong, the

pair are known as the "Three Musketeers" of Chinese art. Zao's work "24.1.61/62" went under the hammer for more than 4.6 million euros in the same Artcurial auction—four times what it was expected to sell for. Both paintings went for record prices for the artists outside Asia.

A triptych by Zao—"Juin-Octobre 1985"—went for \$65 million at Sotheby's Hong Kong in September. The other headliners at the Paris sale were 15 watercolors by the Spanish surrealist master Salvador Dali, which went for 1.2 million euros. They are valued individually between

20,000 and 100,000 euros (\$22,300 and \$112,000). The works, created between 1959 and 1976 for the Spanish pharmaceutical company Hoechst Iberica, were for New Year's greeting cards sent out to clients. In addition to painting the cards, Dali penned exuberant holiday wishes and put his signature to them. The works were displayed for two decades at the Dali Foundation in Figueras in his native Catalonia. — AFP



In this file photo French-Chinese painter Zao Wou-Ki (center), gestures during his induction ceremony in the painting section of the Academy of Fine Arts (Academie des Beaux-Arts), part of the five academies of the Institut des France in Paris. — AFP

Rebel leaders deported as web 'blackout' hits Sudan

KHARTOUM: Sudanese rebel leader Yasir Arman said yesterday he and two comrades had been forcibly deported from Khartoum to Juba, on the second day of a nationwide civil disobedience campaign by protesters. The alleged deportations came as digital rights group Netblocks reported "a near-total blackout" of internet coverage in Sudan, while vehicles manned by heavily armed units of the feared Rapid Support Forces (RSF) patrolled Khartoum. Speaking to an AFP reporter at a hotel after arriving in South Sudan's capital Juba, Arman said "I was deported against my will... I have not been released; I have been deported from my country."

Sudanese state television had earlier reported that Arman - together with fellow leading rebels Ismail Jalab and Mubarak Ardol - had been released from custody. "I came together with comrade Ismail Khamis Jalab and comrade Mubarak Ardol... I just want to confirm I have been deported against my will," said Arman in Juba, adding he had been well received by South Sudanese authorities. Arman said on Twitter he had been deported by "military helicopter". "I was not aware of where they were taking me. I asked them many times," Arman added, alleging that he, Jalab and Ardol had been tied up for their flight.

The three men had been detained after meeting Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Khartoum on Friday for talks aimed at reviving negotiations between Sudan's rulers and protesters. Ahmed also met on Friday with the head of Sudan's military council Abdel Fattah Burhan, "on mediation progress to bring peace and stability to Sudan", Ahmed's office tweeted yesterday afternoon. "Their discussion highlighted the way forward ... (and) both expressed hope that the current situation will be positively remedied," it added.

Arman had arrived in Khartoum in late May to take part in talks with the military council that in April toppled longtime president Omar al-Bashir, after months of protests against his 30-year-rule. But protesters remained outside army headquarters in Khartoum to demand the military council hand over to civilian rule, until they were finally dispersed early last week in a crackdown that left dozens dead.

Net outage deepens

An AFP correspondent said landline internet connections were down across the city yesterday afternoon, after mobile internet services were cut last week. The military council announced that security forces on the streets would be boosted after four people were killed in clashes on Sunday - two in Khartoum and two in Omdurman, just across the Nile river. Protesters had set up roadblocks across many areas of the capital that the ruling generals have vowed to remove in order to bring "life to normal".

Several shops, fuel stations and some branches of private banks were open in Khartoum as the civil disobedience campaign moved into a second day, an AFP correspondent who toured the capital said. Public buses were also ferrying passengers, while more vehicles and people were seen on the capital's streets than the previous day. But most parts of the capital and its key business districts remained closed as shopkeepers, traders and employees opted to remain indoors.

Those who ventured out said they had to earn their livelihood. "If I work it does not mean that I don't support the revolution," said bus driver Abdulmajid Mohamed. "I have to work to support my family or else we will have no money." The generals have blamed protesters for a deterioration in security in Khartoum and across the country. "The Alliance for Freedom and Change (umbrella protest movement) is fully responsible for recent unfortunate incidents... including blocking roads which is violating international humanitarian laws," Lieutenant General Jamaaliddine Omar said on state television late Sunday.

"The Military Council has decided to reinforce the presence of armed forces, RSF and other regular forces to help normal life return," the council member said. The RSF has been blamed by witnesses for the killings last week during the clearing of the weeks-long sit-in. The general said security forces would provide "security to isolated civilians, reopen roads and facilitate the mobility of people, public and private transport and protect markets and strategic state installations".

Some residents called for the generals and protester leaders to narrow their differences. "The two have to find



KHARTOUM: A man walks in front of closed shops in the Sudanese capital yesterday, the second day of a nationwide civil disobedience campaign called to pressure the ruling military into handing over power. — AFP

common ground because if the situation continues like this, I'm worried we will lose our country," said Issa Omar, an employee at a workshop in Khartoum. The death toll since the crackdown began on June 3 has reached 118, according to a doctors committee linked to the protesters who are pressing the military to hand over power to a civilian administration.

The health ministry, for its part, says 61 people died

nationwide in last week's crackdown, 49 of them from "live ammunition" in Khartoum. The Central Committee for Sudanese Doctors blamed forces supporting the ruling generals for the deaths on Sunday. The Sudanese Professionals Association, which first launched protests against Bashir in December, has said the disobedience campaign would continue until power is transferred to a civilian government. — AFP



ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistani president and the co-chairperson of Pakistan People's Party Asif Ali Zardari arrives for his bail appeal at Islamabad High Court yesterday. — AFP

Pak ex-president Zardari arrested on graft charges

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari was arrested yesterday after his bail application was rejected in connection with a high-profile money laundering case that saw millions allegedly siphoned out of the country. Zardari, husband of assassinated former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, served as president from 2008 until 2013 and has long been the subject of corruption allegations, and he is widely known in Pakistan as "Mr Ten Percent".

Small scuffles erupted between police and supporters of Zardari's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) outside his family's residence in Islamabad as he was taken into custody. A senior PPP official confirmed the arrest. The charges in the latest case center around allegations Zardari laundered vast sums of money through suspect bank accounts and companies. Last year, Pakistani authorities discovered several accounts in the name of poor people that had been flooded with cash, then suddenly emptied.

6 escape death for rape, murder...

Continued from Page 1

India has the death penalty for the most brutal murders and terror attacks. The last execution happened in 2015 over bombings in Mumbai in 1993. The Kathua case sparked two days of violent protests in Jammu and demonstrations in several other places across India, including in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore. The ruling right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party also drew flak after

Pakistan's Supreme Court established a commission in September to investigate the scourge, finding that at least US\$400 million had passed through "thousands of false accounts". Zardari has repeatedly dismissed allegations he had a hand in the scheme, calling the government an instrument of the powerful military and labeling Prime Minister Imran Khan the army's "blue-eyed boy". Never popular and always shrouded in controversy, Zardari - who was once jailed for 11 years for corruption - stepped down from the president's office in 2013. But he has continued to serve as co-chairman of the opposition PPP.

The arrest comes as the economy continues to spiral and discontent simmers in Pakistan following repeated devaluations of the rupee, soaring inflation, and rising utility prices. Khan, a longtime foe of Zardari, was elected prime minister last year after running a heated campaign vowing to crackdown on corruption. A former businessman and a polo-playing playboy in his younger days, Zardari swept to power in 2008 following a wave of sympathy following the killing of his wife, Benazir, a two-time premier, by Islamist militants in a suicide attack. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif is also currently behind bars, after being sentenced to seven years in prison late last year on corruption charges. — Agencies

two of its members participated in rallies in support of the accused. The protests were reminiscent of those that followed the fatal gang rape of a Delhi student on a bus in 2012 that made headlines around the world. The Supreme Court had shifted the Kathua trial to Punjab after the girl's family and their lawyer complained of death threats.

