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Kuwait, Iraq call for wisdom to avoid tension in Gulf region

Amir holds talks with Iraqi president, PM on expanding cooperation

BAGHDAD: Kuwait and Iraq called for wisdom and reason in dealing with the latest developments in the Gulf region in order to avoid tension and any clashes, Kuwait News Agency said yesterday. HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited Iraq yesterday to discuss bilateral relations and the latest regional tensions. The visit by HH the Amir was the first to Iraq in seven years. He last visited Baghdad in 2012 to participate in the 23rd Arab Summit.

HH the Amir met Iraqi President Barham Salih at Al-Salam Palace in Baghdad. During the meeting, they reviewed the good brotherly relations between the two countries and the two brotherly peoples and means of enhancing them. The talks also dealt with issues of common concern and the latest developments on the regional and international arenas. The talks between the two leaders were cordial and reflected depth of bilateral relations

between the two countries' leaderships and the spirit of understanding and brotherhood binding the two countries, embodying the desire of the two sides to support bilateral cooperation in various fields.

Relations between Iraq and Kuwait have made great strides forward, thanks to the wisdom and desire of the leaderships of the two countries to "overcome the remnants of the past", the Iraqi president said. Salih affirmed that Iraq is keen to build advanced relations with its neighbors in general and Kuwait in particular, a presidential statement said. Iraq is looking at the nature of the current crisis in the region with a broad perspective to achieve a comprehensive regional consensus based on dialogue and good neighborliness among countries, he added. Salih expressed hope that HH the Amir's visit will be a good opportunity to start a constructive relationship between the two neighbors.

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BAGHDAD: HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah shares a light moment with Iraqi President Barham Salih and Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi during his visit to Iraq yesterday. — Amiri Diwan (See Page 3)

Over 500 arrested in MoI crackdown in Salmiya, Jleeb



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Affairs Lt Gen Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah and other officials are seen during a crackdown in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh yesterday. — MoI

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: More than 500 people were arrested during a police crackdown in Hawally and Farwaniya governorates yesterday, only two days after 232 people were detained in similar campaigns in the Capital and Ahmadi governorates. Police, led by Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Affairs Lt Gen Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah,

arrested 226 people during a campaign in Salmiya (Block 12) and 296 in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh for violations that included having expired visas, breaking the residency law, failure to produce documents and absconding among others, the interior ministry announced yesterday. Security authorities are continuing crackdowns on areas with large populations of laborers and suspected illegal workers, the ministry added in a statement.

MoH, CITRA say no risk from 5G; budget rejected

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The health ministry and the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority yesterday told the National Assembly's health panel that there were no confirmed health risks from using 5G Internet at extremely high speed. The committee was asked by the Assembly to study any possible health hazards from 5G Internet, which some telecom

companies have started offering. But a number of MPs have complained that the price of the new service is too high and called on the government to force providers to bring it down.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee yesterday rejected the draft state budget for the 2019/2020 fiscal year which already started on April 1, committee member MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said. Adasani said the committee rejected the budget by a majority vote, adding he voted against the budget because of squandering of public funds and the wrong implementation of the budget, as spending violations have continued.

The lawmaker said they rejected the draft budget because there was no improvement in dealing with public issues like employment, projects and services. The committee also rejected

the final account for the previous fiscal year. The budget is scheduled to be debated on July 1, just a day before the Assembly is set to close its current term and go on summer recess for around four months. The Assembly has the right to override the financial committee's rejection of the state budget.

National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said the assembly will meet for four days next week - from Monday to Thursday - to complete urgent laws and debate budgets, casting doubt whether the government will be able to attend a special session on Sunday requested by MPs. The lawmakers demanded to hold a special discussion on Sunday to study ways to resolve unemployment among Kuwaitis. Ghanem said that the government always wants prior coordination before holding any special session.

WMO confirms highest Kuwait temperature

KUWAIT: Kuwait recorded the world's highest temperature in recent years, UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) experts said yesterday. Head of the Meteorology Department at the Kuwait Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Hassan Dashti told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) that the WMO

commission of experts adopted, at a meeting earlier yesterday, an official decision that the highest temperature recorded was in Mitrabah in northeastern Kuwait of 53.9 degrees Celsius on July 21, 2016. The WMO added Turbat in Pakistan recorded a temperature of 53.7 degrees Celsius on May 28, 2017. These are the highest, officially-recognized temperatures to have been recorded in the last 76 years.

According to Dashti, this was confirmed according to a report by the commission, which groups 18 international experts, including from Kuwait. Dashti said the locally recorded temperature is the highest ever recorded for Asia and third warmest tempera-

ture on record globally after Death Valley in eastern California, which registered the highest temperature of 56.7 degrees in 1913, and the Tunisian governorate of Kebili with 55 degrees Celsius in 1931. But some weather historians have questioned the accuracy of old temperature records.

The task of the WMO committee is not limited to recording temperatures. It also examines various weather and climate phenomena. Dashti commended Kuwait's determination and unprecedented methodology to provide the committee with data and facts that will help make decisions linked to dealing with extreme weather. — Agencies

US alleges tanker hit by Iran mine; US interests under rocket fire in Iraq

FUJAIRAH/BAGHDAD: A Japanese-owned tanker attacked in the Gulf of Oman last week was damaged

by a limpet mine resembling those used by Iran, the US military said yesterday, as the Islamic republic slammed accusations against it. Commander Sean Kido of US Naval Forces Central Command, or NAVCENT, said the mine used in the attack "is distinguishable and it is also strikingly bearing a resemblance to Iranian mines that have already been publicly displayed in Iranian military parades".

The Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous, loaded with highly flammable methanol, came under attack last Thursday as it passed through the Gulf of Oman along with the Norwegian-operated Front Altair.

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BASRA: Iraqis inspect the damage at a drilling facility that was hit by a Katyusha rocket yesterday in the Burjesiya area, a key oil-producing region hosting various Iraqi and foreign companies including US major Exxon Mobil. — AFP

Trump launches 2020 bid with vow to 'keep America great'

ORLANDO: US President Donald Trump launched his 2020 reelection campaign Tuesday much the same way he rode to power in 2016 - with a raucous, nationalist rally stirring fear of illegal immigration and vowing to fight for blue collar workers. Lashing out at his Democratic opponents as radical leftists fueled by "hatred" and out to "rip your country apart," Trump promised an "earthquake at the ballot box" next year. "We did it once and we're going to do it again," he promised some 20,000 ecstatic supporters in Orlando, Florida. "And that is why tonight I stand before you to officially launch my campaign for a second term as president of the United States."

There were no substantial new ideas or plans for the future in Trump's nearly 80 minute speech in the Orlando arena, where the crowd formed a sea of Trump campaign red baseball caps, chanting "USA" and "Four More Years". Instead, the unconventional Republican made his reelection pitch by touting economic gains, renewing his longstanding vow to build a wall along the Mexican border.

In a speech filled with his customary boasts and rhetorical exaggerations, Trump did say - though giving no detail - that he would oversee cures for cancer and AIDS and pave the way to send US astronauts to Mars. But the meat of his address aimed at the grievances and



ORLANDO: US President Donald Trump arrives to speak during a rally at the Amway Center to officially launch his 2020 campaign on Tuesday. —AFP

fears of the same white working and middle class voters who underpinned his surprise victory as an utterly inexperienced politician against the seasoned Hillary Clinton in 2016.

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Local

Amir's envoy participates in ceremony celebrating Kuwait-UK treaty anniversary

'Partnership based not only on mutual interest, but also mutual respect'

LONDON: The State of Kuwait is pleased to celebrate the 120th anniversary of the Kuwait-British friendship accord coinciding with the yearly occasion marking the 1961 independence, the visiting Envoy of His Highness the Amir said. The Envoy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, who was addressing a grand celebration marking these occasions at the Mansion House in the Central London, stated that the treaty, inked in the 19th century, "remains suitable for the 21st century, where it has laid the corner stone for a sustainable relationship between the two countries, marked with partnership and cooperation. "This partnership has been based not only on mutual interest, but also on mutual respect." Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah said, indicating that the treaty was inked in 1899, amid regional critical circumstances and a struggle among super powers.

Kuwait and the UK, in line with the treaty cooperation frameworks, have been committed to protect each other's interests, he said, lauding the honorable stand of supporting the Kuwaiti legitimacy and the international alliance for liberating the country from the Iraqi occupation in 1991. Kuwait, in turn, had helped Britain in treating its wounded soldiers during World War I and coordinated with the British air force during the second

global war. The bilateral ties are being elated through works of the joint guidance group, formed during His Highness the Amir visit to Britain in 2012, 14th session of which would be held in London in two weeks, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak added.

His Highness the Amir Envoy, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah, expressed confidence in the British economy, where Kuwaiti investments in the private and public sectors in the UK reached \$65 billion. Moreover, volume of Kuwaiti-British trades exchanges has been growing by 10 percent per annum, hitting \$4.5 billion in 2018. There have been new opportunities since the State of Kuwait declared allotting \$70 billion for diversifying the Kuwaiti economy, overhauling the infrastructure and public services, he says, expressing hope that British companies will "play a significant role in implementing the Kuwait strategy 2035."

At the cultural level, Kuwait which hosted a branch of the British Cultural Council, was the first country in the Gulf that adopted the British teaching curricula. Britain, favored by Kuwaiti students, currently hosts more than 6,500 of them, 140 percent higher as compared to the past three years. Up to 200,000 Kuwaitis visit Britain annually. Twenty air flights between the two countries are organized every week, he said, adding that thousands of Britons reside and work in Kuwait, contributing to the domestic development.



More than
6,500 Kuwaiti
students in UK



LONDON: Envoy of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah participates in a celebration marking the 120th anniversary of the Kuwait-British friendship accord, and the 1961 independence anniversary. — KUNA

Furthermore, Kuwait, in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), has been cooperating with Britain, for adopting a large number of resolutions, latest of which was the Kuwait-proposed resolution 2474 on sparing civilians in armed conflicts. His Highness the Amir Envoy has affirmed that Kuwait remains committed to pursue such diplomatic efforts within quarters of the international organizations, always guided by the humane val-

ues it advocates and shares with the UK.

In other news, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah discussed yesterday with the UK Minister of State for Middle East Andrew Murrison bilateral ties and issues of common interests. The meeting, which was held at the Foreign Ministry headquarters, was attended by Kuwait's Ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Duwaisan and the UK's Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport. — KUNA

NBK launches 2019 Summer Internship Program



KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) launched the first in a series of four, the 2019 Summer Internship Program. A two-week courses custom-made for high school and college students aged between 14 and 21 years.

The Summer Internship Program this year is made up of four different sessions, five-hour daily over two weeks each. The second and third sessions start on the 14th and 28th of July, while the fourth will take place on August 25, 2019.

Thirty two students joined the first session of this program and were welcomed by NBK General Manager- Group Human Resources, Emad Al-Ablani in an opening speech that was followed by a mixture of theoretical and practical training that included a tour to the

NBK museum, safety box introduction and a branch tour.

"NBK views the Summer Internship Program as an extension to its educational initiatives and as part of its corporate social responsibility," said Yaqoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public Relations Team Leader. "This annual program demonstrates NBK's long-standing social involvement as well as its national commitment towards providing young generations with the suitable opportunities to experience how the actual professional banking concerns and transactions are handled and processed."

"It has been 18 years since the establishment of the program," added Baqer. "At the core of NBK's corporate social responsibility is our commitment to developing the youth in

Kuwait. NBK invests at every level in the training, professional development and the growth of the youth cadres, to contribute to trainees' basic and professional competencies and abilities in fields of practical life."

The Program provides the interns with invaluable knowledge on a variety of subjects such as: teamwork, creative thinking, the means of self-expression and modern banking, in addition to helping them having a greater exposure to daily banking work procedures. NBK will conclude the first session by a field trip to Kuwait Danish Dairy Company (KDD). The visit will introduce the students to the factory where they'll have the chance to see the different stages of food production. The aim of this visit is to enrich the students' knowledge.

Official praises Kuwaiti Investment Office in London's role

LONDON: The Head of the Kuwaiti Investment Office in London Saleh Al-Ateeqi said yesterday that the development of the work of the office of the commission is an essential part of the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Ateeqi noted that the Kuwait Investment Office in the United Kingdom is the first sovereign wealth fund in the world, pointing out that a number of countries followed the step of Kuwait in the establishment of similar sovereign funds. Ateeqi said that the Investment Office in London established in 1965 and treated by the British government as an exceptional treatment in terms of tax exemption. London office played an important role during the period of the Iraqi invasion in 1990, it was the treasury of Kuwait and helped in the process of releasing the dormant assets of Kuwait to support the efforts of liberating Kuwait and assisting Kuwaitis at home and abroad, he added.

Ateeqi pointed out that the office played an important role in the process

of rebuilding Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion and turned the office into an active finance ministry abroad to carry out remittances. On the role of the Office in supporting the reserves of future generations, Ateeqi said that Decree-Law No. 106 of 1976 stipulated the need to deduct 10 percent of the public revenues of the state to the reserve of future generations. Ateeqi stressed that the London office is the best place to train and develop Kuwaiti youth on asset management, investment issues and refining expertise. Investment management from the capital London has given a positive advantage, which is the distinctive geographical location and the right timing to facilitate investment management from east to west. — KUNA



Saleh Al-Ateeqi

KFH honors top achieving high school graduates



KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized a ceremony to honor 125 top achieving high school graduates at the Sheraton Hotel recently. KFH Personal Banking Service Manager Khaled Mandani delivered a speech at the event, which was held under the patronage of Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

IOM, SWS celebrate Int'l Domestic Workers Day in Kuwait

KUWAIT: For the occasion of International Domestic Workers day, which is celebrated on June 16 every year, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kuwait organized a series of events to celebrate domestic workers in cooperation with the Social Work Society (SWS).

The first event was an outreach activity that took place at the avenues mall on the 14th and 15th of June IOM staff distributed cards reading "Thank You" to employers of domestic workers. The initiative encouraged employers to pass the cards to their domestic employees as a sign of appreciation. Domestic workers who have also visited IOM's booth, received flowers and colorful frames where they could keep the cards. This outreach activity was the first of its kind and was well received by the public.

The second celebration took place on the day of International Domestic Workers Day (June 16) at the Public Authority for Manpower's (PAM) Kuwait Government Shelter for Female Migrant Workers. Several entertainment activities were organized for the shelter residents. These included group motivational sessions, yoga classes, art classes and two

types of dance classes. Shelter residents enjoyed the ongoing activities from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm.

In parallel to both events, a social media rollout was implemented to highlight the domestic workers law 68/2015. The selected articles tackled the most common misconceptions among households, such as withholding documents and transferring employment of domestic workers. The rollout targeted households, with the aim of raising their awareness about the domestic workers law so that they respect the regulations when recruiting.

The State of Kuwait is committed to protecting the rights of domestic workers. In 2013, an anti-trafficking law was officially established, which ensures that the rights of domestic workers are fully protected. An integral part of IOM's mission is to provide services and advice concerning good migration governance and to support migrant workers. IOM's mission in Kuwait continues to provide any needed support to the government shelter by providing assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) to vulnerable workers and organizing entertainment events which aim to provide positive support for their emotional wellbeing.



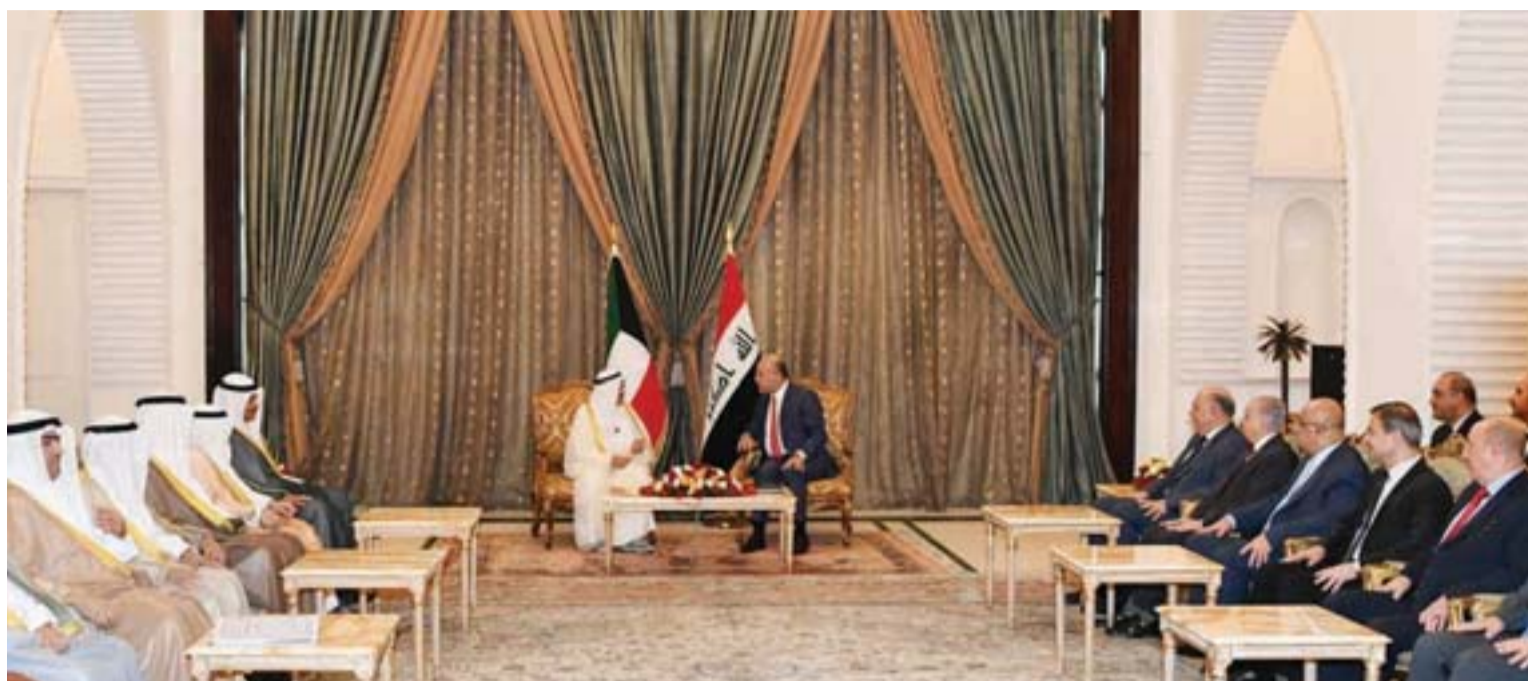
Local

Prospected business cooperation looms high in Amir's visit to Iraq

Agreement eyed for the northern crude oil fields' development



BAGHDAD: Iraqi President Dr Barham Salih welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi President Dr Barham Salih, as senior officials from both countries attend the meeting.

KUWAIT: Prospected cooperation in the sector of businesses and oil loomed high in the talks held by Kuwaiti and Iraqi officials during His Highness the Amir's landmark visit to neighboring Iraq yesterday. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, during his official visit to Iraq, held talks with Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi at the Government Palace in the Iraqi capital. His Highness the Amir headed the participating Kuwaiti officials and the Iraqi premier led the Iraqi officials, holding cordial official discussions on means of boosting bilateral ties and expanding cooperation at various levels. Among the officials who spoke about specific topics: raised during the marathon, day-long talks topped with a summit meeting, was Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce, Industry and Minister of State for Services Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan who said that the discussions between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti officials addressed planned treaties to be signed by the two sides very soon, adding that executives of private Kuwaiti and Iraqi companies would visit the two countries to explore cooperation prospects. "There will be work for overhauling the (border) Safwan and Al-Abdali checkpoints for sake of boosting land commercial exchanges," he announced further, marking mutual desires to broaden the scope of cooperation between the two neighbors.

Northern crude oil fields
Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Minister of Oil, Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel announced that Kuwait would ink an agreement with Iraq once feasibility studies for the northern crude oil fields have been finalized. Speaking after talks with Iraqi officials, minister Al-Fadhel said Kuwait's Oil Ministry planned to work out an accord with the Iraqi side after assessing the prospected crude output at the northern fields. Moreover, there are "serious steps to link up Iraq with the GCC electricity grid," said the minister in one of the significant revelations made during the day-long visit by His Highness the Amir and senior officials of the State of Kuwait to the neighboring state.

In the meantime, Iraqi Oil Minister Thamer Al-Gadhbhan praised directions of His Highness the Amir to overcome obstacles facing bilateral cooperation between Kuwait and Iraq. This came after the official talks held in Baghdad between the Iraqi President and His Highness the Amir. During the talks, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad stressed on the importance of overcoming obstacles facing the issuance of entry visas and facilitate the movement of goods between the two countries, the Minister said in a statement to the press. The discussion also included other issues related to economic cooperation, mainly in the sectors of gas and trade. Both

sides agreed on completing the remaining terms of the gas agreement signed between both countries with taking into consideration what has been reached during the latest meeting of the Iraqi-Kuwaiti Joint Committee, held in Kuwait last month, he noted. Issues of trade, free trade zone, reconstruction of the border cross point between the two countries, were also discussed during the meeting, the minister added.

Iraqi parliament speaker Mohammad Al-Halbousi lauded Kuwait's backing for his country, urging Baghdad and Kuwait to resolve pending issues. The Iraqi speaker's statement came during his meeting with His Highness the Amir. He also called for activating parliamentary diplomacy between the two neighboring countries urging both sides to coordinate stances at international quarters regarding regional issues.

Kuwaiti, Iraqi ministers meet

Meanwhile, a number of Kuwaiti ministers met with their Iraqi counterparts on sidelines of the official visit by His Highness the Amir to Iraq. During the meeting held at the government palace in Baghdad, the ministers discussed a number of bilateral issues and enhancing cooperation between the two countries in various fields. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-



Kuwaiti ministers meet with their Iraqi counterparts on sidelines of the official visit by His Highness the Amir to Iraq.

Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Finance Minister Dr Nayef Falah Al-Hajraf, Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of State for Services Khalid Nasser Al-Rodan, Minister of Oil, Electricity and Water, Dr Khalid Ali Al-Fadhel.

The Iraqi side was represented by Culture Minister Abdul Amir Al-Hamdani, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers Hamid Al-Ghazi, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Qusay Al-Suhail, Chairman of the Investment Authority Sami Al-Araji, Finance Minister Fuad Hussein and Minister of Electricity Loay Al-Khatib and Iraqi

Ambassador to Kuwait Ali Al-Hashemi.

The visit of His Highness the Amir was the first in seven years. He visited Baghdad to participate in the Arab summit at its 23rd regular session in 2012. The visit comes just one month after Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi's first visit to Kuwait. His Highness the Amir met during his visit with Iraqi President Dr Barham Salih at the Al-Salam Palace in Baghdad. During the meeting, they reviewed the good brotherly relations between the two countries and the two brotherly peoples and means of enhancing them. The talks also dealt with issues of common concern and the latest developments on the regional and international arenas. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi parliament speaker Mohammad Al-Halbousi.



Iraqi President Dr Barham Salih bids farewell to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the conclusion of his visit.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi.

Project launched in Belgium to promote Arab culture

BRUSSELS: A number of Arab, Belgian and other European activists have joined forces with the famous cultural house BOZAR in Brussels to launch a project promoting Arabic literature, helping challenge anti-Arab stereotypes. Kuwait's ambassador to Belgium, the European Union and NATO, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, attended the opening ceremony of the project called "Lagrange Points," on Tuesday. Budaiwi expressed his happiness about the project, describing it as a very important initiative. This project will expose the true and rich culture of the Arab world, he said, ahead of a similar event in the new European Parliament next September or October to expose the positive aspect of Arabic literature and culture.

Hashim Ibrahim from Syria, one of the initiators of the project, said it aims to promote Arabic culture including literature, music, art and cuisine. "We have to support cultural projects to make it acceptable to a wide range of people who are curious to know about Arabic culture and literature," he said. Similarly, Tomas Van Respaille, who works at BOZAR's international department, of BOZAR said he hopes the project would change the narrative existing on the Arab world in Belgium. "What you hear in the media and politics is totally different, so we want to show another side," he explained. According to a study released last year, 18



BRUSSELS: Kuwait's ambassador in Brussels Jassem Al-Budaiwi with Hisham Ibrahim, an initiator of the project. — KUNA

percent of the population in Brussels speak Arabic, he noted.

Over the course of three months, visitors will be able to discover the rich tradition of literature and books from the Arab world, with titles available in Arabic, English, French and Dutch. The socio-cultural project creates a refreshing image of the Arab

world as a counterweight to the often populist discourse that reaches us through a variety of channels, he added. According to unofficial estimates, over 442,000 people of Arab origin, including Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, among others, live in Belgium, which has a total population of around 11 million. — KUNA



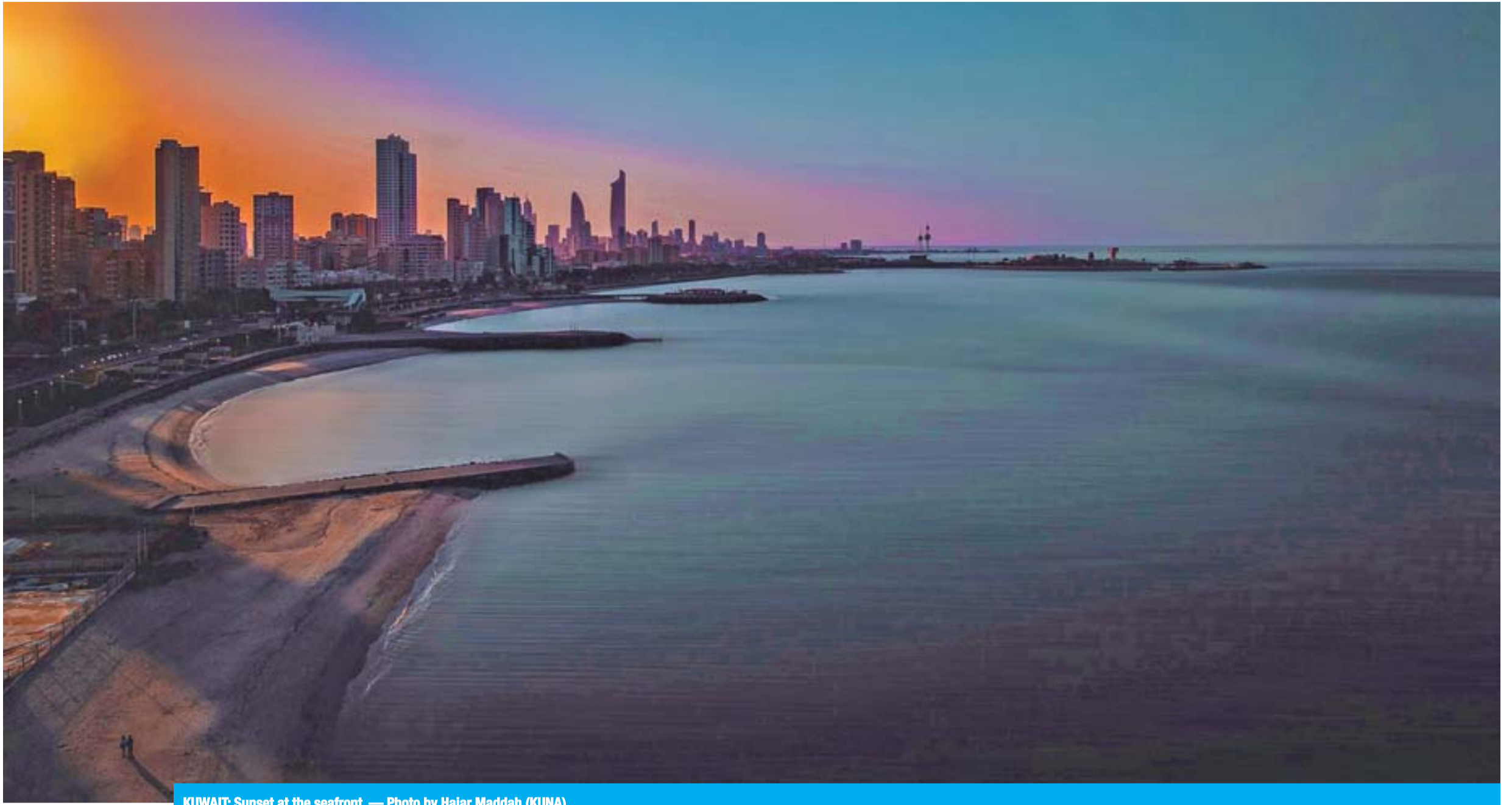
NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during annual UN talks over peacekeeping operations. — KUNA

Kuwait says UN peacekeepers need adequate training

NEW YORK: It is imperative to equip UN peacekeeping personnel with proper training, which includes disciplinary practices and language skills, said a Kuwaiti diplomat yesterday. "Some 70 years after the inaugural UN peacekeeping mission was established, we have developed solid peacekeeping principles." Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi said amid annual UN talks over

peacekeeping operations. He highlighted the need to strengthen the relationship between peacekeeping operations and host countries, which is crucial to ensure the success of the mission. On this relationship, the Kuwaiti envoy said host nations shoulder a bigger responsibility towards the success of UN peacekeeping missions, citing the 'praiseworthy' peace initiative in the Ivory Coast as a case in point. — KUNA

Local



KUWAIT: Sunset at the seafont. — Photo by Hajar Maddah (KUNA)

Major oil company educates foreign workers on their rights

50,000 workers at Clean Fuel Project on 40 contracts

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) announced the formation of a social care committee concerned with educating foreign workers about their rights according to the contracts signed with them with reference to Kuwait's labor law. The committee made its first tour of the Clean Fuel Project, which has the largest number of workers - 50,000 working as part of 40 contracts with contracting companies. The committee distributed leaflets in eight languages (Arabic, English, Korean, Japanese, Hindi, Urdu, Chinese and Tagalog) to make sure the committee's ideas reach the largest number of workers. Personal and joint interviews are being conducted as a first step to inform them about their rights, such as the number of working hours, calculating overtime, salaries, rights, housing and measures to be taken when temperatures soar. The Clean Fuel Project is a strategic project to expand and upgrade Mina Abdullah and Mina Al-Ahmadi Refineries to be an integrated refining complex with a total capacity of 800,000 bpd. It is expected to boost Kuwait's global position in the oil refining industry.

Students' allowances

Head of the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) board Falah Al-Suwairi said the board received promises from the higher education ministry with regards to its proposal to increase Kuwaiti students' financial allowances abroad in order to give them more incentives and relieve them of some burdens. He said we are keen to keep in touch with concerned authorities in order to give them proposals that will help students and make it easier for them to complete their studies.

Education Ministry Undersecretary Saud Al-Harbi said permanent opportunities for supervisory jobs at the ministry will be made at the start of the new school year. He revealed an integrated plan to boost the education process that includes enhancing the curricula and increasing the



KUWAIT: This archive photo shows construction works at the planned Clean Fuel Project.

efficiency of teachers and the school environment. He said the plan was presented two months ago, adding "we currently are working on an operational plan for it as the education ministry is getting ready for the new year."

Meanwhile, the national project to improve school canteens decided that the project will be executed in mid-August in cooperation with Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company, while the undersecretary said the ministry is keen on developing school canteens to change wrong nutrition habits in children and adopt positive behavior by providing healthy food to students.

Dairy products

The Hudson Star-Observer said about 12 businessmen from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Lebanon will visit the US state of Wisconsin this month in an attempt to import its dairy products to their countries. The site said Wisconsin is known as "dairy land" as it is one of the pioneers in dairy production in the United States and famous for its cheese. CEO of Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin said "we need to expand our reach to international markets to present Wisconsin's dairy products and achieve growth in this industry that is full of challenges."

