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Op-Ed

2019 Trafficking in Persons Report



By Lawrence Silverman,
US Ambassador to Kuwait

SEE PAGE 5 FOR FULL REPORT ON KUWAIT

Earlier this week, Kuwait and the international community marked International Domestic Workers' Day, recognizing the important contributions domestic workers make to the lives of millions of families worldwide. The violence and abuse domestic workers and other vulnerable people suffer at the hands of some human traffickers are painful reminders that nations must act to eliminate human trafficking and guarantee safe and humane working conditions for all.

Each year the United States Department of State issues its Trafficking in Persons Report as part of a worldwide effort to eliminate trafficking. This year's report, released on June 20, reflects the US government's commitment to leadership on this issue and the government of Kuwait's increasing effort to fight this scourge. As a humanitarian leader, Kuwait has made important strides to prevent exploitation and eliminate trafficking. A national committee is carrying out the government's anti-trafficking strategy; it is beginning to implement a national referral mechanism that will assist victims.

Using the anti-trafficking law, in some cases for the first time, government agencies expanded targeting of human traffickers, visa traders, and abusive employers - resulting in an increase in prosecutions and convictions.

Continued on Page 24

TEHRAN: Tehran warned Washington yesterday that any attack would see its interests across the Middle East go up in flames after US President Donald Trump said he called off a strike at the 11th hour. The aborted military action was to have been in response to Iran's downing of a US reconnaissance drone, which has seen tensions between the two countries soar after a series of attacks on oil tankers the US has blamed on Iran.

"Firing one bullet towards Iran will set fire to the interests of America and its allies" in the region, armed forces general staff spokesman Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi told the Tasnim news agency. "If the enemy - especially America and its allies in the region - make the military mistake of shooting the powder keg on which America's interests lie, the region will be set on fire," Shekarchi warned.

Hours after his comments, Iran said it had executed a man convicted of spying for the US. "The execution sentence was carried out for Jalal Haji Zavar, a contractor for the defense ministry's aerospace organization who spied for the CIA and the American government," semi-official ISNA news agency reported, quoting the Iranian military.

The United States was "cocked & loaded" to strike Iran late Thursday, US President Donald Trump said while announcing he had pulled back at the last minute as it would not have been a "proportionate" response to Tehran's shooting down of an unmanned drone.

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TEHRAN: General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, Iran's Head of the Revolutionary Guard's aerospace division, looks at debris from a downed US drone reportedly recovered within Iran's territorial waters and put on display by the Revolutionary Guard in the capital on Friday. — AFP

Johnson domestic 'row' rocks UK leadership race

LONDON: Britain's leadership contest was rocked yesterday by reports that police were called to a late-night "row" between frontrunner Boris Johnson and his partner, just hours before campaigning opened to win over grassroots Conservatives. The Guardian said officers were alerted early on Friday after a neighbor said there had been a loud altercation involving screams, shouts and bangs at the south London property, shortly after Johnson had secured his place in the final run-off to become prime minister.

The paper said late Friday Johnson's partner Carrie Symonds could be heard telling the former London mayor to "get off me" and "get out of my flat". London's Metropolitan Police said it responded to a call from a local resident but that "all occupants of the address... were all safe and well". Johnson, who is the runaway favorite to beat Jeremy Hunt, refused to answer questions on the issue during the first date of a month-long nationwide tour he is conducting with Hunt to win over Conservative members, who have the final say.

"I don't think people want to hear about that kind of thing," he told interviewer Iain Dale, to cheers from a friendly crowd at the first of 16 "hustings" - where candidates field audience questions. He instead tried to focus on his policies, saying "we need to get Brexit done" and promising to prepare Britain for a no deal exit from the EU, if a deal cannot be reached.

Continued on Page 24



BIRMINGHAM: Conservative MP Boris Johnson gestures as he takes part in a Conservative Party leadership hustings event yesterday. — AFP



KHARTOUM: Sudanese protesters burn tyres as demonstrations against the military council continue in Bahri on the northern outskirts of the capital late on June 20, 2019. —AFP

Sudan protesters hold night gatherings to rekindle movement

KHARTOUM: As night fell, residents of a southern district in Khartoum briskly moved to set the stage for Sudanese protest leaders giving a brief on the movement's latest updates. Grappling with a power outage, blocked internet access and heightened security, people from the Jabra district had few means to

organise the meeting which drew dozens from the neighborhood. Within a few hours, power generators were fetched, loud speakers set up, plastic chairs lined up and cars blazed their headlights on the podium where protest leaders were to give their speech.

Continued on Page 24

US plans to raise \$50bn, create 1m Palestinian jobs

WASHINGTON: The United States said yesterday that its Middle East peace plan to be presented next week in Bahrain aims to raise more than \$50 billion for the Palestinians and double their GDP within a decade. Unveiling details for the first time, President Donald Trump's administration said the initiative will look at reforming the Palestinian economy and linking it to those of its neighbors, seeking to generate major international investment.

The conference Tuesday and Wednesday in Bahrain, led by Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner, is the opening of a long-awaited Middle East peace initiative that officials say will later include a political component. But the Palestinian Authority is boycotting the so-called Peace to Prosperity workshop, charging that the unabashedly pro-Israel Trump is seeking to buy off the Palestinians and deprive them of an independent state.

Continued on Page 24

US writer says Trump sexually assaulted her

WASHINGTON: An advice columnist for Elle fashion magazine said Friday that Donald Trump sexually assaulted her in the dressing room of a New York department store more than two decades ago, an accusation swiftly denied by the US president. According to E Jean Carroll, the rape occurred in either 1995 or 1996, when Trump was a prominent real estate developer and she was a well-known magazine writer and host of a television show.

The account, revealed in an excerpt of Carroll's latest book and published Friday by New York magazine, makes her at least the 16th woman to have accused Trump of sexual misconduct before he became president. Trump reacted with a statement saying he'd never met Carroll, and that the incident "never happened". Carroll, 75, says she ran into Trump at the Bergdorf Goodman



E Jean Carroll

department store in Manhattan while they were both shopping.

She says that in an initially friendly encounter, Trump asked her for advice on buying a piece of lingerie for an unnamed woman. Then jokingly, they each suggested that the other should try it on. "The moment the dressing-room door is closed, he lunges at me, pushes me against the wall, hitting my head quite badly, and puts his mouth

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Local

Kuwait urges immediate halt of Israeli settlement expansion on occupied land

Illegal settlements 'huge obstacle' to peace process: Kuwait

NEW YORK: Kuwait on Friday called for the immediate halt of Israel's illegal settlement activities on occupied Palestinian land, saying these breaches of international law were a 'huge obstacle' to the peace process. "Israel, an occupational power, continues its illegal settlement activities in full violation of its obligations under Security Council resolutions and international conventions and treaties," Kuwait's permanent UN representative Mansour Al-Otaibi told the Security Council. "Israel's establishment of settlements in the Palestinian territories, occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law," he added. Ambassador Otaibi underlined that these measures represent a 'huge obstacle' to the two-state solution and attaining comprehensive and permanent peace. "We therefore call upon Israel to cease immediately and completely all settlement activities on occupied Palestinian land, to fully honor all of its legal obligations and to cease its forceful annexation policies," he said.

Ambassador Otaibi outlined the many violations Israel continues to commit, namely its siege on Gaza, its targeting of Palestinian civilians, its disruption of Christian and Muslim religious sanctities and its initiation of measures and policies aimed at altering the holy city of Jerusalem's physical and demographic landscape. "The international community cannot remain silent in light of the continuing crimes against the Palestinian people, under the siege of Israel," he said, calling for "action to safeguard our obligations under international humanitarian law, human rights law and the Fourth Geneva Convention." He went on to reaffirm Kuwait's commitment to peace as a strategic option and resolution of the conflict in accordance with international law and the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, which calls for a return of Arab territories occupied since 1967.

Central African Republic

Separately, Kuwait has welcomed President of Central African Republic Faustin-Archange Touadera's appointment of Muslim community members in government posi-



First Secretary Jawaher Al-Sabah during the meeting of a UN Security Council team tasked with exploring means to prevent and solve conflicts in Africa.

tions as well as including them in decision-making. Addressing a Security Council's session on CAR, Otaibi praised Touadera's decision to appoint female ministers and his performing of Eid Al-Fitr prayers in a mosque in the capital city, Bangui, with Muslim worshippers. Otaibi urged all parties in CAR to contribute to spreading principles of peaceful co-existence and to refrain from speeches of hatred. He voiced relief for conciliation agreement signed between CAR government and 14 armed groups on February 6, which paved way for their dialogue.

Otaibi welcomed CAR government's compliance with the peace agreement, including formation of technical committees in the country's provinces. He also welcomed CAR government's cooperation with regional and international organizations like the African Union, European Union, and UN



NEW YORK: Kuwait's permanent UN representative Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a Security Council on Friday. — KUNA

Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA). Otaibi, however, said violence against civilians in CAR posed a major challenge to the government despite the peace agreement, like the attacks by armed groups against MINUSCA and relief workers. He urged CAR government to hold those committing violent actions accountable, while regretting the 'very critical' humanitarian situation in the African country. "The only way to end the crisis in CAR is political dialogue between all parties," said Otaibi.

Sustainable Development Goals

In other news, Kuwait said Friday that reforming the security sector should take place in line with goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which should include all parties concerned in order

to promote role of prevention. This came in a speech by First Secretary Jawaher Al-Sabah before a meeting of a team, affiliated to the UN Security Council, tasked with exploring means to prevent and solve conflicts in Africa. She said efforts by governments, UN and parties concerned should be joined by regional and sub-regional organizations in order to reform security sector.

Sabah said a country has a sovereign right to determine how to reform the security sector. "Every country has its own nature and circumstances," she added. Any peace and stability operation in a conflict zone should be comprehensive with the objective of achieving sustainable peace coupled with national dialogue, respect of human rights and justice, she said. Sabah said weaknesses in some security sectors posed a threat to international peace and security. "We look forward reforms carried out by the Secretary General have positive impacts on reforming this sector," she added. Sabah noted UN Security Council resolutions 2157 and 2086 which showed the relation between security sector's reform and national property. — KUNA

News in brief

Amir condemns bombing

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday addressed a cable of condolences to Iraqi President Barham Saleh and Prime Minister Dr Khaled Abdul Mahdi on the victims of the suicidal explosion that occurred in East Baghdad. His Highness the Amir expressed the State of Kuwait's strong condemnation of this flagrant terrorist act that claimed lives of innocent people. He has affirmed solidarity with Iraq and measures it may take to preserve the country's security and stability. His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad prayed for souls of the deceased and wished the wounded quick recovery, appealing to His Almighty to protect Iraq and its brotherly people. Their Highnesses the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, respectively Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, sent cables of identical content to the Iraqi president, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent a cable of condolence to his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Al-Halbousi. — KUNA

Parliament examines bills

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Al-Ghanem declared that he had address invitations for partaking in the forthcoming sessions to examine the government employment policy. A number of MPs requested holding the session today, Ghanem said, expressing his belief that government members would not attend "because there has been no prior coordination" with it in this regard. The house speaker revealed that he had also addressed invitations for participating in tomorrow's session, adding that he would call for another one on Thursday to examine a number of bills. As for tomorrow's session, it will be dedicated to hold the second debate on the laws of public tenders, regulating and overseeing insurance, copyrights, amending corporate law, regulations concerning auditors, counterfeit certificates, teachers' employment, public universities and the law profession. Security authorities' readiness to cope with emergencies will be looked into in the Tuesday session. The Kuwaiti parliament is currently finalizing several files ahead of the summer recess. — KUNA

Informatics Academy launches

KUWAIT: His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah Informatics Award launched yesterday a new national initiative called 'Informatics Academy'. This academy was created to spread education and digital training with its diverse programs and seminars, all to boost digital programming, informatics economy and to spread the spirit of discovery and innovative thinking. Chairwoman of the Award Board of Trustees Sheikha Aida Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah said in press statement that this initiative was made to fulfill His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision of turning Kuwait into an advanced financial and commercial center. "This award also supports digital transformations in the fields of knowledge and economy, and it also assures the importance of technical education in developing human abilities and sustainable development," she continued. The Chairwoman noted that this academy seeks to fill some of technical holes in the Kuwaiti society in its different sectors of digital programming. The non-profit award was launched in 2001 as a development scheme in informatics and digital culture. — KUNA

Gulf Bank launches summer internship program

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank launched its 2019 Summer Internship Program geared towards University students. The program blends both practical and theoretical skills encouraging students in exploring a career path in Kuwait's banking sector. Interns can expect to learn the ins-and-outs of Gulf Bank's daily operations and procedures by focusing on learning how our organization runs.

The internship commences with a comprehensive two-day orientation, which will familiarize students with their future transition into the workforce. The program also entails a focused designation in one of Gulf Bank's departments whereby interns are matched with the business areas related to their field of study.

Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager Human Resources at Gulf Bank stated that, "At Gulf



Salma Al-Hajjaj

Bank, we continuously implement youth-focused programs to shape Kuwait's future leaders. Participating in this internship program will ease the transition from graduation to full-time work as interns become accustomed to the differences between classroom learning and workplace responsibilities that are not covered in their studies. With our Summer Internship Program, we are equipping interns with networking opportunities, skills development, and the ability to test-drive a career in banking."

"We encourage all college and university students to make use of their summer vacation by immersing themselves in an experience that will help promote their employment upon graduation. An internship is a great way to kick start a career, and we look forward to welcoming university students in our internship program this summer," she added. In addition to delivering summer internships, Gulf Bank offers a wide array of youth-centric initiatives across all levels.



KFH sponsors over 50 student graduation projects

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) took part in sponsoring the engineering graduation projects made by students of College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University. This comes as part of KFH efforts to encourage academic and scientific innovations

of Kuwaiti students, and in line with the social responsibility the bank assumes towards the youth.

The projects were demonstrated in the 36th Engineering Design Fair held at Crown Plaza. The Participants showcased brilliant engineering designs that can be available in a practical manner which contributes in enriching the engineering process and the mechanism of some majors

The college staff and students applauded KFH for its participation in the event which symbolizes the role of the private sector in shouldering social responsibilities towards the society, not to mention underscoring KFH's leading role in such events that revolve around

Kuwait Deputy FM calls for activating 'economic diplomacy'

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister has underscored necessity of activating 'the economic diplomacy' and working diligently to lure foreign investments to the country. Khaled Al-Jarallah, also the head of the permanent committee for following-up on implementation of the five year development plan and the government tasks, was speaking yesterday during a training course, themed "means of attracting the foreign investor .. laws and goals."

Jarallah, sponsor of the course, was quoted by a ministry statement as noting necessity to draw attention to the facilities provided by the Kuwaiti authorities for the entrepreneurs for sake of diversifying national income. The deputy foreign minister lauded noticeable role in this respect by the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, led by its Director General, Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

The course is designed to publicize Kuwait as an attractive investment country, educating personnel on relevant regulations. A special team has organized the course, during which Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Al-Sabah, the assistant director general of investments for diplomats joining the missions abroad, addressed the participants. Kuwait has diplomatic missions worldwide. The envoys are involved in a variety of activities including the promotion of investment opportunities available in the country and diverse incentives for the business community. The country is currently in the executive process of the national development strategy, Vision 2035, in line with the approach to attain His Highness the Amir key goal, transforming Kuwait into a lucrative business hub in the Gulf.

In other news, Jarallah is scheduled today to head to Europe in a business tour that would take him to Romania, Ireland and the UK. While in Romania and Ireland, Jarallah will hold political consultations, in addition to following up on fate of missing Kuwaiti citizen Mohammad Al-Baghli. The businessman went missing in Prahova north of the Romanian capital Bucharest on August 5, 2015. In London, Jarallah will head the delegation to the 14th session of the Kuwait-UK joint steering group, according to a ministry press release. —KUNA



supporting students.

KFH is aware of the importance of the College of Engineering and Petroleum as the graduates play role in the most vital economic sector in Kuwait; especially that this college

includes various branches of engineering that can boost development in all fields. KFH firmly believes that the students are the real assets of Kuwait, and that they will be the pillars of the development process in Kuwait.



Local

US report highlights religious freedom practices in Kuwait in 2018

local spotlight

KD 2 million for dogs



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The subject of stray and neglected dogs is still the talk of town and people's attention. The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) recently issued a statement on its plans to conduct a campaign to neuter stray dogs. This decision raised a debate in the community and social media amid questions about the ability of the authority to reach all dogs, especially male ones, and the cost of the spaying operations that may reach KD 2 million.

There were also different opinions on the best way to deal with stray dogs - there were calls to kill them, house them in private places, activate the law of import and acquisition, or transfer some of them abroad.

I have written in previous articles on animal rights, but today I would also like to speak about the important role of animal rights advocates, because they are the mechanism that can change the culture of society and support the government's decision to protect the animals from potential harm, whether by neglect by their owners or being abandoned on the streets to be sick and hungry and cause harm to themselves and others. Dogs might be abandoned by their owners for various reasons, such as travelling abroad and their inability to take their pets with him, or negligence, where some people find that the animal, whether a cat or a dog, needs continuous care and attention, so they find it easier to leave them in the street.

There are several ways to deal with neglected dogs. In some developed countries, animal welfare associations use volunteers. Here, animal rights advocates, veterinarians and volunteers work to provide shelters for these animals. This must be handled in a gentle, compassionate and legal manner acceptable by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

The spaying should be done by a government agency, because the average price in private hospitals for neutering dogs is around KD 100, and with the announcement by PAAAFR that the campaign will target 20,000 dogs, it means it needs KD 2 million to implement it in a proper manner.

Director of Al-Dahma Veterinary Hospital Sultan Al-Awad told the local press that only five veterinary hospitals are accredited in Kuwait, catering to animal breeders and pet owners. He pointed out that charges for removing the testicles of dogs differs from one hospital to another, calling on everyone to pay attention to their animals' health to prevent the spread of diseases, which may affect those who are close to them. He also stressed that prices vary according to services provided and experience. I think this is best way to reduce the numbers of stray dogs, and better than the use of poison and weapons that made Kuwait face criticism for animal rights violations. The authorities in some countries are demanding that those arriving with pets have to possess a travel document for the animal showing its vaccination history to be allowed to enter.

I think the responsible body for the issue should be PAAAFR and the Department of Animal Health, to provide the necessary resources. The government should set a budget for this issue and act seriously and continuously to protect neglected and stray animals.

KUWAIT: The United States Department of State released its annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 2018, which states the following in its executive summary on Kuwait:

The constitution declares Islam to be the religion of the state but declares freedom of belief is "absolute." It declares the state will protect the freedom to practice one's religion, provided such practice does not conflict with established customs, public policy, or morals. Defamation of the Abrahamic faiths (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity), publication or broadcast of material the government deems offensive to religious groups, and practices the government deems inconsistent with Islamic law are prohibited by law.

The law does not specifically prohibit proselytism, but individuals promoting proselytism may be prosecuted under laws criminalizing contempt of religion. The government continued to appoint and pay the salaries of Sunni imams and provide the full basic text for weekly sermons preached at Sunni mosques. It did not exercise the same oversight of Shia imams. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs (MAIA) fined, reprimanded, or suspended several Sunni imams for giving sermons perceived as politically motivated, insulting to other religious groups, and violating the national unity law. In September the government fined a Member of Parliament (MP) for insulting a Shiite parliamentarian and defaming Shiite Islam via Twitter posts. In June, the Court of Appeals reduced the sentence of a journalist and secular activist convicted of blasphemy charges in 2017 for "contempt of Islam" and "slander of sharia."

MAIA organized several courses for imams promot-

ing tolerance and countering radicalization. The government continued to provide added security at religious sites to all recognized non-Sunni religious groups. It required all religious communities to conduct religious events indoors. Minority religious groups said they could worship in private spaces without government interference provided they did not disturb their neighbors or violate laws regarding assembly and proselytizing. MAIA permitted the construction of five new Shiite mosques during the year; however, most minority religious groups reported a continued lack of sufficient facilities for worship and difficulty obtaining permission to construct new facilities. The government did not accredit any religious schools or establish Shiite religious training institutions. Religious minorities said they practiced self-censorship to avoid conflict with authorities. Some Shiite leaders continued to report discrimination in clerical and public sector employment. Members of most non-Abrahamic faiths and unregistered churches were not able to get married locally. In July, the press reported that two parliamentarians submitted a request to halt enforcement of a prohibition against registering local Baha'i marriages. The Ministry of Education continued to ban or censor instructional materials referring to the Holocaust or Israel.

Muslims continued to face societal pressure against conversion from Islam but there were no legal prohibitions to doing so. It remained illegal, however, for individuals of other faiths to convert Muslims within the country. Some citizens who converted outside the country said their families harassed them due to their conversion from Islam. Hotels, stores, and businesses continued to mark non-Islamic holidays such as

Christmas, Easter, and Diwali. News media continued to publish information about the celebrations of religious holidays, including such material as the religious significance of Christmas. Some Muslim clerics continued to express disapproval via social media of the celebration of non-Islamic holidays and called for more government action to restrict public expression of these holidays. According to the NGO Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), there were instances of anti-Semitic commentary in print and on social media, including by a public university lecturer and a licensed imam.

Senior embassy officials and senior MAIA officials discussed the ministry's function to promote tolerance and religious freedom in the country, including for members of religious minority groups. In March the Department of State Special Advisor for Religious Minorities met with government officials, including MAIA senior officials and MPs from the Human Rights Committee, and with religious leaders, and attended a large private interfaith meeting. In December, the US Ambassador and other embassy officials hosted an annual event for representatives of officially recognized non-Muslim faiths to discuss religious freedom and the challenges they faced in the country, as well as the importance of religious tolerance. A senior embassy official also hosted a roundtable at which leaders of non-Abrahamic faiths discussed their communities' needs. Senior embassy officials attended religious events throughout the year and discussed issues related to religious tolerance with participants and emphasized the US government's commitment to international religious freedom.

Kuwait asks for blacklisted citizens' pardon: Report

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: US media sources said Kuwait urged the UN to pardon blacklisted Kuwaiti citizens whose assets are frozen, including Hajjaj Al-Ajmi. According to a Wall Street Journal report quoting well-informed sources, "loopholes in UN Security Council sanctions procedures are allowing blacklisted Al-Qaeda and Islamic State terrorists and their supporters to tap their bank accounts despite a UN asset freeze."

The report added that those who had access to their bank accounts include Qatari Khalifa Al-Subaiei, a terrorist financier whom the US had long ago declared to be providing financial support to Al-Qaeda leaders, including the 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed. Subaiei was blacklisted in 2008, but the US has been granting him access to \$10,000 monthly for his basic needs.