Sexual violence, including against children, remains unabated in India. Nearly 20,000 child rape cases were reported in 2016, according to official data, while a 2014 UN report said one in three rape victims was a minor. Yesterday, hundreds of police were on duty in Pathankot for the trial. Wary of new protests, security was also heavy in Kathua town and surrounding Muslim areas, although no incidents were reported. — AFP

Nearly 100 killed, 19 missing in Mali village massacre

BAMAKO, Mali: Nearly 100 people were killed in a gruesome overnight attack on a village in central Mali, in the latest violence to strike the fragile region, officials said yesterday. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the massacre, targeting a village inhabited by the Dogon community, bore the hallmarks of tit-for-tat ethnic attacks that have claimed hundreds of lives. It came less than three months after nearly 160 members of the Fulani ethnic group were slaughtered by a group identified as Dogon.

"Right now we have 95 dead civilians. The bodies are burned, we are continuing to look for others," an official in Koundou district, where the village of Sobane-Kou is located, told AFP. The government, giving a provisional toll, said 95 people had been killed, 19 were missing, numerous farm animals had been slaughtered and homes had been torched. "Armed men, suspected to be terrorists, launched a murderous attack on this peaceful village," it said in a statement.

A Malian security source at the site of the massacre said "a Dogon village has been virtually wiped out". A survivor who gave his name as Amadou Togo said "about 50 heavily armed men arrived on motorbikes and pickups". "They first surrounded the village and then attacked anyone who tried to escape was killed.

"Some people had their throats cut or were disembowelled, grain stores and cattle were torched. No one was spared - women, children, elderly people." Togo added: "We have counted 95 dead and 38 wounded, with about 20 listed as missing." The local official said the village had a population of about 300. An association of Dogon traditional hunters, called Dan Nan Ambassagou, deplored the "barbaric and vile" attack which it described as tantamount to genocide.

A brutal cycle of violence in central Mali, an ethnic mosaic, began after a predominantly Fulani jihadist group

led by preacher Amadou Koufa emerged in 2015. It started targeting the Bambara and Dogon ethnic groups, which in turn started to form "self-defense groups" of their own. The Fulani are primarily cattle breeders and traders, while the Bambara and Dogon are traditionally sedentary farmers.

On May 16, the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) announced it had recorded "at least 488 deaths" in attacks on Fulanis in the central regions of Mopti and Segou since Jan 2018. In the bloodiest raid, about 160 Fulani villagers were slaughtered on March 23 at Ogossagou, near the border with Burkina Faso, by suspected Dogon hunters. According to MINUSMA, armed Fulanis had "caused 63 deaths" among civilians in the Mopti region, also since January 2018.

"It's a shock, a tragedy," MINUSMA chief Mahamat Saleh Annadif said of the latest bloodletting, noting that it came at a time "when we are discussing the renewal of the (MINUSMA) mandate." There are currently about 14,700 troops and police deployed in Mali, which ranks as the most dangerous UN mission, with 125 peacekeepers killed in attacks since deployment in 2013. Donor countries to MINUSMA are to meet at the UN on Wednesday. A decision on renewing the force's mandate is expected by June 27.

Speaking at the UN headquarters in New York, Annadif voiced regret that the Malian authorities had not been present enough in the area to prevent such violence. Just a week earlier, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres had warned of a "high risk" of atrocities and called on the government to strengthen its response to extremist groups. "If these concerns are not addressed, there is a high risk of further escalation that could lead to the commission of atrocity crimes," he wrote in a report to the UN Security Council.

In yesterday's statement, the Malian government expressed its condolences and said "every measure will be taken to arrest and punish those responsible for this bloodshed". "Reinforcements are currently deployed in the sector and carrying out a wide-ranging search," it said in a statement. MINUSMA was established after radical Islamist and Tuareg militias seized the north of the country in 2012. — AFP

Iran warns over 'economic war'...

Continued from Page 1

and they appeared to agree on little. "We had a serious, frank and rather long discussion," Zarif said. Ahead of their meeting, Maas acknowledged the economic benefits Tehran hoped for from the deal were now "more difficult to obtain" but urged Iran to fully respect the deal. It was in Iran's "political and strategic interest to maintain this agreement and the dialogue with Europe", he said.

The nuclear deal, Maas said, is "extraordinarily important" for Europe's security and they "have made the greatest effort to meet (their) commitments". "We will not work miracles. But we are doing all we can to prevent a failure." But Iran begged to differ. "What the Europeans must do, and have done so far, has not satisfied" our interests, foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said. The US sanctions reimposed last year targeted crucial parts of Iran's economy, especially the oil and banking sectors.

"The summary of Maas' remarks: We are nothing without America and are not capable of doing anything, do not expect much from us," Abdollah Ganji, the managing director of ultra-conservative Javan daily, wrote mockingly on Telegram after the ministers' meeting. The oil embargo has hurt Iran's main supply of foreign revenues, while the banking sanctions have scared away

foreign investors and made money transfers through official channels nearly impossible for businesses.

Europe tried to respond to the US withdrawal by setting up a special trade mechanism called INSTEX that would allow legitimate trade with Iran to continue without falling foul of US sanctions, but it has yet to become operational. Iran has given Europe, China and Russia until July "to make their commitments operational". Otherwise Tehran said it would stop complying with the nuclear deal's uranium enrichment restrictions and resume building a heavy-water reactor at Arak that was shut down as part of the deal.

The Gulf has been tense for about a month over increased strain between Iran and the United States on one hand and the Islamic republic and US allies like Saudi Arabia on the other. The tensions worsened after the US military announced it was dispatching reinforcements to the Middle East in response to alleged "Iranian threats" as well as the sabotage of four ships at the entrance to the Gulf on May 12. Washington and Riyadh have accused Tehran of being behind those attacks, a charge it has dismissed as "laughable".

An international investigation found a "state actor" was likely to have been responsible for the attacks. The UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, said yesterday it was "worried about increasing tensions" over Iran's nuclear program. IAEA chief Yukiya Amano also said Iran's "production rate (of uranium) is increasing", although he was unable to give an exact figure. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu referred to the IAEA's assessment in a statement later, saying his country "will not allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons that threaten our existence and endanger the entire world". — AFP

Sports

Ferrari plan appeal after Vettel second-place Canada furore

Vettel punished for making an unsafe re-entry to the action after 48 laps

MONTREAL: Ferrari announced yesterday their intention to appeal the controversial five-second time penalty that cost Sebastian Vettel his first victory of the season in the Canadian Grand Prix. In a move that requires the Italian team formally to support their decision with new evidence within 96 hours, Ferrari kept alive the controversy that followed the stewards' mid-race penalty and resulted in a petulant demonstration of his fury afterwards by the German driver.

Vettel was punished for making an unsafe re-entry to the action after 48 laps after running off track and across a strip of grass, his move squeezing Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes towards a wall and blocking him from trying to take the lead.

Vettel went on to win the race 'on the road', but after his time penalty was applied he dropped to second and Hamilton claimed a record-equalling seventh victory in Canada. In his annoyance, Vettel launched a tirade against the race stewards, stormed away from the immediate post-race interviews, moved a number two sign from his car to Hamilton's vehicle and declared the race had been stolen from him and Ferrari.

His team chief Mattia Binotto remained calm, but defiant, saying "we won the race." Ferrari later notified the sport's ruling body, the International Motoring Federation (FIA) of their intentions and now have until Thursday to supply fresh evidence.

Hamilton, who made clear Vettel's re-entry was dangerous, later admitted if their positions had been reversed, he would have done the same. "I watched the replay," he said. "It was obviously very close. If I was

in the lead and I made a mistake and went wide, I probably would have done the same thing because it happened so quick and you're just trying to hold your position," he added.

"When I say I would do the same, I would try to squeeze him too. That's ultimately what happened." Hamilton, however, defended the existence of the rule which led to the penalty. "Say you didn't have that rule. I would have kept it lit and we would have crashed. So, one way or not, it was going to go badly," he said.

He said Vettel's move to squeeze his attack was understandable. "It's a natural instinct that you have. You're not going to go 'actually, I better pull to the left and let everybody go by'. He did block me, but, unfortunately he went off-track," he said.

"Ferrari were so strong this weekend - a really formidable force. We were lucky to be in the battle with them because they could have had a one-two if they had a front row, for example, but, luckily, I was able to stop that."

Hamilton also rejected suggestions comparing Vettel's mishap to the 2008 Belgian Grand Prix, where he was handed a post-race time penalty that gave a race win to Ferrari's Felipe Massa, the last incident of this type to decide a race.

"It was a lot different, but I do understand what it's like to lose a race and it's definitely not the way you want to win," he said. It was the 12th time a driver who 'won' a Grand Prix race was stripped of victory.