News in brief

No delay in refinery operations

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) announced yesterday that refining and exportation operations at Abdullah Port were not affected by temporary cut in flow of seawater used for cooling production units of the refinery. KNPC immediately responded to the situation by following emergency procedures to guarantee the safety of its staff working at the facility, the company said in a statement. It clarified that a specialized team was formed to help the Public Authority of Industry, which is responsible for providing the needed seawater flow to Mina Abdullah to solve the problem as soon as possible. — KUNA

Municipality meets cleaning companies

KUWAIT: The public cleanliness committee at Kuwait Municipality held a meeting with representatives of cleaning companies to find out the readiness of these companies to start implementation of the contracts that were signed recently. Committee chairman and deputy director general of the services sector Khalaf Al-Mutairi spoke about the importance of companies' compliance with the set times to deliver 80 percent of equipment and machinery before the start of work on Oct 11, 2019. — By Meshal Al-Enezi

New university eyed

KUWAIT: Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi stated Tuesday that the ministry seeks to accelerate the approval of a new public university law to open a new university and increase opportunities for undergraduate students. In statements to reporters, Azmi said the much-anticipated law is an implementation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's directives to increase world-class education opportunities for Kuwaiti students. — KUNA

Three hurt in Farwaniya blaze

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: An apartment on the fourth floor of a 10-storey Farwaniya building was on fire, so firemen evacuated the building and rescued three persons, who were taken to Farwaniya Hospital. The fire was put out and investigators are probing the cause of the blaze.

Separately, a toy store in an Egaila mall went up in flames, and fire spread to neighboring stores. Mangaf and Qurain firemen rushed to the scene and put out the fire. No injuries were reported. Meanwhile, Jahra occupational fire station men rushed to a house in Naseem and dealt with a fire in two makeshift rooms. The fire was put out and no injuries were reported.

In other news, the central operations department at Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) held a workshop on avoiding and dealing with the issue of jumping from buildings during fires. KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad opened the workshop and urged KFSD leaders to always be ready and use all KFSD facilities to prevent people from being trapped inside buildings during fires, which may lead them to jump.



KUWAIT: Firefighters tackle a blaze in a toy store inside an Egaila mall.



KUWAIT: Securitymen carry out inspections in Salmiya and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh yesterday.

Retiree health insurance card now available

KUWAIT: A version with even more benefits of the already-existing health insurance card for retired Kuwaitis, Afya 2, can now be collected across 46 public health centers throughout the country, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday. The card, which will be operational as of July 16, will now offer full coverage for the treatment of several additional ailments, the ministry said in a statement. These include joint stiffness, joint articulation with prosthetics, osteoporosis, fractures, urinary incontinence, prostate enlargement, benign and malignant neoplasms, and cardiac catheterization, including a maximum of three stents per year. Kidney stone disease, dental implants and crowns, barring the cost of the cultivated parts and the materials used, and the coverage of the parts used in cartilage therapy. The coverage will also include doctor's fees based on the costs agreed with an approved healthcare provider, the statement added. For more information on the matter, applicants may contact the ministry on its around-the-clock Afya customer service hotline: 1811-110. They may also do so on the Ministry of Health website and app. — KUNA

Local

On World Refugee Day, Kuwait emerges as role model for humanitarian activism

KUWAIT: Director of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait (UNHCR) Samer Hadadian has hailed Kuwait, on the occasion of the World Refugee Day, as a role model for humanitarian activism, recalling its generous aid to refugees and needy people worldwide. Kuwait does not hesitate to provide support and humanitarian assistance to people in need and to help mobilize international response to humanitarian crises around the world, Hadadian said. He noted that Kuwait had intensified its humanitarian action to cope with the surge in regional conflicts and numbers of displaced people worldwide.

Kuwait's contributions to the UNHCR since 2013 amounted to approximately \$400 million, which helped provide emergency humanitarian aid and protection services to millions of conflict-affected men, women and children in Syria, Yemen and Iraq, the UN official pointed out. He underlined that the UN proclamation of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a 'Humanitarian Leader' and the designation of Kuwait as a 'Humanitarian Center' in 2014 was a well-deserved move due to Kuwait's unprecedented initiatives and generous donations to people in distress and leading regional and international philanthropic role. He noted that the world was witnessing the commitment of Kuwait through its active engagement with United Nations agencies and its huge donations to relevant United Nations agencies and other humanitarian and charitable initiatives.

Kuwait — represented by its political leadership, government and people, the private sector, charitable and humanitarian organizations — has become a role model for world countries in humanitarian activism, he said. "It has not excluded any sect or race from its donations and has made contributions to Africa, Europe and Asia," Hadadian pointed out, citing Kuwait's chairing of an international donors' conference to support Rohingya refugee in Geneva in 2017, which raised aid pledges amounting to \$335 million. Kuwait has also hosted three international conferences between 2013 and 2015 in response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria, co-chaired two others for the same purpose and created an international mechanism to follow up donors' fulfillment of their aid pledges for Syrian refugees. He explained that the conferences chaired and co-organized by Kuwait raised nearly \$30 billion of aid pledges to provide basic humanitarian support for refugees and displaced Syrians. Kuwait also hosted an international conference for Iraq reconstruction in 2018 which raised \$30 billion of investment pledges, he said.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said that the KRCS continues to provide humanitarian assistance to all refugees and displaced people in any part of the world in accordance with the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Sayer stated the number of refugees in the world is increasing due to the rising number of natural disasters and man-made crises. He stressed the need to exert more efforts to pave the way for the returning of refugees to their homes after the end of the conflicts. "The number of refugees is growing and the magnitude of their human suffering is unbearable. They are separated from their families, living in the open without homes and haunted by death everywhere," he regretted.

Political Science Lecturer at the Kuwait University Dr Ghanim Al-Najjar echoed a similar sentiment, argu-

ing that the number of refugees this year had exceeded 65 million, more than their peers during the WWII. He highlighted the decades-long plight of Palestinian refugees who still suffering until today. Najjar lauded Kuwait's supportive role to refugees worldwide citing as example Kuwait's hosting conferences for supporting refugees in Syria and other countries as well as its regular contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). He recalled UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's praise to Kuwait contribution to humanitarian causes and its fulfillment of aid pledges. Kuwait supports UN humanitarian organizations, especially the UNHCR, more than any other countries, he said. He shed lights on the efforts of the Kuwaiti humanitarian organizations, especially the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, to help needy people around the world.

The World Refugee Day, internationally observed on June 20 each year, is dedicated to raising awareness of the situation of refugees throughout the world. On this day, the United Nations, United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and countless civic groups around the world host World Refugee Day events in order to draw the public's attention to the millions of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, conflict and persecution. Annual commemoration is marked by a variety of events in more than 100 countries, involving government officials, humanitarian aid workers, celebrities, civilians and the forcibly displaced themselves. The theme of this year's celebration is 'Take a Step with Refugees' to urge people worldwide to take big and small steps in solidarity with refugees. —KUNA

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Being an entrepreneur



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

There are many definitions of the word 'entrepreneur', but the way I define entrepreneurs is as follows: "People who are willing to take risks and run their own businesses to make a difference within the community in a creative way."

I think everyone is capable of making positive changes in society and we all have potentials that can be creative, and we can financially benefit from them. I know taking the decision to be an entrepreneur can be challenging at first, but it is something worth your while if you do not feel happy in your corporate job. This depends from person to person and you need to know what feels best for you. Here are a few legal points that are important for first-time entrepreneurs.

Owning a license

Not all creative activities need a legal license under Kuwaiti law, but it is always more professional to get one. If you are a photographer or a copywriter, you can always provide your services without a license to begin with to save on legal and administrative fees.

What type of license

What type of license you get depends on many different aspects regarding the activity of the company. Some licenses need special approval from certain ministries, such as anything media-related needs approval from the ministry of information. Some licenses can be merged with another, so one company can have two different activities, such as selling watches and gifts. To find out which license to get, you should visit the Kuwait Business Center.

If you have an idea for a company activity that you are interested in but it does not fall under a particular type of license, you can apply for a new type of license so do not feel like you have to stick to certain activities in Kuwait - be creative!

Shareholders

I cannot emphasize this enough - having a legal document between your partners and you is very crucial from the beginning, even if your partners are family members or friends. The obligations and responsibilities of each party should be laid out from the beginning - this can be done through a contract or through the constitutional documents of the company. The constitutional documents of the company are the license and the articles of association, a document that is certified by the ministry.

For questions or queries, please email us at info@tl-legal.com.



38 killed in attacks on villages in Mali

Promised \$9 million online, US teen kills 'best friend'

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KINSHASA: Yellow taxis clog up the streets of Kinshasa, capital of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Cities almost everywhere have transport problems—just ask people stuck in traffic jams or overcrowded trains for their opinion. — AFP

Commuting hell in DR Congo's capital

World's Worst Commuter Nightmare

KINSHASA: Cities almost everywhere have transport problems - just ask people stuck in traffic jams or overcrowded trains for their opinion. But daily travel in Kinshasa, capital of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), may well have the best claim on World's Worst Commuter Nightmare. In a mega-hub of 13 million, the ride to work is a battle with choked, pot-holed streets and jam-packed buses, yellow taxis and motorbikes, to the backdrop of blaring horns, pollution, hawkers and accidents. In short, a transport hell... and in a sauna-like heat.

During peak time, commuters jostle to board creaking buses or taxis where they will become intimately familiar with the anatomy and odor of their fellow humans for the next hour or two. "Every day we're packed in like sardines. You get there exhausted," sighed law student Esperant Kashama. At rush hour, it is not uncommon for average speeds to be well below 10 kilometers per hour. In poorer areas such as Lemba,

Matete and Ndjili, it can take up to two hours to reach Gombe, the city's business heart.

Infrastructure

Like Africa's two other megacities, Cairo and Lagos, Kinshasa has failed to successfully manage the twin challenges of a growing population and weak infrastructure. The task is only going to get worse in the coming years, for, by 2030, Kinshasa will rank as the 10th most populous city in the world, according to UN estimates. Lacking a suburban rail network, the city is fatally dependent on the road. President Felix Tshisekedi has floated development plans to widen vital bridges spanning the Congo River, but the scheme is already under fire, with critics saying they encroach on public spaces.

His initiative adds to a string of attempts to free up the capital's clogged roads. These include solar-pow-

ered aluminum robots equipped with cameras and lights to regulate the flow of traffic and send real-time images to police. The government has also purchased dozens of buses from foreign firms to make the ride more comfortable - if not necessarily speedier - for commuters. In the past, battered local buses were nicknamed "Spirits of Death" due to their shoddy maintenance. The new vehicles have been baptized the more optimistic-sounding: "Spirits of Life."

Kickbacks

Some transport startups have been working to address the issues, with the development of Uber-style taxi apps. One of these, Ubizcabs, is squarely aimed at the middle classes with air-conditioned saloons costing around \$40 for a run to the airport - out of reach for the vast majority of Congolese. "We began with the middle class. We wanted to keep the same standards

with different models of vehicle in order to meet the needs of the whole population," company head Patricia Nzolantima said.

The authorities have also attempted a crackdown on dodgy cab drivers in a bid to reduce robberies and abductions. Last year, owners of taxis and taxi-buses were ordered to repaint their vehicles yellow and make sure licence plates were clearly visible. Now the city has a wave of yellow vehicles, but Sonia - not her real name - was still a victim of a crime.

"I got into a collective taxi at the same time as some other guy. I thought he was a client. But he was an accomplice," the student and model said. On the back seat, the young woman was throttled and robbed of her telephone and \$130 (115 euros), before being thrown out of the taxi. "I filed a complaint," she said. "The police asked me to pay (the equivalent of) \$100 to open an investigation." — AFP

Chaos, tragedy in Indian 'brain fever' outbreak

MUZAFFARPUR: The stench of urine, chlorine, vomit and death fills the main hospital in Muzaffarpur, the epicenter of a brain fever outbreak in India that has killed over 100 children since June 1. Doctors are not sure what the cause is, but one theory is that the culprit is a toxin found in lychees eaten by children of poor families who go to bed with empty stomachs. One of the distraught parents crowding the chaotic corridors of the Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH) is Dilip Sahni, 25, a construction worker and father of three.

He brought his daughter Muskan, aged four-and-a-half, to the SKMCH early in the morning, only 24 hours after she fell ill. There almost 100 other children are being treated, many sharing beds. "When her mother went in to wake her yesterday at 11 am, she was shocked to see her hands and legs tightened and her teeth sticking together," Sahni told AFP.

"Her mother started screaming for help, and we rushed her to the Kejriwal hospital. At midnight the hospital doctors told us to take her to SKMCH," he said. "Early morning we shifted her here but her condition has been deteriorating." Sahni said before breaking down. Not long afterwards came the news that little Muskan had died. She was very likely just the latest victim in a health crisis blamed on Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in the dirt-poor, baking hot eastern state of Bihar.

The onset is lightning fast, its young victims quickly developing a high fever, seizures, and vomiting. All often, if treatment is not swift, leading to death. A total of 118 children have died so far this month, authorities said yesterday. "Obviously it is tough to make ends meet and raise three children. But I try my best. She was a healthy and playful child," Sahni had



MUZAFFARPUR: An Indian child suspected to have Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) arrives at the government-run Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital in Muzaffarpur district in the eastern state of Bihar. — AFP

said when he had brought his daughter in. "The night before she had eaten bread, she did not have any lychees. It was 10 days ago she had the fruit," he said.

'Dying with worry'

As the hospital guards scream at parents not to crowd the wards, Raju Kumar, 35, a father of five, has just admitted his two-and-a-half-year-old son to the intensive care unit. "I am dying with worry. So many dead bodies of little children I have seen standing here. I am just praying my son is saved somehow," Kumar, who owns a clothes shop, told AFP. "He fell unconscious suddenly the day before yesterday. We rushed him here immediately," he says, holding his four-month-old baby in his arms.

Another being admitted is Krimta Kumari, a girl around nine years old sat on her father's lap in a yellow T-shirt, visibly flushed with fever and unable to keep her eyes open or speak properly. Just then, there is a power cut, leaving mothers in colorful saris and gold

nose studs to try and cool their sick children in the sweltering hospital with hand-held fans. Bihar, home to almost 100 million people, has also been hit by a heatwave, with temperatures of 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit) killing 197 people this summer - including 97 since Saturday.

Sleepless nights

Not only is Bihar poor, its healthcare system is in a dire state. For every 100,000 people there are fewer than two health workers, compared to the average for India of around nine, according to the Hindustan Times daily. "We as doctors are trying our best to save the lives of as many children as possible," said Srikant Prasad Bharti, an overworked junior paediatric doctor at the SKMCH. "No one talks about how many sleepless nights we have been spending to look after the sick kids. No one is talking about the children who have been cured. It is easy to blame hospitals and doctors," he complained. — AFP

Trump's Pentagon nominee quits; Iran targets CIA network

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump lost his nominee for Pentagon chief on Tuesday, adding to the volatility in a tense standoff with Iran, which claimed to have dismantled a CIA network. Foreign powers are watching the situation in the Mideast with growing concern as Tehran and Washington exchange warnings about an escalation in their conflict. Trump - in his latest comments that appear to contradict more hardline advisors - told TIME magazine late Monday he considers explosions on two oil tankers, blamed by Washington on Iran, to have been only "very minor."

But his policy was thrown into further uncertainty by the abrupt withdrawal of his pick for defense secretary. Trump announced on Twitter that Patrick Shanahan was quitting to spend time with his family. The former Boeing executive has seen his candidacy bogged down for months in Congress and the last straw appeared to be revelations of violent incidents during his previous marriage.

Trump named army secretary Mark Esper as his new pick. He will start work on June 24. The upheaval leaves the Pentagon without a permanent boss since the shock resignation of the respected James Mattis in December last year. Despite Trump's comments to TIME, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned Iran that the United States is serious about curbing what it calls Iranian aggression.

Another 1,000 troops were ordered to deploy on Monday, in addition to powerful air and naval forces sent earlier. That deployment should "convince the Islamic government of Iran that we are serious and to deter them from further aggres-

sion in the region," Pompeo said Tuesday. Trump also told TIME he would "certainly" order a war if necessary to stop Iran getting nuclear weapons - something the country says it does not want to do.

Spy claims

In Tehran, officials said they had dismantled a US spy network. Tehran's announcement came a day after it said its uranium stockpile would from June 27 begin to surpass a limit agreed in a 2015 international nuclear deal that Trump unilaterally abandoned in May last year. Tensions between Tehran and Washington have grown ever since, with the US bolstering its military presence in the region, reimposing sanctions and blacklisting Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization.

"Following clues in the American intelligence services, we recently found the new recruits Americans had hired and dismantled a new network," Iran's state news agency IRNA said, quoting an intelligence ministry official. It said some members of the alleged CIA network had been arrested and handed over to the judiciary, while others still required "additional investigations." The agency's source did not specify how many agents were arrested or if they were operating only in Iran.

In Moscow, President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday urged all sides "to show restraint" while Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned them "not to open a Pandora's box." He urged Washington to "change its practice of extreme pressure" but also called on Tehran not to abandon the nuclear agreement "so easily." — AFP

International

Egypt's ex-president Morsi 'more popular' after death

Morsi supporters give him the status of a 'martyr'

CAIRO: Unpopular in power and deposed after huge protests, Egypt's ex-president Mohamed Morsi could be humanized in the eyes of many Egyptians after his death in court Monday. "It is sad, from a strictly human point of view", a trader in central Cairo said of the former head of state, who had been imprisoned since his 2013 fall from power, and was buried on Tuesday. "He was old and ill. Whatever one thinks of the political situation, his death while the court was in-session shows that those who judged him were not good people", the trader said, on condition of anonymity.

Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood is banned in Egypt and he was appealing a 2015 death sentence, making both the man and his organization extremely sensitive topics in the country. While Morsi's supporters have quickly given him the status of a "martyr", Egyptian authorities appear keen to avoid a wave of empathy from citizens, who largely favored the uprising that deposed him. His rapid burial on Tuesday morning took place extremely discreetly and under heavy surveillance, while the public and the press were forbidden from attending.

'Death symbolically important'

Morsi came to power in 2012 in elections that took place the year after a popular uprising that deposed president Hosni Mubarak, who had headed an authoritarian regime for three decades. Spurred on by mass demonstrations against Morsi's own rule, the army ousted him on July 3, 2013 and Egypt declared the Brotherhood a "terrorist organization". Ever since, the government has cracked down heavily on opponents, especially on members of the Islamist organization. The official narrative, regularly broadcast by Egyptian TV channels — which are all behind the regime — is that the Brotherhood are "terrorists" who harm the country's interests.

Since Morsi's death was announced, some channels

have hosted "experts" denouncing the "violence" and "lies" perpetrated by the group. On Tuesday morning, pro-government newspapers only briefly mentioned Morsi's death, without referencing his status as a former president. TV channels devoted most of their airtime to a visit by current President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi — Morsi's former defense minister, who ultimately toppled him before being elected head of state in 2014 — to Belarus.

"As a president Mohamed Morsi was not very popular among Egyptians — in fact he was unpopular, he was seen as uncharismatic, indecisive, very unsteady," said Fawaz Gerges, professor of international relations at the London School of Economics. But "his death in a courtroom will humanize him in the eyes of many Egyptians" who do not support the Brotherhood, Gerges added. While Morsi was not a great leader for the Brotherhood, "his death will be symbolically important" and could drive radical elements of the group to take up arms against the authorities, Gerges said.

Radicalization

Since its founding in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood has faced numerous waves of repression by Egyptian governments, which have been dominated by the military since 1952. Morsi's death adds to a long list of what the Brotherhood call martyrs, including the group's founder Hassan Al-Banna, who was assassinated in 1949 by Egypt's secret police.

Another key figure, Sayyed Qotb — one of the movement's main ideologues and an inspiration behind its radicalism — was executed in August 1966 by Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime, which fiercely repressed the Brotherhood. But for Zack Gold, an analyst at the CNA research centre in the United States, it is "unlikely Morsi's death will result in any immediate rise in the security threat to Egypt". Jihadist movements — sympathetic or not



AMMAN: Members of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front Party (IAF) receive condolences for the death of Egypt's former president Mohamed Morsi at the IAF headquarters in the capital Amman. — AFP

to the Brotherhood — are already very active in Egypt, particularly the Islamic State group in North Sinai, the Middle East security expert said. Since 2013, hundreds of Egyptian soldiers, police and also civilians have been killed in attacks. "In the long term, it would be concerning

if the government pre-emptively arrested large numbers out of concern for street protests or other outbursts in the wake of Morsi's death," Gold said. Conditions in Egypt's prisons "have a track record of radicalizing individuals", he noted. — AFP

Egypt Muslim Brotherhood

CAIRO: The Muslim Brotherhood, from which hailed Egypt's former president Mohamed Morsi who died on Monday, is the oldest and most structured group of Sunni Islam in Egypt. Here is a brief history of the movement:

Foundation

In March 1928 the Muslim Brotherhood is founded in the Suez Canal city of Ismailiya by imam Hassan Al-Banna, who takes the title of guide of the movement. Its beginnings are as a welfare group, before taking on a political role, based on opposition to the British presence and in support of an Islamic state.

Banna killed

In December 1948, a Muslim Brother assassinates prime minister Mahmud Fahmi Al-Nuqrashi, who had ordered the Brotherhood dissolved. From then on the group is brutally repressed. In February 1949 Banna is murdered by the secret police.

Sayyed Qotb executed

In 1954, President Gamal Abdel Nasser decides to ban the Brotherhood after it is blamed for an assassination attempt against him. In August 1966, Sayyed Qotb, a theoretician behind the movement who inspired its radicalization, is hanged by Nasser's

regime. Until Nasser's death in 1970, the Muslim Brotherhood are arrested in their thousands or go underground.

Sadat assassinated

In 1971, Anwar Sadat who succeeds Nasser as president and seeks to neutralize the Nasserian left, grants the Brotherhood's leadership amnesties. On October 6, 1981 Sadat, vilified by many in the wider Arab world for signing a peace treaty with Israel without obtaining concessions for the Palestinians, is assassinated by Islamic extremist soldiers.

Religious organization

In 1984 the regime of Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak, recognizes the movement as a religious organization but refuses its registration as a political party. The Brotherhood fields candidates on independent tickets. In 2005 after a breakthrough in legislative elections in which its sympathizers gain one-fifth of parliamentary seats, it emerges empty-handed from the first round of the 2010 elections and boycotts the second round, denouncing massive fraud.

Out of hiding

On February 11, 2011 Mubarak steps down and hands his powers to the military on the 18th day of a popular uprising. The movement sides with the revolt progressively. The Brotherhood founds its political wing, the Freedom and Justice Party. The Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist allies clinch an overwhelming majority in staggered legislative polls in 2011-2012.

Morsi elected then ousted

On June 30, 2012, Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate who won 51.73 per cent of the vote in a presidential election, is sworn in as Egypt's first head of state chosen in a free vote, and also the first Islamist and civilian to head the country. On July 3, 2013, after massive popular demonstrations, the army ousts Morsi, who is arrested along with his guards.

Repression

On August 14, 2013, security forces storm two huge Cairo protest camps occupied for weeks by supporters of Morsi, leaving 700 people dead in 12 hours, according to official sources. In total more than 1,400 pro-Morsi protesters are killed over several months. Most Muslim Brotherhood leaders and thousands of Islamist opponents are arrested. Hundreds, including Morsi, are sentenced to death.

'Terrorist organization'

In late 2013, the Muslim Brotherhood is declared a "terrorist organization" by the judiciary, before their political arm is dissolved in 2014. In April 2019, the White House says that President Donald Trump plans to put the Brotherhood on the US terrorist blacklist. The announcement comes three weeks after the visit to the White House of current Egyptian leader Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

'Slow death'

On June 17, 2019, Morsi dies after falling ill during a court hearing, the attorney general says. The Muslim Brotherhood accuses the Egyptian authorities of being responsible for Morsi's "deliberate slow death". — AFP

US interests come under fire in Iraq

BAGHDAD: US assets in Iraq have been targeted at least five times in as many days, officials said yesterday, amid a tense standoff between Baghdad's key allies, Washington and Tehran. The attacks follow a series of operations against tankers in highly sensitive Gulf waters which the US has blamed on Iran, raising fears of a regional war.

In Baghdad, officials have voiced fears that a proxy conflict between the bitter enemies could play out in Iraq, where political and armed groups routinely accuse each other of being agents for foreign states. Yesterday at dawn, "a Katyusha rocket fell on an Iraqi drilling company in the Burjesiya area near Basra, wounding three people according to an initial assessment," Iraqi military command said in a statement.

Oil ministry spokesman Assem Jihad told AFP that those wounded were all Iraqis. Burjesiya is a complex near southern Iraq's main city, in a key oil-producing region hosting various Iraqi and foreign companies including US major Exxon Mobil. The firm withdrew its 83 expatriate employees from a nearby oil field in mid-May after Washington pulled non-essential staff from its Baghdad embassy, citing threats from Iranian-linked

armed groups. The Exxon Mobil staff had since returned. Burjesiya is several kilometers from oil wells, and the attack had "no impact on production", Jihad said. Hours before the Burjesiya incident, the Iraqi military announced that an improvised rocket had hit a regional command base in the northern city of Mosul, where American troops are reportedly deployed. And on Monday evening, three Katyusha rockets hit the Taji army base, which hosts both Iraqi and foreign troops, including Americans.

No group has claimed the attacks, but experts say they appear to have been fired from Shiite-majority areas north of Baghdad. That would appear to implicate pro-Iranian Shiite armed groups, as opposed to Sunni jihadists who continue to carry out hit-and-run attacks despite the elimination of the Islamic State group's "caliphate". An Iraqi official speaking on condition of anonymity said rocket fire had also targeted a Baghdad airbase on Monday.

On Friday evening, "three mortar rounds hit the Balad airbase (north of Baghdad), starting a fire," the same source said. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi said he had "ordered all forces to take all necessary measures" to prevent further rocket attacks. "These actions disrupt the political situation and give a distorted picture of the security situation," he said. Baghdad, which declared victory over IS jihadists in late 2017 after a grueling offensive against their self-proclaimed "caliphate", has played up Iraq's return to stability as it seeks to position itself as key diplomatic actor in the region. — AFP

Lebanese police nab drug baron

BEIRUT: Lebanon's police yesterday said they arrested a "prominent" drug trafficking baron suspected of smuggling large shipments of the amphetamine-like drug captagon to at least six countries. The 31-year-old suspect "had been professionally smuggling captagon to Arab countries for around six years," the Internal Security Forces said, without naming the man.

He confessed to carrying out "12 smuggling operations to Egypt, Qatar, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Sudan and Saudi Arabia," it said in a statement. He was "one of the most prominent of those involved" in smuggling captagon from Lebanon to the Gulf, the statement said. He was arrested in the Bekaa Valley in a bust coordinated with Saudi Arabia's Directorate of Narcotics Control, it said.

Four other members of the same smuggling network — two Lebanese and two Syrians — were also arrested, according to the statement. Captagon is an amphetamine manufactured in Lebanon and probably also in Syria and Iraq, mainly for consumption in Saudi Arabia, according to the French Observatory for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT). It is also one of the most commonly used drugs in the Syrian war, where fighters say it helps them stay awake for days and numbs their senses, giving them stamina for long battles and allowing them to kill with abandon.

Lebanon has previously stopped several shipments of the drug to Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia. In May, it arrested a Saudi man at Beirut airport carrying about 10 kilograms of the drug. In April, it seized more than 800,000 pills worth around \$12 million (10.7 million euros) in a bust coordinated with Saudi authorities. In one of the country's largest busts, Lebanon arrested a Saudi prince and four other Saudi nationals in October 2015 for attempting to smuggle out nearly two tons of captagon via Beirut's airport. — AFP

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International

Johnson fends off dwindling British PM rivals in TV debate

Boris Johnson wins key Brexit backing in leadership race

LONDON: British leadership favorite Boris Johnson won the endorsement of a key Brexit-backing rival yesterday despite accusations he was softening his rhetoric on leaving the EU. Ahead of another round of voting among Conservative MPs, former Brexit secretary Dominic Raab said Johnson was the "only candidate" who would take Britain out of the European Union as planned on October 31.

On Tuesday, Raab was eliminated from the contest to replace Theresa May as the leader of the governing Conservative Party and therefore as prime minister, leaving five candidates standing. One of them will be eliminated in another ballot later, before further votes today to whittle the field down to a final pair. Former foreign minister Johnson is leading the pack after securing the support of 126 of the 313 Conservative MPs in Tuesday's ballot.

A figurehead of the 2016 referendum campaign for Brexit, he insists there must be no more delays to Britain's EU exit, after May postponed it twice. During a television debate on Tuesday, watched by an average 5.3 million viewers, Johnson said further delay would cause a "catastrophic loss of confidence in politics". But he declined to guarantee this would happen - and one of his main rivals, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, suggested afterwards that his position was not clear. "I am not entirely sure what he believes on this," Hunt told BBC radio.

Johnson keeps low profile

Hunt came second in Tuesday's ballot with 46 votes, followed by Environment Secretary Michael Gove - another leader of the 2016 Brexit campaign - on 41. International Development Secretary Rory Stewart, the only candidate to rule out leaving the EU with no deal,

continued his unlikely progress with 37 votes. Sajid Javid, Britain's first Muslim interior minister, scraped through with 33 votes - the minimum to avoid elimination - while Raab fell short with 30. Raab was viewed as the candidate with the most hardline policy on Brexit, even suggesting he could suspend the session of parliament if it tried to block "no deal".

Stewart said yesterday that he was in talks with Gove about joining forces. Tuesday's BBC debate was the first of the campaign to feature Johnson, who dodged a previous one on Sunday and has kept his public and media appearances to a minimum. But none of the candidates made any major headway or gaffes, and Johnson remains the runaway favorite. Opposition leaders yesterday targeted the front-runner's past comments, with the Scottish National Party's leader in parliament Ian Blackford telling MPs: "not only is the member racist, he is stoking division in communities."

Johnson's most uncomfortable moment in Tuesday's debate came when, following up a question from a British imam, he was challenged over his description of Muslim women wearing burkas as looking like "letter boxes", in a 2018 article against banning the full face veil. But the BBC was later forced to explain its vetting process after the imam was found to have posted allegedly anti-Semitic messages on his Twitter page.

'None of us want no deal'

After Conservative MPs whittle them down to two candidates by the end of today, the final pair will be put to a ballot of 160,000 party members, with the winner taking over in Downing Street likely in late July. May stepped down last month over her failure to deliver Brexit on time,



LONDON: Britain's International Development Secretary Rory Stewart, a contender for the Conservative Party leadership, talks with members of the media as he leaves the Millbank television studios in London. — AFP

although she remains prime minister until her successor is chosen. She struck an exit deal with Brussels last November, but failed three times to get it through parliament's lower House of Commons. All the candidates except Stewart insist they can renegotiate the text with the EU - despite repeated warnings from Brussels that it will not do this.