Further, the report also shows the UN Security Council approved 71 out of 72 requests made by blacklisted financiers in 2008 and 2018 to have access to their bank accounts. In addition, the report stressed that although, according to UN sanctions, blacklisted terrorist are not allowed any access to their assets and bank accounts, a loophole in the sanc-

tions policy allows their home countries to apply for exemptions to give them access to small amounts of money for daily basic needs.

Expats' contracts

The Ministry of Education (MoE) plans to cancel the posts of special education supervisors in various educational areas because they had been appointed without Civil Service Commission (CSC) approval, said informed sources, noting that the cancellation decision is due to be signed within a few days and that the six supervisors will then return to their old posts. Meanwhile, a delay in terminating the contracts of expat teachers and administrative staff members has resulted in speculations, rumors and optimism that the ministry will change its mind and halt the process for this year. However, official MoE sources stressed that the ministry is keen on implementing CSC instructions concerning replacing expats with citizens and that lists had already been prepared and signed pending the minister's final approval to submitted to the laid off personnel.

Imams' residence

The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs refused to allocate special residences for imams and muezzins outside residential areas, said the manager of the ministry's engineering department Salah Al-Shallahi in response to a proposal made by municipal councilmember Abdul Aziz Al-Mojel. Shalahi justified the rejection by the fact that both clerics have to reside close to mosques to lead prayers five times daily. They also do not have driving licenses and the ministry cannot afford to transport them to mosques.

Ministry comments on homeless bedoon's case

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Social Affairs will follow up the case of a bedoon (stateless) elderly person who is living in an unhealthy place because he had nobody to support him, Director of the ministry's charity department Hoda Al-Rashed said yesterday. Rashed added that the ministry urged Al-Najat Charity to provide the man with suitable accommodation and transfer him from the temporary place he currently inhabits in an endowment building run by Al-Najat Charity, where an assistant has been appointed to accompany and help him. Rashed added a catering company has been contracted to provide the man with meals that are suitable for his health condition and the geriatric diseases he suffers from, such as hypertension, diabetes and other chronic diseases. The bedoon's case has been making the rounds on social media lately, with many people calling on the state to provide full care for him.

12 laparoscopy surgeries

Head of Adan Hospital's gynecology and maternity department Dr Abeer Al-Zayedi announced that the department had conducted 12 laparoscopy surgeries to remove pre-cancer womb and ovary

tumors. Zayedi said that the surgeries had been conducted by a special team accompanying a specialized visiting professor from India, adding that laparoscopic surgeries reduce patients' hospitalization period and spares them from surgical wound complications.

Municipal Council building

Municipal Council Secretary General Bader Al-Refae said the council's new building will be built according to modern architectural designs to become a landmark in Kuwait. Speaking during a tour he made yesterday along with the acting deputy director for projects affairs Adnan Sayyed Mohsen, Refae said that 95 percent of the building has been completed, adding that it is located in Qibla over a total area of 77,600 sq m. He also noted that the building will have multi-storey parking, a 10-storey building for employees' offices, a meeting room, ground floor and two basement levels.

Bureau's remarks

Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi stressed that the municipality's executive body takes the State Audit Bureau's remarks made very seriously, and that it will spare no effort to avoid them in the future. Speaking on attending a meeting with executive body members, Manfouhi pointed out that the Audit Bureau's reports are very important and help to fix malfunctions. He added that linking the municipality with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will provide more control on issuing electronic ad licenses, noting that a new online service will be launched soon to issue licenses for new activities.

Shops busted for selling unauthorized fire equipment

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) announced yesterday that a number of fire-fighting shops have been busted for selling unauthorized fire equipment. KFSD carried out an inspection campaign on Thursday, upon directions of Director-General for the Prevention Sector Major-General Khalid Abdullah Fahad, on fire equipment shops, the Directorate said in a press statement. Inspectors found that some stores trade in fake equipment, the statement said, adding that such an action is a violation of the extinguishing regulations, and that equipment must fit world laboratories standards. Legal actions have been taken against those shops, KFSD affirmed, noting its campaign inspects equipment for their efficiency and official authorization, adding their quality should be certified and confirmed by international laboratories. —KUNA



KD 200,000 worth chewing tobacco busted in container

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Shuwaikh customs officers suspected a 40-ft container that was reportedly carrying spices, but when inspected, banned tobacco was found in the third row. The container arrived at Shuwaikh Port from a Gulf country yesterday and had more than 1.9 million packs of paan and chewing tobacco with a value of KD 200,000.

Khaitan murder

Security forces arrested a group of Indian nationals who demonstrated in downtown Kuwait City holding banners demanding the execution of a compatriot in India, said security sources. An Indian man was found murdered in his residence in Khaitan, said security sources, noting that police detectives were summoned to the crime scene, where they found the man's body in a pool of blood with a deep wound to the neck and knife besides it. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Child drowned

A four-year-old Kuwaiti child died after he drowned in a swimming pool in Julaia, said security sources, noting that the child was rushed to hospital, where he was pronounced dead. A case was filed and investigations are ongoing.

Eight people rescued

Firefighters saved eight people who were



A customs officer inspects the banned substances found in the container.



Firefighters inspect the scene of a car accident between Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber and Bayan.

stranded on a southern Kuwaiti island yesterday. Four people were trapped in Umm Al-Namil island in the midst of high tides before teams of volunteers came to their rescue, injuring themselves in the process, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement. The fire crews managed to save all those who were stranded.

Four hurt in crash

Firemen in Mishref responded to an accident between Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber and Bayan resulting in four injuries, one critical. Meanwhile, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh fire department dealt with a fire in garbage left in a yard covering 500 sq m. The rubbish included lumber, tires and foam.



KUWAIT: Cardboard boxes containing contrabands that arrived in a container at Shuwaikh Port yesterday.

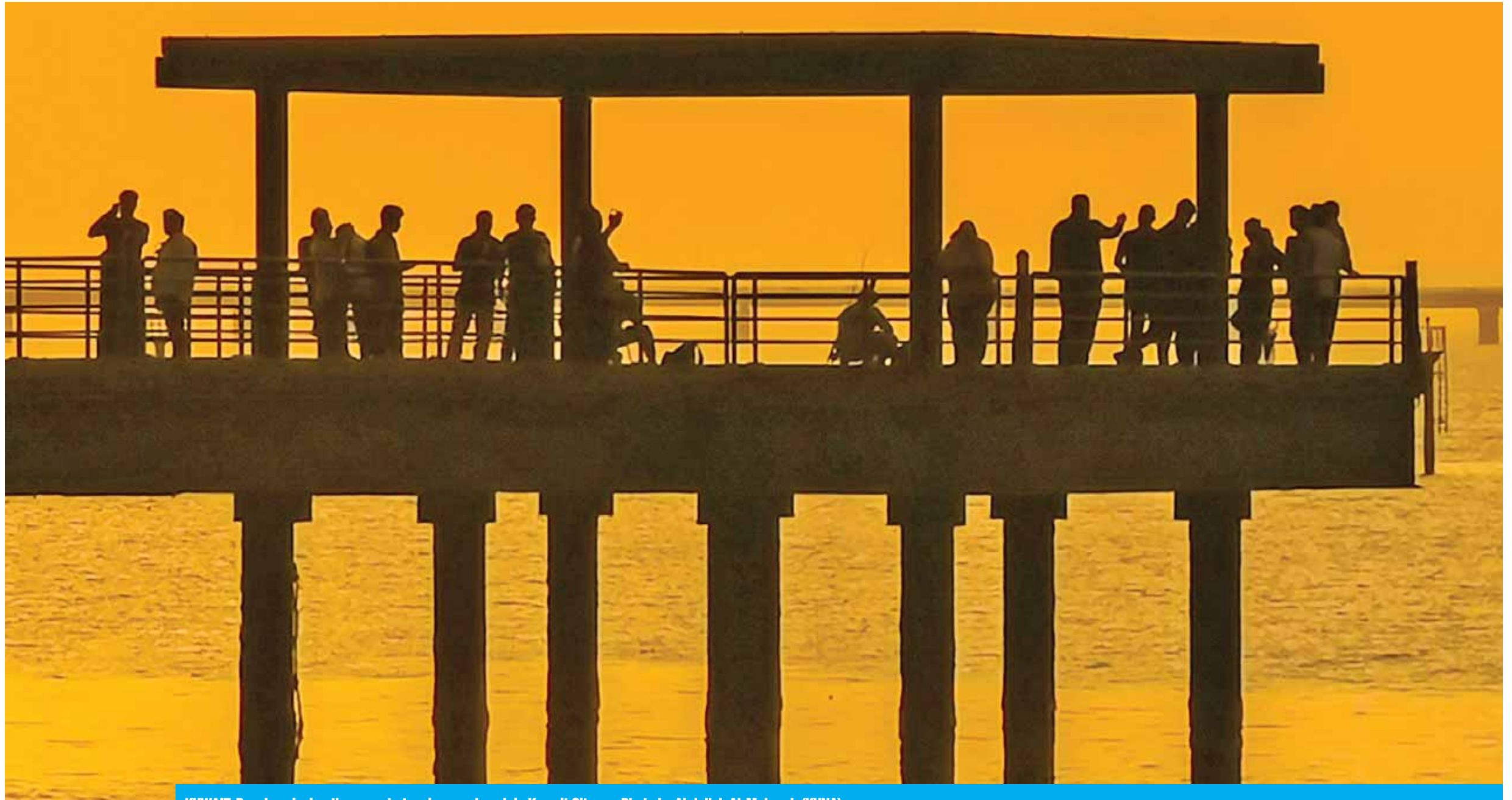


People rescued after being stranded in Umm Al-Namil island.



Flames are seen in a yard where solid waste was set ablaze in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

Local



KUWAIT: People enjoying the sunset at a pier on a beach in Kuwait City. — Photo by Abdullah Al-Muhareb (KUNA)

Kuwait's institutes continue tackling humanitarian aid around the world

Kuwaiti charity celebrates graduation of 1,000 Syrian students in Turkey

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti institutions and organizations have continued to locally and internationally provide relief assistance, aid, and tackling issues related to refugees, displaced people, and the needy throughout the week. Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN and International Organizations headquarters in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim said last week that Kuwait would hold annual strategic talks with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) tomorrow. Ghunaim said that these talk would take place in the Committee's headquarters in Geneva, to discuss, coordinate and organize international efforts towards the most recent humanitarian challenges.

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

Promising results

Moving forward, the International Committee of the Red Cross' (ICRC) recent talks with Kuwait yielded "promising results," its president Peter Maurer said last Monday. "We exchanged views on humanitarian issues concerning the region and examined plans for more cooperation with Kuwait," Maurer said after the latest round of talks. He said ICRC representatives listened intently as Kuwaiti officials explained the country's strategy to deal with humanitarian crises gripping the region, citing a recent Kuwaiti-proposed draft UN resolution over the matter of missing persons at times of armed conflict. Kuwait's relationship with the ICRC dates back to around three decades, said the head of the Gulf state's delegation to the talks Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah, who serves as the assistant foreign minister for the office of the deputy prime minister and foreign minister's affairs.

Kuwait continues to cooperate with the ICRC over a myriad of issues including protecting civilians at times of armed conflict and tracking the whereabouts of missing persons, the diplomat added. Echoing the ICRC president's remarks, Ghunaim pinned hopes on the talks, saying a roadmap has been set on how to address humanitarian issues. The primary goal for these talks is to come up with new solutions to humanitarian crises around the world, with much emphasis placed on the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, besides other countries, he explained.

Meanwhile, also on Monday, Kuwait Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of the Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah praised on behalf of Kuwait efforts exerted by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), after extensive meetings at the committee's headquarters in Geneva.

Present at the meeting, which touched upon humanitarian diplomacy at its second session between Kuwait and the ICRC, were Dr Sayer, Ambassador Ghunaim, and Assistant Foreign Minister for International



Members of the Kuwaiti charity Al-Najat participate in a ceremony to honor more than 1,000 students from the Syrian community in Turkey.

Organizations Nasser Al-Hayyen. The officials also discussed cooperation between Kuwait and ICRC especially in light of UN Security Council's adoption of resolution 2474 (2019) on protecting civilians in armed conflict - missing persons in armed conflict. The resolution was passed on June 11 during Kuwait's Presidency of the Security Council and was the result



Kuwait, ICRC coordinate over recent challenges

of great cooperation and coordination between Kuwait and the ICRC. Addressing mechanisms to develop cooperation and exploring means of maintain this cooperation for more prosperous achievements, was also part of discussions.

Distinguished students

Meanwhile, in Istanbul, Al-Najat Charity Association celebrated the graduation and honoring of more than 1,000 students from the distinguished members of the Syrian community residing in Turkey. The ceremony was attended by Turkish senior education officials, Deputy Director of the Turkish Red Crescent in Orfa Guzdeh Yildirim, and Director of External Education Department of Najat Charity Association Ibrahim Al-Bader. "We celebrate the graduation of a group of students from the elite schools of survival of the great Syrian people, who studied in the survival schools of the Turkish Republic," said Bader. "I hope that these promising young people will be able to contribute to the renaissance and leadership of the nation." Bader added that Al-Najat Charity strives to protect youth and young people from the menace of illiteracy and ignorance that spread in a "frightening" way among the Syrian refugees. Bader affirmed that the Najat Charity Association is one of the first associations that contributed strongly to support the Syrian refugees and will continue to provide food, medicine and clothing.

In Irbil, a prominent leader from Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) praised Kuwait's humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people. Last Tuesday, political bureau member Hoshiyar Zebari said in a statement to the press that he discussed with the Kuwaiti Consul General in Irbil Dr Omar Al-Kandari bilateral relations between the two sides and ways to develop and strengthen ties in addition to common concerns about the situation in the region. Zebari, who previously held the finance portfolio in the Iraqi government, said that discussion also focused on Kuwait's generous humanitarian efforts to the people of Iraq and people of the Kurdistan region. Kuwait has provided various humanitarian assistance to Iraqi displaced people over the past years, including various relief, educational and health assistance, which were welcomed and praised by officials in the Kurdistan region as well as displaced people and humanitarian organizations operating in the region. In February 2018, it hosted an international conference for the reconstruction of Iraq with the participation of a number of donor countries and international and regional organizations headed by five parties (the European Union, Iraq, Kuwait, the United Nations and the World Bank) and ended with a total commitment of \$30 billion. Earlier this year, Iraq's Fund for the Reconstruction of Affected Areas signed an agreement with Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) totaling \$100 million to support the health sector in the war-affected areas of Iraq.

Clear efforts

On another front, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Kuwait Dr Bakhromjon Aloev last Wednesday commended the efforts of KRCS to help the needy and relieve those affected by natural disasters or manmade disasters. Dr Aloev told reporters after meeting with the Deputy Chairman of KRCS Anwar Al-Hasawi that the efforts are clear in the field of helping victims and have a leading position in the field of humanitarian work. He underlined the importance of the regional and international activities in the field of relief and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy and the afflicted throughout the world. On the meeting that took place between the two sides, Dr Aloev said that the issues of common concern were discussed, especially with regard to the humanitarian and relief fields, pointing out that the talks he had with Al-Hasawi were constructive. Meanwhile, Hasawi welcomed the visit of Dr Aloev, affirmed readiness for KRCS' constructive cooperation

and coordination with the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan (RCSU), along with humanitarian and community organizations in his country. The association will continue its programs to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of refugees and displaced people worldwide and support any effort to support those in need in Uzbekistan, he said.

World Refugee Day

Also last Wednesday, Director of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait (UNHCR) Samer Hadadian 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. — KUNA

Local

Minister applauds efforts for upgrading Kuwait in anti-human trafficking report

KUWAIT: Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Fahad Al-Afasi said yesterday the US-based 2019 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report has upgraded Kuwait from Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 2 in anti-human trafficking efforts. Justice ministry's continued efforts and cooperation with other state bodies led the country to acquire a trustworthy international status in anti-human trafficking field, said Afasi, who is also head of the national committee to prevent trafficking in persons. The US report showed that the Kuwaiti government demonstrated overall increasing efforts in anti-human trafficking compared to the previous reporting period, in addition to its increasing efforts to offer protective services to potential trafficking victims, he said. It also showed

the government demonstrated overall increasing efforts by deploying its specialized trafficking unit to initiate more criminal investigations of potential trafficking crimes and more prosecutions under the anti-trafficking law, added Afasi. The US government considers the TIP report as one of the policies and decisions making tools on the international level, the minister noted, adding it shows advancement levels in countries that carried out intensified procedures to combat trafficking in persons.

Meanwhile, Afasi mentioned that the Justice ministry, through a specialized committee for drafting Law (91/2013) on combating trafficking in persons and immigrants, and providing protection to victims of such crimes, has authorized the Public Prosecution to

refer those victims to health and social care centers and provide them with all services they need. The ministry has also contributed to the legislative drafting of Law (68/2015) on information technology (IT) and cybercrimes, he noted, adding the law firmly punishes individuals who launch websites and publishes information using the Internet or any other IT source for the purpose of trafficking in persons or facilitating business with them. Furthermore, the ministry has also drafted the national strategies to combat trafficking in persons, Afasi mentioned, noting the Cabinet has commissioned the minister of justice to form a committee, under his presidency, that include in its membership various bodies tasked with making a national strategy to prevent trafficking in persons and immigrants.

The ministry has prepared this strategy, which included three main axes: prevention, protection, and international cooperation, and referred it to the Cabinet, the minister said, adding the Cabinet has officially approved the strategy and commissioned the justice ministry in coordination with the foreign ministry to implement it in cooperation with other bodies in the country. Thus, the justice minister's decision (1902/2018) was issued to establish the permanent national committee to implement the strategy under his presidency and membership of several national bodies in Kuwait, noted Afasi. He commended the great efforts made by the permanent committee's members in boosting the national strategy to combat trafficking in humans and making it successful. —KUNA

2019 Trafficking in Persons Report on Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Government of Kuwait does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore Kuwait was upgraded to Tier 2. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts by deploying its specialized trafficking unit to initiate more criminal investigations of potential trafficking crimes and more prosecutions under the anti-trafficking law. It referred significantly more potential trafficking victims for protective services, operationalized its central recruitment agency in an attempt to hire and better safeguard the rights of hundreds of domestic workers, and increased enforcement of its domestic worker law. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Rather than prosecuting potential criminals for human trafficking, officials continued to routinely use arbitration and administrative penalties to resolve grievances filed by domestic and other migrant workers instead of investigating such cases as human trafficking crimes, and protracted litigation and subsequent appeals processes led most victims to decline to file court cases. By not holding traffickers criminally accountable with stringent sentences, the government perpetuated a climate of impunity that failed to deter future crimes. The government did not regularly use standard procedures for proactively identifying victims and continued to detain, prosecute, and deport trafficking victims, including those fleeing forced labor.

Prioritized recommendations

Increase law enforcement efforts to investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers, including Kuwaiti citizens, under the 2013 anti-trafficking law rather than treating potential forced labor cases as administrative violations.

- Proactively screen for trafficking indicators among vulnerable populations, and during migrant round-ups and amnesty periods to ensure victims are not wrongfully penalized or deported for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit.

- Institute reforms to the sponsorship-based employment system, including by allowing all workers to change employers without necessitated employer approval and ceasing prosecution of workers who flee their employment.

- In adherence to Kuwaiti labor law, increase investigations and punishment of employers who illegally confiscate migrant workers' passports.

- Institute trainings for all relevant officials on mechanisms to proactively identify and refer to protection services all victims of human trafficking and routinely employ these procedures.

- Continue to strengthen enforcement of the domestic labor law to ensure domestic workers' rights are protected.

- Eliminate worker-paid recruitment fees.
- Commence construction on or allocate existing facility space for a shelter to accommodate male victims.

- Continue to convene the official governmental committee and strengthen implementation of the national anti-trafficking strategy.

- Expand efforts to raise anti-trafficking awareness, particularly among vulnerable populations, including migrant workers.

Prosecution

The government maintained law enforcement efforts. The 2013 anti-trafficking law criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of up to 15 years' imprisonment for offenses involving an adult male victim and up to life imprisonment for those involving an adult female or child victim. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. In addition, the Public Prosecutor's Office (PPO) and the Ministry of Interior (MOI) launched a new policy in January 2019 requiring all cases of buying and trading of fraudulent visas, withholding of salaries and passports in excess of three months, or forcing individuals into jobs different from those contractually agreed upon be prosecuted under the anti-trafficking law rather than the labor law; this accounted for 21 of the reported investigations during the period.

The government's specialized trafficking unit investigated 50 potential trafficking cases during the reporting year, compared to 60 investigations in the previous reporting period; 21 of the 50 investigations were the result of the new PPO/MOI policy guidance on the anti-trafficking law. It discovered such cases through tips from foreign embassies, civil society, hotlines, the government-run shelter, and the MOI's Domestic Labor Department (DLD). In 2018, officials prosecuted eight cases-four for forced labor and four for sex trafficking-compared to five cases in 2017. The government convicted an unknown number of defendants in one case under the anti-trafficking law, and seven additional trafficking cases awaiting sentencing at the close of the current reporting period; during the previous reporting period, it convicted six sex traffickers in one case and sentenced them to between 15 years and life imprisonment. In 2018, the government did not report sentencing details or disaggregated information on convictions

for forced labor versus sex trafficking crimes committed. However, in April 2018, the Criminal Court sentenced a Kuwaiti national and three stateless Arabs to life imprisonment for forcing 32 male workers into prostitution.

Generally, Kuwaiti authorities did not categorize or investigate labor violations of domestic workers as human trafficking and continued to typically treat such cases as administrative infractions. Officials commonly used arbitration, which resulted in monetary compensation and repayment of back-wages to victims, administrative fines, and closure of recruitment firms to resolve such cases. Such resolution neither enforces stringent punishment to deter future crimes, nor provides victims care to heal from the trauma of the trafficking experience. If a settlement could not be agreed upon, DLD officials referred the case to the labor courts, and if the complaint involved a gross violation, such as assault or domestic worker abuse, authorities transferred the case directly to the public prosecutor's office. Many domestic worker abuse cases were not prosecuted due to lack of evidence or witnesses. As a result, only severe cases of domestic worker abuse-usually involving significant bodily injury or death-were prosecuted, and typically as violations of other criminal laws instead of trafficking. In some cases, media reported the government sought prosecution of potential trafficking cases for abuse or simple assault rather than as violations of anti-trafficking laws.