Hamilton's fifth win of the season and third in succession was also the 78th of his career and lifted him 29



MONTREAL: Lewis Hamilton of Great Britain and Mercedes GP and Sebastian Vettel of Germany and Ferrari talk with Martin Brundle on the podium during the F1 Grand Prix of Canada at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal, Canada. —AFP

points clear of Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas in the title race. Bottas finished fourth behind Charles Leclerc in the second Ferrari, the first time this season

Mercedes had failed to finish with both drivers on the podium. Bottas, however, did clock the fastest lap of the race to gain a bonus point. —AFP



Toyota Yaris WRC races to victory in first Rally Chile

TALCAHUANO: GAZOO Racing (GR) World Rally Team and driver Ott Tanak clinched their second victories of the season recently at the inaugural Rally Chile in Talcahuano during the sixth round of the 2019 FIA's World Rally Championship (WRC). Tanak completed an outstanding performance in the No. 8 Toyota Yaris WRC to secure the fastest time on the rally-ending Power Stage during the demanding 4-day event, gaining extra points to climb up to second place in the drivers' championship.



Tanak finished 1.3 seconds faster than anyone else in the Power Stage, as he and co-driver Martin Jarveoja clinched overall victory by 23.1 seconds. The result saw GR World Rally Team maintain second position in the manufacturers' championship and close the gap on the leading team to just 29 points.

Akio Toyoda, Team Chairman, commented: "I would like to congratulate Tanak and Jarveoja on their exceptional second win of the season, which took place in Chile, and thank all our fans worldwide for their support. I am very pleased to see that the team ran through all the stages flat out and stood on the top of the podium with smiles. The points earned by this big effort by all the team members under Tommi Makinen's leadership will be highly valuable later this season. Now, the WRC will move to gravel rounds in Europe. We will work hard together with one heart to help the six drivers and co-drivers and three Yaris WRC bring more good news to our fans."

Ott Tanak, Driver of the No. 8 Toyota Yaris WRC, said: "It's great to take this victory here on the first time in Chile. It was a very demanding event, and required a lot of focus to avoid mistakes. Today wasn't easy. With our rivals pushing hard behind, we had to keep going and we collected maximum points from the Power Stage. To fight back like this following the last couple of events with a perfect weekend is very positive. It was really important, especially for the team, to keep the motivation high and keep pushing, and this kind of result definitely does that. Now we are looking forward - we are back in the fight."

The WRC returns to Europe for Rally Portugal from 30 May to 2 June. Based in Matosinhos near Porto in the north of the country, the event features classic stages on sandy and rocky roads. Grip can be hard to find on the soft roads, while rocks may be exposed and deep ruts can form on the second pass, making for challenging driving conditions and an exciting contest.

McIlroy captures Canadian Open with career-tying 61

OTTAWA: Rory McIlroy blitzed the field at the Canadian Open on Sunday, firing a scintillating nine-under 61 to run away with the title by a massive seven strokes less than a week before the US Open.

McIlroy, who flirted with a 59, put on a golf clinic, rolling in nine birdies, one eagle and two bogeys for a 22-under 258 total and a dominating victory over runner-ups Shane Lowry of Ireland and American Webb Simpson.

"It was awesome," said McIlroy, who claimed his sixth career national open title in his Canadian debut. "I said at the start that I wanted to be aggressive and play with freedom. This will give me so much confidence. This is a huge tournament and I am so proud of myself."

"I am going to take a lot from this and I am so excited for next week (US Open)." The four-time major championship winner tied his career best when he shot a 61 in the third round of the Wells Fargo Championship in 2015. His previous best closing score to win a tournament was a 62 at the Quail Hollow Championship in 2010.

McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, began the day with a share of the lead with Simpson and Matt Kuchar at 13-under at the Hamilton Golf and Country Club in Hamilton, Ontario. He was making his Canadian Open debut and improved with each round, shooting 67, 66, 64, before opening the birdie floodgates on Sunday.

Lowry, who shot a closing round of 67, and Simpson, who shot a 68, finished at 15-under 265, two shots ahead of fourth place finishers Brandt Snedeker (69) and Matt Kuchar (70). The four-time major winner McIlroy was part of a strong field at the Canadian Open, which this year serves as the final tune up before the US Open. —AFP

Laver says Barty 'tough to beat' at Wimbledon

SYDNEY: Australian tennis legend Rod Laver says Ashleigh Barty will be "a tough lady to beat" at Wimbledon in July as he and fellow great Margaret Court heaped praise on the new French Open champion.

Barty's 6-1, 6-3 thrashing of Czech teenager Marketa Vondrousova in the Roland Garros final propelled her to number two in the world and Laver said she had all the attributes to win on grass, a surface she favours over clay.

"There are some other big girls out there that are big servers and have good ground strokes but Ash is tenacious, has a good drop shot, good angles, good anticipation," Laver, who was in Paris to witness the final, told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"I really think she'll be a tough lady to beat." Since famously taking a break from tennis late in 2014 to play professional cricket, Barty has returned with a new focus and Laver said it was clear her confidence was much higher. "You could see her concentration has been much better. Sometimes before, when she missed something she would have a 'hang-dog' look about her if she missed a forehand," said the 80-year-old, who won two French Open titles among his 11 Grand Slams.

"She would drop away and maybe think, 'This game is too tough to play'. But now everything she hits is perfect." Barty was the first Australian woman to win in Paris since the last of Court's five singles titles there in 1973 — against Chris Evert—and the 24-time Grand Slam winner said she wasn't surprised at her success.

"I've watched most of her matches throughout the year and I've seen the improvement. She's got a very good all-round game," Court told reporters. "She can hit through the ball. She can slice, volley, she's got a good serve and smashes well. There's an all-round game. There's not a weakness there."

And in an era when Australia is more used to the



PARIS: Australia's Ashleigh Barty kisses the trophy Suzanne Lenglen after winning against Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova at the end of the women's singles final match on day fourteen of The Roland Garros 2019 French Open tennis tournament in Paris on June 8, 2019. — AFP

antics of Nick Kyrgios and Bernard Tomic, she also praised the 23-year-old for her "wonderful temperament." "She is a very good role model. She is good for our nation. I think she is very refreshing."

Meanwhile, five-times Wimbledon champion Venus Williams will play in the Birmingham grasscourt event later this month after accepting a wildcard. The American, 38, has never played in the competition before but will join French Open champion Ashleigh Barty and world number one Naomi Osaka in the draw as the build-up to Wimbledon continues.

"I'm really excited to be playing in Birmingham for the first time. I always love playing on grass in front of British crowds and have heard wonderful things about the tournament," the seven-times Grand Slam singles champion said.

Czech Petra Kvitova, a double Wimbledon champion, is also playing. Spain's former Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza has withdrawn because of a left leg injury. The tournament runs from June 15-22. — Agencies

Rask spoils Blues' party as Bruins dominate to keep playoff hopes alive

LOS ANGELES: Brad Marchand had a goal and an assist and Tuukka Rask stopped 28 shots as the Boston Bruins forced a game seven in the Stanley Cup finals with a 5-1 win over the St. Louis Blues on Sunday.

Marchand scored on the powerplay and David Pastrnak also had a goal and an assist for the Bruins who leveled the best of seven series at 3-3. The winner-take-all game seven is Wednesday at Boston. "The whole hockey world loves a game seven. May the best team win," Boston coach Bruce Cassidy said.

Marchand's goal snapped a mini scoreless streak on the powerplay for the visiting Bruins, who spoiled the Blues' Stanley Cup party plans to improve to 8-3 on the road in the postseason. Game six was St. Louis' turn to struggle with the man advantage as they went zero-for-five in front of a sold out crowd of 18,800 at Enterprise Arena.

The Bruins have been in this situation before. In the opening round against Toronto they were down 3-2 with game six on the road. They rallied to win the series in seven games. A victory by the Blues Sunday night would have ended the longest wait in NHL history — 51 seasons—for a team to win its first championship.

But they still stand on the cusp of history heading into game seven. They need one more win to complete an improbable turnaround after a season in which they were in last place in the NHL in early January.

The Blues playoff run has taken the city by storm. People who couldn't afford the \$2,000 for a scalper ticket started lining up four hours before the opening puck drop on nearby Market Street for a watch party.

