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Houthi strike Saudi airport, coalition vows to retaliate

Amir denounces heinous attack • 26 civilians injured

KD 1 per ton toll for trucks using Jaber Causeway from July 16

KUWAIT: A KD 1 per ton toll to be paid by trucks using Jaber Al-Ahmad Causeway and Doha Link will take effect starting July 16, Minister of Public Works Jenan Boushehri said yesterday. The Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) has set regulations for trucks in a bid to ensure safety of the causeway and commuters, said Boushehri, also Minister of State for Housing Affairs, in a press release, pointing out that revenues expected will be allocated, in part, for the bridge's maintenance and operation costs, as well as checks and supervision.

According to the release, the weigh-in and toll collection processes will take place at stations before the trucks enter the causeway, which will guarantee adequate traffic flow. It added that truck drivers choosing not to pay



KUWAIT: A view of the Jaber Causeway is seen in this May 1, 2019 photo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

could use Road 80, then Road 801 to reach the northern area. The mega bridge cost approximately \$3 billion, as it spans Kuwait Bay in two directions and comprises the Main Link, which connects Kuwait City with the future Silk City; and Doha Link, which connects Kuwait City with Doha and the Entertainment City. — KUNA

RIYADH: A Yemeni rebel missile attack on an airport in southwestern Saudi Arabia wounded 26 civilians yesterday, drawing promises of "stern action" from the Saudi-led coalition fighting the rebels. Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have faced persistent coalition bombing since March 2015 that has exacted a heavy civilian death toll, have stepped up missile and drone attacks across the border in recent weeks. Yesterday's missile strike hit the civil airport in the mountain resort of Abha, which is a popular summer getaway for Saudis seeking escape from the searing heat of Riyadh or Jeddah.

Eight of the wounded were admitted to hospital, coalition spokesman Turki Al-Malki said. The other 18 were discharged after receiving first aid, he added in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. The missile caused some damage to the airport's arrivals lounge and flights were disrupted for several hours before returning to normal. At least one Indian and a Yemeni were among three women wounded along with two Saudi children, said Malki, adding the "terrorist attack" on a civilian target could be considered a "war crime". Malki said the coalition would "take stern action" to deter the rebels and protect civilians.

IHH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah strongly condemned the attack. This heinous attack deliberately targets the lives of innocent people and threatens Saudi Arabia's security, showing complete disregard for humanitarian principles, the Amir wrote in a letter he sent to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz. IHH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and IHH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar messages to the Saudi king.

Kuwait's foreign ministry also strongly condemned the attack. This despicable attack on Abha Airport not only threatens Saudi Arabia's security, but is also a dangerous escalation in hostilities, the ministry said in a statement, highlighting Kuwait's steadfast support for its larger neighbor. National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem also sent a cable to Saudi Shura Council President Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sheikh, strongly condemning the attack. Voicing full solidarity with the Saudi people in face of such "heinous and terrorist" acts, the top Kuwaiti lawmaker reaffirmed utmost support for whatever measures Saudi Arabia takes to ensure its safety and stability.

The attack was also condemned by the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, whose information minister

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Cop sought for raping newly arrived maid

KUWAIT: The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), through the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait, said in a statement it is closely coordinating with Kuwaiti authorities for the speedy arrest of the suspect in a rape case involving a Filipina household service worker in Kuwait. Embassy Charge d'Affaires Mohd Noordin Lomondot said Kuwaiti authorities have issued a warrant of arrest against the suspect (F. N. H. A.), a 22-year-old Kuwaiti police officer.

He said the suspect assisted the victim during her fingerprinting and registration at the airport upon her arrival in Kuwait on June 4. It was alleged that he later kidnapped and assaulted the victim. Lomondot added the employer of the worker is cooperating with the embassy and local authorities. The Philippine government will exert all efforts to ensure that justice is served, the statement added. — Embassy statement

Lanka bombers on govt payroll; church reopens

COLOMBO: The Islamist extremists behind Sri Lanka's deadly Easter bombings received funding from state intelligence services, a top Muslim leader told a parliamentary investigation. The comments by Azath Salley, who quit last week as governor of Western Province, added to evidence of massive security failings before the April 21 attacks that killed 258 people. The bombings were led by Zahran Hashim, a radical who broke from the Sri Lanka Thowheeth Jama'ath (SLTJ) to form an extremist group, the National Thowheeth Jama'ath (NTJ).

Salley told the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) that he repeatedly told President Maithripala Sirisena to take action against the group. "The defense ministry paid the Thowheeth Jama'ath. The police worked closely with the Thowheeth Jama'ath," Salley said, according to a transcript of his remarks. Salley said the former government of Mahinda Rajapakse in office until 2015 funded Thowheeth Jama'ath through military intelligence, a practice continued by the new administration.

Salley said that the funding was to spy on other groups. Salley also said that a week before the attacks, he met with top defense officials to warn them about the activities of Islamist radicals and impending dangers. "If the police had taken action on the information I provided at the time, we would have been able to avoid this disaster," he said. The PSC has already heard from several top defense and police officials that the authorities failed to implement an effective security plan even after receiving precise warnings of an impending attack.

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Power usage hits record as Kuwait sizzles

KUWAIT: The unprecedented heat in the country continues to rise, as temperatures exceeded 50 degrees Celsius before the official start of summer. On Tuesday, Kuwait recorded its highest electricity consumption as the temperature hit more than 50 degrees Celsius, an official at the ministry of electricity and water announced. Kuwait's electricity

consumption on Tuesday was 14,360 megawatts, up 3.5 percent compared with the highest rate registered last year. Undersecretary of the Ministry of Electricity and Water Mohammad Boushehri told KUNA.

The rise in electricity consumption is expected in summer due to rising temperatures, which forces people to operate air conditioners in houses and other facilities, he said. Boushehri also assured that the record rise does not pose any threat to Kuwait's power grid, as it has an overall capacity of up to 18,000 megawatts. Although Kuwait's grid has a surplus, he advised people to rationalize their consumption of power. — KUNA

Abe meets Rouhani to ease tensions

TEHRAN: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held talks with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in Tehran yesterday during a rare diplomatic mission aimed at defusing tensions between the Islamic republic and Tokyo's ally Washington. Abe, the first Japanese prime minister to visit Iran in 41 years, was received by Rouhani at the Saadabad presidential palace where they began a closed-door meeting, an AFP reporter said. He is expected to meet Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei today morning.

Addressing a cabinet meeting ahead of

the visit, Rouhani said Iran's leaders and people were united in their view that "the main culprit is America. Not a single individual doubts it." "The (US) pressure has reached its full strength," he told the cabinet. Tehran is locked in a bitter standoff with Washington after US President Donald Trump withdrew from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal in May last year.

Washington has since reimposed crippling unilateral sanctions - which have forced Japan to halt its once-substantial purchases of Iranian oil - and launched a military buildup in the Gulf. "Amid concerns over growing tension in the Middle East and with the attention of the international community on the issue, Japan wishes to do its best towards peace and stability in the region," Abe told reporters before leaving for Tehran. "Based on traditional friendly ties between Japan and Iran, I

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KUWAIT: Workers take shelter from the sun under a tree yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani meets Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during a welcoming ceremony at Saadabad Palace yesterday. — AFP

India unveils spacecraft for moon mission

BANGALORE: India yesterday unveiled a spacecraft which is expected to take off for the moon next month, making the country only the fourth to achieve the feat. The mission is India's second to the moon, and if successful it will put the nation in the league of the US, the former Soviet Union and China. Named Chandrayaan-2, the craft is made up of an orbiter, a lander and a rover developed by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

It will be launched from Sriharikota space center on July 15 and is expected to land near the lunar South Pole on Sept 6. Once it touches down, the rover will carry out experiments while being controlled remotely by ISRO scientists. "It is going to be the most complex mission ever undertaken by ISRO," Chairman K Sivan was quoted as saying by local media. "The aim is to use space technology for the benefit of the common man."

The Indian mission would be the third attempted lunar landing this year after China's successful

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BANGALORE: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scientists work on the orbiter vehicle of 'Chandrayaan-2', India's first moon lander and rover mission planned and developed by the ISRO yesterday. — AFP

Local

Amir, Crown Prince receive top state officials at Bayan Palace

Amir sends condolences to Chinese president over flood victims



KUWAIT: 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. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



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

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. His Highness also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. He later received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, and Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping over victims and casualties of the flood-hit southern province of Guangxi. In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished the wounded rapid recovery, to overcome the aftermath of such natural disaster. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables. —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 Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

European Union official lauds Kuwait's mediation role ahead of regional visit

BRUSSELS: The European Union (EU) yesterday heaped praise on Kuwait's role for stability and peace in the region. "Kuwait's stance is deeply appreciated by the European Union. His Highness the Amir's commitment to peace and stability stands out as a bulwark in the Gulf region and we regard Kuwait as a natural ally in promoting regional cooperation and, allow me the expression, fostering 'wasatiyya' (moderation) at a critical time," Helga Maria Schmid, Secretary General of EEAS, said in an interview ahead of her visit to three Gulf countries and Iran. The "EU knows that it can count on Kuwait to work towards the promotion of a rules-based order, built on mutual respect and the defense of human rights and principles," she said. "We have valued Kuwait's presidency of the UN Security Council and its leading role in the stabilization of Iraq, Kuwait's generous contributions to UNRWA in Palestine, to Syrian refugees in Jordan or to children in Yemen are remarkable examples of its humanitarianism," said the senior EU diplomat.

Schmid noted that although she will not be able to visit Kuwait this time, she hoped that she will have soon other opportunities to meet the Kuwaiti authorities. "We are working together on an important and eloquent milestone: the opening of an EU Delegation in Kuwait," she said. She was set to begin her visit yesterday to the UAE followed by Oman, Qatar and Iran. Schmid said the EU has been active for years with its international and regional partners in trying to address the multiple challenges that the Gulf is facing. "During the past few weeks, we have seen a worrying trend towards escalation. We are concerned about this period of intensified hostility, which, in the absence of any form of structured cooperation or regular dialogue, maybe very risky for the stability of the region," said Schmid who is a German diplomat.

Although there is no one single set of solu-

tion, the goal is to promote dialogue as an antidote to confrontation. I am going there to express the EU's concern about the rise of tensions, listen to our partners' views and share our assessment, she said. "I will also stress our support for the opening of channels of dialogue and reflect how the EU could be useful in helping to de-escalate. I will use this opportunity to share the ongoing European efforts for the preservation of the nuclear deal with Iran (JCPOA), which is key to the stability and security in the Middle East and beyond as well as a crucial element of the international non-proliferation architecture," she stressed.

"Our discussions will focus on the latest regional developments and on the situation in the region more broadly, including issues of common concern, such as the conflicts in Yemen and Syria, the Middle East Peace Process, and the situation in Libya and in Sudan," she said. The visit will also be an opportunity to talk about bilateral relations. "We are keen to continue deepening our relations on an individual basis as well as through the Gulf Cooperation Council," said Schmid. "We are already exchanging on a wide variety of issues, from energy cooperation to trade and investment, to security and counterterrorism. It is our firm belief that by strengthening our ties we will be able to better appreciate each other's concerns and develop a relationship that is not only mutually beneficial but one that serves the stability and prosperity of the EU and the Gulf region," said the EU diplomat.

"In Iran, where I will travel to after my visit to UAE, Oman and Qatar, I will of course also discuss the state of play regarding the implementation of the JCPOA, including the operationalization of the Instrument in support of trade exchanges (INSTEX), aiming to provide a mechanism for legitimate trade with Iran. All actors should take a constructive approach in order to preserve regional stability," she

stressed.

She noted that the relationship between the EU and the GCC dates back three decades. It is one of the oldest multilateral partnerships for the EU. Our Cooperation Agreement, which we signed in 1988, remains our legal basis and provides for exchanges on an array of topics. Despite the crisis that is affecting the GCC since 2017, we have continued our cooperation whenever possible, in areas such as Clean Energy, Economic Diversification, Technology, Trade and Investment and others, said Schmid. "We have expressed our wish, however, of seeing again a politically united GCC. As the only regional inter-state organization, the GCC's contribution to stability is very much valued by the EU," she added. European External Action Service (EEAS) is the diplomatic service of the EU.

EEAS said in a statement yesterday that the visit will take place against the backdrop of the prevailing tensions in the region. "It will be an opportunity to underline the call of the European Union to defuse regional tensions, find ways towards de-escalation and promote dialogue," it said. As part of the EU's efforts to promote stability in the region, the visit will also aim at discussing the preservation of the nuclear deal with Iran, which continues to be a key element of the non-proliferation architecture and a key pillar of security, both globally and in the region, it noted. The visit will be an occasion to discuss bilateral relations as well as other regional issues of common concern, added the statement. —KUNA



Helga Maria Schmid



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Member of the Supervisory Board, President of the Middle East and Africa Area at Huawei Company Yi Xiang. — KUNA

PM receives Huawei Middle East-Africa chief

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on yesterday Member of the Supervisory Board, President of the Middle East and Africa Area at Huawei Company Yi Xiang and his

accompanying delegation on the occasion of their visit to the country. The meeting was attended by Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority Sheikh Dr Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Elder Quentin L Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles meets with Fared Emadi, Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.