Although the withholding of workers' passports is prohibited under Kuwaiti law, this practice remained commonplace among sponsors and employers of foreign workers. During the reporting period, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) received 2,489 complaints of confiscated passports; the government did not report how many employers PAM ordered to return employees' identification documents. Some government officials allegedly sold work permits to illegal recruiters or even directly to migrant workers, potentially facilitating trafficking; the government did not report efforts to prosecute and convict officials complicit in trafficking or trafficking-related offenses. The MOI's anti-trafficking unit conducted two training sessions, on trafficking indicators and a victim-centered approach to law enforcement efforts, for 37 trainees drawn from all MOI departments; in the prior year, there were four such training sessions. The government also participated in and provided in-kind support for three international organization-sponsored trainings and capacity-building programs for law enforcement sectors of the MOI, including the specialized anti-trafficking unit and DLD. Throughout the reporting period, more than 110 employees from PAM, MOI, and the Ministry of Justice attended two anti-trafficking seminars on how to identify victims. The DLD continued its production of internal training programs on a weekly basis targeting investigators and labor inspectors.

Protection

The government demonstrated increased efforts to protect trafficking victims. In 2018, an international organization reported that the government had identified and referred approximately 800 vulnerable domestic workers and potential trafficking victims to its shelter, substantially up from the 48 potential victims it referred during the previous year. Of these, the MOI and PAM, in cooperation with an international organization, identified and provided voluntary repatriation and transition assistance for more than 300 identified trafficking victims during the reporting period. It provided shelter to a total of 1,600 domestic workers, of whom an international organization reported roughly 20-30 percent were likely trafficking victims; this is compared to 3,000 in 2017. Many of those admitted to the shelter had fled poor working conditions, including excessive hours and delayed payment of wages, or desired to return to their respective countries of origin. The government also used the facility to host domestic workers awaiting repatriation, or deportation if facing criminal charges. Additionally, of the total number of domestic worker complaints the DLD received, it referred 40 domestic workers to the government-run shelter during the year. Although the government had in place since 2015 a screening process to proactively identify potential trafficking victims among vulnerable populations, the extent to which the government employed this proactive screening mechanism was unknown. During the year, the government-run shelter received referrals from embassies, NGOs, international organizations, churches, private citizens, and other migrant workers. Officials ratified a national referral mechanism in 2018 that aimed to improve intergovernmental coordination, provide training for judicial and prosecutorial personnel, and expedite criminal charges in forced labor cases; however, the government did not implement this revised mechanism during the reporting period. The shelter served as a one-stop facility, providing medical and psychological care, food, rehabilitation support, and access to officials from various ministries to facilitate legal and repatriation assistance. Residents at the shelter had access to cell phones and freedom of movement to leave on supervised regular outings. Despite government allocation and budgetary approval for construction

of a male shelter during the previous reporting period, Kuwait did not commence construction of such a shelter during the current reporting period.

The government provided an annual budget of two million Kuwaiti dinar (\$6.6 million) for domestic worker shelter operations and protection programs for trafficking victims. Some international organizations, in conjunction with foreign affairs officials, provided assistance to an unknown number of domestic workers from nations without diplomatic representation in Kuwait who needed to procure travel documentation. Embassies of the Philippines, India, and Sri Lanka maintained their own domestic worker shelters and worked closely with the Kuwaiti government to seek compensation and legal redress for their nationals subjected to exploitative working conditions in the country. In cooperation with international organizations and foreign embassies, the government assisted victims in retrieving documentation and funding for repatriation; and in the case of administrative deportation officials provided airline tickets and worked to recoup associated costs from the accused employers. Beyond the repatriation and transition assistance, MOI and PAM provided for more than 300 foreign domestic workers who were trafficking victims during the reporting period, the DLD provided repatriation assistance for 120 female domestic workers who fled exploitative employers. The government allowed victims residing in its shelter to either change sponsors or be repatriated to their country of origin once their residency status was resolved or pending the resolution of a legal case, without respective sponsor approval. It did not report deporting those who faced retaliation or retribution in their respective home countries. Rather, the government allowed all trafficking victims to change employers and maintain residence in Kuwait or otherwise be repatriated to a third country at the victims' request. In May 2018, the government allowed foreign nationals present in Kuwait in violation of their residency status, reported to have absconded from their employers during the period from January 2016 to April 2018, to seek amnesty and legalize their status or depart the country without penalty. The government did not report how many trafficking victims it identified from this offer of amnesty or if it proactively screened for trafficking indicators among applicants and subsequent deportees.

Authorities continued to arrest, prosecute, and deport some workers who fled their sponsors without permission or recourse to the judicial system. The risk of penalization, coupled with protracted litigation processes and exorbitantly high legal fees, discouraged workers from appealing to police or other authorities for protection and adequate legal redress for their exploitation. In addition, it was not uncommon for sponsors to file counter-grievances against their employees, including trafficking victims who reported abuse. This sometimes resulted in administrative deportation or detention of the employees and victims. Within worker communities, there existed a persistent fear that confiding in authorities would result in deportation, imprisonment, or return to the employer in question. The government reported public prosecutors willingly tried cases on victims' behalf using their oral and written statements; however, it lacked privacy laws to protect victims against potential retribution and often was unable to provide adequate care for victims throughout the duration of legal proceedings. Media reported that the government directed settlements in response to individual civil suits against employers, but the government did not report how many victims received restitution during the year.

Prevention

The government continued robust efforts to prevent human trafficking. In November 2018, the Minister of Justice issued a ministerial decree on the formation of the Permanent National Committee for the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Trafficking that was approved and funded by the Council of Ministers during the previous reporting year. The Committee did not officially convene during the reporting period; nonetheless, relevant government entities commenced implementation of several action items in the national anti-trafficking strategy. Key ministries, in collaboration with an international organization, financially supported and conducted numerous public awareness campaigns at shopping malls and the international airport to raise awareness of trafficking and warned against using illegal domestic labor recruitment companies. Various officials also took part in anti-trafficking awareness messaging on local television, radio, and social media platforms. It continued to disseminate pamphlets to educate migrant workers on their rights, which were published in multiple languages and disseminated in airports, embassies, and labor-recruitment agencies.

The domestic labor law (Law 68/15) guaranteed domestic workers one day off per week, a maximum 12-hour workday, minimum wages paid per month, paid annual leave, and access to file formal grievances at the MOI, among other protections. The 2016 by-laws regulated implementation of this law. Amendments to the 2010 labor law, passed in 2016, increased penalties for

non-payment of wages, made mandatory documentation of all paid wages, and required prison time and fines for employers and government officials who failed to adhere to provisions of this law. During the reporting period, the government transferred the DLD from the MOI to PAM, based upon recommendations that having the DLD under the MOI deterred workers from seeking assistance. In adherence to the domestic labor law, the DLD received 433 complaints directly from domestic workers during the year, 1,835 from employers, and 60 from recruitment offices and companies. Of these, it referred 448 cases to the labor courts, collected 14,440 Kuwaiti dinar (\$47,650) in unpaid wages for domestic workers, and referred 40 of these domestic workers to the government-run shelter during the reporting period. In addition, PAM shut down 72 companies and suspended 1,510 companies for being in violation of Kuwaiti labor laws. Authorities continued to apply the amended provisions of the domestic labor law by building a monetary reserve to adjudicate cases of labor law violations to pay unpaid wages and cover the costs of repatriation. For issuance or renewal of a license for a domestic labor recruitment firm, it enforced the rule that single offices must submit financial deposits of 40,000 Kuwaiti dinar (\$132,010) with a two-year validity and larger companies to present a letter of guarantee worth 100,000 Kuwaiti dinar (\$330,030).

The DLD continued to investigate domestic worker recruitment agencies and inspect residences to ensure compliance with the 2015 domestic labor law. In addition, it initiated investigations based on grievances filed by domestic workers, employers, and embassies of labor-sending countries. The government arbitrated such grievances and did not report referring any for criminal investigation or prosecution. During the reporting period, DLD officials received 1,328 work-related complaints, amicably resolved 579 in extrajudicial proceedings, referred 333 to labor courts for further investigation, and the others remained pending. The DLD also conducted 404 inspections of domestic worker recruitment firms and consequently permanently shut down 30 and suspended 11 such agencies for three to six months for violation of the domestic labor law, compared to 82 closures the previous year; officials did not refer any of these for criminal investigation or prosecution. Separately, the PAM received 16,626 official grievances from foreign laborers, the most common of which included pay discrepancies, denied requests to transfer employers, and disputes regarding overtime pay issuances. Authorities reported resolving 90 percent of the employment transfer grievances in favor of the employees, to include transference of employer or receipt of unpaid wages; it referred the remaining 5,805 unresolved cases via arbitration to the labor courts. At the close of the reporting period, the outcomes of these cases were unknown, and the government did not report referring any of these cases for criminal investigation or prosecution under the anti-trafficking law. In 2018, PAM investigated 248 companies engaged in fraudulent visa practices and referred all of them to the PPO or the MOI's trafficking-specific investigative unit.

In February 2019, media reported the government's centralized recruitment company-named Al Durra-recruited nearly 900 male and female domestic workers since its launch in late 2017. In adherence to the domestic labor law, Al Durra worked to reduce recruitment costs, curb illegal recruitment fees, provide greater oversight of recruiting practices, hire male domestic workers, and secure labor agreements for female employees. According to press reports, new workers from Sri Lanka, India, the Philippines, and Burkina Faso arrived to Kuwait via Al Durra, and 150 additional contracts remained in process at the conclusion of the reporting period. In May 2018, Kuwaiti officials signed an agreement with the Philippine government to regulate the recruitment and employment of Filipino domestic workers in Kuwait to better safeguard their legal protections. Based on this treaty, which entered into forced in January 2019, the Philippine government lifted its February 2018-imposed travel ban on sending Filipino workers to Kuwait. Similarly, in October 2018, Kuwait and India signed an MOU on broader protections for domestic workers, and ratified it in January 2019. This resulted in the end of India's 2014 ban on sending Indian female domestic workers to Kuwait. The agreement with India guaranteed registration of the employee-sponsor contact information with the Indian Embassy, an established monthly minimum wage for Indian laborers, and all employers would use the government's centralized recruitment company with Indian government-authorized recruitment agencies. In April 2018, the Commerce Ministry revoked the licenses of 116 domestic labor recruitment agencies for contravening Kuwaiti labor laws and exploiting an unspecified number of domestic workers during the course of their employment. This ministry also capped at 990 Kuwaiti dinar (\$3,270) the ceiling for mandatory recruitment fees employers pay to agencies to recruit domestic employees; in actuality, a portion of these fees were transferred to the domestic employees. During the reporting period, authorities employed the

services of the Mobile Labor Disputes Office to help workers in remote areas of the country file complaints against employers for labor law violations. The mobile unit was run by an emergency team of investigators, inspectors, translators, lawyers, and lay volunteers. Officials also advertised to migrant laborers online services that allowed workers and employers to dock and track workplace issues electronically, receive alerts if an employer filed an absconding charge, notify the respective source country embassy, and challenge legal settlements incurred. Both the DLD and the MOI's anti-trafficking department operated hotlines to assist vulnerable migrant workers, to include potential trafficking victims, but neither entity reported how many trafficking-specific calls they received during the reporting period. The government made efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex. The government provided annual anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel.

Trafficking profile

As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit foreign victims in Kuwait. Men and women migrate primarily from South and Southeast Asia, Egypt, and the Middle East, to work predominantly in the domestic service, construction, hospitality, and sanitation sectors, and the vast majority arrive voluntarily. Unskilled laborers and female domestic workers are especially vulnerable to forced labor, as they often have limited access to assistance due to the absence of diplomatic representation in Kuwait. As conditions for many remain perilous, numerous labor-sending countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, continue to restrict their female nationals from domestic employment in Kuwait. In January 2019, the Philippine government lifted the February 2018-imposed travel ban on Filipino workers to Kuwait due to strengthened regulatory oversight of recruitment and employment of Filipino domestic workers. Similarly, in October 2018, Kuwait and India signed an agreement on broader protections for domestic workers, which resulted in the end of India's 2014 ban on Indian female domestic workers. As more countries restrict labor movement to Kuwait, however, the government has continued its recruitment of domestic employees from African labor-sending countries including most recently from Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia.

Upon arrival, some sponsors subject migrants to forced labor through the following: non-payment of wages, protracted working hours contrary to contractual agreements, deprivation of food, substandard housing, threats or harassment, physical or sexual abuse, and restrictions on movement, such as confinement to the workplace and passport confiscation. Although unlawful, passport withholding by employers is ubiquitous in Kuwait. Furthermore, many migrant workers pay exorbitant fees to recruiting agents in their countries of origin and/or are coerced into paying labor broker fees in Kuwait, which, according to Kuwaiti law should be paid by the employer, thereby rendering workers vulnerable to forced labor, including debt bondage. In some cases, officials do not provide workers copies of their contracts, or the contracts are not written in a language they can read. Additionally, many sponsors pay high fees to agencies for migrant workers. Some illegal labor recruiting companies facilitate trafficking through the use of deceptive techniques to bring in migrant workers on the basis of unenforceable contracts, fraudulent visas, and nonexistent positions. Some officials allegedly take bribes or overtly sell work permits to illegal labor recruiting companies or directly to migrant workers. For more than a decade, press reports indicated that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) sent more than 4,000 North Korean laborers to Kuwait for forced labor on construction projects, sourced by a North Korean company operated by the Workers' Party of Korea and the North Korean military. According to these reports, employees worked 14 to 16 hours a day while the company retained 80 to 90 percent of their wages. The company also monitored and confined workers, who lived in impoverished conditions and were in very poor health due to lack of adequate nutrition and health care. In previous reporting periods, the government ceased issuing new visas to North Korean workers, discontinued all residency permit renewals, and repatriated virtually all of them.

Kuwait's sponsorship law-which ties a migrant worker's legal residence and valid immigration status to their employer-restricts workers' movements and penalizes them for leaving abusive workplaces. Domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to forced labor inside private homes, as endemic cultural attitudes-particularly regarding the sanctity of the private household-sometimes enabled the exploitation of expatriate workers. Many workers report experiencing work conditions substantially different from those described in the contract. In addition, previous sources report runaway domestic workers are sometimes exploited in sex trafficking by agents or criminals, who manipulate their illegal status.



Living with the dead:
Urban poor take over
Cambodian cemetery

Last-minute Iran strike reversal showcases Trump’s confusion on war

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PYONGYANG: China's President Xi Jinping (2nd left) and his wife Peng Llyuan (left) speaks with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (2nd right) and his wife Ri Sol Ju at the Kumsusan State Guest House in Pyongyang. —AFP

Xi muscles in on Trump-Kim ‘love’ affair

China - an indispensable chaperone in US-N Korea nuclear dance

BEIJING: US President Donald Trump once said there was “love” between him and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, but Xi Jinping is intruding into the relationship to remind them that China is an indispensable chaperone in their nuclear dance. With his first trip to Pyongyang as president, Xi took another big step to patching up his tattered relations with Kim, whose nuclear tests prompted Beijing to join UN sanctions against its longtime ally.

Xi’s two-day visit, which ended Friday, will also serve the Chinese leader in his complicated relationship with Trump, as they prepare to hold talks on their trade war at the G20 summit in Japan next week. Months after Trump declared that he and Kim had fallen “in love”, their nuclear talks faltered at their second summit in Vietnam in February ended without an agreement.

Trump has also repeatedly called Xi his “friend”, but their own negotiations to end the US-China tariffs war broke down last month. With Trump’s relationship with Kim on the rocks, Xi has found an opening. After the North Korean leader travelled to

China four times in the past year, Xi has finally reciprocated, declaring in North Korea’s official newspaper that the friendship between their nations was “irreplaceable”.

Kim gave Xi a lavish welcome, inviting him to the “Mass Games”, an epic music and dance show in a packed stadium that featured the song “I love you China” and a giant portrait of Xi. “(Xi) wants to use his visit to Pyongyang to demonstrate to President Trump that China’s role on the Korean Peninsula is indispensable,” said Bonnie Glaser, senior adviser for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

“And if Xi can persuade Kim to resume talks with the US, he hopes that Trump will ease up pressure on trade,” Glaser said. Glaser noted that Trump himself made the link between a trade deal and China helping with North Korea. But Trump has also seen Xi as a potentially negative influence on Kim, calling him a “world-class poker player” last year, as he noted a change of attitude by the North Korean leader after meeting the Chinese president.

Leverage

In talks on Thursday, Xi told Kim that he was “willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation” with North Korea and other parties, and play a “positive and constructive role” in achieving denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, according to Chinese state media. Ahn Chan-il, a North Korean defector and researcher in Seoul, said Xi is using North Korea as leverage in his own confrontation with the United States. “Xi and North Korea... are saying the Beijing-Pyongyang alliance forged in blood will not be affected by Trump, regardless of any economic incentives to effect a change,” he said. China, which fought alongside the North in the Korean War, remains Pyongyang’s main diplomatic and economic backer despite tensions over the nuclear issue. Lu Chao, a North Korean expert at China’s Liaoning academy of social sciences, said Beijing “will certainly play a major role in mediating the return of the DPRK and the United States to the negotiating table.” But Lu said it was wrong to think that China would use North Korea as a bargaining chip-a notion that the Chinese foreign ministry has also rejected.

No Midas Touch

Shi Yin hong, professor of international relations at Renmin University in Beijing, said ties between China and North Korea have not been “fully repaired” just yet, as China still enforces UN sanctions. “With the improvement of Sino-DPRK relations, China can restore some influence on the DPRK, but the main thing is that Kim Jong Un makes his own decisions,” Shi said.

In a sign that the neighbours are not always in sync, North Korean media did not carry comments by Kim reported by Chinese state broadcaster CCTV, which quoted him as saying that he was “willing to be patient” in the talks with the US, but wanted “the parties concerned” to meet him halfway.

The state-run China Daily sought to play down Xi’s influence on North Korea. “The world may hope that the Chinese leader has the magic touch that can turn a stone to gold,” the newspaper said in an editorial. “But it is unrealistic to expect that Xi can solve all the peninsula issues with a two-day visit-even if Beijing has always been the most reliable and considerate partner to Pyongyang.” —AFP

Strait of Hormuz: The key waterway under pressure

PARIS: The Strait of Hormuz, located in the area where Iran shot down a US military drone, is a strategically important waterway for the world’s oil transits, which lies at the heart of regional tensions. Iran warned on Friday it would “decisively defend its territory” against eventual US retaliation, while the airlines KLM, Lufthansa, Malaysia Airlines, Qantas and Singapore Airlines said they were suspending flights over the strait. Some background:

Gateway to the Gulf

The Strait of Hormuz links the Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and is situated between Iran and Oman. It is vulnerable due to its narrowness—some 50 kilometers (30 miles) – and its depth of no more than 60 metres (200 feet). The corridor is dotted with sparsely inhabited or desert islands, which are strategically important, notably the Iranian islands of Hormuz, Qeshm and Larak.

Oil transit hotspot

The strait is a vital corridor connecting the petroleum-rich states of the Middle East with markets in Asia, Europe, North America and elsewhere. According to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), in 2018 nearly 21 million barrels of crude a day transited the strait. That represents around 21 percent of world oil consumption and one-third of total global seaborne oil transit.

A quarter of global liquefied natural gas trade also transited Hormuz, the EIA said. Around 76 percent of the crude transiting the strait was destined last year for Asia, mainly China, India, Japan and South Korea. While Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have established a network of pipelines that can use alternative routes, they only allow the export of limited amounts—around three million barrels a day in 2018, with a total capacity of 6.8 million.

These pipelines too are vulnerable, as shown by the attack on a Saudi pipeline in May by Yemeni rebels. Recent attacks on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman, and the shooting down of the US drone by Iran, have raised the prospect of significant disruptions to shipping and destabilization of the world oil market: oil prices soared more than six percent Thursday in New York.

For consumer countries it would be difficult to find an alterna-



This undated US Air Force photo shows a photo of a RQ-4 Global Hawk unmanned surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft. A US spy drone was some 34 kilometers from the nearest point in Iran when it was shot down over the Strait of Hormuz by an Iranian surface-to-air missile June 20, 2019, a US general said. —AFP

tive in volume and quality terms to Gulf crude. So-called light crude produced by the United States is not a substitute for the Middle East’s heavy crude. The United States, the world’s largest global crude oil producer and exporter, imported around 1.4 million barrels per day of crude which had transited the Strait of Hormuz, seven percent of its consumption.

Zone of tension, conflict

Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, the ideological army of the Islamic republic, controls naval operations in the Gulf. Tehran repeatedly criticizes the presence of foreign powers in the region, notably the US Fifth Fleet stationed in Bahrain, and it has regularly threatened to close the strait if it comes under attack. One of the major disruptions to oil transit came in 1984 during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) when more than 500 vessels were destroyed or damaged in the so-called “Tanker War”.

In 1988, an Iran Air flight from Tehran to Dubai, via Bandar Abbas, was shot down by missiles fired from a US Navy cruiser patrolling the strait. All 290 people on board were killed. The crew of the USS Vincennes said they mistook the Airbus for an Iranian fighter. In April 2015 the Revolutionary Guards boarded and took into custody in the strait a container ship flying the flag of the Marshall Islands.

The following month Revolutionary Guard sailors fired warning shots in an apparent bid to intercept a Singapore-flagged cargo ship in the Gulf. Stoked by the US withdrawal in May 2018 from the landmark nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, and the reimposition of heavy US sanctions on Tehran, tensions have recently escalated in the Gulf region. Washington has blamed sabotage and attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf in May and June on Tehran, which denies involvement. —AFP

Big picture: Xi on show in N Korea

PYONGYANG: Xi Jinping has loomed large over China since becoming president, with a huge personality cult growing around his leadership, but in Pyongyang he looked bigger than usual when a giant portrait was displayed at a propaganda event. The Chinese president, who is making the first trip by a Chinese head of state to North Korea in 14 years, was treated to a special performance of the spectacular “Mass Games” by his host Kim Jong Un.

It is a show that could only be mounted by a country as single-minded as the North - Guinness World Records lists a 2007 performance as the world’s largest gymnastic display, with 100,090 participants. Months in the preparation, the Mass Games feature tens of thousands of people in synchronized displays enacting scenes from Korean history and modern life.

Behind them, around 15,000 children turn the colored pages of books in sequence to create an ever-changing backdrop of giant images rippling across one side of the cavernous May Day stadium - an analogue version, on a giant scale, of a usually digital solution. Thursday’s performance - a special version called “Invincible Socialism” - took place with giant North Korean and Chinese flags hanging from the roof, and included scenes of the two countries’ troops fighting together during the Korean War. At one point the backdrop displayed a portrait of Xi against a Chinese flag, footage showed.

Kim and Xi’s wife Peng Liyuan applauded, sitting either side of him, while Xi merely smiled. At another point the backdrop formed a slogan in Chinese: “Long live the unbreakable friendship and unity between the two peoples of DPRK and China.” DPRK is the abbreviation of North Korea’s official name. Songs included “New China cannot exist

without the communist party”, “I love thee, China” and “Red flag is fluttering”.

