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Gulf seeks to secure energy supplies as US, Iran face off

Stricken tankers head to port • Trump says US video shows Iran 'did it'

Ship insurance costs soar; Iraq gets new waiver

LONDON/BAGHDAD: Insurance costs for ships sailing through the Middle East have increased by at least 10 percent after attacks on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday, with the potential for costs to rise further as regional tensions escalate, ship insurers said. The attacks have already stoked concerns about reduced flows of crude oil on one of the world's key shipping routes, pushing up oil prices by as much as 4.5 percent. Some tanker companies have already suspended new bookings to the Middle East Gulf.

Freight rates for supertankers transporting oil from the Middle East Gulf

to Asia were already close to a two-month high on Thursday at nearly \$13,000 a day, up nearly \$2,000 from Wednesday. Every ship needs various forms of insurance, including annual war-risk cover as well as an additional 'breach' premium when entering high-risk areas. These separate premiums are calculated according to the value of the ship, or hull, for a seven-day period.

Ship insurers say the biggest vessels sailing through the Gulf area face additional costs of up to \$200,000 for a single seven-day voyage, roughly twice as expensive as earlier this week. "The facts on the ground have changed. If any of those tankers sink, you will see a rise across the board in the annual war premiums," one underwriter said. "This is not the first incident, and what we are seeing (with rates going up) reflects the worsening situation in the area."

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DUBAI: Saudi Arabia and the UAE yesterday called for decisive action to protect energy supplies amid a tense US-Iran standoff as two tankers attacked in a vital Gulf shipping channel headed to port. The United Arab Emirates' Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan called on world powers "to secure international navigation and access to energy", a plea echoed by regional ally Saudi Arabia after the incident sent crude prices soaring.

The two tankers - the Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous that was carrying highly flammable methanol when it was rocked by explosions and the Norwegian Front Altair - were heading to port yesterday, owners and shipping officials said. The US military on Friday released grainy footage it said showed an Iranian patrol boat removing an "unexploded limpet mine" from one of the tankers. US President Donald Trump has said the twin attack in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday had Iran "written all over it", rejecting Tehran's vehement denial. "Iran did it and you know they did it because you saw the boat," Trump told Fox News on Friday.



This grab taken from a video released by the US Central Command (USCENTCOM) on June 13, 2019 reportedly shows an Iranian navy patrol boat in the Gulf of Oman approaching the Japanese operated methanol tanker Kokuka Courageous and removing an unexploded mine. — AFP

Iran has repeatedly threatened to block the Hormuz Strait, a narrow seaway vital to the world's oil supplies, in the event of a conflict with the US. The UAE's Sheikh Abdullah,

whose country is bitterly opposed to Iranian influence in the region, called yesterday for a de-escalation of tensions.

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Local

Kuwait FM urges more Security Council, Arab League coordination on Arab crises

Security Council strongly condemns attack on oil tankers: Kuwait

NEW YORK: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister urged further cooperation between the Security Council and the Arab League on resolving the Arab region's crises peacefully, in accordance with the UN Charter. As things stand, this cooperation remains "substandard, unambitious and uninspiring," Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah told a Security Council session on Thursday amid his country's rotating June presidency. At the session, intended to discuss the two organizations' cooperation, he noted to the 50-year-long relationship and several joint agreements signed between both sides. On this, he welcomed the opening of a new UN liaison office at the Arab League's Cairo headquarters, later this month, as a show of intent towards boosting this cooperation, expressing confidence it would be successful in its goal. He also commended a consultative meeting at the level of permanent representatives, held between both last month, which discussed common interests, expressing hope that such talks would continue. "Taking effective steps to enhance this cooperation" is necessary, he argued, in light of a region gripped by "dangers and challenges... (and) an enormously deep and complex political landscape."

This is illustrated in the Security Council's agenda

being preoccupied with nine long-standing Arab issues, most notably the Palestinian crisis, which he said remains the "central" concern for Arab states. "Without reaching a lasting, just and comprehensive solution to the (Arab-Israeli) conflict, tensions and instability in the region will continue," he warned. He also urged the necessity of further coordinating with UN envoys in regards to the crises in Syria, Libya, Yemen and Somalia. Any cooperation should focus on matters such as "conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building, particularly in the post-conflict phase, with a focus on civilian capacity-building, humanitarian assistance, human rights, refugee issues, migration and counter-terrorism," he urged. Later, the Kuwaiti delegation issued a presidential statement summarizing the guidelines highlighted by the deputy prime minister and foreign minister's speech.

Palestinian crisis 'central' concern for Arab states

Attack on oil tankers
Separately, the UN Security Council strongly condemned the recent attack

on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said Friday. All UNSC members unanimously called the incident a criminal act and violation of international law. Otaibi told reporters following the Council's consultations session on latest agendas regarding the



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attends the session. — KUNA

attack in the Gulf of Oman. "We would want to see thorough, impartial, and objective investigation to take place, and know who stands behind these actions," said the Kuwaiti diplomat. He also expressed appreciation and support to UNSC's stand toward the incident, and affirmed keenness to discuss the issue. Replying to a

question on what went during Friday's session, Otaibi said no proposals and decisions have been made yet by the Council to commission any particular body to carry out investigation. Explosions ripped through two oil tankers, Norwegian and Singaporean, in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday. — KUNA

The Hague Forum participants express satisfaction over results

THE HAGUE: Participants at the World Forum for Culture of Peace, which concluded Thursday evening, expressed their satisfaction over its outcome, a senior official affirmed Friday. "This was a very successful and useful event in pursuit of peace related to the role of education and the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage in war torn countries," President of the International Peace Institute Terje Rod Larsen said. "So, Al-Babtain Foundation has done a great job," said Larsen who had chaired a session on Promoting Culture of Peace through Education at the Forum.

"But also, Kuwait and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah are a role model in search for peace and reconciliation in the region and throughout the globe," he added. Larsen is a Norwegian diplomat who played a key role in the 1990s negotiations that led to the Oslo Accords, the first-ever agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). He also served as an UN Under-Secretary-General, serving as the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Ambassador to the Netherlands Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi said the Forum's message was of peace, adding the event discussed how to promote the culture of peace to the new generation in the world regardless of religion, sect, or country. "We believe that harmony and peaceful co-existence among people is crucial. It is time to think earnestly how we can overcome hatred and violence so the people live in peace," added Otaibi.

In the meantime, Tokia Saifi, a French politician and member of the European Parliament, said the Forum was very important "when you see everything that's going on in the world." Saifi, who also spoke at the Forum, noted the European Parliament is very interested and active to promote the dialogue of cultures around the world. The one-day international event was 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.

Peace is only solution

Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem had affirmed during the forum that Kuwait strongly believes in peace as key to resolve all issues. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's policy stands on avoiding war and conflict at all costs, as they violate human rights and destroy development in countries, he said. Kuwait had seen the destruction a war could cause during the Iraqi Invasion, and does not wish for other countries to go through the same path, the speaker added. As part of Kuwait's peace efforts, the country had hosted three international donors conferences for Syria and chaired the fourth held in London, he noted.

Moreover, Kuwait hosted an international donors conference for Iraq and it also hosted the UN-mediated Yemeni peace talks for two months, Ghanem said. Meanwhile, he affirmed Kuwait's stance on reaching political solutions through peace talks to resolve the conflicts in Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan and others, as well as to bring an end to the crisis between the GCC states. In the same context, speaker Ghanem noted that His Highness the



THE HAGUE: Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem speaks during the World Forum for Culture of Peace. — KUNA

Amir had been calling for a political solution since the Syrian crisis broke out in 2011. He added that the world started calling for a peaceful solution in 2019 after long years of killing innocent civilians and spreading terrorism in the country.

Promoting peace

Speakers and participants at the forum were united in their views that promoting education is absolutely vital to establish peace and security in the world. "Education is the basis for intellectual and moral solidarity. Ignorance breeds suspicion of the other and misunderstanding of peoples and cultures and therefore education is of significant importance," said Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, President of the International Court of Justice. Yusuf, who chaired the closing session of the forum this evening titled 'Moving Forward: Culture of Peace Manuals,' welcomed the large number of participants saying that this court is where all nations come to settle their disputes peacefully through the law. He expressed the importance of the culture of education which is theme of this conference and of the Al-Babtain Foundation, he noted.

AbdulAziz Saud Al-Babtain, the organizer of the one day-event, noted in his closing remarks that he has prepared seventeen approaches for school and university students to promote peace education.

"I would like to point out that these approaches are the outcome of the thinking of a human mind that unites us. The initiative is Kuwaiti and has been contributed by the finest experts from the world under the auspices of an international committee," he said. Babtain pointed out that members of the Committee and experts are from more than 20 countries of the world, that is, from multiple cultures, and each of them is proficient in the minimum two languages and more. "Thanks to you for coming with us and sharing this achievement and this happiness, we would like to urge you very kindly to work on teaching these curricula in your communities, and that what you'll look at the notes after this presentation," he added.

Carel Stolker President of the University of Leiden, in his closing remarks said the crucial question is what can universities around the world do to spread peace education and what knowledge students must be taught. "The obvious answer is knowledge and understanding of various disciplines like international law and international relations that are relevant to the culture of peace," he said. He also called for the teaching of social sciences

including the cultures and languages around the world. "The most important of all is delayed judgment, reserving judgment not jumping to conclusions to consider other people's thinking," he said. "Every university must be a place where all opinions can be freely expressed even controversial ones. Students must learn to fight with words and not with swords. This is what all the students around the world should learn," stressed the Dutch professor.

Dialogue on all levels

Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly, in her video message called for dialogue on all levels to achieve the culture of peace. "We must ensure to sow the seeds of sustainable peace by investing in conflict prevention, in peace education and inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue," she said. Faustina-Archange Touadera, President of the Central African Republic, thanked the Babtain Foundation and for the preparatory work that led to the success of the conference. "The culture of peace is necessary for all states," he stressed, calling for more initiatives to promote international stability and peace. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca president emerita of Malta said peace means promoting peace through knowledge and education. "Send books instead of sending guns, send teachers instead of soldiers," she said. Preca called for building a culture of sustainable peace and said this needs constant efforts and education of children from school to university to promote positive peace that we so urgently need.

Abdullah Gul, former president of Turkey, said peace does not come by itself so in order to live in peace we must respect each other's culture and differences. "Compromise is the only way to live together," he stressed. Other eminent speakers like Ammar Al-Hakim, President of the reform and reconstruction Alliance of Iraq, Dr Hisham Al Alawi, representative of the President of Iraq, Hassan Arfaoui representative of President of Tunisia, Laurence Konkala Bropleh, special envoy of the President of Liberia, also expressed their support for promoting the culture of peace through education. The one-day international event was 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. —KUNA



GENEVA: Kuwait's Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel speaks during the International Labor Conference. — KUNA

ILO chief praises Kuwait efforts in supporting youth

GENEVA: International Labor Organization (ILO) Director General Guy Ryder praised Friday Kuwait's efforts in supporting youth through programs that highlights their talents in the labor market. This came during Ryder's meeting with the GCC Labor and Social Affairs Ministers on the sidelines of the International Labor Conference. ILO will benefit from the joining of one of these young Kuwaiti female next year, which has proved their excellence through these joint programs, Ryder said.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Minister for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel said that Kuwait is the first Arab country to support this program, especially that the program was a joint collaboration between the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development as the strategic partner of United Nations Development Programme UNDP in cooperation with all related United Nations organizations. Most of these organizations showed a desire to employ Kuwaitis, especially after the success of youth supporting program, which showed Kuwaiti promising and distinguished competences, she added.

Palestinian workers

In her address to the International Labor Conference - the 108th Session on Thursday, Aqeel applauded Ryder's report on "the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories." She reaffirmed Kuwait's full solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle for their legitimate rights. Aqeel said the malpractices of the Israeli occupation forces against everybody and require collective action to secure social justice for the Palestinian people. "The State of Kuwait has always been keen on supporting the fair demands of the workers in the occupied Palestinian territories for decent work and putting this issue on the agenda of the ILO," she pointed out. "Since its

inception, the ILO has set the rights to decent work, equal employment opportunities and provision of the maximum standards of social protection as the main targets of its noble mission," she said, reaffirming Kuwait's support for the UN agency.

On the ILO Director-General's report, Aqeel said it dealt with the changes in the employment world and offered new thoughts for addressing these changes. The report detects gaps in employment opportunities relating to gender equality and demographic changes in communities with larger ratios of old workers, as well as challenges stemming from technological innovation and green economy, she noted. The report also sets forth a program of action that focuses on man to ensure better future for employment, Aqeel said, expressing hope for translating it into action to serve the interests of the social partners.

The minister noted that the State of Kuwait, at the behest of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, launched the 'New Kuwait 2035' vision as a national comprehensive strategy aiming to ensure socio-economic development. "As part of this strategy, the Kuwaiti government has shaped a package of educational, training and capacity-building programs geared for the labor market. In the framework of the longstanding cooperation between Kuwait and the ILO, Kuwait General Authority for Manpower inked an agreement with the ILO on the national project for decent work in December, 2018" she added.

The ILO conference, being held from June 10 to 21, 2019, at two locations in Geneva - the Palais des Nations and the ILO headquarters, marks this year the ILO's Centenary. It brought together nearly 45 heads of state and government and 185 minister of labor from the Organization's 187 member states, as well as a number of observers from other international actors. — KUNA

Local

Political movements demand answers on Kuwait's participation in Bahrain conference

Unemployed citizens' numbers dropped by 73 percent in six years

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A number of Kuwaiti political movements recently urged the government to put an end to speculations and rumors concerning Kuwait's participation in the unveiling the economic component of a new US peace plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Bahrain. A joint statement made by the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM), Kuwait Democratic Forum (KDF), National Public Movement, National Convention Alliance, Arabism Bloc, Kuwait Progressive Movement, Kuwait Liberal Movement, Popular Action Movement, Civil Conservative Party, Wala National Alliance, National Islamic Alliance and Justice and Peace Alliance stressed that Kuwait's boycott stems from its national, nationalist, Islamic and historic public and official stances of support to Palestinian rights and condemnation of the enemy's attempts to tempt it into normalizing relations with it.

"Kuwaiti political powers and blocs are concerned about attempts to blackmail and drag Arab countries to take part in the workshop due to be held in Bahrain by

the end of this month under claims of developing the occupied Palestinian territories," said the statement, noting that the event is nothing but a platform to promote the idea of normalizing relations with the occupying Zionist entity and the so-called 'Deal of the Century.'

Unemployed citizens

The number of unemployed citizens dropped by 14,200 in the past six years, ie 73 percent compared to 2013, according to statistics issued by the Central Statistics Bureau. According to statistics, unemployed citizens dropped due to the policies the government has been following in recruiting citizens in both the government and the private sectors, which brought down the total number of unemployed citizens from 19,218 in 2013 to only 5,000 in May, 2019.

Statistics explained that the total number of unemployed citizens aged 20-29 years dropped from 8,000 to 3,050, the total number of unemployed married citizens dropped from 10,000 to 3,000, and the total number of unemployed citizens with intermediate school certificates dropped from 6,000 to 3,151.

Further, statistics showed that the total number of citizens who are unemployed for less than six months increased from 3,000 to 5,000, those who are unemployed between six months and one year dropped from 3,000 to 1,800, and those who are unemployed for over a year dropped from 12,000 to 2,100 during the same period. The report also noted that 55 percent of unemployed citizens do not have enough professional training

and have not undergone any qualifying training courses.

National labor

Well-informed sources at the Public Authority for Manpower said the authority is currently working on issuing a directive explaining resolutions concerning percentages of national labor in the private sector. The sources explained that activities that have less than 25 registered workers will still be exempted, and stressed that exemptions will not be cancelled except when the authority issues further cancellation decisions. Meanwhile, manager of the manpower authority's public relations department and the official spokesperson Aseel Al-Mazyad said the authority recently published special brochures on expatriate laborers' rights in seven languages. She added that the brochures include the measures workers should follow before arriving in Kuwait, in addition to Kuwaiti laws and regulations and their rights and duties after arrival.

Rumaithiya tour

Upon an invitation from MP Salah Khorsheed, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Boushehri yesterday visited Rumaithiya to inspect the problems residents suffer from. During her tour, Boushehri said a contractor had been recently approved by the Cabinet after winning the tender of maintaining Rumaithiya, and that the contract will be signed by the end of this month.

Boushehri added that according to the contract, maintenance operations will include all the area's streets, expanding Nasser Al-Mubarak Street to three lanes per direction and opening a new exit for it into Fahaeel Expressway. Boushehri stressed MPW has a comprehensive plan to maintain all areas including highways, adding that PART is currently working on



KFAR QADDUM: A Palestinian protester runs for cover while being chased by Israeli security forces during a weekly demonstration against the expropriation of Palestinian lands by Israel in the village of Kfar Qaddum, near Nablus in the occupied West Bank on June 7, 2019. —AFP

maintaining King Fahd Expressway and the Sixth Ring Road, and that the project is going according to schedule. She blamed the sluggishness of maintenance operations to traffic congestions during Ramadan, during which operations were only done on weekends.

Fees increase

Finance minister Nayef Al-Hajraf denied that the ministry approved increasing fees collected by any government body in accordance with law number 79/1995, adding that related decisions made by some of those bodies are administrative ones.



Minister tours Rumaithiya to inspect problems

Stop killing dogs

local spotlight



By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

A video clip on social media of a PAAAFR team killing stray dogs in Kabd by poisoning them provoked angry reactions by viewers. The video shows five stray dogs struggling to death after consuming poisoned food in a scene that is bereft of humanity. On Twitter, some expressed their disapproval of what had happened, referring to the Islamic religion, which urges the welfare of animals.

Others expressed satisfaction with what happened, pointing to attacks by dogs on humans, especially young kids, and their role in the transmission of diseases. Some people responded by posting pictures and videos of their pets and children with street dogs, saying they hurt only those who hurt them.

I believe mercy has been taken away from the hearts of officials, who chose the easiest solution in dealing with stray dogs by killing them with poison, and encouraged citizens and expats to do so by allowing the circulation and sale of toxic substances that can be mixed with food and placed near garbage containers. Activists claimed the poisonings took place in block 3 in Kabd, demanding accountability over all those who committed an inhumane attack on animals.

It was said that the method of killing these animals is in accordance with fatwas of legitimacy, since poisoning has been practiced for a long time, and especially since the dogs were abandoned in the streets or dumped in the wilderness. But is this an excuse? I believe dogs and other stray animals are generally vulnerable to diseases and epidemics, especially since they are not subject to any healthcare or immunizations.

In 2014, the animal welfare law of the GCC countries was issued after approval by the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly. The law requires animal owners to commit to all precautions to ensure that no harm is caused to animals, and that proper living conditions are provided for the animals. According to the law, if an animal is to be given up, it should be done in coordination with the authorities to ensure that the health of the animal is monitored, and it should be presented to a veterinarian for checkup and treatment.

Animal owners are required to feed the animals in a manner suitable to their age and in sufficient quantities to keep them healthy, house the animals in a place designated for them and not use them for scientific experiments. I believe the law is clear and has specific details to ensure no harm is done, but sadly ignorance and cruelty are prevailing. I think that poisoning dogs is dangerous and their condition after poisoning was painful and shameful.

The biggest issue in people's dealings with stray animals - whether cats or dogs - is cultural. There is a need to find alternative solutions other than poisoning, the most important of which is impounding these animals in a locked yard or specific areas instead of killing them. Also, providing proper food to the animal is very easy and requires only contracting poultry or meat companies to give the bones that are thrown in the waste daily.

It seems that the culture of humane behavior with animals has been lost among many people, as killing them by stoning, suffocation and poisoning only reflects ignorance. The question that remains is whether these ignorant people will be punished, and why these animals are not offered for adoption in Kuwait or other countries. Will Kuwait witness another crime if there is no punishment for those who harm these animals? I hope we don't witness a similar crime in the near future.

Kuwait urges Sudan parties to use self-restraint

NEW YORK: Kuwait called late on Friday all parties in Sudan to use self-restraint and renounce violence, stressing on the need to preserve achievements made by the joint African Union-UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), and encourages Sudan to take steps to extend its authority over all of Darfur region. In a speech to a United Nations Security Council session on Darfur, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi mentioned a report on a joint assessment of the situation in Darfur, which showed the continued stability of security in the region, excluding the impact of the exit strategy (UNAMID) on the situation. With regard to the 'instruments of conflict,' Otaibi stressed that it was possible to deal with them through non-peacekeeping means, adding that issues relating to land, ownership, climate change, and the safe and dignified return of displaced persons, were at the heart of post-conflict peace-building efforts. He pointed out that peacekeeping is no longer the best means for the situation in Darfur. "On the basis of the above, we call for the continuation of the mission in the current path as agreed in resolution 2429 (2018) and presidential statement No 19 of the Council last year," he said.

In terms of UNAMID's departure, Ambassador Otaibi praised the innovative approach of the mission through the work of 'liaison functions in the States,' which contribute to a gradual and smooth exit of the mission through enhanced coordination with the United Nations teams in the areas of peace building. "The mission and its exit strategy cannot be held hostage to the willingness of these parties to cooperate," Otaibi added. "The Sudanese government has always cooperated in this field, which was appointed by UNAMID, represented by the Joint Special Representative, in addition to the commendable efforts of the State of Qatar and the Federal Republic of Germany," Otaibi said. "We will work within the next two weeks on a new mandate for the mission and hope to be concise and clear on one of the exit options and specific in areas that need to be focused on, such as capacity building, strengthening the rule

Teen drowns off Shaab seafront

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A teenager drowned on Friday evening while swimming off a popular restaurant along the seafront in Shaab, said security sources. According to eyewitnesses, the boy jumped from the wave breakers to swim, but soon started to struggle, before drowning. It took four coast-guard boats and scuba divers 42 minutes to retrieve the body.

Fatal crash

A man was killed in a collision between a vehicle and water tanker along Subbiya highway, said security sources. Firefighters and paramedics arrived to the scene shortly after the accident was reported and handled the situation. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the crash.

Bachelors' residence

The committee entrusted with following up the issue of 'bachelors' residing in private and model residential areas met under the chairmanship of the municipality's deputy director for Farwaniya and Mubarak Al-Kabeer affairs Ammar Al-Ammar and



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks to a United Nations Security Council session on Darfur late on Friday. —KUNA

of law, strengthening national ownership and strengthening cooperation and consistency with main member team in Darfur," he added.

Political stability in Burundi

Separately, Kuwait expressed late Friday hopes for more political and security stability in the east African nation of Burundi. Speaking to a UNSC session on the situation in Burundi, Otaibi said that the political situation in the African nation since the May 17, 2018 constitutional referendum seemed stable compared to the upheaval, which began in 2015. The Kuwaiti diplomat hoped that the political progress would continue with the Presidential election of 2020, adding that all political parties would hopefully contribute to a fair and transparent election fulfilling the dreams of the people of Burundi.

The efforts carried out by the government of Burundi in preparations for the election and current President Pierre Nkurunziza's intention not to run in the future event are all good indications for progress

in the political sphere, said Ambassador Otaibi. He also commended efforts by the UN, the African Union, and other regional and international organizations and state players in aiding the political stability of the country.

On the security level, despite violent incidents carried out some armed groups, the outlook seemed to be positive for Burundi, indicated Otaibi, urging the government of Burundi to take advantage of the stable situation. The Kuwaiti diplomat touched on the humanitarian and refugee situations in the eastern African country, saying though the situation has improved, there was a crucial need to solve problems facing people including the lack of food security and basic human rights to name a few. In regards to economic and social development, Ambassador Otaibi commended the Burundi government step taken on August 22, 2018 to launch a national development plan, stressing that it was important to implement the tenets of the plan to gain the fruits of development. —KUNA

representatives from the interior, electricity and water and justice ministries, the Public Authority of Civil Information (PACI) and Kuwait Municipality to discuss how to eliminate the presence of bachelors from those areas. Ammar stressed the municipality will not tolerate violations and will work on evicting bachelors from those areas using various measures including disconnecting power supplies. Ammar also warned landlords of attempting to illegally reconnect power supplies or using electricity generators, noting that power will be officially reconnected only after evicting the bachelors and removing all violations.



KUWAIT: Divers participate in the search operation for a teenager who drowned off the Shaab seafront.



A meeting for the committee entrusted with following up the issue of 'bachelors' residing in private and model residential areas.

Local



KUWAIT: Colorful display of Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center's fountain. — Photo by Saleh Al-Jufalrah (KUNA)

Kuwait's 'Heart of Culture' initiative leads to cultural alliance: Italian official

Kuwaiti art exhibition hosted at cultural festival in Venice

VENICE, Italy: Representative of the Venice Mayor Paola Mar said yesterday that the 'Heart of Culture' art exhibition held by Kuwait's Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center would lead to a cultural alliance between Italy and Kuwait. Mar said that Venice warmly welcomes and hosts this exhibition, given that it has always been a center point for diplomacy, commerce and culture. She said that the gala that was held by Kuwait's Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center, and attended by Kuwait's Consul General in Milan and Northern Italy Abdulsamer Bokhador, is considered the first initiative between the two countries in this field.

Mar affirmed that this event shows the keenness of both countries to meet and communicate culturally, expressing her happiness towards Kuwait's choice in taking Venice as a cultural meeting point for such a cultural event. This initiative would pave the way for an Italian-Kuwaiti cultural alliance and would even result in a cultural exchange between Venice, including its museums, and Kuwait. Meanwhile, Veneto Regional Government Director for International Policies and Co-operation Diego Vecchiato spoke highly of the 'Heart of Culture' initiative and exhibition as a significant event held in the historical city of Venice. He added that the traditions of the people of

Veneto with Venice being its capital, stem from their trade and cultural exchange with others.

High turnout

The event, which coincides with the 2019 International Art Fair in Venice, witnessed a high turnout of artists, critics, intellectuals, and art enthusiasts from around the world. Marwa Al-Shalaan, the Kuwaiti event's supervisor, said the exhibition highlights her country's varied artistic and cultural works. This key platform enhances opportunities for Kuwait's creative individuals to benefit from the expertise and knowledge of Italian artists and art experts, she added. The first phase of the exhibition, which runs until August, includes the artworks of Zahra Marwan, Amani Al-Thuwaini and Mahmoud Shaker.

While the second, held between September and November, will be allocated to Ahmad Moqim, Khaled Al-Najdi and Nasser Behbehani. Marwan's works focused on her unique observations of social injustice adorned by the characteristics of Kuwaiti tradition. Meanwhile, Shaker used his authorship skills to shed light on people's personal interests, delving into their emotions through different illustration techniques. — KUNA



Paola Mar



Diego Vecchiato



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Kuwait Nikolay Makarov hosted a reception on the occasion of his country's national day at the embassy over the weekend. Higher officials, diplomats, media persons and a cross section of the Russian community attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Kuwait wins International Federation of Journalists seat

Minister welcomes KJA board member reelection to IFJ executive committee

TUNIS: Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) board member Dehiran Aba Al-Khail has won a seat in International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Executive Committee elections. The Kuwaiti journalist garnered 225 votes in the process held on the sidelines of the 30th IFJ Congress held in Tunis. KJA Treasurer and Kuwaiti Delegation Head Jassem Kamal said Aba Al-Khail's win of 225 out of a total 260 votes was deemed an accomplishment for Kuwait and its journalism. "It also reflects Kuwait's world reputation as a regional beacon of the freedom of expression and responsibility," he said. But, he said, this achievement requires more efforts by Kuwaiti journalists to maintain their key media role in the region and the world.



Dehiran Aba Al-Khail

organization that speaks for journalists within the United Nations system and within the international trade union movement. First established as the Federation Internationale des



Jassem Kamal

said the reelection of a Kuwaiti journalist to the membership of the executive committee of IFJ signals Kuwait's contribution to the efforts to promote the profession and protect the press freedom. "The Congress took place from June 11 to 14 in Tunisia, the first time in a Middle East country," Minister Jabri said, appreciating Aba Al-Khail's contributions to the KJA and journalism in Kuwait. "Kuwait is the first Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member country to be represented in the IFJ executive committee," he noted.

The minister reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to working with the KJA, as a civil society institution, to ensure free press in line with the insight of the political leadership represented by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Kuwait, ICRC to hold strategic talks over humanitarian challenges

GENEVA: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and International Organizations headquarters in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim said yesterday that Kuwait would hold annual strategic talks with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) tomorrow. Ghunaim said in a statement that these talks would take place in the Committee's headquarters in Geneva, to discuss, coordinate and organize international efforts towards the most recent humanitarian challenges. "These talks come from Kuwait's keenness in obliging to International Human Laws and in cooperation with ICRC towards providing humanitarian aid. Kuwait aspires to achieve better humanitarian work by living up to international standards," Ghunaim continued.

Ghunaim noted that the talks include several regional and international humanitarian issues, especially in the Middle East, and ways of dealing with those issues to mitigate its negative effects, in addition to the issue of lost Kuwaitis and the Committee's role in finding solutions. The Kuwaiti Ambassador also explained that this meeting would have a general humanitarian diplomacy aspect and discussions to provide better solutions for the future. The Kuwaiti delegation will be represented by Assistant Foreign Minister for Affairs of the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah, and President of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer. President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Peter Maurer and a number of figures involved in humanitarian work will also be present. — KUNA



Jamal Al-Ghunaim



Win a recognition of KJA's historic role

Historic role
Meanwhile, Aba Al-Khail boasted about his win of an IFJ seat as a recognition of the historic role of the KJA and journalism at Gulf, Arab and international levels. This success has been notched up thanks to Kuwait's good reputation and close relations with other countries, chiefly Arab ones, along with Arab integration within the IFJ. Held in Tunis for the first time the Middle East and Africa, the 30th IFJ Congress concluded here on Friday, with the attendance of 300 union leaders representing 600,000 journalists. The IFJ, the world's largest organization of journalists, represents 600,000 media professionals from 187 trade unions and associations in more than 140 countries.

Journalists (FIJ) in 1926 in Paris, it was relaunched as the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) in 1946, but lost its Western members to the Cold War and re-emerged in its present form in 1952 in Brussels.

Protecting press freedom

In the meantime, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri

Singaporean, Kuwaiti tankers collide at Bangladeshi port

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti oil tanker had a minor collision with a Singaporean container ship at the Port of Chittagong in Bangladesh, Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOIC) said on Friday. The collision took

place at the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port after the Kuwaiti tanker Burgan's shipment was unloaded in a normal and safe way, the KOTC said in a statement. The accident between Burgan and Express Mahanada was caused by traffic congestion at the port, it added. However, neither marine pollution nor casualties were reported as the Kuwaiti tanker safely docked at the Bangladeshi port, according to the statement. The Kuwaiti company's operations have not been affected by the accident, it said, adding that investigations would be carried out in order to find the exact causes of the collision and take all necessary legal measures in order to safeguard its rights and properties. — KUNA



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Bowing to pressure, Hong Kong suspends the extradition bill

Beijing denies 'hit-and-run' in South China Sea collision



AT SEA: A likely limpet mine can be seen on the hull of the civilian vessel M/V Kokuka Courageous in the Gulf of Oman. A methanol tanker came under fire in the Gulf of Oman on June 13. — AFP

Gulf faces tough task protecting shipping lanes

Asymmetric warfare tactics pose threat. Commercial vessels may get naval escorts

DUBAI: The United States and its allies may need to start escorting commercial vessels to prevent further attacks in Gulf oil shipping lanes, Gulf sources and experts said. Even then, the conventional naval and air capabilities of Western and Gulf powers tasked with policing vital commercial waters may be of limited use against the asymmetric warfare tactics suspected in recent operations, including naval mines.