Deputy FM discusses bilateral ties with UAE ambassador

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Saqer Nasser Al-Raesi. During their meeting, they discussed issues of bilateral relations between the two countries and latest developments on regional and international scenes. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Saqer Nasser Al-Raesi. — KUNA

Mormon Church official thanks Kuwait on recognition

KUWAIT: A top Mormon Church official visited Kuwait recently to thank state officials on Kuwait's recognition of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints back in February. During his visit, Elder Quentin L Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles met government leaders and Latter-day Saints in Kuwait City to express gratitude on behalf of the First Presidency for the important milestone. "We are incredibly grateful for your absolutely key role in granting recognition to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Elder Cook said Monday during a meeting with Fared Emadi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and secretary general of the Supreme Commission for the

Promotion of Moderation in the ministry. The Ministry of Awqaf gave the Church this recognition, Emadi said, based on the teachings of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that focus on the desire to live in peace. "Our religion taught us how to deal with others and how to respect others," he said. While in Kuwait, Cook also met with Sheikha Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, before he and other men, including local interfaith leaders, gathered for a traditional diwaniya meeting. Cook also spoke to 125 soldiers at a sacrament meeting at Camp Arifjan, a US military base outside Kuwait City. Nearly 300 Mormons live and work in Kuwait; they come from many countries around the world.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sunset at Ashiraj Beach. — Photo by Nawaf Al-Humoud (KUNA)

Hague Forum to promote peace culture in the world

Organized by Kuwait's Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation

THE HAGUE, Netherlands: Distinguished political leaders, decision makers, scholars and cultural personalities from around the world will gather in the beautiful Dutch city of the Hague today to give boost to international efforts to promote peace. "It is amazing that my beautiful country of Holland is able to play such a pivotal role in realizing the Kuwaiti dreams of respect for each other's culture and relentless devotion and love for peace," commented the Dutch Ambassador to Kuwait Frans Potuyt. "Artists, writers, musicians, and scholars: they constitute a global community surpassing national boundaries and mentalities, often taking the lead in guiding us on the way to peace," he wrote in an article. The Dutch ambassador noted that the study of the Islamic and Arab culture has flourished in Holland for centuries, as Dutch merchants were sailing the seas and always curious to learn from other cultures. "So Leiden became

the natural partner for the Al-Babtain foundation to enhance the study of the Arab world," said Potuyt. "Dr Babtain chose this historic palace as the venue for an international conference to promote education of peace, focused on the protection of cultural heritage in times of war," he added. The 'World Forum for the Culture of Peace' will kick off at the Peace Palace which houses the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague. The one-day international event has been organized by Kuwait's Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation in partnership with the World Peace Foundation, New York, Leiden University in the Netherlands, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Carnegie Foundation Peace Palace.

The forum will "send a humanitarian message to the whole world to establish peace and security," said the chairman of the Foundation of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain. "We will not only provide suggestions and recommendations, but we will work to put the theories into reality. We have issued seventeen approaches to culti-

vating a culture of peace from schools to the university," he said. The Forum will open with a keynote address by Maltese President George Vella and statements by Secretary General of the Dutch foreign ministry Joke Brandt, Director General of the Peace Palace, Erik de Baedts, Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain and Prince Turki Al-Faisal Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia.

The first session titled "Education and the Protection of Cultural Heritage," will be chaired by former Bosnian President, Haris Siljadzic and will be addressed by Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Yousef Al-Othaimeen, among other eminent personalities. Kuwaiti former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah will preside over the second session titled "Protecting cultural heritage (Iraq and Yemen)." This session will be addressed among others by the representative of the Iraqi president, Ali Al-Shukri, Yemeni Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Abdullah Lemles, Shaikha Mai Bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, President of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities and Minister of Higher Education in Iraq's Kurdistan, Dr Yusuf Goran. The third session titled "Promoting the culture of peace through education (Central Republic of Africa)" will be chaired by Terje Rod-Larsen, the President of the International Peace Institute, New York.

Speakers include the Kuwaiti Minister of Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi, Sylvie Baipo Temon, Foreign Minister of Central African Republic among other dignitaries. The last and closing session titled "Moving Forward: Culture of Peace Manuals" will be chaired by Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice, and speakers include Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, Abdullah Gul, former President of Turkey as well as other eminent personalities. Closing remarks will be delivered by the President of the University of Leiden, Carel Stolker. — KUNA



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India PM to avoid Pakistan airspace

Media has a big problem, Who will pay for the news?

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KHAN YUNIS: Angham Zorab removes clothes from a clothes line at their home in the southern Gaza Strip refugee camp of Khan Yunis. Angham Zorab's two brothers along with her husband fled the blockaded Palestinian enclave in June 2014 - like many others who see no hope in remaining. — AFP

Despite risks, Gazans dream of life away

Around 61,000 Palestinians left Gaza for Egypt last year

KHAN YUNIS: At a modest dwelling open to the winds next to a landfill in the Gaza Strip, only the women, children and an old man remain. Angham Zorab's two brothers along with her husband fled the blockaded Palestinian enclave in June 2014 - like many others who see no hope in remaining. "He sold the house and left with the \$5,000," the frail 23-year-old woman said of her husband.

"They passed through tunnels" to reach Egypt, she added from the house where she now lives in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. Gaza's two million residents have lived under Israeli blockade for more than a decade, and humanitarian conditions have worsened by the year. Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas and Israel have fought three wars since 2008 and the strip has an unemployment rate of more than 50 percent - while around two-thirds of young people are jobless. Eighty percent of the population are dependent on international aid.

There are no official figures on the number of Palestinians leaving the Gaza Strip permanently, said Samir Zaqout of the Palestinian human rights group Al-

Mezan. According to data compiled by the United Nations, around 61,000 Palestinians left Gaza for Egypt last year, while only around 37,000 entered - a deficit of 24,000, though more could eventually return. Israel grants limited numbers of exit permits, mainly for merchants and medical patients, according to Gisha, an NGO which monitors the Gaza blockade.

Zaqout says the reasons young people seek to leave include unemployment and poverty, low pay, lack of freedom of expression under Hamas and the impossibility of free travel under Israel's blockade. "In the past, the idea of emigrating was considered a betrayal (of the Palestinian cause)," he said at his office in central Gaza City. "Today it is a source of pride. Even those who are engaged in politics, in the resistance (to Israel), are

preparing to emigrate." The will to leave crosses all social classes, from the rich to the poor, he said.

'For my family'

For years, tunnels under the Gaza border with Egypt provided Palestinians with a way out of the enclave. Some would then take a dangerous route into Europe, often involving a journey by sea. Egypt has since destroyed the tunnels, but it reopened its crossing with Gaza in 2018 after having kept it largely closed for years.

Zorab's brother-in-law, the last of the family to emigrate, left Gaza last summer through the Rafah crossing with Egypt. As for her husband, she said he left "for the same reasons as all the others: for work. He said 'I'm going to build a future for my daughter, for my family.'" Her two

brothers eventually reached Sweden and have established themselves there. She has however lost contact with her husband and has asked for a divorce.

She and her six-year-old daughter now live with her parents. She thinks the acne-like bumps across her daughter's body are due to the landfill next door. "I would like to leave too," Zorab said. In front of her on a small wooden shelf sits the most precious object in their spartan home: a modem connected to a battery for when the Gaza Strip's frequent electricity cuts plunge the neighborhood into darkness.

"I speak with my sons everyday now," said the mother of the family, Chamaa. "The first two years, my eyes were always filled with tears." The money that her sons send keeps the house running. Nine people live in a handful of rooms that are nearly empty, furnished with mattresses on the floor and kitchen utensils. In the extended family, at least 20 men have left the Gaza Strip and some died in the process. Zaqout of Al-Mezan said the reopening of the Rafah crossing has made emigrating easier. — AFP



Gaza's 2 million residents live under blockade

India's heatwave deaths rise to 36

MUMBAI: A heatwave gripping India has killed 36 people with the poorest workers bearing the brunt, national disaster management officials said yesterday, warning that the record temperatures were impacting more states than in previous years. India's capital Delhi recorded its highest-ever temperature of 48 degrees Celsius (118 Fahrenheit) on Tuesday, while Churu in the north-western state of Rajasthan, temperatures reached as high as 51C.

"This is the worst heatwave ever. In 2015, the heatwave was recorded in nine states, this year the forecast is 23," said Anup Kumar Srivastava, drought and heatwave expert at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). "We have verified 36 deaths due to the heatwave against 25 last year. They are mostly poor labourers who come from rural areas to cities to look for work and live on the road side," Srivastava told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. India typically witnesses water scarcity during summer months, but the situation this year is particularly bad in western and southern states which received less than normal rainfall in the 2018 monsoon season. The NDMA had predicted that a heatwave would hit India from mid-March but the weather turned extreme in mid-May and is expected to last until mid-June.

More cities are also struggling with the heat than in previous years with many recording temperature above 45C, Srivastava said. Although India recorded over 2,000 deaths during a 2015 heatwave, deaths fell over the next three years as public awareness campaigns spread to more states, NDMA officials said.



NEW DELHI: Indian residents use hoses to collect drinking water from a tanker truck during a hot summer day in the low-income neighborhood of Sanjay camp yesterday. — AFP

"We wanted to bring down the number of deaths to single digits this year," Srivastava said. "But many officials were assigned for election duty (and) that impacted monitoring and awareness activities." India's marathon general elections were held from April 11 to May 19 and relied on government officials from several departments to carry out the mammoth poll.

Go home

Workers on farms, construction sites or on salt pans were worst hit by the heatwave, labor rights campaigners said. "Many struggled with the weather and chose to go back home," said

Ramaswamy Natarajan, manager at the Odisha Migration support centre in Tamil Nadu. Some Indian states such as the southern state of Kerala issued sunstroke warnings in March and announced noon breaks for workers for three months. Officials at NDMA said its advisory on reducing eight-hour work schedules by 20% during summer months was being implemented for government workers who are paid daily rates under its national rural employment guarantee scheme. But those working for private employers on farms, building sites and brick kilns had no such protection, labor rights campaigners said. — Reuters

Syria says air defense downs Israeli missiles

DAMASCUS: Syrian air defense shot down Israeli missiles targeting the south of the country yesterday, state media said, as a monitor reported positions of the regime's Lebanese ally Hezbollah had been hit. The attack was launched in the early hours of the morning against the Tall al-Hara sector near the Golan Heights, according to official news agency SANA, which said there had been no casualties.

It did not specify what had been targeted. SANA also accused Israel of conducting an "electronic war" and "jamming" Syrian radar. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said the strikes had targeted positions of the Hezbollah Shiite movement in two locations, but without causing any casualties.

"All the positions hit had the Lebanese Hezbollah there," Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said. The missiles targeted Tall al-Hara, a hill in the southern province of Daraa where Hezbollah has radars and the regime has air defense batteries, said the Observatory, which relies on sources inside Syria for its information. It also targeted barracks for the Lebanese fighters in the abandoned town of Quneitra on the Syrian-controlled side of a demilitarized zone between both countries in the Golan.

The town has been largely in ruins for over four decades since it was razed by Israeli forces before they withdrew under a 1974 United Nations agreement. Israel has carried out hundreds of air strikes in Syria since the beginning of the conflict in 2011, targeting forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad and the regime's allies Iran and Hezbollah. Earlier this month, Israel struck multiple positions held by regime forces over a period of 24 hours, killing 15 combatants according to the Observatory. In January, it targeted Iranian positions in Syria in what it said was a response to an Iranian missile strike from inside the country. That attack killed 21, mostly Iranians. Israel says it is determined to prevent its arch foe Iran from entrenching itself militarily in Syria, where Tehran backs Assad in the country's eight-year war, which has left more than 370,000 people dead and displaced millions. Israel and Hezbollah have fought several wars, the latest in 2006. — AFP

International

China launches new web cleanup campaign amid fresh takedowns

More foreign media websites blocked in recent days

BEIJING: China launched a new campaign to clean up its internet, state media said, amid a fresh wave of apparent censorship by Beijing blocking more foreign media websites and shutting down domestic accounts on social media. The joint effort was launched in May by the cyberspace administration, the information technology ministry, the public security bureau and the markets regulator and will run until the end of the year, the official Xinhua news agency said.

The "rectification" campaign will punish and expose websites for "illegal and criminal actions", failing to "fulfil their obligation" to take safety measures or the theft of personal information, it added. The campaign follows a series of shutdowns and blockages of certain websites and social media accounts. Several foreign media beyond Beijing's control, such as the Washington Post and The Guardian, have not been accessible online since last weekend, adding to a list of blocked sites that includes Reuters.

Online Chinese financial news publication Wallstreetcn.com said on Monday it took its website and mobile app offline at the authorities' request, but gave no details of the rules it may have broken. Social media accounts ranging from those publishing politically sensitive material to financial news have also been shut. Authorities said in November they shut 9,800 accounts of news providers deemed to be posting sensational, vulgar or politically harmful content. The Chinese internet regulator's Shanghai office said

in a statement yesterday it and the markets regulator's Shanghai office summoned representatives from Baidu Inc and criticized the firm for unethical advertising using vulgar content or overly sensational titles. The authorities ordered Baidu to rectify its advertising business to eliminate such practices, according to the statement. Baidu did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In recent years, China has regularly campaigned to police its internet, shutting down websites, social media accounts and mobile apps.

"The cleaning drives are not purely political. Many, possibly even most, of those accounts were probably spam, porn or other types of content that the platforms have made clear are undesirable and unwelcome," said Fergus Ryan, an analyst with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. "The problem is that in among those legitimate removals are accounts that are removed for political reasons." Shimin Fang, a popular science writer who drew public scrutiny in China for critical comments about Huawei Technologies Co, said he found out on Tuesday all of his Chinese social media accounts had been taken down.