Stewart wants to try again to get the deal agreed with Brussels through parliament, but the others warn that

without a change, Britain must be ready to leave with no deal at all. Johnson said in Tuesday's debate: "None of us wants a no-deal outcome. We are going to make sure we come out on terms that protect the UK and protect the EU as well." Both Hunt and Gove repeated that a further delay might be required if a Brexit deal was within reach. But Javid said it was "fundamental" to get out by the new deadline no matter what. — AFP

News in brief

Drones close airport runway

SINGAPORE: Singapore's main airport temporarily closed a runway after drones were spotted in the area, causing dozens of flights to be delayed, authorities said yesterday. It is the latest case of unmanned aerial devices causing disruption at a major airport after thousands of passengers were affected when drone sightings forced the closure of Britain's Gatwick Airport last year. Changi Airport, one of Asia's busiest hubs, closed one of its two runways for short periods from late Tuesday into yesterday after the drone sightings, the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore said. About 37 flights were delayed and one arriving in Singapore was diverted to neighboring Malaysia, the agency said. Authorities have launched an investigation. It is against the law in Singapore to fly a drone within five kilometers of an airport without a permit, the Straits Times newspaper reported. — AFP

Spain busts 'Qaeda gang'

MADRID: Spanish police yesterday detained 10 nationals of Syrian origin accused of financing "Al Qaeda terrorist militia" in Syria, the interior ministry and a source close to the probe said. With Europol's collaboration, more than 350 agents took part in an operation in Madrid, further south in Toledo and the eastern province of Valencia. Fourteen homes and other premises were searched by officers. The source, who refused to be named, said the detainees were Spanish of Syrian origin. "The organization was led by a family clan that for years allegedly used a legal business structure to hide illicit operations with which they evaded tax authorities and laundered large amounts of money," the ministry said in a statement. "The detainees allegedly took away money from each legal operation, substituting the real amount of the operation in the receipt with another lower value amount," it said. — AFP

Addis Ababa to ban motorbikes

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa plans to ban motorbikes in the city from July in a bid to curb a spree of muggings and robberies, local authorities said yesterday. Addis Ababa Mayor Takele Uma said motorbikes had been used in recent crimes and the city would prohibit them from July 7 though people using bikes for business may be exempt. "Exceptions will be made to those conducting licensed businesses with motorbikes as well as those who use motorbikes as postal carriers and motorbikes affiliated to embassies," the mayor told journalists. Addis Ababa, a city of an estimated five million, is generally considered safe for residents and foreigners. But a growing number of violent crimes involving suspects on motorbikes or in cars has caused alarm. The mayor said the proposed ban came after a study of criminal activities in the city found a significant number were carried out using motorbikes. — AFP

Egypt blasts UN over Morsi

CAIRO: Egypt accused the United Nations yesterday of seeking to "politicize" the death of the country's first democratically elected president Mohamed Morsi by calling for an "independent inquiry". Foreign ministry spokesman Ahmed Hafez said he condemned "in the strongest terms" the call by the spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Rupert Colville, for an independent investigation into Morsi's death during a court hearing on Monday. Hafez said it was a "deliberate attempt to politicize a case of natural death." Colville called Tuesday for a probe into whether the conditions Morsi faced during his nearly six years in custody had contributed to his death. "Any sudden death in custody must be followed by a prompt, impartial, thorough and transparent investigation carried out by an independent body to clarify the cause of death," he said. — AFP

Trump threat to deport 'millions' sparks firestorm

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's threat to begin deporting "millions of illegal aliens" next week triggered heated rhetoric Tuesday on both sides of America's political divide, with Democrats warning the US president was fear-mongering ahead of his reelection campaign launch. Liberal lawmaker Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez went so far as to accuse the Trump administration of operating "concentration camps" at the border, where a surge of migrants has all but overwhelmed US officials' capacity to detain them.

Trump vowed to have US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrest and remove undocumented migrants "as fast as they come in" - a move that could disrupt thousands of families. The comment thrusts the controversial issue to the fore as the Republican leader and his Democratic rivals ramp up their 2020 presidential campaigns. The US is facing a surge in migrant arrivals from several Central American countries plagued by gang violence and poverty.

The numbers have smothered US authorities' abilities to temporarily shelter and process them. Trump has called it "an invasion," and has made the fight against illegal migration a central plank of his administration. The timing of his tweets, the night before kicking off his reelection

campaign at what promised to be a rollicking Tuesday evening rally in Orlando, Florida, strongly suggests he is highlighting it as a theme of his 2020 bid.

Democratic ire

Several Democrats, including those seeking to challenge Trump for the Oval Office, lobbed criticism at his comments and accused him of pandering to his conservative base. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Trump's chief Democratic rival in Congress, blasted the threat as "an act of utter malice and bigotry, designed solely to inject fear in our communities." Former San Antonio mayor Julian Castro, the only Latino in the presidential race, accused Trump of "spewing racist lies and fear mongering about immigrants." And candidate Senator Kamala Harris said Trump's threat could result in "a shameful stain" on the country. Ocasio-Cortez sparked ferocious criticism from Republicans when she equated US actions on the border with Nazis rounding up Jews and others in the 1930s.

"The fact that concentration camps are now an institutionalized practice in the home of the free is extraordinarily disturbing, and we need to do something about it," she said, as she denounced Trump's "authoritarian and fascist presidency." She faced a swift rebuke by the third-ranking House Republican Liz Cheney, who urged her Democratic colleague to learn about the six million Jews exterminated in the Holocaust. "You demean their memory and disgrace yourself," Cheney tweeted.

'Political bluster?'

An estimated 10.5 million unauthorized immigrants are living in the United States, according to the Pew Research

Center. With US lawmakers and the White House failing to reach agreement on how to stem unauthorized immigration, the contentious issue has simmered.

Amid the squabbling, spiking arrival numbers at the US border with Mexico have threatened to spark a full-blown emergency. Migrant apprehensions soared to 144,000, including 57,000 minors, in May - the highest number in 13 years. Congress has authorized ICE to detain 40,000 migrants, and many others are sent to other overcrowded facilities across the nation. The Trump administration is demanding billions of extra dollars from lawmakers to address the problem.

"This is a humanitarian crisis of gargantuan proportions. It needs to be dealt with," warned Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, as he urged Democrats cooperate with Republicans on extra funding. The migrant surge has enraged Trump. This month, he used the threat of another trade war to pressure Mexico into doing more to stem the tide. And on Monday, his administration said it would offer no more aid to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras unless they take "concrete actions" to deter undocumented migrants bound for the US.

Jorge Loweree - the policy director at the American Immigration Council, which seeks a more just immigration system - called Trump's hardened deportation threat "political bluster" that could devastate millions of families with an undocumented parent, but would do little to address the border crisis. Deportations have increased steadily - up 13 percent in fiscal year 2018 from the previous year, according to ICE. The agency said it deported 256,086 people in the 2018 fiscal year, most of them convicted criminals. — AFP



SANGHA, Mali: Officials and residents stand near freshly dug graves in the Dogon village of Sobane-Kou, near Sangha, after an attack that killed over 100 ethnic Dogon. — AFP

38 killed in attacks on Mali villages

BAMAKO: Thirty-eight people were killed and many others wounded in attacks on two ethnic Dogon villages in central Mali, the government said yesterday, in the latest in a cycle of violence in the volatile Sahel region. No group immediately claimed responsibility for Monday's attacks but Mali has seen a spate of massacres this year between ethnic Dogon and Fulani communities. "The terrorist attacks on Monday evening targeted the villages of Gangafani and Yoro... not far from the border with Burkina Faso. The official provisional toll is 38 dead and numerous people wounded," the Malian government said in a statement.

"Defence and security forces have been dispatched to the location to protect the population and their property and to track down the assailants of these attacks," the statement added, revising upwards an earlier toll of 14 dead. Goundjou Poudiougou, a local community official, said around a dozen bodies had been counted in both villages. "They are terrorists because they killed and then disembowelled some bodies and burned crops," Poudiougou said.

Earlier this month, a massacre on another Dogon village, Sobane Da, killed 35 people, stirring fears of tit-for-tat attacks in a region with an ethnic patchwork. "This

time is the same as Sobane Da: People and animals targeted," said Adama Dionko, a spokesman for Mali's Dogon association. "We demand the state give us more security." Mali's armed forces also reported, on Twitter, that an army patrol Tuesday was ambushed at Gossi in the north of the country and suffered both "human and material losses".

Cycle of violence

President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has appealed for an end to the revenge attacks after he visited the site of the Sobane Da massacre. But despite military help from France and the United Nations, Mali's government is struggling to calm violence that began in the north of the country in 2012, sparked by radical Islamist and Tuareg militias. Earlier this year, in the bloodiest raid, 160 Fulani were killed in an attack on a village by suspected militiamen from a rival ethnic group. Ethnic violence in central Mali surged after a predominantly Fulani jihadist group led by preacher Amadou Koufa emerged in 2015.

The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA, said in May it had recorded nearly 500 deaths in attacks on Fulanis in the central regions of Mopti and Segou since January 2018. Armed Fulanis caused 63 deaths among civilians in the Mopti region over the same period, it said. The Fulani are primarily cattle breeders and traders, while the Bambara and Dogon ethnic groups are traditionally sedentary farmers. Unrest in the central region coincides with an ongoing jihadist campaign that the Mali government is struggling to contain. — AFP

Europeans wary as Facebook takes up cryptocurrency challenge

PARIS: European financial leaders on Tuesday vowed vigilance after Facebook announced it was diving into the cryptocurrency market, as analysts warned the social media giant could face major regulatory questions. French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, whose government initiated a new tax on digital giants like Facebook that has angered the United States, said such digital money could never replace sovereign currencies of governments and insisted Facebook's plan required guarantees.

Bank of England Governor Mark Carney said Facebook's new currency would have to withstand scrutiny of its operational resilience and not allow itself to be used for money laundering or terror financing. Facebook and some two dozen partners on Tuesday released a prototype of a cryptocurrency called Libra, whose rollout as global digital money is expected next year. "If Facebook wants to create an instrument for transactions, why not? But there is no question that this can become a sovereign currency," Le Maire told Europe 1 radio, saying a "limit" had to be set.

"It cannot and must not become a sovereign currency, with all of attributes of a currency", such as the capacity to issue sovereign debt and serve as a reserve currency. "The aspect of sovereignty must stay in the hands of states and not private companies which respond to private interests," Le Maire added. There need to be "guarantees" so that "this transaction instrument is not misused, for example, for the financing of terrorism or illicit activities," he said.

'Not open door'

With France currently holds the G7 presidency, Le Maire said he had asked the group's central bank governors to prepare a report by mid-July to lay out the guarantees required from cryptocurrencies. Speaking in Portugal, Carney echoed Le Maire's concerns, saying the new cryptocurrency would require the strictest regulation. "Anything that works in this world will become instantly systemic and will have to be subject to the highest standards of regulation," Carney said, Bloomberg



WASHINGTON: iPhone displays the Facebook app's screen in Washington, DC. Facebook is leaping into the world of cryptocurrency with its own digital money, designed to let people save, send or spend money as easily as firing off text messages. — AFP

reported. "So open mind, but not open door," he said. Libra will be introduced in the wake of other cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin but aims to avoid the roller-coaster valuations that have attracted speculation and caused ruin. Cathy Mulligan, a cryptocurrency expert at London's Imperial College, said Facebook faced a huge challenge to win regulatory approval for such a service in its markets. "Financial services operators act to protect consumers first - this is not something that Facebook are known for so we can expect difficulties for them," she told AFP.

Mulligan said that if Facebook wished to act like a "nation state" it would have to expect "governments to react quite strongly". She added given that Facebook has no track record in fiscal and monetary policy, "we can expect regulators to take a strong approach to this." Le Maire's comments are likely to resonate with EU counterparts, who have been keeping a wary eye on the increasing domination of the digital giants over citizens' daily lives. But under President Emmanuel Macron, France has prided itself on leading Europe in taking on the digital giants. French lawmakers this year approved legislation - dubbed "Gafa" after Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple - for a new tax on digital giants, and a joint commission of the upper and lower houses of the legislature is now discussing the final details. — AFP

International

Circumcision season: Philippine rite puts boys under pressure

Critics brand circumcision 'child abuse'

MANILA: A row of boys lying on newsprint-covered tables howl in pain and grit their teeth as part of "circumcision season" in the Philippines, when thousands of youngsters suffer through the procedure en masse. The removal of foreskins is a centuries-old rite of passage to adulthood in the country, which has one of the highest rates of male circumcision in the world.

Yet even as circumcision comes under increasing scrutiny around the world, with critics branding it "child abuse", it is rarely questioned in the Philippines and boys face tremendous pressure to undergo the procedure. Every year, thousands of pre-teens from poor families go through the operation for free at government or community-sponsored clinics. "I was shouting the whole time because it hurt so bad," Vladimir Vincent Arbon said after his 20-minute ordeal.

"My mum told me that I need to get circumcised so I would grow taller and become a real man," the 11-year-old added, expressing the pressure many youths face. He was among 1,500 boys who underwent the procedure in one city near Manila, but the scenes are similar in clinics nationwide. "To get circumcised is probably the essence of being a man... for boys, circumcision is necessary to be called a man," Joana Nobleza told AFP after her 11-year-old son Carlos underwent the operation.

The boys, some with their parents, arrive before dawn typically in the months of April and May for an anxious wait in long lines and then a sharp jolt of pain. Many get local anaesthetics but for some the sensation is still intense. They are also provided with antibiotics to protect against any infections. Around 90 percent of males are circumcised for non-religious reasons in the Philippines, according to World Health Organization data.

'Basically child abuse'

In towns across the country, government and health workers convert classrooms, health centres or sports complexes into makeshift operating rooms where boys as young as nine take a number and wait their turn. The pressure even manifests itself in the Tagalog language word for "uncircumcised", which is

a slur similar to coward. "The term 'supot' implies that one is different and a coward... for lacking the courage to experience the pain and anxiety," Professor Romeo Lee of De La Salle University said in his research about the tradition.

The roots of circumcision in the Philippines can be traced back to the arrival of Islam in 1450, according to anthropologist Nestor Castro. However even after the nation became majority-Christian under 300 years of Spanish colonial rule, the practice persisted as a cultural rite. Male circumcision tends to be more common in nations with significant Muslim or Jewish populations, and less so in Catholic majority places. In the past decade the procedure has become increasingly controversial as the anti-circumcision movement has grown worldwide.

Critics consider it medically unnecessary and, as the majority of procedures are conducted in infancy, a violation of children's rights as they are unable to give informed consent. "I would assume 18 or 19 year olds would have the wherewithal to do some research... and consent only after much thought," said John Geishaker, spokesman for US-based advocacy group Doctors Opposing Circumcision. "But clearly a 10-year-old or an eight-year-old can't do that and so... it's basically child abuse," he added.

'Rite of passage'

A decline in the number of children undergoing circumcision has been reported in the US, where historically the procedure has been common. There is evidence safe male circumcision reduces the risk of heterosexually acquired HIV in areas with epidemics, according to WHO, which has included the procedure in some of its programs to tackle the virus in southern Africa.

But Castro, the anthropologist, believes removing the foreskin has a very specific value in Philippine culture. "A circumcised lad is no longer treated as a young boy and is now given more adult roles within family and society," he added, noting it's also important socially. "A rite-of-passage is usually done collectively. There is always a group of boys who grow up together, enter school, and get circumcised at the



MANILA: Boys wait for their turn to be circumcised during a mass circumcision at a village health centre in Manila. —AFP Photos

same time," Castro said.

Prices for the surgery cost from \$40 and can cost as much as \$240 when performed in a hospital, the equivalent of a month's pay for workers in the capital. For boys in poor communities and their families, the free circumcision events sponsored by the government are the only option but most go willingly and are proud to endure it. Holding his hand protectively over his bandaged penis, Erwin Cyrus Elecanal explains: "Going through the test of circumcision has made me a full-fledged adolescent." The 12-year old added: "I will be more mature now and be helpful to my family." —AFP



MANILA: A boy covers his eyes while being circumcised during a mass circumcision at a village health centre in Manila.

Four charged with murder over MH17 deadly crash

NIEUWEGEIN: International investigators yesterday charged four people with murder over the 2014 shooting down of flight MH17 above rebel-held eastern Ukraine in which 298 people were killed. The Dutch-led team said it was going to prosecute Russian nationals Igor Girkin, Sergey Dubinskiy and Oleg Pulatov, and Ukrainian Leonid Kharchenko over the downing of the Malaysia Airlines plane. Relatives of the victims said they had been told the trial of the men for murder would start in March 2020, although they are likely to be tried in absentia as Russia does not extradite its nationals for prosecution.

Russia has vehemently denied all involvement in the downing of MH17, while Girkin yesterday said Ukrainian separatists were also not implicated. "Today we will send out international arrest warrants for the first suspects that we will prosecute. They will also be placed on national and international wanted lists," Wilbert Paulissen, chief constable of the Netherlands National Police, told a press conference. Dutch prosecutor Fred Westerbeke said they were the "four who will be held accountable for bringing the deadly weapon, the BUK Telar, into eastern Ukraine."

The same investigation team said in May 2018 that the BUK anti-aircraft missile which hit the Boeing 777 had originated from the

53rd Russian military brigade based in the southwestern city of Kursk. The airliner travelling between Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur was torn apart in mid-air after being hit by a missile over territory in eastern Ukraine held by pro-Russian separatists on July 17, 2014, investigators say. Wreckage was spread over a wide area in an incident that plunged relations between Moscow and the West, already tense over the conflict in eastern Ukraine, deep into crisis.

'I'm satisfied'

Prosecutors said Girkin was a former colonel in Russia's FSB intelligence agency who was the self-declared minister of defense in the separatist administration in eastern Ukraine. Dubinskiy was a former minister from the Russian military intelligence agency GRU. Pulatov was an ex-soldier in Russia's Spetsnaz special forces unit and Kharchenko a Ukrainian separatist. A number of telephone intercepts were played that prosecutors said showed the four were involved. Relatives of those killed aboard MH17 welcomed the news. "It's a start. I'm satisfied," Silene Fredriks, whose son and daughter-in-law were killed in the disaster, told reporters. "I am happy that the trial is finally going to start and that the names have been announced."

Asked if she personally blamed anyone for the crash, Fredriks said: "Mr (Russian President Vladimir) Putin. Because he made this possible. He created this situation. He is the main responsible person." Girkin, who is also known as Igor Strelkov, denied the rebels were involved. "I can only say that rebels did not shoot down the Boeing," he told Russia's Interfax news agency. Russia



NIEUWEGEIN: Members of the Joint Investigation Team hold a press conference yesterday in Nieuwegein, on the ongoing investigation of the Malaysia Airlines MH17 crash in 2014, next to the pictures of former FSB colonel Igor Girkin (Strelkov) (top left), Sergei Dubinskiy (top right), former soldier of the Spetsnaz GRU Oleg Pulatov (bottom left) and Ukrainian Leonid Kharchenko. —AFP

complained yesterday of being excluded from the probe despite "proactively" trying to be involved. "You know our attitude towards this investigation, Russia had no opportunity to take part in it even though it showed initiative from... the very first days of this tragedy," Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

The Joint Investigation Team (JIT) probing the attack includes Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine. The Netherlands and Australia said in May last

year that they formally "hold Russia responsible" for the disaster, after the findings on the origin of the missile were announced. Of the passengers who died, 196 were Dutch and 38 Australian. Any trial is likely to be in the Netherlands where the majority of the victims came from. "After five years, it is finally clear that justice will be done. This is very important for surviving relatives," Piet Ploeg, president of a Dutch victims' association who lost three family members on MH17 said. —AFP

Russia, China block US efforts N Korea

UNITED NATIONS: Russia and China on Tuesday blocked an American initiative that aimed to halt fuel deliveries to North Korea, which Washington accuses of exceeding its annual ceiling for 2019, diplomatic sources said. Moscow and Beijing said more time was needed to study the US request, which was backed by 25 UN members including Japan, France and Germany, according to the sources.

A week ago, the United States, in a report,

accused North Korea of breaching the United Nations-imposed ceiling on fuel imports by carrying out dozens of ship-to-ship transfers. The cap on fuel imports is among a series of tough sanctions adopted by the UN Security Council in response to North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear tests. The United States insists that "maximum pressure" from the sanctions must remain on North Korea until it agrees to dismantle its weapons program.

Washington had asked that a United Nations sanctions committee rule that the annual cap of 500,000 barrels had been exceeded and order all countries to halt fuel deliveries. Countries on the sanctions committee, including Russia and China, had until Tuesday to raise objections to the request to cut off fuel shipments to North Korea. The

issue "should be decided... on the basis of solid and credible facts and through abundant discussion and study," said Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang at a press briefing in Beijing on Wednesday.

The relevant parties should "do more things that are conducive to easing the situation... and push forward the political settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue," he added. The US and Japan have documented at least eight illegal ship-to-ship transfers of fuel involving North Korea-flagged tankers, according to the report obtained by AFP. An additional 70 instances of fuel deliveries at sea were detected by the United States between January and April, although the volume of fuel unloaded from the ships was not known.

"The United States and its partners

remain gravely concerned about the degree of UN Security Council resolution violations that are occurring in relation to North Korea's import of refined petroleum products," the report said. According to diplomats, the North Koreans are masters at concealing ships via false flags or false documents to hide their use for the benefit of Pyongyang.

The United States last year accused North Korea of exceeding the quota on fuel imports through illegal ship transfers, but Russia and China raised questions about the data and no action was taken. This year, Washington began raising its concerns about the sanctions-busting with Beijing and Moscow weeks ago, arguing that without enforcement, the cap on fuel imports will be "completely meaningless," a council diplomat said earlier. —AFP

Promised \$9 million online, US teen kills 'best friend'

LOS ANGELES: An American teenager has been charged with conspiring to murder her "best friend" after a man she met online offered her \$9 million to commit the crime. According to investigators, Denali Brehmer, an 18-year-old

from Alaska, was recruited to kill her friend by a man a few years her elder, 21-year-old Darin Schillmiller of Indiana. The pair had previously hooked up online, with Schillmiller assuming a fake identity and posing as a millionaire named "Tyler." Court documents say that during the course of their online relationship, they discussed a plan to rape and murder someone in Alaska.

Schillmiller allegedly promised Brehmer \$9 million or more to send him videos or photographs of the attack. Brehmer then proceeded to recruit four other teens and the group settled on Cynthia Hoffman—who considered Brehmer to be her best friend—as their victim. On June 2,

authorities say, 19-year-old Hoffman was lured to a hiking trail northeast of Anchorage where she was bound with duct tape and shot once in the back of the head before being pushed into a river. Her body was discovered on June 4.

Local news reports said Hoffman's father has described his daughter as having a learning disability and the mindset of a 12-year-old. Police say the victim was driven to Thunderbird Falls by Brehmer and Kayden McIntosh, a 16-year-old boy, under the guise of going on a riverside hike. McIntosh allegedly shot Hoffman with Brehmer's gun and dumped her body in the water. Authorities say Brehmer

communicated with Schillmiller throughout the murder, sending him "Snapchat photographs and videos of Hoffman tied up and of the body afterward."

Both Brehmer and McIntosh have been arrested and charged in relation to the murder. Schillmiller has also been arrested along with three others accused of assisting in the planning or execution of the killing. A grand jury last Friday indicted all six defendants for first-degree murder, conspiracy to commit murder in the first degree, two counts of second-degree murder and other charges. Schillmiller and Brehmer were also indicted Tuesday on federal child pornography and child exploitation charges. —AFP

Lower trust in vaccines among people in richer countries

WASHINGTON: People in Europe have the lowest levels of trust in vaccines, according to a global survey of public attitudes toward health and science published yesterday. The study found that people living in high-income countries have the lowest confidence in vaccines, a result that ties in to the rise of the anti-vaccination movement, in which people refuse to believe in the benefits of vaccinations or claim that the treatment is dangerous.

And France has the lowest levels of confidence, according to the survey devised by British medical charity Wellcome Trust and conducted by Gallup World Poll between April and December 2018. A third (33 percent) of French people do not agree that immunization is safe, according to the poll of more than 140,000 people 15 and older across 144 countries. Globally, 79 percent of people agreed that vaccines are safe and 84 percent said they were effective.

On the other end of the spectrum from France, Bangladesh and Rwanda had the highest levels of confidence in vaccines, with almost 100 percent in both countries agreeing they were safe, effective and important for children to have. "I think we expected that general trend, because where we have seen that skepticism and concern about vaccines, that tends to be in more developed countries," Imran Khan, Wellcome's head of public engagement, who led the study, told AFP.

"But I think the extent of the difference is surprising and some of those numbers were really startling." The lowest confidence levels in relation to vaccines were in Western Europe where more than a fifth (22 percent) of people disagree that vaccines are safe, and in Eastern Europe where 17 percent disagreed that vaccines are effective.

An estimated 169 million children missed out on the vital first dose of the measles vaccine between 2010 and 2017, according to a UN report issued in April. In the US alone, the number of cases of the disease this year has exceeded a thousand, according to the latest official figures. "I guess you could call it the 'complacency effect,'" said Khan. "If you look at those countries in our survey which have very high rates of confidence in vaccines, places like Bangladesh and Egypt, these are areas where you do have more infectious disease. —AFP

Analysis

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

Drought-hit Costa Rica's electricity stays clean - but not cheap

Despite a harsh drought this year, Costa Rica - which relies heavily on hydropower - has been able to keep its electricity production almost entirely renewable. The dry spell, which ended in May, was the first big test of an ambitious push for clean energy, said Javier Orozco, planning director at the Costa Rican Electricity Institute (ICE), the state-owned power and telecoms provider. The Central American nation needs clean electricity to meet its climate goal of achieving net-zero planet-warming emissions by 2050.

A renewable electricity supply is one of the "most important advances" towards freeing the economy from fossil fuels, according to a national decarbonization plan launched in February. Other focus areas are adopting cleaner public transport, improving waste management, and expanding the country's forests. But the clean power has come at a cost - heavy investment in excess capacity that is driving up the utility's debt levels, energy researchers said.

Over the last four years, Costa Rica has generated more than 95 percent of its domestic electricity from renewable energy. In 2018, nearly three-quarters came from hydropower, official data showed. This year's drought threatened that record - but strong wind production, the country's second biggest source of clean electricity, combined with water rationing from dams means about 98 percent of power is still expected to be produced cleanly in 2019. "After these critical months, we don't think we'll need more thermal production (using fossil fuels)," Orozco told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

In the driest summer period from January to April, Costa Rica generated 97 percent of electricity from renewable sources, he noted. That was despite drought hitting rivers hard, with some already dry by January and all suffering "exceptionally low" water levels, putting a lot of stress on hydropower generation, Orozco said. But Jose Daniel Lara, a researcher at the University of California Berkeley, said Costa Rica's main vulnerability lies not in whether it can keep generating enough clean electricity as climate change hikes drought risks, but in its finances. To maintain its supply of renewable energy in dry periods, the utility must have twice the hydropower capacity installed than it uses regularly - and that is costly, Lara said.

Wind, imports plug gap

In recent years, the ICE has bet on wind energy to reduce its dependence on water to produce electricity. Wind power grew to 15 percent of the electricity mix in 2018, up from 4 percent in 2011, official data showed. During the drought this year, strong winds were one factor keeping the rain away, Orozco said - but they drove the turbines. The gates at hydropower dam reservoirs could be shut when winds were high and opened when they dropped, he added.

Yet Costa Rica's imports of electricity from other parts of Central America cloud the picture somewhat, said Jorge Blanco, a researcher at the electrical engineering school of the University of Costa Rica. Electricity imports from December to April were the highest in the last five years, at about 8 percent of the country's total electricity supply.

Blanco said importing electricity was often cheaper than turning on the country's thermal plants, which run on diesel. "If we hadn't had the possibility of importing energy from Central America, there would have been an important problem here," he said. But that imported power cannot really be counted as clean, he noted, since about 60 percent of Central America's generation comes from fossil fuels. Still, as 40 percent comes from renewable sources, Orozco said it was far cleaner than making up the gap using thermal generation in Costa Rica. Under guidelines from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, emissions from imported electricity should be counted in the country where the power was produced.

In a bid to maintain Costa Rica's home-generated clean electricity supply in dry spells, the state power provider ICE has implemented so many renewables projects it is now facing a financial crisis, researcher Lara warned. When there is plenty of rain, more hydro-electricity is produced than needed - and much of it is wasted because export capacity is limited, he said. "We survived the drought - but that's because ICE is paying for plants in a system that is not consuming enough energy," Lara said. Generating excess power in wet seasons has led to higher electricity tariffs for consumers and financial problems for the ICE, he said.

"It's as if I bought a Mercedes to drive Uber, I had it parked in the garage all day, and then I said that I don't have enough money to pay off the loan," said the electrical engineer. The ICE ended 2018 with net losses of \$400 million, going into the red in four out of the last five years, with its debt reaching almost \$6 billion. — Reuters

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Conservative MP and leadership contender Boris Johnson leaves his home in London yesterday. — AFP

Weary Brussels braced for second bout with Boris

The frontrunner to become Britain's prime minister, former Brussels journalist - and foreign minister - Boris Johnson has not left a positive impression in Europe's capital. Diplomats across the continent view Johnson as an opportunist who made up tall tales about the European Union as a reporter then misled British voters during the Brexit referendum. But there are some, among those who have known "Boris" down through the decades, who think he might be slippery enough to bluster his way through a successful divorce deal.

"There are two schools of thought," says Pierre Sellal, a former French ambassador to the European Union who knew Johnson as the Daily Telegraph's Brussels correspondent in the late 1980s and early 1990s. "There are those who think the office makes the man, and that if he's PM he'll behave differently, and those who think that if the Foreign Office didn't change him, nothing will," he told AFP. "I think we'll know which it is soon enough."

If, as seems likely, Johnson is chosen by Conservative MPs and party members to succeed Theresa May in Number 10 he has warned he will demand significant changes to Britain's Brexit withdrawal agreement. If, as also seems likely, European leaders refuse to reopen talks on the deal or to tinker with the "Irish backstop" clause, he says he is ready for a "no-deal" Brexit. This, economists and business leaders warn, would plunge trade relations between the UK and the remaining 27 EU members into chaos and perhaps tip Britain into recession. So is Boris bluffing? And would he execute a dramatic U-turn if an

officially hasty Brexit threatened an early and ignominious end to his premiership?

Popular tennis court

The former head of the World Trade Organization and chief of staff to 1990s EU leader Jacques Delors, Pascal Lamy, has known the Johnson family since young Boris' Brussels childhood. He recalls playing tennis on the Johnson family court in leafy Uccle, and later meeting Boris Johnson when he appeared as a journalist at European Commission press briefings. He followed the ambitious young man's advance through journalism and politics, escaping scrapes that would have sunk others, to become mayor of London and then foreign minister.

For Lamy, Johnson's decision to become the figurehead of the Brexit referendum campaign, reflects his personal ambition rather than any deeply felt objection to EU integration. "I don't think he has a very settled opinion on Brexit, but he has very settled opinion on himself. The only thing in which Boris Johnson believes is Boris Johnson," Lamy told AFP. "Once he gets there he'll want to stay there. I think Brexit will be secondary to a strategy to remain prime minister."

Johnson may soften his stance now his main diehard Brexit rival Dominic Raab is out of the running, but he has long insisted Britain must leave the EU on Oct 31. He says he would prefer a renegotiated deal but, if Europe does not bow to his demands in a short timeframe, he is ready to walk away when the deadline expires. Brussels

officials scoff at this. After all, they argue, the damage to the British economy in abandoning tariff-free trade with no transition or standstill period would dwarf that to the much larger continental market. But views differs as to what Johnson's arrival in Number 10 means for this equation.