Six tankers have been hit in the past month in two attacks near the Strait of Hormuz, through which almost a fifth of the world's oil passes, and Washington and Riyadh have accused Iran of being behind them, which Tehran denies. Two senior US officials said on Thursday that the United States is discussing with its allies a variety of options on how to protect international shipping in the Gulf of Oman after two tankers, bearing Norwegian and Japanese flags, were crippled. "We don't think this is over," one of the officials said of the possibility of more attacks.

Three sources in the Gulf said few options exist: Gradually introduce the escort system used during the Iran-Iraq "Tanker War" in the 1980s and more recent Somali pirate attacks, adopt new rules of engagement, and conduct mine-sweeping operations. "The Americans and others are speaking about the need for enhanced security in and around shipping routes, for protection for commercial vessels as a first step to convoys, and ability

to fire under new rules of engagement at hostile speed boats approaching such vessels," one of the Gulf-based sources said.

"You could see other powers sending navy ships eventually. It is a slower process now as moves are explored within the United Nations and to build a coalition." Another source said the feasibility of Washington and its allies sending naval convoys to accompany tankers would need to be studied given heavy traffic in a confined waterway. It also risks exacerbating tensions. The Strait of Hormuz is 21 miles (33 km) wide at its narrowest point, with the shipping lane just two miles (three km) wide in either direction.

Oxford Research Group's chief executive, Richard Reeve, likened averting asymmetric attacks to defending against Improvised Explosive Device or suicide attacks on land forces. John Hammersmark, director of the security and crisis department at the Norwegian shipowners association, added: "The threat posed in this area is very hard for ships to defend against." "It is the international community that has to take action with the measures

they have at hand, not least government bodies. If this gets worse, shipping will come to a halt, at least parts of it," he told Reuters.

High stakes diplomacy

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, said on Thursday it had stepped up readiness to face any threat. Some experts say much depends on how President

Donald Trump deals with Iran after his decision to exit a 2015 international nuclear pact last year, reimpose sanctions on Tehran and raise the US military presence in the Gulf in response to perceived Iranian threats. US and Saudi officials also blamed Tehran for a May 12 strike on four ships, including two Saudi oil tankers, off the United Arab Emirates, which is submitting evidence to the UN Security Council. Tehran accused the three allies of "warmongering". UN chief Antonio Guterres has said the world cannot afford "a major confrontation in the Gulf region". China, the European Union and others called for restraint from all sides.

Riad Kahwaji, CEO of the Dubai-based Institute for

Near East and Gulf Military Analysis, said either the international community could push Washington to ease up on Iran, or continued attacks could encourage global pressure against the Islamic Republic. "If there was going to be a war ... it will be the international community against Iran. No one wants to slide into a lone war against Iran," Kahwaji said. The burden, he said, would fall on Western powers, particularly the United States but including France and Britain, to protect regional waters.

"I would not be surprised to see the Chinese and Japanese sending ships to escort at least tankers and ships flying their colors," he said, given their dependence on Gulf oil. The situation is reminiscent of the tanker war that erupted in 1984 during the eight-year Iraq-Iran conflict. Both sides attacked tankers and merchant ships in the Gulf in an escalation that threatened global oil supplies and internationalized the conflict.

Lloyd's of London estimated that 546 commercial vessels were damaged and about 430 civilian sailors killed. To facilitate safe passage, the United States provided military protection by having its ships escort tankers, some of which carried the US flag. The Soviet Union also agreed to charter tankers. "What's happening now is different, this is not an open conflict. How to protect waters and for how long is a big question. We don't want a war," said the second Gulf source. — Reuters



Six tankers hit in two attacks in past month

Syria flare-up kills 35 fighters, 10 civilians

BEIRUT: At least 10 civilians and 35 combatants, mostly pro-regime forces, were killed yesterday in clashes and air strikes that erupted at dawn in northwestern Syria, a war monitor said. The flare-up came as Russian-backed regime forces tried to retake two villages seized by jihadists and allied rebels earlier this month, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. "Since this morning, the Syrian regime and allied fighters have launched five failed attempts to regain control of Jibine and Tal Maleh in northwestern Hama province," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman.

Syrian regime air strikes killed nine jihadists and rebel fighters, the war monitor said. Ensuing clashes in the north of Hama province left 26 pro-regime forces dead, including eight who were killed in a mine explosion, the Observatory said. In neighboring Idlib, regime air strikes killed 10 civilians, including three children, the Observatory said. The strikes hit the towns of Maaret al-Numan and Al-Bara as well as the village of Al-Ftura, according to the war monitor.

The Idlib region of some three million people is supposed to be protected from a massive regime offensive by a buffer zone deal that Russia and Turkey signed in September. But it was never fully implemented, as jihadists refused to withdraw from a planned demilitarized zone. In January, the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham alliance led by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate extended its administrative control over the



FA?IRAQ: Members of the Syrian Civil Defense (known as the White Helmets) prepare to remove a body from the rubble of a building, following reported airstrikes in the village of Fatirah in the southern countryside of the jihadist-held Idlib province. — AFP

region, which includes most of Idlib province as well as adjacent slivers of Latakia, Hama and Aleppo provinces.

The Syrian government and Russia have upped their bombardment of the region since late April, killing nearly 400 civilians, according to the Observatory. Turkey said Friday that it did not accept Russia's "excuse" that it had no ability to stop the Syrian regime's continued bombardments in the last rebel bastion of Idlib. "In Syria, who are the regime's guarantors? Russia and Iran," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told state news agency Anadolu in a televised interview. "Thus we do not accept the

excuse that 'We cannot make the regime listen to us'," he said.

His comments came as Turkey disagreed with Russia earlier this week after Moscow claimed a new ceasefire had been secured in the province following weeks of regime bombardments — a claim that was denied by Ankara. Syria's war has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it started in 2011 with the repression of anti-government protests. Russia launched a military intervention in support of the regime in 2015, helping its forces reclaim large parts of the country from opposition fighters and jihadists. — AFP

Anger as mosque gunman pleads not guilty

CHRISTCHURCH: The man accused of shooting dead 51 Muslim worshippers in the Christchurch mosque attacks in March smiled Friday as his lawyers entered not guilty pleas to multiple murder and terrorism charges. Brenton Tarrant's barrister told Christchurch High Court his client was pleading not guilty to all charges, prompting anger from survivors and relatives of those killed in the March 15 attacks.

The self-proclaimed white supremacist appeared in court via audio-visual link from a maximum-security prison in Auckland for the brief hearing. Tarrant, a 28-year-old Australian national, was committed to stand trial next year on 51 counts of murder, 40 of attempted murder and engaging in a terrorist act. His smiling demeanour enraged survivors still reeling from the worst massacre in modern New Zealand history, who had packed the courthouse's public gallery for a glimpse of the accused. "It just shows he's an animal," Mustafa Boztas, who was wounded in the thigh, told AFP outside the court.

"I feel sad that someone can be so unhuman and take the lives of innocent people." Abdul Aziz, who confronted the gunman at the Linwood mosque and chased him off the premises, said he wanted to see Tarrant's face. "He was laughing there (in court) and he thinks he was so tough, but he was a coward when he faced me and he ran," he said. "He was not man enough to stand up that time and (now) he's standing there and laughing. 'Put me for 15 minutes in one cell and then we will see if he can laugh any more.'"

Tarrant allegedly opened fire in the packed Al Noor mosque during Friday prayers, then travelled across town to continue the carnage in the suburban Linwood mosque, while livestreaming his actions on social media. The court heard that mental health assessments had found Tarrant was fit to stand trial. "No issue arises regarding the defendant's fitness to plead, to instruct counsel, and to stand his trial. A fitness hearing is not required," Judge Cameron Mander said in a statement shortly after the hearing. The judge set a trial date of May 4, 2020, with proceedings expected to last at least six weeks, although some lawyers warned the case - sure to be one of the biggest-ever in New Zealand - could go twice as long. — AFP

International

Iran 'not seeking war with US', but sending a warning

Tensions around the Gulf shipping channel soar

DUBAI: Amid an intensifying war of words following dual tanker attacks in the Gulf, Iran is not seeking open conflict with the United States but is sending a warning to Washington, analysts say. Tensions around the Gulf shipping channel, vital to the transportation of crude, soared after two tankers came under attack early Thursday, with the US quickly blaming Iran for the incidents. "Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps are rational actors — despite how some portray them — and they will not want, unduly, to invite Iran's annihilation," said Middle East analyst and author Neil Partrick.

both, remains," he said. "The skill involved in yesterday's oil tanker attacks suggests that this is something more sophisticated than, for example, the Iranian-supported Yemeni Houthis (rebels) could muster." US President Donald Trump insisted that Iran "did do" whatever led to fires aboard the two tankers. But Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted that the US had "immediately jumped to make allegations against Iran without a shred of factual or circumstantial evidence".

The two vessels, one of them Japanese, came under attack around the time Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was meeting with Iranian leaders in Tehran. For Partrick, the idea that Iran would want to "directly undermine"

Abe's visit "and give a gift to Iran's US and Gulf enemies, by engineering such a substantive attack must be in doubt." Also sceptical, Verisk Maplecroft analyst Torbjorn Soltvedt said: "Ascribing a clear reason why Iran would seek to disrupt tanker traffic in the Gulf of Oman is difficult at this stage."

'Expect further incidents'

"The most likely is that Iran is sending a message to warn the US and its allies in the region that it has the ability to retaliate against tightening energy sanctions. "But it is also possible that hardliners in Iran are seeking to damage the prospects of any renewed talks between Tehran and Washington to ease tensions," said Soltvedt. Relations between Tehran and Washington

soured significantly when Trump refused in October 2017 to re-endorse the deal agreed between global powers and Iran to contain the Islamic republic's nuclear program. The US subsequently re-imposed a raft of economic sanctions which Tehran has angrily denounced as "economic warfare".

The United States also accused Iran over May 12 attacks on four tankers anchored in the Gulf of Oman off the United Arab Emirates port of Fujairah. An international investigation stopped short of conclusively blaming Tehran for the incidents. Partrick suggested that by aggressively blaming Iran the US may have "paradoxically" limited the risk of further damage to oil exports, because Washington has "increased its deterrence capability

through rhetoric". Oil prices jumped at the threat of open conflict around the Strait of Hormuz, the chokepoint between the Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, through which some 15 million barrels of crude pass daily.

"(Iran) are not going to be closing it... It's not going to be closed for long and they know it. They've been told in very strong terms," Trump told the Fox News broadcaster on Friday. Karen E Young, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, warned that "we can expect further incidents, rather than attributable state-on-state attacks". "Neither the Gulf Cooperation Council states nor Iran want a direct military conflict," she said, referring to the six-nation regional grouping of Arab states. —AFP

What we know about the Gulf tanker attacks

NICOSIE: Suspected attacks left two tankers in flames in the Gulf of Oman, bumping up oil prices and further raising regional tensions triggered by a bitter US-Iran standoff. The strikes on Thursday follow last month's sabotage attacks on four ships off the United Arab Emirates that Washington blamed on Tehran. Amid rising fears of a conflict, here is what we know:

What happened?

In the early daylight hours of Thursday, two vessels transiting through the Strait of Hormuz towards the Indian Ocean caught fire. The Front Altair tanker, owned by a company listed on the Norwegian stock exchange, was hit by three explosions, according to the Norwegian Maritime Authority. The ship was carrying naphtha, a refined petroleum product, from Qatar to Taiwan. The Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous, loaded with methanol, was hit by a "fly-

ing object" before suffering a second blast on board, the operator's head said, relaying eyewitness reports from the ship's crew.

The US Fifth Fleet, based in Bahrain, said it received two separate distress calls, one at 6:12 am (0212 GMT) from the Front Altair and a second at 7:00 am from the Kokuka Courageous. The USS Bainbridge observed an Iranian Revolutionary Guard patrol boat and multiple smaller crafts near the Front Altair, a US navy spokesman said. The ship's crew, scooped up by a nearby vessel, were then transferred to Iranian boats, the spokesman added. Iran later aired footage of the 23 rescued sailors on its English-language Press TV, saying they were in "full health".

The 21 sailors from the Kokuka Courageous abandoned ship after "discovering a probable unexploded limpet mine on their hull following an initial explosion", the US navy spokesman said, adding they were picked up by a Dutch tugboat. The sailors were transferred to the USS Bainbridge and US Central Command later released a video it said showed an Iranian patrol boat removing the mine from the ship's hull. On Friday, the crew was back aboard the Kokuka Courageous and headed to the United Arab Emirates port of Khor Fakkan, according to a spokesperson for the vessel's Singapore-based BSM Ship Management.

Who was behind the explosions?

There has been no claim of responsibility for the blasts. Both ships have indicated the attacks originated from the surface, said maritime security company Dryad Global. But it said reports from the Front Altair indicated its hull was breached "on the starboard side partially below the waterline". The Kokuka Courageous was also hit on the starboard side, according to its managers.

Global reactions

Iran's top diplomat voiced incredulity over the timing of the incident, which came as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a bid to ease soaring tensions between Tehran and Washington. "Suspicious doesn't begin to describe what likely transpired this morning," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted. Washington was quick to point the finger at Tehran, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warning the US would defend its forces and allies in the region. Zarif called the accusations "baseless" and said the US was resorting to "sabotage diplomacy". Global oil prices surged by four percent immediately after reports of the attacks. UN chief Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the "security incident" and said the world could not afford a major confrontation in the Gulf. —AFP

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International

Bowing to pressure, Hong Kong leader suspends extradition bill

Chinese government supports Lam, condemns violence

HONG KONG: Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam yesterday indefinitely delayed a proposed law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China, in a dramatic retreat after anger over the bill triggered the city's biggest and most violent street protests in decades. The extradition bill, which would have covered Hong Kong's seven million residents as well as foreign and Chinese nationals there, was seen by many as a threat to the rule of law in the former British colony.

Around a million people marched through Hong Kong last Sunday to oppose the bill, according to organizers of the protest, the largest in the city since crowds came out against the bloody suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations centered around Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

Demonstrations continued through the week and were met with tear gas, bean bag rounds and rubber bullets from police, plunging the Asian finance hub into turmoil and piling heavy pressure on Lam. "After repeated internal deliberations over the last two days, I now announce that the government has decided to suspend the legislative amendment exercise, restart our communication with all sectors of society, do more explanation work and listen to different views of society," Lam told a news conference.

In her first public appearance or comments since Wednesday, she said there was no deadline, effectively suspending the process indefinitely. Political opponents called for the bill to be scrapped completely. Protest organizers said they would go ahead with another rally on Sunday to demand Lam step down. The about-face was one of the most significant political turnarounds under public pressure by the Hong Kong government since Britain returned the territory to China in 1997, and it threw into question Lam's ability to continue to lead the city.

It also potentially alleviated an unwanted headache for the leadership in Beijing, which is grappling with a slowing economy and an all-consuming trade war with the United States. Asked repeatedly if she would step down, Lam avoided directly answering and appealed to the public to

"give us another chance". She said she had been a civil servant for decades and still had work she wanted to do. She added that she felt "deep sorrow and regret that the deficiencies in our work and various other factors have stirred up substantial controversies and disputes in society".

'Great care'

The extradition bill deliberations started in February and Lam had pushed to have it passed by July. But the protests changed the equation. Cracks began to appear on Friday in the support base for the bill with several pro-Beijing politicians and a senior adviser to Lam saying discussion of the bill should be postponed for the time being. Sing Tao newspaper reported yesterday that China's top official overseeing Hong Kong policy, Vice Premier Han Zheng, met Lam in Shenzhen in recent days.

Lam declined to confirm whether or not the meeting had happened, but took ownership for the decision to suspend the bill and said she had support from the central government. Steve Tsang, a political scientist at SOAS in London, said Beijing had most likely ordered Lam to postpone the bill. "They would have indicated to Carrie...that this just has to end. She didn't understand what she was doing," he said. "I think Carrie Lam's days are numbered...Beijing cannot afford to sack her right away, because that would be an indication of weakness."

The Chinese government office in charge of Hong Kong affairs expressed "support, respect and understanding" of Lam's decision to suspend the bill. In a statement via the state news agency Xinhua, a spokesman said the central government "fully affirmed" the work of Lam and the Hong Kong government and would continue "to firmly support" her. Beijing "strongly condemns" the violence during the protests and supports the Hong Kong police, the statement said. Pro-democracy politicians, responding to Lam's announcement, said a suspension was not enough.

"Carrie Lam has lost all credibility among Hong Kong people. She must step down," said Claudia Mo, a legislator and member of the pan-democratic camp, which has



HONG KONG: People pray outside the government headquarters in Hong Kong yesterday. Hong Kong's embattled leader has suspended a hugely divisive bill that would allow extraditions to China in a major climbdown after a week of unprecedented protests and political unrest. — AFP

opposed the bill. A spokesman said the US consulate in Hong Kong welcomed Lam's decision and urged "great care and taking into account the views of the local and international community should the Hong Kong government pursue any amendments to its extradition laws, particularly as they relate to mainland China". Beyond the public outcry, the extradition bill had spooked some of Hong Kong's tycoons into starting to move their personal wealth offshore, according to financial advisers, bankers and lawyers familiar with the details. And senior police officers have said Lam's refusal to heed public opinion was sowing

resentment in the force, which was already battered by accusations of police brutality during the 2014 pro-democracy "Umbrella" civil disobedience movement. Lam had said the extradition law was necessary to prevent criminals using Hong Kong as a place to hide and that human rights would be protected by the city's court which would decide on the extraditions on a case-by-case basis. Critics, including leading lawyers and rights groups, note China's justice system is controlled by the Communist Party, and say it is marked by torture and forced confessions, arbitrary detention and poor access to lawyers. — Reuters

Guatemala: War, poverty, migrants

PARIS: Central America's most populated country, Guatemala is scarred by war, gang violence and poverty, its people among the streams of migrants heading north to the United States. Ahead of presidential elections on June 16, here are some facts about the country with a population of nearly 17 million.

Migrant gateway

On the southern border of Mexico, Guatemala is a gateway for the large numbers of Central American migrants aiming to reach United States. The bulk are from Guatemala and its southern neighbors, Honduras and El Salvador. All three countries are wracked by poverty and violence. US President Donald Trump threatened last year to cut aid to the countries if they do not halt the flow of migrants. He also heaped pressure on Mexico, which agreed to deploy its new National Guard to its highly porous border with Guatemala. The Guatemalan National Migrant Assistance Council estimates that about 1.5 million Guatemalans live in the United States and only between 300,000 and 400,000 have legal residence.

Poverty, violence

While Guatemala has the biggest economy of Central America's seven countries, it also has some of the worst poverty, malnutrition and maternal-child mortality rates in Latin America, the World Bank says. It is expected to reach 3.3 percent growth in 2019 (from three percent for

2018), with textiles and clothing, coffee, sugar, silver and bananas among its main exports. However, nearly 60 percent of its population lives below the poverty line of \$1.50 a day, most in rural and indigenous areas. It has one of the world's highest homicide rates, although this has been dropping: official statistics put the rate at 22.4 murders per 100,000 people at the end of 2018, from 26.1 a year earlier. Around half the killings are blamed on drug trafficking and extortion operations carried out by powerful gangs.

36-year civil war

Once part of the Mayan empire, Guatemala was ruled by Spain from 1524 until its independence in 1821. Spanish remains its official language and there are 21 native, mainly Maya, tongues. In 1954 the leftist regime of freely elected Jacobo Arbenz Guzman was overthrown in a US-backed coup, leading to a string of pro-American, right-wing regimes and the outbreak of civil war. The fighting between government troops, left-wing rebels and right-wing vigilante groups ended with a peace accord in 1996. According to the UN, about 200,000 people died or were forcibly disappeared. About 1.5 million were displaced or exiled. Dictator Efraim Rios Montt, who ruled from 1982 to 1983, died in 2018 while on trial for the genocide at the peak of the war.

Comedian in power

In 2016, former TV comic Jimmy Morales, famous for playing a country bumpkin cowboy who nearly gets elected president by accident, became president for real. He had campaigned on a promise of clean government after his predecessor, Otto Perez, was forced to step down following charges of corruption. However, a UN anti-corruption mission now wants to investigate Morales on suspi-



TAPACHULA: Migrants and residents use a makeshift raft to illegally cross the Suchiate river, from Tecun Uman, in Guatemala to Ciudad Hidalgo, Chiapas state, Mexico. — AFP

cion of campaign finance violations. He is constitutionally prohibited from running for a second term.

'Ring of Fire'

Guatemala is situated in the "Pacific Ring of Fire" where around 85 percent of the world's seismic activity is concentrated. The Fuego volcano, 35 kilometers (22 miles) southeast of the capital Guatemala City, erupted after five times in 2018, claiming around 200 lives in June. Three other volcanoes surround its landmark Lake Atitlan, Guatemala's most important tourist attraction, which has become heavily polluted. — AFP

Back in Italy, Knox fears harassment, new accusations

MODENA: Amanda Knox told an Italian legal forum yesterday she feared "harassment" and "new accusations" four years after she was acquitted of the gruesome killing of her British housemate, Knox, from Seattle, spent four years behind bars after the half-naked body of fellow exchange student Meredith Kercher was found on November 2, 2007 in a room of the apartment they shared in the central Italian city of Perugia.

Now, the 31-year-old is controversially back in Italy for a discussion panel entitled "Trial by Media" at the Criminal Justice Festival in the northern city of Modena. "To tell the truth I am afraid, afraid of being harassed, insulted, afraid of being trapped and new accusations being directed at me," Knox said. "I have come back because it was something I had to do - there was a time when I felt at home in this beautiful country and I hope one day to recapture this feeling." Knox, speaking in Italian, told the forum, her voice often close to breaking.

'Many think I am wicked'

"I know that, despite my acquittal, I remain a controversial figure in the face of public opinion, especially here in Italy. I know many people think I am wicked," said the American. "Some have even suggested that by being here I am once again traumatizing the Kercher family and profaning Meredith's memory," she went on. "They are wrong," she insisted.

"The fact I continue to be held responsible for the Kerchers' pain shows how powerful false narratives can be and how they can undermine justice, especially when reinforced and amplified by the media," said Knox. The conference has been organized by a group of Modena lawyers and the Italy Innocence Project, which focuses "on the issues related to wrongful convictions and miscarriages of justice". "The Italy Innocence Project didn't yet exist when I was wrongly convicted in Perugia," Knox tweeted in May.

From the outset, her case sparked lurid headlines in Britain and Knox's hometown of Seattle, Washington. Prosecutors described the murder as a drug-fueled sex game gone awry involving Knox, her Italian boyfriend Raffaele Sollecito and an Ivorian drifter, Rudy Guede. Sollecito was acquitted alongside Knox, but Guede was convicted in a separate "fast track" trial and is serving a 16-year jail term in Italy. Defense lawyers argued their clients could not get a fair trial because of the media frenzy over the murder, with lurid headlines seizing on the young US student's nickname "Foxy Knoxy". Knox left Italy after she was acquitted on appeal in 2011. In an essay published online on Wednesday, she recalled fleeing the country "in a high-speed chase, paparazzi literally ramming the back of my stepdad's rental car". Knox's sentence was raised to 28 years in prison when her conviction was upheld in 2014, though both she and Sollecito were finally acquitted by Italy's top court the following year and she returned home to work as a journalist and commentator. — AFP



MODENA: US journalist Amanda Knox reacts after she addressed a panel discussion titled "Trial by Media" during the Criminal Justice Festival at the Law University of Modena, northern Italy yesterday. — AFP



BARCELONA: People hold up placards with photos of the 12 Catalan separatist leaders who have been judged in Madrid over their role in Catalonia's failed 2017 independence bid during a demonstration to demand an acquittal for them. — AFP

Catalans separatists conquer new bastions of power

BARCELONA: Not content with controlling the regional government and hundreds of town halls, Catalonia's independence movement is conquering new power centers even if the mayorship of Barcelona could still be out of reach. The push follows a failed attempt to declare independence from Spain in October 2017, which prompted the Spanish government to impose direct rule on the semi-autonomous region in Spain's biggest crisis in decades.

In recent months, the movement took over Barcelona's Chamber of Commerce after a campaign to mobilize grassroots support. The pro-independence Intersindical-CSC union won elections among workers in the region's public administration, becoming the union with most representation. Then in May municipal elections, separatist candidate Ernest Maragall won the most votes. With enough support, he would be the first pro-independence mayor of the city since Spain transitioned to democracy in the 1970s. That looks less likely now, however, as Maragall did not get a majority and looks unlikely to get the support he needs to become mayor.

Mobilising campaign

The separatists' current drive focuses largely on gaining ground in financial or professional institutions. During

the 2017 crisis, thousands of companies moved their legal headquarters out of Catalonia, including the banks CaixaBank and Banco Sabadell, energy group Naturgy and cava-maker Freixenet. The grassroots campaign was launched in December by the Catalan Business Circle, a pro-secession business group, and the highly influential, separatist ANC civic association. Surveys indicate that more than half of Catalans are not in favor of independence.

But the idea was to encourage those independence supporters in Catalonia not only to go to protests but also to vote for separatist candidates in elections to unions, financial institutions, professional associations or sporting federations. "We realized that apart from parliament, town halls and the government, there was a network of power structures that were mainly in the hands of people who weren't pro-independence," Montse Soler of the ANC told AFP.

"Until now, the business community as a whole has been represented by big business, with a unionist message," Joan Canadell, founder of the Catalan Business Circle said. That's something he wanted to change with the joint campaign with ANC. In May, 31 of its candidates were elected to the executive of Barcelona's Chamber of Commerce out of 40 posts that were up for grabs, taking control. The Chamber of Commerce has a budget of 19.8 million euros (\$22.3 million) and is represented in key economic entities in the area, in the tourism, logistics and events sectors.

Canadell, the co-founder of the low-cost Petroleos Independientes petrol stations whose logo includes the Catalan separatist flag, will be its president. "For us, the objective itself is not independence but it's obvious that we will work for it," he said. His victory, due in no small part to the votes of small businesses, caused concern in other financial circles. — AFP

Sri Lanka 'super woman' guilty of child abuse

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Supreme Court fined an award-winning woman police officer for illegally detaining and intimidating a teenage girl to frame a local politician for rape, officials said Friday. Chief Inspector Waruni Bogahawatte was also ordered to pay 100,000 rupees (\$570) as compensation to the victim while the state was also ordered to pay 50,000 rupees in the hearing earlier this week.

The 15-year-old girl was forced by Bogahawatte to undergo repeated medical examinations to establish if she had been sexually attacked. A three-judge bench held that Bogahawatte, who won the best woman officer award in 2017, had abused her authority and violated the girl's fundamental rights and also intimidated her family. Local media had hailed her as a "super woman" chasing child abusers and sexual offenders.

The court heard that Bogahawatte repeatedly forced the girl from the southern town of Akuressa to make a false statement against a low-level politician who faced several unrelated rape allegations. When the girl insisted she had not been raped or sexually molested by the politician, Bogahawatte had illegally detained her at Matara police station in 2012 and subjected her to four medical examinations which proved negative.

Bogahawatte also locked up the girl in a cell with an adult offender, violating rules in dealing with juveniles. The court felt that the girl, who cannot be identified by the media, had been treated as a perpetrator rather than a potential victim of a crime. "This court also takes an opportunity to note with concern the increasing number of incidents of abuse of power by law enforcement authorities."

"There is no doubt that what is brought before courts is a fragment of the totality of incidents taking place across the country," the judges said Wednesday in their 24-page decision seen by AFP. A senior police source told AFP they would immediately withdraw the awards given to Bogahawatte and she would also be subjected to an internal investigation and risked losing her job. Another women's organization which granted her a "Top Career Woman" award in 2014 said it was reviewing the case. The Supreme Court asked police to remind their staff of the need to protect the basic rights of individuals. — AFP

International

India doctors to widen strike, demanding improved safety

Protests in response to attack on doctors in eastern India

KOLKATA: A leading Indian doctors' association called for a nationwide strike tomorrow, stepping up protests by medical staff demanding better security at hospitals after an attack on doctors in Kolkata. The move could paralyze hundreds of government-run health facilities across India. Thousands of doctors across the country went on a strike on Friday. The state of West Bengal, of which Kolkata is capital, has been the worst hit by the strike with at least 13 big government hospitals affected.

The protests were launched in response to an attack at the NRS Medical College in Kolkata on Monday that left three junior doctors seriously injured after a dis-

pute with a family whose relative had died. Doctors demanding better security began a strike but their action was confined to the state. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condemned them on Thursday, saying police did not strike when one of their colleagues was killed.

Banerjee's remarks, which included a warning that junior doctors would be evicted from their hostels if they did not go back to work, triggered a nationwide reaction. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) said the "barbaric" attack at the NRS reflected a national problem and called for a countrywide protest. It also demanded legislation to safeguard doctors.

Nearly 30,000 doctors were on a one-day strike on Friday, most in West Bengal, New Delhi and the western state of Maharashtra, according to figures proved by medical associations. The IMA had previously called for a protest on Friday, but later in the day asked for the protests to continue over the weekend, and a nationwide withdrawal of non-essential services in all health care institutions on June 17.

All emergency and casualty services will continue to function, IMA, which represents nearly 350,000 doctors in the country, said. The federal health minister Harsh Vardhan called for doctors to be protected. "The government must pass a law to make any attack on doc-

tors a non-bailable offence with minimum 12 years of jail," Vardhan, who is himself a doctor, said on Twitter.

India spent an estimated 1.4% of its gross domestic product on healthcare in 2017/18, among the lowest proportions in the world. Many millions of Indians depend on the cheap but inadequate public health system. Saradmani Ray, whose 77-year old father is a patient at the NRS Medical College, said she would have to move him because of the strike. "I will have to take my father somewhere else for his dialysis, maybe a private hospital," she told Reuters. "It will cause a lot of financial strain, but there's nothing I can do. I will have to pay." —Reuters

Conspiracy theories fueling widespread polio outbreak in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR: Two-year-old Farid should have been vaccinated against polio, but his family—like many in rural Afghanistan—believed the conspiracy theories and refused to have him inoculated. He contracted the virus, and now faces a crippling life sentence battling a potentially fatal disease with no cure. "When the doctors told me he had polio, I felt remorse. I had believed people who told me the polio vaccine was a plot against Muslims," Abdul Wali, the child's uncle and head of the family, told AFP of his decision to rule against inoculation.

In the past decade, the numbers of people infected with polio declined from a high of 80 in 2011 to 13 in 2016. But last year there was a jump in new cases with 21 reported across the country.

Polio immunization is compulsory in Afghanistan, but distrust of vaccines is rife, and the programs are difficult to enforce particularly in rural regions. The Taliban, having previously restricted access to such programs for residents living in areas it controls, says it has instituted a total ban on inoculations. Militants and religious leaders tell the community that vaccines are a Western conspiracy aiming to sterilize Muslim children, or that such programs are an elaborate cover for Western or Afghan government spies.

The CIA used a fake immunization campaign to help track down Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden in the Pakistani town of Abbottabad, where US forces later killed him in 2011, which has fuelled the conspiracy theories. Fears run so deep that some parents force their children to vomit after they receive the compulsory polio drops in government-run health centers. "We see this a lot," said Aziza Watanwal, a doctor in Kandahar city. "They believe in the propaganda."