Fang, who lives in the United States, said he did not know what had happened until some readers told him they could no longer find his postings and that the platform operators would not tell him why his accounts were shut down. "My guess is that from now on any influential self-media accounts will not be allowed to exist, no mat-



BEIJING: An elderly man pushes a trolley with food outside a supermarket in Beijing yesterday. —AFP

ter (if) they are political or not," Fang told Reuters in an email. The term "self-media" is mostly used on Chinese social media to describe independent news accounts that

produce original content but are not officially registered with the authorities. "The Chinese internet winter is coming," Fang said. —Reuters



China authorities began campaign in May, Xinhua says

India govt abusing 'lawless' detention act in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: The Indian government is widely misusing a law allowing for detention without trial in the Indian part of the contested Kashmir region, and fuelling animosity with it, the human rights group Amnesty International said yesterday. The Public Safety Act (PSA) was a "lawless law" under which the authorities hold children, old people and the disabled, and it should be scrapped, the group said.

"This act is contributing to inflaming tensions between the state authorities and local populace and must be immediately repealed," said Aakar Patel, head of Amnesty International India. India has long defended the 41-year-old PSA as essential to maintain law and order in the Muslim-majority region where separatist militants have been battling the security forces since the late 1980s. "There is a judicial system in place where there are checks and balances," chief secretary of Jammu and Kashmir state, BVR Subrahmanyam, told Reuters in defense of the law.

Kashmir is claimed in full but ruled in part by both India and Pakistan. India blames its arch rival for fomenting separatist trouble, including attacks on security forces, in its part of the region. Muslim Pakistan denies arming the insurgents but says it supports the people of Kashmir in their opposition to what it calls oppression by the Indian security forces. The law allows for detention for up to two years if a person is deemed acting "in any manner prejudicial to the security of the state".

Amnesty said that was a breach of international human rights law. Police did not let the group launch its report in Kashmir's main city of Srinagar yesterday, citing the "law and order" situation, a spokesman for the right group said. In June 2018, India said a report by the United Nations, that argued the PSA obstructed the normal course of law in Kashmir, was "a selective compilation of largely unverified information".

Amnesty based its report on the analysis of 210 cases of detention under the PSA between 2012 and 2018. The law prohibits the detention of children but Amnesty documented several cases where minors were knowingly detained. In more than 90 percent of cases the group analyzed, detainees faced both PSA detentions and criminal proceedings in parallel, on the basis of the same or similar allegations.

"The police appear to use the PSA as a safety net, using it to secure the detention of suspects who are released, or likely to be released, on bail," the group said. It said it found 71 cases of revolving-door detentions, in which authorities kept on issuing orders to keep people behind bars. One separatist leader, Masarat Alam Bhat, has been detained for a cumulative period of 20 years since 1990, despite never being charged with a crime, Amnesty said. —Reuters

Trump-Kim 1 year on: 'Beautiful letter' and a stalled diplomacy

SEOUL: A year after President Donald Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un met for the first time, they appear committed to a personal bond upon which hopes for peace seem to rest despite a stalemate in efforts to get Kim to abandon his nuclear weapons. Trump and Kim agreed at the first US-North Korea summit in Singapore to work towards the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, easing fears of war between their countries.

But there has been little progress since then and tension has again been rising with North Korea resuming some lim-

ited testing of weapons and warning of "truly undesired consequences" if the United States was not more flexible. But Trump said on Tuesday he had received a "beautiful letter" from Kim. "I can't show you the letter obviously, but it was a very personal, very warm, very nice letter," Trump told reporters outside the White House.

Trump, who has tried to convert what he feels is a warm personal relationship with Kim into a diplomatic breakthrough, gave no details, but repeated that he believed North Korea had "tremendous potential". "I think that something will happen that's going to be very positive," he said. North Korea's state media has not mentioned any letter. The optimism that the two leaders generated in Singapore all but evaporated in February when a second summit, in Vietnam, dramatically fell apart without even a recommitment to the general goals outlined in a statement signed in Singapore.

Since then, North Korea has complained of US sanc-

telecoms and drinking water if they are disrupted by the cyclone. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) warned the cyclone could hold up the progress of annual monsoon rains, as the storm drew rain clouds from over the sea. The monsoon was already about a week late in arriving at Kerala on the southern coast this year, and much of the country has broiled in a summer heat-wave in recent weeks.

Port operations hit

Gujarat is also home to large refineries and sea ports near the storm's path. India's biggest oil refinery, owned by Reliance Industries Ltd, is in Gujarat, though a company official said the cyclone was expected to weaken by the time it reached the Jamnagar-based refinery.

"But in case the course changes or intensifies, the refinery is ready for any contingency," he added, declining to be identified as he was not authorized to speak to the media. Sikka Ports and Terminals Ltd, which handles crude oil and refined products for Reliance Industries Ltd, halted vessel berthing at a western port yesterday over a cyclone warning, according to a port notice.

The company's ports also handle oil and refined products cargo for Bharat Oman Refineries Ltd, a subsidiary of state-run Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd. Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone



MUMBAI: A lifeguard walks along at Girgaum Chowpatty beach following its closure in Mumbai. A cyclonic storm barreling towards western India has strengthened with gusts of up to 170 kilometers per hour. —AFP

Ltd is preparing to move employees at two ports it runs to safer areas, a spokesman said. "Our Mundra and Tuna ports will be closest to the path," he added. "All the necessary precautions are being put in place."

Nayara Energy, owned by a consortium led by Russia's Rosneft, said it was monitoring the situation and also taking precautionary measures at its Gujarat

refinery. In May, Cyclone Fani, the equivalent of a Category 4 hurricane, killed at least 34 people on India's eastern coast, destroying houses and ripping off roofs. Authorities had evacuated more than 1.2 million people in advance of the storm, after an even more powerful cyclone in 1999 killed about 10,000 people and caused damage running into billions of dollars. —Reuters

Modi to avoid Pakistan airspace despite getting permission

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will avoid flying over Pakistan during an official trip to central Asia today, the foreign ministry said, even though Pakistan has granted overflight access. Pakistan closed its airspace in February after a suicide attack by a Pakistan-based militant group in Indian-controlled Kashmir led to aerial bombing missions on each other's soil and a fighter dogfight over Kashmir.

Commercial and cargo airlines using Indian airspace have been forced to take costly and time-consuming detours because they cannot fly over Pakistan. But Pakistan had cleared Modi's flight to Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit beginning today, Indian and Pakistan sources said. The

Indian foreign ministry said the government had considered the routes for Modi's travel and decided he would take the longer passage to Central Asia instead of the direct route over Pakistan.

The move follows calls in local media that Modi shouldn't be securing an exception for himself while thousands of ordinary travelers were enduring the longer travel because of the tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals. "The Government of India had explored two options for the route to be taken by the VVIP Aircraft to Bishkek. A decision has now been taken that the VVIP Aircraft will fly via Oman, Iran and Central Asian countries on the way to Bishkek," the foreign ministry said.

Modi's move also suggests there is little chance of a thaw in ties even though Pakistan said it hoped to revive talks after elections in India ended in May. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan will also be attending the SCO meeting, but Indian officials said there were no plans for a bilateral meeting between him and Modi. Vivek Katju, a former top Indian diplomat who dealt with Pakistan ties, said in a newspaper column on Tuesday that he



KATUNAYAKE: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi looks on from a plane on his departure at Bandaranaike International Airport in Katunayake. —AFP

was disappointed the Modi government had initially sought overflight permission from Islamabad.

"Would it not have been better for government to show solidarity with common travelers, including the great number of workers who live in the Gulf countries

and make significant contributions to India's economy?" he said. Pakistan announced last month that the airspace closure on its eastern border with India would be extended to June 14. The country lies in the middle of a vital aviation corridor. —Reuters



SINGAPORE: In this file photo, North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un (center) gestures as he meets with US President Donald Trump (right) at the Capella Hotel on Sentosa island. —AFP

Business

THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2019

12 Motorbike taxi firms rev up for race into West Africa**13** Iran scrambles to lift petchem sales as sanctions hammer oil**14** The all-new Infiniti QX80 built to transform driving experiences

This file photo taken in Saint-Herblain, western France, shows the logo of carmaker Renault on one of its cars. Bosses at French carmaker Renault yesterday faced robust questioning by shareholders during a general assembly following the collapse of merger plans with Fiat Chrysler and with its troubled Nissan alliance mired in fresh crisis. — AFP

Macron snubs Renault boss amid new crisis

French minister says Fiat-Renault merger still possible

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron has turned down a request to meet Renault chairman Jean-Dominique Senard, who is furious over the government's interference at the carmaker, sources told Reuters, raising questions over Senard's future.

News of the rebuff came as Renault shareholders met yesterday to endorse Senard's January appointment to replace Carlos Ghosn, the ousted leader of the Renault-Nissan alliance. Senard, whose bid to merge with Fiat Chrysler (FCA) over Nissan's reservations was scuppered by French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, unsuccessfully sought a meeting with Macron to secure his backing, four government and company sources said.

Seven months after Ghosn's arrest on financial misconduct charges - which he denies - the alliance he forged is on life support. Nissan refused to study a full Renault tie-up proposed by Senard, and wants to weaken its 43.4 percent shareholder's grip. Instead, Senard then tabled an FCA-Renault deal proposal developed without Nissan's knowledge. But FCA

Chairman John Elkann withdrew the offer after France, Renault's biggest shareholder, blocked the June 5 board vote and demanded more time to secure Nissan's endorsement.

Days later, in a third risky move that caused outrage in Japan, Senard vowed to block governance reforms introduced by Nissan after the Ghosn scandal unless Renault gets more seats on the Japanese firm's powerful new board committees. Renault sources say Senard's exasperation deepened when Le Maire, seeking to smooth tensions from the sidelines of a weekend G20 meeting in Japan, publicly discussed a possible cut to France's 15 percent Renault stake or even Renault's Nissan holding.

Senard felt further undermined by Le Maire's surprise pronouncements and told colleagues he expected to be "backed up from the highest level of government", according to one. But Macron's office declined a proposed sit-down, the sources said. "There is no meeting with Senard on the president's agenda," an Elysee official said yesterday.

Renault declined to comment. But sources close to the chairman played down the rebuffed meeting request and said he was determined to stay put. Senard and Macron "communicate regularly by text message", one said, and the French head of state is extremely busy with other matters. "Senard is on top form for his shareholders' meeting and is resolved to continue."

France is not seeking to replace Senard, another government source said. "He may have taken some bad advice, and he should clearly have made more personnel changes for Renault to move on" from the Ghosn era, he added. Nissan CEO Hiroto Saikawa and Renault CEO Thierry Bollere, Ghosn's former second-in-command who was promoted in January, barely speak and are now seen as clear irritants to the relationship, French official and company sources say.

Merger talks

Plans to merge carmakers Renault and Fiat Chrysler could re-emerge despite the breakdown of negotiations last week, France's transport minister said on

Tuesday, joining a chorus of French officials hoping the deal could be revived. Asked if talks between the two companies were over, Elisabeth Borne told BFM TV: "I think it is not closed."

Borne's comments follow similar remarks by French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, who also said he felt a merger between France's Renault and Italian-American Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) remained a "good opportunity." French budget minister Gerald Darmanin said last week as well that he hoped the door had not closed on a deal.

Last week, FCA pulled out of \$35 billion merger talks with Renault, with both companies blaming the French government. France has a 15 percent stake in Renault and the collapse of the talks deprived the companies of an opportunity to create the world's third-biggest carmaker with 5 billion euros (\$5.6 billion) in promised annual synergies. FCA and Renault are still looking for ways to resuscitate their merger plan and win the approval of Renault's alliance partner Nissan, sources close to the companies have told Reuters. — Reuters

Uber to use drones for food delivery, unveils new autonomous car

WASHINGTON: Uber said yesterday it would begin testing food delivery by drone as it ramps up its Uber Eats service that partners with restaurants. The ride-hailing giant announced at its Uber Elevate Summit that it had been given regulatory approval to begin tests of delivering food by drone in the region of San Diego, California. "Our goal is to expand Uber Eats drone delivery so we can provide more options to more people at the tap of a button," said Luke Fischer, head of flight operations at Uber Elevate.

"We believe that Uber is uniquely positioned to take on this challenge as we're able to leverage the Uber Eats network of restaurant partners and delivery partners as well as the aviation experience and technology of Uber Elevate." For logistical reasons, the drones will not deliver directly to customers, but to a safe drop-off location where an Uber Eats driver will complete the order.

In the future, Uber hopes to land the drones on parked vehicles located near each delivery location to allow the final delivery by hand. Uber said it had developed a proprietary airspace management system called Elevate Cloud Systems that will guide the drones to their location.

While not the first food drone delivery service, Uber is aiming for a potentially large-scale service through its food service partners across the United States. Initial testing in San Diego was done with McDonald's, and will be expanded to include additional Uber Eats

restaurants later this year. Separately, Uber unveiled its newest self-driving vehicle produced by Volvo Cars.

The Volvo XC90 prototype will be "capable of fully driving itself," according to an Uber statement, with sensors atop and built into the vehicle to allow it to operate and maneuver in an urban environment.