Xi has consolidated power to become China’s most powerful leader since Mao Zedong, with the Communist party’s propaganda machine building a cult of personality around its General Secretary. His face or name dominate the front pages of the newspapers every day, and his agenda leads every evening news program. Souvenir shops sell trinkets bearing his image and government workers have been encouraged to download an app dedicated to Xi that rewards users with points for the time they spend reading his speeches, watching videos of him and taking quizzes about him.

‘Land of the People’

For its part, the North lionizes Kim and his predecessors - his authority derives from his status as the third generation of his family to rule. Portraits of his grandfather Kim Il Sung - the founder of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea - and father Kim Jong Il are ubiquitous, found in every office, workplace, schoolroom and home in the country.

Paintings of Kim Jong Un himself are a rarity - it was notable that one was displayed at Pyongyang airport alongside Xi’s when the visitor arrived, with both images again hanging above the rostrum where the two men watched the performance. And towards the end of the Mass Games show, the backdrop displayed a portrait of a smiling Kim against a blue background, fireworks exploding on either side of his image.

When the Mass Games began this year’s run with a show titled “The Land of the People”, Kim excoriated the show’s creators for “their wrong spirit of creation and irresponsible work attitude”, lecturing them on “correctly implementing the revolutionary policy of our Party on literature and art”, the North’s official KCNA news agency reported, and performances were later suspended. The North has never specified what infuriated Kim. —AFP

International

Erdogan's chief antagonist seeks a lasting victory in Istanbul poll

Imamoglu's seeking to prevail again in re-run

ISTANBUL: Three months ago Ekrem Imamoglu was a little-known politician in a fringe Istanbul district who was attempting the near-impossible: to unseat Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan's ruling AK Party from Turkey's largest city after 25 years in power. Today - after having pulled off victory in March to become Istanbul mayor, only to be ousted in May - he has emerged as a national sensation and figurehead for the Turkish opposition.

His victory over the AK Party (AKP) in the municipal vote dealt Erdogan one of the worst setbacks in his 16 years of power. But Imamoglu had been in office less than three weeks when Turkey's High Election Board annulled the results, citing irregularities, after weeks of appeals by the AKP. Now the 49-year-old is trying to win again in a re-run of the mayoral vote today, this time against an AKP machine that has zeroed in on him with accusations of lying and terrorist associations as well as legal threats.

Imamoglu has denied the allegations from Erdogan, Turkey's foreign minister and his AKP mayoral opponent Binali Yildirim, a former prime minister. In response the former businessman has tried to stick to the low-key inclusive message that handed him a narrow victory in the first campaign. There are indications the scrapping of the election results, which many voters say was unjust, has actually served to bolster his popular support.

Recent polls give Imamoglu of the secularist Republican People's Party (CHP) a lead of as much as nine percentage points over Yildirim of the Islamist-rooted AKP, far larger than his 0.2 percentage-point victory on March 31. With his signature rimless eyeglasses and "Everything will be fine" slogan on billboards across Istanbul, Imamoglu has sought to leverage the election board's decision to annul the results over irregularities including polling officials who were not civil servants.

"Of course we have a different agenda item in this election and that is democracy (for which) we are at a turning

point," he told Reuters this week. "Our emphasis on the injustice and lawless intervention ... will continue until the last minute."

Big rallies

On Thursday Erdogan, who served as Istanbul's mayor in the 1990s, accused Imamoglu of cheating in a televised debate by seeing the questions ahead of time, without citing evidence. The Turkish leader has accused Imamoglu of being in cahoots with US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom Ankara says is a terrorist and blames for a 2016 failed putsch.

He also said Imamoglu allegedly insulted the governor of Ordu, a Black Sea coastal province, and added that if prosecuted over the issue, he could be barred from office even if he wins. The annulment of Imamoglu's victory, and attacks on his character, have however had the effect of raising his profile at home and abroad.

His rallies this month before thousands of CHP supporters, including on a three-city tour of Turkey's Black Sea coast, are a far cry from the small face-to-face gatherings and Facebook videos favoured in his initial campaign. "Do you know what a political party opting to hurl constant insults and slander at its opponent shows? It shows that they know they have lost," he told a rally on Wednesday. Some media commentators have even earmarked him as a potential presidential candidate.

"There's this expectation that he is likely to be the face of the opposition," said Deniz Zeyrek, a journalist at opposition newspaper Sozcu. "I believe he will be in Turkey's political future, even if he loses." Imamoglu has also been the subject of feature articles in Western magazines and newspapers. This month he authored a column in the Washington Post, pledging to win again. "I see little reason why Imamoglu would lose votes on June 23," said Howard Eissenstat, nonresident senior fellow at Washington-based



ISTANBUL: Ekrem Imamoglu (right), Istanbul mayoral candidate of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), chat with supporters during a election campaign at Zeytinburnu district in Istanbul. — AFP

think-tank the Project on Middle East Democracy.

But he added that Imamoglu would want to win with a bigger margin to earn a definitive victory and put an end to any potential claims of irregularities. However some academics warn that Imamoglu could overplay his hand.

"His challenge is to use the cult of victimhood but still be defiant," said Galip Dalay, visiting scholar at the University of Oxford's Department of Politics and International Relations. "Too many big things - rallies, comments on national issues - that could backfire." — Reuters

News in brief

Foetus blocks plane's toilet

JOHANNESBURG: Cleaners found an abandoned foetus blocking the toilet of an plane in South Africa on Friday, the domestic FlySafair airline said, prompting the offloading of passengers and a police investigation. The foetus was discovered by cleaning staff as the plane was being prepared and passengers boarded for an early morning flight from the coastal city of Durban to Johannesburg. "Upon final preparations of the waste management system for the departure of flight, our technical crew discovered what appeared to be an abandoned foetus," the airline said in a statement. Police confirmed the incident and said they were investigating. Passengers were asked to disembark the plane and their journeys were re-scheduled. "We will be doing everything within our power to aid authorities in the necessary investigations and thank our loyal customers for their patience with the resultant delay," said FlySafair executive Kirby Gordon. — AFP

9 die in Hawaii plane crash

WASHINGTON: A light aircraft crashed in northern Hawaii killing nine passengers Friday, authorities said. The twin engine King Air plane went down near an airfield on Oahu Island's North Shore, according to Hawaii's Department of Transport (HDOT). "With extreme sadness HDOT reports there were 9 souls on board... with no apparent survivors," it said on its Twitter account. Honolulu Fire Department Chief Manuel P Neves confirmed there were no survivors. He said the aircraft was a skydiving plane that crashed at 6.30pm on takeoff, according to local news channel Hawaii Now. TV footage showed flames billowing into the air from the wreckage. According to its website, the single-runway Dillingham Airport primarily serves commercial glider and sky diving operations. — AFP

672 arrested in global swoop

LYON: Police in 78 countries have arrested 672 people as part of a coordinated global crackdown on potentially dangerous counterfeit food and drink, international police agency Interpol announced Friday. Packets of cheese and chicken on which the sell-by dates had been tampered with, meat that had been stored in unsanitary conditions and drinks containing dangerous substances were among the goods seized in raids on shops, markets and during transport checks. In Zimbabwe, the authorities seized nearly 14,000 liters of soft drinks containing high levels of the active ingredient in drugs used to treat erectile dysfunction, which could be life-threatening for unsuspecting consumers, it said. Bootleg liquor accounted for a large part of the haul. In Russia, an underground vodka factory was shut down and 4,200 liters of counterfeit alcohol seized. — AFP

3 dead in central Paris fire

PARIS: Three people died and another was seriously injured in a fire that broke out in a building in central Paris in the early hours of yesterday, fire services said. One of the victims died after falling from the six-storey block of flats situated in the 11th district, which also housed a restaurant and a hammam, a spokesman for the fire services said. The building was being renovated and was encased in scaffolding. It was not immediately clear the dead woman had jumped out or slipped from a scaffolding while trying to escape the flames. The two other fatalities included a "young man who was trying to get out of his house and was suffocated by the smoke and another person who faced a similar situation," Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo told a news conference. — AFP

Erdogan in lose-lose situation after vote

ANKARA: Voters in Istanbul will take part in a re-run of the mayoral election today after a vote in March was annulled over alleged irregularities. Local elections around Turkey on March 31 showed the ruling party of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan remained the most popular overall, but it suffered a shock defeat in Istanbul, as well as losing the capital Ankara.

It was the first time in 25 years that neither Istanbul nor Ankara were under the control of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) or its predecessors. However, the main opposition candidate Ekrem Imamoglu's success was short-lived in Istanbul after Turkey's top election body accepted claims of fraud by the AKP and called a re-run for June 23. It did not annul the votes for the city council that were cast at the same time, and where the majority of seats went to Erdogan's party.

Why is there another election?

The AKP's Binali Yildirim, an Erdogan loyalist and former premier, lost by around 13,000 votes to Imamoglu of the Republican People's Party (CHP) in March. After two weeks of multiple recounts, the AKP applied in April to the Supreme Electoral Council (YSK) to annul the vote, claiming there was widespread corruption and theft at the ballot box. There were also claims some of the ballot box committee chairmen and members were not civil servants as required by Turkish law. Critics of the ruling party claim the AKP pressured election authorities into calling the re-run in Istanbul because it is Turkey's economic powerhouse, home to 15 million people, and vital to the AKP's political machine.

Mauritania: Where Sub-Saharan Africa and the North meet

PARIS: Mauritania, the geographic and cultural link between North and Sub-Saharan Africa, has been politically stable for the past decade, but is criticized for its human rights record and slavery. Here are key facts about the Muslim country of 4.5 million people, where voting was underway in yesterday's first round elections to replace President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz.

Crossroads

The vast, largely desert country covers 1,030,000 square kilometers, about as big as Egypt and twice the size of France. Washed by the Atlantic, it borders Algeria and the Morocco-annexed Western Sahara in the Maghreb, and Senegal and Mali in Sub-Saharan Africa. Berber-Arab Moors make up more than two thirds of the population, with black Africans accounting for the rest. Some 99 percent are Muslim. While Sharia, or Islamic law, is in force, extreme punishments such as the death penalty and flogging have not been applied since the 1980s.

Post-independence coups

The site of an ancient Berber kingdom, Mauritania was gradually settled by Arabs during the Middle Ages. In the 19th and early 20th centuries it was absorbed into France's colonial empire. Independence was declared in 1960 under the presidency of Moktar Ould Daddah. A string of military coups followed between 1978 and 2008, and inter-ethnic violence in 1989-1991. Current president Abdel Aziz seized power in a military coup in 2008, overthrowing the first democratically elected president. He subsequently won a presidential election in 2009 and was again in 2014 at elections boycotted by the main opposition parties. He can not stand for a third term.

Rights, slavery

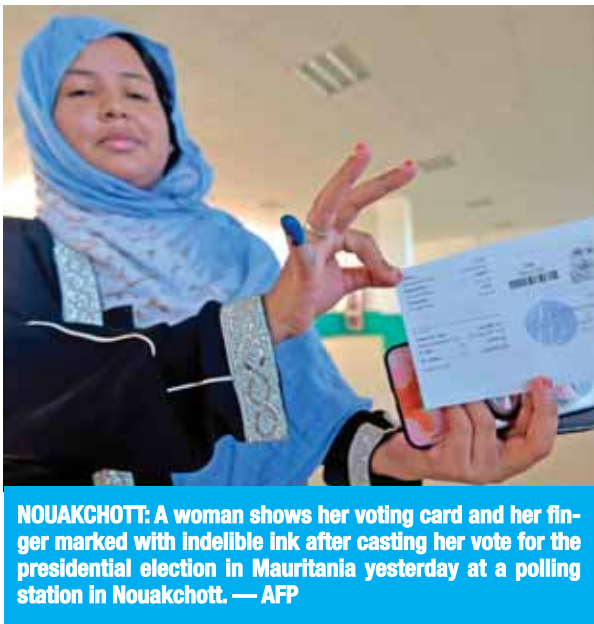
Amnesty International and some 30 other rights groups in June called on candidates in the presidential ballot to end slavery and violence against women. Mauritania was the last country in the world to abolish slavery in 1981, after light-skinned Berber-Arab Moors enslaved local black populations when they settled there centuries ago.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

"The municipality spends billions of US dollars on public tenders and services, which puts the AKP in direct contact with voters. In short, it's the gasoline on which the AKP machine runs," said Berk Esen, assistant professor of international relations at Ankara's Bilkent University. But Abdullah Guler, an AKP lawmaker in Istanbul, dismissed the allegations. "If the AKP looked at the situation like this, it would have done the same (in other big cities like Ankara and Antalya)," he told AFP. "Why didn't we? Because there was open corruption in Istanbul."

Before the March vote, Erdogan's face and voice was everywhere. He held 102 rallies in 50 days in 59 provinces across the country despite not being on the ballot paper. At first, it appeared he would continue this approach for the Istanbul re-run, with the Hurriyet daily reporting he would hold 39 rallies in the city's 39 districts. But that has not happened. On Wednesday, Hurriyet said Erdogan



NOUAKCHOTT: A woman shows her voting card and her finger marked with indelible ink after casting her vote for the presidential election in Mauritania yesterday at a polling station in Nouakchott. — AFP

In 2015, parliament doubled prison terms for the practice. Up to 43,000 people remained in bondage in 2016, around one percent of the population, according to Amnesty.

Taking on jihadists

Hard hit by attacks and abductions of foreigners in the early 2000s, in 2010 and 2011 Mauritania carried out raids on Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) bases in Mali. It has worked with regional allies and the international community to fight jihadism in the Sahel, rebuilding its army, improving territorial surveillance and developing the most remote area, especially near Mali.

Iron ore, fisheries main earners

Mauritania is an exporter of iron ore, although production has fallen in recent years. It also exports fisheries, and to a lesser extent gold and copper. From 2006 to 2017 it also drilled for oil, but complex geological conditions and high costs led to the dismantling of the Chinguetti oil field in early 2018, according to the World Bank. Growth has been on an upward trajectory since 2015, rising to 3.6 percent in 2018, but is insufficient to meet the needs of a fast-growing population, the World Bank says. Literacy rates are low and 31 percent lived below the poverty line in 2014, the last year for which the World Bank published figures. — AFP

would make speeches in just four districts. Guler said this was normal for a single-city election.

"Generally we would have a big rally in Istanbul before an election to send messages to the whole of Turkey. But there is only an election in Istanbul, not all of Turkey." But others, like Esen, believe Erdogan is avoiding a major presence "so that he would not be the face of defeat, which seems very likely according to the opinion polls." — AFP

"He did not want to campaign heavily because he is a polarizing figure and they tried a reconciliatory strategy," Esen said, in the hopes of having a broader appeal. But now, Esen added, "Erdogan is the last tool left at their disposal."

The vote still remains highly significant for Erdogan - to keep alive his reputation as an unbeatable political force as well as to ensure divisions in the party are kept under wraps. Ayse Ayata, a professor at Ankara's Middle East Technical University, said if Imamoglu won, it would be "major chaos" for the AKP with members realizing the party can lose.

But a victory for the AKP would be greeted with suspicion by Erdogan's critics at home and abroad, where the order to replay the election has already drawn criticism. "The whole democratic world will lose further faith in the process and in Turkey," said Ayata. A growing distrust in the West would then increase concern for investors over the trajectory of Turkey, whose economy was hit by tensions with the US last summer. The Turkish lira lost nearly 30 percent in value against the US dollar in 2018.

"It's a lose-lose situation," Esen said. "If he wins, he'll only slow down the haemorrhage of votes for the time being. But if he loses a second time, it's going to be a mortal blow to his regime and party," Guler, the AKP lawmaker, denied there was any risk to Erdogan or the party. "The AK Party continues to have the support of the public," he said, pointing to its control of 760 of Turkey's 1,389 local authorities. — AFP

Mental stress on the rise as coastal towns confront climate threats

NEW YORK: When community leaders in the town of Piermont, just north of New York City, ask residents, "How long do you want to live here?" the question is more than a personal one. Piermont, parts of which are set on a narrow peninsula that juts out into the Hudson River, is hugely at risk from rising sea level rise linked to climate change, and may become one of the early US communities that need to retreat to higher ground.

Right now, flood walls can buy time. But in Piemont, "retreat has been on the agenda for a long time", said Kristin Marcell, who has helped residents discuss the idea as part of her job with the New York State Water Resources Institute.

As seas steadily swallow coastal land around the world, hundreds of experts gathered this week in New York for a first-of-its-kind global gathering on climate migration linked to land loss. At the top of the agenda was a tough question: How soon will people want to move on when their homes and communities are at huge risk but not yet gone? "Sometimes when talking to communities about retreat ... what they really, really want is for everything to be the way it was two decades ago," said AR Siders, an environmental fellow at the Harvard University Center for the Environment.

"And one of the harshest realities about climate change is that the future will not look like the past ... It will never be as safe, it will never be as secure and you will never be able to build the way your grandparents did." Retreat due to natural hazards from storm surges to worsening cyclones has already begun, affecting 1.3 million people worldwide, said Katharine Mach, a scientist at Stanford University who researches climate risks. In the United States, a range of coastal communities are currently planning to move, from indigenous villages in Alaska to others in Louisiana. That harsh reality is prompting scientists - who have long issued warnings about the growing threats from climate change - to now shift to looking at how to move ahead when the battle is already partly lost. — Reuters

International

No, Trump doesn't call Middle East plan 'deal of the century'

Official Palestinian news agency labels it the 'Deal of the century'

RAMALLAH: It has become common in recent months for media reports to say Donald Trump calls his proposed Israeli-Palestinian peace plan the "deal of the century," a phrase seen as indicative of Trump's real estate style of diplomacy. Major international media, including AFP, have said the name was given by the president, but in fact it appears there is no record of him using it in public.

It seems the first major usage of the phrase originates from a 2017 meeting between Trump and Egyptian president Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. Since then it has been used widely in the Arab world and by Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, particularly by those opposed to the deal.

The origins

Shortly after his surprise election victory in November 2016, president-elect Trump gave an interview to The Wall Street Journal. Labeling it the "war that never ends," he called achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace "the ultimate deal." "As a deal maker, I'd like to do... the deal that can't be made. And do it for humanity's sake," he said. Trump had declared his desire to lead the most pro-Israel US government in history, but the Palestinians, Egyptians and other Arab states engaged with his administration on a potential peace proposal.

On April 3, 2017, Trump met President Sisi. In Arabic-language remarks, the Egyptian leader told Trump he was fully supportive of Trump's attempts to find a "solution to the issue of the century with the deal of the century." The simultaneous translation of his speech into English, however, translated Sisi's statement as finding a solution to the "problem of the century," with no reference to the word deal.

After the meeting the term deal of the century began to

be discussed in Arabic media and online. In May 2017, Palestinian leader Abbas met Trump at the White House but refers only to a "historic peace deal" without using the phrase deal of the century. In September the two men met again and Abbas referred to it in Arabic as the "deal of the era." The simultaneous translation into English and White House transcript, however, referred to it as the "deal of the century." This is possibly the first time Trump heard the phrase in public.

In November 2017, the official Palestinian news agency labels it the 'Deal of the century.' In December, Abbas cut ties with the Trump administration after the US officially recognized the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The phrase "Deal of the century" became commonly used by Palestinian officials attacking Trump's proposals, shorthand criticism for the way Trump - a real estate mogul - thinks about foreign policy. Over time it became the default Arabic phrase for the peace proposals. It also starts to seep into English-language reporting on the issue.

In January 2019 The Wall Street Journal said Trump had "spoken repeatedly about his desire to find the 'deal of the century' to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," while the Reuters news wire referred to a "diplomatic effort that Trump has touted as the 'deal of the century.'" In May, The New York Times said Trump and his son-in-law Jared Kushner were finally ready to unveil the first part of "what the president has called 'the deal of the century.'" On June 1, an AFP story said the plan had been "dubbed by Trump as the 'deal of the century.'" Yet there is no record of the president or any of his senior officials working on the issue publicly using the phrase. US officials have expressed surprise and confu-



KHAN YUNIS: A Palestinian protester wearing a Guy Fawkes' mask carries a tear gas canister to be thrown back at Israeli forces across the border during clashes following a demonstration along the fence east of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza strip. — AFP

sion about how the formula became so commonplace. In a statement to AFP, Trump's Middle East envoy Jason Greenblatt distanced the administration from it. "It's not a label we prefer to use.

It has been used in a derogatory way by some media outlets and others (outside the media)," he said. "We will present a realistic and implementable vision for peace." — AFP

UK's leadership race finalists woo Tory grassroots

LONDON: Britain's leadership contest starts a month-long nationwide tour yesterday as Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt each seek to win over grassroots Conservatives in their bid to become prime minister. After five rounds of secret voting by MPs in the governing Conservative Party, former London mayor Johnson and Foreign Secretary Hunt are the two final contenders out of an original field of 13 hopefuls.

The main task of runaway favorite Johnson will now be to avoid making any major blunders while out on the campaign trail, while Hunt will need to pull off a huge upset if he is to win. Whoever takes the Tory party leadership in the week beginning July 22 - and therefore becomes prime minister - will then face the looming Brexit deadline of October 31. The battle is likely to feature pledges from both contenders to get Britain out of the European Union safely and in one piece, succeeding where outgoing Prime Minister Theresa May repeatedly failed.

But the race might ultimately turn into a popularity contest between Johnson - pugnacious but affable with a tendency for gaffes - and the more diplomatic and low-key Hunt. "Mr Johnson may stumble. His challenger must attack. It's an outside chance. But there's no other way," The Times newspaper columnist Matthew Parris wrote. "A challenger will never win on policy," said the former Conservative MP.

Fearing Farage

The 160,000 or so paid-up Conservative members who select the centre-right party's next leader are generally older and whiter than the majority of Britain's 66 million citizens. According to commentator Parris, the group comprises "classic shire Tories", as well as poorer urban workers who are anti-European and more populist in their views. "Finally, you have young Conservatives, including students. They are predominantly men and boys," Parris wrote.

They might be tempted to veer to the right following the drubbing the Conservatives suffered in last month's European Parliament elections at the hands of Nigel Farage's newly-formed Brexit Party. Farage and Johnson were the two main promoters of "Leave" in the 2016 EU membership referendum that unleashed the Brexit chaos which May's successor must settle. The political deadlock might yet have to be broken by a snap general election and Johnson is widely viewed as the one Conservative who can stand up to Farage in a battle of Brexit dihedrals.

A poll for The Daily Telegraph - the paper for which Johnson writes a column - showed six out of 10 Brexit Party backers jumping over to the Conservatives should the man known simply as Boris take charge. The same survey showed the Conservatives losing yet more voters to Farage under Hunt's leadership. Hunt and Johnson appeared yesterday in Birmingham, central England, for the first of 16 "hustings" - occasionally rowdy events where candidates field audience questions - three days before the third anniversary of the Brexit vote.