Yar Mohammad, who brought his three-year-old daughter Razia to a local clinic in Kandahar province



ARGHANDAB: Afghan health workers along with polio immunization team members arrive at a house during a vaccination campaign in Kandahar province's Arghandab district. —AFP

in southern Afghanistan, said the local mullah told villagers the polio vaccine weakens one's faith. The child contracted the disease. "Now she is paralyzed," Mohammad said, as he looked at his daughter lying in a bed.

'Infidel's Campaign'

In the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan, home largely to conservative tribal communities, claims that the polio vaccine contains impure particles—including blood from pigs, a taboo animal in Islam—are widely shared. "I have heard from elders and scholars here and in Pakistan that the polio vaccine is impure and those who receive it will grow up with a weak faith in Allah," Kandahar city resident Abdul Wasay Rahimi said. All seven of Afghanistan's polio cases so far this year have been in Taliban-con-

rolled areas across the south, according to health officials. Hedayatullah Stanikzai, a senior adviser to the Afghan health minister, said the Taliban last year had barred house-to-house vaccinations, forcing health workers to use mosques as vaccination centers. Health experts view the door-to-door vaccination campaign as the best way to eradicate polio. But the tactic has fallen under a cloud of suspicion, in part because of the CIA ruse.

We tell residents the vaccination workers "are helping the vulnerable children. They are not spies," Stanikzai said. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said his organization believed polio vaccination workers use the programs as a ruse to gather intelligence in areas under insurgent control, then report this to foreign forces.

homes, the worst-hit were still on the streets more than a week afterwards, struggling without power in harsh heat and humidity. "We are cooking, eating and sleeping on this sidewalk," Rout's rickshaw-driver husband Manoj told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. He paid wood-cutters a week's wages to chip at the banyan tree until it could be rolled off the roof. Clearing Bhubaneswar of fallen trees and vegetation took well over a fortnight.

After the storms, hundreds of government workers were deployed to map out damaged homes in poor areas, many of them roofed with thatch, tin or corrugated cement sheets. Nearly all the households identified have received more than 2,500 rupees (\$36) to buy plastic sheeting for roofs, and 50 kg (110 lb) of rice to feed them in the short term. Chief Minister Patnaik said in mid-May that there was "a dire need" to build disaster-resilient housing along Odisha's coastal belt, which is vulnerable to cyclones, having experienced four major storms in the last six years. —Reuters

Beyond shelter in a storm, Odisha eyes sturdier homes, power and trees

BHUBANESWAR: Six weeks after India's eastern state of Odisha was battered by the strongest storm since 2013, officials are considering how to build back damaged homes and power networks to better withstand future wild weather, as well as protecting the coast with trees. When powerful Cyclone Fani swept ashore, the wind yanked a huge banyan tree from the soil and crashed it onto Phula Rout's corrugat-

ed-roof home in Shastri Nagar slum in Bhubaneswar city. As the tree's roots began to pop, 30-year-old domestic worker Rout and her family rushed outside their two-room house. The Routs were lucky, but many of the more than 16 million people in the path of the storm were saved instead by careful disaster planning, which led to an evacuation of 1.1 million to safer shelter ahead of the cyclone striking in early May.

Right after, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said the state government aimed to substantially reduce damage in future disasters as it moved into recovery and reconstruction mode. The storm will have cost the state about \$1.3 billion, including loss of public property and the cost of recovery, said Bishnupada Sethi, chief of the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA). Around Odisha, more than half a million homes were damaged, close to 1.5 million trees uprooted, and much of its energy infrastructure was destroyed.

In Shastri Nagar, where about 60% of families lost their

different story, saying they had spent hours in the water awaiting help. They were eventually picked up by a Vietnamese boat and brought home Friday aboard a Philippine navy vessel. The Philippine coast guard has started an investigation of the incident which Duterte's spokesman branded as "outrageous and barbaric".

Opposition lawmaker Francis Pangilinan branded China's version of events "as fake as its territorial claims," and called for Philippine leaders to stand up to Beijing. "Now is the time to show real grit and toughness," Pangilinan said. "There is never a time to be meek and submissive before a foreign power that endangers our own people." Duterte has yet to make any public comment but he recently criticised China's assertive stance over the sea. "I love China... but it behoves upon us to ask, 'Is it right for a country to claim the whole ocean?'" he said in a speech last month.

Manila's Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin said this week that he had lodged a diplomatic protest with China over the sinking. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang on Thursday called the incident "an ordinary maritime traffic accident". Geng said it was irresponsible for the Philippines to "politicize the incident without verification". Competing claims over the South China Sea are a point of regional contention because trillions of dollars of goods pass



MANILA: Activists burn a mock Chinese flag with a map of the South China Sea during a protest in front of the Chinese consulate in Manila, against the Asian superpower's growing sway in the Philippines and as tensions rise over Beijing's presence in the disputed South China Sea. —AFP

Beijing denies 'hit-and-run' in South China Sea

MANILA: Beijing confirmed yesterday that a Chinese vessel hit a Philippine fishing boat in a collision which has increased tensions in the disputed South China Sea, but denied claims it was a "hit and run". The Chinese trawler sailed away after the incident Sunday near Reed Bank that sank the fishing boat, sparking outrage from Philippine authorities and media.

While President Rodrigo Duterte has largely set aside the once tense stand-off with China over the resource-rich waterway, many in the Philippines bristle at Beijing's actions in the sea. The Chinese embassy in Manila said the crew of trawler Yuemaobinyu 42212 "bumped into" the Philippine boat and then left due to safety fears. "The Chinese captain tried to rescue the Filipino fisherman, but was afraid of being besieged by other Filipino fishing boats," the statement said.

It went on to say the incident was not a "hit-and-run", as some Philippine authorities had claimed, because the trawler "confirmed the fishermen from the Filipino boat were rescued". However, the 22 fishermen told a very

through it, and rich petroleum reserves are thought to sit deep beneath its waters.

Reed Bank, an area claimed by Manila and Beijing, is within the Philippines' 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone and far from China's nearest major landmass. Manila won a key 2016 ruling

against China's claims in the waterway, but Duterte opted to set it aside in exchange for Chinese investments. Opposition politicians as well as segments of the public and media charge that Duterte has bartered away Philippine sovereignty with little to show in return. —AFP

South Sudan sees record hunger levels, despite peace deal

JUBA: A record number of almost seven million people are facing severe hunger in South Sudan, despite a peace agreement which has largely stopped fighting after more than five years of war, UN agencies warned Friday. "Every year, hunger reaches new and unprecedented levels in South Sudan with millions of people unsure where their next meal will come from, particularly at this time of the year when hunger peaks from May to July," Hsiao-Wei Lee of the World Food Programme (WFP) said in Juba.

UN-backed assessments use a ranking called the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which rates hunger levels from one to five. The WFP, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and children's agency Unicef said about 1.8 million people in South Sudan were in an "emergency," or level four, which means large gaps between meals, acute malnutrition and excess deaths.

More than five million others are also having to skip meals. At the beginning of 2019, it was estimated that 6.1 million people were facing hunger. But this figure now stands at 6.9 million people — about 61 percent of the population. Under the IPC system, level five is classified as "catastrophe," and when it applies to 20 percent of the population is deemed a famine. South Sudan declared a "man-made" famine in 2017. While the technical requirements for a famine are not currently met, the overall number of people requiring food aid has increased by about two million.

A statement from the agencies said the annual lean season "started early following record low stocks from the poor 2018 harvest and has been further extended by the delayed onset of 2019 seasonal rains." Persistent economic instability, years of fighting and displacement and high food prices have all made access to food more difficult. If the current situation continues, about 21,000 people could slide into "famine" conditions, said Pierre Vauthier, deputy country director for the FAO.

This estimation has dropped from about 30,000 in January. "With greater stability in the country, access to those in need has improved, allowing us to treat more than 100,000 children suffering from severe malnutrition in the first five months of the year, with more than 90 per cent of those children recovering," said Mohamed Ag Ayoya, UNICEF's representative in South Sudan. "But malnutrition levels remain critical in many areas and our fear is that the situation could worsen in the coming months."

South Sudan descended into war in 2013 when President Salva Kiir accused his former deputy and fellow rebel leader Riek Machar of plotting a coup. The war, marked by ethnic violence and brutal atrocities, has left about 380,000 dead while some four million have fled their homes. Under a peace agreement signed in September, Kiir agreed to set up a unity government with Machar, who is to return from exile, but that has been delayed by six months until November. —AFP

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P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
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Washington Watch

The idea of America is at risk

By Dr James J Zogby

I have long argued that the American identity was fundamentally different than that of most other countries in the world. While the identity of most nations has been ethnic-based, being American represented an inclusive idea that transcended ethnicity.

For centuries we have absorbed peoples from all over the world and, within less than a generation, they became American. As they did, not only were they transformed, but the idea of America, itself, was transformed. It hasn't always been easy. Newcomers have often faced resistance in the form of discrimination and exclusion. But despite the bigotry against the many diverse peoples who came to our shores, wave after wave of immigrants became American and, in the process, they changed American culture, music, cuisine, humor, and history.

Despite the periods of resistance and backlash against the latest newcomers, this is how America worked for generations. Now, however, I believe that we are witnessing a distressing unraveling of the very idea of American identity. A story come to mind:

A few years ago, I was the invited speaker at a dinner honoring a retiring Arab American elected official of Lebanese descent. The event was taking place in a center that had been built by the local Lebanese American community. In the lobby of the building proudly hung pictures of those members of this ethnic community who had served in the US military. There were group photos of young men and women, in uniform, from World Wars I and II all the way up to the more recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Because the story told by this photo gallery was so profoundly American, I made a mental note to mention it in my speech.

Before I was to address the dinner, the evening's Master of Ceremony introduced the visiting Ambassador from Lebanon for a few words. He spoke of Lebanon's pride in the success its emigrants and their descendants had achieved in the US. I appreciated the thoughtfulness of his remarks until he shifted, toward the end, to make the announcement that Lebanese Americans would be eligible to vote in Lebanon's next election. As someone who has spent more than half of my life fighting to secure the role of Arab Americans in US politics, registering Arab American voters, and supporting those who run for office, I was horrified.

When it was my turn to speak, I felt compelled to begin by making it clear that I objected to Lebanese Americans voting in Lebanon's elections for two reasons. Our ancestors had made a choice. They became Americans, fought for America, and fought to secure their place in America. The elections in which we should vote, therefore, are here in America. Secondly, I believe that because we will not have to live with the consequences of the outcome of the vote in Lebanon, we have no right to decide who will govern in that country. This phenomenon of voting in foreign elections is a new and growing phenomenon among many ethnic groups in the US. While it is understandable for more recent immigrants who still maintain strong ties to their countries of origin, it is, nevertheless, worrisome because it creates a divided focus and loyalty.

Serious questions must be asked when we see citizenship and identity being cast off like an old coat. We have long questioned how it can be legitimate for US citizens to fight in the Israeli army, settle in the West Bank, or become Israeli officials (like the current Israeli Ambassador to the US). But the same question must be asked of other groups, as well. When two officials, who served in the Bush Administration, leave the US at the end of his term and run for office in the Middle Eastern countries from which they emigrated, we have good reason to question what this says about being an American. While I said that I understood, but was still concerned, about the conflicted loyalty of recent immigrants, what troubles me even more are the increasing numbers of younger American-born citizens seeking dual citizenship in foreign countries. This phenomenon is not limited to Americans of Arab descent. It is occurring in many ethnic groups.

While securing American citizenship, the right to vote, and an American passport were once the coveted goals of generations of immigrants, we must ask why some of their descendants no longer feel that same sense of pride and belonging and instead seek to reverse this process and become dual-citizens. It raises serious questions about the unraveling of loyalty to the American identity. Some blame President Trump for their alienation and search for alternative identities. Although he and divisive xenophobic rhetoric of the Republican Party is not solely responsible for this phenomenon, there can be no doubt that his behavior has added fuel to the divisive atmosphere in which we are living.

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

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A national flag waves as Turkish soldiers take part in a military search and rescue exercise with helicopters and ships near Magosa, Cyprus on June 12, 2019. — AFP

Turkey, S-400 and the new arms sale geopolitics

Sometime next month, Russia may begin air defense system to Turkey. It is a move that divides NATO, may see the Turkish military kicked out of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter project, and demonstrates just how central yet divisive high-tech weapons exports have become. Throughout the Cold War, weapons shipments from both East and West were vital for entrenching alliances and establishing spheres of interest. While some nations - particularly the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia - embraced cutting-edge US technology, many others purchased Russian - hard-wearing, often cheaper equipment that came with wider Soviet diplomatic and economic support.

The world now is rather more complex. A growing number of countries, such as Turkey, Iraq and India, wish to hedge their bets and buy from both. That's understandable - but changing technology brings further complications. As the current US-Turkey row shows all too clearly, mixing and matching the latest Russian and US systems is something Washington does not take lightly. This week, Turkish pilots found themselves pulled from flying F-35s in Arizona, an apparent indication of just how seriously the United States takes the issue. If it goes ahead with the purchase, Ankara may also face US financial sanctions, inflicting further damage on an already fragile economy.

For Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, this appears a matter of pride. Having felt largely ignored by the United States over the Syria war, Turkey has found itself increasingly at loggerheads with Washington. That came to a head after an attempted coup in 2016, when Erdogan seems to have felt the United States was too slow in backing him.

'Wolf brigade': Alps guards with license to kill

As the sun sets over the southern French Alps on a cool evening in early June, a flock of sheep huddle in an enclosure at an altitude of 1,500 m. Next to them, two khaki-clad watchmen settle down for the night in the Mercantour National Park on the border with Italy, equipped with thermal-vision cameras, warm jackets and a rifle with a night-vision scope. "What's going to be important for the next few hours is to be attentive all the time. For a wolf to cross (the pass) takes two or three seconds. If we aren't watching, it's over," one of the guards said.

The pair are part of France's "wolf brigade", employed by the state to protect livestock from a predator that was hunted to extinction in France in the early 20th century but is now making a grand comeback. Starting in 1992, grey wolves started re-appearing in France, arriving across the Alps from Italy, which has rejected calls for a cull of its flourishing population of the fanged mammals. Seventeen years after their return, the population in France is growing fast, rising from an estimated 360 last year to 530, according to the national hunting and wildlife agency (ONCFS), which uses information gathered by 4,000 observers nationwide.

While their numbers are only a fraction of those found in Italy, Spain, Romania or Poland, the predators have raised the hackles of farmers, with some 3,674 wolf attacks reported in 2018 alone, mainly on sheep. Faced with the outcry from sheep farmers, the government has announced plans to nearly double the annual cull quota, from 53 this year to around 100 next year. "We now consider that the wolf is no longer a species at risk of extinction," Agriculture Minister Didier Guillaume said last week, adding that the government's priority was now to protect farmers' livelihoods.

'At the end of their tether'

The killing of wolves is outlawed across most of the EU, with culls allowed only under strict conditions where there is no "satisfactory alter-

Insecure autocrat

In some ways, the S-400 is a poorly designed purchase for an insecure autocrat - particularly anyone whose deepest fear is that one day they might face US-backed "regime change". Developed in the nineties and refined with lessons from the 1999 Kosovo war, it is intended to provide an integrated air defence that would prevent US or other forces from seizing air superiority as quickly as they did in Kosovo or the two Gulf wars. Amongst other attributes, that means its users - and almost certainly also its Russian manufacturers - can share data and insights, boosting their preparedness for any attack.

That capability, of course, is key to the current US-Turkish standoff. America's greatest worry is that once Turkey takes delivery of its F-35s - and then uses them in simulated war games with the S-400 - it will inevitably learn ways in which the aircraft's stealth characteristics can be detected and targeted. If Russia were to gain that information - and some analysts suspect it might be transferred almost immediately from the S-400's networks - then the technical edge of one of the most expensive aircraft in recent history would be lost.

Already, US and other NATO officials are concerned enough about Russia's spreading influence, not to mention the way in which regional powers are turning to Russian and Chinese technology over US systems. Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and India are amongst US allies reported to be considering the S-400. Crucially, none of those states is also part of the F-35 program, meaning the level of concern over secrets being lost is inevitably much lower. Still, the growth of Russian and Chinese arms sales in the region is a clear sign of diminishing US influence.

Predator drones

After Washington refused to sell armed predator drones to countries in the region, several states - including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq - have purchased armed Chinese UAVs that are now a frequent sight in the skies over war zones such as Yemen. Simpler Russian and Chinese technology is also sometimes simply faster to get into service - the most striking example being Iraq's Su-25 Frogfoot ground attack aircraft, bought from Moscow at the height of the Islamic State advance and thrown into action mere days later.

For Beijing and particularly Moscow, conflict in the Middle East makes it an appealing sales destination, both for otherwise obsolete equipment and cutting-edge new platforms. In Syria, Moscow has made a highly public point of testing a number of new weapons systems, including unmanned tanks, as well as getting its commanders experience in the messy realities of modern warfare. Fundamentally, such activity in Syria and the Turkey S-400 sale are signs of Moscow's geopolitical posturing, demonstrating the ability of President Vladimir Putin and the Russian state to extend its will across the Middle East. And perhaps equally importantly, the inability of the United States to stop it. When it comes to the S-400s, that puts Erdogan in an awkward position. If he cancels the purchase, he will look weak and burn down his relationship with Moscow. If he goes ahead, however, Washington has a vested interest in exacting a high price, making sure that Turkey regrets its decision. None of it does anything to solve the problems of the Middle East. But it feels like yet another sign of rising international rivalry quietly running ever more out-of-control. — Reuters

Who will be the first female moonwalker?

Who will take the giant leap for womankind? More than fifty years after the end of the Apollo program, NASA plans to return to the Moon by 2024 as a "proving ground" to test the next generation of spacecraft ahead of an eventual crewed mission to Mars. The new program has been named Artemis after Apollo's twin-sister in Greek mythology, and the space agency has said that the mission will see the first woman to stride the lunar surface. So, who will she be? No one knows for sure, but it's a likely bet the candidate will be selected from among NASA's current roster of 12 female astronauts.

They're aged between 40 and 53, and are former military pilots, medical doctors and scientists who were picked from among thousands of applicants since the late 1990s. Predicting who will join Neil Armstrong in the annals of history isn't an exact science, but several former astronauts and experts interviewed by AFP say the proximity of the deadline mean it probably won't be a new recruit.

"Now personally, I'd be okay with flying a rookie astronaut to the Moon," former astronaut Eileen Collins, who flew and commanded Space Shuttles in the 1990s and 2000s, told AFP. "But if you have enough astronauts who have already flown, they know how they're going to react in space. So, you go up there and they have symptoms that might interfere with their ability to do the work. But you don't know who that is."

Ken Bowersox, a senior official at NASA, agreed. "I think it will be better to send people who have had at least one flight," he told AFP. "That objective will be easier than ever before because there have never been so many women astronauts. When NASA was first established in 1958 it only recruited from the military, which was at the time exclusively male. All 12 moonwalkers between 1969 and 1972 were men, and it wasn't until 1983 that Sally Ride became the first American woman sent to space."

Scientists and soldiers

The four women of the 21st class of astronauts, recruited in 2013, represent a good mix

of youth and experience. Currently between the ages of 40 and 41, they will all have made their first space forays between now and 2020. Anne McClain, an ex-army helicopter pilot, will be in the International Space Station (ISS) until the end of June. Well spoken, with a self-assured gaze and a light smile, she embodies the ineffable "right stuff" of NASA's early recruits.

Also currently in the ISS is Christina Koch, an engineer and passionate mountain climber. She will soon beat the record for the longest time a woman has been in space, at 11 months. Back in March, the pair almost conducted the first all-female spacewalk, but a lack of a proper fitting spacesuit meant McClain had to give her place up for her male colleague Nick Hague. "I think Christina Koch or Anne McClain would be my two top picks," said Janet Ivey, the presenter of a children's show on space and a governor of the National Space Society.

But their two female colleagues from the same class, Jessica Meir, a marine biologist who specializes in penguins and geese, and former F/A 18 fighter pilot Nicole Mann, who flew in Iraq and Afghanistan, are also highly qualified. They are both in the middle of their training to go to the ISS. In a 2016 interview, all four declared themselves ready to go to Mars if the opportunity presented itself. It's hard to imagine them turning down a trip to the Moon.

Opaque process

There's no upper age limit for space. The iconic John Glenn made his last flight at the age of 77 as a US senator. There's nothing therefore excluding the highly experienced Sunita Williams, who is preparing for her third space mission and will be 58 in 2024. Especially since NASA has long "appreciated the leadership skills that came along with test pilots," according to Kent Romminger, the former chief of the astronaut office from 2002 to 2006. "Sunita," as she's known, has piloted about thirty different aircraft in her military career.

Two other women, Serena Auñón-Chancellor and Kate Rubins, have also flown to space recently. The other five haven't flown since 2010 but remain on active duty. There are five women in the 2017 batch but they have yet to complete their initial training. They're not ruled out yet, but the calendar isn't on their side - especially since NASA tends to stick to a cycle of astronauts once their order is set, says Michael Lopez-Alegria, a former astronaut who spent 20 years with the agency. — AFP



Sunita Williams

Business

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Zain launches 5G bundles

Offer starts at KD 45 monthly with 5G BOLT router

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of its 5G Internet bundles for postpaid customers. The launch comes after the company's announcement last month of the full readiness of its network for the commercial launch of fifth generation wireless technology (5G) to be the first operator to offer 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage of all areas.

Last May, Zain unveiled that it succeeded in designing an integrated network for 5G services built on a world-class infrastructure. This came after the official announcement made by Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) to grant Zain the needed licenses for telecom operators to launch 5G services in the Kuwaiti market. This technology will contribute to fully launching the Zain's potential within the digital community and further reinforcing its leadership in the ICT sector. Starting from Saturday 15 June, Zain temporarily changed the name of its network to "Hello 5G" for 48 hours in commemoration of the commercial launch of the service.

Zain offers 5G Internet bundles for its postpaid customers through a number of flexible bundles starting at KD 45 monthly with 500 GBs and a 5G BOLT router. The

Company changes network name to "Hello 5G" for 48 hours to commemorate commercial launch

company also offers many other 5G Internet bundles with varying caps that reach up to 4 TBs monthly to suit customers' different personal and business needs. Customers can learn more about all the available bundles through kw.zain.com/5G or by visiting any of Zain's branches all around Kuwait.

Zain also offers a variety of additional products and services that offer users the



ability to enjoy the revolutionary features of 5G technology even more, including the TP-Link deco-mesh Wi-Fi zone extender, which provides customers with full coverage across their home, as well as other entertainment and gaming devices that can be added to the 5G bundle for an unmatched ultra high-speed Internet experience.

Zain has always been one of the first companies to offer the latest generations of telecommunications technologies. As the telecom sector is currently directing towards digital transformation with significant pace, it is evident that current mobile telecom networks will not be capable of satisfying the future needs of the sector with what is currently available. For that, Zain's impending commercial launch of 5G services comes to keep up with the fast-paced and ever-evolving lifestyle patterns of the community on all levels.

The revolutionary fifth generation wireless technology (5G) offers endless applications that can be summarized in three main uses. The first use is enhanced mobile broadband (eMBB), which can be considered a direct extension and progression of the current 4G LTE networks, offering

faster connections, higher throughput and more capacity. The second use is Ultra-Reliable Low-Latency Communications (URLCC), which means a 5G network is reliable for mission critical applications that requires uninterrupted and robust data exchange. The third use is Massive Machine-Type Communications (mMTC), which will be enabled by 5G networks to serve as an infrastructure and an enabler

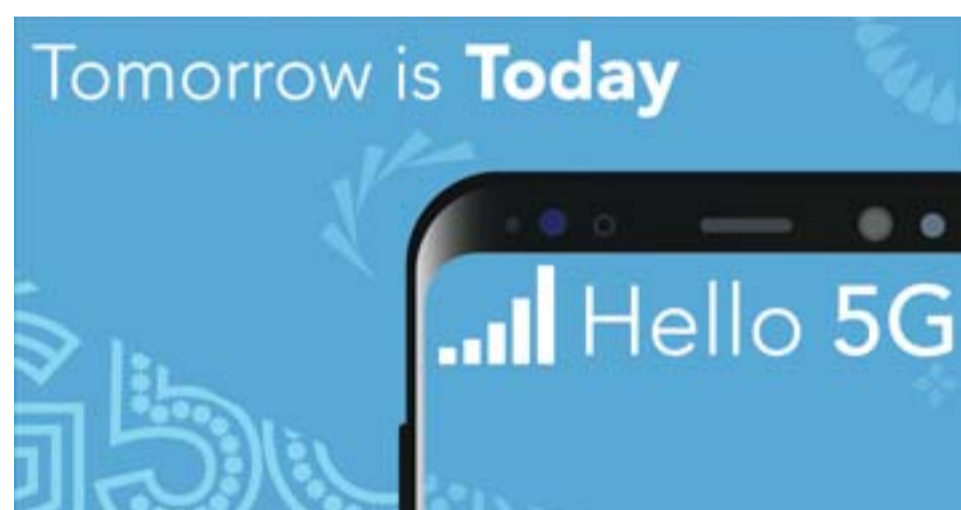
for the new applications that are expected to mature in the near future.

With the widespread use of smart devices, the increasingly fast-paced direction towards smart lifestyles, as well as the lucrative opportunities presented by digital services particularly in the profitable business sector, mobile operators are encouraged to reinforce their investments in the telecom sector.

Reports and forecasts refer to the huge potentials that will be offered by 5G technology, as well as the many opportunities it will offer for the various industries, such as e-commerce, retail, government transactions, energy, public and safety facilities, healthcare, public transportation, media, entertainment, and financial services. Furthermore, 5G services will enhance essential services, and will further push the telecom sector to a new phase of growth.

5G technologies will offer ultimate access, where people and smart devices within the community will communicate with each other in entirely new fashions. The flow of information will be smooth and continuous, while the highest degrees of coverage and unlimited speeds will be possible with this generation of networks.

The real value of digital information lies not just within the information itself, but rather in the new innovative services that can be obtained from them. The nourishment of digital economy will be possible, as well as achieving positive change in manufacturing methods, current lifestyles, and more. All this will ultimately enhance the lives of people for the better.



India set to raise tariffs on some US goods

NEW DELHI: India has decided to raise tariffs on imports of 29 goods from the US after having deferred the move several times since announcing it last year, media reported yesterday.

The government had said last June it would raise import taxes on a slew of US goods including almonds and apples, apparently irked by Washington's refusal to exempt New Delhi from higher steel and aluminum tariffs. But it delayed raising tariffs several times as trade talks between the world's two biggest democracies raised hopes of a resolution.

However President Donald Trump's decision to strip New Delhi of its preferential trade status earlier this month appears to have triggered the latest Indian move. There would be no further delays in imposing the retaliatory tariffs, the Economic Times reported, quoting a government official, with the new taxes due to take effect from today.

The Press Trust of India news agency said the finance ministry would make a formal announcement soon, although it had already conveyed its decision to the United States. The trade tensions come despite Washington's effort to boost ties with India as a counterweight to China and Trump's stated good relations with Prime Minister



US President Donald Trump's decision to strip New Delhi of its preferential trade status earlier this month appears to have triggered the latest Indian move. — Reuters

Narendra Modi. Trump and Modi are set to meet at the G20 summit on June 28-29 in Osaka where the sticky trade issue is likely to be taken up.

It is also likely to figure during talks with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who is set to visit India for talks later this month. On Wednesday Pompeo had said the US

was open to dialogue with India and would "broach some tough topics". US goods and services trade with India stood at an estimated \$142.1 billion in 2018. The US trade deficit with India was \$24.2 billion, according to official data. Washington is already engaged in a full-blown trade war with India's regional rival China. — AFP

Turkey hits out at Moody's after credit rating cut

NAKARA: Turkey yesterday lambasted Moody's ratings agency after it cut Ankara's credit rating further into junk territory, saying the downgrade raised concerns over the institution's "objectivity and impartiality". The agency downgraded the long-term debt rating to B1 from Ba3 and said it maintained the negative outlook for Turkey, in a statement late Friday.

Although the country had a "large, diverse economy" and government debt was low, Moody's said this was outweighed increasingly by "continued erosion in institutional strength and policy effectiveness on investor confidence".

But the Turkish treasury and finance ministry said the move was "incompatible with the Turkish economy's fundamental indicators". "As a result this raises questions over the objectivity and impartiality of the body's analyses," the ministry added in a statement.

It pointed to rising tourism revenues, falling inflation and a new judicial reform package as examples of "very positive developments that we sadly see are being ignored".

The Turkish economy entered into recession for the first time in a decade last year following a currency crisis in the summer amid tensions with the United States. But last month official data showed Turkey



exited the recession with 1.3 percent growth in the first quarter of 2019, although analysts say the return to growth could be temporary.

Moody's also said the latest downgrade reflected the view of a continued rising risk of a balance of payments crisis, "and with it the risk of a government default."

The agency said the negative outlook was maintained because of possible instability caused by the re-run of the Istanbul mayoral election on June 23 and the fear of US sanctions against Turkey over Ankara's purchase of a Russian missile defense system. The US says if Turkey purchases the S-400 system, it faces penalties under an act which prohibits business with Russia's state and private defense and intelligence sectors. "The sanctions which the US Congress will consider if the purchase goes ahead, while largely undefined to date, cast a further shadow over Turkey's economy and financial system," Moody's said. — AFP

Business

Russia, Europe eye investment in Lebanon's oil and gas sector

Lebanon to launch offshore drilling by end of 2019: Minister

BEIRUT: Russian and European firms are mulling investments in Lebanon's nascent oil and gas sector as it prepares to launch offshore drilling by the end of 2019, Energy Minister Nada Boustani said. "Several big companies have visited Lebanon," she told AFP in an interview. "We are talking about Gazprom (Russia), Lukoil (Russia), and soon, the (Britain) BP firm is expected to visit," the 39-year-old minister said in her office in Beirut.

"There is also interest from Total (France), ENI (Italy) and Novatek (Russia)." US firms have not yet participated in offshore bidding rounds. But US State Department official David Satterfield told Boustani on Wednesday that Washington "has no problem with US firms participating" in the energy sector, she said, calling this a "positive step".

Last year, Lebanon signed its first contract to drill for oil and gas in its waters. A consortium comprising energy giants Total, ENI and Novatek took the first two of its 10 blocks, including one disputed by neighbouring Israel with which Lebanon has fought several wars.

On April 5, Lebanon invited international consortia of at least three companies to bid for five more blocks by the end of January 2020. On Thursday, Boustani wrote on Twitter that she had met with the regional head of BP who said his company was "interested in the second licensing round".

Two more of the blocks now up for tender are also adjacent to Israel's waters.

'Negotiations with Israel'

Israel and Lebanon are technically at war, although the last Israeli troops withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000 after two decades of occupation.

This has complicated attempts to demarcate land and maritime borders with Israel, which produces natural gas from reserves off its coast in the Mediterranean. In recent weeks, Satterfield has been mediating in indirect negotiations between the two countries over their disputed maritime border, whose delimitation could

affect offshore exploration.

"If we agree on entering talks with Israel, then in addition to negotiations over the maritime borders, we will also discuss ways to divide offshore oil and gas fields," Boustani said. Lebanon is set to start drilling in block 4 in December, and later in the disputed block 9.