"Working in close partnership with companies like Volvo is a key ingredient to effectively building a safe, scalable, self-driving fleet," said Eric Meyhofer, CEO of Uber Advanced Technologies Group.

Uber signed a deal in 2017 with Volvo, which is owned by China's Geely, to produce "tens of thousands" of self-driving cars for a fleet of autonomous taxis. This week, Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi said he does not expect fully self-driving vehicles to be deployed for at least 15 years, but that autonomous features will be gradually introduced and that some "easy" trips may be made autonomously. — AFP



WASHINGTON: The Bell Nexus concept "flying car" is shown at the Uber Elevate summit on Tuesday, one of several that will make up a fleet of electric aircraft Uber expects to deploy by 2023. — AFP

Business

With powerful elegance, Infiniti QX80 is built to transform driving experiences

'Best Premium SUV' at 'Wheels Car of the Year'



KUWAIT: The Infiniti QX80 brought by Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, exemplifies Infiniti's presence in the luxury SUV segment. The Infiniti QX80 takes Infiniti's 'Powerful Elegance' design language in a bold new direction, creating a powerful, contemporary and commanding aesthetic.

The flagship SUV model has been created to meet the needs of today's luxury car buyers, and introduces a more modern interpretation of upscale luxury to the full-size SUV segment. It will appeal to a buyer that demands space and utility, hand-crafted quality and modern design, and effortless on-road performance.

The QX80 has a refined and spacious cabin that features high-quality materials, a hand-crafted finish and advanced drive-assist technologies. With a taut yet comfort-oriented suspension, and ample performance from its 5.6-liter V8 engine, the new QX80 gives drivers an assured feeling of control and confidence at the wheel.

The QX80's rear entertainment system has also been upgraded. Higher-resolution screens provide the interface for connectivity and entertainment devices. The system also now supports 31 languages, up from three in the outgoing QX80. The QX80 is newly-available with a range of technologies to inform the driver of their surroundings, help them avoid potential hazards and ease the monotony of driving

in certain conditions. These technologies include: Lane Departure Warning and Prevention, Intelligent Cruise Control, Distance Control Assist, Predictive Forward Collision Warning, Forward Emergency Braking, Blind Spot Warning and Intervention and Backup Collision Intervention.

It is worth noting that the Infiniti QX80 received the 'Best Premium SUV' accolade at the prestigious 'Wheels 2018 Car of the Year' awards or popularly known as COTY which was held in Dubai earlier this year.

Infiniti Al-Babtain encourages its customers to explore the unique features of the QX80, by visiting the Infiniti showroom located in Al Rai. The showroom is open daily except Fridays.



Gulf Bank launches competitive auto loan offers

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is introducing exciting new offers across several of the largest car dealerships in the country, with discounts reaching up to KD 700 of the total auto loan amount. This summer, Gulf Bank has collaborated with dealerships including Hyundai, KIA, Dodge, Honda, Ford, Chevrolet, Lexus, Toyota, BMW, Nissan, and Infiniti to introduce offers for both Gulf Bank customers and non-Gulf Bank customers who choose to finance their new or used cars with Gulf Bank.

Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank, Ahmed Al-Ameer said: "At Gulf Bank, we are constantly strengthening our relationships with multiple auto dealerships to make the process of buying your dream car a reality. We're proud to introduce this year's auto loans which aim to simplify the car shopping experience for everyone, whether they are a current Gulf Bank customer or simply wish to finance their new car through Gulf Bank. This summer, we



are excited to offer of up to KD 700 of the total loan amount in cooperation with 10 of the largest auto dealerships in the country. Throughout the year, Gulf Bank is constantly working to launch even more rewarding auto loans and unique offers at Kuwait's top dealerships to make more of our clients' dreams come true."

Customers have until 31 July 2019 to avail an auto loan as part of Gulf Bank's newest offer, with total loan amounts reaching up to KD 25,000 and the maximum period of the loan being 60 months (5 years). Gulf Bank

representatives are also available at more than 12 auto dealerships across Kuwait to further assist with the auto loan process and tailor a financial plan to any customer's needs. Auto loan terms and conditions apply.



KFH: 10 customers win KD 250 each in 'Hesabi' for Youth Draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the 11th draw of "Hesabi" for Youth. The draw took place under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The draw is part of Win with Hesabi campaign that offers 2 BMW 420i and 120 cash prizes worth KD 250.

The winners of the KD 250 prize are: Salwa Al-Jalawi, Faisal Awad, Noura Al-Dosary, Amira Hazzal, LoJain Al-Omani, Aesha Al-Mutairi, Tahany Al-Mutairi, Saad Al-Sawag, Mohammed Al-Hashan, and Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman.

KFH offers "Hesabi for Youth" with a variety of privileges as part of its contin-

ued endeavor to provide adequate customer care, innovate new products and services and fulfill the needs of all customers of various age categories and interests. Services and products are tailored to suit customers' needs and provide distinguished service as per global standards regarding quality, accuracy and speed.

Hesabi program has been designed to meet the needs of youth and aspire for their active life style. This program presents for youth many exclusive offers and a wide range of privileges including Hesabi ATM card with a unique design, eligibility to issue Hesabi prepaid card (as per credit regulations of KFH), distinguished offers and discounts etc.

KFH continues to launch marketing campaigns to reward youth customers. Hesabi for Youth represents the ambitions and expectations of youth category and copes with KFH aspirations to attract the largest portion of youth who represents the major part of Kuwaiti society. Also, the account represents KFH initiative to diversify banking services and products.



KFH representatives after the draw

Drive off in your very own 400 HP Nissan Patrol V8 this summer!

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Nissan vehicles in the State of Kuwait, is delighted to offer its loyal customers a valuable offer on the Hero of all Terrain this summer. Inviting all to embark on a new adventure with the most powerful in its class, for the first time in Kuwait, the Nissan Patrol V8 can be purchased for only KD 15,999.

The Nissan Patrol V8 is backed by a power of 400 HP, and torque of 560 NM comes with the direct fuel injection system and the variable valve shift control technology, Patrol will give you maximum power with the lowest percentage of emissions. Poised to create a strong presence anywhere it goes, a fresh and modern design approach inspired the creation of the impressive exterior. The bold window graphic of the blackened A-pillar, 20" alloy-wheels, as well as the dynamic chrome grille all contribute to Patrol's undeniable on road presence. Conquering the off-roads means roughing through a diverse range of challenging landscapes. Fortunately, Nissan Patrol is well equipped to tackle any terrain thanks to its advanced technologies, thoughtful design, and incredible forethought. The heavy-duty frame at Patrol's core is designed for improved structural rigidity without any compromise in ride quality.

Discover the technologies packed inside Nissan Patrol are practical, useful and, often times, indulgent. They are designed to make



travel easier, safer and a lot more entertaining. The Nissan Intelligent Key allows one to press a button on the door handle or hatch to unlock the doors, while keeping the keys within the pocket or purse. And with Remote Start, one can start your Nissan Patrol from nearly 60 meters away, allowing the cabin to heat or cool.

When it comes to blind spot warning, if another vehicle is detected in the blind spot area, Blind Spot Warning flashes the indicator to put the signal on, and the indicator flashes with a warning chime to alert the driver. Intelligent Forward Collision Warning is on the lookout when one can't see what's going on ahead. It watches two cars ahead, monitoring your speed and distance, and when it detects

sudden deceleration, it gives the driver a heads-up to slow down. The Rear Cross Traffic Alert helps one to back out of a space with more confidence as it watches around the rear of the Patrol.

The intelligent braking system can help save the passengers from a potential frontal collision. It monitors the speed and distance between the driver and the car ahead and can alert the driver to slow down. It can even automatically engage the brakes to help avoid a collision or lessen the severity of an impact. Nissan Al-Babtain invites customers to visit its showrooms located in Al-Rai and Ahmadi to seize this exclusive opportunity and discover the dynamic features the popular Nissan model has to offer.

Warba Bank to hold Al-Sunbula draws today

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best Investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be organizing its weekly Sunbula draw number 22 and 23 in addition to Sunbula Kids draw today (Thursday) at 11 am in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the bank officials.

Al-Sunbula both account and fixed deposits are the perfect choices for customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while at the same time gain the opportunity to win prizes throughout the year. In line with the bank's mission to develop and differentiate its offerings, Warba Bank has enhanced its Sunbula campaign for 2019 with more cash and prizes reaching more than 1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars.

In the running campaign, Warba Bank continued its weekly draws for 5 winners of KD 1,000 each throughout the year, yet introduce

the "Mega Draws" that take place on a quarterly basis to reveal five winners, the 1st winner gets KD 100,000 in cash! The four winners thereafter will each get the latest 2019 Land Cruiser 5.7 VXR. And more, as the last mega draw will give away 2 more Land Cruisers!

As per the winning chances, each customer will be participating in the draw for each KD 10 in the Sunbula Account. It is also worth noting that the Sunbula Fixed Deposit rewards its investor with both high expected returns, reaching up to 3.5 percent, as well as winning chances. And such investors have full flexibility in choosing the desired tenure and the profit distribution method.

Furthermore, Warba Bank is leveraging on its Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request the opening of Al-Sunbula account in a simple electronic manner without having to visit the branch, through 5 simple steps in 5 minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, through the new and unique electronic system used to implement this service. Representatives will then contact the customer to determine the appropriate time to visit the branch to get required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

What's On



Euphoric jubilation dawns at IISM on a creative Arts Day

It's the tradition of India International School to integrate arts into the core curriculum bringing creativity in daily routine, giving holistic and impressive experiences to children. Keeping in tune with the same, the pleasant evenings of 11th and 12th April unfolded the exuberant array of spectacular events on the colossal day of ARTS DAY, in the sprawling auditorium of India International School. Mangal under the auspices of Vice-Principal Mrs Sophy John and her team of diligent teachers.

Reverie of Explicit Values (ROEV) was celebrated with pomp and splendor by the alluring daffodils of classes 3 to 5 with the contextual theme "UNITY IN DIVERSITY." The program was graced by the presence of honorable Chief Guest - Aroub Al Rifai, Secretary General of Refai Charitable Trust; daughter of our beloved Sheikh Yusuf Al Rifai, Dr PA Ibrahim Haji - Chairman India International School, Director Malayil Moosa Koya, Principal F M Basheer Ahmed Vice Principals - Mr Saleem, Mrs Indulekha and Mrs Sophy John.

As a token of love and appreciation bouquets were presented to the distinguished guests. Following this, the laudable introduction of the director threw light on the unobtrusive tremendous social service rendered by



these stalwarts towards enhancing the community. He presented the beacons with the mementos and blessed them wholeheartedly to continue this noble service.

A highlight of the remarkable day was the official release of the school magazine REFLECTIONS - an insight and a mirror to the creme of activities and culture of our

school presenting picturesque view of the creative instincts of our budding amateurs. The honor to release the magazine was given to the Chief Guest.

The momentous occasion was further reinforced with the proud announcement and honoring of academic toppers (classes 3 to 5) for the year 2019-2020. It was indeed a mem-

orable moment for the parents and teachers to rejoice at the successful accomplishment of academic excellence of their children. At this juncture splendid cultural segment of the Arts Day with a series of mesmerizing dances displayed immaculately - The Religious Unity and National Integration, left the audience spell bound and to cherish the beautiful moments. The joyous occasion concluded with Vote of Thanks proposed by the Vice-Principal Sophy John. The Lovely Lilies of classes 1 and 2 charged with the spirit of enthusiasm had enthralled the audience on the august gathering of 12th April 2019 with the noble theme RESPECT.

The program commenced with a welcome address proposed by the Principal. As a token of love and appreciation bouquets were presented to the eminent guests. Following this Chief Guest and Guest of Honor addressed the gathering and enlightened everyone with their inspiring words of appreciation for the school.

The grandeur of the day galore with the honoring ceremony of the stalwarts of the institution who have been journeying for 15 glorious years from the grass root level with dedication and commitment. It was our Director's privilege to honor the staff members with mementos.

The honoring of Academic Toppers of classes 1 and 2 by our former Vice Principal Sapna Raoof added feather in a cap to the glory of the celebration. The great feelings of the parents and teachers could be perceived when the children proudly honored for reaching the summit of Academic Excellence. Following this Mrs Sapna Raoof, inspired everyone with her words of motivation in proclaiming India International School as UNIQUE in rendering quality education and congratulated the beacons of light for leading the school substantially to the laudable height of excellence.

The jubilant performance of lovely lilies was at its peak during the cultural section which enthralled the audience with an amalgamation of artistic creativity and abundant vibrancy. As the maxim goes, ability is what you are capable of motivation determines what you do attitude determines how well you do it. Kudos to all the participants of Alluring Daffodils and Lively Lilies for exhibiting their innate talents under the guidance of dedicated teachers and the spirit of excellence shown in executing the challenging day with synergy and spirit. The fantastic day culminated with vote of thanks proposed by Vice Principal Indulekha.

WHITE CHICKEN CHILI

Ingredients

- Servings: 8
- Start to finish: 1 hour
- 2 onions, chopped
- 3 Anaheim chiles, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 3 poblano chiles, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 3 jalapeno chiles, stemmed, seeded, and minced
- 3 pounds bone-in split chicken breasts, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground coriander
- Salt and pepper
- 2 (15 ounce) cans no-salt-added cannellini beans, rinsed
- 4 cups unsalted chicken broth
- 1/4 cup minced fresh cilantro
- 4 scallions, sliced thin
- 2 tablespoons lime juice, plus lime wedges for serving
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano



Preparation

Toss onions, Anaheims, poblanos, and two-thirds of jalapenos together in bowl. Working in two batches, pulse vegetables in food processor to consistency of chunky salsa, about 12 pulses; set aside. Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat until just smoking. Brown chicken, 3 to 5 minutes per side; transfer to plate and discard skin.