But also seeking answers will be 17 EU leaders who signed the divorce deal May failed three times to ram through parliament. Both Johnson and Hunt have vowed to get better terms from Brussels - or walk away without any strings attached. It is a game of brinkmanship designed to stoke European fears of mutual economic destruction should the sides break up without a plan for future trade. There have been few signs that it will ever work. "Maybe the process of Brexit will be even more exciting than before because of some personnel decisions in London, but nothing has changed when it comes to our position," European Council President Donald Tusk said.

Johnson is also coming under attack from British economic policy-makers for post-Brexit promises they think are impossible to meet. Bank of England Governor Mark Carney on Thursday took apart Johnson's claim that a "no-deal Brexit" could see Britain keep its current European trade arrangement under World Trade Organization rules. Carney noted that the EU bloc would have to lower tariffs to the rest of the world under such an arrangement. "We should be clear that no deal means no deal," Carney said. — AFP

Russians hit out at Kremlin ban on flights to Georgia

MOSCOW: Russia's travel industry and ordinary Russians hit out yesterday at a decision by the Kremlin to suspend flights to Georgia as a politically motivated move that has little to do with safety concerns. President Vladimir Putin signed a decree banning Russian airlines from flying to pro-Western Georgia from July 8 late Friday in response to anti-government rallies in the ex-Soviet neighbor. The protests were sparked by a parliamentary address in Tbilisi by a Moscow lawmaker earlier this week. The Kremlin said the ban was to "ensure Russia's national security and protect Russian nationals from criminal and other unlawful activities."

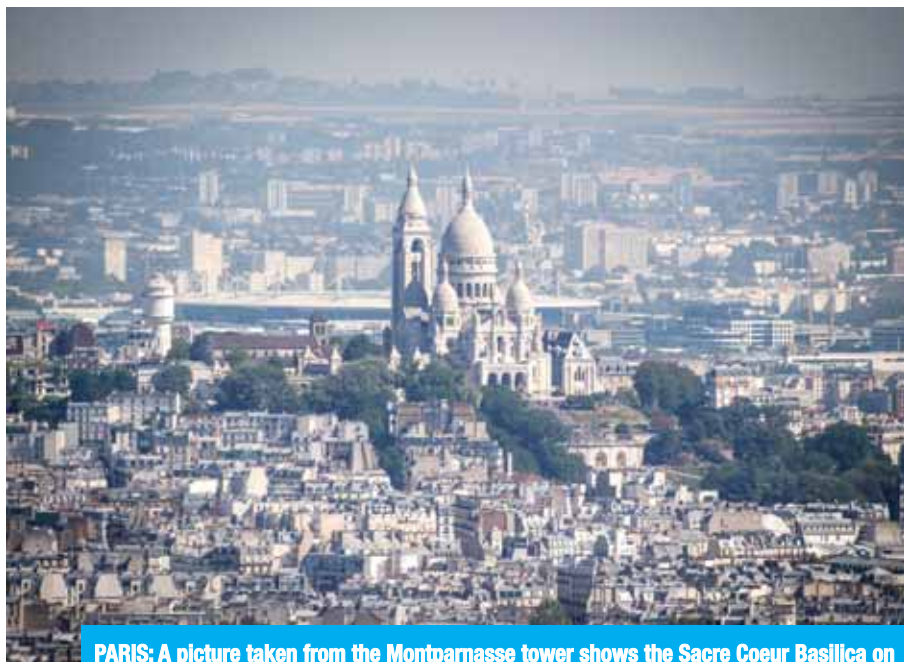
Authorities recommended travel companies stop selling holiday packages to Georgia and advised Russian tourists to return home. Many ordinary Russians bristled at the Kremlin's latest initiative, while key players in the industry said they were

blindsided by the move. "Tourism in Georgia is on the rise, and the decision has shocked the whole industry," Aleksan Mkrtchyan, head of Pink Elephant, a chain of travel agencies, said in a statement.

Industry losses

The ban during high season is expected to hit the travel industry in both countries hard and become a major nuisance for Russian holidaymakers. Russia and Georgia fought a brief but bloody war in 2008 and tensions between the two governments remain high. Georgia - known for its picturesque Black Sea resorts, rich national cuisine and generous hospitality - has emerged as one of the most popular destinations for Russian tourists over the past few years, with more than 1.3 million visiting last year. Irina Tyurina, a spokeswoman for the Russian Tourism Union, refused to say whether the ban was justified, adding she did not comment on political matters.

But the general consensus within the industry was that Georgia was not a dangerous destination, she said. "Georgians have traditionally treated Russians well," Tyurina said. It was too early to estimate any potential industry losses stemming from the ban, she said. According to the transportation ministry, the issue was discussed at a meeting chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Maxim Akimov yesterday.



PARIS: A picture taken from the Montparnasse tower shows the Sacre Coeur Basilica on the Butte Montmartre, in Paris, as a heatwave sweeps across Europe. — AFP

Europeans bracing for a scorching heatwave

PARIS: Forecasters say Europeans will feel sizzling heat next week with temperatures soaring as high as 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in an "unprecedented" June heatwave hitting much of Western Europe. From Great Britain to Belgium to Greece, a wave of hot air coming from the Maghreb in North Africa and Spain will push up temperatures starting this weekend and hitting a peak around mid-week.

Spain's meteorological agency (Aemet) has issued a "yellow alert" for severely bad weather for Sunday and says it expects the country to see a "hotter than usual" summer, like last year. In Germany, forecasters are predicting temperatures up to 37 degrees C on Tuesday and 38 C on Wednesday, with similar hot weather

also expected in Belgium and Switzerland. The British MetOffice said it was particularly concerned that the heatwave could trigger "violent storms" and warned Britons to expect "hot, humid and unstable" weather.

Greece will be one of the countries most affected by the heatwave with temperatures hitting 39 degrees C at the weekend. In France, meteorologist Francois Gourand said the heatwave is "unprecedented for the month of June" and will no doubt beat previous heat records. Back in the summer of 2003, France suffered an intense heatwave that led to the deaths of nearly 15,000 mostly elderly people.

Starting on Tuesday, France will see temperatures from 35 to 40 degrees C, which will remain high at night offering little respite from the heat, forecasters predicted. "Since 1947, only the heatwave of 18 to 28 June, 2005, was as intense," said Meteo France, adding the scorching weather would probably last a minimum of six days. This latest intense heatwave again shows the impact of global warming on the planet, and such weather conditions are likely to become more frequent, meteorologists said. — AFP



TBILISI: Participants attend a rally in front of the Parliament building in Tbilisi. The head of Georgia's parliament quit on June 21, 2019 after at least 240 people were injured in a police crackdown on mass protests, which erupted over a controversial address to lawmakers by a Russian MP. — AFP

Airline customers were returning their tickets "en masse," the ministry said.

"This ban is silly," Margarita Semyonova, a 19-year-old student, who visited Georgia last year, told AFP, suggesting that everyday Russians and the Georgian travel industry would suffer. "Why are they deciding for us what we

cannot eat, where we cannot fly, who we cannot be friends with?" Elena Chekalova, a prominent chef and culinary blogger, wrote on Facebook. Yan Nalimov, writing on social media, said the "political ambitions of some people are destroying the business of those who simply want to work and make money." — AFP

Iran strike reversal showcases Trump's confusion on war

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump wants to be warlike and he wants to avoid war-and-late Thursday, with US bombers poised to unleash explosive fury on Iran, those contradictory impulses came to a head. The surprise revelation that Trump ordered the bombing of Iran in retaliation for downing a US drone, only to pull back at the last minute, encapsulates the paradox at the heart of the White House foreign policy over the last two years.

"He has two instincts. One is caution, believing that endless, repeated wars have been too costly for the United States," said Rob Malley, a former advisor to Barack Obama who heads the International Crisis Group. "The other instinct is to look like someone strong, who can't be pushed around." Many days, Trump resembles a geopolitical John Wayne, a swaggering global sheriff out to duel with rivals like China and old allies alike.

And even if the 45th president famously managed to avoid serving in his generation's big war, Vietnam, he revels in his role as commander in chief. He rarely seems happier than when boasting about the billions of dollars spent on "rebuilding" the military or talking lovingly about the latest, deadliest weapon system. But Thursday evening in Washington, with US forces on the verge of striking three sites in Iran, that hawkish version of Trump suddenly transformed into Trump the dove.

"We were cocked & loaded to retaliate last night on 3 different sights when I asked, how many will die. 150 people, sir, was the answer from a General. 10 minutes before the strike I stopped it," Trump wrote in a tweet Friday morning. Gung-ho bragging about "cocked & loaded" on the one hand. The peace-loving decision to avoid 150 deaths in retaliation for losing an unmanned aircraft on the other. Even in a brief statement replete with his customary grammatical and spelling errors, Trump summarized perfectly the hesitation afflicting the world's most powerful office.

Strategy or dysfunction?
Whether this adds up to strategy or

dysfunction has been an open question since Trump, who had no foreign experience beyond his business deals, became president. In one way, Trump has been consistent. Often going against mainstream political currents and even his own intelligence and military leaders, he has pushed for US withdrawal from battlefields he says most Americans have trouble finding on the map. "Look, I said I want to get out of these endless wars, I campaigned on that, I want to get out," he told reporters on Thursday. But at the same time, Trump installed John Bolton, a veteran cheerleader for the Iraq invasion and a hardliner on Iran, as his national security advisor.

And even as he advocates winding down involvement in the Afghan, Iraqi and Syrian military quagmires, Trump has ramped up tension with Iran by wrecking an international agreement meant to reward the longtime US foe for allowing controls over its nuclear industry. According to Trump, the Obama-era exercise in diplomacy was pure weakness. Malley says Trump actually does have a strategy in Iran and also in another long-time US adversary, North Korea. First he brings massive pressure, including "the threat of economic suffocation," and then he says "if you are ready to accept our conditions, the door is open to an extraordinary relationship." — AFP



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump speaks to the media yesterday, as he travels to Camp David, Maryland. Trump said Iran was 'very wise' not to shoot down the manned plane when it downed the drone and 'we appreciate' that move. — AFP

International

Unholy alliance? Asian authorities accused of trading exiled activists

UN envoys raise suspicion of 'enforced disappearance'

BANGKOK: Three Thai policemen approached Vietnamese refugee Nguyen Van Chung at his home in Bangkok in January and asked him whether he was in touch with another Vietnamese man, Truong Duy Nhat, who had fled to Thailand. Chung said no, he had never met Nhat, a writer and critic of Vietnam's communist government who previously had spent two years in prison for "abusing democratic freedoms". He only knew of Nhat from his Facebook posts.

But during a subsequent interrogation, Chung was surprised to notice a man who seemed to be a Vietnamese official, and Thai police then confirmed he was indeed from Vietnam. "Somehow, discreetly, police of Vietnam and Thailand worked together and knew everything," Chung told Reuters from a third country, where he fled soon after. The encounter was telling because Nhat, the writer the police were looking for, disappeared two days later from a Bangkok shopping mall.

He resurfaced in a Vietnamese jail. UN envoys, in letters to Vietnam and Thailand, raised suspicion of an "enforced disappearance" and expressed "grave concern". Both Thailand and Vietnam declined to comment. Nhat's case is not the only one in recent months. As leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meet this weekend in Bangkok, human rights campaigners decried what they called increased cooperation in the forced return of refugees and asylum-seekers.

Since last year, there have been at least

eight cases of Southeast Asian governments being accused of either officially arresting, or cooperating in the abduction of, political refugees from fellow ASEAN countries. "A number of countries in the region are trading off political dissidents and individuals fleeing persecution as part of an unholy alliance to shore up each other's regime," said Nicholas Bequelin, Amnesty International's director for East and Southeast Asia.

'Extremely worrying'

Authorities in Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and Thailand have all been accused of detaining and returning critics of neighboring governments, in some cases even when they had political refugee status with the United Nations.

"The growing trend of Southeast Asian governments returning dissidents to neighboring states where they could be at risk is extremely worrying," said Charles Santiago, a Malaysian lawmaker and chairman of the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights. Thailand, which is hosting this weekend's ASEAN meeting, declined to comment on rights groups' complaints. "We don't have information on any of these cases," said a Thai foreign ministry spokeswoman. Thailand was once considered a haven for activists fleeing repression from authoritarian governments.

But since a military coup in 2014, Thailand has requested return of its own political opponents from neighbouring countries - and has also obliged similar requests from them,

critics say. Last month, Malaysia arrested and sent home a Thai anti-monarchy campaigner after she registered as an asylum-seeker with the UN refugee agency. The woman, Praphan Pipithnamporn, is awaiting trial on sedition and organized crime charges in Thailand. Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohamad defended the extradition, saying his country was "a good neighbor".

Quid pro quo?

Last year, Thai authorities arrested two Cambodians and sent them home. Sam Sokha, a labour activist, had thrown a shoe at a poster depicting Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen. She is serving a two-year prison sentence for "insulting a public official". Another Cambodian, Rath Rott Mony, was arrested in Bangkok in December and sent back. He faces three years in prison for "incitement to discriminate" for his role in a documentary on child prostitution. The verdict is due on June 26.

While some activists are extradited through legal channels, there have also been reports of extrajudicial abductions, such as Nhat's. UN envoys in letters to Vietnam and Thailand dated April 18 were blunt about their suspicions, saying they believed Thai immigration and police officials, a "representatives from a Thai ministry" and Vietnamese military intelligence officers from Hanoi were involved in the suspected abduction of Nhat.

In February, three exiled Thai anti-junta activists who had been living in Laos - Siam



BANGKOK: A floral installation marking the 34th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit is displayed in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP

Theerawut, Chuchee Chivasut and Kritsana Thapthai - disappeared. They were arrested by Vietnamese authorities while in transit and handed over to Thailand, according to US-based Thai Alliance for Human Rights.

Neither Vietnamese nor Thai authorities would comment on the report, which Reuters could not verify. Still, the timing of the activists' disappearances raised suspicion,

Amnesty's Bequelin said. "The chain of events in Nhat's case suggests a possible quid pro quo exchange between Thailand and Vietnam," he said. The bodies of two Thai activists who fled to Laos were found on the Thai side of the Mekong River in January, cut open and weighed down with chunks of concrete. No one knows - or is saying - what happened to them. — Reuters

N Korea reminds China of colonial history

SEOUL: Pyongyang's relationship with Beijing is "invincible" because the countries both endured Japanese rule, North Korea said yesterday, the day after the Chinese President's highly symbolic visit ended. The commentary, in official North Korean newspaper Rodong Simmun, comes shortly before the G20 summit in Japan where US President Donald Trump will meet with China's Xi Jinping.

With Beijing and Washington at loggerheads over trade, China is keen to remind Trump of its influence with nuclear-armed Pyongyang, while increasingly looking to Japan - a key US ally in the region - to serve as a hedge against growing American protectionism.

Relations between Tokyo, Beijing, and both Koreas are still heavily affected by Japan's expansionism in the first half of the 20th century, with Pyongyang's state media criticizing Japan on a near-daily basis. Yesterday's Rodong Simmun dedicated five pages to the second day of Xi's visit to Pyongyang, and carried a separate editorial stating how the "sacred period of the anti-Japanese struggle has become the foundation of the DPRK-China friendship".

"DPRK-China relationship is an invincible friendship that firmly combines military camaraderie and trust," it stated, using the abbreviation of North Korea's official name. Xi, in a rare opinion piece penned for the newspaper earlier this week, also said citizens of the countries jointly opposed a "foreign invasion" and supported each other in the pursuit of socialism. Like North Korea, Beijing's Communist authorities also regularly denounce Tokyo over historical issues.

Xi is the first Chinese president to visit North Korea in 14 years, after relations deteriorated over Pyongyang's nuclear programs and Beijing's subsequent backing of UN sanctions. But when Kim embarked on a flurry of diplomacy last year, Xi - as the leader of North Korea's



PYONGYANG: A child walks before a television news broadcast showing images of China's leader Xi Jinping meeting with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un during his visit to Pyongyang. — AFP

main trading partner and key aid provider - was the first head of state he met. As Kim expands his diplomatic circle, Japan finds itself battling to remain involved in North Korean discussions.

Tokyo, one of the most hawkish of the major powers on the isolated North, has received some of Pyongyang's harshest rhetoric - as well as missiles launched over its territory. The dovish South Korean President Moon Jae-in - who brokered nuclear talks between Washington and Pyongyang - has also stressed

the independence struggle against Japan is at the heart of both Koreas' national identity.

Seoul and Pyongyang's whirlwind of diplomacy has died down since a second Trump-Kim summit in February ended without a deal, and analysts say North Korea now may seek a new mediator for its deadlocked negotiations with Washington. North Korea's official news agency KCNA also wrote Kim and Xi had reached agreement on "important issues" in their five summits over the past year. — AFP

Among world's worst polluters, ASEAN vows to tackle ocean waste

BANGKOK: With Southeast Asia awash in rubbish, from plastic-choked whales to trash-clogged canals, leaders are planning to push through a deal to fight maritime debris at a regional meeting this weekend. Just five Asian countries - China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand - dump more than half of the eight million tons of plastic waste that end up in oceans every year, according to a 2017 Ocean Conservancy report. The region has come under fire for not doing enough to tackle its mounting trash troubles, with single-use plastic and sub-par waste management adding to the problem.

Leaders at a weekend meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are expected to sign a "Bangkok Declaration" on fighting maritime waste - a first of its kind - which promises to "prevent and significantly reduce marine debris", according to a draft seen by AFP. But activists are worried the agreement doesn't go far enough. "If we are not reducing single-use plastic at the production process, this 'Bangkok Declaration'... will not succeed," said Tara Buakamsri of Greenpeace in Thailand.

The agreement also omits penalties for the worst offending companies or countries, and fails to specify measures to tackle the problem. ASEAN summit hosts Thailand billed the forum as environmentally friendly, handing out recycled paper notebooks and tote bags and food containers made from reused plastic. But venue meetings in giant air-conditioned hotels and rows of plastic water bottles next to signs promoting "green meetings" had some wondering how dedicated the hosts really were.

In addition to spewing out billions of tons every year, Southeast Asian nation are among the world's top importers of trash from more developed economies, like to US and Canada. Greenpeace has called on the countries to stop accepting rubbish, which can end up in landfills and waterways if not properly processed. — AFP

Living with the dead: Urban poor take over Cambodian cemetery

PHNOM PENH: Graveyards may traditionally be the eternal resting place for the dead, but one cemetery in Phnom Penh has become a place to stay for the living, as communities destroyed by unstoppable development are forced to take desperate measures. Ma Nith confessed she was "speechless" when she realized that Smor San cemetery in the capital was to be home after her arranged marriage.

"It was beyond my belief that I could live here," said the 42-year-old mother of four, flipping fillets on the grill as her son clambered over a grave. "But now, I've adapted to it," she told AFP, revealing that she had lived in the graveyard for 16 years. Cambodia has witnessed rapid economic progress since it emerged from decades of civil war and the ultra-Maoist Khmer Rouge regime, which abolished private property and killed a quarter of the population from 1975-1979.

The World Bank estimates growth last year reached a four-year high of 7.5 percent. But as gleaming condominiums crowd out slums, the 14 percent of Cambodians living below the poverty line have become less picky about where they live. Ma Nith's family is one of roughly 130 residing in make-shift still houses and corrugated metal huts in between the colorful tombs of Smor San.

Many residents erected their homes in the 1990s but there has been a steady increase since then. Some came from a community whose riverside homes collapsed into the Bassac river, while others were evicted from nearby land to make way for a new market. They say the cemetery is the best option for them. Views across the river on Diamond Island show a vision of upmarket living with names such as Elite Town.



PHNOM PENH: Photo shows a girl walking past graves in Phnom Penh. Graveyards may traditionally be the eternal resting place for the dead, but one cemetery in Phnom Penh is increasingly becoming a place to stay for the living as land disputes plague the nation's poor. — AFP

Moving the Dead

Buddhist-majority Cambodia typically cremate their dead but the cemetery's long-term occupants are mostly ethnic Vietnamese, who believe in burying the deceased. While the dead may not care, their relatives do, and the growing community has even prompted some to start unearthing their loved ones and reburying them elsewhere. "They say it's messy because a lot of people live here," said Peanh Moeun seated on a wooden bed by a gravestone while children rooted around strewn garbage scavenging for resellable scrap metal.

"They would unearth their ancestors to bury them in another place," the 63-year-old added. When Peanh Moeun first moved in 19 years ago after having to leave a relative's house, there were more than 300 graves.

Today, there are about 110 remaining, she said. With 500 active residents, there are more living than dead. Nearby, Am Sokha looked on as a neighbor laid the foundations for a new house next to several graves.

He admitted to sometimes eating the food left as offerings to the dead. "We are chasing the ghosts away," said the 62-year-old, who used to be homeless but now wishes to stay in Smor San "for life". "Living here is safe, close to markets, and we have electricity and water," he said. But Am Sokha rubbished rumors of hauntings in the cemetery, which comes alive as night falls as villagers drink beer and children tumble around the tombs. He added: "It's just said to scare people, but being scared is nothing compared to having no place to live." — AFP

Pakistan urged to stop the abuse of blasphemy laws

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has urged Pakistan to do more to stop the abuse of blasphemy laws after the release of Asia Bibi, who escaped a death sentence in a case that drew international scrutiny. Releasing an annual report on international religious freedom, Pompeo estimated that more than 40 others were serving life sentences or facing execution for blasphemy in Pakistan. "We continue to call for their release and encourage the government to appoint an envoy to address religious freedom concerns," Pompeo said.

Blasphemy is an incendiary issue in Muslim-majority Pakistan, where mere allegations of insulting Islam have sparked lynchings, although activists say many cases stem from personal disagreements. Bibi, a Catholic, was convicted of blasphemy in 2010 and sent to death row. Despite public protests against her, Bibi was acquitted on appeal last year and in May was able to leave for Canada.

Pompeo also strongly criticized US adversaries Iran and China, pointing to Beijing's detention of some one million Muslims, mostly from the Uighur ethnic minority group, and its "intense persecution" of Tibetan Buddhists, Christians and the Falungong spiritual movement. While President Donald Trump's administration has often hesitated to criticize ally Saudi Arabia, the report spoke of widespread abuses in the kingdom which promotes the puritanical Wahabi school of Sunni Islam.