"Listen, if you told me four months ago we would be in the finals in game seven, I think I would take it," said Blues coach Craig Berube. "We have been a good road team. We have won twice up there in this series so we are a confident group."

The excitement seemed to get the best of the team and the city earlier on Sunday, when the Blues mistakenly revealed some info on their victory parade plans in a letter that club owner Tom Stillman sent to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Stillman wrote the letter as part of a package of congratulatory advertisements and notices which were mistakenly posted on the newspaper website Sunday before being taken down. In the letter Stillman said the victory parade would take place on Market Street.

Rask was Boston's best player Sunday making several clutch saves, but none bigger than one he combined on with defenceman Charlie McAvoy in the second period. With Boston holding a slim 1-0 lead, defenceman McAvoy prevented a goal by batting a fluttering puck out of mid air into the back of Rask, who reached behind to try to trap it in his jersey. Rask then glided to the far right side of his crease so it didn't drop down into the goal.

Brandon Carlo, Karson Kuhlman and Zdeno Chara also scored for the Bruins. Ryan O'Reilly, who is one of the frontrunners for the Stanley Cup MVP award if St. Louis win, scored the lone goal and rookie netminder Jordan Binnington made 27 saves.

"We're confident," said O'Reilly. "We are a great road team. Maybe that's our story, we have to get it done on the road." —AFP

Sports

Hardik Pandya is a key man for India's bid to win WCup: Srikanth

'Sandpapergate' ghost follows Australia into World Cup

LONDON: Krishnamachari Srikanth says Hardik Pandya is a key man in India's bid to win the World Cup after the all-rounder's "game-changing" innings against Australia. Pandya 25, was moved up to fourth in the India batting order at the Oval on Sunday and smashed 48 runs off 27 balls as India reached an imposing 352-8, a total that proved beyond the defending champions.

"The key innings for me was Hardik Pandya," said former India captain Srikanth. "His knock made all the difference because it ensured India set 352 instead of 312. The rate he scored at added so much impetus and carried India to a greater score. It was probably the game-changing moment of the day."

"They promoted Pandya to four and that gave him great confidence to take the game away from Australia. They lost control when he was in the middle." Srikanth said an in-form Pandya was a huge boost for India in a tournament in which favourites England can call on several all-rounders capable of turning the game in their favour. "Pandya is a weapon Australia don't have-an all-rounder of the highest quality. England have a box of them, while we have Pandya in what is probably the most important position in the team," he said.

"He did not take wickets but that did not matter, as Jasprit Bumrah took three. He is at the top of his game and loves it here. I expect him to end up with so many wickets at the end of the tournament." India, who beat Australia by 36 runs, have won their first two group matches to cement their billing as one of the leading contenders to win the World Cup.

"You can't deny it, this has been an absolutely fabulous start for India," Srikanth said. "The batsmen are scoring runs, the bowlers are taking wickets and we even got two run-outs against Australia in a result that suggests everything is right inside the camp."

Next up for Virat Kohli's side is a clash with 2015 run-

ners-up New Zealand at Trent Bridge on Thursday and Srikanth warned the Indians not to underestimate the Black Caps' powerful seam attack. "It's now full steam ahead to New Zealand and that will also be a very tough match. I think New Zealand's bowlers are a step up on Australia's and are likely to be a handful," he said. Sunday's defeat by India not only broke Australia's 10-match winning streak but also confirmed that last year's ball-tampering scandal is not forgotten and has followed the reigning champions to the World Cup in England.

The fiasco left devastation in its wake in Australia where heads rolled, sponsors withdrew and the team culture was flayed.

Steve Smith and David Warner, key protagonists in the Cape Town scandal, served one-year bans, only returning to international cricket at the World Cup.

However, the team looked scarred at the Oval, where skipper Aaron Finch, elevated after Smith was stripped of the captaincy, had to rebut suggestions of more ball-tampering. Social media went into overdrive after video footage showed spinner Adam Zampa putting his hand into his pocket before rubbing the ball prior to bowling the 24th over.

"I haven't seen the photos, but I know that he has hand warmers in his pocket," Finch said after his team's first defeat in its third match at the tournament. "I honestly haven't seen them, so I can't comment too much on it. But I know for a fact that he has hand warmers every game."

A teary-eyed Smith had sought forgiveness for the scandal that took place on his watch, but opposing fans are clearly not ready to forget. Both Smith and Warner have been jeered since they landed in England and the former captain had a particularly tough time fielding near the Oval's Vauxhall End boundary when a section of the predominantly Indian crowd started chanting "Cheater!



LONDON: India's Hardik Pandya fields a ball during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between India and Australia at The Oval in London. — AFP

Cheater!". India captain Virat Kohli gestured to the fans to stop booing and later apologised to Smith for their behaviour. Smith top-scored for Australia with a near run-a-ball 69 but Warner's 56, at a strike rate of just 66.66, nearly 30 below his ODI career average, suggested he was still carrying some scars.

Known for his explosive strokeplay, the former vice captain, who had elbow surgery in January, has been nearly unrecognisable in his three innings so far, playing

the role of accumulator rather than aggressor.

Finch confirmed Warner's slow batting was not part of any game plan, team or individual, but attributed it to India's tight bowling. "I think they bowled really well early. They bowled nice and straight, back of the length, where the ball was just skidding quite low to start with," he said.

"Their bowling plans were pretty simple but really effective on a wicket like that." — Agencies

India, Australia captains call for action over 'unfair' bails

LONDON: India captain Virat Kohli and Australia skipper Aaron Finch joined forces to condemn the "unfair" bail controversy that threatens to ruin the ongoing World Cup. Australia opener David Warner avoided being bowled early in his side's unsuccessful run-chase at the Oval on Sunday when he deflected Jasprit Bumrah's delivery onto the wicket via his boot.

Not for the first time in this tournament, the ball struck the stumps but failed to dislodge the bails, meaning Warner earned an unexpected reprieve. It was the fifth incident in the tournament of the 'zing' bails, which contain lights that flash when the ball hits the wicket, failing to come off when hit.

In the West Indies' game against Australia on Thursday, Chris Gayle was saved when the bails stayed on despite his stump being clipped by a 91 mph (146 kph) Mitchell Starc delivery. Other high-profile instances included South Africa's Quinton de Kock

being reprieved against England in the tournament's opening game and Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne surviving against New Zealand.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) have defended using the 'zing' bails, claiming they are lighter than the standard wooden ones normally used at all levels of cricket. But Warner, who was on one at the time of his escape, went on to score 56, and the issue is becoming a huge talking point, with former England captains Michael Vaughan and Nasser Hussain calling on the ICC to do something about an issue which threatens to turn a freak occurrence into a routine event. Although India won the match by 36 runs, Warner's escape could have been a turning point and Kohli made it clear the situation was unacceptable. "Definitely. This is not something you expect at international level," he told reporters. "The technology is great. It's very precise when you make something happen with the stumps."

"But you literally have to smash the stumps really hard to knock them out. That's me as a batsman saying that. "These are fast bowlers, these are not medium-pace bowlers. "We checked and the stump was not knocked in very hard so I don't know what's going on. Is the stump too thick or too rigid?"

"No team will like to see that, if you bowl a good ball and you don't get a guy out. I haven't seen that happen so many times in the past." Finch's team were beneficiaries of the latest bail incident, but that did not stop the

Australia captain from also voicing his concerns.

BAIL BLAME

Asked if it was wrong the bails could effectively decide a major match, Finch said: "Yeah. I think so. We were on the right end of it today, but I think going forward it is a bit unfair at times. "It hit the stumps pretty hard. It does seem to be happening more and more, which is unfortunate."

"I'm not sure what they can do. I don't know how much lighter they can make the bails. "You would hate to see something like that happen in a World Cup semi-final or final when you have done the hard work to set up the batsman."

Finch had to defuse another potential controversy after Australia spinner Adam Zampa faced allegations of ball-tampering. Zampa was pictured during the match putting his hand into his pocket and then rubbing the ball several times.

The incident came just a year after Australia stars Warner and Steve Smith, as well as team-mate Cameron Bancroft were banned for their roles in a ball-tampering scheme during a Test in South Africa.