Add processed vegetable mixture, garlic, cumin, coriander, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper to fat left in pot and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until vegetables are softened, about 10 minutes. Remove pot from heat. Process 1 cup cooked vegetable mixture, 1 cup beans, and 1 cup broth in food processor until smooth, about 20 seconds, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Return pureed mixture to pot and stir in remaining 3 cups broth, scraping up any browned bits. Nestle chicken into pot along with any accumulated juices and bring to simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until chicken registers 160 F, 10 to 15 minutes.

Transfer chicken to carving board, let cool slightly, then shred into bite-size pieces using 2 forks; discard bones. Stir remaining beans into chili, bring to simmer over medium heat, and cook, uncovered, until chili has thickened slightly, about 10 minutes. Off heat, stir in chicken and let sit until heated through, about 5 minutes. Stir in cilantro, scallions, lime juice, oregano, and remaining jalapeno and season with pepper to taste. Serve with lime wedges.



Sama Voluntary Group recently organized a special ceremony to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr with children at the Women Cultural Society. The ceremony included games, plays, competitions and distributing gifts which were presented by the Fantasy World.

Warba Bank's Ramadan programs

Warba Bank had a busy social program during the holy month of Ramadan as a part of its social responsibility programs designed for various social sects and ages. Warba bank activities included visits to residents of the geriatric houses and patients hospital-

ized at the Amiri hospital, distributing over 1000 Iftar meals, organizing Fayez walking activities at the Avenues, organizing Quran memorization competitions, circulating historical information on the bank's Instagram account and videos about the Prophet's (PBUH) traditions. Commenting

on the bank's Ramadan activities, Warba's marketing and corporal communication executive manager, Ayman Salem Al-Mutairi stressed that the bank is keen on annually organizing such activities for the entire Kuwaiti society.



Do you consume a credit card's worth of plastic every week?

PARIS: People worldwide could be ingesting five grams of microscopic plastic particles every week, equivalent in weight to a credit card, researchers said yesterday. Coming mostly from tap and especially bottled water, nearly invisible bits of polymer were also found in shellfish, beer and salt, scientists and the University of Newcastle in Australia reported.

The findings, drawn from 52 peer-reviewed studies, are the first to estimate the sheer weight of plastics consumed by individual humans: about 250 grams, or half-a-pound, over the course of a year. Another study calculated that the average American eats and drinks in about 45,000 plastics particles smaller than 130 microns annually, while breathing in roughly the same number. "Not only are plastics polluting our oceans and waterways and killing marine life, it's in all of us," said Marco Lambertini, director general of WWF International, which commissioned the new report. "If we don't want it in our bodies, we need to stop the millions of tons of plastic that continue leaking into Nature every year."

Plastics industry set to grow

In the last two decades, the world has produced as much plastic as during the rest of history, and the industry is set to grow by four percent a year until 2025, according to a new report by Grand View Research. More than 75 percent of all plastics winds up as waste. A third of that — some 100 million tons — is dumped or leaches into Nature, polluting land, rivers and the sea.

On current trends, the ocean will contain one metric tonne of plastic for every three metric tons of fish by 2025, according to The New Plastics Economy report, published by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Plastic particles have recently been found inside fish in the deepest recesses of the ocean, and blanketing the most pristine snows in the Pyrenees mountains between France and Spain. The authors of yesterday's report were up front about the limitations of their research, starting with the fact that little is known about health consequences.

'Zero plastics'

Gaps in data were filled with assumptions

and extrapolations that could be challenged, though the estimates, they insisted, were on the conservative side. They invited other researchers to build on their conclusions. "Developing a method of transforming counts of microplastic particles into masses will help determine the potential toxicological risks for humans," said co-author Thava Palanisami, a microplastics expert at the University of Newcastle.

Some experts remain skeptical about long-term impacts. "Based on the evidence that is currently available, I do not think that health effects of microplastics are a major concern," Alastair Grant, a professor of ecology at the University of East Anglia told AFP. But that doesn't mean plastics isn't a major problem, he added. "What we do need is political and economic actions to reduce the amounts of plastic being disposed of into the environment and encourage recycling." Media and watchdog reports have recently uncovered numerous cases of plastic waste from rich countries destined for recycling in poorer ones being dumped or burned instead. — AFP

Lovelorn fish turn gloomy when separated: Study

PARIS: The tiny Central American convict cichlid may only be a few centimeters long but it's a fish with a big heart. Researchers in France found that the tropical fish — known to be a loyal and monogamous partner — suffers from heartache when separated from its lover. Even more heart-rending perhaps is that female cichlids, when paired with a male who is not their preferred partner, were shown in experiments to exhibit "pessimistic" behavior.

Scientists believe that over the course of evolution fish species such as the convict cichlid have developed loyal partnerships as a way to better protect their young, which are extremely vulnerable to predators. To effectively

measure each fish's mental response to separation, researchers from the University of Burgundy in Dijon trained females to use their mouths to open two small boxes, placed either side of their tanks.

The "positive" box contained fish food, and the "negative" box was empty. The boxes had either black or white lids to help the fish distinguish between them. The team then placed a grey "ambiguous" box in the centre of the tank to see how the females would react. They reasoned that a fish with an optimistic outlook would flip open the grey lid in the hope of snaffling a treat, whereas a pessimistic one might hesitate or leave the box alone altogether. — AFP

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Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2019



Actors perform in the play "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" by French director Jerome Deschamps during the "Printemps des Comediens" festival at the Opera Comedie in Montpellier, southern France yesterday. — AFP

Radiohead defies hackers, releases trove of stolen music

Alternative rock legends Radiohead on Tuesday released an 18-hour trove of private recordings from their 1997 album "OK Computer" after getting hacked by someone seeking a ransom of \$150,000 for the music. The genre-bending English musicians uploaded the 1.8-gigabyte collection of recording session outtakes and rare live performances on their radiohead.bandcamp.com website.



Thom Yorke

The songs can be accessed online for free. The group is also selling downloads of an album of the 18 hacked MiniDiscs for £18 (\$22.90, 20.20 euros) and donating the proceeds to the Extinction Rebellion environmental campaign group. "We've been hacked," frontman Thom Yorke wrote on the website. "It's not very interesting," he added. "As it's out there it may as well be out there, until we all get bored and move on." Guitarist Jonny Greenwood later tweeted a statement saying the hack occurred last week.

"Someone stole Thom's minidisk archive from around the time of OK

Computer, and reportedly demanded \$150,000 on threat of releasing it," Greenwood wrote. "So instead of complaining-much-or ignoring it, we're releasing all 18 hours on Bandcamp in aid of Extinction Rebellion," he wrote. News of the hack first emerged on a Radiohead discussion page of the Reddit website last week.

"This is a bit of a doozy," a user identified only as u/santicol wrote. The user described how someone claiming to have the archive came in contact with a "well known leaker" and offered them previews of the tracks. "They were asking upwards of \$150,000 for the entire set, at \$800 per studio track and \$50 per live track," the Reddit user wrote.

'Awkward and challenging'

The collection includes demo versions of "OK Computer" music and a few songs that never made the cut. The critically-acclaimed album earned Radiohead their first Grammy and was followed by a world tour that gave them lasting international fame. Its bestselling single was "Karma Police"—one of the most instantly-recognizable tunes of the 1990s and a staple of parties for the subsequent 20 years. "The leaker seems to be well known in some spaces and has a history of trading in very rare/high profile material," the Reddit user wrote.

Radiohead were formed in 1985 and debuted their genre-bending hit single "Creep" in 1992. They were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in March. "It can be awkward and challenging sometimes," band songwriter Philip Selway said at the induction ceremony. "But I guess that's what kept us all interested for the past three decades." Radiohead have campaigned passionately for environmental causes and feature songs about climate change.

They stopped using disposable cups on tour in 2008 and began filling their tour buses with biofuels. Activists from Extinction Rebellion—a fast-growing movement founded last year by British academics—want world governments to slash greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2025. Their highly-disruptive but peaceful protests brought parts of central London to a standstill for 11 days in April and saw police make more than 1,000 arrests.—AFP

TABOO-BREAKING TV SOAP ON SEX AND WOMEN HAS SENEGAL IN A LATHER

Cheikh hoists his second wife Mareme onto his shoulder and carries her to their rose petal-covered bed, where he lays her down. The frolicking couple embrace and... what happens next is left to the viewer's imagination as the camera suddenly switches to a pair of white slippers, the bedroom door closes and the scene ends. In soap operas in other parts of the world, such coy depictions of sex would be considered unremarkable, even dreary. But in conservative Senegal, where even an on-screen kiss is rare, the self-described monitors of public morality are in uproar.

The show—"Maitresse d'un homme marie" ("Mistress of a married man")—has also already been cautioned by the state's media watchdog for being too racy. But defenders say the soap takes a desperately-needed look at relationship issues such as male abuse, the pain experienced by abandoned spouses and a woman's right to sexual pleasure. "Maitresse d'un homme marie" follows five young women characters, all strong-minded, free-wheeling city dwellers. Some start affairs with married men and-as in the case of Mareme—end up marrying them.

'Cast judgment'

In Dakar's Sicap Liberte 3 district, the Senegalese family is glued to its TV for the twice-a-week show. In between adverts blaring out the virtues of a brand of local rice, bubbly single mother Rose condemns the threat of censorship hanging over her favorite program. "Maitresse", she says, holds up a mirror to hypocrisy and inequality in Senegal. "Men who criticize the series are the same ones who have mistresses and what they do to them is far worse than what you see on the screen," she said. "They cast judgment on the women (in the show) because they are single, because they are in charge of their lives," said Rose. "In Senegal, if you are not married by the time you are 30, you are not a good woman. In this country, it doesn't matter even if you're a huge success, if you're not a man, you're nothing."

Slapped

Launched in January, the show goes out at prime time on the commercial channel 2STV and is also avidly followed on YouTube, where each episode is watched between one and two million times. Devotion to the series is such that one actor was slapped by an elderly woman while exercising. "She told him, 'Stop drinking and look after your family,'" the show's executive producer, Kalista Sy, recounted, with a giggle. The West African state is predominantly Muslim—mostly following the Sufi strain—where public displays of affection or sex outside marriage are frowned upon.



Halimatou Gadji (right), who plays Marieme in the Senegalese television serie "Maitresse d'un homme marie" (Mistress of a Married Man) and Ndiaye Cire Ba (left), who plays Djaliika look on during the recording of an episode in Dakar.



A child watches an episode of the TV serie "Maitresse d'un homme marie" (Mistress of a Married Man) in Dakar.



Ndiaye Cire Ba (left), who plays Djaliika in the Senegalese television serie "Maitresse d'un homme marie" (Mistress of a Married Man) gets make-up during the recording of an episode in Dakar.



The "Maitresse d'un homme marie" (Mistress of a Married Man) serie's director, Baye Moussa Seck, looks on during the recording of an episode in Dakar. — AFP photos

Within weeks of the series' launch, a powerful Muslim NGO, Jamra, asked the country's audiovisual watchdog, the CNRA, to crack down. After deliberation, the CNRA on March 29 allowed the series to continue provided there were "corrective measures" to the script. Without these changes, the show would have to be screened late at night, or face being banned altogether. Everything seemed to be going fine until the 34th episode—the scene of Cheikh and Mareme canoodling on the marital bed.

"They crossed the red line. They offended a large proportion of Senegalese by broadcasting virtually pornographic content during the blessed month of Ramadan," Jamma's Mactar Gueye told AFP. "It is unthinkable that this apology for fornication and adultery continues in this form," he said, in an interview at his home where a giant TV screen was turned on to a telenovela channel showing soap operas.

Sexual emancipation

The female characters on "Maitresse" often

bear the brunt of the moral messages—on-screen marriage-breakers, for instance, are verbally lashed by friends and family for their behavior. But for Senegalese feminist activist Fatou Kine Diouf, this finger wagging has had less impact on viewers than the theme of sexual emancipation. "The series shows women who are in charge of their sexuality. It will never get directly shown on screen but everyone is talking about it. In that respect, the series is really powerful."

The soap opera's set is a joyful buzz of actors, technicians and makeup artists, working up to 12 hours a day, six days a week. In a tired voice, Sy, the executive producer, says that male hostility, religious objections and technical hitches are her daily challenges. "But when young women watch the show and identify with characters that are like them, they are deeply touched," she said. "And nobody can take that away from us." — AFP

No 'Endgame' for Marvel fan: He's seen 'Avengers' film 110 times

A Marvel fan in the United States is doing his part to help "Avengers: Endgame" become the highest grossing movie in history—he's seen the superhero blockbuster a whopping 110 times, possibly setting a new Guinness record. "I work 10 hours, watch end game 2 times on weekdays at least 6 hours," said Agustin Alanis in a message on Twitter on Monday that was accompanied by a picture of himself and a theater attendant holding his 110th ticket stub for the movie.