Quoting non-governmental groups, the report said Saudi Arabia has detained more than 1,000 minority Shiites since 2011, mostly for non-violence offenses such as participating in or promoting protests on social media. Sam Brownback, the ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom, acknowledged disappointment since the rise of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. "I think there was a lot of hope at first in the change of leadership that things would open up substantially." — AFP

Analysis

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Washington Watch

Most candidates still afraid to criticize Israel's violations of Palestinian rights

By Dr James J Zogby

The attitudes of Democratic voters toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have become decidedly more balanced in the past two decades. Favorable attitudes toward Palestinians are up while attitudes toward Israel appear to be in decline. While, overall views of Israel remain positive, substantial numbers of Democrats are opposed to Israeli policies – namely settlement construction and violations of Palestinian rights. Israel's leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, is also viewed negatively by most Democrats.

These shifts in opinion have placed many Democratic presidential candidates in a bind – especially those who have served in Congress or as Governors. As conscious as they may be of their base's changing mood, they have also been schooled not to alienate pro-Israel donors or cross Israel's lobbyists, who can, if aroused, distract their campaigns with a barrage of protests.

It was against this backdrop that I watched the results of a months-long New York Times' project[AH1] in which they interviewed 21 of the Democrats running for president on a range of foreign and domestic policy issues that will confront the next president. There were questions on Afghanistan, hand-guns, health care, immigration, and the death penalty.

Most intriguing to me was question #4: "Do you think that Israel meets international standards of human rights?" because it was deeply revealing about each of candidates' principles, their understanding of, and readiness to deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It was disturbing how few of the candidates appear to have given the matter any serious thought. With the notable exceptions of Senator Bernie Sanders, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, and Congressmen Eric Swalwell and Seth Moulton, most of the elected officials stumbled about like frightened high schoolers being asked a test question for which they hadn't prepared.

Only a handful found the inner strength to suggest that Israel, in fact, was violating human rights. Most respondents hedged their replies noting the challenges Israel faces or "Israel attempts meet human rights standards...but could do a better job. A few, Senators Kamala Harris and Michael Bennet, Mayor Bill de Blasio, and Congressman John Delaney, actually indicated that they believed that Israel was upholding human rights. Some, instead of addressing the question, shifted to a more comfortable critique of the failings of President Trump or Prime Minister Netanyahu – as if to suggest that problems began with these two leaders.

Additionally, those who hedged their answers implying that Israel's record was less than perfect offered, as their way out of appearing to be critical of Israel, something like – "Israel's trying to do the right thing, but sometimes they fail and need our help." Finally, other than the few that mentioned settlement expansion, most failed to consider other human rights violations that occur in the Occupied Territories. The only Democrat who did was Seth Moulton, who cited his earlier support for legislation calling for "not supplying Israel with weapons and goods if they do not uphold standards for the treatment of Palestinian kids in prison."

As they awkwardly struggled to get out of the challenge foisted upon them, you could almost see the wheels spinning inside their heads weighing their need to assert their pro-Israel bona fides with the newly felt need to be relevant to the changing mood of the Democratic electorate. It was for many "a damned if they do, damned if they don't" situation.

What became painfully clear was the extent to which most of the candidates, either because they were loath to offer any criticism of Israel or because they simply had no idea how to answer this question, found themselves forced to recall comfortable, though irrelevant, talking points. The top of mind reply of a majority of the respondents was a variation of "Israel is our most important ally" or "Israel is a liberal democracy" – completely dodging the question asked. Equally off-topic was the support a majority of the candidates expressed for a "two state solution".

You can read the transcripts of their comments, but far more interesting was watching[AH2] their faces as they struggled to answer this simple question. First, there was the obvious discomfort at being called upon to talk about a topic they would rather avoid. Then, you could see them fumbling about trying to remember talking points and looking for a safety net.

At one point, you can see the lights go on when they recalled the magical "two state solution" formula. It was as if at the end of a long and grueling half-baked answer to an unwanted question, they remembered "Ah ha! Two states – that's the way out of this mess."

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

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



In this photo taken on June 20, 2019, Indian workers carry the last bit of water from a small pond in the dried-out Puzhal reservoir on the outskirts of Chennai. — AFP

Dry lakebeds and fights for water in Chennai

Angry residents fight in queues at water taps, lakes have been turned into barren moonscapes and restaurants are cutting back on meals as the worst drought in living memory grips India's Chennai. The hunt for water in south India's main city has become an increasingly desperate obsession for its 10 million residents after months with virtually no rain. The bustling capital of Tamil Nadu state usually receives 825 million litres of water a day, but authorities are currently only able to supply 60 percent of that.

With temperatures regularly hitting 40 degrees Celsius, reservoirs have run dry and other water sources are dwindling each day. A rainstorm on Thursday night, the first for about six months, brought people out onto the streets to celebrate, but provided only temporary relief. "We don't sleep at night because we worry that this well will run out," said Srinivasan V, a 39-year-old electrician who starts queuing for water before dawn in his home district near Chennai airport.

The 70 families who use the well are allowed three 25-litre pots each day. Most pay high prices to private companies to get the extra water they need to survive. Local officials organize a lottery to determine who gets to the front of the queue. The lucky first-comers get clear, fresh water. Those at the end get an earth-colored liquid.

Long, hot wait

Srinivasan said he waits about five hours each day in

water queues and spends around 2,000 rupees (\$28) a month on bottled water or paying for a tanker truck to deliver water. It is a big chunk of his 15,000-rupee monthly salary. "I have loans, including for the house, and I can't repay them now," he said. The desperation has spilled over into clashes in Chennai. One woman who was involved in a water dispute with neighbors was stabbed in the neck.

In another suffering Tamil Nadu city, Thanjavur, an activist was beaten to death by a neighboring family after he accused them of hoarding water. Many in Chennai do not have the money to pay for extra supplies, and arguments in queues for free water often turn violent. The hunt for H2O dominates daily life. Some Chennai restaurants now serve meals in banana leaves so that they do not have to wash plates. Others have stopped serving lunch altogether to save water.

Isolated showers

Families have had to reorganize daily life, setting up schedules for showers and devoting up to six hours a day to line up for water – three in the morning, three in the afternoon. Most of those queuing are women, including housewife Nagammal Mani, who said looking for water was like "a full time job". "You need one person at home just to find and fill up the water while the other person goes to work," she said.

Chennai gets most of its water from four lakes around the city. But it had a poor monsoon last year and levels

have not recovered since. The bones of dead fish now lie on the cracked bottoms of the lakes. While weak rainfall is a key cause of Chennai's crisis, experts say India's poor record at collecting water does not help, particularly as the country of 1.3 billion people becomes increasingly urbanised.

The drought is seen as a symbol of the growing threat faced in many of India's highly vulnerable states, which have been hit by longer periods each year of sweltering heat that has devastated food production. Hundreds of villages have already emptied in the summer heat this year because their wells have run dry. Pradeep John, a local weather expert known online as "Tamil Nadu Weatherman", said if families in the area had spent their money on rain-collection equipment instead of truckloads of water they would be "self-sufficient" now.

"We've got almost 1,300-1,400 millimetres of rainfall every year. So that is a very significant amount of rainfall," he told AFP. "So we have to find out where the problem lies, where the problem of urbanization lies – whether we are encroaching into the (rain) catchment areas – improve these catchment areas, and then find a long-term solution." John said there is no immediate hope for rains to end the crisis, with the monsoon not expected before October. "If the water doesn't come, people will be shedding blood instead of tears," said housewife Parvathy Ramesh, 34, as she endured her daily queue in Chennai's stifling heat. — AFP

As Warren turns 70, age isn't just a number in 2020 race

Senator Elizabeth Warren turned 70 yesterday, meaning the three top-polling Democrats seeking their party's 2020 presidential nomination – not to mention President Donald Trump himself – are septuagenarians who could become the oldest commander in chief ever elected to a first term. Members of the club include frontrunner Joe Biden, the former vice president who is 76, and liberal Senator Bernie Sanders, 77. Trump at 73 is already the nation's oldest leader, and he's running for re-election to keep it that way.

Age has the potential to emerge as a liability in the 2020 presidential race: While calls for generational change and new vision have rarely been louder from the Democratic ranks, the leading candidates have never been older. They may be flying in the face of what Democrats want. "They're all too old," South Carolina attorney and former gubernatorial candidate Marguerite Willis told AFP Friday at a meet-and-greet for presidential hopeful Kamala Harris in Columbia. "I have standing to say this," the 69-year-old added. "I know that it's time for us to pass the baton."

Willis said she will vote for Harris, who at 54 is "just right" in terms of age and experience. Many other Democrats seem to agree on the need for a younger candidate. Recent polls show the party's voters are eager for a dynamic, energetic leader who can relate to young Americans and cast an eye to the future, not an entrenched politician who lingers in the past, as Biden is known to do. A Pew Research Center poll last month found just three percent of Democrats say they believe the best presidential age is 70 or above, while the bulk – 47 percent – say the ideal age is in their 50s.

That fits with American custom. The median age for the country's 45 presidents has been 55, and only 10 of them have been over 60 on their first day in office. In a further sign that age does matter, 48 percent of respondents to a Reuters/Ipsos poll this month said they were "much" or "somewhat" less likely to support someone for president if the person was older than 70. That might be worrisome for the senior citizens in the race, and offer hope for the 17 Democratic candidates who are under 60.

Candidate Pete Buttigieg, the South Bend, Indiana mayor who at 37 is less than half Biden's age, often speaks of the country needing "a new generation of leadership" culturally in tune with young people and the challenges they face, like college affordability, workplace automation and climate change.

Out of step?

The age issue bubbled up recently thanks to



This combination of pictures created shows (clockwise) Elizabeth Warren, Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden. — AFP

two moves by Biden, whose mainstream blue-collar appeal could make him a formidable opponent to Trump. After decades of support for a conservative measure that prohibits federal funding for almost all abortions, he awkwardly flipped at the first sign of pressure on the campaign trail, announcing he could no longer back a law that hurts low-income women. Then he caused a firestorm when he expressed a longing for the "civility" that existed between him and two avowed segregationists in the US Senate, which he joined in 1973.

The comments, during a New York fundraiser, marked another sign that "Uncle Joe" was out step with the progressive, younger, more diverse contingent in the party. Sanders, while older than Biden, has not generated the same level of debate about his age, perhaps because he has kept up a notably busier campaign schedule. Trump has seized on the concern, deriding Biden as a "mentally weak" candidate being out-hustled by rivals.

"He looks different than he used to, he acts different than he used to, he's even slower than he used to be," Trump told reporters. Trump isn't the only one questioning Biden's age, which will be 78 on Inauguration Day. "It's the 78-year-old elephant in the room," consultant and pollster Fernand Amandi, who consulted for the Obama-Biden campaigns in 2008 and 2012, told Politico earlier this month.

While Biden himself has acknowledged that queries about age are fair game, it was Ronald Reagan, running for re-election at 73, who famously used humor to devastating effect to dispel the concerns. Asked at a 1984 debate with Democrat Walter Mondale whether he was confident he could keep a grueling schedule at his age, Reagan said "I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience." — AFP

Serbia's first #MeToo trial a lonely path

Everyone in town told Marija Lukic not to do it. But eventually, "I couldn't stand it anymore," the 31-year-old said, of the moment she decided to break a taboo and publicly accuse the mayor of her small Serbian town of repeated sexual assault and harassment in the workplace. A year later, the former secretary is facing down mobs of men outside court and small-town power politics in the first high-profile #MeToo trial in the Balkans.

For most of the past 20 years, Lukic's former boss Milutin Jelavic – who denies all the accusations – has held senior public office in their town of Brus, a quiet community nestled in Serbia's southern mountains. "Everything and everyone here is under his pressure," Lukic said, in an interview with AFP at a cafe in Brus after the last court hearing in late May. Jelavic, 57, resigned in March, a year after he was charged by police. He did not respond to AFP requests for comment.

But regional 24-hour cable TV news channel N1 reported him as saying he was a victim of "torture by the media". "You journalists should write better and not spread lies and untruths," it reported him as having said after he stepped down.

'Almost every time I was alone'

According to Lukic, the alleged abuse started on day one, when she was interviewed to be the mayor's secretary in June 2015. Jelavic took her to an empty office where he touched her legs and breasts and kissed her on the mouth even after she tried to shove him away, she told AFP. After she continued to protest, Jelavic apologized profusely and said it would never happen again, Lukic said. But it did – "almost every time I was alone in the office". The mayor also harassed her with text messages, she said, thousands of which Lukic is bringing to court as evidence. "When will we make love, it's been two years already," read one message shown to AFP by Lukic.

Nightmares, shaking

Eventually, Lukic said that she reached a breaking point. "I had nightmares, my body was shaking when he was there," she recalled, describing how she would do anything – including bringing her two children to the office – to avoid being alone with her boss. In March 2018, she spoke to the police who later charged the mayor with sexual harassment, sexual assault and abusing his position of authority. Watching the "Me Too" movement unfold across the Atlantic had been a source of inspiration. "If they were shut up for so many years and then spoke out, I can speak out too," said Lukic, who is married and also stepped down from her job at that time.

But the reception in Serbia, where sexual harassment was only made a crime in 2017 and sexism is pervasive, has been far lonelier. At her last court appearance, Lukic had to force her way through a crowd of locals, mainly men, outside court chanting support for the mayor and wearing T-shirts saying "Justice for Jutka" (his nickname). Several men told AFP that they believed Lukic was fabricating the accusations because she had not received a promotion she wanted. "It's a classic case of blackmail and revenge," one middle-aged man said, while others accused her of having dressed provocatively. They all refused to give their names.

Lukic denies their claims. Her lawyers said they had requested the case be moved to a court outside of Brus over concerns about political influence in the former mayor's hometown. Earlier this month, the court said in a statement that it had asked to transfer the trial to Belgrade, and was awaiting a decision.

Several Brus locals privately expressed support for Lukic, but few were willing to do so publicly, citing fears of repercussions. At the last hearing, a troupe of mainly female political activists bused down from Belgrade to support Lukic. Outside court, they faced off with the mayor's supporters, carrying signs that said "Justice for Marija" and playing drums to drown out the "Jutka! Jutka!" chants. Hours later, after the hearing, Lukic said that she feared for her life after a car nearly hit her while she was crossing the road – a move she interpreted as an act of intimidation and reported to police. Although the trial opened in February, four of the five hearings so far have been postponed. — AFP

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CAPITAL****13** Ooredoo Group hosts annual Capital Markets Day in Doha**15** Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Co launches all-new Toyota Corolla 2020**HONG KONG:** In this picture taken on June 21, 2019, protesters relax on a main road near the government headquarters. — AFP

Hong Kongers emigrate as standards slide

There has been a steady drain of talent away from the city

TAIPEI: Hong Kongers are looking for greener pastures overseas as the city's freedoms and living standards slide, with those emigrating saying the huge political protests rocking the international finance hub are just the latest catalyst. Edward, a Hong Kong information science student living in Taipei, is nearly at the end of his course but has no plans to return to his birth city.

The 23-year-old, who asked not to use his family name, said he was thinking about heading to Australia in the next few years. Huge protests sweeping Hong Kong sparked by a Beijing-backed plan to allow extraditions to the mainland have only reinforced his determination to emigrate — and pushed him to consider settling in Taiwan for good.

"The China extradition law has prompted me to speed up my immigration plans," he said from his university campus. Taiwan, a democratic self-ruled island just an hour's flight from Hong Kong, is an easier place to settle, Edward explained, offering a path to citizenship within about three years for students. "In my college there are more and more Hong Kong students each year," he added.

Steady drain

Obtaining precise data on how many Hong Kongers are emigrating is difficult because the government does not keep those numbers. And many of the city's wealthier citizens — including politicians and business leaders — already have dual passports, a legacy of the city's 1997 handover to China when scores snapped up British, Canadian, American and Australian passports.

But more anecdotal evidence suggests there has been a steady drain of talent away from the city in the last decade — a period that has seen public anger build over rising inequality, eye-watering property prices and fears Beijing is trying to undermine Hong Kong's unique freedoms and culture. John Hu, a Hong Kong migration consultant, said there were two distinct recent periods where emigration spiked: the lead up to the handover and after the failure of the 2014 "Umbrella Movement" pro-democracy protests to win any concessions. The extradition bill has prompted "a third wave".

"The rate of inquiries rose nearly 50 percent" after the bill was announced in February, Hu told AFP.

"When the people went onto the streets to protest, it rose even more". Top destinations, he said, remained English-speaking nations with large Chinese communities like Australia, Canada, the United States and Britain. But many were increasingly willing to consider other European Union nations.

Most of his clients are middle class or younger people, often concerned about the standard of medical care and high cost of living. "And I think the political environment lately has accelerated the demand for emigration," he added. YouTube and Facebook now abound with videos explaining how to emigrate while a poll by a local university last year found a third of respondents — including nearly half of those who are college-educated — said they would emigrate if they got the chance.

'I will miss Hong Kong'

Steven Lam, a 37-year-old who works for a logistic company, said he and his wife were already looking considering a move to Australia following the birth of their child to escape Hong Kong's notoriously high-pressured school system. But the political situation

has hardened their resolve. "China is tightening its grip on Hong Kong," he said. "I will miss Hong Kong so much," he said. "But thinking for the next generation, I think it's worthwhile."

Po Fung, a Hong Kong film critic in his fifties, moved to Taiwan last year, and says he has no regrets. He now runs a film-themed bookstore in Taipei, obtaining a residency permit through an immigration scheme that requires a TW\$6 million (\$193,000) investment. "I don't like Hong Kong's political environment because there is a continuous tightening in human rights and it's making me very unhappy to live in that environment," he said.

"There are also economic factors I can't overlook," he added, saying Taiwan was a much cheaper place to spend his planned retirement years. But others say the protests have reinvigorated a desire to stay. Cheung Hon-yuen, a 55-year-old electrician who was out protesting last week, said his father fled Communist China for safety in Hong Kong. "I wanted to emigrate to another country, but now that I see the Hong Kong people are so united I want to stay," he said. "I don't want to give up until the end." — AFP

Rosemary and thyme against Greece's economic torpor

DERVENI: High on the cliff-tops overlooking the Gulf of Corinth, Areti Zaharopoulou has managed to scrape together a modest living for the past six years growing herbs such as sage, thyme and rosemary. The mother-of-four was an accountant in Athens when she suddenly found herself out of a job in 2013 at the age of 57, when the company she had been working for decided to downsize.

So, like thousands of other Greeks, and with 10 years still to go before she would be entitled to draw a pension, Zaharopoulou felt compelled to roll up her sleeves and re-train in agriculture. She took a course in botany, quit Athens in 2014 and found an abandoned field in Pyrgos on the Peloponnese peninsula, which she leased to grow aromatic herbs. "I'm a typical example of the crisis," she says.

While she says she is fulfilling a long-cherished dream, she only makes just enough to get by — saving on distribution costs by doing it herself. But Zaharopoulou grits her teeth and tries to keep smiling. "Like everyone who works the fields, I hope I'll be able to survive this difficult period," she says. Nevertheless, with three weeks to go before the Greek elections, there is no doubt in her mind as to who is to blame for the economic torpor still gripping the country, years after the financial crisis that nearly saw Greece crash out of the eurozone — the political classes.

'It's our fault'

Yannis Nissotakis, a former banker who now owns a small cafe-bar in the coastal village of Derveni, agrees. "There's no hope in Greece and it's our fault," he says. With nepotism still deeply ingrained in the Greek political system, "nothing is going to change," he complains. Nissotakis used to work for Societe Generale in Athens before the French bank shut up shop in Greece at the start of the crisis in 2010.

For the next two years, he worked in a Greek bank, but then decided to throw in the towel and come to Derveni to open his cafe-

bar. "Nobody wants to work in the fields. Lemons from Argentina cost only a euro per kilogram. That destroys the competition," he says. Even though the Greek economy has shown a timid recovery since 2017, 23 percent of the population still lives in poverty.

"What has happened in Europe over several decades has been brutal in Greece in recent years — private debt has increased and part-time work has risen to 27 percent from five percent before the crisis," said Ioannis Kouzis, professor of Social Policy at the University Pantheon of Athens.

"The closure of 270,000 small and medium-sized enterprises after 2010, the drastic restriction of the liberal professions and the reduction of income have plunged the country into a stagnation that creates new classes of poor," he said. Public disaffection has become widespread. And in local elections at the beginning of June, nearly 60 percent of voters stayed away from the polls in some regions. For Kouzis, Greece is "caught in a Catch-22," because its massive debt mountain leaves no room for maneuver for policymakers to draw up "a new model of production." "This leads to a climate of resignation and fatalism in society, which could, in turn, lead to a new crisis," the academic warns. — AFP

Pompeo to assure India on tech visas

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will assure India on a visit next week that the United States is not planning to slash visas commonly used by Indian technology workers, an official said Friday. The United States has backed internet behemoths and major corporations in opposing India's orders that all online data be stored within the country, a move to ensure that authorities in New Delhi have access to it.

A US official denied reports that Washington was linking the issue to H-1B visas for professionals, for which the vast majority of recipients are Indian. "We attach great importance to the US-India relationship," the official told reporters on condition of anonymity. "Indians have contributed under the H-1B program to the US economy and I think the secretary will be able to assure the Indian leadership that we have no plans to place caps on H-1B work visas for nations that are having foreign

companies store data locally," she said.

The official acknowledged that President Donald Trump's administration was undertaking a review of the H-1B program but said it was "not targeted at India." "It's completely separate from our ongoing discussion with India on the importance of ensuring better trade," she said. The United States each year grants 85,000 H-1B visas, which are valid for three years to professionals sponsored by employees. Trump ran for the White House vowing to crack down on immigration, including by building a wall on the Mexican border, denying entry to all Muslims and restricting H-1Bs which he said disadvantaged American workers.

But Trump has appeared to moderate his views on the H-1Bs, saying earlier this year that he wanted to find a way for the top-skilled workers to stay in the United States and become citizens. Pompeo will be seeking to build defense relations with India during his visit starting Tuesday, which will include a speech in New Delhi on the future of the relationship between the world's two largest democracies. The trip comes after the convincing re-election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a Hindu nationalist who has supported stronger ties with Washington. — AFP

NBK Capital: \$2.8 billion expected liquidity flow to Boursa Kuwait in case of upgrade to MSCI EM

MSCI Kuwait Index rose 26%, \$10.5bn in trading value in first five months of the year

KUWAIT: In September 2017, FTSE reclassified Kuwait as a secondary emerging market (EM). This kicked off Kuwait's journey towards ascending to EM status. The implementation of the FTSE upgrade in 2018 (over two phases) attracted around USD 950m of passive flows into the Kuwaiti market. Also, in another step towards EM status, S&P Dow Jones announced that Kuwait's stock market will be added to its Global Benchmark Indices with an EM classification, a move that would be effective this September. Finally, a potential upgrade to EM status by MSCI is in the cards that would cement Kuwait's EM status. Kuwait's weight in the index will likely be at 0.5% and result in passive inflows of around USD 2.8 bn. The upgrade in status will lead to an improvement in market dynamics and the resulting inflows will undoubtedly be a boon, making it a highly anticipated event that we will explore in more detail in this report.