On this occasion, Finch insisted Zampa was using hand-warmers he had put in his pocket, as he apparently does for every match. "I haven't seen the photos, so I can't comment on them. I know for a fact he has hand warmers in his pocket. He has them in every single game he plays," Finch said. — AFP

England's Buttler 'responding well' after hip injury

LONDON: England's Jos Buttler is "responding well" to treatment on a hip injury but the star batsman still has to prove his fitness in time for Friday's World Cup match against the West Indies. Buttler suffered a heavily bruised right hip while hitting a six during England's 106-run win over Bangladesh on Saturday.

The 28-year-old, one of the World Cup's most destructive batsmen, was visibly hampered for the remainder of his innings of 64 in Cardiff. Jonny Bairstow took over Buttler's wicket-keeping duties when he was unable to come out for the Bangladesh run-chase.

"Jos sustained heavy bruising on his right hip during the match against Bangladesh," a statement from the England and Wales Cricket Board said yesterday. "He is responding well to treatment and will be reassessed later this week."

The England squad reconvene tomorrow for two days of practice in Southampton, with Buttler hoping to take part to show he is ready for the hosts' fourth group game against the West Indies.

"We anticipate he will train with the rest of the squad at the Hampshire Bowl on Wednesday ahead of the match against West Indies on Friday," the statement said. England captain Eoin Morgan suggested after the Bangladesh match that there would be no temptation to gamble with Buttler's fitness with so many matches still to play.

Tournament favourites England have won two of their first three group matches as the hosts bid to win the World Cup for the first time. "We'll use every day as much as we can to try to get him back on the park, but if he is a risk going into the next game, it might not be worth it," Morgan said. — AFP

S Africa v West Indies WCup match rained off

SOUTHAMPTON: The World Cup match between South Africa and the West Indies was abandoned yesterday after persistent heavy rain in Southampton, with both sides earning a point each.

Earlier, West Indies paceman Sheldon Cottrell reduced Faf du Plessis's team to 29 for two before rain stopped play. "Very disap-

pointing, but you can't control the weather. We didn't get close to a game," Du Plessis said.

The West Indies are back in Southampton on Friday to play England and skipper Jason Holder hopes all-rounder Andre Russell will be fit to face the hosts after missing Monday's game with a knee injury.

"We are hoping he pulls up alright. I guess it is a blessing this game is over and we can look forward to the game against England," Holder said. South Africa, desperately needing a win after defeats in their first three matches of the tournament in England and Wales, lost the toss and were put in to bat under threatening skies. — AFP

Yuvraj retires from international game

MUMBAI: Yuvraj Singh, India's middle-over batting lynchpin in two World Cup triumphs, retired from international cricket with immediate effect yesterday although he will look to play on in Twenty20 leagues around the world.

The 37-year-old all-rounder, accompanied by his wife and mother, told reporters of his decision at a city hotel close to the Wankhede Stadium where India lifted their last 50-overs World Cup title in 2011.

"After almost 17 years of international cricket on and off, I have decided to move on," he said after being reduced to tears by a video of the highlights of his career.

"Cricket has given me everything and that's the reason why I am standing here today. It's been a love-hate relationship with the sport in retrospect."

Yuvraj, who played the last of his 304 one-day internationals two years ago, was a key cog in India's World Twenty20 triumph in 2007 and was player-of-the-tournament at the World Cup four years later.

In his heyday, Yuvraj was one of the cleanest strikers of the ball in the game-as England's Stuart Broad discovered when he was bludgeoned for six sixes in one over during the 2007 World Twenty20.

That was one of the highlights of his career, Yuvraj said, along with scoring his first test century against Pakistan at Lahore in 2004 and the 2011 World Cup triumph.

His lowest point, he added, came in the World Twenty20 final of 2014 when he scored 11 runs off 21 balls and was widely blamed for India's six-wicket loss to Sri Lanka in Dhaka.

Yuvraj revealed that his first love had been roller-skating and he only reluctantly played cricket because his father, one-test bowler Yograj Singh, would not let him take up any other sport.

"FUN CRICKET"

Part of the victorious Mumbai Indians squad in the recently completed Indian Premier League, Yuvraj played in only four matches during the 2019 campaign.

That would be his last foray in the IPL, he confirmed, but he would seek release from the Indian board to play in other, lower profile, Twenty20 leagues.

"At this age I can manage some kind of fun cricket," he added.

"I am going to go and enjoy my life, it has been too stressful just thinking about my international career, performing in big tournaments like IPL."

"Hopefully I can just enjoy myself. Obviously with the BCCI's permission I would love to go and play this year. Next year I don't know."

Yuvraj made an emotional return to the game in 2012 after a lengthy fight with a rare germ cell cancer in his lungs and played the last of his 40 tests that same year. He scored 1,900 runs in the longest format of the game after making his debut against New Zealand in 2003 with three hundreds-all against Pakistan-and 11 half-centuries. — Reuters

Pakistan have no need to fear Australia: Hafeez

TAUNTON: Veteran batsman Mohammad Hafeez has urged his side to take the confidence from their win over hosts England into their next World Cup match against champions Australia. The 38-year-old was Pakistan's saviour in their sensational 14-run win over England in Nottingham, riding his luck on the way to a match-turning 84 off 62 balls.

That helped Pakistan post a challenging total of 348-8 and set up a confidence-boosting win after they flopped badly in their opening seven-wicket defeat by the West Indies. "I think all 10 teams are beatable," Hafeez told AFP on Sunday. "If you look at England they were playing top cricket and people were thinking it would be hard to beat them."

Hafeez, speaking before Australia suffered a 36-run loss to India at the Oval on Sunday, added: "But all teams are beatable ... if you talk of our next opponent (Australia) they are also playing very good cricket but they too can be defeated."

Pakistan, who face the title-holders at Taunton on Wednesday, have a dismal recent record against Australia they've won just one of the last 14 one-day internationals between the teams dating back to October 2014.

Australia—who have won four of the last five World Cups-completed a 5-0 whitewash of Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates in March, albeit Pakistan rested seven of their top players.

"Yes, we don't have a very good record against Australia because they play tough cricket but every day is a new day," said Hafeez. "This is a World Cup and we now have momentum after our win over England."

Pakistan were left to rue persistent rain in Bristol on Friday, which led to a no-result washout in their match against Sri Lanka with both teams receiving a point. "Yes, that was frustrating but you cannot do much about the weather and now we have moved on. But I am sure when we play again we will put up the same game that we played against England," Hafeez promised.

Hafeez said Pakistan's remarkable turnaround in their first two games—they were bowled out for a paltry 105 by the West Indies in Nottingham—was down to acknowledging their mistakes. "I think we realised that we played a very bad game and we gave confidence to each other and convinced each other that we can win and that positive thinking helped bringing the change," said Hafeez, a veteran of 212 ODIs.

Their win over England, who defeated them 4-0 shortly before the start of the World Cup, ended Pakistan's sequence of 11 consecutive defeats since losing the fifth and final one-dayer against South Africa in January.

"Yes, we had been losing but we were playing good cricket," Hafeez explained. "The best thing about the England win was that everyone contributed. "Even Hasan Ali, who didn't get a wicket, but his last three overs were good and brought us back," said Hafeez of the medium-pace who finished with 0-66 in 10 overs. "When you play like that you get confidence and momentum." — AFP

Sports

Portugal defeat Netherlands to win first Nations League

Ronaldo still hungry for more glory with Portugal

PORTO: Portugal added the inaugural Nations League title to their Euro 2016 triumph as Goncalo Guedes's strike on the hour won an underwhelming final 1-0 against the Netherlands in Porto on Sunday.

The Dutch defensive pairing of Virgil van Dijk and Matthijs de Ligt largely kept Cristiano Ronaldo quiet, but Valencia winger Guedes proved the match winner as his shot had too much power for Jasper Cillessen in the Netherlands goal.

"Thank god things have gone well for the national team in recent years. Portugal has won important things like Euro 2016 and now the League of Nations," said Ronaldo.

"It may seem like an easy job but it's hard, it takes a lot of dedication and willingness. I think the players deserve to be congratulated." Portugal had the advantage of an extra day's rest and not being forced to extra time against Switzerland in their semi-final as the Dutch were in seeing off England on Thursday.

And the hosts looked the fresher throughout with Ronald Koeman's men jaded at the end of a long season. "If we were tired I don't know, but we were not good enough," admitted Koeman.