Alanis' feat beats another record set last year by Anthony Mitchell, who saw "Avengers: Infinity

War" 103 times, which got him a place in the Guinness Book of World Records and a trip to the "Endgame" set. Alanis, who lives in Florida, has been chronicling his trips to see the movie on Twitter, posting a picture of himself at each viewing with his ticket stub. The latest mega-blockbuster from Marvel Studios has earned a worldwide total of \$2.732 billion at the box office so far, putting it within range of beating "Avatar," which raked in \$2.788 billion to become the highest-grossing movie of all time.

The hugely-anticipated Avengers series-ender

earned a staggering \$1.2 billion on its opening weekend at the end of April and has since continued its massive box office run. Industry watchers, however, say the movie has begun to lose steam with viewers and may end up in the number two spot for the foreseeable future—possibly until an eventual re-release.—AFP

In this file photo fans of the Avengers arrive for a costume contest before the first screening of "Avengers: Endgame" at the TCL Chinese Theater in Hollywood. — AFP





Liam Gallagher advises brother Noel to give his fans a break

Liam Gallagher thinks his brother Noel Gallagher needs to take more breaks so his fans don't get fed up with him. The 46-year-old rocker - who recently released the documentary 'As It Was' about his comeback and launch of his solo career with his 2017 debut solo LP 'As You Were' - feels it's important to give fans a gap so he can be "missed" and so they don't get bored of him. And Liam, who will take some time off before working on anymore new material, admitted he thinks that is where his 52-year-old sibling is going wrong. Speaking on the Dave Berry Breakfast Show on Absolute Radio, he said: "I think you've got to keep dipping in and dipping out haven't you. "Otherwise people are going to get very sick of you very quickly. It don't matter who you are.

"Not like Radiohead do where they go away for 10 years and stuff. Maybe like a year or something and get out of people's faces." He added: "You've got to go away and be missed. "I think that's what our kid's problem is. "And I'm not trying to slag Noel off. "He just seems to be always there. "I think he needs to go away for a little bit and come back and he'd make more of an impact." Whilst he wasn't knocking his sibling's success with his High Flying Birds, Liam - who will release his second album 'Why Me? Why Not' in September - backtracked a little, and threw a little dig at the Britpop group's former guitarist - who Liam has been at loggerheads ever since a backstage fight between the pair at their show in Paris in 2009, which led to the demise of the 'Wonderwall' hit-makers - as he admitted it could be a "dangerous" move

for him to go away as he's got a "forgettable" face. The 'Live Forever' singer - who often compares Noel to a potato - added: "Not that he's not doing well. I just think ... then again he's one of them faces, he's forgettable, you know what I mean? So it could be dangerous for him." Meanwhile, the 'Bold' rocker admitted that he can be "overcritical" of this vocal abilities. He said: "I'm kind, hard-working. When I get into it I do like to do my graft, if you can call it a graft ... I can be a little overcritical. I do give myself a hard time sometimes, especially on the singing front." Listen to the Dave Berry Breakfast Show on Absolute Radio, weekdays from 6am - absoluteradio.co.uk

Madonna posts X-rated album art

Madonna has released X-rated album art for 'Madame X'. The 60-year-old superstar shared a "portrait of a lady" on Instagram on Tuesday, just days before she releases her new record on Friday. Alongside the nude artwork, the singer wrote: "Portrait of A Lady.....Madame X. Album drops June 14th #madamex (sic)" Madonna also shared another picture of herself in a colourful designer gown, fishnets and her signature 'X' eye patch, and wrote: "Mother of dragons..... Madame X Album drops June 14th X #madamex (sic)" Meanwhile, the 'Like a Virgin' hitmaker is set to appear at a iHeartRadio ICONS event to discuss the record. The Queen of Pop will celebrate her hotly-anticipated follow-up to 2015's 'Rebel Heart' on June 20 at an event in New York, where she will walk her fans through the songs at a special playback with radio stars Paul 'Cubby' Bryant and Christine Nagy. The event will be live-streamed on LiveXLive from 6.30pm (ET) and 11pm (BST). 'Madame X' features recently released singles 'Medellin', 'I Rise', 'Crave' with Swae Lee, 'Future' with Quavo and 'Dark Ballet'. Madonna - who will kick off her extensive 'Madame X' world tour in September - recently explained that 'I Rise' was written for "all marginalized people" as she was announced as a performer at Pride Island as part of World Pride in New York City on June 30. She said: "I wrote 'I Rise' as a way of giving a voice to all marginalized people who feel they don't have the opportunity to speak their mind. "This year is the 50th anniversary of Pride and I hope this song encourages all individuals to be who they are, to speak their minds and to love themselves." The 'Material Girl' singer was recently honored with the Advocate for Change award at the 2019 GLAAD Media Awards. She said in her speech: "Fighting for all marginalized people was a duty and an honor I could not turn my back on, nor will I ever."



Kurban 'can't get enough' of Cyrus' Mother's Daughter

Keith Urban "can't get enough" of Miley Cyrus' new song 'Mother's Daughter'. The 51-year-old country music superstar - who is married to Nicole Kidman - took to Twitter to congratulate the 26-year-old pop star on her extremely catchy new song. Referencing the chorus, he wrote: "Back up back up back up "Back up boy.... whooooooo. "Damn you @MileyCyrus - Mother's Daughter is going round and round and round in my head- and I cant get enough of it!!!! Swish swish MFerrrrrrr- hell yes! - KU (sic)" Miley hailed "Uncle Urban" "badass" for being into the explicit track. The 'Nothing Breaks Like a Heart' hitmaker - whose father is country music legend Billy Ray Cyrus - wrote back: "Love you Uncle Urban! You're so bad ass! (sic)" 'Mother's Daughter' features on the former Disney star's recently released EP 'She Is Coming'. In the track, Miley sings about the impact her mom Tish has had on her career, whilst in another song 'D.R.E.A.M.' - which stands for Drugs Rule Everything Around Me - she references her party lifestyle, as Wu Tang Clan's Ghostface Killah raps about drugs. In 'Unholy', she claims people view her as "obscene", singing: "You hate me, you love me, you just wanna touch me." Elsewhere, 'RuPaul's Drag Race' star RuPaul features on 'Cattitude' and 'Party Up the Street' has Swae Lee and Mike Will Made-It on it. The 'Younger Now' hitmaker - who is married to actor Liam Hemsworth - previously revealed the mini-album is the "first of three drops" as she promised there would be more music on the way. She added: "This is the 1st of 3 drops! 6 songs , 3 EP's ! SHE IS COMING / HERE / EVERYTHING all to make up 1 album #SHEISMILEYCYRUS next 2 drops to be announced ! (sic)".

Lambert inspired by work as Queen frontman

Adam Lambert has "learned a lot" from fronting Queen. The 37-year-old star has spent eight years leading the legendary rock band - in place of legendary late singer Freddie Mercury - and he revealed his time with the group has helped inspire his own work as a solo artist as he's been working on new album 'Velvet'. He told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column: "It does give me a perspective of what a good song is and why it works. I've learned a lot from singing those Queen songs for audiences. "You go, 'OK, this is a good chorus, this is a good hook, this is a good message'. I suppose that's one of the things that inspired a lot of my new songs." Adam released his latest single 'New Eyes' last month, and he added he hopes Freddie - who died in 1991 from bronchial pneumonia resulting from

AIDS at the age of 45 - would have been a fan of his music. He said: "I would hope that he would like some of it. I feel like one of my new songs, 'Super Power', is like a second cousin to 'Another One Bites The Dust', it has a little bit of the same DNA. "I didn't set out to emulate any of Queen's songs specifically, but I thought, 'Wouldn't it be nice to have an album of music that a Queen fan can wrap their ears around.'" Meanwhile, the band's drummer Roger Taylor previously said Adam joining the group was like "fate unfolding". He explained: "We thought it was all over. And I think [Brian May] and I, well we kinda thought that was the end of that chapter. And everything that's happened, especially since we met Adam has just been fate unfolding."



Kurstin to record Halen covers album with The Bird and The Bee



Superproducer Greg Kurstin is set to record a Van Halen covers album with his act The Bird & The Bee. The indie pop duo - which also consists of Inara George - has announced the release of their new record 'Interpreting the Masters Volume 2: A Tribute to Van Halen' set for release on August 2 alongside a 15-date North American tour. The new album will feature the biggest hits from 1974 until 1985 - when Van Halen consisted of Eddie Van Halen, Eddie's brother, drummer Alex Van Halen, vocalist David Lee Roth and bassist Michael Anthony. The duo have also debuted a re-imagining of 1987 hit 'Ain't Talking 'Bout Love' which appears on the rockers' self-titled album. The 2019 trek will kick off at the John Anson Ford Amphitheater in Los Angeles on August 2 with a special one-off performance featuring Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl on drums and Beck guitarist Justin Meldal-Johnsen on bass. In a statement, Kurstin said: "When I want to listen to hard rock music there's still nothing that hits me like. Every time I hear them it takes me back to when I first found them on the radio, and it felt so dangerous to me - like they were from a whole other world. "It would be so great if people who would never usually listen to Van Halen heard this record, and then ended up falling in love with them too." George added of the band: "I remember being 10 years old and seeing their videos and feeling both excited and totally terrified - I responded to them in this very visceral way." Kurstin has just finished working with Liam Gallagher on his second solo LP 'Why Me? Why Now?' and he has previously worked with artists such as Adele, Sir Paul McCartney, Pink, Sia and Years and Years.

Grande announces extra London shows for October

Ariana Grande has added two more London dates to her 'Sweetener World Tour' due to demand. The 'God is a Woman' hitmaker is already due to play three nights at The O2 between August 17 and August 20, but she has now announced two further nights at the 20,000-capacity arena on October 15 and October 16. The UK leg will see the pop superstar play two nights at Birmingham Arena on September 14 and September 15, Glasgow's SSE Hydro on September 17 and Sheffield's FlyDSA Arena on September 19. Tickets for the two new London dates go on sale via Live Nation at 10am on Friday (14.06.19). The 25-year-old singer tweeted: "london added 2 more shows to the 02 oct 15 & 16. @americanexpress pre-sale wed 10am. on sale friday 10am... (sic)" Last month, Ariana was "beyond devastated" after pulling out of two concerts due to illness. The 'Thank U, Next' hitmaker postponed shows in Tampa and Orlando, Florida, which were due to take place on May 28 and May 29 after becoming poorly. She revealed on her Instagram Story: "i woke up incredibly sick today, ran to my doctor here and have been told to postpone these shows tonight and tomorrow. "i'm so beyond devastated. "i will make this up to you, i promise. please forgive me. i love you and i will be back and better than ever as soon as possible. love you.(sic)" However, the 'Dangerous Woman' hitmaker reassured fans she would return to the cities later in the year to play the shows. She added: "will keep you posted as soon as possible on exact dates but we will be returning in November and you will be able to use the tickets you've already purchased. thank you so much for your understanding.(sic)" Promoters Live Nation later confirmed the rescheduled shows will take place on November 24 and November 25. Although it was unclear what was wrong with the '7 Rings' hitmaker, she returned to the stage on May 31.



PERRY AND SWIFT SPARK COLLABORATION RUMORS

Katy Perry and Taylor Swift have sparked speculation they are set to release a collaboration. The 'Chained to the Rhythm' hitmaker famously fell out with her fellow pop star over their dancers and touring crew a number of years ago, but they have since buried the hatchet, and Taylor recently added Katy's new track, 'Never Really Over', to her 'ME!' Apple Playlist. Now KatyCats and Swifties - their respective fanbases - are predicting that the famous pair are plotting a duet, as Katy posted a plate of cookies with 'Peace At Last' iced around the plate with Taylor tagged on Instagram. The 34-year-old singer captioned the snap of the baked goods: "feels good @taylorswift (sic)." She also set her location as 'Let's Be Friends', a potential song title, and Taylor, 29, commented with 13 pink love heart emojis, her lucky number. Back in 2018, Katy sent Taylor an actual olive branch as a call to end their long running feud. The duo had been at logger-

heads since 2014 when Taylor accused Katy of sabotaging her 'Red Tour' by stealing three of her backing dancers. In the video posted to her social media account, Taylor could be heard off-camera saying: "So I just got to my dressing room and found this actual olive branch. This means so much to me." Katy had previously insisted she has a lot of love for the singer. She said: "I mean, I love her, I always have. We've had our differences but I just continue to say, 'God bless her on her journey.' ... I'm ready to let it go. Absolutely, 100 percent. I forgive her, and I'm sorry for anything I ever did, and I hope the same from her, and I think it's actually ... I think it's time ... I love her and I want the best for her, and I think she's a fantastic songwriter. I think that if we both, her and I, can be representatives of strong women that come together despite their differences, I think the whole world is going to go, like, 'Yeah, we can do this.'"





ROBERT PATTINSON DROPS OUT OF THE SOUVENIR SEQUEL

Robert Pattinson has dropped out of 'The Souvenir' sequel due to scheduling conflicts. The 33-year-old actor has pulled out of the follow up to Joanna Hogg's 2019 indie-drama which is expected to start shooting next month as he's too busy with his role in Christopher Nolan's upcoming action epic 'Tenet' and has just been cast in Matt Reeves' forthcoming superhero film 'The Batman', in which he will play The Caped Crusader. A representative for the actor told IndieWire: "Despite Rob's strong desire to do the film, scheduling proved impossible but he very much looks forward to working with Joanna on something down the line."