Last year, Total said it was aware of the border dispute in less than eight percent of block 9 and said it would drill away from that area. In the wider region, Lebanon is also considering agreements with other neighbors.

In January, representatives of seven Mediterranean countries—including Egypt, Cyprus and Israel—agreed on establishing the East Med Gas Forum, a Cairo-based body that aims to create a regional gas market to benefit member states.

Lebanon refused to take part in the forum because of the participation of Israel, but it has since started working on separate deals. In April, Lebanon and Cyprus said they were working together towards a deal over adjacent oil and gas exploration zones in the Mediterranean.

Regional alliances

"We have made way for negotiations with Cyprus and we are doing the same with Egypt," said Boustani, the youngest sitting minister in Lebanon's government. "We can't be involved where the Israelis are," she said, referring to the East Med Gas Forum. "But nothing prevents us from striking a tripartite agreement" with Cyprus and Egypt, she added.

Laury Haytayan, a Middle East oil and gas expert, says such a tripartite deal is one way for Lebanon to secure strategic regional alliances in the energy sector. Lebanon may also have to strike a deal with Syria, with which it also has a maritime border dispute. Two of the five blocks up for bidding until January 2020 border Syrian waters, which may complicate drilling.

"There is certainly room for (negotiations) with Syria, and we need to look into this very soon,"



BEIRUT: Lebanese Energy Minister Nada Boustani displays a map of offshore oil and gas blocks in the Mediterranean during an interview in Beirut. —AFP

Boustani said. "When the government agreed to open blocks 1 and 2 for bidding... this means that it knows a deal will be brokered" with Syria, she said.

But divisions among Lebanon's political class may complicate such an agreement. Prime Minister Saad Hariri and his Future Movement refuse a normalization with Damascus. Syrian regime backer Shiite movement Hezbollah and its Lebanese ally the Free Patriotic Movement, however, are in favour.

Haytayan said Russia may take the lead in negotiations because Moscow is interested in conducting exploration works on block 2.

"The Russians could mediate between Lebanon and Syria and together they will put in place a plan to share resources and outputs," she said. While many hurdles still stand in the way, Boustani says she has "big hopes for this industry". "The Lebanese will hopefully benefit from this sector soon." —AFP

Bayt.com and YouGov Survey

Half of Kuwait professionals expect to receive a raise in 2019

KUWAIT: A research study conducted amongst professionals in Kuwait by Bayt.com in partnership with YouGov, revealed a variety of insights on employees' perceptions of salaries and benefits. Close to half (46 percent) of employees expect to receive a raise in 2019, with 12 percent expecting a raise of up to 10 percent.

The survey, administered by Bayt.com, the Middle East's #1 job site, and YouGov, a global pioneer in online market research, aims to gauge employee satisfaction with their current salaries and the varying components that contribute to it, as well as explore the drivers of loyalty towards employers and the significance of salary in career satisfaction and general wellbeing.

"Salary is an integral part of an employee's reward and the Bayt.com Middle East and North Africa Salary Survey 2019 aims to define major factors driving the salary expectations and how they are evolving," said Omar Tahboub, General Manager of Bayt.com. "We make this data available to our 36 million members and our 40,000 employers to ensure everyone is empowered with the right pieces of information to help them make educated career decisions."

Salaries, Benefits, and Raises

In terms of salary, 39 percent of Kuwait respondents claim that their current salary package consists of basic salary with benefits, while 48 percent claim that it consists of basic salary only, 12 percent said they receive a basic salary as well as a commission and benefits.

When it came to the preferred pay structure, 61 percent of respondents said they prefer a '100 percent fixed pay structure', 30 percent said they prefer a 'partially-fixed pay structure' with a variable pay for commissions and incentives, while 9 percent prefer a '100 percent variable pay structure'.

Among the various benefits employees receive, personal medical insurance (21 percent), transportation allowance (16 percent), bonus (21 percent) and housing allowance (18 percent) are found to be the top benefits in Kuwait.

In addition, almost half (46 percent) of respondents expect to receive a raise in 2019, with the largest proportion of these respondents (14 percent) expecting a raise of 1 to 5 percent. 62 percent of respondents in Kuwait still manage to save a portion of their monthly income, 54 percent of respondents repatriate some portion of their salary to their home country, and 16 percent make regular financial investments.

Respondent Profile

Among those surveyed, almost half (47 percent) of all respondents have been working in their current industry for up to six years, with another quarter (27 percent) having worked in their industry for more than 10 years. When it came to specific employers, a majority (83 percent) of respondents have been working with their current employer for six years or less, with 50 percent having worked for their employer for less than three years.

In their current role, 32 percent of professionals claim to be 'midway in terms of seniority' when asked about the level they have reached in their career path, with another 31 percent claiming they are 'fairly senior level but not at the top yet', 23 percent report being in the 'early days of their career', and 14 percent being at the 'most senior level' they can achieve.

Kerry McLaren, Head of Omnibus MENA at YouGov said: "The Middle East and North Africa Salary Survey 2019 illustrates the job market from employees' perspective, helping candidates understand their worth in the current job market, and provides professionals with evidence when deciding whether to invest time and money in further qualifications. It also helps you determine if your current remuneration is fair when compared to industry standards."

Data for the Middle East and North Africa Salary Survey 2019 was collected online from 21st March 2019 to 9th April 2019. Results are based on a sample of 3,788 respondents from the following countries: UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Sudan, and others.

June 30th last date to deposit and enter Gulf Bank's Al-Danah draw for KD500,000

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced that June 30, is the last date for customers to open an Al-Danah account and deposit more to enter the third quarterly draw and increase their winning chances. The third quarterly draw of the year will be held on September 25, 2019 with a prize of KD 500,000. The fourth and final draw will take place on January 16, 2020, and will culminate in the announcement of the 2019 Al-Danah millionaire, who will receive a grand prize of one million Kuwaiti Dinars.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. A minimum of KD 200 is required to open an account and the same amount must be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to the account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the upcoming Al-Danah quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw. Al-Danah chances are added on a daily basis, meaning the more customers save and the longer they save for, the higher their chances are of winning. Furthermore, loyal customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous



year which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Terms and conditions apply.

The Al-Danah draws are all approved by and held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce. Furthermore, Gulf Bank has partnered with Ernst and Young Kuwait (EY) with reference to the "Al-Danah Prize Draw" system in order to assist in assessing processes, technical controls considering relevant parameters, and provide recommendations in line with leading industry practices. The study was conducted in line with industry standards and control requirements relevant to similar prize draw schemes wherein a detailed review of prize draw management systems including: draw scheme parameters, data extraction for draw, filtration of customers as per defined business criteria, and necessary system interactions, was conducted to advise on any potential areas of improvements.

To participate in this year's quarterly and annual draws, customers must keep the balance required by the Al-Danah account. To deposit into their Al-Danah account, customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 58 branches, or opt to directly transfer through the online banking service.

EU seals deal to end US beef row

BRUSSELS: The EU has sealed a deal to end a long-running row with Washington over US beef imports, a statement said on Friday, with

hopes that the agreement can ease transatlantic trade tensions.

"With this step, the European Union reaffirms its commitment to bring about a new phase in the relationship with the United States," said EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan in a statement.

The beef accord comes nearly a year after US President Donald Trump and European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker pledged

to hold off from further tit-for-tat tariffs and to a limited trade deal.

Tensions between the allies had ratcheted up after Trump slapped steel and aluminum tariffs on Europe and threatened more on cars. The row over hormone-treated beef dates back to 1988, when Europe banned imports of meat from animals injected with growth hormones, a common US practice. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.300
Euro	345.380
Sterling Pound	387.680
Canadian dollar	229.570
Turkish Lira	52.920
Swiss Franc	308.780
US Dollar Buying	297.300

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.803
Indian Rupees	4.374
Pakistani Rupees	2.059
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.718
Nepali Rupees	2.730
Singapore Dollar	224.160
Hongkong Dollar	38.871
Bangladesh Taka	3.589
Philippine Peso	5.868
Thai Baht	9.779
Malaysian Ringgit	77.826

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.201
Qatari Riyal	83.633
Omani Riyal	790.903
Bahraini Dinar	808.560
UAE Dirham	82.904

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.500
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.130

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.222
Tunisian Dinar	105.660
Jordanian Dinar	429.950
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.201

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.840
Canadian Dollar	229.310
Sterling Pound	387.995
Euro	345.885
Swiss Frank	304.285
Bahrain Dinar	808.025
UAE Dirhams	83.125
Qatari Riyals	84.365
Saudi Riyals	81.921
Jordanian Dinar	429.830
Egyptian Pound	18.157
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.721
Indian Rupees	4.379
Pakistani Rupees	2.012
Bangladesh Taka	3.599
Philippines Peso	5.840
Cyprus pound	18.080
Japanese Yen	3.800
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.742
Malaysian Ringgit	73.945
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.350
Thai Bhat	10.715

Turkish Lira	52.730
Singapore dollars	221.489

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.377402	0.391302
Czech Korune	0.005420	0.014720
Danish Krone	0.041901	0.046901
Euro	0.334550	0.348250
Georgian Lari	0.132000	0.132000
Hungarian 0.001147	0.001337	
Norwegian Krone	0.031055	0.036255
Romanian Leu	0.065204	0.082054
Russian ruble	0.004707	0.004707
Slovakia	0.009095	0.019095
Slovenia	0.028228	0.033228
Swedish Krona	0.298819	0.309819
Swiss Franc		
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.201636	0.213636
New Zealand Dollar	0.192099	0.201599
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.221821	0.230821
US Dollars	0.300200	0.305500
US Dollars Mint	0.300700	0.305500
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003006	0.003807
Chinese Yuan	0.042500	0.046000

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037023	0.039773
Indian Rupee	0.003764	0.004536
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002726	0.002906
Korean Won	0.000246	0.000261
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069511	0.075511
Nepalese Rupee	0.002677	0.003017
Pakistan Rupee	0.001453	0.002223
Philippine Peso	0.005751	0.006051
Singapore Dollar	0.217304	0.227304
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001351	0.001931
Taiwan	0.009986	0.010166
Thai Baht	0.009421	0.009971
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.792591	0.809091
Egyptian Pound	0.018220	0.020820
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.424290	0.433290
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020471	0.044471
Omani Riyal	0.784071	0.789751
Qatar Riyal	0.079317	0.084227
Saudi Riyal	0.080060	0.081360
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.098441	0.106441
Turkish Lira	0.045345	0.055190
UAE Dirhams	0.081425	0.083125
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069

Business



Ooredoo launches 5G commercially

Upgraded network offers customers superfast mobile broadband Internet

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced the launch of its new 5G commercially that supports 5th generation of cellular network technology. The 5G network is a major upgrade in Ooredoo's portfolio that offers customers superfast mobile broadband Internet to deliver incredible download speeds; bringing our mobile broadband experience to unparalleled new heights. Customers will have ultra-low latency times meaning easier and more stable gaming and streaming.

Worth to mention that Ooredoo made the first trial International 5G call in the region between Ooredoo Kuwait and Ooredoo Qatar, demonstrating the phenomenal capabilities of its 5G networks in Qatar and Kuwait. Prior to the 5G launch, Ooredoo hosted a special event that



demonstrated the power of its new 5G network. The event was attended by media and social media influencers and was held at the company's head office in the heart of Kuwait City on Soor Street. During the event, Ooredoo demonstrated the network's ability to operate video games comparing both networks, which require fast data speed, in addition to a live feed in 4K Full HD of drone footage of the event, and a speed test corner with devices equipped to utilize the new network capacity.

Mijbil Al-Ayoub, Senior Director of Corporate Communication underscored

that the 5G commercial launch embodies the company's core values of caring, connecting, and challenging, and demonstrates its commitment to enriching people's digital lives and comes in tandem with our strategy of digital transformation and adopting future technologies.

He added, "Over the years, we have worked tirelessly to deliver the best in-class services to our esteemed customers, no matter their needs. Through this, we are exercising our role as a private sector entity in the New Kuwait Vision 2035, and we aspire to deliver comprehensive telecom services with international standards in the Kuwaiti market under one roof, which comes in tandem with our digital transformation strategy."



Ooredoo Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani makes the first international call using 5G technology

New Mercedes-Benz GLB for family and friends available in ME Q2 2020

KUWAIT: The new GLB is manufactured at the Aguascalientes (Mexico) plant and will be introduced to the market in Q2 of 2020. One in three Mercedes-Benz cars is now an SUV, and one in four a compact model, meaning that a compact SUV like the GLB is a combination of all the success factors of the company's highest-volume segments.

With the new GLB, the compact car family from Mercedes-Benz now consists of eight models: the A-Class, A-Class sedan and long-wheelbase A-Class sedan, B-Class, CLA Coupe, CLA Shooting Brake and the GLA, which are available globally. In 2018 over 609,000 customers all over the world bought a compact model. Since the A-Class was launched in 1997, over 6.5 million vehicles from this segment have been sold worldwide by Mercedes-Benz.

Ready for boarding: up to seven seats

The GLB is the first compact vehicle from Mercedes-Benz to offer a third seat row on request with two additional individual seats. The seats offer people up to a height of 1.68 metres a comfortable amount of space. The extensive safety equipment includes retractable head restraints, seat belts with belt tensioners, and a side window airbag which also protects the passengers in the third seat row plus ISOFIX and TOP-Tether anchorages for suitable child seats. These can be used to attach up to four child seats in the rear.

Comfort details in the third row include two drink holders between the seats as well as two storage compartments with a rubberised insert on the left and right in the load compartment trim, each with a USB port. The seats can be lowered so that they are flush with the

load compartment floor in order to extend the load compartment.

The powerful proportions of the GLB underscore the design with its off-road orientation: the surfaces of the forms are emphasised, and reduced lines and precise seams are major features. The upright front section with its striking headlamps is clear evidence of off-road genes, as are the short overhangs at the front and rear.

The muscular and sensuously contoured vehicle shoulder dominates the side view at the height of the C-pillar, an effect reinforced by the rising waistline. The doors reach over the side bar, improving ease of access, and keep the door apertures free of soiling as well as increasing protection in a side impact. All-round protective claddings divide the overall proportions and emphasise the vehicle's off-road character, as does the simulated underride guard at the front and rear.

"Its iconic design lends the Mercedes-Benz GLB an unmistakable SUV character", says Gorden Wagener, Chief Design Officer at Daimler AG. "The clear forms with reduced lines and powerful surfaces convey our design philosophy of Sensual Purity."

With aluminum details: the interior design

The instrument panel consists of a single piece, which has optical cut-outs in the driver and front passenger area. The driver faces a widescreen cockpit, with control and display via MBUX (Mercedes-Benz User Experience). A new feature is the characteristic off-road tubular element in an aluminium look which rounds off the lower section of the instrument panel and houses the three round centre air vents. These give the dashboard support an



impression of robustness, power and a certain fun factor. Below the nozzles is the air conditioning control panel, whose buttons create the impression that they have been milled from a solid aluminium cylinder.

The robust character of the interior continues in the center console. Tubular elements in a machined look lend solidity to the design of the components and controls. Along the doors, the SUV character is underlined by the horizontal grab handle that, from the design and equipment line progressive upwards, forms a robust part of the door panel structure and resembles a machined aluminium tube.

Spot on for hill and dale: the off-road light function

The LED High Performance headlamps and MULTIBEAM LED headlamps are available for the GLB on request. The latter allow extremely quick and precise, electronically controlled adjustment of the headlamps to suit the current traffic situation. As an option there are also front fog lamps with LED technology. They distribute the light more widely than the main headlamps and thus illuminate peripheral areas better. Their low position in the front bumper helps reduce the risk of dazzling.

Gathering clouds cast shadow over upcoming Paris Air Show

PARIS: Slumping orders, production bottlenecks, regulatory pressures and the prospect of fewer flyers: Aviation executives have plenty on their minds as they head to France tomorrow for the opening of the Paris Air Show. It's a starkly different mood from the previous edition two years ago, when airlines worldwide were optimistic about their prospects and placing big orders for new planes.

But industry leaders Airbus and Boeing have instead seen clients cancel orders for dozens of planes in recent months, managing to sell just a handful of new jets.

While Airbus might claw back some ground with the launch of the A321XLR at the airshow in Le Bourget, just north of Paris, Boeing's future has been clouded by two deadly crashes that have grounded its popular 737 MAX. With the cancellations, "we're in negative territory for the year, and Airbus has a chance to rescue that a bit,

but Boeing does not," said Richard Aboulafia, a longtime industry analyst at the Teal Group in Fairfax, Virginia.

He said that slowing passenger traffic globally-year-on-year growth slowed to just 4.3 percent in April, compared with 6.5 percent growth for all of 2018 — also has airlines worried.

The decline echoes soft global economic growth amid trade tensions between the US, Europe and China, three huge markets for air travel. And Aboulafia noted that air freight levels are usually good predictors of passenger traffic trends, "and these past couple of months have been even worse for cargo traffic". The International Air Transport Association reports that freight traffic has been in a downward spiral since the beginning of the year. "The two most recent months, March and April, were just god awful, and we're going into this show not really knowing what is happening," he said.

Win back confidence

Boeing and Airbus can take comfort in the fact that both their order books remain strong after hefty revenue growth last year, when combined they delivered more than 1,600 planes. And their dominance has been bolstered by the woes at two main rivals, Canada's Bombardier—which has hived off aviation units while cut-

ting thousands of jobs—and Brazil's Embraer, which is selling its commercial plane division to Boeing. That leaves them in prime position to meet an expected surge in global passenger traffic, especially in Asia—at least until China's state-owned Comac starts marketing its first jet in 2021.

Analysts say nearly 40,000 planes will be in service by 2038, double the industry's current fleet.

Yet the frenetic production pace has left several Airbus and Boeing suppliers struggling to keep up, leading to delays as "gliders" without engines or other key parts remain parked on tarmacs.

Some pilots and travellers also suspect the rush to build may have contributed to the flawed anti-stall technology in the Boeing 737 MAX. The so-called Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) is blamed for an Ethiopian Airlines crash in March and an Indonesian Lion Air crash in October, which together claimed 346 lives. "The 737 MAX crisis has an impact across nearly the entire industry, because aviation security is an essential issue for every player," analysts at AlixPartners said in a research note. "It's too early to tell what will happen, but winning back passengers' confidence will be a true challenge for the entire industry," they wrote. — AFP

More worry for China as industrial growth disappoints

BEIJING: China's economy showed further signs of weakness last month, with industrial output posting its slowest growth in 17 years, placing further pressure on the government as it tries to steady the ship while battling a trade war with the US. Authorities have for years been attempting to transition the world's number two economy from a reliance on state investment and exports to a more stable model driven by consumption, with the tariffs stand-off complicating that mission of late.

Retail sales actually beat expectations, rising 8.6 percent year-on-year in May, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said on Friday. That compares to an 8.1 percent increase forecast in a Bloomberg poll of analysts. But the NBS also said industrial output rose just 5.0 percent, the slowest increase since 2002, and missing a 5.4 percent analyst forecast.

Fixed-asset investment growth also underwhelmed with 5.6 percent growth. The readings are likely to fan speculation that authorities may launch another round of stimulus. Beijing has rolled out huge tax cuts and other measures this year to try to blunt the impact of a trade war, which has seen the US impose tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars worth of Chinese goods, causing worries for exporters.

China's exports beat gloomy forecasts to rebound somewhat in May, though imports sank more than expected, according to official data released earlier in the week.

But the overall downward trend gives Xi little room to fight back forcefully against the US, which is using tariffs as leverage to try to force China into opening up its economy.

ANZ Research said it expected further gloom ahead and revised down its 2019 estimate for Chinese economic growth. "The economic data coming out of China over the past two months have not lived up to our expectations," it said in a commentary on Friday.

It had adjusted its gross domestic product growth forecast to 6.2 percent for 2019, from a previous estimate of 6.4 percent. "The industrial outlook will remain gloomy over the next few months in our view. Consequently, China's headline Q2 GDP figure will likely slow to 6.2 percent," ANZ Research said. China's economy grew 6.4 percent in the first quarter of 2019, according to official data.

The International Monetary Fund on Wednesday also said it was lowering its China economic growth forecasts for 2019 and 2020, citing "uncertainty" over the trade war.

It now expects 6.2 percent growth this year and 6.0 percent in the next, down from previous forecasts of 6.3 percent and 6.1 percent, respectively. ANZ said expectations of a US Fed rate cut would give Chinese policymakers room to adjust reserve requirement ratios and money market rates, adding that it expected Beijing to do so. —AFP

Business

VIVA launches 5G with special packages on VIVA postpaid plans

Al-Harbi: Our services are launched on the largest 5G network in Mideast

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced the launch of 5G service, with special packages on VIVA's postpaid plans, starting KD 45, promising a new wave of capabilities for internet and smartphone users.

Customers will gear up for speeds faster than the blink of an eye and to meet the next generation of mobile internet connectivity with cutting-edge technology, and average download speeds touching an unbelievable 1GBps.

On this occasion, Eng. Maziad Nasser Al-Harbi, CEO of VIVA said: "Today, after the launch of the fifth generation services, we will witness a major transformation and a new launch of wireless services. Big part of the "leap" will come from the ability to move much greater volumes of data across networks. 5G will mean more devices can be connected to the network at better speeds. VIVA is creating a new era where the incredible speed and connectivity of 5G becomes a reality, due to the largest network capable to serve

the customers in Kuwait."

He added: "As a leading local and regional telecommunications company, and look forward to being the first to foster our customers' services to meet all their needs, VIVA has invested in building the most advanced network, and now we have an extensive list of sites covered in Kuwait with the 5G, and we are the only company that has more than 1000 sites covered by the 5G service in the Middle East."

He explained: "The launch of this service commercially with special packages, will help VIVA to release its full potential in the digital arena, enhance ICT cooperation and expand the scope of enterprise sector and B2B, B2C and B2G, and launch devices that will support 5G, in addition to after-sales technical team to serve our customers and meet their needs."

VIVA is keen to offer the latest in the telecommunications sector to its customers, and will strive to provide mobile devices that support 5G and will be able to pre-order soon through VIVA's official web-

site. 5G is the next generation wireless network, featuring ultra-fast mobile broadband speeds with multiple Gbps, massive connectivity, critical communication and very low latency. VIVA aims to resolve the various issues that have developed due to the wide popularity of 4G LTE, including the need for higher speeds and lower latency. 5G will provide fiber like service experience to VIVA users, while enabling new digital services to emerge such as AR/VR immersive experience, cloud gaming, autonomous drone, driverless cars, and a wide range of IoT uses.



CEO Maziad Al-Harbi



KFH to participate in conference on private sector role in Kuwait economy

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) is participating in "The Role of the Private Sector in the Future of the Kuwaiti Economy" conference organized by The Business Year (IBY) magazine.

The conference will be held in partnership with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) on June 17th in London, UK.

in the conference, KFH Group CEO- Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh will demonstrate the importance of digital transformation in the banking sector, and the role of Kuwaiti banks in supporting Kuwait Vision 2035. Al-Nahedh will also tackle instrumental topics of which is the significant role of KFH in supporting the Kuwaiti economy and the expertise of the Bank in the Islamic finance industry.

KFH's participation comes within the framework of its commitment to supporting the economic and investment efforts and highlighting the importance of the role of the private sector in economic development, while encouraging investments of added value to the Kuwaiti economy as this conference showcases the country's ambition to the entire global investor community.

The conference is a platform to highlight the role of the banking sector, and the investment opportunities available in the public and private sectors, while discussing developments in the business environment and the financing solutions, especially that Kuwait is increasingly looking to the private sector to diversify and boost its economy across a range of sectors in line with its "New Kuwait 2035 Vision" to transform Kuwait into a financial and commercial hub.

The conference will discuss different topics in several panels such as: Kuwait's financial sector: cornerstone of the country's privatization, the increased diversification of the Kuwaiti economy as a fuel for the future, and digital economy and entrepreneurship to promote digital transformation and spur economic diversification. Bringing together senior public officials and top local and foreign business leaders, the event shall inspire a dialog that will bring new momentum to Kuwait's vision.



Mazin Al-Nahedh

NBK launches world's first full metal NFC-enabled Visa credit card

KUWAIT: In line with its commitment to provide extraordinary services and best banking experience to customers, National Bank of Kuwait and Visa, the world's leader in digital payments, have announced the first full metal NFC-enabled credit card in Kuwait and the world that will be exclusively offered to NBK's Private Banking Customers.

The card will give cardholders access to a world of exclusive privileges, compared to other credit cards. On this occasion, Salah Al-Fulaij, NBK Chief Executive Officer-Kuwait said, "NBK is committed to providing outstanding banking services to NBK Private Banking Customers to meet their demands and expectations. The launch of new NBK Visa private banking credit card translates our ongoing aim to design and intro-



Salah Al-Fulaij



Marcello Baricordi



duce distinctive tailor-made products that meet the lifestyle of the elite".

Al-Fulaij affirmed that the NBK Visa private banking credit card meets the growing demands of the NBK Private Banking Customers by providing first-class, exclusive services that matches the highest industry standards. Marcello Baricordi, General Manager - Middle East and North Africa, Visa said, "We are delighted to partner with NBK to introduce the Visa

Ultra High Net Worth credit card to NBK's Private Banking clients. This card offers features and benefits tailor-made for exclusive high net worth customers in Kuwait. We look forward to developing more best-in-class products in partnership with NBK that deliver rewarding, seamless and secure payment experiences for cardholders."

The NBK Visa Infinite Privilege Credit Card will be available for NBK's Private Banking Customers as soon as the necessary regulatory approval is received.

Warba Bank announces winners of Al-Sunbula draws

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, held its weekly Sunbula draw number 22 and 23 in addition to Sunbula Kids. The draws announced the 13 lucky winners in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and

bank officials.

The bank proudly announced the weekly draw number 22 lucky 5 winners of the KD 1,000 prize: Hanaa Mohammad Adnan Alzain Omar, Nadiyah Jassim Abdullah Al-Enezi, Jameel Nojoum Al-Khaleel, Khaled Khadaan Mohammad Khadaan and Fahad Faizan Thaar Al-Abdali.

As for the weekly draw number 23, the lucky 5 winners of the KD 1000 prize: Hanaa Bader Mohammad Alahmad Al-Sabah, Mohammad Abdullah Mejjel Al-Ajmi, Naser B M Al-Najjar, Mohammad Jadaan Smaileel Al-Azmi and Ibrahim Ajeel Jaber Al-Shammari.

Warba Bank has added Sunbula Kids

Account for the first time to Sunbula draws, it is an investment savings account with promising competitive returns along with monthly draws with innovative prizes chosen carefully for the kids. The winners of this month are: The 1st winner of a trip to Dubai Parks is Eid Mohammad Mubarak Al-Dosari, the 2nd winner of a one year subscription at Flex is Abdullah M M Al-Dousari and the 3rd winner of a one year subscription in one of the participated clubs is Noura Jarrah Salem Al-Haifi.

Al-Sunbula both account and fixed deposits are the perfect choices for customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while at the same

time have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. In line with the bank's mission to develop and differentiate its offerings, Warba Bank has enhanced its Sunbula campaign for 2019 with more cash and prizes reaching more than KD 1 million. Warba Bank will continue its weekly draws for 5 winners of KD 1,000 each. What's new in 2019 are the "mega draws" which will be held every quarter to reveal five winners, the 1st winner will get KD 100,000! The four winners thereafter will each get the latest Land Cruiser VXR. Furthermore, the final Mega draw held in January 2020 will feature 2 more Land Cruiser VXRs!

Strong US retail sales point to a pick-up in economic growth

WASHINGTON: US retail sales increased in May and sales for the prior month were revised higher, suggesting a pick-up in consumer spending that eased fears the economy was slowing down sharply in the second quarter. The fairly upbeat report from the Commerce Department on Friday followed a raft of weak data, including a step-down in hiring in May and tame inflation readings, that have led economists to believe that the Federal Reserve will signal a rate cut later this year when policymakers meet next week.

Financial markets have priced in two rate cuts this year, driven primarily by a recent escalation in the trade war between the United States and China, which economists have warned could undercut economic growth. The economy will next month cele-

brate 10 years of expansion, the longest in history. "Don't count this economy out yet, the consumer is saying, as they show the way by opening their wallets and purses to spend the money that makes the economy hum," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFJ in New York.

Retail sales rose 0.5 percent last month as households bought more motor vehicles and a variety of other goods, the government said. Data for April was revised up to show retail sales gaining 0.3 percent, instead of dropping 0.2 percent as previously reported. There were also increases in purchases of building materials and garden equipment, furniture, and electronics and appliances. Americans also spent more on online and mail-order purchases, hobbies, music and books, as well as at bars and restaurants.

But sales at clothing stores were unchanged. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast retail sales increasing 0.6 percent in May. Compared to May last year, sales advanced 3.2 percent.

Excluding automobiles, gasoline, building materials and food services, retail sales climbed 0.5 percent last month after an upwardly revised 0.4 percent rise in April. These so-called core retail sales correspond most closely with the consumer spending component of gross domestic product.

Wall St down; Broadcom warning hits chip stocks

NEW YORK: US stocks ended lower on Friday as investors were cautious going into next week's Federal Reserve meeting, while a warning from Broadcom of a broad weakening in global demand weighed on chipmakers and added to US-China trade worries.

Shares of Broadcom Inc fell 5.6 percent after it cut its full-year revenue forecast by \$2 billion, blaming the US-China trade conflict and export curbs on Huawei Technologies Co Ltd.

Other chip companies, which both source product and sell heavily in China,

dropped sharply. The Philadelphia Semiconductor index tumbled 2.6 percent. Investors are bracing for next week's Fed meeting in light of recent market expectations that the US central bank could cut interest rates as much as three times this year. Some strategists say stocks are primed for a selloff should the Fed fail to take an even more dovish tilt.

The S&P 500 index has so far gained 4.9 percent in June and registered a second straight week of gains on Friday, largely on the rate cut hopes. "We're going to be on pins and needles until we get some indication from the Fed," said Brian Battle, director of trading at Performance Trust Capital Partners in Chicago.

"That's what matters. Everybody is betting that the Fed is going to cut rates, probably not in June but soon. That is a very ongoing trade."

The ongoing trade battle between the United States and China also gives

investors reason to play it safe ahead of the weekend. "This is kind of a wait-and-see mode. People are staying very close to their benchmarks," said Robert Phipps, a director at Per Stirling Capital Management in Austin, Texas.

The Group of 20 summit at the end of the month may yield progress on a deal.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 17.16 points, or 0.07 percent, to 26,089.61, the S&P 500 lost 4.66 points, or 0.16 percent, to 2,886.98 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 40.47 points, or 0.52 percent, to 7,796.66. All three major indexes posted gains for the week: the Dow rose 0.4 percent, the S&P 500 gained 0.5 percent and the Nasdaq added 0.7 percent.

During the session, shares of Apple Inc slipped 0.7 percent, with Broadcom a major supplier to the iPhone maker. Adding to global demand worries, Chinese data pointed to the worst slowdown in industrial growth in 17 years. China's industrial output growth in May

slowed below expectations and showed signs of weakening demand. In a bright spot, data showed US retail sales increased in May and sales for the prior month were revised higher, suggesting a pick-up in consumer spending that could ease fears the economy was slowing down sharply in the second quarter.

Online pet products retailer Chewy Inc ended up 59 percent in its market debut, joining a host of high-profile names, such as Lyft Inc and Uber Technologies Inc, that listed on U.S. stock exchanges this year.