"They defended well and were very compact in their game, but you have to be better with the ball and we were not." The match had been billed as a showdown between Ronaldo and Van Dijk but with the Dutch captain again rock solid at the back, Portugal's main threat came from midfield with Bernardo Silva rightfully winning player of the tournament.

"I'm very happy, very proud. It's my first title with my country," said Silva, who also won an English domestic treble with Manchester City this season. "Thank you to the Portuguese people, what a night for us, what a night for the country!"

Silva provided the one true moment of quality to decide the game. He broke through the Dutch defence and then picked out Guedes, who bravely ignored playing in Ronaldo to drill a low shot past Cillessen himself.

"If you want to win you have to play well, and if Portugal won we had to play well, whether it was handsome or not," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos. The Netherlands have made huge strides in just over a year since Koeman took charge after missing out on even qualifying for the last two tournaments.

After overcoming world champions France and Germany in the group stages, Koeman's men also outclassed England in the semi-finals.

However, unlike in midweek when Frenkie de Jong dominated the midfield against the English, Holland's latest Barcelona-bound star was unable to seize control of the game and their lack of a top-class striker left the Dutch toothless up front.

"We've made a lot of progress. We have to be very proud of ourselves; now disappointment is in our heads but we have to keep the heads up," said Van Dijk.

"It's been a good season but hopefully next season is going to be even better. That's the only thing I'm striving for," Cristiano Ronaldo insisted he has no immediate plans to retire from international football after helping Portugal lift the inaugural Nations League on Sunday. Ronaldo, 34, was a peripheral figure as Goncalo Guedes's goal won an underwhelming final against the Netherlands 1-0 in Porto.

But after sitting out the group stage of the Nations League on a hiatus from international football, Ronaldo played a huge part in getting his country to the final by scoring a hat-trick in Wednesday's semi-final against Switzerland.

And with a host of exciting young talent, led by Manchester City's Bernardo Silva, who picked up player of the tournament, Ronaldo is keen to hang around for the chance at more international glory as Portugal look to defend their European Championship title next year.

"Portugal has won important things like Euro 2016 and now the Nations League. It may seem like an easy job but it's hard, it takes a lot of dedication and willingness," Ronaldo told Portuguese TV station RTP.



PORTO: Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo raises the trophy as he celebrates with teammates winning the UEFA Nations League final football match between Portugal and The Netherlands at the Dragao Stadium in Porto. — AFP

"As long as I have the strength and motivation, I will continue to represent the colours of Portugal.

"When I am with the national team I feel like at home."

Victory was especially sweet for Ronaldo as the only surviving member of the Portuguese side beaten on home soil by Greece in the final of Euro 2004. — AFP

NZ's keeper Nayler has World Cup goal

BORDEAUX: New Zealand goalkeeper Erin Nayler is hopeful that the Ferns can do enough at the World Cup in France to help the women's game grow in a country where rugby dominates and football often struggles for media attention.

"It's a difficult one because rugby is so popular in New Zealand and everyone follows that, but for the youth, women's football is the biggest sport," Nayler tells AFP. "I think over the next few years it will grow and I think with this World Cup, hopefully it will get some more exposure and continue to grow and maybe be one of the biggest sports in New Zealand."

Nayler was speaking in Bordeaux, at the French club she joined in 2017 after previously being on the books at Lyon, Europe's dominant side. This, then, is a home World Cup for the 27-year-old, who did not take to the field for the Ferns in 2011 in Germany but played every

minute for her country in Canada four years ago.

Established as her country's number one, she believes the standard of the French league has helped her progress as a player. Bordeaux finished fourth in the just-completed season, albeit a long way behind champions Lyon and Paris Saint-Germain in second.

"The league is very competitive, every team is strong," she says. "I think as a goalkeeper playing against some of the best players in the world at Lyon and PSG is very important for my development and for my preparation for the World Cup."

What of this World Cup? New Zealand are in a tough Group E along with European champions the Netherlands, Canada and Cameroon. They kick off their campaign against the Dutch in the northern port city of Le Havre today, and Nayler hopes the Ferns can make a bigger impression than four years ago, when they finished bottom of their group winning a game.

On that occasion they started off with a 1-0 defeat against the Dutch, but this time Nayler says the team are aiming for the knockout stage.

"We played the Netherlands at the last World Cup as well, so we know them quite well, they are a very

strong team, they have a lot of strong players. "At the last World Cup we narrowly lost to them by one goal, but I think if we play well we can get a result against them. We just have to show up and perform well on the day." The team have never made it beyond the group stage at a World Cup, but a 1-0 friendly win away to one of the pre-tournament favourites, England, just before they set off for France hinted at their capabilities.

The Scot, Tom Sermanni-formerly coach of Orlando Pride—took over as coach late last year and led the team to victory at the OFC Nations Cup. "We have had a difficult build-up, we have changed coach three times in the last two years, so it's been a little bit of a rough ride," Nayler admitted.

"Getting out of the group would be the goal." Nayler, a former molecular biology student, is also confident that the month-long tournament can be a turning point for the women's game as a whole. "I think it will be really interesting, I think women's football has grown a lot over the last four years since the last World Cup and I think, being in Europe as well, there will be a lot of support and I think a lot of the French will be behind it," she says. —AFP

Brazil routs Honduras 7-0 in Copa tuneup

LOS ANGELES: Philippe Coutinho helped Brazil prepare for a Copa America without Neymar after 10-man Honduras were comprehensively thrashed 7-0 in Porto Alegre on Sunday. The Paris St-Germain superstar will miss the tournament on home soil which starts on Friday after injuring his ankle against Qatar last Wednesday.

But with Barcelona's Coutinho providing an assist and a penalty strike and the likes of Richarlison and Gabriel Jesus also impressing by getting on the scoresheet against the outclassed Hondurans, who had Romell Quioto red carded in the first half.

Jesus and Richarlison, who both scored against the Qatari's in Brasilia, were particularly lively once again along with the excellent Coutinho to prove the Selecao still have plenty of options in attack despite Neymar sitting on the sidelines.

Brazil made three changes from the side which beat Qatar - Ajax star David Neres was brought in to replace Neymar while Liverpool's Champions League winning keeper Alisson Becker and PSG's Thiago Silva also started.

The five-time world champions are unbeaten in nine games since reaching the World Cup quarter-finals in Russia last summer. Honduras, meanwhile, head for the Gold Cup reborn under new manager Fabian Coito - since his arrival in February, the Central American side have managed draws against Ecuador and Paraguay.

They fell behind, however, on six minutes and were left chasing shadows for the remainder of a chastening 90 minutes. Brilliant work from Alves caused panic in the visitor's defence and Manchester City forward Jesus was on hand to head home.

And just seven minutes later Coutinho curled in a dangerous corner which was expertly headed in by Silva. Now the challenge for Brazil was to keep their foot on the accelerator rather than easing off as they did against Qatar.

Injury woes, however, continued to frustrate when Arthur, the Barcelona midfielder, was forced off on 31 minutes following a poor, two-footed challenge which saw Honduras midfielder Quioto receive a straight red.

Arthur was replaced by Napoli's Allan to win his fourth cap but with the Hondurans down to 10 men, the game was effectively over as a contest. Richarlison, who impressed in the first-half, was brought down in the area on 36 minutes allowing Coutinho to make it three from the penalty spot with his 14th international goal before twice being denied by the post in the space of a few minutes.

Everton's Richarlison remained a menace in the second-half and headed across for Jesus to make it 4-0 just after the re-start. Neres scored a wonderful individual goal on 56 minutes to open his own account for the national team before a cool finish from substitute Roberto Firmino made it six of the best for the Samba stars. Richarlison scored the goal his performance deserved with 20 minutes remaining. Brazil's Copa America campaign starts on June 14 against Bolivia. —AFP

Lieke Martens hoping to fulfil Cruyff's World Cup dream

BARCELONA: After starring in the Netherlands side that won Euro 2017, Lieke Martens has her sights set on this year's World Cup as she dreams of winning a prize that always eluded her illustrious compatriot, Johan Cruyff.

The discreet 26-year-old might not say so herself, but she is one of the stars of the women's game. Quick and powerful, the forward was thrust into the public eye with her performances two years ago, as the Netherlands won the European Championship on home soil.