'The Souvenir' starred Honor Swinton Byrne, Tom Burke and Tilda Swinton and followed a young woman as she embarks on a relationship with a troubled older man. The film's sequel was planned prior to its premiere at Sundance, and A24, who distributed the first film, will distribute the follow-up as well. The 'Twilight Saga' star began shooting 'Tenet' late last month and joins a star-studded cast which includes the likes of Sir Michael Caine, Sir Kenneth Branagh, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Elizabeth Debicki, John David Washington, Dimple Kapadia and

Clemence Poesy. The motion picture is epic action movie about international espionage and it will be shot across seven countries and is set for release on July 17, 2020. Pre-production on 'The Batman' is expected to kick off this summer ahead of a June 2021 release. Reeves took over 'The Batman' directing duties from Ben Affleck - who also stepped down from the role as the titular character in January - and he will produce the motion picture with Dylan Clark.

Laura Linney doubts there will be a Love Actually sequel

Laura Linney has admitted she would be "surprised" if a proper 'Love Actually' sequel went ahead. The 55-year-old actress portrayed Sarah in the 2003 rom-com classic and although a mini-sequel aired for Red Nose Day in 2017, the 'Ozark' star has admitted it's "unlikely" that a second instalment will appear on the big screen. Asked if she thinks fans will get another movie on 'Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen', Laura admitted: "I doubt it. I'd be surprised. But you never know." Laura's character only featured in a US version of 'Red Nose Day Actually' along with a guest appearance from Patrick Dempsey, who gives Sarah her happy ending. The UK version saw writer and director Richard Curtis return, along with Hugh Grant, Liam Neeson, Colin Firth, Andrew Lincoln, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Keira Knightley, Martine McCutcheon, Bill Nighy, Thomas Sangster, L?cia Moniz, Olivia Olson, Marcus



Brigstocke, and Rowan Atkinson, who all reprised their roles. However, Emma Thompson opted out of the reunion as she felt "too sad" to take part without the late Alan Rickman. Alan and Emma played husband and wife Harry and Karen in the original film but Emma admitted that she and director Richard decided she couldn't feature in the update without Alan, who died in 2016 after battling cancer. She said: "Richard wrote to me and said, 'Darling, we can't write anything for you because of Alan,' and I said, 'No of course, it would be sad, too sad.' "It's too soon. It's absolutely right because it's supposed to be for Comic Relief but there isn't much comic relief in the loss of our dear friend really only just over a year ago. We thought and thought but it just seemed wrong but to revisit the wonderful fun characters of Bill Nighy and Hugh Grant and Liam (Neeson) and all of that, that's fantastic but obviously what would he have done? Both of them would be in therapy by now and I would be working on some kind of ward. It was absolutely the right decision." The movie focuses on the complex relationships between a number of couples, including David (Grant), the British Prime Minister who falls head-over-heels for his personal assistant (McCutcheon), Sarah Linney, a graphic designer whose love life struggles due to having to care for her mentally ill brother and Harry (Rickman), who become besotted with his colleague (Heike Makatsch).



Ed Sheeran's wife set for Yesterday cameo

Ed Sheeran's wife will reportedly appear with him in 'Yesterday'. The 'Shape of You' hitmaker landed a role in Danny Boyle's upcoming movie - which follows a struggling songwriter Jack Malik (Himesh Patel) who, after an accident, ends up in a world where nobody else has heard of The Beatles - and it seems his partner Cherry Seaborn will also be seen on the big screen. A source told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column: "Shooting this film was a real laugh and they did some of it on Ed's tour. 'Cherry visits him on the road a fair amount and ended up getting to feature in a scene as an extra. 'It's only a tiny part but Ed and Cherry thought it was hilarious, and it's pretty cute. She even appears in the end credits.'" While Sheeran is in several scenes in the film playing himself as he spots Patel's character - who is pass-

ing off 'The Beatles' music as his own - and turns him into a start, it's said Seaborn's appearance is more fleeting. With Boyle at the helm and Richard Curtis in charge of the script, fans are excited for the movie's release. And Sheeran recently revealed he was also tasked with helping the leading man become a "fantastic performer". He said: "Himesh has been phenomenal. He's gone from being a bit reticent to shy to being a fantastic performer. "Danny wanted me to work with the main actor and turn him into a superstar, he was really adamant. "We worked with Himesh all the way through from buying his first guitar in the shops, so finding one he could love and learn to play with, to sending him out busking and playing the songs."



Cleese joins Clifford the Big Red Dog live-adaptation

John Cleese and Sienna Guillory have joined the live-adaptation of 'Clifford the Big Red Dog'. The 79-year-old actor is set to star alongside Sienna, 44, in Paramount's re-imagining of the American children's book series, first published in 1963 and written by Norman Bridwell, which will also star Jack Whitehall and Darby Camp. The film's script will be penned by Jay Scherick and David Ronn, alongside Annie Mumolo and Stan Chervin while the movie will be produced by Jordan Kerner and Scholastic Entertainment's Iole Lucchese and filming is thought to begin next month in New York City. The book series follows the adventures of a two-year-old big male red dog called Clifford and his owner, an eight-year-old girl called Emily Elizabeth and the movie will see 'Big Little Lies' star Darby portray Emily as she struggles to fit in at home and at school, when she discovers a small red puppy who is destined to become her best friend. When Clifford magically undergoes a growth spurt and attracts the attention of a genetics company, Emily and her Uncle Casey (Whitehall) have to fight to keep hold of their pet as they go on the run across New York City. There have been several adaptations of the novel series in the past, including the 2004 American animated adventure film 'Clifford's Really Big Movie' based on the PBS Kids TV series 'Clifford the Big Red Dog' directed by Robert Ramirez, produced by Scholastic Entertainment and Big Red Dog Productions and originally released in cinemas by Warner Bros. John is known for his work with British surreal comedy group Monty Python who created popular films such as 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail', 'Life of Brian' and 'The Meaning of Life' while Sienna is best known for her role as Jill Valentine in several entries of the 'Resident Evil' action-horror film series.

Tarantino says Thor: Ragnarok is his favorite Marvel film

Quintin Tarantino thinks 'Thor: Ragnarok' is the best Marvel film. The 56-year-old director hasn't totally kept up to date with superhero films in the last few years but he has been catching up with movies in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and he "loved" Taika Waititi's 2017 blockbuster, the third installment in the 'Thor' franchise. Speaking to Empire magazine, he said: "I haven't been keeping up to date with them for, I guess, the last four years, I think the only comic book movies I saw last year at theatres were 'Wonder Woman' and 'Black Panther'. "But about a couple of weeks ago I started catching up with some of the Marvel movies so I could go see 'Endgame'. I just finished 'Captain America: Civil War', so next up is 'Doctor Strange'." "Actually, the last one I saw was '[Thor] Ragnarok'. I loved it, it was my favourite one of the series since 'Avengers' - drastically my

favorite." The 'Kill Bill' filmmaker has had a busy year with the release of his ninth film 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood' which is set 1969 Los Angeles and stars Leonardo DiCaprio as fading television star Rick Dalton, Brad Pitt as his long-time stunt double and Margot Robbie as movie star Sharon Tate. Tarantino considers his latest project to be a "love letter" to the last moments of Hollywood's golden age and he considers the story to be a "memory piece" about Los Angeles, the city where he grew up and the city that fuelled his passion for cinema. He previously said: "[The film is] probably my most personal. I think of it like my memory piece. Alfonso [Cuar?] had 'Roma' and Mexico City, 1970. I had LA and 1969. This is me. This is the year that formed me. I was six years old then. This is my world. And this is my love letter to LA."



Robbie wore Tate's earrings for Once Upon a Time In Hollywood

Margot Robbie wore a pair of Sharon Tate's earrings when filming 'Once Upon a Time In Hollywood'. Quentin Tarantino's upcoming ninth film is set in Los Angeles in 1969 and follows struggling actor Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his stunt double Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt) who seek advice from their neighbors Hollywood star Sharon and



her director husband Roman Polanski (Rafai Zawierucha) on how to continue working in a changing movie business. The 28-year-old actress portrays the late movie star in the film and revealed that in order to "ground the character" she wore jewelry belonging to the star which was lent to her by Sharon's younger sister Debra and insisted it was "quite moving" to pay tribute to Sharon by "having a piece of her" with her. In an interview with Empire magazine, she said: "I guess it sounds like I'm being a bit spiritual or whatever, but it really did help me ground the character in something real. "I wanted to honor her memory and bring the best parts of Sharon forward. And I found it really quite moving to have a piece of her with me." Sharon was eight-and-a-half months pregnant with her and Roman's son when she was murdered by members of the notorious Manson Family cult, led by Charles Manson, in August 1969. Four other people were also killed in the horrific attacks. Margot thinks Sharon's involvement in the film "embodies the best parts of the '60s" and she considers Tarantino's story to be a "celebration of her life". 'The Wolf of Wall Street' actress said: "Sharon embodies the best parts of the '60s. This is a celebration of her life. And you get a lot of hang time with her in this film."



Sevigny believes The Dead Don't Die mirrors reality

Chloe Sevigny thinks her new film 'The Dead Don't Die' mirrors real life. The 44-year-old actress stars alongside Adam Driver, Bill Murray and Selena Gomez in the upcoming zombie comedy film, directed-and-written by Jim Jarmusch which follows a group of small town's cops as they combat a sudden zombie invasion. The 'American Horror Story' star believes the director wanted the movie to encourage viewers to "think more about empathy" and she feels "we're living in the zombie apocalypse now" as the rise in social media means individuals aren't "connecting on like a real level to one another". Speaking on Boston radio station WBUR, she said: "Jim wants us to think more about like empathy, what we can do to help others. I mean, to me, I always think like we're living in the zombie apocalypse now with people in their phones, and people just are like not connecting on like a real level to one another-and it's terrifying." Chloe worked with Jim on 2002's 'Ten Minutes Older', a project consisting of two compilation feature films titled 'The Trumpet' and 'The Cello', and admitted that when he approached her asking whether she wanted to make a "ridiculous zombie picture" she was dubious about the idea as she'd "never had an affinity for zombies". She said: "He said, 'I want to make this ridiculous zombie picture.' And I was like, 'Why zombies?' Like I had never had an affinity for zombies. I love vampire pictures. It's one of my favorites, and I was kind of sad that I wasn't asked to be in 'Only Lovers Left Alive.' But that's OK. I'll forgive him." — Bang Showbiz



A Marine biology university employee inspects corals growing on tables in the Red Sea as a part of a research in the Interuniversity Institute for Marine Sciences near the southern Israeli city Eilat. — AFP photos



An Israeli Nature and Parks Authority employee dives in the Red Sea to remove corals.

Israeli coral rescue plan needs chisel and deep blue sea

A dozen feet deep in the azure waters of the Red Sea, Israeli marine ecologist Assaf Zvuloni firmly grasped a bright red coral fastened to a metal jetty piling. The coral and others close by would most likely perish in planned maintenance works at the site, degrading all the benefits they bring to underwater life. So to save them, Zvuloni and his colleague Assaf Habary have donned scuba gear and armed themselves with chisels and hammers before diving underwater to remove the coral and take them to a new location. "We need to safeguard them," Habary, of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, said after the dive. It is important to "maintain the ecosystem's health," he said.

On a recent day, Habary, Gulf of Eilat regional manager for the authority, placed a chisel at the bottom of the red coral and carefully began hitting, causing a loud clacking to reverberate through the silent sea. Coral use the 16-metre (52-foot) pilings supporting an oil jetty off the southern Israeli resort city Eilat as artificial reefs, creating colorful and varied vertical mosaics that support much of the marine life around. The area around the jetty is closed to boats and divers, enabling the coral to thrive undisturbed. But maintenance work planned on the jetty would be fatal to the animals—a protected species under Israeli law, with the Nature and Parks Authority tasked with their relocation.

'Important animals'

After a short while, the red coral came off the piling, and Zvuloni carefully placed it in a small pink plastic crate he held in his free hand alongside a number of others that had been recently removed. The two divers swam up to the surface of the water where Avi, the skipper of the small motorboat that brought them to the site, leaned over to take the crate, placing it in a large blue container on the stern of the swaying vessel. The boat sped off to the nearby Underwater Observatory Marine Park, where the coral will be divided between the reef there and a large aquarium.

Zvuloni estimates that they have relocated 1,000 coral over the past year, not only from the jetty and other structures but also from pieces of waste that had been sitting on the seabed and were being cleared away. Not all coral, however, allow themselves to be evacuated. Zvuloni and Habary spent many long and precious underwater minutes trying to remove a yellow, dome-

shaped stony coral before throwing in the towel. "We'll have to use a crowbar," Habary said grimly. Each coral constitutes a vital habitat to animals and plants. "Corals in general are very important animals in being species that engineer the environment," Zvuloni said. "It's much more than just the coral itself." While relocation saves the coral from a certain death, not all survive the move, which could be to the observatory and local educational facilities, or even the Jerusalem zoo's aquarium.

ty, said Guilhem Banc-Prandi, a 25-year-old French marine biologist working on a doctorate at the Interuniversity Institute for Marine Sciences in Eilat.

The proximity of the Gulf of Eilat's reefs to the shore increases the threats they face, with "toxins and pollution" from human activity and industry entering the bay on a daily basis, according to Banc-Prandi. To counter those threats in Eilat and elsewhere, Banc-Prandi has founded WeSea, an NGO dedicated to



The Red Sea resort city of Eilat and the Jordanian city of Aqaba in the background.