MSCI upgrade: Overview and timeline

In June 2018, MSCI announced it would be adding Kuwait to its EM watch list. This will qualify it to be included in the 2019 Annual Market Classification Review for a potential reclassification from Frontier Market (FM) to EM status, the result of which will be announced on the 25th of June. MSCI had highlighted a number of positive market reform initiatives taken by the CMA and Boursa Kuwait in areas like market entry, market regulations, clearing and settlement, and custody. We believe that Kuwait being added to the watch list is a step in the right direction. The final decision rests on the consultations that MSCI have launched in March this year and will be conducting with different stakeholders, including investors, brokers, and custodians.

This process will be key in determining whether Kuwait is upgraded in 2019. Though chances of a positive outcome are high, it is still not a done deal. EM investors, who are primary stakeholders in the upgrade decision, had been kept busy over the previous months with multiple index events, not the least of which is Saudi Arabia's EM upgrade that is currently underway. This could play to Kuwait's disadvantage as investors could choose to take more time to study the market and the raft of reforms that have taken place recently. In case the decision to upgrade Kuwait to EM is not made in 2019, we believe that the chances of an upgrade in June 2020 will be significantly higher.

If the upgrade decision on June 25 is positive, actual implementation / inclusion is expected to start in May

NBK CAPITAL

2020. It is still not clear whether it will be implemented in a single tranche or split over two tranches. Foreign passive inflows usually hit the market around the implementation date, though, going by previous similar events, prepositioning by active investors in the market happens before the decision and implementation dates.

Expected foreign flows in case of an MSCI EM upgrade

Analysts expect passive inflows of around USD 2.8 bn in case of an MSCI EM upgrade, significantly higher than the USD 950m or so of passive inflows from the FTSE EM upgrade. Additionally, on top of the USD 500 bn or so of passive funds tracking them, the MSCI EM indices are used by actively managed funds with more than USD 1.5 tn in assets, which could lead to sizable active inflows on top of the passive ones. Unlike the passive flows, which are more or less automatic, the magnitude of the active foreign flows will depend on the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti market and the companies in an EM context. As such, liquidity, valuation, earnings growth, transparency, corporate governance practices will all be factors that will affect which companies will attract active investors. It is this incentive that will help our market improve more over time.

Impact on the market so far

The impact of the MSCI upgrade process can be mainly summarized in terms of the pick-up in traded values, foreign flows, and the performance that the market has seen this year. On traded values, the Kuwaiti market has traded in excess of USD 10.5 bn in the first five months of the year, which is almost a 170% increase over the same period last year.

Net foreign flows grew significantly this year to USD 1 bn. Even adjusted for the USD 300 mn or so of passive inflows triggered by the increase in FOL (Foreign



Ownership Limit) for banks in March, this remains the highest net foreign flow figure on record (Boursa Kuwait's data goes back to 2008). On performance, Kuwait continues its strong performance YTD and the MSCI Kuwait index is up 26%.

This compares to 16% and 14% increases for the respective GCC and World Indices. Kuwait's outperformance relative to global markets is worth highlighting, as we cannot look at market performance in absolute terms but relative to other markets due to increased correlation between equity markets globally. We believe the anticipation of a positive announcement from MSCI regarding the upgrade is in part a driver for the outperformance of Kuwait this year, in addition to solid results from certain sectors such as banking.

Outlook on Kuwaiti equities for 2019

Just to put things into context, the market has had a very good run since the FTSE EM upgrade announcement in September 2017 to mid-June this year, rising almost 36% during this period. Therefore, it is important to keep that in mind when building expectations for future returns. Nonetheless, we still have a positive outlook on the Kuwaiti stock market over the medium-term, as we believe it offers investors the right mix of fundamental attractiveness and fund flow related catalysts. We believe Kuwait is in a 'sweet-spot' from a macro perspective considering its comparatively low budget-break-even level (one of the lowest in the GCC).

This allows Kuwait to stay on course for executing its ambitious infrastructure-spending plan and maintain or potentially grow its sovereign wealth reserve. Kuwait's robust infrastructure spending plan is likely to result in



notable GDP growth over the medium-term as per IMF forecasts. This is likely to have a multiplier effect resulting in earnings growth across multiple sectors especially the banks, which are very well represented on Boursa Kuwait. Our fundamental case for Kuwait is further strengthened by the funds flow angle. Post the FTSE flows, the attention now shifts to the potential MSCI upgrade. As mentioned earlier, this is a significant event and with the right ingredients can attract foreign flows that are more sizable than what we saw during the FTSE EM implementation events.

From a structural perspective, we are also very excited about the reforms that are taking place in Kuwait to open up the market further and employ global best practices when it comes to rules and regulations that govern the market. The reform process initiated by both Boursa Kuwait and the CMA is creating a more robust platform that allows improved access, transparency, and accountability in the market. This will lead to a better functioning of the market and is at the heart of the push to upgrade Kuwait to EM status.

Mutawa Alkazi launches its strongest summer offers

KUWAIT: Mutawa Alkazi Co, the exclusive and authorized distributor and dealership of GAC Motor in Kuwait, has launched its summer "Pay the Cash Price in Installments, 0% Interest with no down payment" offer, starting from KD83 monthly. Including GS8, GS4, GS3 and GA4 models, the offer embodies an exclusive package of 11-year guarantee, 3-year free maintenance (oil and filter), 3-year registration, third party insurance in addition to thermal tinting.

As part of its keenness to boost its footprint in the local market, Mutawa Alkazi offers financing facilities in cooperation with local banks and finance companies. GAC cars are manufactured by a highly-experienced team and subjected to a range of tests around the world to ensure their readiness and suitability for Kuwait and GCC markets.

GS4: Advanced Technology

The "GS4 2019" is characterized by the best performance achieved by its high-tech engines, which are produced under strict quality control systems based on GAC Motors' strategy that puts consumers and customers at the top of its priorities list. The vehicle is designed for consumers looking for a modern driving experience, with powerful procedures to ensure distinctive driving with the most advanced and efficient power system in the world. The car features a sophisticated and secure system, emergency self-brakes, multi-level strategies and a warm-out warning system, which automatically detects the vehicle's lane departure by audible warning. The vehicle is also equipped with an electronic brake system and the highest safety



and security features such as electronic stability control system, rear-view cameras or 360 degree vision with rear parking assist system, standard airbags and new airbag for the driver's knee area and the front passenger.

GS8: Elegance and luxury

The design of the new GAC Motor "GS8 2019" three-piece headrest is butterfly-shaped giving a great sense of head cover, effectively reducing fatigue, and natural Napa chairs with specific and exclusive lining technology to show elegance, distinctive refinement, brilliance and luxury. The leather covers parts of the door aesthetically and with an innovative and elegant design, as well as luxurious trimmings with natural parts and shapes that suggest a water flow view along the forest, with a consistent and elegant manner in all details. GAC has innovated a distinctive design for the rear part of its car through the storage space door, which opens up to give greater comfort when putting luggage, not to mention the attractive rear bumper with reflective lights, a three-dimensional tunnel-shaped backlight and two exhausts of chrome.

The vehicle is equipped with headlamps aligned with the new design that is fully in line with its powerful chassis. It features automatic activation once the vehicle is turned on if ambient light is light, or if daylight is low. As for the integrated safety features on the roads, the car is equipped with radar sensors distrib-

uted around the vehicle to protect the driver and passengers, including a feature of alerting the vehicle blind spot. The illuminated LEDs on each of the external mirrors alert the driver if another vehicle approaches the blind spot, and alert the frontal and audible headlights in the event of a collision using a high-resolution camera to monitor the presence of vehicles in the foreground. Also, the car is equipped with rear-view camera to help fully see the rear area during rear alignment.

GS3: Modern driving experience

The entirely new GS3 prides itself on the superior performance of its powerful and sophisticated engines. With customers at the top of its priorities, the GAC Motors Group manufactures the car according to its strategy of strict quality controls. Designed for customers seeking a modern driving experience, the car incorporates strong features that ensure distinctive driving experience with the world's most advanced and efficient energy system.

The car has an advanced and safe suspension and automatic breaking in emergencies. A voice warning against leaving the lane is activated when the car deviates from its course. The vehicle incarnates the world's most innovative and renewable energy group, through GAC Motors' global R&D network, including cutting-edge technology and applications of the 50 technologies ever used in this vehicle.

AUB extends the opening hours of Avenues, Boulevard mall branches

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced that it is ready to serve clients at the Avenues Mall and Boulevard Mall (Salmiya Park) during weekends. According to the new times, AUB branches are open to serve at the locations six days a week from Saturday to Thursday, morning hours are from 10:00 am. to 1:00 pm and evening hours commence 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

This step solidifies Ahli United Banks commitment to its clients to serve them during weekends and to ensure their financial requirements are met. The Avenues Mall and Boulevard mall branches, will be pioneers to open in malls on weekends in Kuwait. This initiative will also contribute to enhancing the communication and fostering existing relations between customers and the Bank at these two branches highly sought by customers to avail various banking services.

On this occasion, Ranjan Sen, General Manager Retail Banking, at AUB said: "We are pleased to announce this step which confirms our commitment to provide facilities and the best services to our customers at times convenient to them. This step also emphasizes the methodology and philosophy adopted by the bank in identifying and addressing the needs of its customers. Sen



expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait for approving to extend the working hours in these branches and for the support CBK provides to the Bank to be able to provide the best services to its customers.

Mishari Al-Jassim, Deputy General Manager - Retail Banking, said "Through our continuous interaction with our customers, we are inspired to innovate new ways of partnering with them to complete their financial requirements, and we are happy to extend branch working hours at the Avenues and Salmiya Park branches to evening hours throughout the weekdays, including Saturday as well.

Al-Jassim added: Our network of branches and channels of distribution of banking services is a key pillar within our framework to build partnerships with clients to achieve excellence in the light of rapid digital developments and evolving needs of our customers, we are committed to developing future initiatives to overachieve our client's expectations.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.600
Euro	342.830
Sterling Pound	384.410
Canadian dollar	228.850
Turkish lira	52.610
Swiss Franc	306.750
US Dollar Buying	297.250
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.814
Indian Rupees	4.365
Pakistani Rupees	2.061
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.718
Nepali Rupees	2.733
Singapore Dollar	223.560
Hongkong Dollar	38.882
Bangladesh Taka	3.593
Philippine Peso	5.868
Thai Baht	9.773
Malaysian ringgit	77.903
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.281
Qatari Riyal	83.716
Omani Riyal	791.683
Bahraini Dinar	809.350
UAE Dirham	82.986
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.80
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.190

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	105.760
Jordanian Dinar	430.380
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.233

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.240
Canadian Dollar	228.125
Sterling Pound	383.535
Euro	342.040
Swiss Frank	306.025
Bahrain Dinar	809.085
UAE Dirhams	83.235
Qatari Riyals	84.475
Saudi Riyals	82.025
Jordanian Dinar	430.395
Egyptian Pound	18.191
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.721
Indian Rupees	4.371
Pakistani Rupees	1.941
Bangladesh Taka	3.604
Philippines Peso	5.868
Cyprus pound	18.100
Japanese Yen	3.804
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.739
Malaysian Ringgit	73.690
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.535
Thai Bhat	10.725

Turkish Lira	52.265
Singapore dollars	221.781

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.381956	0.395856
Czech Korune	0.005494	0.014794
Danish Krone	0.042266	0.047266
Euro	0.339711	0.353411
Georgian Lari	0.132000	0.132000
Hungarian 0.001147	0.001337	
Norwegian Krone	0.031760	0.036960
Romanian Leu	0.065204	0.082054
Russian ruble	0.004800	0.004800
Slovakia	0.009095	0.019095
Slovenia	0.028506	0.033506
Swedish Krona	0.306025	0.317025
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.203154	0.215154
New Zealand Dollar	0.194983	0.204483
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.225174	0.234174
US Dollars	0.300200	0.305500
US Dollars Mint	0.300700	0.305500
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003006	0.003807
Chinese Yuan	0.042821	0.046321

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037023	0.039773
Indian Rupee	0.003780	0.004552
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002757	0.002937
Korean Won	0.000252	0.000267
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069959	0.075959
Nepalese Rupee	0.002677	0.003017
Pakistan Rupee	0.001415	0.002185
Philippine Peso	0.005789	0.006089
Singapore Dollar	0.219191	0.229191
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001351	0.001931
Taiwan	0.009986	0.010166
Thai Baht	0.009535	0.010085
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.792591	0.809091
Egyptian Pound	0.018220	0.021580
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.424290	0.433290
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021363	0.045363
Omani Riyal	0.784071	0.789751
Qatar Riyal	0.079317	0.084257
Saudi Riyal	0.080060	0.081360
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.099330	0.107330
Turkish Lira	0.045892	0.055737
UAE Dirhams	0.081425	0.083125
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069

Business

Ooredoo Group hosts annual Capital Markets Day in Doha

DOHA: Ooredoo hosted its annual Capital Markets Day in Doha, Qatar yesterday where the senior leadership team presented an update on Ooredoo Group's new "Get Digital!" transformation program designed to transform the group from a traditional telecommunications company to a digital enabler. The Capital Markets Day was attended by investors, sell side and buy side analysts, shareholders and other key stakeholders, who also received an update to the company's full year guidance along with the key drivers of growth for the Group.

A host of senior executives from Ooredoo Group gave presentations at the event, including Waleed Al Sayed, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer and Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Qatar; Mansoor Al Khater, Chief Strategy Officer; Ajay Bahri, Chief Financial Officer; Andrew Kvalseth, Chief Commercial Officer; Christian Linhart, Chief Procurement Officer, as well as Vikram Sinha, Chief Operating Officer of Indosat Ooredoo and Ian Dench, Ooredoo Oman's Chief Executive Officer.

The central theme across the event was Ooredoo's progress towards becoming a digital enabler and the launch of LEAD 2.0, the company's new strategy to achieve its digital ambitions. The strategy relies on digitisation to drive growth across all Ooredoo's markets, with a focus on positioning the company as a preferred digital partner with digital operations and digital interactions. The four pillars underpinning the strategy, which include market leadership, performance culture, efficient models, and extend and leverage (B2B / ICT growth and digital partnerships), were explained

using examples of their implementation across Ooredoo's operations.

Waleed Al Sayed highlighted the attractiveness of Ooredoo Group's investor proposition, noting the company's unique mix of emerging and mature market operations in which it maintains market-leading positions. Ooredoo has distinguished itself as a technology leader in its key markets and benefits from a low cost of funding, lean cost structure and unified brand identity.

Commenting on the LEAD 2.0, Waleed Al Sayed, Ooredoo Group's Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Qatar, said: "We have a clear strategy in place to transform Ooredoo Group to a digital enabler by developing and adopting the latest technologies to better serve our customers. Our passion and business are aligned: we use mobile technology as a tool to realize positive social and economic change for our customers and the communities that we serve. 5G is going to play an increasingly important role in shaping the direction of the telecommunications industry and we are proud to be at the forefront of the 5G revolution." The capital markets day featured presentations from Indosat Ooredoo and Ooredoo Oman, highlighting market trends and Ooredoo's competitive position in these two markets.

Commenting on Indosat Ooredoo, Vikram Sinha, Chief Operating Officer of Indosat Ooredoo, said: "Indosat Ooredoo is the second biggest revenue generator for Ooredoo Group. With a robust economy in Indonesia, driving strong consumer demand for telecommunication services, the opportunity is highly promising. Despite regulatory changes in the first half



of 2018, which impacted the telecoms business, Indosat Ooredoo quickly returned to growth, with the momentum set to continue."

Commenting on Ooredoo Oman, Ian Dench, Ooredoo Oman's Chief Executive Officer said: "Ooredoo Oman has performed extremely well captur-

ing 45% of the mobile market share in Oman during the first quarter of 2019. We see great opportunities in the country to grow beyond traditional telecommunication services and are focused on building our adjacent businesses and revenue streams by capturing the digital opportunity."

US stocks edge lower ahead of G20

NEW YORK: Wall Street stocks finished a choppy session little changed Friday as markets cautiously eyed upcoming US-China trade talks and rising tensions between the US and Iran. Analysts said US stocks were due for a pause after a strong rally this month amid more dovish commentary from the US Federal Reserve.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished the week at 26,719.13, down 0.1 percent. The broad-based S&P 500 retreated slightly from Thursday's record, slipping 0.1 percent to end at 2,950.46. The tech-rich Nasdaq

Composite Index lost 0.2 percent to close at 8,031.71. Markets are looking ahead to next week's Group of 20 leaders' summit in Japan, particularly the meeting between US President Donald Trump and China's Xi Jinping that could lead to a breakthrough in the long-running US-China trade dispute.

"We don't know what is going to come out of the meeting, as long as you can get China and the US to talk again, it is bullish," said Karl Haeling of LBBW. "And if we can come up with a deal this summer, it would be even more bullish for equities." Another wildcard is the latest escalation of tensions between the US and Iran. Trump confirmed Friday that he called off a strike on Iran after the country's forces shot down a US drone, saying that he did not want to cause mass casualties. —AFP

SE Asian leaders lend support to China-led trade pact

BANGKOK: Southeast Asian leaders gathered in Bangkok yesterday determined to drive forward the world's largest commercial pact, with the trade war between the US and China clouding the outlook for their export-led economies. Disputes in the flashpoint South China Sea, Myanmar's persecution of Rohingya Muslims and plastic pollution in the seas are also set to be discussed at the two-day Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit, chaired by Thailand.

But trade will take centre stage with ASEAN leaders keen to hasten the signing of a China-drafted commercial deal covering around half the world's population. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) includes all 10 ASEAN economies, plus India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

It is seen as a mechanism for China to draft the

rules of Asia-Pacific trade, following a US retreat from the region. Shortly after his election, President Donald Trump pulled the US from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) — which would have been the world's largest trade deal — slamming it as an American "job killer".

While tit-for-tat tariffs between the world's biggest two economies have seen some manufacturers flee China to safer ASEAN hubs, economists say the big picture for global growth is bleak. In that context, "RCEP is key to increasing trade volume", Thai government spokesman Werachon Sukhondhapatipak told reporters. "The faster it (RCEP) gets implemented the better," Martin M. Andanar, Philippines Communications Secretary, told reporters.

"Free trade is definitely what we need here in this region," he said, adding that the US-China trade row has resulted in "the entire world catching a cold". Progress on the deal has stuttered in recent months with India digging in over fears cheap Chinese goods could flood its massive consumer market. Australia and New Zealand have also raised concerns over a lack of labour and environmental safeguards.

ASEAN is frequently criticized as a soft forum where diplomatic niceties often outweigh concrete

action on pressing problems. Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohamad on Friday raised the prospect of a joust with Myanmar over the Rohingya, the Muslim minority driven in massive numbers into Bangladesh by waves of concussive violence.

"We hope something can be done to stop the oppression," he said. Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi is in Bangkok for the weekend meeting. ASEAN foreign ministers discussed the repatriation of more than 740,000 Rohingya refugees that have fled into Bangladesh, according to Thai foreign minister Don Pramudwinai. The bloc has come under fire for suggesting the refugees should go back to Myanmar within two years, according to a leaked report seen by AFP — though virtually none have volunteered to go back so far, citing safety concerns.

"It (repatriation) will be quick, Myanmar knows this process is being watched by everyone," Don told reporters. The bloc is also poised to agree on a declaration to "prevent and significantly reduce" marine debris — including plastic — across the region, according to a draft text seen by AFP. Though the statement is the first of its kind for the region, which dumps millions of tons of plastic waste into the ocean every year, activists fear it doesn't go far enough in curbing single-plastic use. —AFP



Announcement

Invitation to existing Shareholders only to participate in the increase of the Share Capital of Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) K.S.C.P.

Invitation to existing shareholders for subscription of 452,748,662 new ordinary shares (the "Issue Shares") in the increase of the share capital of Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) K.S.C.P. ("KIPCO") representing approximately 29.3% of the existing issued share capital of KIPCO at an Offer Price of 210 fils per Issue Share (including the nominal value and the issuance premium) during the Offering Period commencing on 27 June 2019 and closing on 17 July 2019.

Overview of The Offering

Issuer:
Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) K.S.C.P. ("KIPCO" or the "Company"), incorporated in the State of Kuwait

Commercial Registration No:
23118

Total Value of the Offering:
KD 95,077,219.020

Offer Price:
210 fils per share (including the nominal value of 100 fils and the issuance premium of 110 fils).

Eligible Shareholder:
Shareholders who are recorded in the shareholder register of the Company held with the Kuwait Clearing Company K.S.C. ("KCC") as at close of trading on Boursa Kuwait on 26 June 2019 (the "Record Date") For clarity sake, any trade of the Company's shares prior to the Record Date, but which have not completed the trade settlement process of Boursa Kuwait as of the Record Date ("Ex Rights Date"), and as a result have not yet been registered on the Company's shareholder registry, will not be considered in determining the Eligible Shareholders of record as of the Record Date.

Entitlement of Eligible Shareholders:
Eligible Shareholders will be entitled to 293 Issue Shares for every 1000 existing shares that they hold.

Minimum Subscription:
One (1) share

Issuance Advisor and Subscription Agent:
KAMCO Investment Company K.S.C. (Public)

Clearing and Depository Agent:
Kuwait Clearing Company K.S.C.

Subscription for Additional Issue Shares:
Eligible Shareholders have the right to subscribe for additional Issue Shares (the "Additional Issue Shares") in addition to their entitlement to Issue Shares and such subscription shall be made at the Offering Price

Offering Period:
The Offering Period will commence on Thursday, 27 June 2019 at the KCC (acting as the Clearing and Depository Agent) during normal business hours Sunday through Thursday and shall close on Wednesday, 17 July 2019 at 1:00 pm Kuwait local time.

Subscription Instructions:
Eligible Shareholders may subscribe in the Issue Shares via one of the following two methods:

First Method:
Subscription through the Electronic Platform:
The website allows subscription in capital increase of 14,000 (Fourteen Thousand) shares, equivalent to KD 2,940 (Kuwaiti Dinars Two Thousand Nine Hundred Forty) or less for individuals only. Payment shall be made by K-NET service.

The Eligible Shareholder shall:
1. Login to the website via the link: <https://www.ipo.com.kw>
2. Register the civil ID number, thereafter the system shall verify whether the subscriber is eligible to the subscription or not.
3. Record the number of shares to be subscribed for.
4. Be transferred to the payment portal via the K-NET service, where the Eligible Shareholder can pay from his/her/its own account (no other person may pay on behalf of the Subscriber except in the cases provided for under law "Required documents shall be reviewed when submitting the subscription application". The Subscriber shall bear all legal consequences in case of violation).