She wowed observers by pulling off a 'Cruyff turn', the skill made so famous by the great man himself in the 1970s, and scored in the 4-2 win over Denmark in the final. Named player of the tournament, she then joined Barcelona from Rosengard. On the back of that, Martens—who has already won over 100 caps for her country—was named UEFA's female player of the year for 2017, going on stage to collect her award alongside Cristiano Ronaldo.

She also won the FIFA Best Player prize for that same, memorable year. As she later admitted: "My life changed radically after the Euro." There are certain similarities with the late Cruyff in the way she plays, and there is also the Barcelona connection—Cruyff played for Barca before revolutionising the club in his time as coach at the Camp Nou.

"I have a lot of respect for Cruyff," she said in a recent interview with AFP. "What he has done, he changed a lot. He changed things at Barca and he also changed a lot of things in Holland, it's amazing what he has done for football," added Martens, who is also studying a Masters in football business at the Johan Cruyff Institute.

Martens needed time to adapt after arriving in Catalonia, where she has also had some fitness problems, but she quickly settled into the Barcelona way of playing, a style that is Cruyff's legacy.

"How we play for the national team, 4-3-3, is like how we want to play at Barca," she said. "I think the girls (at Barcelona) are more technical than we are in the national team. We are more patient at Barca but in the national team we want to play sometimes more vertical."

In the club season just finished, the Catalans finally saw their ambitious recruitment policy pay dividends as they reached the Champions League final, although they were beaten 4-1 by Lyon. —AFP



NICE: England's forward Nikita Parris (R) celebrates after scoring a goal during the France 2019 Women's World Cup Group D football match between England and Scotland, at the Nice Stadium in Nice, southeastern France. — AFP

Goal-scorer Parris puts spring in England's step

NICE: England coach Phil Neville did not hold back in his praise for Nikita Parris after the forward was named player of the match in her side's 2-1 win over Scotland at the Women's World Cup on Sunday.

The 25-year-old scored England's opening goal from the penalty spot and tormented the Scottish defence from the right flank as the Lionesses got their campaign off to an ideal start in Nice.

"Nikita is the example of the work that England have done, that Manchester City have done, and what Nikita herself has applied over the last 16 months," said Neville, who became coach in early 2018.

Parris looks ready to make a big impact at the competition after her prolific form in the Women's Super League (WSL) for City secured a move to Champions League winners Lyon.

"We have seen a player develop from being a really, really good WSL player, to signing for the best team in the world in Lyon, scoring goals in the WSL, making an impact in the big games on the big occasions," said Neville.

"She is someone that has still got another five or 10 percent left in her," he added as he called the forward from Liverpool "a special player". One highlight of Parris's display came when she nutmegged Scotland defender Nicola

Docherty in her own half.

It was a difficult day for Docherty, whose handball gave Parris the chance to open the scoring before Ellen White made it 2-0. Claire Emslie got a goal back, but England held on despite the rocky finish.

"To finish the last 20 minutes like we did, I think it was actually the best thing for us, to keep us on our toes. It means that we have still got lots to do," insisted Neville, whose team play Argentina next in Le Havre.

The former Manchester United and Everton player is hoping there will be a bigger England support there after a rather underwhelming turnout on Sunday, with little over 13,000 fans in a stadium which holds more than twice that.

Nevertheless, he called his first World Cup match in charge "an unbelievable occasion". "I think everybody concerned, Scotland and England, has got to be really proud that we are taking part in something really special."

Neville's major concern now is getting Millie Bright fit to face Argentina on Friday after the defender came off with a shoulder injury. He hopes to have Demi Stokes and Barcelona forward Toni Duggan back too.

Meanwhile, Scotland coach Shelley Kerr took comfort from the way her team fought back in the second half in their first ever World Cup finals game. She will now hope to take something from their next match against Japan in Rennes. Another defeat there will make qualifying for the last 16 an uphill struggle. "I think the big thing for us now is that we need to recover because that was a tough, tough game, and we are going to face a tough Japanese team as well," she said.

"It is going to be a different type of game against Japan, but I was really pleased with our second-half performance. There were lots of positives." — AFP

25 Laver says Barty 'tough to beat' at Wimbledon

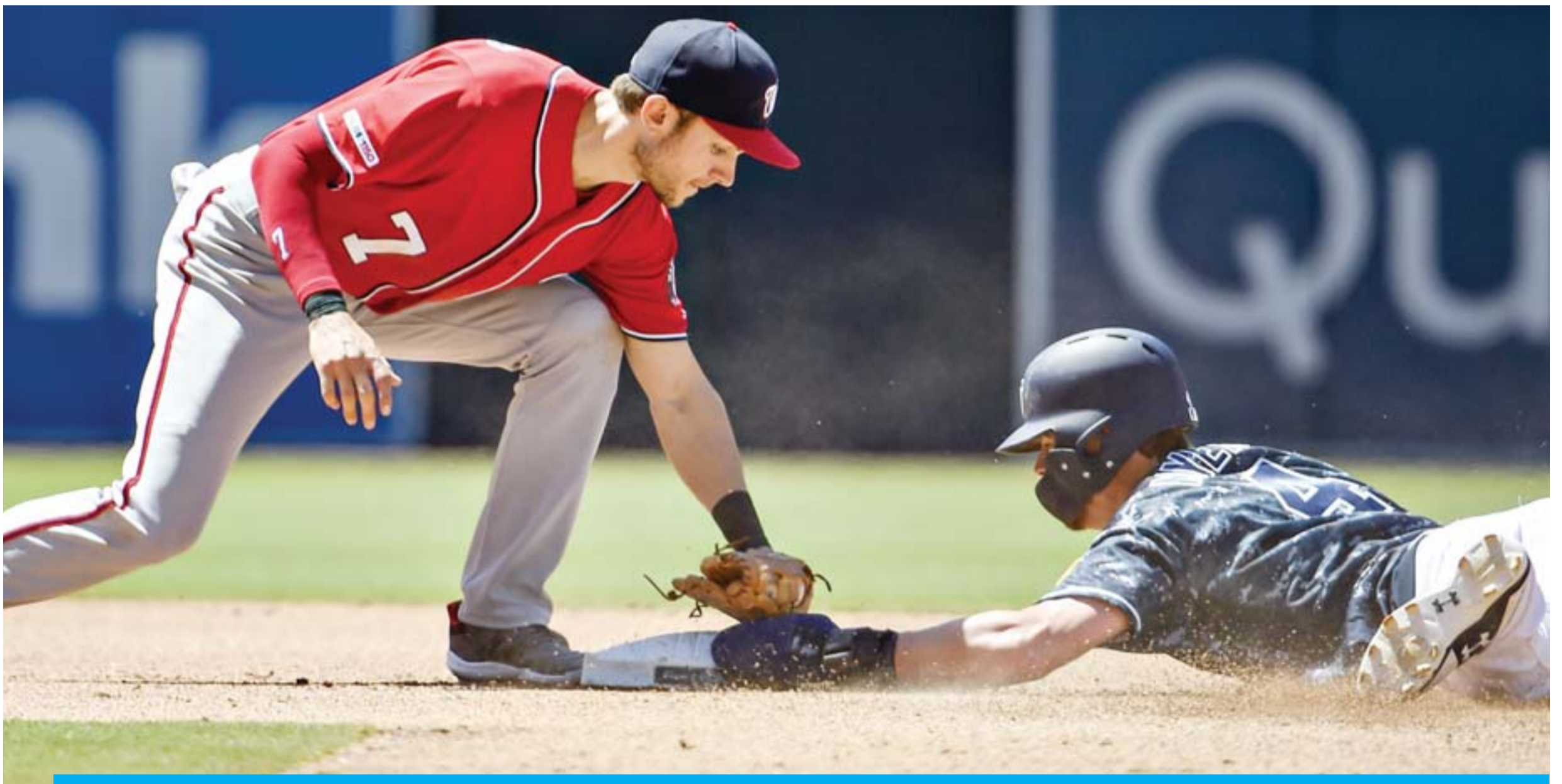
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Nationals use 4 HRs to subdue Padres

Muncy's HR stands up as Dodgers blank Giants 1-0



SAN DIEGO: Wil Myers #4 of the San Diego Padres steals second base ahead of the tag of Trea Turner #7 of the Washington Nationals during the fifth inning of a baseball game at Petco Park in San Diego, California. — AFP

SAN DIEGO: Pinch hitter Howie Kendrick, Trea Turner, Adam Eaton and Anthony Rendon connected on four consecutive eighth-inning home runs off San Diego reliever Craig Stammen on Sunday afternoon to break a tie and lead the visiting Washington Nationals to a 5-2 victory over the Padres. The four homers came in a span of seven pitches with one out in the eighth. It was the second time in Nationals history that players had connected on four straight home runs, the first being on July 27, 2017, against Milwaukee. Sunday marked the ninth time in major league history that a team hit four consecutive homers. The Nationals are the only team to do it twice. The Padres are the only team to twice give up four straight homers, also doing so against the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2006. Kendrick's one-out drive to left snapped a 1-1 tie between Nationals starter Stephen Strasburg (7-3) and the Padres' game-long group of bullpen pitchers. Stammen (4-3) was the fourth of five relievers deployed by San Diego. Strasburg gave up one run in seven innings.