Brexit campaign 'liars'

Some, like the trade expert Lamy, think Johnson will balk and seek a way to kick the can down the road - perhaps even warning to the idea of another referendum to resolve the matter. "I can well see a scenario in which he's elected prime minister, comes to Brussels and makes his big scene," he said. "Then, once they've told him 'No thanks, we've already tried everything and what's on the table is all there is', he heads home and says: 'Right then, friends, we need to decide, and it's you who'll do the deciding.'"

But other insiders fear a different outcome. French President Emmanuel Macron, the most outspoken EU leader in calling those who led the Brexit campaign "liars", has said he will oppose another extension to divorce proceedings. Most in Brussels expect the French to fall into line - now that European elections are over - and agree once again to postpone Brexit, but some think Johnson's arrogance could thwart that. "If he immediately acts aggressively, as he has begun to do, demanding a renegotiation, it'll all go bad fairly quickly," Sellal warns. "The result will hasten the reversal in the mood in Brussels, and point the way to the exit, without or without a deal. Macron was in the minority, but his view could become the majority." — AFP

Game of drones: Airports rally firms to battle threat from above

A quadcopter drone appears on the radar screen and makes a beeline for the control tower at Paris' Le Bourget airport. Is this the latest in a string of drone sightings at airports that has forced costly shutdowns and affected tens of thousands of passengers? No - it's a simulation, and the drone is quickly stopped by a defense system being trialled at the Paris Air Show. "The jamming zone will make it turn back where it came from," says Egidio Cau, head of anti-drone systems at CS Communication Systems as he runs the test at the company's stand for the show at Le Bourget.

Drones are more and more frequently causing havoc at airports around the world, with just the latest coming on Wednesday when drone sightings forced Singapore's main airport to temporarily close, with dozens of flights delayed. It joined a lengthening list of airports suffering serious disruption due to uninvited visits by unmanned aerial devices. London's Gatwick was paralyzed for 36 hours in December following repeated drone sightings. Heathrow and Newark were hit in January. Dubai and Dublin in February. Frankfurt in May.

To fight back against the scourge from the skies, companies are proposing anti-drone technologies such as jamming, interceptor nets and killer drones. CS Communication Systems, which boasts 200 million euros in annual sales, already has its Boreades civilian anti-drone system on the market. The French company has also notably been deployed by Paris police to protect the presidential platform during France's Bastille Day parade.

Explosive situation

The primary danger posed by drones at airports is the potential they could get sucked into a plane's engine. A part of drone batteries is explosive, which could lead to disastrous consequences even if the intrusion was accidental. "That's where the principle of precaution to ground traffic comes from," said Thomas Guedet, a sales executive at CerbAir, a firm which specializes in anti-drone systems. The operator of Paris' two main airports, ADP, launched a drone detection program two years ago called Hologarde in partnership with French aerospace firm Thales.

Last week as part of the program a special radar was installed on top of a tower at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, according to ADP's



An anti-drone system of German defense and security electronics Hensoldt is presented at the International Paris Air Show yesterday at Le Bourget Airport near Paris. — AFP

deputy CEO, Edward Arkwright. "The goal is to have the system operational by the end of 2019," he said this week. After controllers have helped work out the kinks there are plans to offer the system to other airports. Those kinks could be numerous, from properly identifying objects (is it a drone or a bird?) to selecting the appropriate response.

For Olivier Gualdoni, CEO of the drone manufacturer Drone Volt, in the future autonomous drones will use artificial intelligence, making it more difficult to stop them using jamming technology. Moreover, jamming of signals at an airport is not a straightforward decision. "You jam everything: at an airport that potentially means the communications between the tower and the planes, to telephones to remote controls," said Gualdoni.

Airports the target

And authorization to jam varies by country. "Nobody can jam in Britain except in cases of potential danger to people, while in Germany police are generally allowed to do so, for example, said Markus Wolf, director of development at Hensoldt, a German firm which specializes in sensor technologies for surveillance and protection. For Cau at CS Communication Systems "systems that launch nets or interceptor drones may be more efficient solutions" to stop intrusions.

Drone Volt's Gualdoni believes the optimal solution to stopping drones remains to be found. Despite the complexities, for firms looking to develop anti-drone systems, airports "are without a doubt the biggest market", said Hensoldt's Wolf. "But it is also the least structured because there is still not a model on who should invest and operate such a system: air traffic control, the airport's operator, the owner, the police..." he said.

France's civil aviation regulator DGAC said an EU law on drones that will enter into force in July 2020 should harmonize regulations in the bloc. — AFP

Senegal shines in female tech innovation

Barcode health cards, mobile apps for victims of violence and an online legal platform are just some of the ideas showing the direction of female digital pioneers in Africa, with Senegalese innovators in the spotlight. The Senegalese capital Dakar this month hosted the first African edition of "Digital Women's Day", which for the previous seven years had taken place in Paris. More than 650 people and 26 corporations attended the event where innovators displayed tech creations, often to tackle daily problems women face and inspired by their own circumstances.

Organizers say Dakar - one of the first African cities to offer free Internet access - has ambitions as a budding start-up hub with plans to create 35,000 direct jobs in new technologies by 2025. "Dakar is among the top 10 digital cities in Africa, with incubators for start-ups and major investors," said Delphine Remy-Boutang, the event's founder. Among the participants was Nafissatou Diouf, who at 22 already heads a start-up with 10 employees. Her firm, Senvitale, creates QR codes for wristbands, pendants and cards enabling doctors or first responders to instantly access patients' health data.

Moved by her aunt's sudden death after a failed treatment of an allergic reaction, Diouf gave up her studies in industrial chemistry and food technology to launch her digital enterprise. Senvitale, launched in 2017, won best Senegal start-up prize last year for its free platform, which also allows patients to manage their medical appointments.

The concept was to "help doctors and emergency workers... to act quickly", the young Senegalese businesswoman said. For now, the project is waiting on authorization from the Ministry of Health because of the sensitive data that the company handles. But Diouf says she is already considering development of the business internationally.

Victims of violence

Diariata N'diaye, a 36-year-old artist who grew up in France in a Senegalese family, turned her focus on another problem - helping to fight domestic violence and abuse of women. Through her activism traveling to schools in France to educate young people, she became aware many victims did not realize there was help out there. In 2015, she launched a mobile application "App-Elles" - a play on words in French that translates into "She-Calls" - that allows victims to alert three contacts in case of danger. It records and transmits the sound of the incident to the recipient and sends the GPS location. "I began with a very basic observation: everyone has a phone and so if there is going to be a tool for victims, it should go through their phone," N'diaye said.

An optional wristband, costing €30 (\$33), can be used to issue the alerts via a Bluetooth link to the mobile, so the victim does not have to draw attention to herself by switching on her phone. The free platform also allows abused women to contact associations or learn about their rights. The App-Elles creator claims 8,000 downloads of its application and a presence in 10 countries, including France, Canada, Morocco, the United States as well as Senegal. "We have a lot of people using App-Elles when they go out," says N'diaye. "Women who start early in the morning, who come back late at night."

Legal resources

When Nafissatou Tine, a 34-year-old Senegalese-French lawyer left Brussels in 2016 to settle in Dakar, she struggled to find reliable sources of information on Senegalese law. So with the Sunulex platform, which brings together all of Senegal's digitized laws as well as decisions of jurisprudence, she sought to fill a gap for law students, lawyers and even citizens. Sunulex has placed 800 texts on a publicly accessible free platform - a small portion out of the total of 60,000 - which gets 1,700 hits a week. The company, which already has eight employees, hopes to launch a version next month that will pitch to 10 countries in French-speaking Africa. "It's an African platform made with African resources, by Africans, for Africans, and for lawyers around the world," she said. — AFP

Business

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A Syrian farmer walks cows near Deir Al-Asafir in Syria's southwestern region of Eastern Ghouta. The former opposition stronghold of Eastern Ghouta region was once the breadbasket of Damascus, providing rich harvests of apricots and vegetables to the capital. — AFP

A slow road to recovery for Ghouta farms

A 5-year siege and intense bombing took its toll on farmlands and crops

DEIR AL-ASAFIR, Syria: Outside the Syrian capital, Radwan Hazaa is preparing to plant hundreds of pomegranate seeds on his land in Eastern Ghouta, hoping to replace some 3,000 trees lost in years of war. The former rebel stronghold was once the garden of Damascus, supplying abundant fruit and vegetables as well as dairy products to the capital.

But intense bombing during a five-year blockade by the army that ended in the negotiated withdrawal of rebel forces and their families last year has taken its toll on the land. His feet washed by the flow of water from a newly dug well, Hazaa labors away digging an irrigation canal that he hopes will help bring life back to his plot in the village of Deir Al-Asafir.

Haza returned last year, six years after fleeing for the relative safety of Damascus when fierce fighting erupted in Eastern Ghouta. "When I saw my scorched plot, I fell to my knees and cried," said the balding 54-year-old. "It felt like I would have to start over from scratch," said the farmer, a red and white checkered headscarf slung over

a shoulder. Only a few dozen of the 3,500 pomegranate, apricot and walnut trees he boasted before the war were still standing, he said. The rest had died from fire or lack of water during the fighting. "I borrowed some money and started rebuilding, with two cows and a small number of chickens," Hazaa said.

Rain 'blessed the land'

To bring his orchard back to life, the farmer is pinning his hopes on this winter's record rainfall. "In my entire life, I've never seen rain that heavy," he said. "We used to have to dig down up to 150 metres (490 feet) to find water, but this year we only had to dig down 40 metres (130 feet) for water to gush out." On a nearby farm, cattle farmer Bassam Al-Laz too gave thanks for this year's plentiful rain.

"When the rain fell, it blessed the land, animals and humans," said the 50-year-old, dirt covering his black trousers. Since the start of the war, "this is the first time the cows are eating grass from my own land instead of

me having to buy them feed."

Many farmers were reduced to slaughtering their livestock during the war as they could not feed them, especially in blockaded areas, according to the Syrian Center for Policy Research. After government forces imposed a blockade on Eastern Ghouta in 2013, sparking severe fuel shortages, Laz says he watched his crops and cattle die one after the other. Each time, "it was as if I was losing one of my children," he said.

Laz said he was "glad the war has ended", after suffering "irreplaceable losses". Among these, "we lost olive trees that were more than 500 years old," he said.

'Like a desert'

At the Deir Al-Asafir municipality, local official Ahmad al-Hasan listened to the demands of farmers, most of them to do with irrigation. "Their lands will return to what they once were," he told AFP, adding that farmers were more optimistic after the plentiful rain. Eastern Ghouta covers an area of around 10,400 hectares

(25,700 acres), more than half of which are cultivated.

The region is the "primary source of the capital's food, the lungs through which Damascus breathes", Hasan said. "Every single house has a surrounding plot with cows and chicken.

"Everyone works the land: the elderly and the young, men and women." The head of the government's agricultural office in Eastern Ghouta, Mohammed Mohieddine, says the region's orchards will take longer to grow back. The region has lost more than 80 percent of its trees, he said, as a result of the war or of felling for firewood during the blockade.

"In some towns, not a single tree was left," he said. Under a beating sun, he walks along an avenue flanked by the stumps of dead trees. "This road never used to see sunlight because the thick canopy of branches provided kilometers (miles) of shade," he said.

"Now it's like a desert." "It will take 10 years for the area to regain its green cover, and at least five for trees to once again bear fruit." — AFP

After Boeing showstopper, Airbus rebounds with Franke deal

LE BOURGET, France: Airbus struck a 50-plane deal with veteran low-cost airline investor Bill Franke yesterday, bouncing back from the potential loss of a major customer a day earlier when IAG placed a lifeline order for Boeing's grounded 737 MAX jet.

Franke's Indigo Partners signed a memorandum of understanding at the Paris Airshow to buy 32 of the new long-range version of Airbus's A321 jet and to convert 18 existing A320 family jets to the larger model. The planes will be allocated to Hungary's Wizz Air, US carrier Frontier Airlines and Chile's JetSMART, in which Indigo Partners owns stakes. Industry experts estimate the deal for the 32 aircraft could be valued at around \$4.5 billion, based on a slight premium to the A321neo's list price of \$129.5 million, although most airlines get significant discounts.

Airbus, which hasn't disclosed a list price for the A321XLR, launched the plane on Monday, aiming to carve out new routes for airlines with smaller planes and steal a march on Boeing's plans for a potential all new jet for the middle of the market. The deal with Franke is a big vote of confidence in the European planemaker, a day after major customer IAG signed a letter of intent to

buy 200 of Boeing's 737 MAX jets that have been grounded since March after two deadly crashes.

Asked about the IAG deal, Franke, who struck the largest ever plane deal by number of aircraft with Airbus in November 2017, called the A321neo the industry's most efficient single-aisle jet. Airbus also said on Wednesday it had reached a preliminary deal to sell 11 A321neos to Taiwan's China Airlines, snatching the renewal of the airline's medium-haul fleet from Boeing.

The deal signals intensified competition in Asia where Boeing this week predicted 40 percent of jets would be delivered over the next 20 years. Airlines can rarely be persuaded to jump ship to rival suppliers because of the costs of training and parts, but this week's Paris Airshow has witnessed two such announcements as sold-out planemakers mount incursions to continue their growth.

In a further competitive twist, Boeing announced on Monday it would take over the supply of spare parts for the remaining Airbus A320 fleet at IAG's British Airways.

Communications coup

Boeing's surprise deal with IAG on Tuesday enlivened a previously subdued



PARIS: Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Airways Akbar Al Baker (left) and Boeing Commercial Airplanes division President and CEO Kevin McAllister (right) attend a signing event. — AFP

air show, where the talk had been of the possible end of the aerospace cycle, given slowing economies and geopolitical tensions around the world - as well as Boeing's 737 MAX crisis and a long-running corruption scandal at Airbus. It was not immediately clear how many of the 200 aircraft eyed by IAG would wind up as firm orders and how many would be options, nor how it would affect Airbus's presence at IAG, which placed an order for 14 A321XLR hours before the announcement.

"It's a great coup, but for now it's a communications coup as it's a letter of intent. We will see what kind of deal lies behind it," a European industry source said. Even so, Boeing was expected to try to capitalise quickly on the move and seek further support for the embattled MAX as it offers airlines other big packages at attractive prices. Australia's Qantas Airways said yesterday it would order 10 Airbus A321XLR jets and convert a further 26 from existing orders already on the planemaker's books. — Reuters

OPEC to meet July 1 and 2 after postponements

VIENNA: Major oil-producing countries meet in Vienna on July 1 and 2, the OPEC website and a delegate said yesterday, after the biannual gathering had been postponed several times. Oil producers led by Saudi Arabia are expected to decide whether to extend production cuts, with investors welcoming the news that a date has been set. The 176th meeting of the OPEC Conference will be on July 1 followed by the sixth meeting of OPEC and non-OPEC ministers, which includes Russia.

"They are now the confirmed dates," a delegate who requested anonymity told AFP, adding the decision was made on Tuesday. The current meeting was to be held in April, but then postponed to June before the current July date. Investors hope the group and its other key producers led by Russia will extend output curbs beyond this month to soak up excess supplies.

"Saudi Arabia is already cutting output ahead of the meeting... The de facto OPEC leader is also preparing to push for better compliance among producers such as Iraq and Nigeria," ANZ Bank said in a note. In March, members of the OPEC+ alliance had said they would continue coordinating efforts to "stabilize" the oil market through production cutbacks. — AFP

Business

Huawei founder: The world relies on open collaboration for shared success

Zhengfei hosts Nicholas Negroponte and George Gilder in an open dialogue

SHENZHEN: Ren Zhengfei, founder and CEO of Huawei, was recently part of an open dialogue alongside other prominent guests examining the latest economic and political headwinds affecting the global ICT industry-and Huawei in particular. The business leader stressed that the world ultimately relies on open collaboration for shared success. Speaking to a select group of international press, the discussion was attended by Ren Zhengfei as well as Nicholas Negroponte, a tech visionary and co-founder of the MIT Media Lab; George Gilder, one of President Ronald Reagan's most quoted authors and a venture capitalist in the United States; and Catherine Chen, Senior Vice President and Director of the Board of Huawei.

Addressing how Huawei will engage American companies who wish to keep supplying it with products, Zhengfei commented: "All of the US companies that we work with are great companies that hold themselves to high standards in terms of business integrity and ethics. The current setbacks we are facing are not caused by those American companies, but by politicians who see things differently from the way we see them. We didn't expect such extreme measures, but we did make some preparations."

In the coming years, Zhengfei acknowledged that production capacity may decrease. In 2019 and 2020, the company's annual sales revenue will be about \$100 billion, according to Zhengfei. But around 2021, he believes Huawei will regain its growth momentum and provide even better services to society. "When this step is finished, we'll become stronger."

Responding to questions about the US/China relationship and being seen together with Huawei, Gilder contested: "I think that I am contributing to saving the United States from the terrible mistake that it's currently making, epitomized by the outrageous bans and tariffs, as well as restrictions it is placing on Huawei. But also, I can contribute to a re-construction of Internet architecture to address the terrible security



SHENZHEN: Ren Zhengfei (second right) participates in an open dialogue alongside other prominent guests examining the latest economic and political headwinds affecting the global ICT industry-and Huawei in particular.



Ren Zhengfei

collapse across the Internet that is making everybody paranoid and preventing everybody from trusting anybody else. This is really a technical problem that Huawei can address, and not a political problem."

Building on that point, Negroponte added: "We agree on the fact that the United States is making a terrible mistake, first of all, picking on a company. I come from a world where what we value isn't so much about trade, commerce, and stock values. We value knowledge, and we want to build on the people before, and the only way this works is if people are open at the beginning."

Reflecting a similar tone, Zhengfei noted: "Only through open collaboration can we meet people's demands, and bring the benefits of new technologies to more people at lower costs. There definitely have been and will be ups and downs during the process of economic globalization, and we need to take the right approaches to these ups and downs. That means we

need to use laws and rules to reconcile and resolve issues, instead of imposing extreme restrictions."

Recognizing that Huawei's collaboration with a number of American universities and labs has been halted, Zhengfei responded that China is very strong in engineering inventions, and that the company invests heavily in R&D with more than 80,000 engineers. The company now supports more than 300 universities and 900 research institutes around the world.

"In doing so, we hope that we can contribute to theoretical innovation. We will not cut our investment in this area. We will work harder. Even if the US government does not allow some universities to work with us, there are many others who are willing to do so," stressed Zhengfei.

When asked about whether cyber security is really behind the current confrontation with Huawei, Negroponte argued: "Our President has already said publicly that he would reconsider Huawei if we can

make a trade deal. So, clearly, it's not about national security. We don't trade national security. It's about something else. And this trade war has got to end, and that, I believe, will end sooner rather than later."

"We need to separate the issues of cyber security and information security," added Zhengfei. "Cyber security relates to the networks connecting our society. We can't ever allow these networks to break down or malfunction, and this is a security issue." In terms of information security, or the protection of data across a network, Zhengfei noted that Huawei only provides the network "pipe" and devices. The networks and devices themselves don't determine what passes through them. Instead, carriers and content providers determine this.

"We mentioned that Huawei has no backdoors and our products are open, transparent, and trustworthy," concluded Chen. But looking to the future, she added that "[Huawei] will always have our front doors open.

Silk City and Kuwait's economic development in The Investor

KUWAIT: Saleh Al-Selmi, Chairman of the Union of Investment Companies announces the publication of Issue #6 of The Investor magazine which is focused on Kuwait's strategic development until 2035.

In this issue, The Investor speaks with Dr Khalid Mahdi, Secretary General for the Supreme Council for Planning about Kuwait's strategic development plan, privatization efforts and the current status of the Silk City project in the region.

In Issue #6, released mid-June, The Investor magazine also spoke with senior economic officials at the Institute for International Finance (IIF) for their take on Kuwait's future economic prospects including challenges, strengths and potential opportunities for investors.

- In-depth interview with Dr Khaled Mahdi, SecGen for the Supreme Council for Planning
- Arabic/English magazine focuses on local, regional investment opportunities

The Investor also examines the region's growing appetite for renewables, Turkish-Kuwait economic ties in an in-depth interview with Her Excellency Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak, and the impact of the global financial crisis 10 years on. In this issue, The Investor also highlights the local human talent initiative, KAFO with an interview with Dr Fatima Al-Mousawi. The Investor also includes a graph feature on the world energy balance and an article examination of the global financial crisis 10 years on.

The Investor is a quarterly, bilingual publication, available in Arabic and English, focusing on Kuwait and the Arab Gulf region's economic development with an especial interest in upcoming challenges and opportunities for investors. The Investor is published by the Union of Investment Companies (UIC) in collaboration with Kuwait Times.

The Union of Investment Companies is a non-profit



organization headquartered in Kuwait that aims to promote the country's investment sector through a range of activities including the development and implementation of world-class policy standards, regulations and oversight. The 33-member UIC groups some of the country's largest investment firms to protect investors' interests. UIC also identifies and develops investment opportunities for the present and the future development of Kuwait.

African fintech entrepreneur helps migrants move money

PARIS: The money transfer business is personal for Ismail Ahmed. It was cash wired by his family that allowed him to make the final leg of his journey from escaping fighting in his native Somaliland to London in 1988 to take up a university scholarship. Today, Ahmed leads WorldRemit, one of a handful of fintech firms that is upending the remittances business that has long been dominated by three US firms—Western Union, MoneyGram and Ria—as well as banks.

Piggybacking on the development of mobile money systems in Africa and other developing countries, these fintech firms offer migrant laborers a more convenient way to send money home at a lower cost.

The market for personal transfers is sizeable, with the World Bank putting it at \$689 billion in 2018. Some \$529 billion of that was sent to people in developing nations, an increase of 9.6 percent from the previous year. And personal transfers are important, not just for the recipient families. "Remittances are on track to become the largest source of external financing in developing countries," economist Dilip Ratha said this year when presenting the World Bank's latest report on remittances.

One of the report's main conclusions was that the high cost of transfers reduce the benefits of migration. It found that the global average cost of sending \$200 remained high, at around seven percent in the first quarter of 2019, with costs for African and Pacific island nations above 10 percent. Those high fees give ample room for new entrants—fintechs who are leveraging technology to lower costs.

Focus on migrants

For Ahmed, founding WorldRemit in 2010 was just the latest step in a career that has centered on remittances. His first small jobs as a student not only helped to support himself, but his refugee family, where he first encountered the inconvenience of having to trek to the office of a transfer agent that took up to 20 percent of his money in fees. "That's the beginning of my interest in remittances,"

he told AFP. "Very early I learned about how remittances worked ... it was key source of discomfort" as well as being expensive.

Ahmed chose to write his dissertation about the effect of such payments on people, which in 2005 led to a job with the United Nations Development Programme in Nairobi helping remittance agents comply with regulations to prevent money laundering and financing of terrorism. "As soon as I joined, I saw widespread fraud and corruption involving UN official and consultants," he said.

Ahmed became a whistleblower against the practices, but said that UN investigators were "only interested in identifying who the whistleblower was" and he was pushed out of his job.

In 2010, the UN Ethics Committee awarded him compensation worth a year's salary for the way he was treated—a well-timed cash boost as he was looking to found WorldRemit.

Room to grow

While Africa represents more than half of its transactions, WorldRemit serves more than 47 countries, including many in Asia and Latin America. They have partnered with mobile money firms that helped revolutionise the lives of many Africans, who often do not have bank accounts, by making mobile phones a way to transfer money inside countries.

Without having the expense of its own network of agents, WorldRemit can offer its services at a lower price, which makes it possible for people to send lower amounts when their families need money urgently. But that is not the only advantage.

"Digitalization is a shift from informal to formal economic activities," said Ahmed. The informal nature of many old-fashioned remittance services, where there was no or little control over the identity of those transferring money, had led Western banks to stop serving several countries in order to avoid running afoul of anti-money laundering and terrorism financing regulations.

"A lot of our traditional competitors accepting cash often pick up huge fines because of the fact that they are outsourcing their core compliance functions to somebody who owns his small corner shop, who is doing money transfers as a side business," said Ahmed. He said procedures that digital firms employ to ensure compliance are more robust and that a part of WorldRemit's early work was spent convincing regulators of that. Despite the number of competitors now crowding the sector, Ahmed believes there is plenty of room for growth. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.		Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd		BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		Turkish Lira		Hong Kong Dollar	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES		Rate for Transfer		CURRENCY		BUY		SELL	
US Dollar Transfer	304.600	US Dollar	304.240	British Pound	0.375168	0.389068	0.036824	0.039574	
Euro	342.830	US Dollar	304.240	Czech Korune	0.005284	0.014584	0.003769	0.004541	
Sterling Pound	384.410	Canadian Dollar	228.125	Danish Krone	0.041544	0.046544	0.000017	0.000023	
Canadian dollar	228.850	Sterling Pound	383.535	Euro	0.333186	0.346886	0.002725	0.002905	
Turkish lira	52.610	Euro	342.040	Georgian Lari	0.108847	0.108847	0.000249	0.000264	
Swiss Franc	306.750	UAE Dirhams	83.235	Hungarian 0.000962	0.001152	0.001152	0.0069317	0.075317	
US Dollar Buying	297.250	Bahrain Dinar	809.085	Norwegian Krone	0.030731	0.035931	0.002680	0.003020	
ASIAN COUNTRIES		Qatari Riyals	84.475	Romanian Leu	0.055186	0.072036	Pakistan Rupee	0.002187	
Japanese Yen	2.814	Saudi Riyals	82.025	Russian ruble	0.004743	0.004743	Philippine Peso	0.005756	
Indian Rupees	4.365	Jordanian Dinar	430.395	Slovakia	0.009109	0.019109	Singapore Dollar	0.217190	
Pakistani Rupees	2.061	Egyptian Pound	18.191	Swedish Krona	0.027854	0.032854	Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001353	
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.718	Sri Lankan Rupees	1.721	Swiss Franc	0.297718	0.308718	Taiwan	0.009600	
Nepali Rupees	2.733	Indian Rupee	4.371	Australian Dollar	0.200992	0.212992	Thai Baht	0.009416	
Singapore Dollar	223.560	Pakistani Rupees	1.941	New Zealand Dollar	0.192492	0.201992	Vietnamese Dong	0.009416	
Hongkong Dollar	38.882	Bangladesh Taka	3.604	America	0.222232	0.231232			
Bangladesh Taka	3.593	Philippines Peso	5.868	Canadian Dollar	0.300500	0.305800			
Philippine Peso	5.868	Cyprus pound	18.100	US Dollars	0.301000	0.305800			
Thai Baht	9.773	Japanese Yen	3.804	US Dollars Mint					
Malaysian ringgit	77.903	Syrian Pound	1.590						
GCC COUNTRIES		Nepalese Rupees	2.739						
Saudi Riyal	81.281	Malaysian Ringgit	73.690						
Qatari Riyal	83.716	Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.535						
Omani Riyal	791.683	Thai Bhat	10.725						
Bahraini Dinar	809.350								
UAE Dirham	82.986								
ARAB COUNTRIES									
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.80								
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.190								

Business

Reforms and transparency needed for Belt and Road success: WB

Initiative could boost economies and reduce poverty rates

WASHINGTON: China's global Belt and Road Initiative could boost economies and reduce poverty rates in dozens of developing countries, but risks environmental damage, debt and corruption if improvements aren't made, the World Bank said yesterday.

President Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy aims to reinvent the ancient Silk Road to connect Asia to Europe and Africa through massive investments in maritime, road and rail projects—with hundreds of billions of dollars in financing from Chinese banks. Critics, however, say the six-year-old BRI is a plan to boost Beijing's global influence, riddled with opaque deals favoring Chinese companies, and will saddle nations with debt and environmental damage.

The World Bank's "Belt and Road Economics" report said the project has "the potential to substantially improve trade, foreign investment, and living conditions", but only if China and corridor countries make policy reforms to improve transparency, expand trade and mitigate against environmental and corruption risks. While trade will "increase sharply, if unevenly" for economies along the routes, the "potential gains come with considerable risks", according to Ceyla Pazarbasiglu, a World Bank vice president.

The report estimated that the BRI would boost trade by 2.8 to 9.7 percent for participating countries and between 1.7 and 6.2 percent for the world. However, the study found that around a quarter of those economies already have high debt levels and for some them, "medium-term vulnerabilities could increase". The report said large infrastructure projects are "inherently risky," as they can create corruption and failures in public procurement.

This has caused the US, India and some European

nations to look at the project with suspicion.

'Greater transparency'

The World Bank study found Chinese firms account for the majority of BRI contracts, although "limited data" was available. According to one estimate, it said more than 60 percent of Chinese-funded BRI projects are allocated to Chinese companies. "Little is known about the processes for selecting firms," the World Bank report said. "Moving toward international good practices such as open and transparent public procurement would increase the likelihood that BRI projects are allocated to the firms best placed to implement them." "Belt and Road Economics" recommended the BRI made information regarding planning, fiscal costs, budgeting and procurement more available to the public to improve the effectiveness of individual infrastructure investments and national development strategies. "Greater transparency is essential to encourage community involvement and build public trust in investment decisions," the report said.

President Xi has already tried to bat away concerns, telling a gathering of 37 world leaders in Beijing in April: "Everything should be done in a transparent way and we should have zero tolerance for corruption."

He told journalists at the same forum: "We are committed to supporting open, clean and green development and rejecting protectionism." Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said on Wednesday in response to the World Bank report that China would study "earnestly" its opinions and suggestions. He added China would "continue to adhere to the principles of joint discussion, construction, sharing and openness, tolerance, and transparency." —AFP



BEIJING: In this file photo, journalists and officials walk past a screen showing a photo of the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, at the venue of the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing. China's global Belt and Road Initiative could boost economies and reduce poverty rates in dozens of developing countries, but risks environmental damage, debt and corruption if improvements aren't made, the World Bank said yesterday. —AFP

Corporate finance leaders across ME remain optimistic: American Express

KUWAIT: Senior finance executives across the Middle East remain optimistic about the economy, the outlook for their companies and their investments for the future, despite economic uncertainty, according to the 2019 Global Business & Spending Outlook, a survey released yesterday by American Express Middle East and Institutional Investor Thought Leadership Studio.

The cross-industry findings in the joint American Express and Institutional Investor study are based on a global survey of 901 CFOs and other senior finance executives of firms with annual revenues of \$500 million or more. 180 of these respondents are located across the Middle East region including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain. Now in its twelfth year, the survey was conducted in late November and December 2018.

Whilst senior executives suggest they are less likely to foresee economic growth in the region as they did last year (72 percent in 2019 vs 92 percent in 2018) due in part to lower oil prices, the growth outlook for the Middle East is in line with expectations worldwide. 71 percent of the total response base anticipates a substantial or modest expansion in their home countries. Additionally, growth expectations within the region range from 67 percent of respondents from Bahrain expecting substantial or modest expansion, to a high of 77 percent in Egypt.

Only 10 percent of senior finance executives from the Middle East foresee a modest or substantial contraction in 2019. Of the 72 percent who do expect to see growth in 2019, 45 percent anticipate modest expansion while 27 percent anticipate a substantial economic expansion. The majority of executives saw their companies' worldwide revenue rise in 2018 and the Middle East showed especially strong firm-level performance compared with Europe and Asia.

"Despite operating in unsettled times, senior finance executives across the region are concentrating on their day-to-

day business but keeping an eye on the future," said Mazin Khoury, Chief Executive Officer, American Express Middle East. "While they balance spending to drive topline growth with profitability, they're pressing ahead with expansion plans, which include pursuing foreign trade opportunities, hiring and investing in next-generation technology."