Declining issues outnumbered advancing ones on the NYSE by a 1.53-to-1 ratio; on Nasdaq, a 1.79-to-1 ratio favored decliners. The S&P 500 posted 37 new 52-week highs and 3 new lows; the Nasdaq Composite recorded 47 new highs and 82 new lows.

Volume on US exchanges was 5.85 billion shares, compared to the 6.83 billion average for the full session over the last 20 trading days. —Reuters

Burgan Bank introduces exciting summer campaign

KUWAIT: In line with the latest trends to provide its customers with the most innovative offers, Burgan Bank recently launched a new and compelling summer campaign "Spend & Win 200 percent cash back". Continuously keeping abreast of customers' expectations and seasonal demands, the Cash Back draw entitles its credit, debit and prepaid cardholders a chance to gain back double their spending when using their cards locally and internationally.

Creating opportunities for more winners, the summer offer is designed as a three month campaign starting from 16th of June to 29th of September 2019 with minimum spending's of KD 200 per month to be eligible to enter the draws. Burgan Bank's new campaign will announce five winners during July and August and 10 winners during September who will be refunded double their transactions' amount.

Customers who spend more will have higher chances of winning as with every international transaction using Burgan Bank credit, debit and prepaid cards will receive three chances to enter the draw, while every local transaction using Burgan Bank credit or prepaid cards provides them with one such opportunity.

Burgan Bank debit, credit and prepaid cards accommodate customers' different needs with flexibility and convenience for all financial transactions.

Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah, 28 years of absence

A statesman who created the renaissance of Kuwait and built its institutions

By Ali Al-Masoodi

It is the twenty-eighth anniversary of the departure of the deputy ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah is at a time when his fingerprints remain clear on the body of the nation in its various institutions. The man, according to Dr Souad Al-Sabah, lives in the country's register as much as his achievements are witness to what he presented to his country, and he lives in the memory of the people as far as his practices relate to the principles and moral values of the people."

She adds in her book (Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah in Pictures): "The name of Abdullah Al-Mubarak remains in the mind of Kuwait as a model of the general man, and for the pride of power and prestige, because he respected himself and respected the positions he occupied in his government, and he has the same personality outside the authority. So he is imposing his respect and appreciation, he has been great in judgment, and he is bigger in his personal life". On June 15, 1991, Kuwaitis and Arabs bid farewell to a man whose Arabic name was written on the pages of Kuwait's modern history. After Kuwait was liberated a few months ago, he was assured that his great efforts and his family's efforts to fight the invasion and restore legitimacy were not in vain.

He is Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Gulf Falcon, its deputy emir, and the youngest son of the lion of the island, the founder of modern Kuwait, Sheikh Mubarak Al-Kabir (Great Mubarak). Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak was born on August 23rd, 1914. He has adored Kuwait since he was young, defending it, and he has performed the tasks of men since he was 12 years old when he was in the guard of the old gates of city's wall, until he reached his prestigious position as commander of public security, army, police, aviation, and he is the founder of radio and literary clubs. Then deputy ruler for ten years during the reign of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, who was longly absent abroad, he is responsible for the administration of the state Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak. He is one of the founders of the modern Kuwait, who planned, built, lived, and set the foundation for its renaissance.

On this occasion, the French translation of the book (Saqr Al-Khaleej - The Gulf's Falcon Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah) was recently published to be accessible to the French speakers. This translation is an affirmation of the importance of this Arab and international man, where the fifth Arabic edition of the book was published in 2014, followed by the English translation in 2016.

In the book, Dr Souad Al-Sabah is documenting her husband's life, and she has written the finer details of his life from the moment before his birth until shortly after his death, and the accompanying events of most of the twentieth century, and with what it has a significant impact on the political, economic and humanitarian map of Kuwait as well as on geography, with reference to major global or regional events with a big impact.

The book is divided into several chapters that include an account of the facts and images of documents relied upon in documenting the book, whether foreign or Arabic, as well as excerpts from the comments of the Arab press about the book. The writer of this huge book presented the life of her husband, Abdullah Mubarak as if he was mentioning the biography of the country but as a man, so that the younger generations learn from him—as the author points out—the principles of chivalry, manhood, courage, generosity, and patriotism, considering that Abdullah Al-Mubarak was a high beacon, and a tower of Kuwait towers that guides travelers, ships, sailors, open their way to safety to the ports of the twenty-first century.

The book comes within the books of biographies, the title of it is "The Story of the Life of Sheikh Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah and His Role in Building Modern Kuwait". The book examines the political and social development, modernization and institution-building process in Kuwait, studying the personal characteristics of the owner of the biography, in its social context.

As the book examines Arab and international relations, it examines pages of the development of the Arab situation, the issue of Kuwait's accession to the League of Arab States prior to independence, and presents the roots of Iraqi greed in Kuwait, and the relations of cooperation and rivalry between Britain and the United States in the Gulf region, which are relations between a retreating colonial power whose influence has diminished and another young and rising force emerged victorious from World War II, and sought to inherit the influence of European countries and build a new empire.

The writer was keen to follow up on all the books published in the 1950s or published documents that were not previously available at the time of the issuance of the previous editions, whether from British, Ottoman or Gulf documents, as well as from the biographical books of a number of Kuwaiti army officers who have been given details for the process of building the army and for the role of Sheikh Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah, and from the complete collection of the magazine Kuwait today, which some of its numbers were not available before.

"My only goal is to show the truth for an important stage in the history of Kuwait," said Souad Al-Sabah of the book in his new edition. Emir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah praised in a letter addressed to Dr Souad Al-Sabah the virtues of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak and his prominent role in the renaissance of Kuwait. Dr Souad Al-Sabah wrote in the preface to her book: "Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah, a book of thousands of pages and addresses must be read by the young Kuwaiti generations, to learn the principles of chivalry, manhood, courage, generosity, nationalism, and a high beacon, he is one of Kuwait Towers, indicating passengers, ships, and sailors, and open the way to them to the road of safety to the ports of the 21st century."

Dr Souad Al-Sabah highlighted the life of a companion in another book issued by the title (Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah in Pictures): she said at the beginning of the book: " Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak grew up in a desert tribal environment, he derived from this environment his qualities, values, morals and righteous principles, which were a beacon in his childhood, as well as a solid foundation on which he firmly stood on in his youth, from which he derived his strength and distinction as a statesman when he embarked on his various government responsibilities. This creation has left its traces in his creation and printing, and he was patient able to endure adversity and he is fearless, and his biography is



replete with events that indicate his personal courage."

Sheikh was one of the few knights of Kuwait, who placed the nucleus of the "Equestrian and Archery Club", and allocated the place between the Mushref and the White Palace to practice his hobby, and called on Kuwaiti youths to practice equestrian. The extraordinary personality of this man has emerged in a traditional society with its limitations and obstacles, and has looked forward to the broad prospects and support for the forces of change in Kuwait, he made them in many areas.

As he is the youngest son of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Kabir, the founder of Kuwait, since the beginning of the 1920s, he has been responsible for the rule of Kuwait, with his express loyalty and obedience to them. The role of Sheikh Abdullah in the establishment of clubs and cultural associations is clear, that represented the first building blocks of civil society in Kuwait. He is one of Kuwait's most important persons in the 1950s in terms of his role in decision-making and management of the relationship between the sheiks of Al-Sabah, the people, the Arab and regional environment, the United Kingdom and the world.

The politicians familiar with the 1950s and 1960s are witnessing a good job of Al-Mubarak in the consolidation of Kuwaiti-Arab relations on the one hand, and Arab Arab on the other, as well as Kuwait's accession to the League of Arab States before independence, and confronting Iraqi ambitions during the period of rule Abdelkarim Kassem, as well as confronting the effects of the global conflict on the Gulf region.

The Sheikh was awarded the honors of the first degree from most of the Arab countries, including the honoring of Egyptian President Mohamed Nageeb in a high order, and the Egyptian President Gamal Abdunasser held a dinner at his house in Mansheyet Al-Bakri, where he was awarded the highest Egyptian decorations, and that visit was the beginning of a close relationship between the two men. In addition to medals from leaders in Morocco, Lebanon, Syria, Lebanon, and other Arab countries. The British government in 1945 gave him the medal of the Indian Empire with a companion degree due to his efforts in the Second World War.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak has embarked on public work at a relatively young age since 1926, when he was tasked to guard one of the gates of the Kuwait Wall, and succeeded in this mission with remarkable success with firmness and intelligence, and his activity in the Kuwaiti Government continued after nearly 35 years as a decision maker.

Although the details of the life of Abdullah Al-Mubarak, according to the historical documents available, are unclear between 1926 and 1940, their effects are evident in the era of Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber and beyond. In terms of Sheikh Abdullah's assumption of direct and important security functions, and preparing him to be the deputy ruler of Kuwait under the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, where he assumed the presidency of the Public Security Department in 1942, became Governor of Kuwait City following the death of Sheikh Ali Al-Khalifa. Some people remember the behavior of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak in an unprecedented wisdom after punishing two of the servants of Princess Nora Bint Abdulrahman Al Saud for their arrogance against some Kuwaiti citizens, which led to a tense situation with King Abdulaziz Al Saud, and ended with the king's admiration for the bravery of Abdullah Al-Mubarak, who donated two cars, as well as his well-known courage in overcoming a high risk threatened Kuwait in 1944 for the killing of a member of the tribe of the Manaka and the threatening to wage war on Kuwait, and intervened to calm the atmosphere and solve the problem.

Then, in 1948, at the request of the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber, Abdullah Al-Mubarak established a Directorate for Passport and Nationality Affairs. In 1949 Hani Qaddumi issued the first Kuwaiti passport



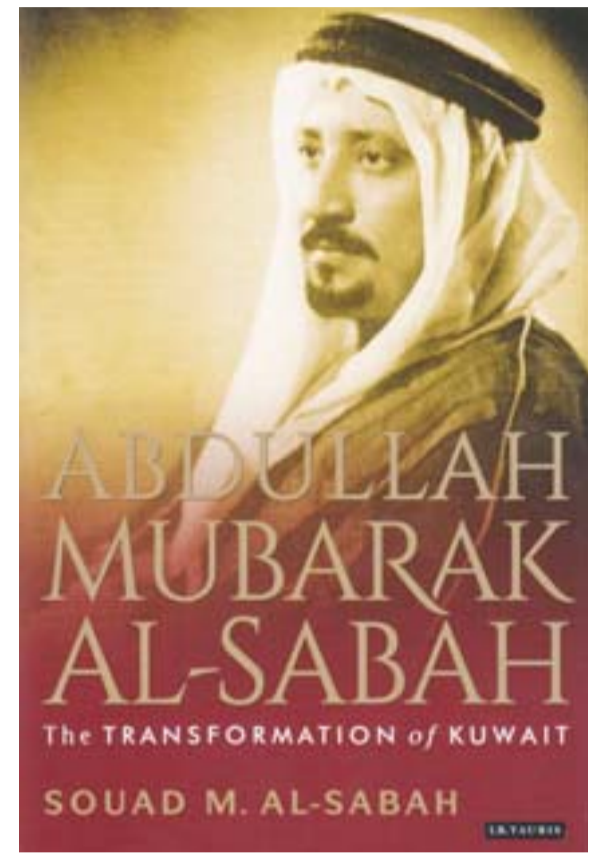
under the direct orders of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak. In the same year, surfaced after he received a medal from the Lebanese government without the permission of the British government, which was associated with Kuwait with a protection treaty signed since 1899.

In her book (Saqr Al-Khaleej - The Gulf's Falcon), Dr Souad Al-Sabah narrated a firm stand by Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak in revoking Arab entry visas to Kuwait: "The Sheikh has revoked entry visas to Kuwait for the Arabs; he has a well-known position on this issue. When the first flight of the Lebanese Middle East Airlines arrived from Beirut to Kuwait, the political agent ordered the Arab visitors to obtain entry visas. The plane was found to carry people carrying visas obtained from British embassies in their country and others without visas. Do not hold a visa, and prevent the entry of holders "All Arab countries should not require a visa to visit their countries." The requests of Arabs wishing to visit Kuwait at the time were sent to the political agent's office for approval.

When Sheikh Abdullah announced the revocation of visas for Arabs, the agent called him to meet the Emir, expressing his displeasure. The governor called Sheikh Abdullah, who was outside Kuwait, to tell him what had happened and that the political agent would meet him at the airport. He had to clarify the matter to him and then to meet him to inform him of the result. In fact, he received the political agent Sheikh Abdullah at the airport - and with him the government secretary Abdullah Al-Mulla - and suggested that he go together to meet with the governor. The rumors followed Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak a lot, and some of them promoted that he is yearning to rule, and one of the biggest evidence of the nullity of these claims were the reception the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem from India shortly before his inauguration as a prince on Kuwait a few days after the death of Sheikh Ahmed Al-Jaber in 1950.

For various reasons between the travel of Prince Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem and his foreign concerns and strategic reasons, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak in the 1950s held the position of deputy ruler of Kuwait many times and repeatedly in ten years, especially in the last three years that were in most of them are the actual acting ruler, due to the illness of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem and his journey abroad. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak first managed matters in 1950, then 1951, then took it in 1952 for three months (March, November, and December), and in 1953 for three months also (summer period), in 1954 for two months (April and May), in 1955 for three months (April, May, and December), and in 1956 for one month (October), in 1957 for four months (April, June, November, and December), and in 1958 for nine months (except August, September, and October), and in 1959 in most months for the governor to travel every month of the year except October, and in 1960 for six months (January, April, May, June, October and November).

The greatest role of the Sheikh in the era of the ten years prior to independence, and it seems that God was estimated to have a link between him and his homeland at a crucial stage of development for both. The Sheikh was coming in the forties, the stage of manhood and the ability to give, Kuwait is bursting with vitality and activity, flowing with goods and growth, and man's interaction with the requirements of the stage in order to build the institutions of the modern state. As a further understanding of the tense relationship with the United Kingdom, the British Foreign Office in 1955 described the possibility of Abdullah Al-Mubarak ruling in Kuwait as a disaster, and for several years they had created the news that he was preparing himself for the succession of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem. One of the most significant events in the history of Kuwait was the visit by Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak in 1956 to Britain at the invitation of General Temberle the head of British Army chief of staff.



Sheikh Abdullah was at the top of his agenda to negotiate about 10 armored vehicles, as well as his first official visit in the same year to Egypt at the invitation of the Government of the Revolution and the Islamic Conference, and then return from there to the police and security command following the explosive events in Kuwait and demonstrations of solidarity with Egypt because of the triple aggression against them.

"It was no coincidence that Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak never traveled to Iran, India, and Pakistan, contrary to what was typical of this period, and his many visits focused on Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf countries" said Dr Souad Sabbah. Lebanon occupied a special place in the heart of the sheikh, and his visits to this country were fraught with official, social and personal activities with many bodies and individuals, and are closely acquainted with a number of prime ministers (..) and it was normal that the relationship of Kuwait to Saudi Arabia, which is a historical relationship dating back to the era of the Departed Sheikh Mubarak Al-Kabir (Great Mubarak) and King Abdulaziz Al Saud, this relationship was reinforced by the close friendship that linked Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak to King Saud." The year 1959 was full of events in which Abdullah Al-Mubarak held the strings of the game, where he worked to increase the number of members of the Kuwaiti army and held consultations in London on the defense plans to be submitted by Britain to Kuwait in the event of external aggression following the repeated threats of Iraq at the time, Acting Governor praised the Syrian-Egyptian unity. The most important event in 1959 was the meeting of the Supreme Council under the chairmanship of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem. He and Sheikh Fahad Al-Salem criticized the sympathetic behavior of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak and Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad towards the opposition.

By security, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak to respond to the Iraqi authorities not to consent to the delivery of water Shatt Al-Arab (River of the Arabs) to Kuwait because Iraq fell into the hands of the Communists who are conducting bloody liquidation against their opponents. In the same year, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak sought to settle the relations between Cairo and Tunisia.

In 1960, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak married Suad Mohammed Al-Sabah and gave birth to his first child (Mubarak) on August 29, 1961. Muhammad was also born in 1971, Ummiah in 1972, Mubarak in 1978 and Shaima in 1980. After his visit to the Vatican at the invitation of the Pope, the Egyptian army received 100 jeeps from him, and his meeting in 1965 with Iraqi President Abdulsalam Aref in Egypt, and in 1966 sent him a check of \$ 1 million to Egyptian President Gamal Abdunasser, leaving the president to direct him for any purpose of public interest, donated in 1967 with medical aid to Egypt, and donated 1 million dollars for the war effort. In 1973, his eldest son died in Egypt.

Despite his long absence, Kuwait did not emerge from the thought of Abdullah Al-Mubarak. In 1978 he returned with his family to Kuwait. In 1983, he sent a letter to Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad expressing his concern about the situation in Kuwait. His Highness left Kuwait on June 15, 1990, to London, where he addressed a speech in October to Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad in Taif following the events of the invasion of Kuwait in which he expressed his pain and gave him some advice. The path of the life of Abdullah Al-Mubarak clearly shows that he was one of the pioneers of modernization and progress in all areas of life.

At the level of thought and planning, the Sheikh had a comprehensive view of things. He surrounded any subject in all its aspects, for example in his plan to build the army, the development of the military capabilities of Kuwait in various aspects of weapons, equipment, ammunition, human beings, and training. We also recognize the importance of national independence as building economic, social and administrative institutions capable of performance and performance, as well as recognizing that institution-building requires the provision of qualified personnel, and then, he was interested in education and sending foreign missions in order to familiarize the young people of Kuwait with the sciences and systems.

In terms of and practice, the Sheikh has a realistic view and ability to harmonize the balance between the legal relationships with Britain and seek to expand Kuwait's external freedom of movement. The sad moments come, and the sad news comes on June 15, 1991, when the soul is overflowing with the presence of His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak in London, and he is buried in the Sulaybakh cemetery in Kuwait the next day. By the death of Abdullah Al-Mubarak, a bright sun in the history of Kuwait has gone, where the historical stage was the most turbulent and dangerous for the people that God wanted to face its destiny, but God Almighty created men like Abdullah Al-Mubarak to run the ship to safety.

Health & Technology

For stomach cancer, aerosol chemotherapy offers hope

DIJON: "Classic chemotherapy was awful... but with this treatment, I feel hope," says French pensioner Jacques Braud, who is undergoing treatment for stomach cancer with a new form of therapy dispersed by aerosol. Several hours before going into theatre, Braud is waiting in his room, looking surprisingly relaxed with a book in hand.

This is a place he has been before. At the age of 76, Braud is about to face his second bout of chemotherapy after the cancer in his stomach spread to two other organs. But this time it is different. He is being treated at the Georges-Francois Leclerc hospital in the eastern city of Dijon, one of seven hospitals in France that are trialling pressurised intraperitoneal aerosol chemotherapy, or PIPAC, a technique developed in Germany in 2013.

Although it is still being tested, chemotherapy by aerosol has shown promising results against certain cancers, in a treatment with fewer side effects that offers hope to some of the weakest patients. Unlike traditional chemotherapy, the drugs are not injected into the bloodstream. Instead, the patient is put under general anaesthetic and the treatment introduced by laparoscopy, by which a small incision is made in the abdominal wall and the chemotherapy is introduced into the peritoneal cavity by an aerosol spray.

Minimally invasive

It is a minimally invasive procedure without the harmful side effects normally "associated with the circulation of the treatment within the blood", says David Orry, who heads the hospital's oncological surgery department. "So you avoid the loss of appetite, the damage to peripheral nerves or to the red and white blood cells" which often require the treatment to be stopped. "Chemo is horrendous, it destroys you," says Braud, running his fingers through his short white hair that has barely grown back two months after his first bout of treatment.

"My fingers and toes are paralyzed, I don't feel anything," he says, admitting it forced him to give up hiking, his passion. But with the PIPAC therapy, he has not experienced any such side effects. For now, he is receiving treatment every two to three weeks, alternating between traditional chemo and PIPAC therapy, whose use is still being studied.

'Very promising'

As he lies in a deep sleep on the operating table, the surgeons bend over him to make two small five-centimeter (two-inch) incisions in his abdomen before inserting trocars through the two layers of the peritoneum, the membrane which wraps around the internal organs. They then inject air to artificially create a cavity, which is a prerequisite for delivering

PIPAC therapy — and which is why it is, for now, exclusively used for gynaecological or digestive cancers. "You see, Mr Braud has several metastases on his peritoneal wall," explains Orry, pointing to a screen showing images from the laparoscopy. "This membrane only has a few vessels. So it is very difficult to treat with chemotherapy which passes through the blood. Which is a further advantage of PIPAC." Once the two trocars are in place, the chemotherapy is released into the inflated cavity and left there, during which time the surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses leave the operating theatre to avoid inhalation or exposure to leaks.

After 30 minutes, the product is extracted through a powerful miniature pump and the incisions closed. After six small sutures, the operation is over. It took just two hours. By the evening, Braud is back in his room and eating dinner, although he needs to stay another two nights in hospital due to the risks linked to a general anaesthetic. For the moment, PIPAC therapy is only offered to patients undergoing palliative treatment, as its efficacy has yet to be demonstrated in a large scientific study. But the initial response to this complementary treatment has been "very promising" and raised hopes, says oncologist Francois Ghiringhelli who has been working on the development of PIPAC in Dijon since 2017. —AFP

India plans 'very small' space station after 2022

NEW DELHI: India plans to establish its own "very small" space station in the next decade as the country gears up for a first manned mission beyond earth. Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) chief K Sivan said Thursday that the ambitious project would follow a successful launch of a manned space flight scheduled by 2022. "Our space station is going to be very small... useful to carry out experiments," Sivan told reporters in New Delhi. "We are not having a big plan of sending humans on tourism and other things," he added.

A space station is capable of hosting crew members for years on end, and provides facilities for experiments and support vehicles to dock. India's first manned space mission — named Gaganyaan — is due to take place by 2022, in time to commemorate 75 years of the country's independence from Britain. It will have two or three astronauts on a maximum seven-day mission. The Indian announcement comes a day after the country unveiled an unmanned moon lander expected to be launched on July 15 for a touchdown on the lunar surface around September 6. India successfully sent a first lunar mission to space in 2008, playing a crucial role in the discovery of water molecules on the moon. The country has made giant strides on its space journey in recent years and has been a pioneer in low-cost technology. It sent a mission to Mars in 2014 for just \$74 million — a fraction of the \$671 million spent by the US space agency NASA. ISRO also plans to send a mission to study the Sun in 2020, and to Venus by 2023. — AFP

CLINIC

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Kuwait Times

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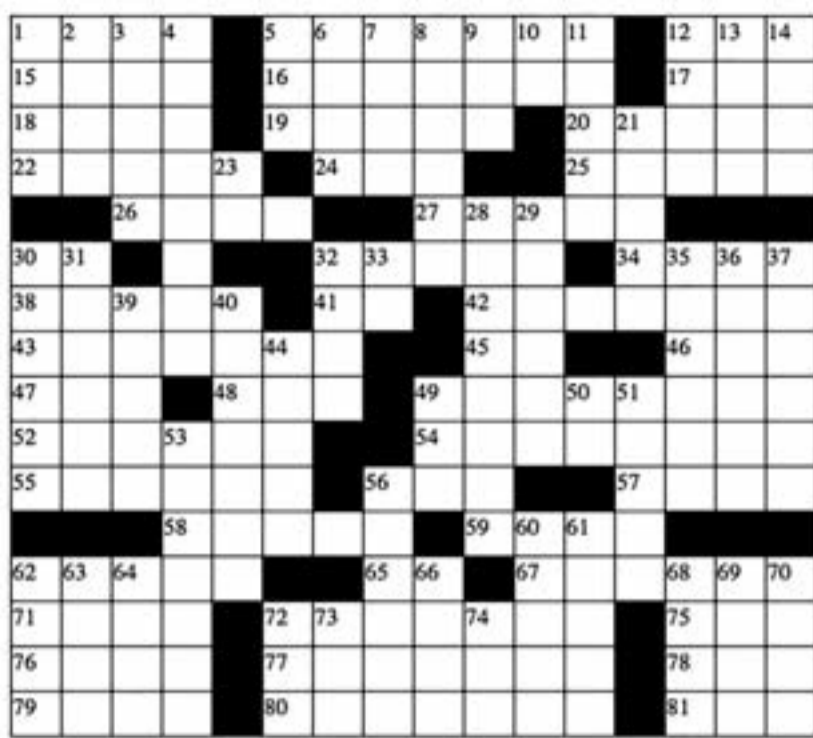
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2232



ACROSS

1. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
5. The second month of the Hindu calendar.
12. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
15. Speaking a Slavic language.
16. Cause to become alive again.
17. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
18. Large edible mackerel of temperate United States coastal Atlantic waters.
19. A domain in which something is dominant.
20. A woman of refinement.
22. A fence formed by a row of closely planted shrubs or bushes.
24. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
25. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
26. Noisy talk.
27. More than enough in size or scope or capacity.
30. An informal term for a father.
34. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
38. Take away the weapons from.
41. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
42. A sac or cavity containing fluid especially lymph or cerebrospinal fluid.
43. A Powhatan Indian woman (the daughter of Powhatan) who befriended the English at Jamestown and is said to have saved Captain John Smith's life (1595-1617).
45. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
46. Ratio of the adjacent side to the hypotenuse.
47. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.
48. The basic unit of money in Albania.
52. An informal conversation.
54. Perfect or complete or pure.
55. Small genus of dioecious tropical aquatic plants.
57. A primeval personification of air and breath.
58. A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
59. A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
62. Lower in esteem.
65. Before noon.
67. Remote city of Kazakhstan that (ostensibly for security reasons) was made the capital in 1998.
71. A member of the British order of honor.
75. A unit of electrical power in an AC circuit equal to the power dissipated when 1 volt produces a current of 1 ampere.
76. The function or position properly or customarily occupied or served by another.
77. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
78. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
79. A fraudulent business scheme.
80. Congenital absence of the heart (as in the development of some monsters).
81. A member of a Mayan people of southwestern Guatemala.

DOWN

1. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
2. Great merriment.
3. Having rugged physical strength.
4. Italian physicist noted for his work on gases.
5. Seed vessel having hooks or prickles.
6. Someone who copies the words or behavior of another.
7. A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
8. A deep bow.
9. An anticipated outcome that is intended or that guides your planned actions.
10. A state in midwestern United States.
11. Relating to the blood vessels or blood.
12. The capital and chief port of Qatar.
13. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
14. Fallow deer.
21. An active and efficient cause.
23. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
28. Typically having large ears and feeding primarily on insects.
29. A gripping hand tool with two hinged arms and (usually) serrated jaws.
31. (electronics) Of a circuit or device having an output that is proportional to the input.
32. Hard strong durable yellowish-brown wood of teak trees.
33. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
35. Fruiting body of some rust fungi bearing chains of aeciospores.
36. English novelist.
37. Not seen or perceived.
39. Make amends for.
40. Physical discomfort (as mild sickness or depression).
44. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
49. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
50. An artificial language for international use that rejects rejects all existing words and is based instead on an abstract analysis of ideas.
51. Fear resulting from the awareness of danger.
53. The part that is left when a cone or pyramid is cut by a plane parallel to the base and the apical part is removed.
56. A landlocked republic in eastern Africa.
60. East Indian tree yielding a resin used medicinally and burned as incense.
61. Jordan's port.
63. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
64. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
66. Israeli statesman (born in Russia) (1898-1978).
68. The female reproductive cell.
69. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
70. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
72. An accountant certified by the state.
73. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
74. A digital display that uses liquid crystal cells that change reflectivity in an applied electric field.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Out with the old. Bring on the new, exciting and wild. What a rebel you are! If it goes against tradition you are all about it today. You crave excitement and the same old, same old, just isn't going to cut it for you. Change is in the air. A new hairstyle, a new outfit, or a visit to a new place tonight may be just what you need to add a little excitement to your life. Go have some fun!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are focused and very goal oriented today. It is as if you are on a mission and will let nothing stand in your way. You are motivated and determined to fix all that is around you this not just as you think it should be. You want things your way and refuse to settle for less. This day reveals itself to be a perfect time to spend with a lover or someone close to you as you are feeling a desire to be needed and admired. You will find this will fulfill your needs and leave you with a sense of completion. Your most productive time today will be spent at home, Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may have been so focused lately you have been missing out on a social life. Today is a great day to get out and about. Hit the town but choose your company wisely as not to experience any conflict while doing so. Surround yourself with like-minded friends. Choose friends who are positive and share your love of life. You may find yourself experiencing a real spiritual awakening and the desire to share this with others. You should be pleasantly pleased at how receptive your friends are. A great day for you where the lines of communication open in all aspects of your world.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may find yourself becoming overly comfortable with your position in life. This could be careerwise or this could be concerning a relationship. Be careful not to let things become boring. Remember the grass is not always greener on the other side. You may find today brings many options and temptations into your world. Take time to make careful choices and take all consequences into consideration before making a move. You will find comfort in knowing you are financially sound and things seem to be going your way in this aspect today. Actions have consequences. Cancer, keep this in mind today.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Out with the old and in with the new. Your focus is on ambition, security, and responsibility are areas in your life where you have placed major focus. There are big decisions in your life concerning these areas that need to be made. Knowing you have fallen short of goals in the past has you extremely determined at this point in your life. The easy way is not always the best way. You may reap great reward from your determination. Remember, you can only count on yourself to accomplish your goals. We live in a "what's in it for me" kind of world.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

No decision will be made without deep thought and research. You are well aware your actions have consequences. You are extremely focused and determined to set the stage for great success. You may find yourself accounting for every detail. You seem to be taking life very seriously now. You could find your health and career to be a major focus for you. Be sure and take some time to relax as you know what they say about "all work and no play".



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a time to come back to reality. Focus on the here and now. Shed the illusions- fast. Open your eyes to what is going on in your close relationships. You will see change is needed. This may concern your living situation. Be realistic and think through every move you make now. This is not the time to sugar coat the things that are going on your world. Speak up and be heard. Make others aware that you clearly know what is going on.



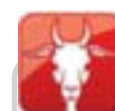
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

If an emotional argument is what you are seeking today may just in fact be your day. You may feel a lack of support and blocked at every turn. Use your imagination and ability to think outside of the box to find your answers. Others may see you detached or cool on a personal level today. Your tolerance levels may be low and your temper short. You are drawn now to the unique and unusual in this world. Make your ideas count. Now is a great time to try new things and visit new places. You should find today as one where you are able to make new friends and have great conversations with everyone you cross paths with.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Love would not begin to describe the feelings you are experiencing now. This is more like an obsession. You crave something that makes you feel alive. Feelings such as passion, jealousy and possession may come into play in your world. It seems as if you know exactly what/who you want and you will not let anything nor anyone stand in your way. You HAVE TO HAVE IT! Keep your focus and your determination will lead to you having exactly what your heart desires.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may be feeling emotionally detached from your surroundings at this time. You tend to be viewed as detached by others when you are in all reality your mind is highly focused and your wheels are turning. You are fascinated by the unusual and are finding yourself lost in your thoughts. You may find it hard to focus in the workplace today. Today may not be the best day for important decisions in the work place as you have lost yourself in your thoughts. You are quick witted and are no stranger to finding yourself having to apologize for having offended someone. Bite your tongue, keep it to yourself today as this could result in a battle of words with someone close to you. Capricorn, settle in with a book tonight and give your mind a break from reality. This will provide a much-needed escape for you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Today may bring a sense of isolation your way. This is not always a bad thing. Time spent alone can be used in prayer or meditation. A time to truly get in touch with yourself. Spend some time working on you. Sometimes you get so caught up in caring for others you forget to give yourself the same time and attention. Embrace the silence that surrounds you today and really listen to what your mind and body are telling you. You may need rest. You need to feed your soul just as you feed your body. Spend a quiet evening of escape alone. Run a bath, light the candles, and dim the lights. Breathe in the peace that surrounds you. Curl up with a good book and turn in early. Allow only that which is peaceful and positive into your world.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You know what you want and you will not let anything stand in your way. You have your eye on the prize. This has gone way beyond a want. You are actually obsessed.