DODGERS 1, GIANTS 0

Max Muncy's first-inning home run was all starting pitcher Walker Buehler needed as Los Angeles earned a fiery victory at San Francisco. Buehler (7-1) gave up five hits over seven scoreless innings with a walk and nine strikeouts as the Dodgers rallied to win the three-game series after a defeat on Friday. Giants starter Madison Bumgarner (3-6) was nearly as good as Buehler, giving up one run on four hits over seven

innings with a walk and five strikeouts. Thinking Muncy took too long to go into his home run trot, Bumgarner shouted at the Dodgers' left-handed hitter before Muncy even reached first base. Muncy first reacted by brushing his hands toward Bumgarner as he approached first base, then appeared to invite the pitcher for a physical altercation as he jugged between first and second base. The two shouted at each other off and on until Muncy crossed the plate.

YANKEES 7, INDIANS 6 (10 INNINGS)

Aaron Hicks belted an RBI double with two outs in the 10th inning as visiting New York rebounded to top Cleveland after squandering a pair of leads. New York scored five runs with two outs in the second inning and another in the ninth, only to see Cleveland rally to forge a tie on both occasions. The Yankees claimed a 7-6 lead in the 10th after Cameron Maybin launched a double to deep center off Oliver Perez (1-1) with one out before Hicks doubled to left-center one out later. Aroldis Chapman (1-1) picked up the win after his bid for his 16th straight save went awry following an error by shortstop Didi Gregorius with two outs in the ninth.

RAYS 6, RED SOX 1

Brandon Lowe homered twice among three hits, while Yandy Diaz also went deep and had four hits as visiting Tampa Bay powered past Boston in the finale of a four-game series. Tampa Bay hit four homers in the contest, all solo shots. Blake Snell (4-5) gave up

one run on five hits and struck out seven in six innings as the Rays took three of four in the key division series. The Red Sox were held to two or fewer runs in all three losses. Eduardo Rodriguez (6-4) was tagged for four runs on seven hits over 5 2/3 innings, striking out seven and walking two.

CUBS 5, CARDINALS 1

Kyle Schwarber drove in two runs, Kyle Hendricks won his sixth consecutive decision, and Chicago pulled away to complete a three-game sweep of visiting St. Louis. Carlos Gonzalez homered while Anthony Rizzo and David Bote also drove in one run apiece for the Cubs. Kolten Wong hit an RBI double for the Cardinals, who lost for the fourth time in their past five games. Hendricks (7-4) allowed one run on eight hits in seven innings, walking none and striking out three. Cardinals starter Adam Wainwright (5-6) exited the game after 4 1/3 innings because of left hamstring tightness. He allowed three runs on seven hits while walking one and striking out two.

BRAVES 7, MARLINS 6 (12 INNINGS)

Ronald Acuna Jr. tied the score with a three-run homer in the ninth, and Matt Joyce hit an RBI single in the 12th as the Atlanta won at Miami. Closer Sergio Romo gave up four runs in the ninth-including Acuna's homer—and fellow Marlins reliever Tyler Kinley gave up a run in the 10th before Adam Conley (1-6) took the loss in the 12th. Ozzie Albies sparked the winning rally by diving into third with a one-out triple. He scored on a

single by Joyce, who went 3-for-4 from the No. 8 hole. Dan Winkler (3-1) got the win for Atlanta, and Josh Tomlin picked up his first career save in his 205th appearance.

TWINS 12, TIGERS 2

Nelson Cruz blasted one of Minnesota's four home runs among his three hits and drove in three runs as the Twins routed host Detroit. Eddie Rosario supplied three hits, including a homer, scored two runs and knocked in two more while Byron Buxton ripped a two-run homer and scored twice. Miguel Sano also homered, C.J. Cron had two hits and two RBIs and Ehire Adrianza scored three runs. Twins starter Jake Odorizzi (9-2) gave up one run on five hits in six innings and struck out eight. Detroit starter Ryan Carpenter (1-3) surrendered eight runs on 10 hits in 3 2/3 innings.

ASTROS 4, ORIOLES 0

Jordan Alvarez homered in his second career plate appearance to support a strong outing from veteran Wade Miley as Houston claimed the rubber match of its three-game series with Baltimore. Alvarez, the Astros' third-ranked prospect according to MLB Pipeline, broke a scoreless tie with his two-run, opposite-field homer off Orioles starter Dylan Bundy (3-7) with two outs in the fourth inning. Miley (6-3) completed his afternoon having allowed six hits and two walks while recording five strikeouts over six-plus innings.

Brazil trip 'significant step' for Qatar ahead of 2022 World Cup

DOHA: First-timers Qatar go into the Copa America with the young team riding high following their triumph in the Asian Cup but humbled by "higher calibre" competition than they encountered in the Emirates.

Head coach Felix Sanchez also said that the tournament would be a "significant step in our journey towards the World Cup" which Qatar will host in 2022. "We'll play against experienced teams that are certainly of a higher calibre than what we saw at the Asian tournament," he said in an interview with FIFA ahead of

the Brazil tournament.

"Our group includes Argentina, whose abilities are well known, and Colombia, who are exceptionally good performers, whether at World Cups or the Copa America. Paraguay also boast a pedigree history."

The South American continental championship gets underway on June 14 with the hosts Brazil looking for their first title since 2007. "So, I believe these matches will serve as an important staging post for me and the players. They'll tell us where we currently stand and what we need to do in the next phase," added Sanchez.

Qatar got off to a cautious start in a friendly against Brazil who won 2-0, although the visitors' credible performance was overshadowed by Neymar's travails. The forward, who is facing rape accusations he strongly denies, sprained his ankle and was forced to limp off the pitch on crutches, ruling him out of the tournament.

"It was a great game for us. (But) we should learn from our mistakes," said a Qatar team official. "In the

second half we played better." The side, which with Japan was invited to make up the required 12 teams, has struck a cautious tone ahead of their highest profile outing since the Asian Cup.

Qatar's inclusion in the Copa America initially raised eyebrows but both they and Japan reached the Asian Cup final in Abu Dhabi. Qatar triumphed in that tournament going from zero points at the last Asian Cup to their first continental title in record-breaking style, beating Japan 3-1. Forward Almoez Ali's bicycle kick helped bring home the trophy and broke Ali Daei's 23-year-old mark for goals at a single Asian Cup. Ali said the Copa was all about learning for Qatar, continuing the methodical approach which has already paid dividends.

"We're not expecting to win, but just to learn because after the World Cup, the Copa America is the biggest competition in the world," Ali said following the Asian Cup win. "The weakest teams are in Asia,

Asia is the weakest continent for football so in the Copa America we will learn more." The team source acknowledged to AFP that "it won't be easy". Qatar also has one eye clearly fixed on the 2022 World Cup. "You have to always focus on your overriding goal. The state of Qatar is heading towards a historic event: hosting the 2022 World Cup," said Sanchez who was given a mandate last month to lead Qatar into the global soccer spectacle when his contract was extended to 2022.

"We need to make sure the squad are in top form and up to the nation's expectations. This means that we'll not be participating just for its own sake, but that we're determined to leave our mark on World Cup history, especially since this will be Qatar's first World Cup. "Our participation in the 2019 Copa America can be seen as a significant step in our journey towards the World Cup, a journey that we started some time ago." —AFP