Foreign trade

This year's survey also highlighted that despite uncertainties around global trade issues, a majority (64 percent) of senior finance executives in the Middle East expected socioeconomic changes and global trade policy would strengthen their companies' growth prospects in the near future, while only 5 percent of senior executives think these issues will weaken growth prospects. This view aligns with respondents globally, where 66 percent believe economic changes and global trade policy will strengthen their companies' growth prospects.

Additionally, it was suggested that expanded foreign trade will be based more on organic strategies than partnerships, with companies most likely to set up or expand foreign operations (75 percent) and use online media for marketing programs (70 percent) to pursue international growth opportunities. These company-controlled strategies are preferred consistently over local partnerships and alliances in foreign markets (58 percent) and produce/service localization (48 percent), a sign that a more nimble approach to foreign trade is taking hold in the Middle East.

Next-Gen Technology

And while digital transformation is clearly a central theme for the majority of organizations across the region, this year's study also revealed a growing awareness for the dramatic impact of next-generation technology on competitive dynamics within industries (31 percent, up from 23 percent last year). Expectations for major disruption on company operations and performance (16 percent, compared to 18 percent last year) or on countries have waned (14 percent, down from 21 percent last year). Among those industries surveyed, the media entertainment/ travel (43 percent), wholesale/retail (41 percent) and construction (38 percent) industries are most likely to anticipate major disruption to their industry's competitive dynamics.



Queried on the greatest technology challenge to their industry across the region, senior finance executives in this year's study cite the use of artificial intelligence (59 percent), Fintech applications for payments, risk management or investment management (48 percent), and the Internet of Things (IoT), which includes embedded sensors and ubiquitous, internet connected devices (43 percent).

Against this backdrop, in keeping with their focus on the next generation, many Middle Eastern companies are investing in these emerging technologies. The most popular being artificial intelligence (AI) where 66 percent of respondents indicated this was a major areas of focus (up from 40 percent in 2018). Other areas of focus included the Internet of Things (57 percent in 2019 vs 24 percent in 2018), and fintech (44 percent in 2019 versus 27 percent in 2018).

Emergence of 'Generation Z'

Another key theme from this year's survey was the continued rise of 'Generation Z', as both a customer and employee. Young people under the age of 24 now make up between 50 percent and 65 percent of the Middle East population, and senior finance executives across the region believe their companies are prepared for this generation ('Generation Z') and the technological and economic changes they bring with them. 81 percent of those asked agreed with the statement, "My company has a

long-term plan that considers technological, demographic and economic changes over the next 5-10 years" and 78 percent agreed that, "My company has explicit strategies to appeal to 'Generation Z' consumers born between 1995 and 2005."

The war for talent

Companies across the region will continue to be competing for talent in a highly competitive marketplace in the coming year, but senior finance executives are looking beyond compensation to attract and retain the best employees. In the Middle East, 61 percent of senior executives expect to increase their companies' worldwide number of employees between 8 percent-15 percent. On average, headcount will grow by 8.6 percent for companies across the region, somewhat lower than the global average of 9.2 percent. However, this increase is not going to be accompanied by aggressive increases in compensation. Instead companies will focus on improving career development opportunities and working environments.

Just 31 percent of respondents intend to raise wages or salaries to attract and retain employees in 2019. Instead companies will expand career development opportunities (56 percent), improve working environments through reconfigured office spaces and increased amenities (56 percent), and allow flexible working arrangements (45 percent).

rules," said Asakawa, who oversaw the G20 finance leaders' gathering earlier this month.

"Japan will continue to take a multilateral approach in promoting free trade," he told a news conference. China and the United States, the world's two largest economies, are in the middle of a costly trade dispute that has pressured financial markets and damaged the world economy.

Markets are focused on whether US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping can narrow their differences when they sit down at the G20 summit. The bitter trade war has forced the International Monetary Fund to cut its global growth forecast and overshadowed the G20 meetings that conclude with the Osaka summit on June 28-29.

At the finance leaders' gathering, the G20 issued a communique warning that trade and geopolitical tensions have "intensified" and that policymakers stood ready to take further action against such risks.

"The macro-economic impact (of the trade tensions) is an issue of concern," Asakawa said, conceding it took considerable time for G20 finance ministers and central bank heads to agree on their communique's language on trade. More "concrete" discussions on trade policy will

take place at the G20 Osaka summit, he added. The row over trade appeared to spread to currency policy when Trump criticised European Central Bank President Mario Draghi's dovish comments as aimed at weakening the euro to give the region's exports an unfair trade advantage.

Asakawa rebuffed the view the Bank of Japan's massive stimulus program could also provoke the ire of Trump. He also said the G20 shared an understanding that members would accept any exchange-rate moves driven by ultra-easy monetary policies as long as the measures are not directly aimed at manipulating currencies.

"The BOJ's ultra-easy policy is aimed at beating deflation, not at manipulating exchange rates. That's understood widely among the G20 economies," he said. Fears of the widening fallout from the trade war have heightened market expectations the US Federal Reserve will start cutting interest rates this year. Draghi said on Tuesday the ECB will ease again if inflation fails to accelerate.

The dovish tone of other central banks have piled pressure on the BOJ, though many analysts expect it to keep policy steady at least at this week's rate review. —Reuters

Turkish lira weakens on report detailing possible US sanctions

ISTANBUL: The Turkish lira weakened yesterday after Bloomberg said the United States is considering sanctions that could target Turkish defense companies, cutting them off from the U.S. financial system over Ankara's purchase of a Russian defense system.

Ankara and Washington have sparred publicly for months over the S-400 missile systems, expected to be delivered to Turkey as early as next month. Washington has said that would trigger US sanctions under CAI-SAA, a law calling for sanctions against countries procuring military equipment from Russia.

The lira stood at 5.8750 against the dollar at 0633 GMT, weakening from Tuesday's close of 5.8265. Earlier, it weakened as far as 5.9250. The most severe package under discussion would all but cripple the already troubled Turkish economy. Bloomberg reported three people familiar with the matter as saying.

It said the idea with the most support for now is to target several companies in Turkey's defense sector with sanctions that would effectively sever them from the US financial system, making it almost impossible for them to buy American components or sell their products in the United States.

"We see negative newsflow this morning. News that new sanctions are being assessed created selling pressure on the lira," said a treasury desk trader at one bank. "We can't say the impact is that great because no concrete step is expected before the Trump-Erdogan talks. But in the period ahead, relations with the US will remain the main topic on the market's agenda," he said. The dispute between the NATO allies has set investors on edge, sending the lira down nearly 10 percent against US dollar so far this year. A currency crisis last year tipped economy into recession. The S-400s are not compatible with NATO's defence systems and Washington says they would compromise its F-35 fighter jets. Ankara has repeatedly said that it will not back down from its Russian order adding that it will "take reciprocal steps" if the United States imposes sanctions. —Reuters

Global economic slowdown hits oil consumption

LONDON: Global oil consumption rose last year at the slowest rate since 2014, as higher prices and broad deceleration in manufacturing activity and freight movements took their toll on fuel use and petrochemicals. Consumption is likely to rise even more slowly in 2019, given the further weakening of most manufacturing and freight indicators since the start of the year.

World consumption increased by just 1.44 million barrels per day (1.46 percent) in 2018, according to the latest edition of the BP Statistical Review of World Energy, published on June 11.

Consumption growth slowed from 1.67 million bpd (1.72 percent) in 2017, 1.69 million bpd (1.78 percent) in 2016, and 1.85 million bpd (1.99 percent) in 2015. If the global economy experiences a mid-cycle slowdown this year similar to those in 2014/15 or 2011/12, consumption growth could decelerate to as little as 1.0 or 1.2 percent in 2019. Given current consumption of almost exactly 100 million barrels per day, that would imply an increase of just 1.0 to 1.2 million bpd in 2019.

A full-blown global recession would obviously reduce growth even further, potentially well below 1.0 million bpd, and leave the market severely oversupplied.

For the moment, all three major statistical agencies predict growth of around 1.2 million bpd in 2019, implying a mid-cycle slowdown but no recession. —Reuters

Japan says G20 summit to debate trade including WTO reform

TOKYO: Substantial discussions on trade, including reform of the World Trade Organization, will likely take place at a summit of Group of 20 major economies next week in Osaka, a senior Japanese finance ministry official said yesterday.

Japan, which chairs this year's G20 gatherings, will take a neutral stance in the US-China trade row and urge countries to resolve tensions with a multilateral framework, said Masatsugu Asakawa, vice finance minister for international affairs. "With regard to differences (on trade) between the United States and China, Japan of course won't take sides. We will also not take any steps that go against WTO

Business

Al Mulla Automobiles inaugurates Kuwait Automotive Academy

Academy established in partnership with Daimler AG and KIA



A group photo



KUWAIT: Management of Al Mulla Automobiles and representatives from Daimler AG and Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) during the inauguration of Al Mulla Automobile Academy

KUWAIT: Al Mulla Automobiles, the sole authorized distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, inaugurated last week Kuwait Automotive Academy and Al Mulla Automobiles Training Center at Shuwaikh Industrial area, in the presence of representatives from Daimler AG, the parent company of Mercedes-Benz, and Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA).

Kuwait Automotive Academy is the result of the successful partnership between Daimler AG and Kuwait Investment Authority, which is a major stakeholder in the parent company. Both parties share a common vision to provide advanced training programs and support the Kuwaiti youth who wish to work in the automotive industry.

During the inauguration, Talal Al Mulla, CEO of Al Mulla Group said: "We are proud of our partnership with Daimler AG, not only because they are among the leading manufacturers of vehicles in the world, but also because we share common values of innovation, excellence and commitment to the society."

"We are happy to support our partners in the opening of Kuwait Automotive Academy, which is a great facility that has a history of achievements in providing very specialist skills and expertise to our Kuwaiti youth. The Academy is a living example of how partnerships between the private and public sectors can be extremely successful and beneficial to all parties as well as the community," Al Mulla added.

Hashem Saif Al-Saif- Deputy Director, Training Department- Kuwait Investment Authority stated: "In February 28, 2005 the Kuwait Investment Authority and Daimler AG signed a memorandum of understanding to form the Kuwait Automotive Academy to focus on automotive technology, with the aim to train and empower Kuwaiti youth in the fields of vehicle checks,



A student explains the functions of a machine at the academy



A tour of the Academy

mechanical programming, and electrical elements to the highest standards." In addition Hashem Al-Saif commented on the various other development programs in place at the Kuwait Investment Authority, including the training programs on offer for new Kuwaiti graduates, an employment program for Kuwaitis in the World Bank, The Middle East Center for Economics and Finance program that is part of the IMF, and the MBA scholarship program provided to individuals joining top ranking Universities- according to the Financial Times rankings.

The academy offers advanced training programs that are facilitated by Daimler AG-certified experts, who provide Kuwaiti youth with the knowledge and expert-

ise they need to excel in the automotive industry, with a focus on Mercedes-Benz cars and trucks.

The new facility also contains Al Mulla Automobiles Training Center, which is the central location for Al Mulla Automobiles product-based training and educational programs provided to the company employees. Since its establishment in 2007 to date, the Academy has received over 117 trainees and provided them with high-quality educational programs in the automotive industry, without the need to travel abroad. The Academy is supported by the Kuwait Investment Authority as part of its belief in the industry as a vital sector in Kuwait's economy. The Academy receives up to 12 trainees per year.

The Kuwait Automotive Academy trains Kuwaiti youth who have completed their high school education, as well as a curriculum at the Applied Education and Training Institute or university, and who want to work in the automotive industry.

To join the Academy, applicants must meet certain criteria, such as a good technical understanding of the industry and proficiency in English. Training programs at the Academy cover mechanics, electronic and electrical systems, inspection programs, management, and marketing. The idea of the Academy was debated back in 2004. In 2005, a memorandum of understanding to establish the academy was signed between Kuwait Investment Authority and Daimler AG.

US fines firms transshipping via Cambodia to dodge China tariffs

PHNOM PENH: The United States has fined several companies for exporting goods via a Chinese-owned special economic zone in Cambodia in a bid to dodge President Donald Trump's tariffs on Chinese imports, a US Embassy official told Reuters yesterday.

Earlier this month, Vietnam's customs department said it had also found scores of cases of exporters illegally relabelling Chinese goods as "Made in Vietnam" in order to avoid tariffs imposed as a result of the ongoing US-China trade war. "The Department of Homeland Security has inspected and fined a number of companies for evading tariffs in the United States by routing goods through Cambodia," US Embassy spokesman Arend Zwartjes told Reuters in an emailed statement. "These companies are located in Cambodia's Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone," said Zwartjes, who did not name or say how many companies had been fined for avoiding the tariffs, how large the fines were, or what goods the companies had been exporting.

Zwartjes referred further questions to the US Department of Homeland Security, which did not immediately respond to a request for comment sent outside of office hours. Cambodia's customs department and foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request from Reuters for comment.

China is Cambodia's biggest aid donor and investor, pouring in billions of dollars in development assistance and loans through the Belt and Road initiative, which aims to bolster land and sea links with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

The Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone (SSEZ), 210 kilometers (130 miles) west of the capital, Phnom Penh, is a Chinese and Cambodian joint venture in the Belt and Road initiative which produces textiles, garments, bags and leather products, according to its website. The zone did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment. Under a trade agreement that was expanded in 2016, the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) allows Cambodia to export travel goods such as bags, luggage and accessories, to the United States duty free.

Kaing Monika, Deputy Secretary General of the Garment Manufacturers Association of Cambodia (GMAC), which represents 600 garment factories in Cambodia, said he was unaware of the transshipments. The \$7-billion apparel industry is the largest formal employer in the Southeast Asian country. Cambodia's economy grew 7.5 percent last year, a four-year high, compared with 7 percent in 2017, helped by rising exports to the United States, the World Bank said in April. —Reuters

Gulf Air signed up as official carrier of Bahrain Int'l Airshow 2020/22

LE BOURGET, Paris: Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, yesterday signed a sponsorship agreement with the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications' Civil Aviation Affairs entitling the airline to become again the official carrier of the Bahrain International Airshow in its 6th and 7th editions in 2020 and 2022. The agreement was signed by both parties in a signing ceremony that took place during the Paris International Airshow at Le Bourget, Paris in France.

The signing ceremony was attended by Engineer Kamal bin Ahmed Mohammed, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications and Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee for Bahrain International

Airshow and Gulf Air's CEO Kresimir Kucko at the Paris Air Show. Gulf Air has been the official carrier since the pilot edition of the Bahrain International Airshow in 2010 and it continues to support this important biennial event in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Commenting on the renewal of the official carrier deal, the minister said, "The Bahrain International Airshow 2020 marks a decade of success since it first launched in 2010 and we are very pleased to have had Gulf Air as the official carrier of each of the airshow's editions and a contributor to its success. We look forward to continuing on this success leveraging our partnership with Gulf Air, as the airline helps us to bring the leaders of the global aerospace industry to Bahrain."

"We are very proud to hold the official carrier title of the very prestigious Bahrain International Airshow each time it is hosted in the Kingdom. This is a fantastic platform to promote Bahrain along with our evolving airline and it continues to be a great international forum to network with key industry players," Kresimir Kucko, Gulf Air CEO

In China's Chongqing, high-rises buck property slowdown

CHONGQING, China: In many Chinese cities, government restrictions have cooled formerly feverish property markets, but in the southwestern city of Chongqing, construction is booming and sales soaring as investors rush in. The most audacious evidence is one of the newest additions to the city's skyline, a mega project of eight futuristic high-rises, six of which are connected by a vertiginous skybridge.

The behemoth Raffles City Chongqing looms over a bend in the Jialing river, where its dark-green waters meet the muddy currents of the Yangtze. The 73-storey towers, part of a project built at a cost of \$4.8 billion, are unmistakable proof that a slowdown which has seen sales slump nationwide has not taken hold in Chongqing.

In recent years, Beijing has banned capital flight, curbing investments in foreign projects like a luxury development built by Chinese developers in Malaysia.

And authorities have tightened regulations in the country's main cities, requiring buyers to show proof of residence before

purchasing homes. Those rules have benefited places like Chongqing, a key logistics staging point in China's Belt and Road Initiative.

The city is China's largest market in terms of area of residential apartments sold: some 31.23 million square meters (336 million square feet) of new homes were sold in 2018, with sales of new homes jumping 64.3 percent in March, compared to a 0.6 percent drop nationally. And the sales came despite Chongqing's economy losing steam after years of double-digit growth, with its gross domestic product growing just 5.3 percent in 2018 — well below the national pace.

The scale of construction has been so rapid that prices have begun to drop as supply stacks up, but the lower prices are helping attract buyers. "Chongqing is now at a point where there is an abundance of supply and it's in a phase of market correction," said Andrew Deng, managing director for western China at property consultancy CBRE. "It's a buyer's market and many are taking advantage of that," he added.

Prices for a 98-square-metre one-bedroom unit at Raffles City starts at \$4 million yuan (\$580,000), and developers say three-quarters of the 775 residential units in three towers have been sold.

Potential buyers reportedly including diplomatic missions, as well as tech and



commented. He also added: "We have been the official carrier since the beginning and we are honored to continue this relationship with our friends at the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications. The airshow witnessed significant moments for Gulf Air as we announced our fleet orders in 2016 and 2 years later displayed the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner and the Airbus 320neo to the visitors of the show and the world."

The airline continues to support mega events in Bahrain that promote the Kingdom to the global audience. Gulf Air is the title sponsor of the Formula 1 Bahrain Grand Prix, which established the Kingdom as a major host of motorsport events in the region and the world. With the renewal of Bahrain International Airshow agreement, Gulf Air will continue to promote the Kingdom as one of the main aviation hubs in the region.



The Raffles City Chongqing under construction through an installation in south-west China's Chongqing Municipality. In many Chinese cities, government restrictions have cooled formerly feverish property markets, but in the southwestern city of Chongqing, construction is booming and sales soaring as investors rush in. —AFP

finance firms. But for many locals, whose average monthly salary in 2016 was 6,100 yuan (\$880), properties like Raffles City represent another out-of-reach part of the cityscape. "I suppose there will be some influence on the housing price nearby, which will probably go up," said local

Wang Mingjun. He noted that traditional porters working the docks in the area had been cleared out during the property's development. "Some people consider that it's too modern and it will damage the traditional dock culture," he added. —AFP

What's On



Embassy of Palestine to Kuwait honors high school graduates

By Faten Omar

The Embassy of Palestine to Kuwait honored Palestinian high school graduates of the 2018-2019 academic year on Tuesday at the embassy in Bayan. During his opening speech, Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub congratulated the students, saying that Palestine's future is in their hands and their responsibility is to maintain the path of excellence.

"We are honoring today, 12 girls and 1 male student from the Palestinian community. That shows how smart our women are. Palestinian women have played a great role in many fields around the world," he said. Regarding the scholarships, Tahboub said that the embassy has cooperation with Kuwait Education Ministry to increase the number of scholarships. "Kuwait offers two scholarships at Kuwait University and five at the Publish Authority for Applied Education and training, along with private universities

such as Kuwait College of Science and Technology that offers 50 percent discount."

He added that the scholarships will be given according to a certain basis and criteria, for the highest degree in high school, the social status of the student's family, and the eligibility of the student. He revealed that during this week, the Kuwaiti Committee of the Ministry of Education went to Palestine to interview Palestinian teachers to determine the number of teachers to be accepted. "The Ministry of Education will choose from 180 to 200 Palestinian teachers and the number may increase."

Meanwhile, Tahboub said that some Kuwaitis received the documents of their properties in Palestine. "During his visit, Chairman of Land Authority in Palestine, Judge Moussa Shakarna, met some Kuwaitis who own properties in Palestine and handed over the papers of their real estate that they own in Palestine," he said adding that Kuwaitis must ensure that they can receive



Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

their properties in Palestine whenever they want. At the end of the event, he thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for all that Kuwait is doing for Palestine, its cause and its people.



Symphony Style Kuwait conducts fire drill



Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel's Safety and Security Team along with the responsible business team organized a full-scale fire drill in which guests and staff have successfully taken part. The initiative implemented was in line with one of our three key responsible business pillars 'Think People'.

Initially, our guests and staff were notified of the fire-drill in advance, prior to sounding the alarms for them to gather at the assembly point. Symphony Style Kuwait's General Manager, Peter Schuler, personally supervised the full drill operation, in order to ensure that the best practices and procedures were

performed during the drill's execution.

As Peter Schuler addressed the drill's success, he also urged the staff to provide constant feedback and maintain communication with colleagues to ensure effectively carrying out the correct procedures in the fire drill. Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel's responsible business has maintained the key pillar of 'Think People' in its commitment to creating a safely secure environment for guests, which in turn sets a standard as a global leader in business ethics. In addition to 'Think People', 'Think Community' and 'Think Planet' are two important pillars for our responsible business program.



Corsica's 'cat-fox': On the trail of what may be a new species

ASCO, France: In the forest undergrowth of northern Corsica, two wildlife rangers open a cage to reveal a striped, tawny-coated animal, one of 16 felines known as "cat-foxes" in the area and thought to be a new species. "We believe that it's a wild natural species which was known but not scientifically identified because it's an extremely inconspicuous animal with nocturnal habits," says Pierre Benedetti, chief environmental technician of the National Hunting and Wildlife Office (ONCFS).

"It's a wonderful discovery," he tells AFP, holding the feline-called "Ghjattu volpe" in Corsican-found in Asco forest on the French Mediterranean island. While resembling a domestic cat in some ways, the ring-tailed feline measures 90 centimeters from head to tail, has "very wide" ears, short whiskers and "highly developed" canine teeth. Other distinguishing features include the stripes on the front legs, "very dark" hind legs and a russet stomach. The dense, silky coat is a natural repellent for fleas, ticks and lice.

The tail usually has two to four rings and a black tip. "It's their size and their tail that earned them the name 'cat-fox'

across the island," says Benedetti. The animals are found in a remote habitat where there is "water and plant cover offering protection against its main predator, the golden eagle," says Carlu-Antone Cecchini, ONCFS field agent in charge of forest cats. Using nonviolent methods, the ONCFS has since 2016 captured 12 of 16 felines seen in the area, releasing them again after a quick examination. Now, they say, they hope to have "this cat recognized and protected" within two to four years.

Legend has it

"The cat-fox is part of our shepherd mythology. From generation to generation, they told stories of how the forest cats would attack the udders of their ewes and goats," says Cecchini. After years of playing cat and mouse, one of the animals "was caught unexpectedly in 2008 in a chicken coop at Olcani in Cap Corse," says Benedetti, who has been researching the species for more than 10 years.

Research got under way and, in 2012, with the help of a method involving essence attractive to cats and a wooden

stick which they rub against leaving traces of their fur, they were able to determine its genetic make-up. "By looking at its DNA, we could tell it apart from the European wildcat, Felis silvestris silvestris. It's close to the African forest cat, Felis silvestris lybica, but its exact identity is still to be determined," Benedetti adds.

With advanced photographic and later physical traps, the researchers captured their first "cat-fox" in 2016. There are still many mysteries surrounding the cat. Its diet and reproductive patterns are yet to be studied but Benedetti has a theory that the cat could have been brought to Corsica by farmers 6,500 years BC. "If the hypothesis is true, its origins are Middle Eastern," he says.

The identification chip in the neck of the animal being shown to AFP helps reveal that it is a male of between four and six years old, already caught a few times before and has a damaged eye caused by a fight with another male. After examination, the cat with one green eye and one brown eye is free to go, leaving behind its GPS collar with 80 days' data. — AFP



ASCO, France: A picture in Asco on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica shows a 'ghjattu volpe' (fox-cat) Felis silvestris.—AFP

CLINIC

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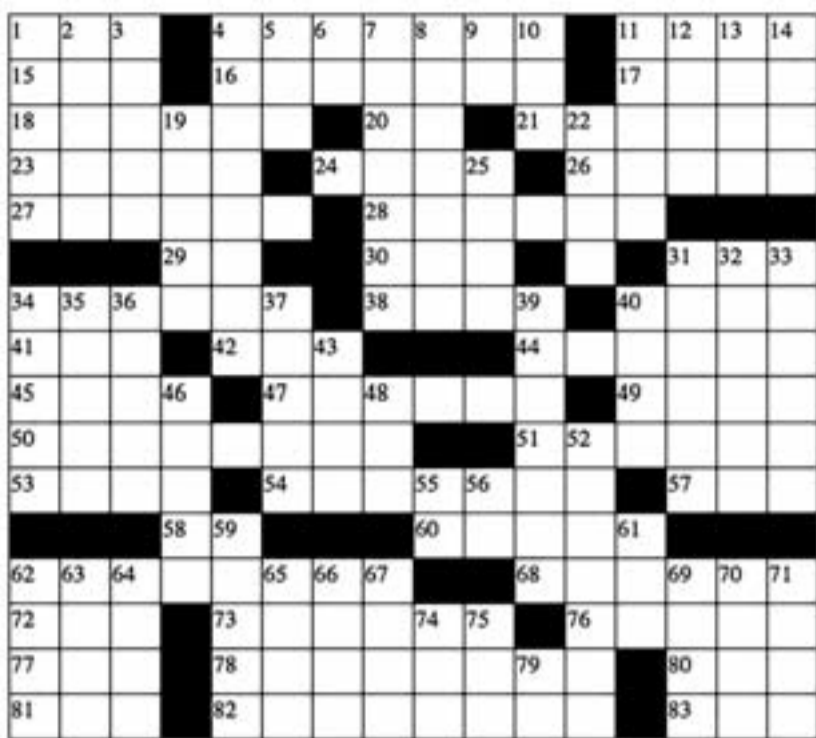
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2236



ACROSS

1. The network in the reticular formation that serves an alerting or arousal function.
4. The capital and largest city of Georgia on the Kura river.
11. (informal) A bunch.
15. A metal-bearing mineral valuable enough to be mined.
16. Genus of low-growing mat-forming New Zealand plants.
17. A South American shrub whose leaves are chewed by natives of the Andes.
18. Capable of wounding.
20. Being one more than fifty.
21. On a ship, train, plane or other vehicle.
23. The boy whose upbringing was described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
24. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
26. Type genus of the Ardeidae.
27. Argue or speak in defense of.
28. Compel or impose.
29. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
30. The compass point that is midway between north and northeast.
34. Roman general who commanded the invasion of Carthage in the second Punic War and defeated Hannibal at Zama (circa 237-183 BC).
38. A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
41. Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.
42. A digital display that uses liquid crystal cells that change reflectivity in an applied electric field.
44. Occurring or payable every year.
45. Located in or toward the back or rear.
47. Derived from or containing calcium or lime.
49. The basic unit of money in Cambodia.
50. Be in awe of.
51. Remote city of Kazakhstan that (ostensibly for security reasons) was made the capital in 1998.
53. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
54. (New Testament) Disciple of Jesus.
57. A long projecting or anterior elongation of an animal's head.
58. Before noon.
60. An island of central Hawaii.
62. Tall tufted perennial tropical American grass naturalized as pasture and forage grass in southern United States.
68. Raised for its long silky hair which is the true mohair.
72. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
73. Discover or determine the existence, presence, or fact of.
76. Any of various cycads of the genus *Zamia*.
77. A flexible container with a single opening.
78. Extinct order of jawless vertebrates.
80. The month following March and preceding May.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
82. A great raja.
83. (meaning literally 'born') Used to indicate the maiden or family name of a married woman.

DOWN

1. Dressed or clothed especially in fine attire.
2. An edible seaweed with a mild flavor.
3. (printing) A short line at the end of the main strokes of a character.
4. A wooden peg that is used to fasten timbers in shipbuilding.
5. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
6. (Greek mythology) A maiden seduced by Zeus.
7. Causing to become tranquil.
8. Small genus of perennial herbs or shrubs.
9. A complete metric system of units of measurement for scientists.
10. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
11. A number or letter indicating quality (especially of a student's performance).
12. A blue dyestuff obtained from the woad plant.
13. A unit of area (4840 square yards) used in English-speaking countries.
14. An informal term for a father.
19. A short high tone produced as a signal or warning.
22. A vigorous blow.
25. A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
31. A complete viral particle.
32. One of two alternative forms of a genes that can have the same locus on homologous chromosomes and are responsible for alternative traits.
33. United States space station.
35. Someone unpleasantly strange or eccentric.
36. Complacently or inanely foolish.
37. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
39. Type genus of the Lycaenidae.
40. A commercial leavening agent containing yeast cells.
43. A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
46. A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
48. A serve that strikes the net before falling into the receiver's court.
52. A festival featuring African-American culture.
55. A soft gray malleable metallic element that resembles tin but discolors on exposure to air.
56. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
59. A woman of refinement.
61. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
63. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
64. An narrative telling the adventures of a hero or a family.
65. A Russian river.
66. A state in the western United States.
67. Flat tableland with steep edges.
69. A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
70. Fully developed or matured and ready to be eaten or used.
71. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
74. An emergency procedure consisting of external cardiac massage and artificial respiration.
75. Brief episode in which the brain gets insufficient blood supply.
79. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

If you have been debating on a new business approach, today is the day to make it happen. Much success will come your way. Make the pitch, present the proposal. Today is a day you will get the results you have been dreaming of. You are convincing and have a way with your words today. You will be able to make others see things your way. By the time you are through, those involved will see things your way and have the exact desires you do. Stay on top of news about money matters. This is a very profitable time for you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

A time of major change in your life is upon you. It will be strange and unusual in many ways. Everything new, unusual, and revolutionary seems to appeal to you now. A more eccentric side of you emerges. Thinking outside of the box may lead to a very profitable and creative invention. Let your thoughts lead you. You may find those close to you may be a bit uncomfortable with this unusual side of you. Taurus. Don't worry. They will grow to love the new you.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may be feeling drawn and even turned on by that which is taboo. Sex, power, and the pursuit of wealth are beginning to be a driving force behind your emotions. You are fascinated by people. What makes them tick? What makes them do? What makes them tick? You desire a fresh start in your life and major changes. You know this may only be accomplished by turning your back on all you believed and starting over with an open mind and a new outlook on life in general.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

All that is mysterious and taboo seem to draw you in. Curiosity may have killed the cat but that is a chance you are willing to take. You are craving excitement and long to experience something new. This is a great time of creativity for you. A change of scenery or a change of style are coming your way. You may be drawn to the unusual and avant garde. Out with the old and in with the new. Watch out world! Expect to turn some heads today.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is a day you will crave all eyes to be on you. You crave attention. From the way you dress, to the way you carry yourself, the center of attention is what you can expect to be. All eyes are on you. You will shine today. It seems as if everything conspires to bring out your more unique and unusual qualities. It may seem as if things work in your favor today. Solutions to old problems will come easy. This is a great day to spend some time working on a new invention.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may feel a need for change is long overdue. You may want to break old habits and set out on a new path. You may find yourself drawn to a different lifestyle and find yourself going against the grain. You desire to be a part of a new and different crowd and feel as if something is pulling you in a direction beyond any comfort zone you have known. Today may find you lacking direction and this may lead to conflict in the work place as you appear lost with no focus. This is an internal conflict and there is no need to try to explain this to others close to you as it may cause frustration when your ideas are not met with acceptance by others.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

The sky is the limit for you today. You are optimistic and can accomplish anything you set your mind to. You have faith and are willing to take chances on an emotional level that may bring great reward and happiness your way. You may be deep within your feelings and have a desire to experience something new. An emotional wanderlust, if you will, is the desire of your heart. Today you are all about you. Your wants, needs, and desires, take over and all you can do is pursue what your heart wants. This is a very productive day for you physically and emotionally. You will find peace and happiness in accomplishing the goals you have set for yourself today. Libra. Reach for the stars! You may just be the one that can touch them.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be feeling drawn and even turned on by that which is taboo. Sex, power, and the pursuit of wealth are beginning to be a driving force behind your emotions. You are fascinated by people. What makes them tick? What makes them do? You desire a fresh start in your life and major changes. You know this may only be accomplished by turning your back on all you believed and starting over with an open mind and a new outlook on life in general.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Stress plays a bigger role in your life than usual. Under pressure is not the best position to be in to make decisions. When tensions are high like you may experience today, it is best to but off any decisions for later. Hit the road, take a drive, or just do what it takes to add a bit of relaxation into your world. You may find someone turning to you for advice or as a shoulder to cry on. Pouring your time into helping someone may seem to relieve your stress and minimize your own problems. Helping others could be the best way to help yourself.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself wanting to broaden your horizons. You know this is a big world and your life is contained in a tiny square of it. It may be time to take a step out of that box and find what the world has to offer you. You could find it difficult to communicate with others today because you find your mind is a million miles away. Curiosity has taken a hold on you and you can't seem to stay focused on the here and now. You may find this evening that a good book may be just what you need to find this escape you have been searching for. A good time for rest and relaxation is in order for you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You tend to bore easily. This is a time where you crave something different, something out of the ordinary. The only way to bring about change in your world is for you, yourself to make changes. Think outside of the box. Dare to dream the impossible. Reach for the stars. One day you just may be one. You crave excitement and something that will set your soul on fire. Trying new things and surrounding yourself with new friends may be in order. Let no one set limits on your life. You are in control and you have the power to acquire everything your heart desires.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You're into the organic diet and toxic free lifestyle; this is reflected in the contents of your garden and kitchen. You're focused like a laser on reaching certain financial goals and anything that threatens this rattles you; take a deep breath and conquer! You're in a position to caretake someone who's unable to take care of themselves in some way; you happily attend to this. You go the extra mile to help someone at work and this opens your eyes to the plight of someone else. A melancholy energy could infuse your environment; realizing that we live on a sometimes harsh planet is a downer until you take a look at the wonderful life you lead.