'Very sensitive one'

Coral populations around the world are undergoing bleaching and dying due to global warming, but the population in the northern Red Sea has remained stable due to its unique heat resistance. "Being stable these days is a privilege," Zvuloni said. In another area of the northern Red Sea, experiments have been ongoing to measure the health of the region's corals. While relatively heat resistant, factors such as pollution from heavy metals could harm the corals' durability,

raising awareness of the marine environment and educating the public.

"We strongly believe that outreach and education can truly change the fate of the marine eco-system," he said. To Zvuloni, saving the coral is not only of ecological significance but an "ethical duty." With their stony or vegetative appearances, most people encountering coral don't even realize that they are alive. "It's an animal, a very sensitive one," Habary said, "that needs to be preserved." — AFP

Solo, yet tutti: App puts orchestra in your living room

It's a musician's dream—rehearse alongside a full orchestra, but in your own living room. And the immersive experience is possible because, yes, there's an app for that, courtesy of a French start-up, Digital Music Solutions. "NomadPlay" is all down to an algorithm which separates out the sound components of a score to remove any instrument as desired, fading out an oboe or piano part for instance, and allowing the home musician to join the fray.

"When we were young we all practiced with records to get the impression we were playing along with the Vienna or Berlin philharmonic. That was very gratifying," internationally-renowned French violinist Renaud Capucon, 43, told AFP. "But it was a nightmare when our parents heard us play because it just wasn't the same thing!"

Now, thanks to the app, "you're accompanied by an orchestra all on your own in your room—it's extraordinary." Clothilde Chalot and Hannelore Guittet started Digital Music Solutions in Paris five years ago. Their app can be downloaded for free on a phone or tablet and offers a catalogue of albums, ranging from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to Schubert's Fantasia in F Minor. Amateurs and professionals buy the pieces for between five and 20 euros (\$5.60-\$22.50).

Karaoke style

Capucon, the app's "ambassador," offered AFP a demonstration of its capabilities at the Festival de Paques in the southern town of Aix-en-Provence in April. Taking Ravel's string quartet, he clicked on the violin symbol to eliminate the sound of the part, before accompanying the

piece with his own instrument. The concept is similar to that of karaoke, where fans grab the mic to provide their own vocals to the original backing track. Yet the NomadPlay app is more elaborate.

First off, you can search by level—beginner, intermediate, experienced or expert—or by instrument, as well as by composer. You can increase or slow down the tempo, repeat a bar or part of a bar and even annotate the score. Capucon says the app is brimming with educational promise as it can help budding musicians "learn a work more quickly with this harmonic help." For professionals such as himself, the system offers a "huge time gain" as "when finally you practice with the others, you already have the reflexes".



In this file photo in Aix en Provence, southern France, French violinist Renaud Capucon practices with the new application "NomadPlay", created by the French start-up Digital Music Solutions, which can replace virtually every orchestral musician. — AFP photos

Emulate Rostropovich?

He does concede, however, that the app per se will not transform the user into a musical genius. "It's not going to turn you into a (Yehudi) Menuhin or (Mstislav) Rostropovich". Indeed "if the pupil only works with the app you could say it's dangerous... but from the point of view of speeding up the job, it is very positive," said Capucon.

For Marc Bourreau, a teacher and lecturer at engineering college Telecom ParisTech, applications dedicated to music, be it for listening, mixing or editing, have become ever more sophisticated. "This digitally-pushed evolution eliminated the frontier between creator/artist and consumer," he said.



In an age where "children grow up with their tablets you have to give music this technological and entertaining side to spark their interest," added Dominique Bluzet, executive director at the Festival de Paques. Bluzet says concerts these days are no longer the only way to introduce young people to music. NomadPlay is already working with the Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra, National Orchestra of France's Ile de France region around Paris and their Rouen-Normandy equivalent.

It hopes to extend its repertoire by September to include scores played by a broader range of ensembles. "We shall be able to try out the tempo of different conductors (and offer) preparation which affords musicians greater flexibility," Capucon said.

Practice anywhere

Chalot says the app can offer discs a second life. "We wanted to find a new economic model for recorded music which has been around for 100 years," said the 38-year-old, who has worked at the Paris Opera and the Rouen-Normandy Opera. "We tell independent and major labels that 'this is also a way of getting your artists known'," said Chalot.

Around a dozen people worked on the app, whose creation was partly funded by the CM-CIC Innovation investment fund and French culture ministry. "The day we ran the first tests I cried. It was magnificent," Chalot recalled. To date, the catalogue is purely classical music but the company says it is in talks with independent pop and rock producers as it looks to "open up to all genres." — AFP

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Warner's ton sets up Aussies WCup win

Pakistan's Amir finishes with career-best figures of five for 30



TAUNTON: Australia's David Warner (R) is watched by Pakistan's captain Sarfaraz Ahmed as he plays a shot during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between Australia and Pakistan at The County Ground in Taunton, southwest England, yesterday. —AFP

TAUNTON: David Warner scored his first international century since completing a ball-tampering ban as Australia returned to winning ways at the World Cup with a 41-run victory over Pakistan at Taunton yesterday. Warner made 107 and, with Australia captain Aaron Finch (82), got the defending champions off to a flying start with an opening stand of 146 — the highest partnership for any wicket at this World Cup to date.

Mohammad Amir dragged Pakistan back into the game with career-best figures of five for 30 in 10 overs but Australia still managed to post a challenging score of 307, which ultimately proved beyond their opponents. "It means a lot to a batter to get a century," said man-of-the-match Warner. "It was a great effort from Pakistan in the end but our bowlers bowled excellent. They probably got closer than we expected."

Pakistan, after a middle-order collapse that saw them lose three wickets for 11 runs in 15 balls, were all but beaten at 200 for seven in the 34th over.

But captain Sarfaraz Ahmed (40) and the big-hitting Wahab Riaz (45) gave them renewed hope with a stand of 64. Australia, who lost to India on Sunday, were again looking to Mitchell Starc to get them out of a tight spot, as had done in an earlier win over the West Indies and the fast bowler duly delivered with 2-43.

He had Wahab caught behind got off a thin edge, although it needed an Australia review of an original

not out decision to leave Pakistan 264-8

Two balls later, Amir played on for a duck before Glenn Maxwell ended the match with a brilliant direct hit run out of Sarfaraz.

Pakistan's chase started badly when Fakhar Zaman fell for a duck uppercutting Cummins to Kane Richardson at third man. Babar Azam was in superb touch, with 28 of his 30 runs coming in fours, before he mishooked Nathan Coulter-Nile to deep backward square leg. Opener Imam-ul-Haq was upping the tempo in his 53 when he gloved Pat Cummins (3-33) down the legside to wicket-keeper Alex Carey.

Finch, an occasional slow bowler, grabbed a real bonus wicket when Mohammad Hafeez (46) hit a rank full toss straight to Starc at deep square leg.

And when Shoaib Malik was brilliantly caught for nought by a diving Carey after inside edging Cummins, Pakistan were in dire straits at 147-5.

Both Warner and Steve Smith, also returning from a year-long ban for ball-tampering, had been jeered by fans in previous games but Pakistan fans largely heeded an appeal from Sarfaraz not to boo the pair, preferring to roar chants of "Amir! Amir!"

Warner completed his 15th one-day international hundred when an edge off Shaheen Shah Afridi flew past slip for four. An elated Warner leapt in the air in celebration but his 111-ball innings ended soon after-

wards when he was caught at point off Shaheen, having gone past fifty for the third time in four innings at this World Cup. "I'm very disappointed," said Sarfaraz. "We lost three wickets in 15 balls and that's why we lost."

"We conceded too many runs in the first 20 overs apart from Mohammad Amir. We came back and restricted them well but it was a 270-280 pitch. "We made some runs and got starts but we've got to convert them and go long. If you want to win matches your top four must score runs." Australia have three wins in four matches while Pakistan are struggling, with just one victory in their four games so far. —AFP

Injured Froome out of Tour de France

ROANNE: Chris Froome will miss the Tour de France after hitting a wall at high speed and suffering severe injuries in a training accident at the Criterium du Dauphine yesterday, Team Ineos leader Dave Brailsford has confirmed.

"It's clear he'll take no part in the Tour," Brailsford told French television while four-time Tour de France winner Froome was being treated at the scene in a parked ambulance. This year's Tour de France embarks from Brussels on July 6 and the loss of the iconic British rider will shake up ambitions at several teams.

But Froome's team principal Brailsford's sombre tone suggested the implications may go further. "He is in a very,

very serious condition," said Brailsford, adding that the racer was having difficulty speaking and would be helicoptered to hospital.

A witness at the scene of the accident said Froome had suffered an open fracture of the femur and had suffered other injuries too, notably to his elbows. Brailsford said Froome had been speeding downhill with Dutch teammate Wout Poels on a "recon" ride for yesterday's time-trial when a gust of wind blew him off track and into a wall.

"They were going very fast and the wind got his front wheel and sent him straight into the wall," Brailsford said in French. The accident took place on a narrow descent through the village of Saint-André d'Arpchon in the Loire region and other competitors on the recon estimated he would have been travelling at 60km/h (38 m/ph). "He could hardly speak. He'll be helicoptered to either Lyon or Saint-Etienne hospital within a few minutes," said Brailsford.

SCOREBOARD			
Scoreboard in the World Cup match between Australia and Pakistan in Taunton yesterday:			
Australia			
A. Finch c Hafeez b Amir	82		
D. Warner c Imam b Shaheen	107		
S. Smith c Asif b Hafeez	10		
G. Maxwell b Shaheen	20		
S. Marsh c Malik b Amir	23		
U. Khawaja c Riaz b Amir	18		
A. Carey lbw Amir	20		
N. Coulter-Nile c Sarfaraz b Riaz	2		
P. Cummins c Sarfaraz b Hasan	3		
M. Starc c Malik b Amir	3		
K. Richardson not out	1		
Extras (lb10, nb3, w6)	19		
Total (all out, 49 overs)	307		
Fall of wickets: 1-146 (Finch), 2-189 (Smith), 3-223 (Maxwell), 4-242 (Warner), 5-277 (Khawaja), 6-288 (Marsh), 7-299 (Coulter-Nile), 8-302 (Cummins), 9-304 (Carey), 10-307 (Starc).			
Bowling: Amir 10-2-30-5 (1w); Shaheen 10-0-70-2 (1nb, 1w); Hasan 10-0-67-1 (1nb, 3w); Riaz 8-0-44-1 (1w); Hafeez 7-0-60-1; Malik 4-0-26-0 (1nb)			
Pakistan			
Imam-ul-Haq c Carey b Cummins	53		
Fakhar Zaman c Richardson b Cummins	0		
Babar Azam c Richardson b Coulter-Nile	30		
Mohammad Hafeez c Starc b Finch	46		
Sarfaraz Ahmed run out	40		
Shoaib Malik c Carey b Cummins	0		
Asif Ali c Carey b Richardson	5		
Hasan Ali c Khawaja b Richardson	32		
Wahab Riaz c Carey b Starc	45		
Mohammad Amir b Starc	0		
Shaheen Shah Afridi not out	1		
Extras (lb4, nb1, w9)	14		
Total (all out, 45.4 overs)	266		
Fall of wickets 1-2 (Zaman), 2-56 (Babar), 3-136 (Imam), 4-146 (Hafeez), 5-147 (Malik), 6-160 (Asif), 7-200 (Hasan), 8-264 (Riaz), 9-265 (Amir), 10-266 (Sarfaraz)			
Bowling: Cummins 10-0-33-3 (1nb); Starc 9-1-43-2 (2w); Richardson 8.4-0-62-2 (2w); Coulter-Nile 9-0-53-1 (2w); Maxwell 7-0-58-0 (1w); Finch 2-0-13-1 (1w).			
Result: Australia won by 41 runs.			

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Tour de France director Christian Prudhomme was swift to wish Froome a speedy recovery. "We hope he gets well soon. The Tour de France won't be the same without him. Chris Froome has been the central character at the Tour since 2013," he said. "His withdrawal changes the whole thing. Even if they have the title holder Geraint Thomas and let's not be lured into underestimating Egan Bernal, who will be his lieutenant or possibly more," Prudhomme said of two key Ineos riders.

French climber Romain Bardet, who came second to Froome on the 2016 Tour de France, described the news of the extent of his fellow rider's injuries as awful. "I didn't realise it was that serious," Bardet said when told after the time-trial won by Wout van Aert.

"That's dreadful. It's never nice when one of your rivals gets unlucky like that." Froome's last major win came at the 2018 Giro where he also fell while doing recon for the opening day time-trial around Jerusalem, suffering early in

the three week race before a spectacular late rally.

He also fell on stage one of the 2018 Tour de France where he eventually came third behind Thomas and Dutch all rounder Tom Dumoulin. This year has been disappointing for Froome. Early in the 2019 season he took part in the Tour of Colombia, but the rarefied air at altitude and the long climbs failed to suit him and he came 91st in the run through the Andes.

He was 94th at the Tour of Catalonia, 11th in the Tour of the Alps and 13th at the Tour de Yorkshire, leaving critics lukewarm over his 2019 Tour de France chances. The Kenyan born Froome, who at his best combines top level time-trialing skills with a fearsome prowess for climbing, first won the Tour in 2013 with Team Sky.

He went on to further Tour de France wins in 2015, 2016 and 2017, he also won the 2017 Vuelta a Espana and the 2018 Giro d'Italia, making him the greatest Grand Tour rider of his generation. —AFP