Wordsearch Puzzle

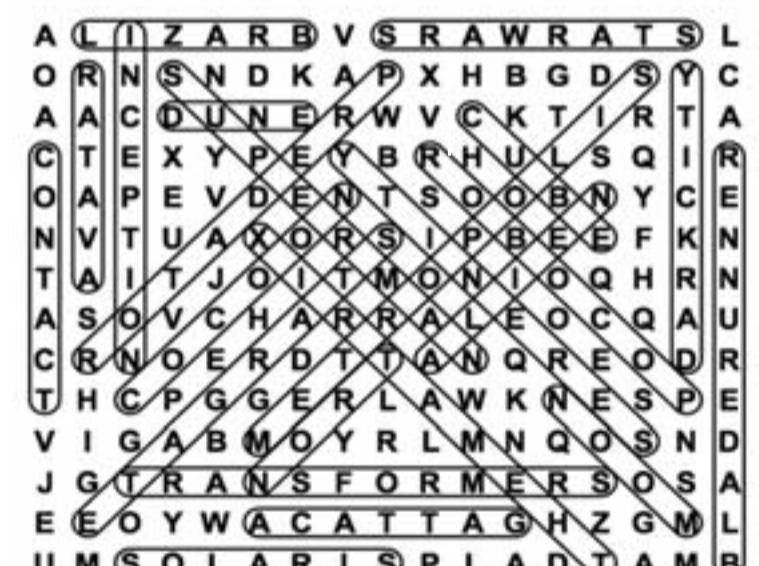
Sci-Fi Movies 2 - Word Search



- | | | |
|-------------|---------------|-----------|
| ALIENS | JURASSIC PARK | SLEEPER |
| CLOVERFIELD | KNOWING | SLITHER |
| DEEP IMPACT | MAD MAX | SPHERE |
| EQUILIBRIUM | MEN IN BLACK | STAR TREK |
| FLATLINERS | OUTBREAK | SUNSHINE |
| FREEJACK | PUSH | THE ABYSS |
| GODZILLA | RED PLANET | TIMECOP |
| HULK | SIGNS | |

Friday's Solution

Sci-Fi Movies 1 - Solution



- | | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|
| ALIEN | DUNE | STAR WARS |
| AVATAR | GATTACA | STARGATE |
| BLADE RUNNER | INCEPTION | SUPERMAN |
| BRAZIL | METROPOLIS | PREDATOR |
| COCOON | MOON | THE MATRIX |
| CONTACT | ROBOCOP | TRANSFORMERS |
| CUBE | SERENITY | TRON |
| DARK CITY | SOLARIS | |

Daily Sudoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 2019



This aerial picture shows a 600 meters long installation by French land artist SAYPE entitled 'Beyond Walls' representing hands joined together in support to the SOS Mediterranean migrant association, set up at Paris' landmark Champs de Mars gardens in front of the Eiffel Tower. — AFP photos



Happiness and Harmony: 'Big step forward' as twin pandas grow

Born to a wild father and captive mother, nearly one-year-old twin pandas roll on the grass in a conservation base in southwest China, marking an important achievement in the preservation of the country's beloved animal. Pandas are listed as a vulnerable species, but conservation efforts have helped reduce their danger of extinction. The pair, named Hehe (meaning Harmony, pronounced Huh-huh) and Meimei (Happiness, pronounced May-may), were taken out of a dormitory on a bright sunny day this week to gulp milk and munch bamboo in front of some 100 visitors.

After eating, the cubs tumbled on the grass and played on a swing before they were returned to their cool dormitory for a noon nap. The birth of Hehe and his younger sister Meimei, on July 25 last year in the Hetaoping panda base, was a success in China's attempt to introduce genes of wild pandas into the captive population. The achievement was recognized by Guinness World Records on Wednesday. The twins now live in the Shenshuping panda base in

Sichuan province, with 70 other pandas. There is a 50 percent chance for panda parents to produce twins, but making Hehe and Meimei was "very tough", said Liu Xiaoqiang, head of the Hetaoping panda base animal management department.

It took their mother more than a month to mate with a wild male after she was taken to a wild panda habitat. There was no human interference during the mating process. "The genetic diversity of the captive population is still quite limited, so we need to introduce some fresh blood from the wild," Liu told AFP. The birth of the twins is "a big step forward" in enriching genetic diversity and the success will allow researchers to make similar attempts in the future, Liu added. Hehe weighs a robust 20.2 kilograms, and Meimei a healthy 17.6 kilos.

Giant pandas typically reach 100 kilograms when they are mature, said Li Feng, head of Shenshuping's panda kindergarten management department. Li has been taking care of pandas for almost 15 years and has raised more than 100 cubs. She knows the names of all the pandas in the conservation center by heart, and can easily distinguish between Hehe and Meimei: the bigger brother has an irregular swirl on his pink nose, while the sister has a round face.

Hehe is a notorious troublemaker, famous for eating extraordinarily fast and stealing everyone else's food—except his sister's. Meimei, on the other hand, is very quiet and loves to follow her handlers around. "I hope they can... grow up strongly, healthily and happily," Li Feng said, "so when they mature, they can bring more babies to our panda family." — AFP

CHINA'S LARGEST EVER PICASSO EXHIBITION OPENS



This picture shows a pupil looking at an oil canvas entitled "Self-Portrait" by Pablo Picasso during an exhibition "Picasso Birth of a Genius" at an art gallery in Beijing. A woman looks at the artwork entitled "Head of Woman" by Pablo Picasso at an art gallery in Beijing. — AFP photos

The largest Picasso exhibition ever held in China opened yesterday, featuring more than 100 works—many of them from the artist's early years. The "Birth of a Genius" exhibition brings together the best of the Picasso Museum Paris, Laurent Le Bon, the museum's president told AFP. Featured works include paintings, sculptures and drawings, and are accompanied by photos of the young Pablo in Barcelona and Paris. The first Picasso exhibition in China was held in 1983, timed to coincide with a Beijing visit by then French president Francois Mitterrand. Just 33 pieces of art were put on display.

This year's exhibition, which runs until September 1 at the UCCA Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, focuses on the artist's first 30 years. "We have tried to show the

great masterpieces like the blue Self Portrait, for example, that hardly ever leave the museum, and display them alongside a more multidisciplinary Picasso," Le Bon said.

The Spanish artist's "blue period" from 1901 to 1904, which focused especially on the poor and marginalized, such as prostitutes and drunks, features prominently in the selected works, added exhibition curator Emilia Philippot. "These are very political subjects in a way," she said. Transporting all the works to China brought its own challenges. The insurers for the works, which are valued at more than 800 million euros (\$900 million) insisted that the pieces travel on seven separate planes, the organizers said. — AFP



A revolver believed to be the gun Dutch 19th century painter Vincent Van Gogh would have used to kill himself on 27 July 1890 is on public display at Paris' Drouot auction house before it goes under the hammer later today. — AFP

Gun that likely killed Vincent van Gogh goes on auction

Bidders, lend them your ear! The gun Vincent van Gogh is believed to have killed himself with will hit the auction block in Paris next week, according to reports. The weather-worn revolver - dubbed "the most famous weapon in art history" - is expected to fetch up to \$67,000 when it goes up for sale June 19, according to the Antiques Trade Gazette. The tortured artist, known for masterpieces such as "Starry Night" and "Sunflowers," is said to have borrowed the 7 mm Lefauchaux revolver from an innkeeper in southern France in July 1890.

In a nearby field, Van Gogh shot himself in the stomach then managed to stagger back to his room at the inn, historians say, according to news.artnet.com. He died three

days later from injuries - and the gun was later returned to the inn by a farmer, who found it in a field decades later, according to news.artnet.com. The innkeeper's family will now sell the morbid treasure, which has never before been up for grabs, the outlet reported.

The gun's expected value is based on the "celebrity of the artist, the likelihood that it is the weapon of the suicide, and the interest we feel it can raise," a rep for the auctioneer, AuctionArt, told the outlet. But some art historians have recently speculated that Van Gogh was in fact killed by accident by two boys playing with the gun in the field. — nypost.com



People visiting an exhibition named "Picasso Birth of a Genius" at an art gallery in Beijing.

Madonna insists she's staying put in Portugal

Pop icon Madonna marked the release of her 14th album Friday by denying rumors she is looking to leave Portugal, her home of two years. "I am not going to leave Lisbon," the 60-year-old queen of pop insisted as her latest disc hit the stores. Earlier this month, the US-born artist said she had initially taken time to settle down after coming to Portugal two years ago. That changed when she began forging contacts with Portuguese-based artists she says inspired the album, "Madame X," a fusion of a variety of musical influences.

Another reason to stay, beyond the music, is the fact that David Banda—one of four children she adopted in Malawi—is enrolled at the Benfica football academy. "My

son is still playing at Benfica. I still have a house there and I've been going back and forth—I live in TAP Air Portugal's planes." Madonna told Visao weekly in an interview. Madonna's time in Portugal has been marked by controversy, leading to rumors in the country's media in March that she would pack her bags. That followed an episode where the city hall in Sintra outside Lisbon refused to allow her to use a horse in a video for the song "Indian Summer" on the grounds the resulting vibrations could damage the manor house venue's wooden floor.

Several media said Madonna was furious with what she perceived as a snub and threatened to leave the country. "I faced pressure from the highest level to let the

horse in," Sintra mayor Basilio Horta told Sol weekly last week. "We carried out a study to determine the impact" which found "it would have damaged the flooring. So it was impossible to satisfy this demand." "She took it badly and was angry," said Horta. Further controversy came when Lisbon city council was accused of giving Madonna special treatment by renting her a 15-spot car park in the packed capital, provoking anger across the political spectrum. — AFP

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



In this file photo Bruce Springsteen performs during the World AIDS Day (RED) concert in Times Square in New York. — AFP

California nostalgia as Springsteen introduces new sound

The sun setting over an open road, small towns down on their luck—and a horse galloping through the desert? The Boss is back, and bigger than ever. Bruce Springsteen will release his first new album in five years today, calling it a "jewel box of a record." "This record is a return to my solo recordings featuring character-driven songs and sweeping, cinematic orchestral arrangements," Springsteen said. He still belts out melancholy ruminations on the American condition in his signature gravelly voice, but in this his 19th album his inspiration has changed.

Instead of small Rust Belt towns worn down by the decline of the economy and morale, he turns to southern Californian country-pop classics of the 1960s and 70s, infusing his music with a deep nostalgia for a golden era of the United States, slowly becoming buried under Californian sand but with hope for its return. The result is a 13-track album-titled "Western Stars"—that covers "a sweeping range of American themes, of highways and desert spaces, of isolation and community," said the 69-year-old rocker in a statement. But also of "the permanence of home and hope."

The album's first single, "Hello Sunshine," which dropped in April, sounds like a slow country ballad, with lyrics that invite hope back into an old underdog's life. Springsteen followed the song with "Tucson Train" in May, which tells the story of a man turning his life around. The tentatively optimistic lyrics are set to classical instruments, including an entire brass section to replace Springsteen's late musical partner in crime, the much-loved E Street Band saxophonist Clarence Clemons, who died in 2011.

"Western Stars"—whose cover art shows a horse with a glossy brown coat galloping across the desert—pays homage to musicians of Springsteen's young adulthood. The album features echoes of Glen Campbell, Roy Orbison and, particularly in "Hello Sunshine," Harry Nilsson's version of "Everybody's Talkin'." By playing with what has long fascinated him, Springsteen reveals more of himself, in a manner true to his characteristic sincere melancholy.

This is not the first time Springsteen has looked to California for inspiration. Back when he was the frontman for the band Steel Mill, he attempted to break out of New Jersey between 1969 and 1971, convinced his blend of rock and rhythm and blues would be better understood in the Golden State. In 1972, he wrote the song "California," a year after his parents moved to the titular state. He moved there himself in 1991, where he married guitarist Patti Scialfa, who is still a member of the E Street Band.

A few years later, Springsteen recorded his album "The Ghost of Tom Joad" at his home in Los Angeles, which went on to win the 1997 Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Folk Album. "Western Stars" is Springsteen's first studio album since 2014's "High Hopes," which followed "Wrecking Ball" in 2012. It also comes months after the artist closed his wildly successful run on Broadway, a 236-concert residency that is now available streaming on Netflix. When the show ended in December after several renewals, it was one of Broadway's most coveted tickets, with resale prices running upwards of \$1,000. — AFP

Neeson tried to explain race outburst to 'Men in Black' co-star

"Men in Black" actress Tessa Thompson said she "appreciates the bravery" of her co-star Liam Neeson in facing up to his racist feelings in the past, as the film was released Wednesday. The African-American actress—who made her name playing civil rights activist Diane Nash in "Selma"—said she had been in contact with Neeson since he admitted harboring thoughts about killing a random black man after a woman close to him was raped. "I had many conversations via email with Liam," said Thompson, who plays new recruit Agent M opposite Chris Hemsworth in "Men in Black: International". "I realized that in speaking to the press sometimes there can be a huge chasm between what you intend and what your impact is," she said. Thompson, who has also starred in "Creed" and the Marvel blockbusters "Thor" and "Avengers", told AFP that she found Neeson, 67, "very responsive" to her concerns.

"I expressed to Liam the importance in my mind of clarifying his heart, because many people who do not have proximity to him would not understand it, and his words would have confused them and for many really hurt and alienated them," she added. Neeson holds up a memory eraser used by MIB agents in the poster for the film, with social media wags saying that Hollywood executives probably wished it was real after the outcry he sparked in February while promoting the revenge thriller "Cold Pursuit". The "Star Wars" and "Schindler's List" star has been conspicuously absent for the publicity tour to launch the blockbuster which opens in the US Friday.

'Lesson to be learned'

A handful of fans demanded he be cut from the movie, as Kevin Spacey was from "All The Money In The World" after being hit by multiple sexual harassment claims. However, Neeson has a major role in the film as High T, the head of MIB's London bureau charged with protecting the "Earth from the scum of the universe". Thompson said she hoped lessons have been learned from Neeson's confession, with the Irish-born actor denying he was a racist and saying he was merely trying to "open up" about latent "racism and bigotry".

"I appreciate his bravery in talking to something that happened in his past," the actress said during a promo-



Chris Hemsworth, Tessa Thompson, and Kumail Nanjiani at the World Premiere of Columbia Pictures' MEN IN BLACK: INTERNATIONAL, sponsored by Lexus, at AMC Lincoln Square in New York City. — AFP photos

otional tour in Paris, where the film opened yesterday. "I don't feel a responsibility to speak for him," she added, "but it did allow a real conversation to happen and it was a teachable moment". "I think we all need to be conscientious that our words can have a huge effect, particularly if we are in a position of power which celebrity gives you. I am glad he has taken the time to clarify them."

Thompson was guarded about her own reaction to Neeson's admission, admitting that she has "more to say than time allows..." "But I will acknowledge that because of his experiences (growing up in Northern Ireland) there are some cultural differences." Neeson has frequently said

that he was made to feel like a second-class citizen growing up a Catholic in Northern Ireland during the Troubles.

While Whoopi Goldberg and Michelle Rodriguez have defended him, director Ava DuVernay—the first black woman director ever to be nominated for a best movie Oscar for "Selma"—was less forgiving. "When people ask me what white privilege is. Imagine if this was Will Smith," she tweeted over a report of Neeson's comments, referring to the black superstar from the first three "Men in Black" films. — AFP



Songwriters Hall Of Fame inductee US rapper Missy Elliott speaks onstage during the 2019 Songwriters Hall Of Fame Gala at The New York Marriott Marquis in New York City. — AFP

Rapper Missy Elliott inducted into Songwriters Hall of Fame

Missy Elliott has become the first female rapper inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. Fighting back tears, Melissa Elliott—her real name—received the honor Thursday night from Queen Latifah, a rap pioneer from the previous generation. Earlier, the academy broadcast a video in which former first lady Michelle Obama said she is a fan of Elliott, who is 47. Singer Lizzo and rapper Da Brat paid tribute to Elliott by performing some of her songs.

Before Elliott, two other rappers had made it into the hall of fame: Jermaine Dupri last year and Jay-Z in 2017. Elliott first tasted success as a producer and writer for other artists before launching a solo career. Working with producer Timbaland, who shaped some of Elliott's hip hop and R&B music in the 1990s, she

performed with Aaliyah and Destiny's Child. Also with Timbaland, Elliott released her first album, entitled "Supa Dupa Fly" in 1997. Her song "The Rain" made her a rap star.

She had a series of hit albums and songs in the 1990s, such as "Work It," "Hot Boyz" and "Get Ur Freak On," often recorded with other big-name artists. At Thursday's ceremony the Songwriters Hall of Fame also honored five other creators, including singer Yusuf, formerly known as Cat Stevens, who penned such classics as "Wild World." Justin Timberlake received a special prize, the Contemporary Icon Award, which celebrates giants of contemporary music. — AFP

'Utterly terrifying': 'Shining' sequel melds King and Kubrick

Almost 40 years on from "The Shining," the blood-soaked corridors of the Overlook Hotel are still the stuff of nightmares for generations of horror fans. Stanley Kubrick's psychological masterpiece, adapted from the Stephen King novel, made creepy twins and axe-murdering maniacs—who can forget Jack Nicholson's chilling line, "Here's Johnny!"—synonymous with the genre.

But for the director tasked with bringing the book's 2013 sequel "Doctor Sleep" to the big screen, checking back into the Overlook was scary for a different reason. King famously hated Kubrick's film adaptation of "The Shining"—in particular the liberties it took with his plot and protagonists—leaving Mike Flanagan with the unenviable task of marrying the visions of the two creative giants. "That was utterly terrifying," Flanagan said about seeking King's blessing, calling it the "most nerve-wracking" moment of his career.

"The hope going in was that there was some universe in which Stephen King and the Stanley Kubrick estate could both love this movie," he told journalists at a Los Angeles screening of the trailer for the film, due out in late October. "Threading that needle has been the source of every ulcer we've had over the last two years." The brief teaser contained several images eerily familiar from Kubrick's movie, including a young Danny Torrance peddling his tricycle down the haunted hotel's foreboding hallways, and the word "Redrum"—"Murder" spelled backwards—hewn into a wall.

Producer Trevor Macy said each iconic scene had been reshot in painstaking detail, although the famous moment—an elevator door opens to unleash roaring cascades of blood—was lifted directly from Kubrick's footage. Most hauntingly, the trailer ends with Ewan McGregor, who plays an adult Dan four decades on, peering through the gaping hole in an axe-chopped door, calling back to that most signature of Nicholson's scenes.



Suffocating tensions

The filmmakers said they had ultimately secured King's blessing to make a faithful version of his sequel that could still exist in Kubrick's "cinematic universe." But the project was made more difficult because King, in writing the sequel, "actively and intentionally ignored everything Kubrick had changed," Flanagan explained—including penning parts for characters killed off in the film.

One new character is Abra, a young girl who possesses an even stronger version of Dan's magical "shining" powers. The filmmakers viewed 900 girls before selecting American actress Kyliegh Curran for her first major role, passing over more experienced child stars. Abra and Dan team up to take on a gang of supernatural villains who feast on those with "shining" powers—in the process forcing Dan to confront inner demons originating from his stay at the Overlook a lifetime earlier. The film, like its predecessor, aims to frighten viewers by building tension and a "suffocating atmosphere" rather than simply startling them with "jump-scares," said Flanagan. "We used a lot of the lessons that Kubrick taught us about how to do a psychological thriller," he said, while adding the movie was "ferociously protective" of King's text. Macy added: "In a very real sense, we're standing on the shoulders of literary and cinematic giants." "Doctor Sleep" will be released globally from October 30. — AFP

Lifestyle | Music & Movies

Almodovar to get Venice film festival lifetime award

Spanish director Pedro Almodovar will receive a Golden Lion lifetime achievement award at the Venice Film Festival this year, the organizers said on Friday. They called the 69-year-old filmmaker the "greatest and most influential Spanish director" since Luis Bunuel last century. Almodovar "has offered us the most multifaceted, controversial, and provocative portraits of post-Franco Spain," festival director Alberto Barbera said in a press release. "The topics of transgression, desire, and identity are the terrain of choice for his films, which he imbues with corrosive humor and adorns with a visual splendor."

Almodovar has directed 21 feature films, including "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown", "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!", "High Heels" and "All About My Mother". He said in a statement he was "excited and honored" by the prize. "This Lion is going to become my pet, along with the two cats I live with." The filmmaker, screenwriter and producer won an Oscar for best foreign film with "All About My Mother" in 2000. He won the best screenplay award for "Volver" at the Cannes Film Festival in 2006 and the Venice festival's best screenplay award for "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown"

in 1988. This year he was back at Cannes, where he presented his 21st film, "Pain and Glory" with Antonio Banderas. Banderas received the festival's best actor award for his role as a filmmaker in crisis. The Venice International Film Festival runs from 27 August to 7 September. — AFP

Spanish movie director Pedro Almodovar attends the men's singles final match on day fifteen of The Roland Garros 2019 French Open tennis tournament in Paris. — AFP



In this file photo Cuba Gooding Jr throws his Oscar into the air as he poses for the press after he was won for Best Supporting Actor for his role in "Jerry Maguire". — AFP

Actor Cuba Gooding Jr charged over groping claim

Prosecutors in New York charged Oscar-winning actor Cuba Gooding Jr with forcible touching on Thursday after he was accused of groping a woman in a Manhattan bar over the weekend. Gooding's lawyer Mark Heller said his client intended to plead not guilty. "Mr Gooding has not acted inappropriately in any shape or form. Nothing in the video could even be considered ambiguous," Heller said, without giving details of the video he was referring to.

The actor had earlier denied the allegations, telling celebrity news outlet TMZ that "nothing" happened. "I trust the system. There's a tape that shows what really happened," he said. Forcible touching is a misdemeanor offense punishable by one year in prison under New York state law. A police spokesman confirmed that the 51-year-old Gooding—who won an Academy Award in 1997 for his performance as a football player in "Jerry Maguire"—had turned himself in, but would not comment on the nature of the complaint.

Several US media outlets reported that a woman claimed Gooding, a native New Yorker, grabbed her breast during a night out late Sunday. Other reports indicate a second woman has come forward with claims that the actor groped her buttocks in March 2008, also in a Manhattan club. Gooding's first major role came in the groundbreaking 1991 movie about life in the inner city, "Boyz n the Hood." More recently, he played OJ Simpson in "The People vs OJ Simpson: American Crime Story." — AFP

Italian director Franco Zeffirelli dies aged 96

Italian film and opera legend Franco Zeffirelli died yesterday at the age of 96 at his home in Rome, local media reported. The director of movies and operas "died serenely after a long illness, which had worsened these last months," Italian media said, citing family members. "I never wanted this day to come. Franco Zeffirelli departed this morning. One of the greatest men in the

world of culture. We join in the grief of his loved ones. Goodbye, dear Master, Florence will never forget you," tweeted Dario Nardella, the mayor of Florence, where Zeffirelli was born.

A director, screenwriter, and producer, Zeffirelli has about 20 feature films to his name. Internationally, he is best known for having directed the 1968 film version of

Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" for which he was nominated for an Academy Award. He also borrowed from Shakespeare for adaptations of "Hamlet" in 1992 with Mel Gibson and Glenn Close, and "The Taming of the Shrew" in 1967 with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. He also directed more than 30 plays and operas. — AFP



In this file photo Italian film director Franco Zeffirelli poses at the British Embassy in Rome before receiving the medal of knighthood from the British ambassador to Italy. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken on January 11, 2000 Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti (right) jokes with Italian Director Franco Zeffirelli during a press conference in Rome, three days before the first presentation of Giacomo Puccini's "The Tosca" at Costanzi's theatre for its 100th anniversary.

South Korean court tells cheating husband he must stay married

A cheating husband cannot divorce his wife despite having a years-long affair, a South Korean court ruled Friday, insisting only the injured party in a marriage could initiate a legal separation. Movie director Hong Sang-soo, 58, a Cannes film festival regular, filed for divorce in 2016, shortly after his relationship with actress Kim Min-hee became public. But Hong's wife, whom he wed in 1985, refused to play along-leading to a drawn-out legal battle that has lasted for years.

Seoul Family Court on Friday dismissed Hong's petition, and awarded costs against him. South Korea remains a conservative society, where until 2015, anyone indulging in extramarital sex risked a two-year prison sentence. Even since decriminalization, public disapproval of affairs remains strong. Despite her successes on the silver screen, 37-year-old Kim—who won best actress at Germany's prestigious Berlinale in 2017 — has struggled to inspire warmth among the South Korean public.

Her portrayal of an out-of-work actress reeling from an affair with a married director in Hong's "On the Beach at Night Alone" appears to have been too close to real life for movie goers. The law against adultery was originally intended to safeguard the rights of women at a time when marriage offered them some of their only legal protections. Most had no independent income, and divorce carried enormous social stigma.

In 2015, when the country's highest court reaffirmed that only the injured party could initiate a divorce, it said "gender equality had some way to go". Judges said women would be particularly vulnerable if unfaithful husbands were allowed to divorce them without any justifiable complaint. Opponents of the current divorce laws say they violate individual freedoms and trap people in unhappy marriages. — AFP



Director Hong Sang-soo and actress Kim Min-hee

BTS, Korean pop titans who conquered the West

Paris's Stade de France stadium is packed. The crowd is a sea of screaming teenagers in sporty hoodies, colorful rabbit ears and-as it starts to rain-plastic ponchos. In a puff of smoke, BTS bursts onto the stage from behind two giant inflatable leopards. Dressed in white suits, they jump around to pumping hit "Dionysus", to the delight of fans clutching smartphones and flashing globe balls. It's a suitably dramatic entrance for the seven-piece South Korean boy band, whose world tour, "Love Yourself: Speak Yourself" came to Paris for two nights late last

week, after a string of sold-out shows in Los Angeles, Chicago and London's iconic Wembley Stadium. While the music industry has seen its fair share of boy bands over the years, from The Jackson 5 to One Direction, BTS—short for Bangtan Sonyeondan, which translates as Bulletproof Boy Scouts—is the first K-pop group to top charts in the US and Britain. "BTS has captivated pop fans in the West in a way that no other Asian band has ever done before," Ben Beaumont-Thomas, music editor of Britain's The Guardian newspaper, told AFP.



In this file photo South Korean boy band BTS, also known as the Bangtan Boys, pose on the red carpet at the 28th Seoul Music Awards in Seoul. — AFP photos



In this file photo fans react as they arrive for a concert of the South Korean K-pop boy band BTS at the Stade-de-France stadium in Saint-Denis, on the outskirts of Paris.

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"Access (to international music) is so instantaneous and

phrases in English and their YouTube videos have translations. "Their music brings joy to our daily lives. I like the messages they communicate in their songs—they sing about everything from depression to family and bullying," said Philae, a French 22-year-old car industry worker at one of the Paris shows who declined to give her full name.

'Global culture'

In Paris, the Korean septet sang and danced their way through 22 tracks, showing off their meticulous choreography in pop anthems like "Not Today", before one of the members, J-Hope, took the spotlight with his aggressive

rapping in Korean to "Trivia: Just Dance". Another of the band's members, Jimin, one of the youngest, serenaded the crowd with R&B ballad, "Serenadipity", with the faintest smile or flick of his hair eliciting squeals of delight from adoring fans.

Their hit single "Boy With Luv" broke the YouTube record for the most views in 24 hours, with 74.6 million hits when it was released in April. Beaumont-Thomas linked the group's appeal in the West to streaming apps like Spotify and Deezer, which allow music fans to dis-

cover performers from around the globe. "Young people today, especially through social media and streaming, feel like they're part of a global culture," he said. "BTS already have a massive fan base in Asia, so fans (in the West) feel like they're part of something. There's a real sense of identity."

South Korean performers like Blackpink and Psy, whose hit "Gangnam Style" in 2012 became the first video to top a billion views on YouTube, have already broken into Western markets in recent years. But BTS is "a very exceptional case", Dong Sun-hwa, entertainment reporter at The Korea Times, told AFP. "They're very accessible.

Other K-pop bands keep physical and emotional distance from their followers."

BTS' popularity does not seem to have been affected by recent sex scandals involving some of the South Korean K-pop industry's other stars. High-profile cases have included singer Seungri from popular boy band BIGBANG, who is accused of arranging sex services for potential investors and rich clients at a nightclub he co-owns. He denies the allegations. And singer-songwriter Jung Joon-young has admitted to filming himself having sex and sharing the footage without his partners' consent.

Self-acceptance

While their onstage personas seem almost cartoonlike at times—during one set in Paris they wandered around an inflatable obstacle course holding glittery pink microphones—their songs about self-acceptance have struck a chord with teens. In September, the band's lead singer RM made a speech to the United Nations in New York about how music allowed him to overcome worries about "what other people thought of me", and start to "love myself, little by little".

The floppy-haired musicians, whose ages range from 21 to 26 and who often sport earrings and lipstick, appeal to a generation that feels comfortable with the idea of fluid gender identity, said Samantha Lifson, writer at Seoul-based pop culture magazine, K-Soul. "In some of their earlier work, they had a sexier image, but they went from that portrayal of strong masculinity to a softer look," she told AFP, adding: "I definitely think younger music listeners are looking for that kind of comfort."

Baran Masifi, 24, who travelled from Germany to see the band perform in Paris, said she found their music "really catchy, but it has a lot of meaning, too. They talk about real life—things like mental health and school." Lucie, 13, from Nancy in northeast France, who attended one of the Paris concerts with her father, said: "They encourage people to love themselves." — AFP



Women wearing "hanfu" - traditional Chinese clothing - chatting during a gathering of hanfu devotees at a park in Beijing. — AFP photos



Two women wearing "hanfu" - traditional Chinese clothing - preparing to pose for a photo at a gathering of hanfu devotees at a park in Beijing.

BACK TO THE HANFU-TURE: YOUNG CHINESE REVIVE ANCIENT FASHION



Hanfu fashion designer Zhu Zheling posing with a design at her studio in Beijing.

Dressed in a flowing long robe adorned with beaded floral embroidery from a bygone era, stylist Xiao Hang looks like she surfaced from a time machine as she strides across the bustling Beijing metro, attracting curious glances and inquisitive questions. China has embraced Western fashion and futuristic technology as its economy boomed in recent decades, but a growing number of young people like Xiao are looking to the past for their sartorial choices and donning traditional "hanfu", or "Han clothing".

These historic costumes of the Han ethnic majority are enjoying a renaissance in part because the government is promoting traditional culture in a bid to boost patriotism and national identity. Period dramas have also contributed to the surge in interest for traditional Chinese garb — "The Story of Minglan", a TV series set in the Song Dynasty, garnered more than 400 million viewers in three days when it debuted earlier this year. There is no uniform definition of what counts as hanfu since each Han-dominated dynasty had its own style, but the outfits are characterized by loose, flowing robes that drape around the body, with sleeves that hang down to the knees.