Wordsearch Puzzle

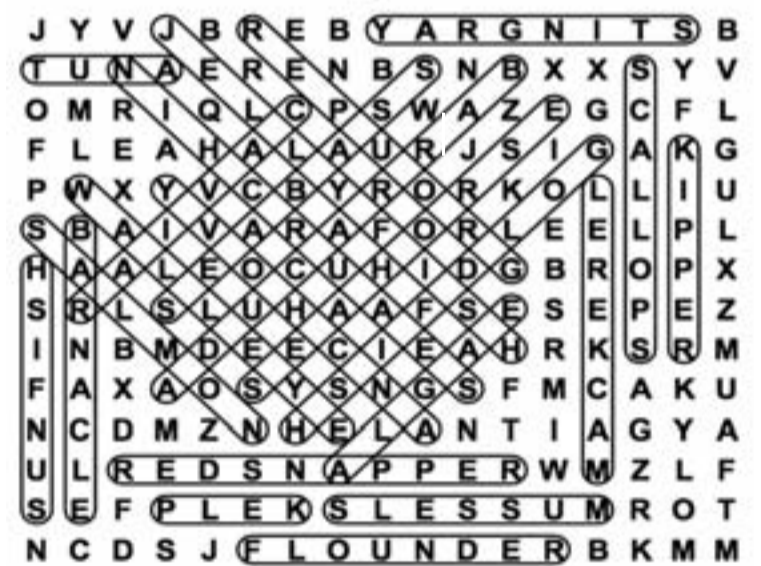
Spring - Word Search



- | | | |
|------------|----------|----------|
| APRIL | GOLF | RAIN |
| BASEBALL | GREEN | ROBINS |
| DAFFODILS | GROWTH | SEASON |
| EARTHWORMS | INSECTS | SNOWMELT |
| EASTER | LILIES | TULIPS |
| EQUINOX | MARCH | WARMER |
| FLOWERS | MAY | WET |
| FROGS | PLANTING | |

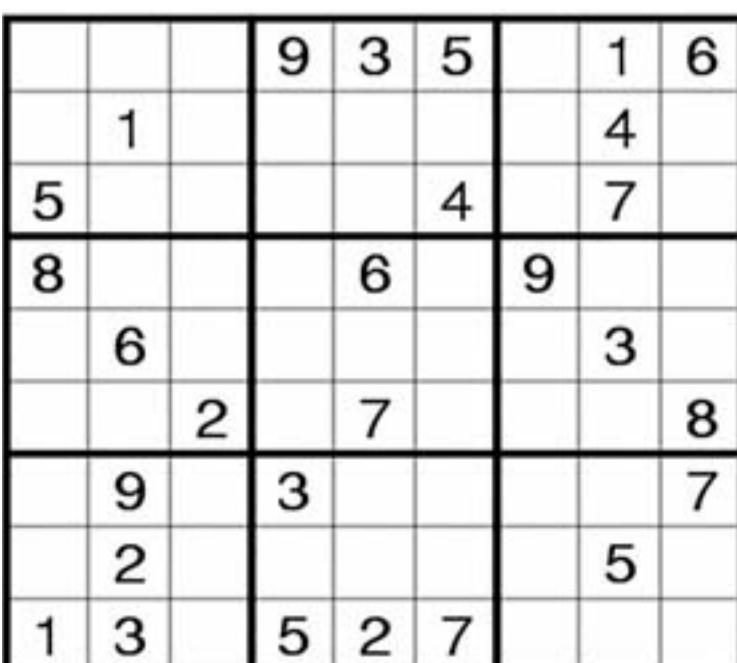
Yesterday's Solution

Smells Fishy 2 - Solution



- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|----------|
| ALGAE | KELP | SEAHORSE |
| ANCHOVY | KIPPER | STINGRAY |
| BARNACLE | MACKEREL | SUNFISH |
| BARRACUDA | MUSSELS | TUNA |
| CAVIAR | RED SNAPPER | WALLEYE |
| FLOUNDER | SALMON | |
| GOLDFISH | SCALLOPS | |
| GROUPE | SEA BASS | |

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2019



Installation of colorful balloons by Portuguese artist Patricia Cunha on display at Cour St Emilion at Bercy Village, in Paris. — AFP

Tiny houses entice budget conscious Americans

In a country that nearly always believes bigger is better—think supersize fries, giant cars and 10-gallon hats—more and more Americans are downsizing their living quarters. Welcome to the world of tiny homes, most of them less than 400 square feet (less than 40 square meters), which savvy buyers are snapping up for their minimalist appeal and much smaller carbon footprints. The tiny homes revolution, which includes those on foundations and those on wheels, began a few decades ago, but the financial crisis of 2008 and the coming-of-age of millennials gave it a new impetus. The proliferation of home improvement shows on networks like HGTV fueled the trend, inspiring customers ready to personalize their own small living spaces.

Cost is one of the driving factors—a tiny home of just over 200 square feet with a customized interior can go for about \$50,000 — a massive savings over a McMansion in the suburbs. “We have a housing crisis and we have crumbling buildings around us. It’s just hard to find good quality living at an affordable price,” says Brandy Jones, who took the plunge with her husband and two sons. Eight months ago, they moved into a tiny house in Reading, Pennsylvania, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) northwest of Philadelphia.

Jones says that for a new house in the area, the family would have had to budget for about \$300,000. The tiny home option “is a huge difference. It makes living affordable.” In most cases, the savings is not enough of a motivating factor: the average newly-built family home in the United States measures about 2,600 square feet, according to the Census Bureau. Marcus Stoltzfus, the director of sales and marketing for Liberation Tiny Homes in nearby Leola, says that over the last 40 years, Americans “went into this McMansion phase, where they built those mas-

sive homes.” Now, in some parts of the country, “people are realizing that living with less is very advantageous to your lifestyle.”

No ‘wasted space’

Scott Berrier, who moved into a 370-square-foot home about four months ago with his wife Melissa, says he’s happy not to have as many possessions as before. “We really like the whole minimalist approach—kind of paring down and not having clutter everywhere and everything,” Berrier explained, adding that his home is simply more functional. “The biggest difference I notice is that we use every single space. There is not any wasted space,” he said. Roland Figueredo, who plans to leave his New York apartment in July for a tiny house in Oregon, says he’s ready for a change. “We truly are trying to simplify our life and getting rid of our crap,” he said.

Even if public opinion is changing, it’s not always easy to go against societal norms and materialistic expectations. When Berrier told friends of his plans, several of them warned him that his new home would make him feel claustrophobic. Stoltzfus admits the trend can seem “very hipster-ish” and suffers from a bit of a negative image, but he believes that will change over time. “The more that folks travel, work from home, this trend will definitely be up there,” he said.

‘Preconceived notions

Berrier says wanting to live a more minimalist life extends to the environmental impact of home ownership. “You’re not leaving as much of a carbon footprint. You’re not using as much electricity, as much water” as in a traditional home or apartment, he notes. Despite the advantages, the tiny homes movement is far from wide-



Melissa Meshey walks out of her tiny home called Grackle, built at Liberation Tiny Homes, in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. — AFP photos

spread. Rough estimates put the number of tiny homes in the United States at a little more than 10,000. The first sticking point is financing—would-be homeowners are finding it impossible to get traditional loans for non-traditional houses.

Banks are instead offering medium-term loans of up to seven years—at significantly higher interest rates than regular loans. But the main obstacle is a legal one: most municipalities and towns ban residents from living year-round in anything on wheels, and often have statutes requiring homes to be at least 900 square feet. Several US states such as Colorado, Nevada and North Carolina are seen as more progressive on the issue, but the country’s

most populated areas have for the most part ignored the movement.

Historically in American culture, bungalows, caravans and mobile homes have a bad reputation—they are seen as badly made and decidedly lower-class. But the Berriers’ home is impeccably decorated with a bathtub, a sunroom and a movie screen—no “trailer trash” here. “There are preconceived notions. They haven’t seen it enough. It’s just something new. I think that’s the problem,” Berrier said.

‘Night and day’

Homes made by Liberation Tiny Homes like the Berriers’ place are “built like a normal house” with the same materials, explained Stoltzfus. So far, the company has completed more than 65 projects since launching in 2015. For Jones, who lived in a motor home for several months before moving into her new place, “a travel trailer compared to a tiny house is night and day.”

And while some non-profit organizations are building tiny homes for the homeless, the movement is primarily targeted at young couples with the means to spend more than they would on a mobile home. To vault over the many legal hurdles, many tiny home buyers are setting up their places without permits from local urban planning officials. But others are opting for tiny house communities, which are on solid legal footing and are sprouting up all over.

Tiny Estates in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania took over a former campground and obtained the necessary permits to accommodate tiny homes on wheels. “It’s important to go to your town meetings, your borough meetings and just say, ‘Hey, here’s what they are,’” says Berrier. “It’s not some clandestine little sketchy thing. These are beautiful tiny houses, well designed. If anything, they add property value to things.” — AFP



A reporter looks in the window of a tiny home called Alfa in the woods of Tiny Home Estates.



Scott Berrier and Melissa Meshey smile inside their tiny home, built at Liberation Tiny Homes.



Producers had Men in Black: International casting doubts

The 'Men in Black: International' producers initially didn't want to cast Tessa Thompson alongside Chris Hemsworth after they acted opposite each other in 'Thor: Ragnarok'. Walter Parkes and Laurie Macdonald revealed that it was looked upon as a "potential negative" that Tessa, 35, and Chris, 35, had starred as alongside each other as Thor and Valkyrie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe movie as they didn't want it to seem like they had "no imagination". However, the producers insisted they made the correct decision in casting the Chris and Tessa as agent H and agent M respectively as audiences are "embracing" the idea of the actors as a "duo". In an interview with Collider, Parkes

said: "It was looked upon as a potential negative". Macdonald added: "For us it was, 'is it a potential negative?' But we felt that..." Prompting Parkes to interject: "But on the other hand there was proof of concept. We saw that she, and this is the most important thing, you have Chris Hemsworth, that looks like Chris Hemsworth and has Chris Hemsworth confidence and charm and size, everything. Who can stand up to him? Who can absolutely hold their own? In a way that isn't even competitive but is just like elemental forces. Not that many people, and we did see evidence of that. It's not why we cast her, in fact we had certain trepidations about how we proceed." Macdonald said: "We didn't want to look like, do we have no imagina-

tion?" Parkes replied: "But, as it turns out, it was the right casting and, in fact, people are embracing the idea that it's that duo back together again." The sci-fi blockbuster is a spin-off of the main 'Men In Black' series which starred Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones as two agents working for a secret government agency working to police aliens living on Earth and protecting the planet from extra-terrestrial threats. Hemsworth and Thompson star are joined in the movie by all-star cast which includes Kumail Nanjiani, Liam Neeson, Rafe Spall, Emma Thompson and Rebecca Ferguson.

Freida Pinto joins Hillbilly Elegy

Freida Pinto has joined 'Hillbilly Elegy'. The movie - which has been in development since 2017 - is based on the 2016 bestselling memoir of the same name by author J.D. Vance, and the 34-year-old actress will be directed by Ron Howard in the motion picture. Bo Hopkins and Owen Asztalos have also been added to the cast, which already had Amy Adams, Glenn Close, Gabriel Basso and Haley Bennett attached. Vanessa Taylor has adapted the script, while Vance and Julie Oh will executive produce, with Howard, Brian Grazer and Karen Lunder set to produce the film. The book tells the tale of Vance - who was born in Kentucky - growing up in the Rust Belt, an area of the United States from the Great Lakes to the upper Midwest, where de-industrialization caused economic decline, population loss, and urban decay. Thanks to his grandmother, the author learned to appreciate his education which eventually helped him rise out of poverty. Netflix won a bidding war to finance the \$45 million movie in January. Imagine Entertainment previously secured the rights to the book following a bidding war, and the company's president Erica Huggins previously described the tome as a "powerful, true coming-of-age memoir". She said in a statement: "'Hillbilly Elegy' is a powerful, true coming-of-age memoir by J.D. Vance. "Through the lens of a colorful, chaotic family, and with remarkable compassion and self-awareness, J.D. has been able to look back on his own upbringing as a 'hillbilly' to illuminate the plight of America's white working class, speaking directly to the turmoil of our current political climate." Freida is known for her roles in British drama 'Slumdog Millionaire' and science fiction film 'Rise of the Planet of the Apes'.



Toy Story 4 director felt 'numb' after seeing Tom Hanks watch film



Toy Story 4' director Josh Cooley says he felt "numb" after seeing Tom Hanks' reaction to the film. The 39-year-old filmmaker became emotional at the US premiere of the Disney/Pixar movie after turning to look at the 62-year-old Hollywood star - who has voiced cowboy doll Woody in the animated franchise since 1995 - and seeing him with a "huge smile" on his face. Speaking to the Metro.co.uk, he said: "Recently we had the US premiere and I had Tom [Hanks] sitting right in front of me the entire time, and he hadn't seen the movie yet. When it was over, he turned around and had a huge smile, and shook my hand. I was so numb. I can't quite remember what he said, but it was positive." The 'Inside Out' writer went on to explain that although he was daunted by the prospect of taking on such a well-loved film series, the movie's "great cast" - which features the likes of Tim Allen as Space Ranger action figure Buzz Lightyear and Keanu Reeves playing new character Duke Caboom - were able to help him "steer" the film in the right direction. Cooley said: "It was pretty daunting. It's like, 'Here's a brand new Lamborghini. Go as fast as you can and don't scratch it.' And I'm like, 'I don't have a licence!' But I had a great cast and a great crew that helped me steer that Lamborghini straight back home." Hanks recently opened up about the making of 'Toy Story 4', and he described his final scenes as "profound". He previously said: "I didn't want to have any self-consciousness for what I knew was going to be the ... last few hours I was spending with the movie. "When it came to pass, I felt as though I was on the other side of the river waving to everybody I had left back in the old country. It was pretty profound." — Bang Showbiz

Eiza Gonzalez joins thriller I Care A Lot

Eiza Gonzalez has joined the cast of 'I Care A Lot'. The 29-year-old actress and singer is on board to star in an unknown role in the upcoming thriller alongside 'Game of Thrones' actor Peter Dinklage, 49, and 'Gone Girl' star Rosamund Pike, 50. Dinklage's role is being kept under wraps for now, but Pike will portray a successful legal guardian called Marla Grayson who cherry picks what appears to be her ideal client, but soon comes to the conclusion that looks can be deceiving. J Blakeson will direct the movie and has written the script for the project, which is due to begin filming later this month. Blakeson's Sugar November will produce the motion picture, as will the director himself, alongside Teddy Schwarzman's Black Bear, and Sacha Guitenstein will executive produce the film. Speaking in March, Schwarzman said: "Black Bear is thrilled to partner with J and Rosamund to bring 'I Care A Lot' to life. "J has written one of the boldest and most entertaining scripts we've ever read, and we have been a fan of J's work ever since seeing 'The Disappearance of Alice Creed'. "We can think of no one better to play I Care A Lot's fierce, intelligent and unrelenting lead than Rosamund Pike, who deserves all the accolades she's received to date and more. "We can't wait to see Rosamund do something truly memorable with this iconic role." Eiza is best known for her roles playing Monica "Darling" Castello in the action crime thriller 'Baby Driver', written-and-directed by Edgar Wright, and Nyssiana in the cyberpunk action film 'Alita: Battle Angel'.



Lionsgate planning The Hunger Games prequel movie

Lionsgate is planning a 'Hunger Games' prequel movie, based on a forthcoming novel from Suzanne Collins. The 56-year-old author recently announced that she'll be penning another instalment of the dystopian franchise and is working closely with the studio on a new movie which will take place in fictional world of Panem, 64 years before the events of the original books. Joe Drake, chairman of the Lionsgate Motion Picture Group, said in a statement: "As the proud home of the 'Hunger Games' movies, we can hardly wait for Suzanne's next book to be published. We've been communicating with her during the writing process and we look forward to continuing to work closely with her on the movie." The original best-selling trilogy - comprised of 'The Hunger Games', 'Catching Fire' and 'Mockingjay' - follows Katniss Everdeen as she's thrust into a compulsory televised battle to the death called The Hunger Games and was adapted into a film series starring Jennifer Lawrence in the main role in 2008. The prequel will explore "the state of nature" during the so-called Dark Days following a failed rebellion in the totalitarian city and will focus on rebuilding Panem as it "struggles back to its feet". Collins said: "With this book, I wanted to explore the state of nature, who we are, and what we perceive is required for our survival. The reconstruction period ten years after the war, commonly referred to as the Dark Days - as the country of Panem struggles back to its feet - provides fertile ground for characters to grapple with these questions and thereby define their views of humanity."



Sevigny's foolish fears in The Dead Don't Die

Chloe Sevigny was scared she would look like an "utter fool" next to Adam Driver and Bill Murray in 'The Dead Don't Die'. The 44-year-old actress stars alongside Adam, 35 and Bill, 68, in Jim Jarmusch's zombie-comedy film as small-town cops trying their best to deal with an uprising of the undead - and the 'Act' star admitted that she was embarrassed to be "playing the trauma and the stakes" while her co-stars gave such a "deadpan" performance. In an interview with Comingsoon.net, she said: "I wasn't really playing the deadpan I was playing the trauma and the stakes. "So I was just afraid that I was gonna look like an utter fool next to these two [Driver and Murray] out deadpanning each other." Adam then joked: "We had a deadpan competition. Who could not move their mouth the most and not get their line out." 'Star Wars: The Last Jedi' star Adam went on to explain that he and Bill weren't "consciously" giving a deadpan performance but thanks to the "thoughtful and introspective" characters written by Jim - who also helmed the film - he was able to easily portray his alter-ego. He said: "I think it's that we're not consciously thinking let's do this deadpan his characters are like very thoughtful and introspective so there's a lot of thought and what comes out is you know minimal." Chloe interjected: "It's more like the timing and the weight, there's a lot of breathe." Adam replied: "You're watching people think a lot. That's what I liked about Jim is that he trusts that that's cinematic enough watching people think and [wondering] what they're gonna come out with."

Abrams joins Chemical Hearts

Austin Abrams has joined the cast of 'Chemical Hearts'. The 22-year-old actor - who is best known for his role as Ron Anderson in 'The Walking Dead' - will take the male lead opposite Lili Reinhart in the big screen adaptation of Krystal Sutherland's young adult novel 'Our Chemical Hearts'. The movie, which is written and directed by Richard Tanne for Amazon Prime Video, will follow Henry Page (Abrams), a hopeless teen romantic who has never been in love and is focusing all his attention on getting good grades and attending a decent college. When he meets Grace Town, a new student who walks with a cane, wears oversized boys' clothes, and rarely seems to shower, and begins editing the school newspaper with her, he quickly finds himself falling for her. Julie Rapaport, Co-Head of Movies at Amazon Studios, said in a statement: "We are thrilled to work with this talented team to bring to life a beautiful story of first love and heartbreak. "Krystal Sutherland's novel captured the hearts of readers around the world, and we are excited to bring this film to our global Prime Video customers." 'Chemical Hearts' will be produced by Page Fifty-Four's Alex Saks and Tanne while the film is executive produced by Jamin O'Brien and Reinhart, in her first executive producer role. As well as 'The Walking Dead', Austin also starred in 2015 American romantic comedy-drama film 'Paper Towns', which was an adaptation of John Green's

2008 novel of the same name alongside Nat Wolff and Cara Delevingne, as well as upcoming 2019 horror film 'Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark', in which he plays Tommy Milner.



Lifestyle | Features

Weinstein in search of a lawyer as trial approaches

The main lawyer for Harvey Weinstein has asked a judge to be removed from the case, leaving the disgraced movie mogul without counsel as his sexual assault trial approaches in September. Weinstein has been charged over the alleged assaults of two women—a rape in 2013 and an incident of forced sex in 2006. He faces life in prison if convicted, and is also accused of sexual misconduct with dozens of other women. Weinstein's first lawyer, Benjamin Braufman, withdrew in January after which Weinstein hired two other high-profile attorneys, Ronald Sullivan and Jose Baez. Sullivan, who also teaches at Harvard, pulled out in May after coming under fierce criticism on campus for defending the man seen as giving rise to the

#MeToo movement.

Once one of the most powerful men in Hollywood, Weinstein has been accused of harassment and assault by more than 80 women, including stars such as Angelina Jolie and Ashley Judd. Then last week Baez asked to withdraw from the case, New York news outlets reported. He did so in a letter to State Supreme Court Justice James Burke, who is overseeing the case. "First, Mr. Weinstein has engaged in behavior that makes this representation unreasonably difficult to carry out effectively and has insisted upon taking actions with which I have fundamental disagreements," Baez wrote.

"For example, he has engaged outside counsel to communicate with myself and my co-

counsel and has decided to have another attorney threaten legal action against this firm," Baez said, adding that since May 15 or earlier Weinstein has known that Baez probably could not stay with the case. Neither Baez, nor a spokesman for Weinstein nor the Manhattan prosecutor's office responded to AFP's requests for comment. No hearing is scheduled until September 9, when jury selection is scheduled to begin in a trial that promises to be a media sensation. It is not clear if the trial might be postponed because of Weinstein's lawyer problems. — AFP



In this file photo disgraced Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein leaves the State Supreme Court in New York, after a break in a pre-trial hearing over sexual assault charges. — AFP



Elton John to receive France's top honor

Rock legend Elton John is to be awarded France's highest civilian honor this week as he passes through Paris as part of his farewell tour, the French presidency said. The Legion d'Honneur award will be presented to the 72-year-old megastar by President Emmanuel Macron during a ceremony at the Elysee Palace in the French capital on Friday. The singer, whose life was captured in the searingly honest "Rocketman" biopic that wowed critics at Cannes film festival last month, is not expected to perform although he was expected to use the occasion to promote his charity work.

Although parts of his five-decade career were lived in a hazy whirl of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, the British performer has used his stardom to promote gay rights and AIDS causes and was expected to launch an appeal on behalf of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. His own charity, the Elton John AIDS foundation, was set up in 1992, just months after his friend Freddy Mercury died of the disease. It has since raised more than \$400 million (357 million euros).

Macron's office praised him as a "piano virtuoso, melodic genius and a true showman" who was also "one of the first gay artists to have the courage to say it and to give voice to the LGBT community in the media." Last year, the consummate showman announced he would retire after a final global tour, saying he wanted to spend more time with his children. His "Farewell Yellow Brick Road" tour kicked off in Pennsylvania in September. The three-year extravaganza, which is expected to involve some 300 shows, will see him performing in Lille on Tuesday before taking the show to Paris on Thursday followed by an appearance in Bordeaux and Nimes. — AFP



It's the one you want: Olivia Newton-John's 'Grease' costume up for auction

Olivia Newton-John is putting the black leather jacket and tight pants that she wore in the final number of "Grease" up for auction to help raise money for her cancer treatment center in Australia. Julien's Auctions said yesterday the iconic outfit that marked her character's transition from demure high schooler to sexy Sandy Olson in the 1978 movie musical was one of 200 items that Newton-John is selling in November. The jacket and pants are being sold separately but together are expected to fetch up to \$200,000, the auction house said.

"Grease," a high school romance set in the 1950s, became a global box office smash and sent the careers of both Newton-John and co-star John Travolta soaring. The singer, who announced in 2017 that the breast cancer she first suffered in 1992 had returned and spread to her lower back, wore the leather jacket and high-waisted black pants for the final scene in "Grease," in which the actors perform the duet "You're the One That I Want."

Newton-John, 70, is selling her original script from the film, estimated at up to \$4,000, the pink gown she wore to the "Grease" premiere in Los Angeles (estimated at \$3,000-\$5,000), and a custom Pink Ladies jacket given to her by the "Grease" cast and crew. The British-born and Australian-raised singer and actress is also auctioning two of the outfits she wore while promoting her 1981 "Physical" album and tour, along with several costumes from her 1980 film "Xanadu." — Reuters



People walk past the "Ladies of Hollywood Gazebo" on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Hollywood, California. — AFP

Thief saws off Marilyn Monroe statue in Hollywood

A statue of Marilyn Monroe that sat atop an artwork in Hollywood that celebrates women in film has gone missing in what authorities are calling the "Marilyn caper of 2019." The statue, which illustrates the legendary actress in her iconic pose from "The Seven Year Itch," was perched atop the Ladies of Hollywood Gazebo on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Authorities said a witness saw a man climb the Eiffel Tower-shaped structure late Sunday and use a saw to remove the statue.

Police said investigators had recovered some prints at the scene but had yet to make any arrests on Tuesday. The artwork located at the beginning of the Hollywood Walk of Fame, features large statues of Mae West, Dorothy Dandridge, Anna May Wong and Dolores Del Rio—women from different cultures who influenced the film industry. The statue of Marilyn Monroe striking a pose in her flying skirt sat atop the installation. — AFP

Door to legendary Berlin techno club gets museum digs

The giant metal entrance door to a legendary techno club in post-Wall Berlin moved into a museum Tuesday as a symbol of the city's rebirth after its Cold War division. The rusty portal to the original Tresor nightclub became the first object for a display about the city at a museum still under construction. The door's journey mirrors Berlin's own turbulent 20th century history.

It once sealed the massive bank safe rooms of the pre-war Jewish-owned department store Wertheim, whose family proprietors were stripped of their assets by the Nazis and either sent to the camps or forced into exile. The elegant shopping Centre was demolished in Allied bombing during World War II but the heavy metal

door survived nearly unscathed. It languished for decades in the no-man's land at the highly militarized border.

But after the Wall fell in 1989, dozens of the city's abandoned industrial spaces, particularly in the ex-communist east, were converted into pop-up electronic music venues, attracting party people from east and west Germany and around the world. Perhaps the most iconic of the early 1990s clubs was Tresor, which owner Dimitri Hegemann built inside the former department store's underground safes with the famous door at its entrance. The club's original location finally closed in 2005 and the site was razed to construct a sprawling shopping mall and office buildings. — AFP



Paul Spies (left), chief curator for the State of Berlin at the Humboldt Forum, Moritz van Duelen (center), Managing Director of Cultural Projects Berlin, and Hans-Dieter Hegner, Director of Construction at the Humboldt Forum Foundation in the Berlin Palace take part in a presentation of the former door of Berlin's legendary techno club Tresor at the Humboldt Forum in Berlin after the door was brought to be part of the upcoming "Berlin exhibition". — AFP

Gun 'that ended Van Gogh's life' sells for nearly triple estimate

The revolver with which Vincent van Gogh is believed to have shot himself sold for 162,500 euros (\$182,000) at a Paris auction yesterday—nearly three times the estimate. Billed as "the most famous weapon in the history of art", the rusty 7mm Lefauchaux revolver was bought by a private collector with a telephone bid. The troubled Dutch painter died in July 1890 and experts believe he shot himself with the revolver in a field near Auvers-sur-Oise, a village north of Paris where he spent the last few months of his life.

Discovered by a farmer in 1965 in the same field, the gun has previously been exhibited at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. But the sale was hit by controversy on the eve of the auction as the Van Gogh Institute, which looks after the village inn where the artist spent his last days, condemned the sale. "Nothing suggests that the remains (of the gun) are formally linked with the death of Van Gogh," it said in a statement, deploring the "commercialization of a tragedy which deserves more respect". While Art Auction, which sold the gun, said there is no way of being absolutely certain it is the fatal weapon, they insisted tests showed it has been in the ground for 75 years, which would fit.

The Dutch artist had borrowed the gun from the owner of the inn. He died 36 hours later after staggering back wounded to the inn in the dark. The bullet extracted from Van Gogh's chest was the same calibre as the one used by the Lefauchaux revolver.

Accident or suicide?

Nor was it his first dramatic act of self-harm. Two years earlier, he cut off his ear which he offered to a woman in a brothel in Arles in southern France. Auction Art said the farmer who found the gun in 1965 gave it to the former owners of the inn at Auvers-sur-Oise, whose family are now selling it. "Technical tests on the weapon have shown the weapon was used and indicate that it stayed in the ground for a period that would coincide with 1890," it said. "All these clues give credence to the theory that this is the weapon used in the suicide."

While most art historians agree Van Gogh killed himself, that assumption has been questioned in recent years, with some claiming the fatal shot may have been fired accidentally by two local boys playing with the weapon in the field. That theory won fresh support from a new biopic of the artist starring Willem Dafoe, "At Eternity's Gate", in which the gun goes off after the two brothers get into a struggle with the bohemian stranger. The film's director, the renowned American painter Julian Schnabel, told AFP that Van Gogh had painted 75 canvasses in his 80 days at Auvers-sur-Oise and was unlikely to be suicidal.

'He was not at all sad'

The legendary French screenwriter Jean-Claude Carriere—who co-wrote the script with Schnabel—insisted that there "is absolutely no proof he killed himself". "Van Gogh was working constantly. Every day he made a new work. He was not at all sad. 'Do I believe that Van Gogh killed himself? Absolutely not!' Carriere declared when the film was premiered at the Venice film festival last year. He said Van Gogh painted some of his best work in his final days, including his "Portrait of Dr Gache", his friend the local doctor who later tried in vain to save his life. That canvass set a world record when it sold for \$82.5 million in 1990.



In this file photo a revolver believed to be the gun Dutch 19th century painter Vincent Van Gogh used to kill himself on 27 July 1890 is on public display at Paris' Drouot auction house.