Clothes are the "foundation of culture," said Jiang Xue, who is part of Beijing-based hanfu club Mowutianxia, which has received funding from the Communist Youth League. "If we as a people and as a country do not even understand our traditional clothing or don't wear them, how can we talk about other essential parts of our culture?" she said.

'Strange clothes'

There is some way before the style reaches mainstream acceptance in China. In March, two students in Shijiazhuang Medical College in northern China were reportedly threatened with expulsion for wearing the outfits to school. Others say they're deterred by the odd looks they get when wearing hanfu in public. "I used to be very embarrassed to wear (hanfu) out," screenwriter Cheng Xia told AFP. The 37-year-old said she overcame her reservations after going out dressed in a full outfit last year.

Meanwhile, the movement to revive Han ethnic clothing is raising questions about nationalism and Han-ethnocentrism—a sensitive issue in China where the government is wary of any inter-ethnic conflict. For instance, within the



A woman wearing "hanfu" - traditional Chinese clothing - taking a photo at a gathering of hanfu devotees at a park in Beijing.



Hanfu fashion designer Zhu Zheling (center) at her studio in Beijing.

"When we were little, we would also drape sheets and duvets around ourselves to pretend we were wearing beautiful clothes," Xiao told AFP. Xiao, who used to work at a state-owned machine manufacturing company, now runs her own hanfu business, where she dresses customers for photo shoots and even plans hanfu-style weddings.

Ancient style, new fashion

In modern China, the hanfu community spans the gamut: from history enthusiasts to anime fans, to students and even young professionals. Yang Jiaming, a high school student in Beijing, wears his outfit under his school uniform. "Two-thirds of my wardrobe is hanfu," he said, decked out in a Tang-style beige gown and black boots at a hanfu gathering, adding that his classmates and teachers have been supportive of his style. A government-supported revival in Chinese culture has given the hanfu community a boost: since he entered office in 2012, President Xi Jinping has supported the idea of promoting a Han-centric version of heritage. In April, the Communist Youth League of China launched a two-day conference for traditional Chinese garb, including hanfu.

A live broadcast of the event drew some 20 million viewers, alongside a visceral outpouring of emotions. "Chinese people have abandoned their own culture and chosen Western culture. The red marriage gown has now become a wedding dress," wrote on user on Bilibili, a video streaming platform popular among young anime, comic and gaming fans in China.



Women wearing "hanfu" - traditional Chinese clothing - in a street after attending a gathering of hanfu devotees in Beijing.

hanfu community, there is long-running opposition towards the qipao, the high-collared, figure-hugging garment that used to be a staple of women's wardrobes. Also known as cheongsam in Cantonese, the qipao-meaning "Q robe" — began as a long, loose dress worn by the Manchus or "Q" people who ruled China from the 17th century to the early 1900s.

Its popularity took off in 1920s Shanghai when it was modified into a fitted must-have, favoured by actresses and intellectuals as a symbol of femininity and refinement. "Some people... think that the cheongsam was inspired in the Qing Dynasty, which is not enough to represent China. There are nationalist undertones in this issue," said Chinese culture scholar Gong Pengcheng. "It is a good trend to explore traditional culture and clothing culture... There are many things we can talk about, and we need not shrink to nationalist confrontation." Yang, the high school student, is more upbeat. He said: "At the very least, we can wear our own traditional clothes, just like the ethnic minorities." — AFP



A woman wearing "hanfu" - traditional Chinese clothing - posing for a photo at a gathering of hanfu devotees at a park in Beijing.



Women wearing "hanfu" - traditional Chinese clothing - rehearsing for a performance at a gathering of hanfu devotees at a park in Beijing.

Designers Lim and Leon quit French label Kenzo after eight years

The American designers Carol Lim and Humberto Leon are quitting Kenzo, the French fashion label said Friday. The two Asian-Americans have led the brand founded by Japanese-born creator Kenzo Takada for the last eight years. The duo, who the brand said had "revitalized it with a series of bold creative ideas that have reverberated throughout the fashion industry", are leaving to concentrate on US retailer Opening Ceremony, which they set up in 2002.

Korean-American Lim, 44, and Leon, 44, whose mother was Chinese seamstress, will stage their final show for

Kenzo during Paris men's fashion week next Sunday. The pair—who met at the University of California, Berkeley and have worked together since—are credited with broadening the appeal of the luxury label, known for its perfumes and striking streetwear prints. They worked with US indie film legends David Lynch and Spike Jonze as well as the maverick Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, best known for his sculpture of Pope John Paul II hit by a meteorite.

Kenzo CEO Sylvie Colin said that Lim and Leon "consistently brought diversity and inclusion to the forefront at

Kenzo, using their collections, fashion shows, advertising and special projects to engage and galvanize a new generation of creatives." Kenzo's owners, the French luxury goods conglomerate LVMH, said "a new creative step for Kenzo will be announced at a later stage." — AFP

In this file photo Kenzo's fashion designers Humberto Leon (left) and Carol Lim greet the public at the end of the show during the men's Fall/Winter 2019/2020 collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP



Classifieds

Sunday, June 16, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 20 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 20 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 15/06/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	34 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	28 °C			
ABDALY	47 °C	27 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	48 °C	32 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	45 °C	29 °C			
SALMIYAH	41 °C	33 °C			
AHMADI	39 °C	35 °C			
NUWAISIB	43 °C	30 °C			
WAFRA	46 °C	28 °C			
SALMY	47 °C	30 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	06/16	Very hot	48 °C	30 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Monday	06/17	Very hot	49 °C	32 °C	NW	10 - 40 km/h
Tuesday	06/18	Very hot	47 °C	34 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	06/19	Hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	46 °C	35 °C	NW	20 - 50 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:13
Sunrise	04:49
Zuhr	11:48
Asr	15:22
Sunset	18:49
Isha	20:21

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	32 °C
MAX. RH	24 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	NE 39 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Melissa Jessica, Mangaf, Block 4, Street 25, Flat 13, Floor 5, Kuwait, holder of Indian Passport No. J5549911, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare, the name changes as Surname Rodrigues and given name Melissa Jessica. (C 5550) 14-6-2019

Hussain Shabbir Gubbuji H.9 Sacra heart town, Wanwadi Pune, 411040, India. Holder of Indian Passport No. M8390452, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare, the name change as surname Gabbuji and given name Hussain Shabbir. (C 5549) 13-6-2019

I, Abdul Khadar Sheeja Beegum, Vilakampurayidom, near T.B, Pathanamthitta P.O, Pathanamthitta, Pin-689645, Kerala, India, holder of Indian Passport No. T4012709, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare, the name changes as, given name Sheeja Beegum and Surname Abdul Khadar. (C 5547) 14-6-2019

I, Pakkir Mohamed Anver Ali, holder of Indian Passport No. R5458898 wish to correct my name as given name Pakkir Mohamed Surname Anver Ali, hereinafter in all my documents my name will appear as Anver Ali Pakkir Mohamed. (C 5546)

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

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

Arrival Flights on Sunday 16/6/2019				Departure Flights on Sunday 16/6/2019			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	KAC	157	Istanbul	11:15
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	221	Doha	11:20
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	YYY	0000	Doha	11:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05
AHY	119	Baku	00:55	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	JZR	123	Dubai	13:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	JZR	115	Doha	13:25
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	ETH	3621	Addis Ababa	13:30
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	541	Cairo	13:30
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	MSR	611	Cairo	13:45
PGT	840	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	515	Tehran	13:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	FDB	8192	Dubai	14:50
YYY	0000	DIJ	02:05	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
YYY	9999	DIJ	02:05	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	UAE	878	Dubai	15:30
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	SVR	501	Jeddah	15:45
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
PGT	856	Istanbul	03:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	785	Doha	16:25
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	FEG	442	Asyut	16:55
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	YYY	9999	Doha	17:00
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
JZR	1738	Cairo	04:45	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	JZR	531	Dhaka	17:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
THY	1414	Trabzon	05:05	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	503	Beirut	17:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	FEG	242	Alexandria	17:45
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	621	Doha	17:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
UAE	873	Dubai	05:40	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	SVR	511	Riyadh	18:10
QTR	8511	Doha	06:05	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
BAW	157	London	06:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	708	Luxor	06:15	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	IRA	664	Shiraz	18:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	501	Lahore	18:35
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	KAC	351	Kochi	20:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	724	Alexandria	07:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:45
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
JZR	706	Asyut	08:25	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	JZR	058	Dubai	20:30
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	FDB	058	Mumbai	20:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	KAC	351	Kochi	20:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	KAC	333	Trivandrum	21:05
KAC	384	Delhi	09:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
SAW	703	Damascus	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	DHX	171	Doha	21:50
OMS	223	Muscat	10:35	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
JZR	114	Doha	11:10	THY	1403	AYT	22:25
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
JZR	1736	Cairo	12:05	KAC	383	Delhi	22:50
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
ETH	3620	Addis Ababa	12:30	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
				KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
				KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				JZR	701	Asyut	23:45

Iran renews nuclear pact ultimatum amid tensions



DUSHANBE, Tajikistan: (Front row, from left) Bangladeshi President Abdul Hamid, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena pose for a family picture at the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) yesterday. — AFP

DUSHANBE: Iran will continue scaling back compliance with a nuclear deal unless other signatories to the pact show "positive signals", the Iranian president said yesterday as tensions with the United States escalated over tanker attacks in the Gulf region. Iran stopped complying in May with some commitments in the 2015 nuclear deal that was agreed with global powers, after the United States unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 and ratcheted up sanctions on Tehran.

"Obviously, Iran cannot stick to this agreement unilaterally," President Hassan Rouhani told Russian, Chinese and other Asian leaders at a conference in

Tajikistan. His comments follow rising tensions with Washington, which has accused Tehran of carrying out Thursday's attacks on two oil tankers in a vital oil shipping route at the mouth of the Gulf. Tehran has denied having any role.

Rouhani did not refer to this week's tanker incident in his speech to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, behind held in the Tajik capital Dushanbe. "It is necessary that all the sides of this agreement contribute to restoring it," he said, adding that Iran needed to see "positive signals" from other signatories to the pact, which include

Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. He did not give details on what actions Iran would take or say what positive signals Tehran wanted to see.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow would adhere to the agreement and urged other signatories to follow suit. "We believe that the only sensible decision is for all deal participants to honour commitments," Putin told the conference. Tehran said in May that Iran would start enriching uranium at a higher level, unless world powers protected its economy from US sanctions within 60 days.

Washington has ratcheted up pressure on Iran,

saying it wants to prevent Tehran developing a nuclear bomb, rein in its ballistic missile program and end what it calls Iranian meddling in the Middle East. Tehran has said its nuclear program is peaceful and will not be stopped, says its missile work is for defence and accuses the United States of destabilizing the region. France and other European signatories to the nuclear deal that aimed to curb Iran's nuclear work, have said they wanted to save the accord, but many of their companies have cancelled deals with Tehran, under pressure from the United States. — Reuters

Pakistan politician does livestream with cat whiskers, ears

PESHAWAR: A politician in northwestern Pakistan was given paws for thought after his press conference was streamed live on Facebook with the "cat filter" turned on, giving him on-screen whiskers and ears. The online stream of regional minister Shaukat Yousafzai speaking with journalists went viral on Friday after a member of his social media team accidentally activated the filter on the social network.

Comments started pouring in as Facebook users noticed pink cat-like ears and whiskers had appeared on the heads of the minister and two accompanying officials. There's "a cat in the cabinet" one said. Others were more literal: "Shaukat Yousafzai looks like a cat - Meow meow meow." The video - seen by an AFP reporter - was deleted minutes after the press conference from the official Facebook page of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, which is in power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Images from the press conference were still available on social media. Yousafzai confirmed the incident and told AFP it happened by accident. "The cat filter was turned on by mistake" Yousafzai said, adding "let's not



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani children point at a computer screen showing a screen grab of a press conference attended by provincial minister Shaukat Yousafzai and streamed live on social media yesterday. — AFP

take everything so seriously". "I wasn't the only one - two officials sitting along me were also hit by the cat filter," he joked. — AFP

The live stream continued with the whiskers and ears in place, even after the error was pointed out by users. A press statement, issued by the PTI social media team said the incident happened because of "human error". "All necessary actions have been taken to avoid such incidents in future," it said. — AFP

7 die cleaning Indian hotel septic tank

AHMEDABAD, India: Seven people have suffocated to death while cleaning a hotel septic tank in western India without safety gear, police said yesterday. The hotel owner has been charged with causing death due to negligence following the incident Friday night in Gujarat state's Vadodara district, a police official said. Four of those who died had been called to clean the tank while three others were hotel employees who were assisting. Hundreds of thousands of mostly low-caste Indians are employed as "manual scavengers" who clear underground pipes and septic tanks without any protective gear or masks.

"One person first entered the tank, but when he

did not come out and did not respond to calls, three other cleaners went inside to help him," said Vadodara fire officer Nikunj Azad who was leading the rescue operations. When all four did not emerge after some time, the three hotel employees entered the tank, all seven of them losing their lives in the process, Azad added. "Their bodies have been brought out and sent for postmortem," he said.

Deaths from asphyxiation in sewers full of noxious gases are frequently reported across the country. Last year five people died in New Delhi while cleaning a sewage treatment tank. Indian legislators have passed several laws aiming to stamp out the age-old practice of manual scavenging, the latest in 2013. But many scavengers are still used through sub-contractors, making it difficult for authorities to fix responsibility. In rural areas, women "scavengers" clean out primitive non-flush toilets with basic tools, although the practice is now on the wane. There is no official data but independent surveys indicate that some 1,370 lose their lives every year during the hazardous work. — AFP

Gulf seeks to secure energy supplies as...

Continued from Page 1

"We remain hopeful in attaining a broader framework for cooperation with Iran," he said at a summit in Bulgaria.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih called for a "swift and decisive" response to threats against energy supplies after Thursday's "terrorist acts". Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani also called the attack a "direct threat" to energy supplies, calling on world powers to protect international shipping lanes and hold the perpetrators accountable.

The Japanese tanker's Tokyo-based operator Kokuka confirmed yesterday the vessel was heading to port in the UAE. "We still don't know if the tanker goes to Khor Fakkan or Fujairah as they are very close," said a spokesman, referring to two Emirati ports on the Gulf of Oman. Maritime experts would then seek to transfer the highly flammable cargo to shore, according to an unnamed official quoted by Japanese state media. "From a viewpoint of global energy security, it is necessary for the international community to jointly deal with the act," said Japanese Trade Minister Hiroshige Seko at a G20 energy and environment meeting in Japan yesterday.

The other ship, the Norwegian-operated Front Altair, has left Iran's territorial waters, multiple sources said yesterday. The ship is "heading toward the Fujairah-Khor Fakkan area in the United Arab

Emirates", head of ports for Iran's southern province of Hormozgan told the semi-official news agency ISNA. The tanker "has left Iran's territorial waters", he said, adding that it was being towed and sprayed with water to cool the hull. Frontline Management, the Norwegian company which owns the ship, confirmed it had left Iranian waters and said "the 23 crew members... remain safe and well, with plans being made for their repatriation soonest".

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted that the US had "immediately jumped to make allegations against Iran without a shred of factual or circumstantial evidence". The United States has also accused Iran over May 12 sabotage attacks on four tankers anchored in the Gulf of Oman off Fujairah. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for an independent investigation. "It's very important to know the truth (and) that responsibilities are clarified," he told reporters at UN headquarters in New York. "Obviously that can only be done if there is an independent entity that verifies those facts."

The oil tankers hit Thursday morning were 10 nautical miles apart and heading for Asia when they were struck by explosions after passing through the Strait of Hormuz, some 25 nautical miles off Iran's southern coast. The Front Altair was carrying naphtha, a refined petroleum product, when it was hit by three explosions, according to Norwegian officials. Blocking the Hormuz Strait would be a relatively low-tech, high-impact countermeasure Iran could take against any attack by the United States, and would severely disrupt global oil supplies. But Trump played down the threat. "It's not going to be closed, it's not going to be closed for long and they know it. They've been told in very strong terms," he said on Friday, referring to Iran. — Agencies

Ship insurance costs soar; Iraq...

Continued from Page 1

On May 17 the London insurance market's Joint War Committee extended the list of waters deemed high risk to include Oman, the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf after separate ship attacks off Fujairah. Washington has blamed Iran or its proxies for attacks on May 12 that crippled four oil tankers in the same area. It also said Tehran was behind May 14 drone strikes on two Saudi oil-pumping stations. Tehran has denied all the allegations.

"War-risk premiums have already gone up since the decision by the Joint War Committee to extend the high-risk zone and they are now in the double digits," said Marcus Baker, global head of the marine practice at insurance broker Marsh. About a fifth of the oil consumed globally passes through the Strait of Hormuz, shipped from Gulf energy producers, including Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest crude exporter.

Jonathan Moss, head of transport and shipping with law firm DWF, said the extent of geopolitical turmoil had not been seen since the US war in Iraq in 2003, when underwriters increased premiums on fears of claims arising from collisions, groundings and attacks on ships and oil facilities. "This coming year will see a drive by insurers to raise premiums in the face of a cocktail of instability in the region," Moss said. Rate increases for hull, machinery and war risks are likely to be between 10 percent and 20 percent, he added. "Once again the international shipping industry finds itself caught in the middle of a geopolitical conflict over which it has no control,"

tanker association INTERTANKO said.

Meanwhile, the US has allowed Iraq to import Iranian gas for its power grid for another three months by extending a waiver to sanctions - but insists that Baghdad seek alternative sources. Iraq has had several extensions to the waiver first granted last year after Washington reimposed sanctions on Tehran's oil sector forbidding countries from purchasing Iranian energy. "An additional 120-day waiver was granted to allow Iraq to continue to pay for electricity imports from Iran," the US State Department said in an emailed statement.

An Iraqi government source said the extension was given during a phone call between Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. The State Department said the United States continued to insist on "diversifying energy imports away from Iran," however. President Donald Trump's administration has said oil-rich Iraq must become more self-reliant for its electricity, including by harnessing gas energy and reducing flaring at oil production sites.

US energy giant General Electric is in the running to win a large share of multibillion-dollar contracts to rebuild Iraq's electricity system amid intense US lobbying efforts. Washington reimposed sanctions on Iran's oil industry in November, citing concerns about its nuclear program and what it said was its meddling in the Middle East. Iraqi officials have said they might need years to wean the country of Iranian power.

Iraq relies heavily on Iranian gas to feed several power stations, importing roughly 1.5 billion standard cubic feet per day via pipelines in the south and east. Washington wants to roll back Iranian influence in the Middle East, including in Iraq, where Tehran holds broad sway over politics and trade. Although Iraq has one of the world's largest natural gas reserves, it has moved slowly to develop them and has relied on Iran to supply it with gas and electricity. — Agencies

Sports

Renfroe, Padres stage big comeback to dump Rockies

Jimenez, White Sox crush Sabathia, Yankees

DENVER: Hunter Renfroe highlighted a five-run 12th inning with his third home run of the game, and the San Diego Padres rallied from seven runs down to beat the Colorado Rockies 16-12 in Denver on Friday night. Renfroe finished with four hits and five RBIs, Manny Machado homered and also had four hits, and Craig Stammen (5-3) got the win for the Padres in a game that lasted 5 hours, 4 minutes. Ian Desmond hit an inside-the-park home run, and Charlie Blackmon and David Dahl also went deep for the Rockies. San Diego trailed 11-5 entering the ninth but sent 11 men to the plate to tie it. Renfroe hit his second homer of the night to cut it to 11-9, and Fernando Tatis Jr. tied it with a two-run single against Wade Davis. San Diego put it away in the 12th. Tatis led off with a triple, Austin Allen and Machado had consecutive RBI doubles, and Renfroe hit a two-run homer off Jairo Diaz (1-1). Renfroe, who produced his second career three-homer game, has 21 homers for the season.

BRVES 9, PHILLIES 8

Brian McCann's two-run single with two outs in the ninth inning gave him 1,000 RBIs for his career and completed a three-run rally to lift Atlanta over visiting Philadelphia. The Braves trailed 8-6 entering the ninth inning against Philadelphia closer Hector Neris (1-3). He allowed a leadoff single to Dansby Swanson and walked Nick Markakis with two outs. Rookie Austin Riley knocked in the first run with a double to left field. McCann worked the count to 2-2 and went down to get a splitter from Neris. McCann golfed the ball to left field for the game winner. Jerry Blevins (1-0) pitched a scoreless ninth and earned the win. The victory was the eighth straight for the Braves and their first in four tries against Philadelphia. Rhys Hoskins, Bryce Harper and Scott Kipery homered for the Phillies.

NATIONALS 7, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Max Scherzer allowed two solo homers in seven innings and struck out 10 as host Washington beat Arizona. Scherzer (5-5) gave up three hits and had at least 10 strikeouts for the 87th time in his career. He passed Hall of Famers Bob Feller and Warren Spahn for 27th on the all-time strikeout list with 2,585. Carson Kelly hit a solo homer off Scherzer in the third and Nick Ahmed went deep in the fifth. Tanner Rainey came on in the eighth for the Nationals to get the last out and keep the lead at 7-3 after Arizona scored one off Wander Suero. Closer Sean Doolittle pitched a scoreless ninth for Washington. Nick Ahmed and Carson Kelly homered for Arizona.

ASTROS 15, BLUE JAYS 2

Gerrit Cole recorded his eighth double-digit strike-

out performance of the season, and rookie Yordan Alvarez hit his third home run in four games as host Houston pounded Toronto. Alvarez homered with two outs in the fourth inning, his two-run blast extending the Houston lead to 10-0. The Astros scored multiple runs in each of the first four innings, tagging Toronto's Aaron Sanchez (3-8) for eight runs on six hits and three walks over three innings. Robinson Chirinos added his first career grand slam in the Astros' five-run eighth.

CARDINALS 5, METS 4

Paul DeJong delivered a tiebreaking single in the top of the 10th inning as St. Louis finished a two-day comeback and beat host New York in the completion of a game suspended by rain Thursday night. The game resumed at 6:10 p.m. ET Friday for the start of the bottom of the ninth after a "delay" of more than 17 hours. On Thursday, the Cardinals scored twice in a rainy top of the ninth off Mets closer Edwin Diaz to tie the score before play was suspended. Diaz (1-4) remained in the game when play resumed Friday and suffered the loss. Carlos Martinez (1-0) threw a perfect bottom of the ninth, and Jordan Hicks earned his 14th save with a perfect 10th.

WHITE SOX 10, YANKEES 2

Rookie Eloy Jimenez hit a pair of three-run homers. Lucas Giolito became the first 10-game winner in the majors and Chicago reached the .500 mark for the first time in over two months with a victory over visiting New York. Jimenez's six RBIs were a career high. He connected off CC Sabathia (3-4) in the first inning and Luis Cessa in the sixth. He recorded his third multi-homer game and second against the Yankees. He also has five homers in his last six games. Giolito (10-1) allowed a solo homer to Luke Voit four pitches into the game and little else, holding the Yankees to four hits in six-plus innings. He struck out six, walked four and threw 104 pitches.

INDIANS 13, TIGERS 4

Jake Bauers hit for the cycle, Leonys Martin blasted a three-run homer during an eight-run fourth and Cleveland pounded host Detroit. Bauers' cycle was the first by a Cleveland player since Rajai Davis on July 2, 2016. Bauers completed the feat with a two-run homer off Blaine Hardy in the eighth. Indians starter Adam Plutko (3-1) gave up three runs, two earned, on five hits and struck out six in six innings. Niko Goodrum had two hits for Detroit.

RED SOX 13, ORIOLES 2

J.D. Martinez hit two of Boston's season-high six home runs in an easy win over host Baltimore. Brock



DENVER: Manny Machado #13 of the San Diego Padres hits a RBI double in the 12th inning against the Colorado Rockies at Coors Field, in Denver, Colorado. —AFP

Holt, Jackie Bradley Jr., Michael Chavis and Christian Vazquez also homered for Boston, which has won three straight. Martinez reached base five times, adding a single and two walks for the Red Sox, who led 2-1 before scoring four runs in the fourth inning and five in the fifth. Trey Mancini had a homer and a single for the Orioles, who have lost three straight.

TWINS 2, ROYALS 0

Mitch Garver hit a two-run homer in the eighth inning, and Kyle Gibson pitched eight shutout innings to lead Minnesota to a victory over Kansas City in Minneapolis. Garver lined his 11th home run of the season 405 feet just over the center field fence off reliever Jake Diekmann (0-4) with two outs in the eighth. It was the major-league-leading 133rd home run hit this season by the Twins. Gibson (7-3) allowed just two hits and didn't walk a batter while striking out six. Royals starter Brad Keller, who had lost his previous three starts, matched Gibson for seven innings, allowing three hits and three walks while also hitting a batter. He struck out five.

RAYS 9, ANGELS 4

Ji-Man Choi had two hits, including a two-run homer, and Tampa Bay rallied against Los Angeles' bullpen to post a win in St. Petersburg, Fla. Angels starter Andrew Heaney brought a one-hit shutout into the sixth inning, but was removed after giving up a leadoff double to Austin Meadows on his 99th pitch. The Rays then sent nine more batters to the plate off relievers Luis Garcia and Ty Buttrey (4-3), scoring five runs in the inning to take a 5-4 lead. The Rays came in on a three-game losing streak, and the Angels had won three straight, all by the score of 5-3. Los Angeles has lost its past five attempts at getting back to .500.

RANGERS 7, REDS 1

Rougned Odor belted his fourth career grand slam in the fifth inning as visiting Texas recorded a victory over Cincinnati. Elvis Andrus successfully stole home and Delino DeShields had a sacrifice fly and scored on a groundout for the Rangers, who have won 20 of their last 30 games. Yasiel Puig recorded his second three-hit performance of the season for the Reds, who have lost seven of their past 10 games. —Reuters

Semenya declines Rabat 800m race

PARIS: Two-time Olympic champion Caster Semenya will not run her specialist 800m distance at Rabat today despite having received an invitation to do so, in the latest twist of her bitter court battle over gender rules. "She received an invitation but is unable to organise her schedule to come to Rabat," organiser Alain Blondel told AFP.

Semenya was cleared to take part in the Diamond League meeting after Switzerland's top court rejected an IAAF request to reimpose rules obliging her to lower her testosterone before competing in certain events.

Organisers of the Morocco event had initially refused to allow the South African to take part but on Friday they "confirmed her invitation". "After checking the situation of Caster Semenya in the light of the decisions of the Swiss Federal Court, and the Court of Arbitration for Sport, the head of the international athletics meeting in Rabat, Alain

Blondel, is happy to confirm the invitation," a statement on the event's official site said.

The Swiss federal court issued their order on Wednesday, explaining "this means that Caster remains permitted to compete without restriction in the female category at this time". The IAAF had earlier this month opposed a ruling by the court temporarily suspending the federation's rules following an appeal by Semenya who won the women's 800 metres at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics.

The athlete was contesting a decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport which previously found the rules were "discriminatory" but "necessary" to ensure fairness in women's athletics. The rules require women with higher than normal male hormone levels, a condition known as hyperandrogenism, to artificially lower the amount of testosterone in their bodies if they are to compete in races over distances of 400m to the mile.

"No woman should be subjected to these rules," Semenya said in a statement Thursday, adding she had "thought hard about not running the 800m in solidarity unless all women can run free. But I will run now to show the IAAF that they cannot drug us".

The athlete, who underwent a gender test

shortly before she won gold at the 2009 Berlin world championships, also dismissed the IAAF's claim that it is committed to the full participation of women in sport.

"I am a woman, but the IAAF has again tried to stop me from running the way I was born," she said in the statement, pointing out the hormonal drugs she had been required to take to compete had made her feel "constantly sick and unable to focus for many years".

"No other woman should be forced to go through this," said Semenya, whose Berlin test allegedly showed she had both male and female characteristics. Semenya took to the track at the Montreuil meeting in eastern Paris on Thursday in the rarely-run 2,000m.

The 28-year-old duly won that race, taking to social media afterwards to say: "They keep talking, I keep winning. Isn't that beautiful...?"

That tweet, accompanied by emojis of crossed fingers and a talking head, garnered more than 65,000 "likes". Semenya, who won the 800m in the season-opening Doha Diamond League, is now slated to run the 3,000m at the Diamond League Prefontaine Classic, exceptionally being held in Stanford, California this year, on June 30. —AFP



KUWAIT: Director of the Public Authority for Sports, Dr Humoud Flaiteh and KJA Secretary General and Head of the Sports Committee, Adnan Al-Rashed recently discussed bilateral cooperation and KJA members coverage of activities organized by the authority both local and foreign.

Battling Brumbies, Hurricanes set themselves up for Super play-offs

CANBERRA: The ACT Brumbies and Wellington Hurricanes both staged battling fightbacks to win their final Super Rugby conference clashes and head into next weekend's quarter-finals full of confidence.

On a freezing night in Canberra, the Brumbies rallied from a 7-0 deficit to beat the Queensland Reds 40-27 for their sixth straight win. Their stellar form had already guaranteed them third place overall behind the Crusaders and Jaguares and a home knock-out tie against the sixth-placed team, which will be decided after the final games in South Africa.

In Wellington, the Hurricanes produced a stunning second-half comeback to down the Auckland Blues 29-24 in a match where nothing was at stake. Regardless of the outcome, they knew they would be hosting a last eight clash against the fifth-placed team, which will also be known after the late games.

The Blues, meanwhile, could do nothing about being rooted to the bottom of the New Zealand conference. "I thought we turned up with a real nice mindset considering our momentum and we got the job done," said Brumbies skipper Christian Lealifano.

"Obviously we've got some things also to look at defensively and we're do that this week. I

think there's still some improvement to come from us." The Reds, farewell captain Samu Kerevi who will play in Japan next season, got an early breakthrough with fullback Bryce Hegarty darting over after a six-phase attack. They were unlucky not to stretch the lead when a try was disallowed for a high tackle by Taniela Tupou. The big prop was sin binned and in his absence the Brumbies struck back with Andy Muirhead wrongfooting two defenders to dot down, and they got another after No.8 Lachlan McCaffrey picked up the ball from a driving maul at the base of the post.

More misery was piled on the Reds on half-time when the Brumbies were awarded a penalty try and the Scott Higginbotham was yellow-carded to give the home team a 19-10 advantage. Ten minutes into the second-stanza and they were 33-10 in front with Rory Arnold scoring from a maul and Tom Wright getting an intercept try. The Reds showed some backbone to pull back 17 points but the Brumbies' sixth try, from Murray Douglas, ensured the win. The Brumbies are the only Australian team to make the last eight, with the Rebels and Waratahs narrowly missing out along with the Reds.

In Wellington, the Hurricanes rested several stars including All Blacks Beauden and Jordie

Barrett and Ngani Laumape, while the Blues welcomed back double World Cup winner Sonny Bill Williams from injury.

The Blues, who have not won away this year and not beaten a New Zealand team away for six years, raced to an early 10-0 lead and by half-time were ahead 24-5. Tanielu Tele'a, Caleb Clarke and Melani Nanai scored with Otere Black landing three conversions and a penalty while Peter Umaga-Jensen's try was the sole reward for the home team. But a stirring pep-talk at the break fired up the inexperienced Hurricanes who took control, with their cause assisted by ill-discipline from the Blues. Tries to Fletcher Smith, Isaia Walker-Leawere and Peter Umaga-Jensen, all converted by Jackson Garden-Bachop, had the Hurricanes ahead for the first time at 26-24 in the 63rd minute.