Art Auction acknowledged that the gun could also have been hidden or abandoned by the two boys. While the Van Gogh gun may have nearly tripled its estimate, it is still well short of the 434,500 euros (\$460,000) paid two years ago for the gun which the French writer Paul Verlaine tried to kill his lover and fellow poet Arthur Rimbaud. The sale also comes as crowds are flocking to an immersive Van Gogh exhibition in Paris which allows "the audience to enter his landscapes" through projections on the gallery's walls, ceilings and floors. "Van Gogh, Starry Night" runs at the Atelier des Lumieres in the east of the French capital until December. — AFP



Grab and throw: S Korea makes flower vase fire extinguisher

In a panic after a fire has broken out and can't remember where the fire extinguisher is, let alone how to use it? Worry no more. Now you can simply pick up a vase and throw it to douse the flames. Developed by South Korean ad agency Cheil Worldwide, a subsidiary of Samsung Group, the innovative "firevase" contains liquid potassium carbonate, which can block oxygen, effectively suppressing a fire. When the vase is hurled at a blaze and shatters, 770ml of the liquid is released to put out the fire. The vase itself is made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) to reduce the danger of the fragments causing harm.

And, yes, it can also be used for a small bunch of flowers. "At the early stage of fire-fighting, a fire extinguisher is equivalent to one fire engine," said Hwang Seong-phil, associate creative director at Cheil Worldwide.

"However, people don't remember where they put it and cannot find it when they need. So we came up with the idea of

making a fire extinguisher which people can always keep handy in the home." Roughly 60% of fire fatalities in South Korea in the decade to 2017 occurred in homes, according to the National Fire Agency, accounting for about 2,000 deaths in total.

Though it is mandatory to have a fire extinguisher and a smoke detector installed in homes, the agency reported that only 49% of residents actually own an extinguisher. In 2018, Cheil Worldwide and Samsung Fire & Marine Insurance manufactured and distributed 110,000 firevases to their clients. They are planning to give out another 100,000 this year. Park Gijong, 62, who has just got his vase, said he was reassured to have it in his terraced house and office building. "Anyone can just throw it," he said. "Even if I am not around, my wife or my children can take some action right away." — Reuters



Spanish Fashion designer Alejandro Gomez Palomo, acknowledges the audience at the end of the Men's Spring-Summer 2020 collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos



Up Pompeii! Paris men's fashion goes Roman back in time

It was not quite the return of the toga, but Spanish wunderkind Alejandro Gomez Palomo turned the fashion clock back 2,000 years at his Paris men's show Tuesday. The flamboyant Andalusian conjured up Rome at its most decadent with a procession of beautiful boys who he claimed had just stepped from the frescos and mosaics of the lost city of Pompeii. "Buried under the volcanic ashes of Mount Vesuvius lies a distant civilization of Palomo boys who for centuries have been subject to a deep lethargy," he declared.

Now they have come back to shake fashion from its long conformist sleep, he added, and to "become the man of the future". Palomo believes pretty dresses are not just for girls and his clothes can be worn by men, women and everyone in between in. And you could imagine Nero or the boy emperor Elgabalus fighting with Madonna, Beyonce and Miley Cyrus—all fans of his Palomo Spain label—for some of his new gladiator glam.

Watch out for versions of his centurion sandals, which strode a stylish line between sneaker boot and espadrille, in the shops next summer. To the sound of imperial trumpets, he sent out his resurrected Roman dandies, socialites and emperors in clever and erudite clothes made from everything from jute to the flouciest feathers.

Laurels in their hair

A Roman general's armor was reimagined in dripping white Andalusian lace, legionnaires' helmets evoked in chin strap headbands, breastplates turned into vinyl corsets, and dance floor dandies wore leather laurel leaves in their hair. Palomo's



dive into Roman accessories—armbands, torcs and chainmail—was so deep, one model wore a golden nose similar to the solid gold hooter sported by the 7th-century Byzantine emperor Justinian II. As for the toga, he took it on a wild bacchanalian dance from a relatively simple embroidered tunic to the glamiest of tulle feather-fringed evening dresses.

Despite their feminine line, Palomo insisted that his clothes are very much designed and tailored for men—even if lots of women were now wearing them. "I would never call them women's dresses or say they are for women," he told AFP. "Everything is for men." The 27-year-old designer said he wanted to "liberate" men from the straitjacket of suit and trousers. "It's great that women have helped get my clothes known, but I do not feel so qualified to design for them," he added.

Cowboy in a dress

Palomo—who lives and works far from the madding fashion crowd in his home village of Posadas near Cordoba—weaved the Roman, Spanish and Arab influences of his native region into his clothes. But there was also a nod to the transgender hijra culture of the Indian subcontinent. Young New York designer Emily Adams Bode-making made her Paris debut—also has a sideways view of what men's fashion should look like. She had her vintage, vaguely aristo lost-boy models wear ballet pumps and cute stripey silk pyjama suits. Bode is known for turning 100-year-old tablecloths or 1960s towels into rather beautiful shorts and jackets, all with the lightest of off-beam touches. And she didn't disappoint with her debut Paris collection that gently flirted with gender.

Another American debutant, Spencer Phipps, took his inspiration from the much more straight-down-the-line urban cowboy, with Stetsons galore in his line of sustainable streetwear. But that did not stop blurring the lines with one cowpoke wearing a dress over his hiking boots. London-based Swedes CMMN SWDN toyed with the unisex vibe in



their show, wrapping the heads of several of their models in print scarves and then layering the motifs through their looks. Japanese creator Takahiro Miyashita also had a skirt or two in his radical deconstruction of the tuxedos and military dress uniforms. —AFP



Classifieds

Thursday, June 20, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 55 km/h causing rising dust.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate freshening at times over coastal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h.

WEATHER WATCH			Fresh wind + dust	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 19/06/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	34 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	34 °C		
ABDALY	45 °C	30 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	46 °C	33 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	43 °C	32 °C		
SALMIYAH	41 °C	33 °C		
AHMADI	41 °C	35 °C		
NUWASIB	43 °C	31 °C		
WAFRA	46 °C	32 °C		
SALMY	45 °C	29 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	06/20	Hot and rising dust	44 °C	32 °C	NW	25 - 50 km/h
Friday	06/21	Hot with a chance for haze	44 °C	30 °C	NW	15 - 35 km/h
Saturday	06/22	Hot	45 °C	30 °C	NW-NE	12 - 35 km/h
Sunday	06/23	Hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	44 °C	30 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:13
Sunrise	04:48
Zuhr	11:49
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:50
Isha	20:22

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	35 °C
MAX. RH	26 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	N 57 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, RAPHAEL JASON, holder of Indian Passport No. M6102415, Hawally, Block-6, Building-2601, Flat Number-10 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare the name change as Surname Rajan Babu (RAJAN BABU) and given name Raphael Jason (RAPHAEL JASON). (C 5551) 19-6-2019

I, Sayed Ahmed Taher, Indian citizen, holder of Passport No. M4635260, residing in Kuwait, Salawa, Block-5, Street-7, hereby declare the name change as Surname Sayed and given name Ahmed Taher. (C 5553) 18-6-2019

MATRIMONIAL

Marriage proposal for a Christian/Born Again girl settled in USA. Proposal invited for an Orthodox/Born Again Keralite girl, born and raised in Kuwait, 35 years of age, 164cm height, medical graduate and currently in family business. We invite alliance from professionally qualified, God-fearing Christian bachelors willing to relocate to USA. If interested kindly contact email: jobema33@yahoo.com. (C 5552) 17-6-2019

EMERGENCY

112

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
Luftansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

Flight Schedule

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 20/6/2019				Departure Flights on Thursday 20/6/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MSR	611	Cairo	13:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	IRA	600	Tehran	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	FDB	5060	Dubai	15:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
PGT	828	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:35	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	JZR	1233	Taif	16:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	KAC	151	Istanbul	17:35
MSR	0516	Cairo	04:25	KAC	503	Beirut	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:30	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:30	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	FEG	242	Alexandria	17:45
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	JZR	253	Amman	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	362	Colombo	06:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
BAW	157	London	06:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
QTR	8511	Doha	07:05	KAC	691	Muscat	19:35
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	07:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	357	Kochi	20:05
KAC	352	Kochi	08:05	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	NIA	162	Cairo	20:30
JZR	702	Asyut	08:25	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	FDB	058	Dubai	20:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	333	Trivandrum	21:05
KAC	384	Delhi	09:45	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	RBG	214	Sohag	21:10
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
JZR	1220	Jeddah	10:55	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
JZR	410	Delhi	11:50	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
IRA	667	Esfahan	13:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	RBG	556	Alexandria	23:10
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20



People ride in a loaded truck yesterday by a police checkpoint where two policemen were killed and four injured by armed men during an overnight attack at a police station at the northern entrance to Niamey. — AFP

Saudi defangs religious police but plans to enforce 'decency'

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has rendered toothless the once-feared religious police amid a liberalization drive, but a planned "public decency" law is stoking controversy with some fearing a revival of morality policing. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has sought to shake off his country's ultraconservative image with the reopening of cinemas, mixed-gender concerts and party-fuelled sporting extravaganzas, while vowing to take the kingdom towards moderate Islam.

The relaxed social norms in a kingdom seldom associated with fun in the past have been welcomed by many Saudis, two-thirds of whom are under 30, in the midst of painful economic reforms geared towards a

post-oil future. But Saudi Arabia now aims to police its citizens' behavior with a new public decency law approved by cabinet in April, though it remains unclear when it will be enforced.

The law seeks to uphold Saudi "values and principles", banning in public clothing deemed to "offend public tastes" - including men's shorts - and graffiti that could be interpreted as "harmful", according to local media. Violators reportedly risk facing a fine of up to 5,000 riyals (\$1,333). "The haia (religious police) is back without the beards," academic Sultan Al-Amer said on Twitter. The bearded enforcers of the religious police were long notorious for patrolling streets and malls to

chastise women wearing bright nail polish and for rigidly imposing sex segregation, but their powers have been clipped in recent years.

The law, widely perceived to be vague, has sparked public concern that it would be open to interpretation, leading to arbitrary penalties and, more light-heartedly, prompted humorous banter on social media. The Arabic hashtag "shorts don't offend public morals" has gained traction alongside memes of men sweating it out on treadmills in loose-fitting traditional robes. "It's Saudi Arabia meets Singapore," Kristin Diwan, of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, told AFP. "The Saudi leadership wants to undermine the Islamist basis of social

power while still maintaining absolute political control and public order."

Pro-government Saudi media reported the law was meant to be implemented from May 25, with the interior ministry and tourism authority enforcing the rules. But on May 27, state media said the law was yet to be enforced. It did not specify a new date. "This (law) is an effort to balance the pressure from conservative elements of society that accuse the (government) of allowing things to go 'out of control'," said Ali Shihabi, founder of the pro-Saudi think-tank Arabia Foundation. "Effecting social change is an art form - you want to push as fast as possible without provoking a counter reaction. Not easy!" —AFP

US alleges tanker hit by Iran mine...

Continued from Page 1

It was the second attack in a month on ships in the strategic shipping lane. Kido told reporters in the UAE emirate of Fujairah that the US military had recovered "biometric information" of the assailants on the Kokuka Courageous including "hand and finger prints".

This information "can be used to build a criminal case", Kido said as the US Navy took journalists on a tour to the damaged ship currently docked some 14 km off Fujairah. The explosion on the Japanese-owned tanker left a metre-wide hole on its body. Members of the crew were on board when journalists arrived for the tour and they waved when they left.

Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier-General Amir Hatami flatly rejected allegations the Islamic republic was behind the two tanker attacks in the Gulf of Oman. "Accusations leveled against Iran's armed forces and the published film with regards to the incident (that) happened to the vessels... are unsubstantiated and we categorically reject these accusations," the official news agency IRNA quoted him as saying yesterday.

Washington has already placed the blame for last week's attack on Tehran, releasing images and a grainy video it says shows Iranians on a patrol boat removing an unexploded limpet mine attached to the Kokuka Courageous. The US commander Kido said there was an "ongoing joint and combined investigation with our regional partners into the attacks" on the two tankers. Based on NAVCENT assessment, Kido said, the Kokuka Courageous was damaged by a limpet mine that had been attached to the hull of the vessel. "The limpet mine was placed above the water, and it does not appear that the intention was to sink the vessel," he said.

Evidence collected from Kokuka Courageous and showed to reporters included a black magnet that was allegedly left by members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps who removed the unexploded limpet mine. The US navy also showed small fragments and composite material they recovered during the probe. Kido reiterated US claims a Revolutionary Guard patrol vessel had approached the Japanese ship and removed an unexploded limpet mine from the hull. The two vessels have already been towed safely to the UAE coast.

Iran's Hatami said forces from his country were among the first to approach the tankers "for relief operations and they rescued 23 people in the first tanker". He did not explicitly specify which of the two ships he was referring to, but Iran's English-language Press TV at the time broadcast footage of 23 sailors rescued from the Front Altair. Hatami said the Iranian forces then headed to the second tanker, but the crew said another vessel had already rescued them.

"This means Americans had arrived sooner to the scene where they claim the video was recorded," Hatami said, with apparent reference to the Kokuka Courageous. Kido said a US military team quickly arrived on the Japanese ship on June 13 and was able to examine the site where the limpet mine was attached to the ship as well as the site where the damage occurred. "The damage at the blast hull is consistent with a limpet mine. It is not consistent with an

external flying object striking the ship," Kido said. In addition, the team was able to recover fragmentation caused by the detonation of the limpet mine, which was composed of aluminium as well as composite material.

Meanwhile, US assets in Iraq have been hit by shelling six times in as many days, officials said yesterday, amid a tense standoff between Baghdad's key allies, Washington and Tehran. Baghdad fears a proxy conflict between the bitter enemies could play out in Iraq, where political and armed groups routinely accuse each other of being agents for foreign states.

Late Tuesday night, three rockets landed in the Rumailah oil field in Iraq's Basra, an industry source there said. The rockets hit near a camp used by Baker Hughes, a company of US industrial conglomerate General Electric working in gas fields in Iraq, but did not cause any injuries, the source added. It did however prompt US companies to issue emergency procedures to immediately evacuate senior-level foreign workers on the first flights out of Basra, the source said.

"There's a red alert issued by the American companies. The senior expat management are leaving today and tomorrow," the source told AFP, saying it was the same level of alert issued in May. ExxonMobil withdrew its 83 expatriate workers from a nearby oil field in mid-May, but they returned after "guarantees" from the government. "Since May, it had been about a year since anything similar had happened. It's not frequent," the source added.

A second industry source confirmed to AFP that "explosions" had been heard on Tuesday night near the Baker Hughes operation. The associate head of the South Oil Company told local media rockets landed near a camp used by services company Oil Serv. That camp also lies near the one used by Baker Hughes. Hours later, around dawn yesterday, "a Katyusha rocket fell on an Iraqi drilling company in the Burjesiya area near Basra, wounding three people according to an initial assessment," Iraqi military command said in a statement.

Oil ministry spokesman Assem Jihad told AFP the wounded were all Iraqis and that the incident had "no impact on production". Burjesiya is a complex near southern Iraq's main city, in a key oil-producing region hosting various Iraqi and foreign companies including US major ExxonMobil.

The oil-related incidents are only the latest in a string of rocket and mortar attacks on US interests. On Friday evening, "three mortar rounds hit the Balad airbase (north of Baghdad), starting a fire," said the Iraqi military. Then, on Sunday, rocket fire targeted the Baghdad military airport, a government source told AFP. On Monday, three Katyusha rockets hit the Taji army base, which hosts both Iraqi and foreign troops, including Americans.

And on Tuesday, before the oil-related incidents, the Iraqi military announced an improvised rocket had hit a regional command base in the northern city of Mosul, where American troops are reportedly deployed. No group has claimed the attacks, but experts say they appear to have been fired from Shiite-majority areas north of Baghdad. That would appear to implicate pro-Iranian Shiite armed groups, as opposed to Sunni jihadists who continue to carry out hit-and-run attacks despite the elimination of the Islamic State group's "caliphate".

Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi on Tuesday "ordered all forces to take all necessary measures" to prevent further rocket attacks. "These actions disrupt the political situation and give a distorted picture of the security situation," he said. — AFP

Kuwait, Iraq call for wisdom to avoid...

Continued from Page 1

HH the Amir also held talks with Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi at the Government Palace. The Amir headed the delegation of participating Kuwaiti officials and the Iraqi premier led the Iraqi side, holding cordial official discussions on means of boosting bilateral ties and expanding cooperation at various levels. The Kuwaiti side, during the session, expressed support for Iraq's efforts to strengthen the country's security and stability in the face of terrorist organizations and its diligent efforts to maintain Iraq's territorial sanctity as well as rebuilding the country. The discussions also dealt with other issues of common concern and regional developments.

Trump launches 2020 bid with vow to...

Continued from Page 1

Striking a dark note, Trump repeatedly encouraged the crowd to boo journalists covering the event, calling them "fake news". Then Trump turned on the Democrats, whom he said have "become more radical, more dangerous, and more unhinged than at any point in the modern history of our country". "They want to destroy you and they want to destroy our country as we know it," he said to roars of boos. "Not acceptable. It's not going to happen."

Even if dismal early poll numbers show he faces a difficult race, Trump goes into his fight buoyed by this fiercely loyal rightwing base. Trump - himself accused by opponents of a slew of serious crimes - told the crowd that together they had formed "a great political movement" that had "stared down a broken and corrupt political establishment". "We are going to keep America great again," Trump told the packed arena in Orlando, Florida. "Oh, we will keep it so great."

Supporters lined Orlando's downtown sidewalks all day, waiting in tents and chairs overnight to be the first in the door. "This is a historic event, we would not miss this for anything," one fan, David Meloney, told AFP. Florida will be one of the key swing states in 2020 if Trump is to defeat the nominee chosen from a field of 23 Democratic hopefuls. Trump's strongest card is the current health of the US economy, which he described as "the envy of the world."

But Trump said that the "American dream" itself is in peril from illegal immigrants, insisting that his stuttering Mexico wall project would still go ahead. "Illegal mass migration brings in millions of low wage workers to compete for jobs, wages, and opportunities against the most vulnerable Americans, cutting off their path to the American dream," he said.

Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said the visit of HH the Amir was successful and came at a very important time. During the visit, several bilateral issues were discussed including cooperation in all fields. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid told KUNA in a statement. He stressed on the importance of following up with what was agreed on at the meeting of the Kuwait-Iraq High Joint Committee in its seventh session in Kuwait last month, and assessing what has been implemented, adding that common issues between the two sides are on track.

He pointed to the exchange of views on regional and international issues related to the security and stability of the region, and stressed the importance of HH the Amir's visit to the brotherly country at such an important time. The visit of HH the Amir comes just a month after Abdel Mahdi's first visit to Kuwait. — Agencies

Oddly, he did not mention his announcement earlier in the day that he was ordering the deportation of "millions of illegal aliens". The startling threat was announced in a tweet in the morning but quickly was followed by media reports that government officials had no idea what the president was planning. Hours before the rally, the president had insisted that officials were in fact on board with the project. "They're going to start next week," he told journalists at the White House.

After more than two drama-filled years at the White House, the fast-talking real estate salesman is betting that Republicans and enough centrist blue collar workers will turn out again in 2020. But there's no question that a lengthy probe into Trump's murky dealings with Russia and his divisive, bruising style have left him wounded. A wide range of polls show Trump lagging far behind Democratic frontrunner Joe Biden, who is campaigning on a promise to return the country to what he portrays as the calmer, gentler days of Barack Obama.

Biden zoned in on the president's claim to have brought an economic miracle. "Let's be clear: President Trump inherited a growing economy from the Obama-Biden administration," Biden's campaign tweeted. "Now, he's in the process of squandering it." Another big Democratic candidate, the left-wing Senator Bernie Sanders, scorned Trump after the Florida speech. "Listening to Trump made me feel very much like he is a man living in a parallel universe... and is a man who must be defeated," Sanders said. A Quinnipiac University poll released Tuesday showed Biden leading Trump 50-41 percent in Florida, while Senator Bernie Sanders is up 48-42 percent over the president in the state.

Polls so far in advance have limited value and in 2016 they famously failed to predict Trump's defeat of Democrat Hillary Clinton. If anything, the surveys point to another bitterly fought, tight race. But in a sign of frayed nerves, Trump has lashed out at what he calls "fake" polling, while multiple US media reports say that his campaign has fired several of its own pollsters. — AFP

Sports

Red-hot Blackmon's historic night lifts Rockies over Diamondbacks

Kepler powers Twins to 17-inning win over Red Sox

PHOENIX: Charlie Blackmon became the first Colorado player to have at least three hits in five consecutive games as the Rockies beat the Arizona Diamondbacks 8-1 in Phoenix on Tuesday night. Blackmon, who set a major league record with 15 hits in a four-game series against the San Diego Padres last weekend, went 3-for-5 with a double on Tuesday. He is the 12th player since 1900 — and the first since Houston's Jose Altuve (July 4-9, 2017) — with three hits or more in five consecutive games, per the Elias Sports Bureau. Blackmon led off the game with a double and scored on Nolan Arenado's two-out homer off Merrill Kelly (7-7) for a 2-0 lead. Blackmon singled in the third and seventh innings. Colorado banged out 12 hits to support starter Antonio Senzatela (6-5). He pitched 6 2/3 innings, allowing one run while scattering seven hits and four walks. He struck out five.

Twins 4, Red Sox 3 (17 innings)

Max Kepler singled with the bases loaded in the 17th inning to give Minnesota its first walk-off win of the season, a decision over Boston in Minneapolis. Kepler finished 3-for-5 with three RBIs, including a game-tying homer in the 13th inning. He led off the bottom of the 13th with a home run after Mookie Betts led off the top of the 13th with a homer. Minnesota's Eddie Rosario finished 4-for-8, hitting his third double of the night in the 17th to set up Kepler's decisive hit. Rafael Devers went 3-for-8 with a homer and two RBIs, and Andrew Benintendi and Brock Holt also had three hits for Boston, which had its season-high six-game winning streak snapped.

Padres 4, Brewers 1

Left-hander Logan Allen allowed three hits over seven scoreless innings in his major league debut as host San Diego defeated Milwaukee. Allen (1-0) also got his first big-league hit in the fifth inning and scored the game's first run. Francisco Mejia, who last week was catching Allen at Triple-A El Paso, hit a two-run homer for the Padres. Allen, 22, issued two walks and hit a batter while striking out five. He threw 90 pitches, 56 of them strikes. The Padres turned three double plays in the first six innings behind Allen, who ended his outing in style, striking out all three batters in the seventh.

Marlins 6, Cardinals 0

In just his second major league appearance, Jordan Yamamoto extended his scoreless streak to 14 innings, leading Miami past host St. Louis. Yamamoto (2-0) allowed just two hits and two walks in seven innings, striking out seven and keeping his ERA at 0.00. Yamamoto also beat the Cardinals 9-0 on June 12. Starlin Castro and Brian Anderson hit home runs to lead Miami's offense. Castro's solo shot was his fifth homer of the season. Anderson's two-run blast was his eighth homer of the year.

Yankees 6, Rays 3

Giancarlo Stanton returned to the lineup for host New York, but newcomer Edwin Encarnacion who stole the show, homering for the first time since joining the club as the Yankees topped visiting Tampa Bay. In the eighth inning, Encarnacion hit his league-leading 22nd homer. Teammate Cameron Maybin homered for a career-high fourth straight game as the Yankees won their fourth straight. They also extended their streak of

hitting at least one homer in 21 straight games, the longest in the majors this season and four shy of the team record set in 1941. New York's J.A. Happ (7-3) won his sixth straight decision, allowing two runs on seven hits in five innings. Happ struck out three, walked none and threw 87 pitches.

Dodgers 9, Giants 0

Clayton Kershaw celebrated the fifth anniversary of his only no-hitter with another dominating performance, delivering seven scoreless innings as host Los Angeles blanked San Francisco. Kershaw (7-1) held the Giants to three hits five years after the Rockies failed to collect any in a game at Dodger Stadium. Giants rookie starter Shaun Anderson (2-2) gave up three runs on seven hits over 5 2/3 innings in his first career start against the Dodgers. Joc Pederson hit a leadoff home run in the bottom of the first inning, and Enrique Hernandez added a grand slam in a six-run seventh as the Dodgers rebounded from a 3-2 loss to the Giants on Monday.

Mets 10, Braves 2

Jacob deGrom won for the first time since May 11, and rookie first baseman Pete Alonso picked up his first four-hit game to power New York past host Atlanta. DeGrom (4-6) celebrated his 31st birthday a day early by winning for the first time. Atlanta's Freddie Freeman and Josh Donaldson ended his bid for a shutout by hitting back-to-back homers with one out in the ninth. He gave up five hits in 8 1/3 innings and was lifted after 113 pitches. DeGrom struck out 10, his fourth time this season in double digits. He picked up his 1,107th career strikeout, moving him past Al Leiter and into seventh place on the team's all-time list, and finished the night with 1,112.

Reds 4, Astros 3

Jesse Winker and Derek Dietrich slugged home runs in the first inning before Kyle Farmer added a third homer against Justin Verlander in the seventh as host Cincinnati defeated Houston. The Reds saddled the Astros with their first series loss since April 29-May 2. Cincinnati has won three consecutive games for the first time since May 9-11. It marked just the fifth time in his 15-year career that Verlander (9-3) had allowed two homers in the first inning. He gave up four runs on six hits and one walk with eight strikeouts over seven innings.

White Sox 3, Cubs 1

Eloy Jimenez launched a go-ahead, two-run home run in the ninth inning in his first game against his original organization, boosting the Chicago White Sox past the host Chicago Cubs. Jimenez, a rookie left fielder, smacked a 1-0 pitch from Pedro Strop (1-3) into the left field bleachers for his 12th home run of the season and sixth in nine games. Alex Colome pitched a perfect ninth for his 15th save in as many chances, capping a solid outing from the White Sox bullpen. The White Sox relief corps contributed four scoreless innings of two-hit ball with zero walks and four strikeouts.

Indians 10, Rangers 3

Rookie Zach Plesac allowed two hits over seven-plus innings, and Jose Ramirez and Jason Kipnis each drove in three runs as Cleveland knocked off Texas in



PHOENIX: Charlie Blackmon #19 of the Colorado Rockies doubles in the first inning of a MLB game against the Arizona Diamondbacks at Chase Field in Phoenix, Arizona. — AFP

Arlington, Texas. Jake Bauers highlighted his three-hit performance by joining Roberto Perez and Tyler Naquin in belting back-to-back-to-back homers to open the seventh inning. Rookie Oscar Mercado scored three times and Ramirez also homered as Cleveland banged out 14 hits en route to its ninth win in 13 outings. Plesac (2-2) worked around Rowned Odor's solo homer in the fifth inning and Nomar Mazara's single to lead off the seventh to allow just one run.

Angels 3, Blue Jays 1

Kole Calhoun and Brian Goodwin hit solo home runs, Tyler Skaggs pitched 7 1/3 effective innings, and Los Angeles defeated host Toronto. The Angels have won the first two games of the four-game series and have taken all five games this season against the Blue Jays. Lourdes Gurriel Jr. hit a home run for the Blue Jays. Skaggs (6-6) allowed three hits, no walks and one run while striking out six. Ty Buttrey retired the last two batters in the eighth, and Hansel Robles pitched a perfect ninth with one strikeout for his 11th save of the season.

Athletics 16, Orioles 2

Beau Taylor triggered a six-homer assault on Baltimore pitching with his first major league blast as host Oakland made it two straight to open the three-game series. Taylor, Ramon Laureano, Robbie Grossman, Chris Davis, Stephen Piscotty and Chad Pinder all homered for the A's. Oakland topped its previous season best of five long balls, set four times earlier, including twice in an April series at Baltimore. The loss was Baltimore's seventh straight while Oakland improved to 5-2 in its past seven games. Athletics left-hander Brett Anderson (7-4) coasted through seven innings, allowing two runs (one earned) and four hits. He walked one and struck out two.

Royals 9, Mariners 0

Whit Merrifield hit two homers and drove in six runs, and Homer Bailey pitched 7 2/3 strong innings as Kansas City defeated host Seattle. Jorge Soler also homered, and rookie Nicky Lopez went 3-for-4 with a double and two runs for Kansas City, which has won the first two games of the series and will look for a sweep Wednesday afternoon. Bailey (6-6) allowed five hits, walked two and struck out six. It was his second consecutive start in which the right-hander didn't allow any runs, as Bailey pitched six scoreless innings in a 7-3 victory against the Detroit Tigers last Thursday in Omaha, Neb.

Tigers 5, Pirates 4

Detroit scored the winning run in the eighth inning with the help of host Pittsburgh's mistake-prone defense and broke a four-game losing streak. In a 4-4 game, Detroit loaded the bases with one out in the eighth on a walk by Nicholas Castellanos, a single by Miguel Cabrera and a pitch from reliever Kyle Crick (2-3) that grazed Christin Stewart's foot. Brandon Dixon's grounder might have been a double play, but second baseman Adam Frazier chose to go to first base first, and Castellanos scored to give the Tigers a 5-4 lead. Castellanos had an RBI double and Cabrera an RBI single for the Tigers. Josh Bell homered, and Jung Ho Kang and Kevin Newman each hit an RBI triple for Pittsburgh, which was charged with three errors while losing for the ninth time in 11 games.

Phillies at Nationals, ppd.

Philadelphia and Washington had a scheduled game postponed due to rain for the second night in a row at Nationals Park. The scheduled Tuesday contest will be made up as part of a split doubleheader on Sept. 24. The scheduled Monday game will be made up as part of a split doubleheader on Wednesday. — Reuters



The Kuwaiti shooting team.

Kuwait shooters hailed after five medal haul at Amir Open in Italy

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti shooters were praised after winning a total five medals in men's and women's events at the Fifth Italian Open Amir Shotgun Cup in Todi, Italy. Following their return home after the international competition ended on Tuesday, Kuwait Shooting Federation President Duajj Al-Otaibi said the shooters prepared well for the event, named after His Highness the Amir of Kuwait. A total 400 marksmen from 16 nations took part in the annually-held 10-day event, organized under the initiative of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Rome. The participation provided Kuwaitis with a unique opportunity to prepare for upcoming tournaments, most notably the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Al-Otaibi told reporters.

Abdulrahman Al-Faihan, who earlier qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics after clinching gold in the men's trap event in Italy, said competition was at its toughest in the final stages against his Italian

rivals. But his focus and determination were enough for him to pull through in the competition, he said, is "dear to all Kuwaitis." The World Championship 2018 trap bronze-medalist and team gold medalist, who makes it to the Olympics for the second time in his career, added that the accomplishment would spur him on towards a place on the Olympics podium. Iman Al-Shamma, who won gold in the individual women's skeet and bronze in the teams events at the Italian Open, said her victory enables progression to the World Championship. Al-Shamma's main goal for now is to keep the momentum going in order to qualify to the Olympic Games. Other medals in the competition included a silver in the men's double trap for Ahmad Al-Afasi, women's team bronze for Al-Shamma alongside Fatima Al-Zaabi and Sheikha Al-Rashidi and a men's veteran shooters' gold for Husam Al-Roumi. — KUNA



Kuwait Shooting Federation President Duajj Al-Otaibi welcoming the team.

Mercedes can take sequence of success into double figures

PARIS: Formula One champions Mercedes can stretch their unbeaten run into double figures in France on Sunday while rivals Ferrari and Sebastian Vettel still chafe at being denied victory in Canada two weeks ago.

Lewis Hamilton, winner last year at Le Castellet's Paul Ricard circuit from pole position, has won five races this season while Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas has taken the other two. Add in Hamilton's two victories at the end of last year, after winning his fifth championship, and Mercedes are set to match their 2016 run of 10 successive wins and Ferrari's 2002 sequence of success.

Only McLaren, with 11 in a row in a near-perfect 1988 season with champions Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost, have strung together a better run in the modern era. It nearly ended in Montreal, however, with Vettel on pole and finishing first before a five-second penalty for running off and rejoining in an unsafe manner demoted the German to second behind Hamilton.

Ferrari have sought a review of the stewards' decision, apparently promising a new element that could yet provide a twist. Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff saw Canada as a wake-up call regardless, not least because of reliability problems the team battled right up to the start.

"We expect another tough fight in France... the circuit features some similarities to Montreal and the long straights will present a challenge for us," said the Austrian. "However, unlike Canada, the corner characteristics are spread across a range of speeds, which should play to our advantage. We're looking forward to the chance to put a few things right again." Hamilton, on 78 career wins and edging ever closer to Michael Schumacher's record 91, made a rare mistake in Canada when he hit the wall in Friday practice. "I'll come back stronger at the next race and hope not to make mistakes on the Friday," said the Briton, now 29 points clear of Bottas and 62 ahead of Vettel, after a race dominated by the Ferrari controversy.

With huge run-off areas, Le Castellet should be more comfortable. Montreal was the second race this season that Ferrari should have won, with Charles Leclerc on pole in Bahrain but denied victory by a late engine problem, but they will not be favourites in France. "We will have a few small evolutions," said Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto. "What we will be bringing won't be the solution to our problems, but the technical feedback we get from these evolutions will be important for the next steps we take. — Reuters

Sports

Harbhajan tells India to stick with Yadav-Chahal spin twins at WCup

Wrist spinners generally get more turn than finger spinners

MANCHESTER: Harbhajan Singh has hailed wrist spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal for their key role in India's recent one-day successes, saying the pair should be fixtures for the rest of the World Cup. Wrist spinners generally get more turn than finger spinners, with left-armed Yadav striking twice in India's 89-run hammering of arch-rivals Pakistan in Manchester on Sunday to prove his worth on English pitches that often favour the quicks at this stage of the season.

Chahal's leg-spinners did the damage in India's first World Cup outing against South Africa, with the bowler returning figures of 4-51. Calls were made to replace Yadav with paceman Mohammed Shami against Pakistan but former India off-spinner Harbhajan said the team should stick with the spin twins.

"It is a very good combination," Harbhajan told AFP. "The results that India have got in the last two-and-a-half years, a lot of credit should be given to these guys."

"I would like to see them playing together, because none of the other teams have got two spinners and they don't have the habit of playing spin in the middle overs. "It has worked for India to play two spinners, even in English conditions, because they are wrist spinners. If India are thinking about their best XI then these two will feature in all the games."

The two bowlers have 168 one-day international wickets between them in the three years since Chahal made his international debut in 2016. Yadav played his

first ODI the following year. The 24-year-old Yadav is 10 away from a century of wickets with an impressive economy rate of 4.92 in 47 ODIs.

"He has definitely got the capabilities and the talent to be there for a long period of time," said the 38-year-old Harbhajan, who last played for India in a 2016 Twenty20 match. "(India coach) Ravi Shastri said he is our number one bowler. So it's good that the team is backing him," said Harbhajan, one of India's finest off-spinners, who took 417 wickets in 103 Tests and 269 wickets in 236 ODIs.

India, second in the ODI rankings, have been hit by injuries to opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan—out of the rest of the World Cup—and paceman Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

INDIA STRENGTH

But Harbhajan said Virat Kohli's side have strength in depth with Shami, who is yet to play at the World Cup, likely to replace Kumar in the next match against Afghanistan on Saturday. "I think Shami is capable enough to win games on his own. He is one of those guys who has been a matchwinner on his own," said Harbhajan.

Harbhajan credited Kohli for a fitness revolution that has improved all aspects of India's game, particularly their fielding. "They are fit, agile, a proper fielding squad. All the credit must be given to Kohli for changing the face of Indian cricket in terms of fitness," said Harbhajan, a member of the 2011 World Cup-winning



NOTTINGHAM: India's Yuzvendra Chahal and India's Kuldeep Yadav attend a nets training session at Trent Bridge in Nottingham, central England, ahead of their 2019 Cricket World Cup match. — AFP

team. "So if you have better fitness then your results always follow the way you want them to be," Harbhajan said. England, holders Australia, New Zealand and India—the current top four—would qualify for the semi-

finals, with Kohli's side the team to beat in the knock-out phase. "To beat India they (other teams) will have to bring their 'A' game on that day. India will be a very tough side to beat," he said with a smile. —AFP

Australia planning to nullify Shakib threat, says Carey

NOTTINGHAM: Australia wicketkeeper Alex Carey says the defending champions will target Bangladesh dangerman Shakib Al Hasan when the two sides meet at Trent Bridge today. Shakib's brilliant century helped the Tigers complete the second-highest World Cup chase in a seven-wicket win over the West Indies in Taunton on Monday.

The 32-year-old all-rounder, who is the tournament's leading run-scorer with 384 runs, also hit a century against England earlier in the tournament and has been among the wickets.

When Bangladesh beat Australia in a 2005 one-day international in Cardiff, it was widely regarded as one of the biggest upsets in cricket history. But they are now an established force and, having beaten both South Africa and the West Indies already at this tournament, they are pushing for a semi-final berth.

"We've obviously put our time into Shakib and all the players at the top of the order as well as their bowling," Carey said yesterday. "He's in probably career-best form with the white ball. So we sort of know the areas and line and length we want to bowl to him and I guess out there we'll assess the conditions as well."

"We leave that up to the bowlers and the captain to do that, but he's one guy we want to get out early." Australia, despite a defeat by India, appear to be well on course for a semi-final berth, with four wins from their five matches in the 10-team round-robin phase so



TAUNTON: Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan (21) hugs West Indies' Darren Bravo (L) as he walks off the pitch after winning the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between West Indies and Bangladesh in Taunton.

far. But wicketkeeper-batsman Carey said there was still room for improvement from the defending champions. "We obviously like to take wickets up front, there have been times we probably would have liked to finish off innings with the bat," he said.

"Although we're getting results, we're still striving hard to try to find that perfect game and put a full 50 or 100 overs together. But the guys are working really

hard and we're aware of the areas to keep improving."

All-rounder Marcus Stoinis could return at Trent Bridge on Thursday after missing Australia's past two matches with a side strain. "It will be great to have Stoinis to come back into the side," said Carey. "And I know he's worked really hard off the ground to be ready to go, and he's smacking the ball in the net. It will be exciting to get him back out there." —AFP

Dhawan ruled out of the World Cup

SOUTHAMPTON: India opener Shikhar Dhawan has been ruled out of the rest of the World Cup with a fractured finger, the Board of Control for Cricket in India announced yesterday. The in-form batsman suffered the break while facing Australia's Pat Cummins in India's second match of the tournament at the Oval on June 9.

Dhawan carried on batting and scored a century to earn the man-of-the-match award as India beat the reigning champions by 36 runs. But the 33-year-old left-hander did not field and has not featured in the World Cup since his century at Surrey's headquarters in south London.

Rishabh Pant, a dynamic batsman and wicketkeeper, is set to replace Dhawan in India's squad ahead of their match against Afghanistan at Southampton on Saturday. "Shikhar has a fracture at the base of his first metacarpal on his left hand," team manager Sunil Subramanian told reporters in Southampton. "Following several specialist opinions, he will remain in a cast until mid-July, which rules him out of the ICC World Cup 2019."

India, who will still require the formal approval of the World Cup event technical committee before calling up the 21-year-old Pant into their tournament squad, summoned the dynamic left-hander last week as concerns mounted over Dhawan's fitness.

"He (Pant) bats in the middle order and obviously being a left-hander helps and he was named in the standbys as well, so the team management has gone and picked him," said India assistant coach Sanjay Bangar last week. —AFP

England's Wood has no regrets over Afghanistan short stuff

MANCHESTER: England fast bowler Mark Wood said he had no regrets about persisting with short-pitched deliveries after hitting Afghanistan batsman Hashmatullah Shahidi with a bouncer.

Shahidi had made 24 when he took his eye off a 90 mile-per-hour (145 kilometres-per-hour) delivery from the Durham quick that thudded into the side of his helmet at Old Trafford on Tuesday and saw him hit the turf immediately after the impact.

But instead of retiring hurt, the 24-year-old donned a new helmet and carried on to top-score for Afghanistan, with 76 in a lopsided 150-run loss. Wood, while concerned enough to check on Shahidi's condition, had no regrets about testing him and the other Afghanistan batsmen with more short-pitched deliveries.

"Well, I was concerned when I first hit him, obviously," said Wood. "It was a bit of a bad blow and then it's out of my hands really. You have to let the medical staff do their thing. I checked he was all right himself, said 'are you OK?'. Then I was back in the game mode."

"Morgy (England skipper Eoin Morgan) wanted me to fire another few down. If that's what the captain wants, you listen to orders," the 29-year-old Durham quick added. "Once you know he (the batsman) is all right, it's game time again." Told he had split Hashmatullah's helmet, Wood grinned: "I'm bowling them quite fast... for a change!" Wood and fellow England fast bowler Jofra Archer shared five wickets against Afghanistan as they continued an effective partnership that has helped take the hosts to the top of the 10-team World Cup table.

"I thought, collectively, we bowled really well," said Wood. "It was difficult at times because I didn't feel the Afghanistan batsmen were coming at us and we had to try to mix it up, get them to play a few shots."

"It was nice to try something different and get a few wickets." England's victory over basement side Afghanistan was set up by an extraordinary innings from Morgan who, defying a back problem, hit a one-day international record



Mark Wood

17 sixes in his blistering 148.

"It was amazing, amazing," said Wood. "I was delighted for him. Coming off his back injury scare and stuff, and not knowing how he would play or feel, I was just astounded by how well he played out there."

"A lot of the bowlers tend to sit in the back of the dressing room and try and relax but even I came out and watched that because it was great to see on such a big occasion." Under Morgan's captaincy, England have risen to the top of the ODI rankings since their woeful first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup.

"I know we've played like this for four years now, and there's been some remarkable things," said Wood. "But to do it in a World Cup game speaks volumes about how Eoin wants the team to play and the values we've kept going throughout those four years." —AFP

Rain-hit cricket WCup may cost insurers millions

LONDON: Lost revenues from a record number of rain-hit cricket World Cup games in England and Wales may result in insurance claims of a few million pounds for each abandoned fixture, insurance sources say. Broadcasters, organisers, venues, advertising sponsors and catering establishments are among firms to have missed out after four matches were called off in an exceptionally rainy June. Due to the hectic nature of the tournament, which features 48 one-day matches between May and July, finishing on July 14, there is no opportunity to reschedule, except for the semi-finals and final.

Companies typically buy contingency, or cancellation, insurance for sporting events, which covers everything from rain stopping play to terror attacks. Lloyd's of London insurer Beazley estimated, for example, that the football World Cup in Russia in 2018 was insured for more than \$10 billion, including cover for property damage and cyber breaches, as well as cancellation.

Insurers say cover for the less-popular cricket equivalent will be much lower. Star India has the global media rights for the cricket tournament but has licensed further rights to sports broadcasters in other countries.

However, it is likely to have lost at least 1 million pounds (\$1.26 million) for each abandoned match, insurance specialists estimate, as it gains huge advertising revenue in India for a popular sport in a nation of more than one billion people.

Star India did not respond to requests for comment. There are 123 advertising spots for broadcasters in a World Cup match, after each of the 100 overs and 20 wickets and during refreshment breaks, said Jonathan Ticehurst, a director at Lloyd's of London insurance broker Bishopsgate, who has arranged insurance for previous cricket World Cups.

Broadcasters buy contingency insurance, as "in the event of no play, they are not able to charge" the advertisers, he said. The fixtures, several of which were sold out, also attracted ticket sales of at least a few hundred thousand pounds each, with larger games likely attracting sales of more than a million pounds, based on Reuters estimates.

Spectators get all their money back if no ball is bowled, or if the game is abandoned after a small amount of play. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), which gets the revenue from the ticket sales, said it had an insurance policy against matches being called off, but declined to comment further.

Star India likely took out contingency insurance from Indian insurers, but reinsurance may have been provided by the specialist Lloyd's of London market, insurers said. Reinsurers share the burden of large losses with insurers, in return for part of the premium.

The ECB will likely also have bought insurance from the Lloyd's market, along with county teams whose grounds were booked for the rained-off matches, industry sources said. The local teams will buy insurance against lost sales from the venues' bars and restaurants, sources said.

But insurers may also have required clients to bear the losses themselves for one, two or even three abandoned games, specialists said. At four matches, they are likely to be able to claim insurance, if not before.

"Insurers probably looked at the calendar and reckoned you would not go through the whole World Cup without two or three games being rained off," said one underwriter. "They will probably charge a two-game or three-game excess."

The four abandoned matches were all at smaller venues. An abandoned match at a bigger ground in London, Birmingham or Manchester over the remaining 3-1/2 weeks of the tournament would have an even greater financial impact, insurers say. — Reuters

Sports

Record-breaker Marta representing women after firing Brazil into WCup knockouts

Australia goes Kerr-azy after four-goal blitz at World Cup

VALENCIENNES: Marta said she was representing women in football after becoming the leading scorer in the history of the men's and women's World Cups on Tuesday by firing home the penalty that downed Italy and secured Brazil's place in the last 16 of this year's tournament in France.

The 33-year-old, widely considered the best player in the history of the women's game, slammed home from the spot in the 74th minute against Group C winners Italy to secure qualification and take her World Cup tally to 17 after Debinha was bundled over by Elena Linari.

That puts her one ahead of former Bayern Munich and Lazio striker Miroslav Klose in the all-time rankings, and the veteran attacker said the goal was more than just a personal triumph.

"The feeling is a joyful one, definitely, not only for breaking the record but for being able to represent women in doing so," she said. "And for being able to help my team which is what matters most, qualifying for the next stage of the tournament."

Marta's record-breaking spot-kick wasn't enough to secure second place in the group however, as Sam Kerr's incredible four-goal haul in Australia's 4-1 hammering of Jamaica saw the Matildas leapfrog Brazil on goals scored as three sides finished on six points.

It means they could face either France or Germany in the next round, a tough test for a team that has at times spluttered in the group stage. "I think that when you play a big competition like a World Cup, you can't

choose who you play," insisted Marta.

"We have this thing now, we need to do what we need to do to keep this thing going in the competition and then whoever we have to play we will be prepared." The Aussies will play Norway in Nice in the next round on Saturday after they made sure of qualification on Monday with a scrappy 2-1 win over eliminated South Korea that came thanks to two penalties.

Having lost their opening match with Italy they looked dead and buried as they headed towards half-time against Brazil two goals down, but clawed back to win 3-2 before comfortably seeing off the Jamaicans, who finish the group stage with no points to their name despite Havana Solaun scoring the Reggae Girlz' first ever World Cup goal four minutes after the break.

Kerr became the first Australian woman to score a World Cup hat-trick when she tapped home in the 69th minute following two first half headers, and her fourth was the goal that secured second spot. Italy meanwhile will take on one of the four best third-placed finishers after topping the group ahead of Australia on goal difference, while Brazil have to wait to know their opponent. "It's hard to think of such a thing as a 'good defeat', but you could say that we're happy for qualifying and finishing first in the group," said Italy coach Milena Bertolini.

England take centre stage as they attempt to match Italy in finishing first in Group D when they take on Japan, while Argentina look to squeeze into the next round when they take on bottom side Scotland. — AFP



VALENCIENNES: Brazil's forward Marta (C) celebrates after scoring a goal during the France 2019 Women's World Cup Group C football match between Italy and Brazil, at the Hainaut Stadium in Valenciennes, northern France. — AFP



FIFA World Cup for Netherlands Ladies Football team

By His Excellency Frans Potuyt, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Netherlands are leading in women sports. Two years ago the Orange Lionesses (the Dutch football team) became European champions. At the World tournament in France they are considered by the bookmakers as favorites for the title. The team qualified for the 1/8 finals. They want to be an inspiration for all women and girls worldwide, and not only on the soccer field!

Women with goals: FIFA World Cup 2019

The FIFA World Cup tournament started on the 7th of June. Not the one for men, but for women! This year Women's World Cup will be in France and is the eighth time the tournament is held.

For as long as football exists the game has been played by women. It was documented that women played football during the Han Dynasty (25-220 CE) in China. The female variation of the sport has also suffered some backlash at times. During the 1920's women's football in the United Kingdom was more popular than men's. This was seen as problematic and

for 50 years women were not allowed to play on football fields and had to use rugby fields instead.

In 2019 Women's football has made a full return and teams from around the globe are preparing to take home the World Cup. With the rise in popularity comes a rise in equality. In the Netherlands, one of the favorites for the title and ruling European Champions, private sector companies are very keen on supporting the Orange Lionesses (as the Dutch National Women's team is called) with sponsorships. The Royal Dutch Football Association is working on equal pay for male and female players. Through these developments we see how a rise in popularity of this sport leads to women empowerment.

Also for entertainment purposes women football becomes more and more popular. Women scored in general more often and earlier in the game. With regard to fouls men and women are in number the same, however the women are a lot less nasty. The more aggressive, testosterone driven, fouls resulting in yellow or red cards happen a lot less.

The Women's Football League in Kuwait was founded in 2017 and the Kuwait women's national football team has competed in international duels. However, there is room for growth. In



US defeat Guyana 4-0 in Gold Cup opener

SAINT PAUL: The United States got their Gold Cup title defence off to a flying start with a 4-0 win over Guyana in Saint Paul, Minnesota on Tuesday.

The United States opened the scoring in the 28th minute when Weston McKennie delivered a pass to Paul Arriola, who found the back of the net to fire up the crowd at Allianz Field.

Tyler Boyd made it 2-0 in the 51st minute, taking a long pass from Michael Bradley and rifling the ball home despite appearing to be in an offside position.

The tournament is not using Video Assistant Referee (VAR) technology so the play was not reviewed. Boyd's goal was the 1,000th scored by the US Men's National Team, who played their first match in August 1916. Gyasi Zardes pushed the lead to 3-0 10 minutes into the second half when a deflected shot hit him hard in the face and sailed into the goal. The 27-year-old appeared shaken but continued playing.

Boyd struck again from distance in the 81st minute to complete the rout.

"We knew we had to get started on the right foot and after breaking the ice, we were able to break them down," Arriola said. "The most important thing was to win with confidence and clarity and I think we did that today. It's a great start for us but it's just one game." The victory, which came on the back of two defeats in friendlies against Jamaica and Venezuela, was the biggest yet for US head coach Gregg Berhalter, who was hired in December after the United States failed to make last year's World Cup. One concern for the team was a left hamstring injury suffered by 20-year-old midfielder McKennie late in the game. The United States next face Trinidad and Tobago in Cleveland on Saturday.

It will be the first meeting between the two since Trinidad and Tobago's victory in October 2017 ended the United States' qualification campaign for the World Cup in Russia.

In the other Group D game, Guyana will face Panama, who defeated Trinidad and Tobago 2-0 earlier in the day. The United States are looking for their seventh Gold Cup title while Guyana are making their first appearance at the competition, which is held every two years and crowns the continental champion of North America, Central America and the Caribbean. — Reuters



order for Kuwait to get on the level of the Dutch team women and girls should be encouraged to start playing. Women like Lieke Martens of FC Barcelona and 2017's best player of the world, can hereby serve as an inspiration like Messi and Ronaldo have that role for boys.

As we see in the Netherlands, women's football provides opportunities to talk about global women equality

and its challenges. Gender equality is one of the United Nations' sustainable development goals and all countries should be working towards implementing them. With the talented women in Kuwait and the up and coming women's football culture, good opportunities can be created to work on women empowerment. Women that score goals reach women's goals!

SIPG peg back Jeonbuk's flying start to AFC knockouts

SAITAMA: Jeonbuk Motors got off to a flying start in the AFC Champions League last 16 yesterday, scoring in the first minute in Shanghai before being pegged back by SIPG in a 1-1 draw. On a good night for South Korean sides, Ulsan came from a goal down to stun Urawa Red Diamonds 2-1 in Saitama in the earlier first-leg encounter. Jeonbuk silenced the sea of red-clad supporters in the Shanghai Stadium in the opening seconds when Moon Seon-min stole in to lift Lim Seon-yeong's through ball over onrushing goalkeeper Yan Junling.

In a bruising encounter between the champions of China and South Korea, Shanghai SIPG's Brazilian imports Oscar, Hulk and Elkeson created a string of chances, though Jeonbuk carried a potent threat on the break.

Hulk went close twice before the home side deservedly levelled in the 39th minute. Right wing-back Wang Shenchao found himself in space in the centre of the box as he got on the end of Yu Hai's cross and equalised with a neat

header. Hulk rampaged through in first-half stoppage time with a chance to put SIPG in front after being fed by Elkeson's header. But after rounding goalkeeper Song Beom-Keun the angle was too tight and the burly striker's shot agonisingly hit the post and rebounded to safety. The second half was more scrappy and Jeonbuk will be the happier of the two sides after claiming a draw and an away goal ahead of the second leg in Jeonju next Wednesday.

Earlier, away goals from Joo Min-kyu and Hwang Il-su gave Ulsan a precious 2-1 win against Urawa Reds to take back to Korea for next week's second leg. In a battle of former Asian champions, Urawa dominated in the first half and were rewarded for their efforts when a delightfully chipped ball from Takuya Aoki in the 37th minute was met by Kenyu Sugimoto's glancing header.

Ulsan had barely threatened till that point, but it took them just five minutes to get back on terms. A mistake in midfield enabled the lively Lee Keun-ho to burst down the left flank and drive in a cross that was met by a powerful headed finish from Joo. The goal lifted the visitors and the lively goal provider Lee twice went close to putting Ulsan ahead after the break. First a rasping volley from the edge of the box flew just wide then a near-post flick found the side netting.

In the 80th minute substitute Hwang ran almost unopposed to the edge of the box before drilling home a left-foot shot for the winner. Junior Negroao should have made it three shortly after, but somehow cleared the crossbar from close range. — AFP



SAITAMA: South Korea's Ulsan Hyundai Junior Negroao (top) heads the ball against Japan's Urawa Reds during their AFC Champions League Group round of 16 football match in Saitama yesterday. — AFP

Neymar three-match Champions League ban confirmed

PARIS: Brazilian star Neymar will miss three Champions League matches next season, UEFA confirmed yesterday, as punishment for insulting a referee following Paris Saint-Germain's collapse against Manchester United.

UEFA first imposed the ban in April before PSG contested the decision, but a final decision was delivered yesterday. "The appeal lodged by PSG is rejected. Consequently, the UEFA Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body's decision of April 25 is confirmed," UEFA said.

The world's most expensive footballer was ruled out of the match with an injury. He watched from the stands as United were awarded a penalty deep into injury time after a protracted VAR decision, which Marcus Rashford scored to knock the French side out in the last 16 of the Champions League.

The 27-year-old aimed an Instagram rant laced with expletives at the match

officials. "It's a disgrace. They get four guys who don't understand football to watch a slow motion replay in front of the TV," wrote Neymar.

The striker had been having a poor season by his own exalted standards after being booed and mocked for diving at the World Cup, where Brazil were dumped out in the quarters by Belgium. He failed to make the Top 10 in the Ballon d'Or race and then injured his right metatarsal just 13 months after a previous lengthy layoff.

He then lost the Brazil captaincy and is facing accusations that he raped a Brazilian woman in Paris. He vehemently denies the accusations. Neymar then injured his ankle in a friendly match, ruling him out of the Copa America on home soil.

Paris Saint-Germain have indicated they would be prepared to offload the brilliant but troublesome winger who cost them a world-transfer 222-million-euro fee two years ago. —AFP

25 Kuwait shooters hailed after five medal haul at Amir Open in Italy



26 Harbhajan tells India to stick with Yadav-Chahal spin twins at WCup



27 Record-breaker Marta representing women after firing Brazil into WCup knockouts



N Zealand win WCup thriller against S Africa

Williamson rides luck when S Africa failed to review an edge from the captain



BIRMINGHAM: South Africa's Lungi Ngidi (C) dives but fails to stop the ball as New Zealand's Martin Guptill (R) and New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson (L) add runs during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between New Zealand and South Africa at Edgbaston in Birmingham, central England, yesterday. — AFP

BIRMINGHAM: Kane Williamson anchored New Zealand to a tense four-wicket victory at Edgbaston yesterday after an astonishing stroke of luck when South Africa failed to review an edge from the Kiwi captain.

The Black Caps' skipper was on 76 when he got a faint edge to a ball by leg-spinner Imran Tahir that Quinton de Kock took behind the stumps but South Africa took no action. That decision could prove fatal to their tournament hopes, with the Proteas now needing a miracle to progress to the semi-finals after just one win from six matches, while New Zealand now top the 10-team table. Earlier, Martin Guptill, who had been guiding New Zealand towards their target of 242 off a rain-reduced 49 overs with a minimum of fuss, trod on his stumps to spark a mini collapse.

The batsman, on 35, pulled Andile Phehlukwayo and ended up swivelling, only to lose his balance and clip his leg stump with his foot.

Two overs later New Zealand slipped to 74-3 when Ross Taylor tickled a Chris Morris leg-side delivery and De Kock took the catch behind the stumps. Tom Latham's

dismissal left them struggling at 80-4.

Jimmy Neesham (23) steadied the ship with his skipper but when he was out, New Zealand were back in trouble at 137-5.

Colin de Grandhomme came to New Zealand's rescue, batting positively and bringing up his fifty off 39 balls but when he was caught in the deep for 60 by Du Plessis off Lungi Ngidi, Kiwi nerves were jangling again. Eight were still needed off the final over.

But Mitchell Santner pinched a single and Williamson kept his nerve, bringing up his century with a huge six off the next ball and then a four sealed the victory. Earlier, Rassie van der Dussen gave South Africa something to bowl at as the Proteas struggled to 241-6 after losing the toss. Hashim Amla made a sluggish 55 off 83 balls but Van der Dussen's 67 not out came at better than a run a ball. During his innings, Amla became the fourth South African to reach 8,000 runs in one-day internationals.

He is the second-fastest player (176 innings) from any side to reach the milestone after India's Virat Kohli (175 innings). — AFP

SCOREBOARD

South Africa		New Zealand	
Q. de Kock b Boult	5	M. Guptill hit wicket b Phehlukwayo	35
H. Amla b Santner	55	C. Munro c & b Rabada	9
F. du Plessis b Ferguson	23	K. Williamson not out	106
A. Markram c Munro b De Grandhomme	38	R. Taylor c De Kock b Morris	1
R. van der Dussen not out	67	J. Neesham c Amla b Morris	23
D. Miller c Boult b Ferguson	36	C. de Grandhomme c Du Plessis b Ngidi	60
A. Phehlukwayo c Williamson b Ferguson	0	M. Santner not out	2
C. Morris not out	6	Extras 8 (lb1, nb1, w6)	
Extras 11 (lb7, 4w)		Total (six wickets, 48.3 overs)	245
Total (six wickets, 49.0 overs)	241	Did not bat: M. Henry; L. Ferguson; T. Boult	
Did not bat: K. Rabada, Imran Tahir, I. Ngidi		Fall of wickets: 1-12 (Munro), 2-72 (Guptill), 3-74 (Taylor), 4-80 (Latham), 5-137 (Neesham), 6-228 (De Grandhomme)	
Fall of wickets: 1-9 (De Kock), 2-59 (Du Plessis), 3-111 (Amla), 4-136 (Markram), 5-208 (Miller), 6-218 (Phehlukwayo)		Bowling: Rabada 10-0-42-1 (1w); Ngidi 10-1-47-1 (2w); Morris 10-0-49-3; Phehlukwayo 8.3-0-73-1 (1nb, 3w); Tahir 10-0-33-0;	
Bowling: Henry 10-2-34-0; Boult 10-0-63-1 (1w); Ferguson 10-0-59-3 (3w); De Grandhomme 10-0-33-1; Santner 9-0-45-1		Result: New Zealand won by four wickets.	

Platini released in 2022 WCup probe, denies wrongdoing

NANTERRE: The banned ex-UEFA chief Michel Platini was released from custody yesterday after hours of questioning in connection with a criminal investigation into the awarding of the 2022 World Cup to Qatar.

The French football legend who led European football's governing body from 2007 to 2015 was held Tuesday by French anti-corruption police investigating alleged corruption in the 2010 vote to award the competition to the gas-rich Gulf state.

He denied wrongdoing and a statement from his representatives said the facts of the case were "unknown to him." In the early hours of Wednesday, Platini's lawyer William Bourdon said he had been released without charge, adding that there has been "a

lot of fuss over nothing".

Platini, 63, looked drawn as he left the police anti-corruption office in Nanterre in the western Paris suburbs. "It was long but considering the number of questions, it could only be long, since I was asked about Euro 2016, the World Cup in Russia, the World Cup in Qatar, Fifa," he told reporters.

The decision to name Qatar as 2022 World Cup hosts triggered allegations of corruption that ultimately sparked FIFA's worst ever scandal. France's Office of the Financial Crimes Prosecutor (PNF) opened a preliminary investigation in 2016 into allegations of corruption, conspiracy and influence peddling surrounding the Qatar vote and also the awarding of the 2018 World Cup to Russia.

According to Sepp Blatter, the FIFA president at the time, Qatar won hosting rights as a result of a deal with France, derailing FIFA's own "diplomatic arrangement" whereby hosting rights would have gone to Russia in 2018 and then to the United States four years later.

The French investigation centres on alleged French intervention linked to Platini and former French president Nicolas Sarkozy. According to France Football

magazine, a "secret meeting" took place on November 23, 2010, at the Elysee Palace in Paris between Sarkozy, Qatar's then-Prince (now Emir) Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, and Platini, who at that time was both UEFA president and vice-president of FIFA.

Just over a week later, FIFA voted to award Qatar hosting rights for the 2022 tournament. Platini dismissed Blatter's allegations as a "tissue of lies" and denies he was influenced by Sarkozy, whose advisor for sport, Sophie Dion, was also held for questioning Tuesday along with the former French captain.

Platini's representatives said in a statement: "He has done absolutely nothing wrong and affirms that he is totally unrelated to the facts (of the case) which are unknown to him."

Lawyer Bourdon denied that the three-time Ballon d'Or winner had been placed under arrest by the police, as first reported, saying that he had been questioned "as a witness". Claude Gueant, Sarkozy's erstwhile chief of staff and former interior minister, was also called in for questioning Tuesday by France's Anti-Corruption Office of the Judicial Police. The decision to award Qatar football's highest-profile tournament ultimately sparked a wider fraud probe

that led to the overthrow of Blatter and Platini and the arrest of a series of senior FIFA figures.

Platini led UEFA until 2015 when he was banned from football for four years for ethics violations including receiving a two-million Swiss francs (1.8 million euros, \$2 million) payment from Blatter, who was suspended for six years.

Qatar has been accused of buying votes in its bid to stage the World Cup and a subsequent report by US independent investigator Michael Garcia unearthed an array of suspect financial dealings, many linked to Sandro Rosell, the ex-Barcelona president who served as a consultant for Qatar.

Platini was expected to succeed Blatter as FIFA president in 2016 before his fall from grace. He has been battling to clear his name ever since. Blatter told AFP he was "completely surprised" at Platini's questioning by police, adding that "this won't help him" coming as it does months before the end of his ban.

"With this story resurfacing at a time when the international media are in France for the Women's World Cup and three months before the end of his suspension it's astonishing and fodder for the media," Blatter said. — AFP