Garden-Bachop added another three points with five minutes left when the Blues conceded their 11th penalty of the match. Captain Dane Coles said it was a big boost heading into the play-offs knowing there was depth in the squad.

"I'm stoked for the young lads," he said. "We threw so many guys in at the deep end. It wasn't pretty in the first half but the way (they) responded with a rev-up at half-time, I'm just proud of the effort." —AFP

Chalmers, Campbell headline Aussie swimming squad

BRISBANE: Olympic 100-metre freestyle champion Kyle Chalmers and former women's world record holder Cate Campbell headline a 27-strong Australian squad for the world swimming championships in South Korea next month. Head coach Jacco Verhaar said he was encouraged by the quick times produced during Australian trials over the past six days, setting them up for another fierce battle with arch-rivals the United States. "We have very strong qualification standards which is based on the top eight times in previous world championships, so this is a smaller team than perhaps previous worlds, but a very strong team I believe," he said.

"There have been some fantastic individual performances and the depth in some of our relay teams is very promising." Only the top two in each final during the trials earned selection, providing they also finished under the tough qualifying time.

Consisting of 13 men and 14 women, the squad includes Chalmers, who clocked the fastest 100m in the world this year—a formidable 47.35. He will also compete over 200m along with Clyde Lewis. Campbell also produced the world's quickest time this year in the 100m free (52.12) with teammate Emma McKeon claiming second fastest. Mitch Larkin qualified in three events after a

world-leading 2019 time in the 200m individual medley (1:55.72) — a new Commonwealth record.

He will also line up in his favoured backstroke events in both the 100m and 200m-for which he was world champion in 2015. Australia's new middle-distance queen Ariarne Titmus will swim the 400m freestyle after setting a new Commonwealth mark of 3:59.35, along with the 200m and 800m freestyle.

Olympic champion Mack Horton failed to make the necessary qualifying time in either the 200m, 400m or 800m freestyle, but Verhaar used discretionary powers to include him in the squad. "He is an Olympic champion, it's not panic stations, he could turn it around in weeks," he said.

Australia squad

Men: Kyle Chalmers, Thomas Fraser-Holmes, Alex Graham, Mack Horton, Mitch Larkin, Clyde Lewis, Cameron McEvoy, Jack McLoughlin, David Morgan, Zac Stubbly-Cook, Matt Temple, Matt Wilson, Bradley Woodward.

Women: Minna Atherton, Bronte Campbell, Cate Campbell, Madeleine Gough, Jess Hansen, Shayna Jack, Emma McKeon, Kaylee McKeown, Kiah Melverton, Leah Neale, Jenna Strauch, Brianna Throssell, Ariarne Titmus, Madison Wilson. —AFP

Sports

Raptors top Warriors for first NBA title

Toronto to hold Raptors championship parade tomorrow

OAKLAND: The Toronto Raptors celebrated their first NBA championship on the Golden State Warriors' home floor. The two-time defending champs, meanwhile, scheduled their consolation party at a local hospital. Fred VanVleet gave Toronto the lead for good on a 3-pointer with 3:46 remaining, and the Raptors took advantage of another serious Golden State injury to beat the Warriors 114-110 and reward Canada with its first NBA championship.

Pascal Siakam and Kyle Lowry scored 26 points apiece while VanVleet and Kawhi Leonard added 22 each in a balanced attack that allowed the Raptors to win at Oracle Arena for the third straight time en route to a 4-2 win in the best-of-seven NBA Finals.

"It means a lot for our city and the country and for these players, staff," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said of the magnitude of the achievement. "I don't know if it would have meant any more or any less (beating a team other than the Warriors), to be honest with you. You get the win and you're just happy you got it and celebrate that fact." Going for a fourth title in five years, the Warriors put up a valiant effort in their final game at Oracle Arena—doing so without Kevin Durant, who ruptured his right Achilles tendon in Game 5, and for the final 14:19 without Klay Thompson, who had 30 points before sustaining a left knee injury late in the third quarter. "When Klay goes down and is out for the game, it's just sort of a, 'You got to be kidding me, like, this has to stop,'" Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "But it's just the way it's gone. I don't know if it's related to five straight seasons of playing 100-plus games and just all the wear and tear, but it's devastating."

The game was tied three times in the fourth quarter before VanVleet buried his fifth 3-pointer of the game for a 104-101 Raptors advantage.

Toronto went on to lead by as many as six before a 3-pointer by Draymond Green cut the deficit in half, and the Warriors rallied within 111-110 with 18.5 seconds left. Golden State then forced a Toronto turnover on a bad pass from Danny Green with 9.6 seconds to go, but Stephen Curry misfired on a 3-point attempt with eight seconds left that could have put the Warriors in front. "I just thought it was in," Kerr said of his reaction to Curry's shot. "I always think every shot Steph takes is going in. But they don't all go in."

"But what a warrior, no pun intended. Steph was getting hounded this entire series. Toronto did a great job on him sending two, three people at him, hounding him and harassing him. And especially without Klay to rely on in that fourth quarter, I thought he got a little worn down."

Curry finished with 21 points, but he shot just 3-for-11 from 3-point range. He wound up 23-for-67 on threes in the series, setting a Finals record for most misses (44) in a six-game Finals.

After a wild scramble for the rebound of Curry's



OAKLAND: Kawhi Leonard #2 of the Toronto Raptors holds up the Larry O'Brien trophy after defeating the Golden State Warriors during Game Six of the NBA Finals at Oracle Arena in Oakland, California. — AFP

shot, the Warriors were assessed a technical foul for calling a timeout with 0.9 seconds remaining when they had none left. Leonard made it a two-point game by sinking the free throw, then added two more after getting fouled on the inbound pass to secure Toronto's third road win in the series. No team had accomplished that feat since the Los Angeles Lakers in 2001.

Leonard was chosen the Finals MVP, allowing him to join Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and LeBron James as the only players to claim the honor for two different teams. Leonard, who won the honor with the San Antonio Spurs in 2014, is the only one to win the honor in both conferences.

The pending free agent went out of his way to praise his teammates, even though Leonard put up the third-most points in a single postseason, 732. His total trails only Michael Jordan's 759 in 1992 and James' 748 last year. "It was a whole group collectively," Leonard said. "Fred played amazing in that fourth. Kyle played amazing tonight throughout the whole game. Pascal played big. I just kept striving and pushing, and I ended up with the trophy, but everybody deserves it."

The last five games of the series were won by the road team. The five road wins equaled the Finals record set by Boston-Milwaukee in 1974 and tied by Chicago-Phoenix in 1993.

Meanwhile, Canada's largest city will hold a championship parade tomorrow for the Toronto Raptors, the first team outside the United States to capture the NBA

crown. The upstart Raptors dethroned the defending champion Golden State Warriors late Thursday to win the NBA Finals, 114-110.

With the victory-cheered across Canada—the team also became the first Canadian club to win a major North American sports title since the 1993 Toronto Blue Jays captured Major League Baseball's World Series.

The parade, officials said, is scheduled to start at 10 am (1400 GMT) on Monday at the Raptor's practice facility, OVO Athletic Centre, on Toronto's west side and proceed along Lake Shore Boulevard into downtown, ending at city hall.

The last major championship parade in this city was held for the Blue Jays 26 years ago.

Newspaper headlines on Friday heralded the win with full front-page photos of star player Kawhi Leonard raising his arms in victory at Oakland, California's Oracle Arena.

They shouted from sidewalk newspaper boxes "Prehistoric: Dinosaurs rule the Earth again" and "We the Champs" to passers-by, some just heading home after late night celebrations in several Canadian cities.

A few revellers got out of hand. Toronto police said rowdy fans damaged two parked cruisers, shattering their windshields and denting their hoods, and an intoxicated man was dragged off a transit bus. A shooting just north of the outdoor downtown celebrations in Toronto, meanwhile, landed one man in hospital and another in detention. — Agencies

Raptors fans worldwide get the last laugh

By Ahmad Jabr

If there is one fact that every basketball fan can agree on, it is that there is no easy path to winning an NBA title. For much of its existence, the Toronto Raptors has not found much success in the postseason, earning the franchise the moniker of being perennial underachievers. Following years of mediocrity since its inaugural season in 1994, the Raptors became a stable in the playoffs since President of Basketball Operations Masai Ujiri took office in 2013. But their inability to get past the first round for many years and repeated failures to defeat the LeBron James-led Cleveland Cavaliers have led basketball analysts and fans alike to believe that the team 'always underperforms on the big stage.'

Building a contender

The road to build the Toronto Raptors into a title contender was not an easy one, and it took an unconventional route the likes of which perhaps no team has ever taken before. While there is no clear-cut method executives can turn to transform their teams into title chasers, the blueprint to build a contender has always been through drafting top prospects, trading for established stars and creating enough salary cap space to lure superstar free agents. Ujiri took a different approach that was based on a philosophy he strived to establish since he was hired: create a winning culture in Toronto after years of dismal performance.

The Raptors saw much success under this new culture. Teams led by Kyle Lowry, DeMar DeRozan and former Head Coach Dwane Casey continued to exceed expectations in the regular season, and achieve progress in the postseason year after year. Despite it being a slow and tedious process, the team continued to build on its successes every season. But after years of playoff disappointments, Ujiri realized that the current formula he had was not working, and that changes were needed so that the team can take the next step.

In the meantime, a golden opportunity arose in the summer of 2018 when former San Antonio Spurs forward Kawhi Leonard became available for trade. An established star who has already won a title and Finals MVP award with the Spurs, Leonard was coming off a major injury that cast doubt on his ability to regain his top form the following season. Furthermore, he had only one year left in his contract, which deterred most teams from heading to the Spurs' extreme trade demands at the time. But Ujiri knew that the NBA is a superstar-driven league and that historically speaking, almost all title winners had at least one superstar on their rosters. Knowing what his team was lacking at the time, he decided to trade for Leonard in an unpopular move at the time that saw the team part ways with its leading scorer and fan favorite DeRozan.

Another controversial move Ujiri did was fire the reigning Coach of the Year Casey and replace him with his top assistant Nick Nurse, who had never been a head coach in the NBA before. That move proved to be worthy in the end, as Nurse - an established coach with a long resume of coaching overseas and in the G-League - introduced a new offensive system that broke away from the iso-heavy, guard oriented offense under Casey to a system that favored ball movement and utilizing all players on the floor to help create better scoring opportunities. This new system allowed using players like Serge Ibaka more efficiently in pick-and-roll and pick-and-pop sets, and helped turn a player like Pascal Siakam into an offensive juggernaut by taking advantage of his vast offensive skillset. Ujiri's final move to go 'all-in' for the title came ahead of February's trade deadline when he acquired Memphis Grizzlies' long-time center Marc Gasol. With his superior passing and floor-spreading skills, Gasol added a whole new dimension to the Raptors' offense, while his elite defense proved very helpful in the playoffs especially in the second round against the Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid.

The Golden State Warriors were heavy favorites to win the title for the third straight year before the season even started. Despite injuries to two of its top players in Kevin Durant and Klay Thompson, the Warriors still arguably had the advantage given the team's experience playing in the finals and having a lot of weapons in the likes of Stephen Curry, Draymond Green, Andre Iguodala and DeMarcus Cousins. Especially for Curry; there was strong belief around the league that this would be the year he finally won the Finals MVP award that remains missing from his cabinet by leading his team to victory. But Leonard and company had other plans, and their excellent game-plan execution brought the first ever title for a franchise and a fanbase that have been hungry for success for nearly 25 years.

International fanbase

Being the only team located outside the United States has always given the Raptors an 'international' feel, which perhaps made the Raptors have one of the largest international fanbases in the league with supporters from all continents cheering for their team each year. The Raptors' rise to prominence was also accompanied by a marketing campaign - with the #WeTheNorth social media hashtag coined for it - that focused on the team being a representative not only of the city of Toronto, but the entire country of Canada. This was evident as fans from various Canadian cities showed support for their team throughout the years, and took to the streets to celebrate when the Raptors finally became NBA Champions.

There are few feelings in the world that match that of triumphant jubilation sports fans experience when their favorite team wins the ultimate prize, and a win after years of failure makes that sweet feeling extra special. This is especially true for Toronto Raptors fans all over the world who celebrate today after having to endure years of frustration, heartbreak and being mocked for supporting a team that has been called all kinds of names: from 'perennial losers' to 'a dysfunctional mess,' and being laughed at for supporting a 'joke franchise.' But there is an old saying that goes like this: 'He who laughs last, laughs best.' So to everyone in the Raptors organization and their fans around the world, enjoy your good laugh. You have earned it.

India face Pakistan in WCup battle royale

MANCHESTER: Virat Kohli will have history on his side when India take on arch-rivals Pakistan in a World Cup blockbuster today—a clash that is always more than just a game of cricket.

India cut off bilateral cricket ties with its neighbour after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, with authorities blaming Pakistani militants.

Pakistan toured India in 2012/13 for a series of one-day internationals and Twenty20 matches but they have not faced each other outside of a multi-nation tournament since. Tensions between the two countries soared earlier this year and some Indian fans and ex-players called for India to boycott the match at Old Trafford.

In February a suicide bombing in Indian-administered Kashmir divided between India and Pakistan since partition in 1947 — claimed by a militant group based in Pakistan killed 40 Indian troops.

India and Pakistan then carried out tit-for-tat air strikes. On the pitch, India have won all six of their meetings against their neighbours in World Cups as they look to maintain their perfect record in Manchester.

India beat Pakistan in their most recent encounter at the Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates last year. But at least Pakistan can look back for inspiration to the final of the 2017 Champions Trophy in England, when they thumped their fierce rivals by 180 runs.

"May there be peace and tranquility while the two Asian giants fight it out on the cricket field," former India captain Bishan Singh Bedi told AFP. "And may the better team win without losing out on the etiquette of cricket."

Kohli's side have lived up to their billing as one of the favourites along with holders Australia and hosts England, with two wins and a washout in three matches so far. The number-two ranked side won their opener against South Africa and then beat defending champions Australia before a no result against New Zealand.

Pakistan, by contrast, are struggling in the 10-team table with just one win—an upset against England, two defeats and a washout. Kohli downplayed the frenzy and excitement surrounding the high-octane clash, with more than a billion people set to tune in, but said the "intimidating" atmosphere would bring out the best from his players.

"For Sunday, we know we're there when it comes to the mindset. Just about going out there and having a game plan, executing it," said Kohli. "As soon as you enter the field, it's calm and relaxed. The atmosphere from the outside, for the first time, it's a bit intimidating, but we'll look to execute well."

"It's been competitive for years. It's a marquee event all over the world, an honour to be a part of the big game. Brings out the best in all of us." Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed said his team needed to learn from their mistakes to get past a powerful Indian side.

"We have to overcome our mistakes because India are also a very strong team. We will assess our performance and then we will plan," he said. Passionate fans of both sides want local bragging rights even if their team ultimately goes on to lose the tournament.

"We want to win this match even if Kohli loses the Cup, we don't care." Harron Memon, an Indian fan in Nottingham, told AFP. "We have always dominated India in cricket. Call it war or sport, we are certainly going to win it come Sunday," a Pakistan supporter wrote on Twitter.—AFP



PEBBLE BEACH: Gary Woodland of the United States plays a shot from the 17th tee during the second round of the 2019 US Open at Pebble Beach Golf Links in Pebble Beach, California. — AFP

Record-setting Woodland eyes breakthrough at US Open

PEBBLE BEACH: Gary Woodland, who couldn't muster a top-10 finish in his first 27 major championship appearances, takes a two-stroke lead into the weekend at Pebble Beach eyeing a US Open title that once seemed all but impossible.

The 35-year-old American, ranked 25th in the world, is a three-time winner on the US PGA Tour, but no one's ever been tempted to tag him with the "best-player-never-to-win-a-major" label.

He admitted it once rankled to be known only for his booming drives, and says it's improvements in his short game and his putting that have seen him contend at the PGA Championship the past two years and, now, on an iconic US Open course.

"It's nice to be putting the results up so people can change the narrative a little bit," he said. It was 0-27 top-10s in majors. The narrative is going to be a long hitter. It's nice to come out well and change that."

Woodland had six birdies without a bogey in a 65 to match the best US Open round ever shot at Pebble Beach, achieved first by Tiger Woods in 2000 and matched by England's Justin Rose on Thursday.

Woodland's nine-under par total was one stroke better than Woods posted on the way to his crushing 15-shot triumph in 2000. It's rare company to be in, but Woodland hasn't arrived at this point entirely without warning. He held the 36-hole lead in the 2018 PGA Championship at Bellerive before settling for a tie for sixth. He was tied for eighth at the PGA Championship

last month at Bethpage Black.

"Short game has come around," he said. "I've always been a pretty good ball-striker. I've relied on my ball-striking my whole career, athletic ability. "But the short game and putting has kind of held me back. PGA last year I made a lot of putts, especially early in the week. Obviously it was nice to finish the top-10 and get that monkey off the back."

He said he learned a lot at Bellerive, especially how to contend when his ball-striking wasn't at its best. "I have other things that can pick me up," he said. "That's been a big confidence boost for me, knowing I don't have to be perfect I can still contend and have a chance to win." Woodland made a steady climb up the leaderboard, teeing off on 10 and making birdies at 12 and 16. A birdie at the first put him within a shot of the lead, and he matched it at the par-three fifth where he jarred a 15-footer.

At the par-five sixth he reached the green in two, and two-putted from 21 feet. He kept his nerve on the toughest holes on the course—eight and nine, saving par from the greenside rough at the eighth before an unlikely closing birdie at the ninth where his tee shot was in a fairway divot.

"I didn't want to give a shot back," he said. Woodland said his experience at last year's PGA Championship, when he played with eventual winner Brooks Koepka and with Woods on the weekend, would stand him in good stead as he tackled the weekend at Pebble Beach.

"You can't get caught up in what's going on around you," he said, adding that he'd "never seen anything like" the hubbub that surrounds Woods during a round. "I played in a basketball arena with 16,300 people right on top of you," he said of his college playing days. "There was nothing like that."

"You learn to slow your breathing. Adrenaline is a huge deal. You learn to stay within yourself and what you have to do to calm yourself down and stay within your game plan." — AFP

Sports

Coutinho brace helps Brazil forget Neymar in winning Copa start

Build up to the competition had been dominated by Neymar's woes

SAO PAULO: A brace from Philippe Coutinho handed hosts Brazil a winning start to the Copa America on Friday in a 3-0 victory over Bolivia as the absence of superstar Neymar was quickly forgotten.

Barcelona's Coutinho scored from the penalty spot early in the second half and added a close-range header three minutes later. Substitute Everton netted a sensational third five minutes from time to clinch victory for coach Tite's tournament favorites in Sao Paulo.

The build up to the competition had been dominated by Neymar's woes, firstly when he was accused of rape by a Brazilian model, and then when he damaged ankle ligaments in a friendly last week, forcing him out of the Copa. If Brazil's first half performance was anything to go by, the Paris Saint-Germain star was sorely missed, but Coutinho's brace at least papered over the cracks of an at times disjointed performance. Brazil made a bright start and predictably dominated the early possession and chances. But surprisingly their greatest threat came from set-pieces with Coutinho's corner delivery causing panic in the Bolivian backline.

Bolivia's goalkeeper Carlos Lampe made an instinctive block from a Roberto Firmino flick that came straight at him. And a few minutes later, towering center-half Thiago Silva was left unmarked eight yards out to meet another Coutinho delivery, but he inexplicably headed well wide.

The pitch at the Morumbi stadium wasn't helping flowing football, with Bolivia in particular struggling to string passes together. Brazil, wearing white shirts and blue shorts, weaved almost geometric patterns around their unambitious visitors but struggled to test Lampe.

Their best chances came from Bolivian mistakes and Richarlison should have scored into an open goal when

a woeful Lampe clearance went straight to him, but the Everton forward failed to lift the ball over defender Adrian Jusino, who headed clear from the edge of the 18-yard box.

With 10 men behind the ball, Bolivia were proving hard to break down but Casemiro went close with what appeared to be a shanked cross that drifted just beyond Lampe's far post with the goalkeeper scrambling to cover it.

Tite's team were treated to a barrage of jeers from the 67,000 crowd when the half-time whistle went. Bolivia's best moment had perhaps been a cheeky nutmeg of Casemiro by Raul Castro on the edge of his own 18-yard box. It had been slim pickings.

Fans' spirits were quickly lifted after the restart, though, as Coutinho fired home from the spot on 50 minutes after a contentious penalty award. Richarlison's attempted cross struck Jusino's arm, which was by his side and only slightly away from his body, but after consulting the video assistant referee, Argentine handler Nestor Pitana pointed to the spot.

Bolivia were stunned and just three minutes later their defence went missing as Firmino reached the bye line and chipped the ball to the back post for Coutinho to head home from barely two yards out.

Reluctant to push men forward, Bolivia never looked like getting back into the match. And Coutinho's corners continued to present Brazil with their best chances, as Marquinhos headed straight at Lampe from seven yards with 15 minutes left. The game had slowed to almost walking pace when substitute Everton scored a sensational third, cutting in from the left wing before firing an unstoppable shot into the far corner with Lampe rooted to the spot. —AFP



SAO PAULO: Bolivia's Marcelo Martins (R) is marked by Brazil's Casemiro during their Copa America football tournament group match at the Cicero Pompeu de Toledo Stadium, also known as Morumbi, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. — AFP

Taylor shoots England into Women's World Cup last 16

LE HAVRE: Jodie Taylor broke a 14-month goal drought to shoot England past Argentina and into the last 16 of the women's World Cup on Friday after Cristiana Girelli's hat-trick saw the Italians through with a 5-0 hammering of hapless Jamaica. Euro 2017 top scorer Taylor tapped home her first England goal since April 2018 from Beth Mead's inviting low cross just after the hour mark to send England to the top of Group D on six points, two ahead of Japan, and into the next round alongside Italy, France and Germany with a game still to play.

"I'm the first one to admit that I score goals because of my teammates. The Euros I won the golden boot because of the quality of my teammates," Taylor told reporters.

"The ball from Beth today absolutely showed that." Phil Neville's side now need a point in Nice on Wednesday against Japan, who beat Scotland 2-1 earlier on Friday, to ensure they finish in first place and avoid a potential clash with European champions the Netherlands in the next round. They could form part of a powerful group of teams in the knockouts with the three strong-looking European nations plus the USA, who are heavy favourites to

go through from their group.

"To be honest I'm so focused on the group I don't even know who we could face yet," added Taylor about the prospect of facing one of those sides. "We want to top the group, that's all we want to focus on—ask me after Japan."

Despite the defeat the 'Albicelestes', third in the group with a point, can still qualify for the knockout stages if they beat Scotland in their final game in Paris, although they will have to show more attacking intent than they have in their opening two matches.

They were twice saved by goalkeeper Vanina Correa, who pushed Nikita Parris' 28th-minute penalty off the post and then pulled off a super stop to deny the excellent Mead four minutes before the break.

Italy took their place in the knockout stages following Juventus striker Girelli's treble and a late brace from Aurora Galli, which also gave Milena Bertolini's side a perfect six points and put them top of Group C.

Italy can now guarantee top spot by getting a result from their final game against Brazil, although their superior goal difference means they can lose and still maintain first place. "We never thought we would have got this kind of result at the outset of the tournament," said Bertolini, whose side were among the outsiders before the start of the World Cup.

Girelli became only the second Italian woman to score a World Cup hat-trick just after the break when she beat Schneider to a looping cross. "I couldn't have even dreamed of scoring a hat-trick in the World Cup, it's an incredible personal satisfaction," said Girelli.

Girelli then missed the spot-kick, but



LE HAVRE: Argentina's defender Agustina Barroso (L) vies for the ball with England's forward Jodie Taylor during the France 2019 Women's World Cup Group D football match between England and Argentina, at the Oceane Stadium in Le Havre, northwestern France. — AFP

Keighley allowed her to retake following another VAR check that Jamaica goalkeeper Sydney Schneider had encroached. The 29-year-old made no mistake the second time round—two minutes after the original penalty was given—before doubling Italy's lead 13 minutes later when she bundled home Bonansea's flick-on from a corner.

Girelli became only the second Italian woman to score a World Cup hat-trick just after the break when she beat Schneider to a looping cross. "I couldn't have even dreamed of scoring a hat-trick in the World Cup, it's an incredible personal satisfaction," said Girelli.

Mana Iwabuchi set 2011 winners Japan on their way against the Scots and Yuika Sugawara converted a penalty as Japan closed in on the last 16, just four days after a disappointing display in a goalless draw against Argentina.

Scotland claimed a goal back late on through substitute Lana Clelland, but they will be disappointed at offering nothing going forward until it was too late after being 2-0 down at half-time, just like in their opening defeat against England. Their hopes of qualifying for the last 16 at their debut World Cup are slim before a final group game against Argentina. — AFP

In Iraq, legal dispute threatens chances at 2020 Olympics

BAGHDAD: Day after day, Iraqi weightlifter Safaa Rashed Aljumaili hits a worn-down Baghdad gym to train for the 2020 Olympics. But despite all his grit, politics could keep him from competing.

The single air conditioning unit in the dilapidated facility is out of service, leaving Aljumaili to pump dumbbells and loaded bars with little relief from the crushing 45-degree heat of the Iraqi summer.

The gym's walls look like they could crumble at any moment—much like the athlete's hopes. "We don't know what to do anymore. I have to participate in six qualifier tournaments to get to Tokyo, but I've already missed two because of the problems in sport in this country," says the 29-year-old.

These "problems" are a spiralling dispute between the Iraqi Olympic Committee and the country's Ministry of Youth and Sports, a power struggle that has left aspiring Olympians without the necessary funds to train properly.

Iraq has competed in the Olympics since 1948, winning a single silver medal in the 1960 Games for weightlifting. Under ex-dictator Saddam Hussein, the country's Olympic Committee was headed by his eldest son Uday, whose reputation for violence included the alleged torture of Iraqi footballers whom he deemed to have under-performed.

When the US-led invasion toppled Saddam in 2003, all government bodies—including the committee—were dissolved in favour of the coalition-run administration. Today's dispute stems from this moment.

Iraq's Ministry of Youth and Sport claims the committee's status was never re-established after 2003, so its finances should be managed by the ministry. "We requested a commission take control of the Olympic Committee's finances until a new law can regulate its legal status," the ministry's legal expert Mohammed Hadi says. Since February, that commission has been in control of the \$25 million allocated to the Committee in the 2019 budget.

But the Olympic Committee points to its management of Iraqi teams at several Games since 2003 and the regular membership elections it has held—without objection by the ministry. For the athletes, the legal limbo has already cut off the monthly stipends they rely on to prepare for competitions.

"You need money to train, go to training camps abroad and qualify for the games," says Aljumaili, who draws from his meagre \$400 salary to survive. Dressed in his blue gi, judo athlete Ahmad Daoud runs laps around a sparse room to train for the 2020 Games, as Baghdad lacks a dojo specifically for the Olympics.

The 23-year-old athlete earns just \$700 a month from the Al-Jaish Judo Club after losing the \$400 stipend he received from the Olympic Committee. With his revenues slashed, Daoud says it looks increasingly unlikely he'll be able to afford the six training sessions abroad he had planned attend before the 2020 Games. "We don't know if we can continue training," he says. "Everything depends on money, and we haven't received a thing because of this



BAGHDAD: Iraqi judoka Ahmad Daoud (C, top) trains with other athletes at a gym in Baghdad on June 1, 2019. Amidst spiralling disputes between the Iraqi Olympic Committee and the country's Ministry of Youth and Sports, power struggles leave aspiring Olympians without the necessary funds to train properly. — AFP

dispute, whose victims are the athletes themselves," says Daoud.

Committee Treasurer Sarmad Abdullilah says the ministerial commission is already overstepping its bounds. "The government's monitoring of the Olympic Committee's expenditures is normal, but the ministry's monitoring of the athletic federations' work is unacceptable," he says. Those federations, indeed, are fuming. They have already accused the ministry of embezzlement, an all-too-common refrain in the world's 12th most corrupt country, according to Transparency International.

Mustafa Saleh, head of the Iraqi

Weightlifting Federation, says the ministry promised his athletes huge sums after the 2018 Asia Championships in Jakarta. "It pledged endowments of \$25,000 to Safaa Aljumaili and \$17,000 to Salwan Jassem Abboud, who snagged a silver medal for heavyweights, plus the same amount for the federation," says Saleh. "We never received anything. Where's the money?" And the timing, just a year before the Games get underway, couldn't be worse. "As time goes by, our chances of getting to Tokyo—and of getting any medals in the next Olympic games—are gradually slipping away," says Saleh. —AFP

Finch, Starc shine as Australia beat S Lanka

LONDON: Australia captain Aaron Finch and pace bowler Mitchell Starc stole the show as the holders eased to an 87-run win over Sri Lanka at the Oval yesterday. Finch equalled his career-best one-day international score with a masterful 153 and Steve Smith chipped in with 73 as Australia scored 334-7.

Needing a World Cup record run-chase to claim a shock win, Sri Lanka got off to a flying start thanks to a first-wicket partnership of 115 between captain Dimuth Karunaratne and Kusal Perera.

But Perera departed for 52 and when Karunaratne fell on 97 the game swung back in Australia's direction. Starc was the catalyst with a fiery spell of three wickets in six balls, Australia eventually dismissing Sri Lanka for 247 thanks in large part to his 4-55 from 10 overs.

Kane Williamson added three wickets of his own as Australia made it four wins from their five group matches after previously beating Afghanistan, the West Indies and Pakistan.

Their lone defeat in the 10-team tournament came against India and their latest victory puts them well on course for a semi-final berth. Sri Lanka, who lost their last seven wickets for 42 runs, have only one win from their five matches, a disappointing run that includes two washouts.

They face a struggle to reach the semi-finals with only four matches left, a spell that features encounters with title contenders England and India. Sri Lanka had briefly looked capable of surpassing the World Cup chase set by Ireland, who made 329-7 to beat England in 2011.

Karunaratne and his opening partner Perera blasted 24 from the first two overs and reached their fifty partnership in just the seventh over. But Starc bowled Perera and Jason Behrendorff dismissed Lahiru Thirimanne for 16 as Australia hit back.

A six from Kusal Mendis in the 31st over signalled Sri Lanka's intent to get cracking. But crucially Karunaratne stumbled short of his maiden World Cup century when he carelessly flicked Richardson to Glenn Maxwell at backward point.

That left Sri Lanka 186-3 and set the stage for Starc to turn the screw by dismissing Milinda Siriwardana, Thisara Perera and Mendis in quick succession. Mendis's mistimed drive off Starc reduced Sri Lanka to 222-7 and shattered their resistance.

Earlier, Finch took the Sri Lanka attack apart with a dazzling display that included 15 fours and five sixes. He was well-supported by Smith's 73 from 59 balls and the pair put on 173 runs for the third wicket.

Together with opening partner David Warner, Finch took the attack to the Sri Lankans after being put in to bat under cloudy skies in south London. The pair passed fifty for the opening wicket for the fourth time in five games at the World Cup.

Sri Lanka had no answer to Finch's brutal assault and by the time he departed, caught by Karunaratne off Isuru Udana, he had put Australia in a commanding position. Maxwell's quick-fire 46 from 25 balls rubbed salt into Sri Lanka's wounds. — AFP



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