Second Method:
Subscription Through Referral to the Clearing and Depository Agent Office:
"For Corporates or to subscribe in number of shares exceeding 14,000 (Fourteen Thousand)":
1. Login to the website via the link: <https://www.ipo.com.kw>
2. Register the civil ID number, thereafter the system shall verify whether the subscriber is eligible to the subscription or not.
3. Record the number of shares to be subscribed for.
4. Print the "Subscription Application Form", including but not limited to the name of the subscriber, the civil ID number in the event that the Eligible Shareholder is an individual and commercial registration number in the event that the Eligible Shareholder is a corporate, the number of shares to be subscribed and their value.
5. The Eligible Shareholder shall visit his/her/its own bank and submit a copy of the "Subscription Application Form" printed from the above link and transfer the amount required to the Bank Account (non-interest bearing) by way of electronic funds transfer (net amount without any charges by the transferring bank and the receiving Bank) stated below:

Name of the Bank:
Burgan Bank

Account number:
6015378046

IBAN:
KW53 BRGN 0000 0000 0000 6015 3780 46

SWIFT:
BRGNKWKW

Beneficiary:
KIPCO – Capital Increase

Reference/Narration:
KIPCO Capital Increase + Shareholder ID (Business Partner ID number) + Shareholder Contact Number

- The Eligible Shareholder shall get an original deposit voucher of the amount transferred from his own bank and then refer to the Clearing and Depository Agent to complete the remaining procedures.
- The Eligible Shareholder shall refer to the headquarters of KCC located at the Arabian Gulf Street, Ahmad Tower, the Fifth floor to submit and sign the Subscription Application Form accompanied by the following documentation during normal working hours, Sunday to Thursday inclusive.

General Requirements

- Copy of the notice issued by Kuwait Clearing Company containing the name, shareholder identification and the number of shares owned by an Eligible Shareholder in the Company on the Record Date; and
- Transfer receipt of the Subscription Monies along with the Subscriber's IBAN number

Individual subscribers

- Original and copy of personal civil identification card;
- Original and copy of passport for citizens of GCC states;
- Original and copy of special legal proxy for subscribing in shares (for proxy subscribers);
- Original and copy of Certificate of Guardianship for orphans;
- Original and copy of Certificate of Guardianship for minors; or
- Original and copy of a Limitation of Succession Deed for beneficiaries.

Corporate subscriber

- Original and copy of Commercial Registration Certificate;
- Original and copy of the Authorized Signatories Certificate or the Extract of the Commercial Register;
- Original and copy of the personal identification card of the authorized signatory;
- Original and copy of the specimen of signature for the authorized signatory issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor or attested by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and
- Letter issued by the authorized signatory on behalf of the entity authorizing the subscription.

Non-Kuwaiti subscribers

- Non-Kuwaiti subscribers (whether corporates or individuals (as applicable)) are required to provide the equivalent of the aforementioned documentation as issued by their jurisdictional authorities if they do not have Kuwait issued documentation as highlighted further above.

- The Clearing and Depository Agent shall provide the Subscriber with a deposit receipt of the Subscription.

Failure of any Subscriber to submit a duly completed Subscription Application Form (together with all applicable supporting documentation thereto) at the offices of KCC, after the transfer or deposit of the subscription monies as required, shall render the Subscription Application Form of a Subscriber null and void. Subscription monies shall not be accepted in cash.

Risk Factors:

Investment in the Issue Shares is associated with some types of risks. These types of risks can be categorized as follows:
1. Risks relating to the Company
2. Risks related to the Issue Shares

(for further details on any such risk factors, please refer to the downloadable/printable version of the Prospectus relating to the offering on the Company's website (www.kipco.com)).

Prior to investing in any Issue Shares, prospective investors should carefully consider, together with all other information contained in the Prospectus relating to the Offering, the risk factors highlighted in the table above and seeking professional advice before investing (for further details on any such risk factors, please refer to the downloadable/printable version of the Prospectus relating to the offering on the Company's website (www.kipco.com)). This announcement does not contain all the information that prospective investors should consider before deciding to invest in the Issue Shares and does not purport to be complete.

Subscription Information

The necessary information regarding the investment in the Issue Shares is included in the Prospectus which is available for printing and downloading from KIPCO's website (www.kipco.com). A copy can also be obtained from Boursa Kuwait, Kuwait Clearing Company or the Company's Office.

You are hereby advised to seek the advice of an advisor licensed by law and which specializes in advising on the subscription prior to making a decision as to subscription.

The Kuwait Capital Markets Authority or any regulatory organization in the State of Kuwait shall not bear any liability for the contents of this announcement or its accuracy, and not for any loss arising from this announcement.

For Inquiries, please contact:
Call Centre: +965 2233 6982
Email: kipcori@kamconline.com

Business

Ford Edge rolls into Kuwait showrooms with Segment-First Tech and Co-Pilot360

KUWAIT: Ford has begun introducing the coveted ST brand to its SUV lineup in Kuwait with the launch of the all-new Edge ST, building on its ever-growing popularity in the country. The all-new Edge ST – Ford's first SUV to be tuned by the Ford Performance team – features the most powerful V6 engine available in its class with a specially tuned 2.7-litre twin-turbocharged EcoBoost engine pumping out 335 horsepower and 515 Nm of torque.

It's also outfitted for dynamic handling with a quick-shifting eight-speed automatic transmission, standard all-wheel drive with selectable traction control, an available performance brake package, and ST-tuned sport suspension. "The all-new Edge ST is a performance SUV with a track mentality," said Adriaan Coetzee, Director, Product Marketing, Ford Middle East & Africa. "Bringing a sophisticated driving experience, and a host of new technologies, Edge sets a new standard in SUV excellence that fans will love to experience."

A new Sport Mode allows Edge ST drivers to experience more aggressive throttle response and shifting patterns that hold gears near redline through cornering maneuvers, sharper engine braking, and a more resonant exhaust tone. Drivers can also manually shift using the steering wheel-mounted SelectShift paddle shifters while firmly positioned in unique Edge ST seating with additional bolstering.

To complement its performance abilities, Edge ST features new front and rear styling, a wide mesh grille for optimal cooling, deep side skirts and dual-exhaust outlets. Unique 21-inch wheels are standard and interior design cues on the steering wheel, seat backs and scuff plates provide a subtle reminder that this five-passenger SUV is something special.

For 2019, Edge introduces Ford Co-Pilot360, which bundles popular, advanced driver-assist features previously available only as separate options, as standard.

Technologies like Blind Spot Information System, which uses radar to alert drivers of approaching vehicles entering their blind spot by flashing an indicator light, and cross-traffic alert, warning drivers of traffic approaching from the sides when backing out of a parking spot or driveway, are included. Other technologies include pre collision assist with automatic emergency braking, auto high beams, a lane-keeping system and a rearview camera.

Standard Ford Co-Pilot360 Assist offers evasive steer assist, providing drivers with steering support to help avoid collisions with a slow or stopped vehicle if a potential accident can't be mitigated by braking alone. Lane centering technology, which detects lane markings on the road to help keep the vehicle centered, is also available. Lane centering helps keep drivers centered in their lane while adaptive cruise control with stop and go capability is enabled, which allows drivers to set a desired speed and distance between themselves and the vehicle ahead. Dual-stage airbags, side-curtain airbags, rain-sensing wipers, and an innovative active glove box knee airbag, front and rear ultrasonic sensors, 180-degree front camera and Enhanced Active Park Assist are also fitted as standard.

Technology for a connected world

Inside, drivers will find a standard wireless charging pad nestled in the forward media bin, and a standard 12-speaker B&O PLAY(tm) Premium Audio System by HARMAN specially tuned for Edge. SYNC with AppLink, an enhanced voice-recognition communications and entertainment system, is also standard. This system gives users access to their favorite media content, daily appointments, and the ability to search for nearby points of interest, all from the road. SYNC 3, with an eight-inch touchscreen, is standard on Trend, Titanium, and ST models.



els for enhanced in-vehicle experience.

A powerfully sophisticated ride

The new Edge, when not boasting the ST badge, comes standard with a 2.0-litre EcoBoost engine that offers more power, more torque and better fuel economy than the outgoing model. The engine produces 250 horsepower and 373 Nm and is mated to a newly designed eight-speed automatic transmission with Auto Start-Stop technology. The system efficiently turns the engine off when the vehicle is stopped and idling, then seamlessly restarts the

moment the brake is released.

Inside, a redesigned centre console is accentuated by an all-new rotary gearshift dial that frees up space, allows easier access to the wireless charging pad and enhances the vehicle's modern, sophisticated feel. With a wider grille and freshened fascia that create an athletic, modern appearance, the new Edge maintains the reputation for sophistication it's carried for more than a decade. Full LED headlamps are standard, LED fog lamps and signature lighting are standard on Trend, Titanium, and ST and a redesigned hood imparts a wider, more planted stance.

HUAWEI P30 dual-view camera mode now available overseas



KUWAIT: With the recent introduction of EMUI 9.1 and its B153 version being rolled out gradually in overseas markets from today, Huawei has given HUAWEI P30 and P30 Pro users access to one of the most exciting and innovative features offered in the smartphone camera space: dual-view camera mode.

With this capability, users can create split-screen videos by simultaneously using the phone's primary camera and zoom lens, showing two perspectives at once on the screen. Pioneering this advanced camera technology, Huawei's continued innovation and focus opens the doors for users to further experience the creative possibilities within videography.

Dual-view camera mode, available on both HUAWEI P30 and P30 Pro devices, is highly capable of producing exceptional videography on its own, or in tandem with other video features like AI editor. Because of the dual perspectives, the HUAWEI P30 series delivers the industry's first and a totally new function available on smartphones today, allowing users to capture large scale events or the full view of a scene in a unique and refreshing fashion. Huawei is bringing professional-grade photography and videography functions to its users through the award-winning HUAWEI P30 Series camera.

Top features of the dual-view mode in the P30 and P30 Pro include:

- Capturing a wide view with more of the background and surrounding objects
- Simultaneously zooming in on desired subjects via the split screen
- Shooting two different angles, panoramic and close up, at the same time
- Ability to adjust the magnification level
- Taking artsy and creative shots for a vivid recollection of special moments

Huawei is a leader in bringing technologically-advanced camera capabilities to market, and continues to grow its user base overseas with the launch of the HUAWEI P30 Series, which has embedded next-level technology. Along with dual-view mode enabled through the EMUI 9.1 update, the HUAWEI P30 Pro features SuperZoom Lens supporting 5x optical zoom, 10x hybrid zoom and 50x digital zoom, and SuperSpectrum Sensor delivering 40 percent more light input for stellar low light photography with a high ISO of 409,600.

VIVA partners with Regency Hotel to provide 5G coverage

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, and The Regency Hotel inked a partnership agreement to provide the hotel with the latest 5G internet service. The signing ceremony took place at The Regency Hotel in presence of VIVA's CEO Eng Maziad Nasser Al-Harbi and The Chairman of Jameel Abdulrazzaq Al-Sanea and His Sons Group (Owner of The Regency Hotel) Jameel Abdulrazzaq Al-Sanea. This coverage will allow the guests at the hotel to connect to the 5G network (Wi-Fi) and enjoy high speed connection.

On this occasion, Al-Harbi, said: "As VIVA rolled-out the new 5G successfully nationwide, we believe it is vital to foster close partnership with prominent leads such as The Regency Hotel, and we are thrilled to accomplish our first 5G corporate deal. Augmented by our customers' trust in us, VIVA formulates creative solutions that address the specific telecom needs of customers. Our efforts are to innovatively evolve both our products and our customer service tools and to deliver into those spaces relevantly for enterprises and government (B2B and B2G). We are working to introduce strong B2B product portfolio for multiple verticals."

On his part, Al-Sanea said: "We are pleased to be the first hotel in Kuwait to offer the 5G in cooperation with the leading telecom company VIVA. This will enhance our desire to provide the best service standards by keeping pace with the latest technological developments to suit the needs of our guests and to pro-



vide splendid experiences in hospitality, in a world where luxury concepts are no longer limited to ordinary products and

services, but extend beyond that to all that is distinctive and exceptional and to imitate the modern lifestyle."

X-cite gathers gaming fanatics in the biggest XGL Tournament

KUWAIT: Stemming from its continuous strive to further engage with the growing number of e-gaming fanatics and enthusiasts in Kuwait, along with providing them with a competitive atmosphere where they can put on show their professionalism and talent, X-cite, the largest electronics retailer in Kuwait, organized in cooperation with Zain, Huawei and HP, a special tournament dedicated for gaming lovers at The Avenues on the 7th and 8th of June, 2019, in the presence of the MC Baraa Abdullah, as well as thousands of fans, creating an exciting ambience of challenge, suspense and time tracking between the participants in this competition.

Having announced earlier the launching of the tournament, X-cite invited candidates to register in the eSports event to compete and win prizes of over \$25K in value, including X-cite coupons, Huawei



phones, Acc, and others. Following the great interaction, registration was stopped at 1000 competitors giving everyone the chance to participate, dare to challenge and win in the first tournament of its kind to be held in Kuwait.

The host of challengers gathered at the X-cite Gaming League lounge, X-cite's exclusive zone at The Avenues, where competition on the most popular electronic games kicked off, including PUBG, FIFA19 and Apex. The audience as well had the chance to interact with the players through the installed wide screen that read their scores and allowed them to help, encourage and engage with the participants.

At the end of the two-day tournament, first-place winners from each game were offered valuable prizes from X-cite, Huawei and Zain. Through its special XGL



program, X-cite promised all e-gaming fans more activities and events to come, and invited them to discover its latest products, electronic devices and accessories especially designed for their favorite electronic games as the company is always keen to provide Kuwait's customers with all latest releases.

X-cite has established itself as a leading brand in providing the latest products to customers as it continues to build strong relations with international brands in the electronics sector. Continuously seeking to

satisfy the needs of its customers, X-cite provides them with diverse services that enable customers to experience products and interact with them, and the service of buy online and pick the product in store, whether in their 28 showrooms or through the website, designed to make online shopping a fast and easy experience. X-cite also offers premium maintenance and purchase services at most of its major showrooms throughout Kuwait and other services such as free delivery and X-care packages.

Buy Michelin tyres and win Al Shaya cards

KUWAIT: KAICO, the Exclusive distributor of Michelin tyres in Kuwait, is celebrating its 70 years of quality service to Kuwait market and now offering a 'Buy Michelin tyres and get up to KD 25/- Al Shaya Cards' promotion until 1st August 2019. We urge our customers to visit any of KAICO outlets or our authorized dealers across Kuwait to buy Michelin tyres for you and your loved ones safety and get Al Shaya cards to shop/eat in this summer season.

The KAICO, which was established in 1936 by the Al Shaya and Al Sagar families had built a reputation over the years as a one-stop store for original and reliable Michelin tyres: a reputation for which it is entrusted the sole authority for importation and distribution of Michelin tyres and its products in Kuwait. KAICO General Manager, Ashish Tandon has described the relationship between Michelin tyres and its customers, "ours is a partnership driven by a common desire which is to make

automobiles safer and more durable". Also we believe that it is essential to make people sit up and take notice as the tyre situation has become quite worrying, as our surveys show that 42% of Vehicles on Kuwait roads have underinflated tyres and 8% of them have dangerously underinflated tyres."

Further added by the Divisional Manager for Tyres and Lubricants, Sadiq Ali, in whose opinion asserts that "nothing could best protect the commitment to quality which KAICO do claim that a Michelin tyre, which is regarded by many as arguably the best of its kind". Are drivers aware that their safety (or lack of it) is riding on a few square centimeters of tyre - which is in contact with the road? Do they realize that is being ignorant of the aging or state of wear of their tyres, and by failing to carry out routine tyre maintenance or inflating tyres to the wrong pressure, they are putting their lives in danger?

In conclusion, Ashish Tandon, General Manager of KAICO, stated that Michelin is working in three main directions - increasingly safer products, permanent innovation and awareness campaigns aimed to make people aware of the tyre's major role in safety and thanking our valuable customers for the trust shown to Michelin & KAICO for almost 70 Years.



Business



Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Co launches all-new Toyota Corolla 2020

Innovative features and systems to enhance passenger safety

Underlining its commitment to building on the legacy of its innovative vehicles through continual refinements, to meet and exceed the expectations of its customers, Mohamed Naser Al Sayer and Toyota have unveiled the all-new Toyota Corolla. Now available with a hybrid electric power train, the 12th generation Corolla ushers in a new era of style, safety, and driving excitement that is set to bring delight to both motorists and passengers in the region.

The launch event was attended by Mr. Faisal Bader Mohamed Al Sayer - Chairman, Mubarak Naser Al Sayer - CEO Al Sayer Holding, Bengt Schultz - COO Al Sayer Holding, members of the Top Management from ALSAYER Toyota Group Sales including Savio Alvares - Deputy General Manager Fleet, Sales consultants, Group Marketing, media members and press and media. From Toyota Motor Corporation attended by Yuichiro Takeda - Assistant Chief Engineer All New Corolla and Tadashi Asazuma - Group Manager, Planning Division.

The Corolla is Toyota's all-time best-selling car series, with more than 46 million cars sold worldwide (including derivative models) since the first generation was released in Japan in 1966. With each new generation, the Corolla has evolved; new advanced features and functions have been introduced to suit the needs of the time, all while inheriting the original model's core DNA reliability and usability from the very first generation.

According to Mubarak Naser Al Sayer "It is aspired year for Toyota, we have introduced several successful new models including the flagship sedan Avalon, small SUV Rav4 and the commuter and cargo bus Hiace. And

class-leading model offers the lowest fuel consumption value in its category at 27.6km/L, enabling customers to contribute to a greener future while enjoying the increased driving satisfaction provided by its advanced technologies. The new model offers exceptional cabin quietness and smooth acceleration, especially when accelerating from a stand-still.

"At Toyota, we strive to design new models that are eye-catching and fun to drive. The Corolla carries a heritage of more than 50 years and has always remained true to its original concept: a passenger car that offers strong levels of quality, durability, and reliability, together with a smooth driving experience. This foundation was our starting point." Stated Yuichiro Takeda, Assistant Chief Engineer All New Corolla. "We wanted to make a new model that both builds on this legacy and enriches mobility for our customers. The biggest reward we can get is seeing how people enjoy our car and that they are proud to own a new Corolla."

"Corolla owners perceive it as Toyota trademark of quality and reliability. Recently Corolla won Middle East Car of the Year Award - yet another testimony of its remarkable heritage. We are confident that the new Corolla will continue its successful journey and it will always remain the right investment choice for your family as well as for your business" said Savio Alvares.

The all-new Corolla is built on the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA) platform, which guarantees a more rewarding driving experience. A lower center of gravity, 60% more rigid body shell and multi-link suspension all contribute to better handling and stability, without com-

design and connects with the top of the sharply designed headlamp units, wrapping around the corners to emphasize the car's low and firmly planted appearance. Meanwhile, the rear of the car echoes the look of the front through the shape of the bumper and the inverted trapezium design of the boot lid. The rear lamp clusters are connected by a chrome trim, further highlighting the car's wide stance.

The Corolla's distinct personality is completed by its expansive and comfortable cabin, which displays exceptional quality and finishing throughout. The interior design adopts a simple yet appealing style, with comfortable spaciousness and integrated functional parts combining to create a refined elegance. The ergonomically designed seats feature new cushion material, while the armrest and ample legroom offer superior comfort for rear-seat passengers. The cabin is accentuated with an extensive range of features, which vary based on the trim level. These include the automatic air conditioning system with Smart-flow (S-FLOW) control, which achieves greater comfort and enhanced fuel efficiency by providing air conditioning to occupied seats only. Occupants also benefit from AC vents for the rear seat, a one-touch moon roof, a 4.2 or 7-inch color multi-information display (MID) in the cluster gauge, 7-inch touch-screen multimedia infotainment display, reversing camera, cruise control, six-speaker sound system, multi-adjustable power driver seat, and 60:40 split-folding rear seats.

The all-new Corolla's striking looks are complemented by an exciting drive personality imbued by three powertrain options; these include a newly developed 2.0-liter



and 71 hp with a combined power of 121 hp, and delivering 14.5 kg-m and 16.6 kg-m of torque respectively. It is also mated to an Electrically Controlled Continuously Variable Transmission (E-CVT), which provides an outstanding fuel consumption value of 27.6km/L while improving the driving experience.

Toyota has more than 20 years of technical leadership in electrified vehicles and has amassed more than 12 million global environmentally friendly vehicle sales. The all-new Corolla establishes yet another landmark in its development of the technology with the debut of model's hybrid electric variant. The vehicle can be driven entirely on electrical power with zero-fuel consumption and tailpipe emissions, or by combining the power generated from both the petrol engine and two electric motors, depending on the vehicle's speed and customer's driving behavior. Its hybrid electric batteries are continuously charged by either the petrol engine or when decelerating and braking, eliminating the need to plug in a power cord. Furthermore, the hybrid electric model features a host of advanced technologies, yet drives like any other conventional vehicle and does not require special fuel.

As with any other Toyota model, safety remains a top priority for the all-new Corolla, which includes a comprehensive array of features to protect its occupants, such as four SRS airbags, Drive-start Control, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), Tire Pressure Warning System (TPWS), Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), among many others.

Available in eight distinctive exterior colors, the all-new Corolla provides customers the opportunity to express their individuality. These include the newly-developed Celestite Gray ME, which further expresses sophistication and generates a voluminous feel. Meanwhile, the interior is available in contrasting two-tone color schemes such as Light Gray and Fromage, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere. The all-new Corolla comes equipped with newly-developed 16-inch and 17-inch alloy wheels that further express its elegance and sportiness.



today we are launching the all new Corolla 2020. Since its launch over 50 years ago, Corolla has won the hearts of millions of customers worldwide. I fondly remember, in Kuwait Corolla was launched in the late 60's, it became one-of-the best-selling cars."

Exemplifying Toyota's continuous commitment to providing environmentally friendly vehicles is the addition of a hybrid electric model, which combines two power sources consisting of a petrol engine and two electric motors. The

promising ride comfort. The vehicle meets all the requirements of daily commutes and weekend leisure journeys, offering driving enjoyment in all road conditions and greater peace of mind thanks to its comprehensive array of safety features.

The all-new Corolla's striking look is characterized by a frontal treatment with a two-step rendering of the front corners, flanking a strongly projecting lower grille. The slim upper grille has a pronounced three-dimensional

four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine with a new D-4S fuel injection system, which produces 168 hp and 20.43 kg-m of torque and is mated to a new 10-speed Sequential Shiftmatic transmission; and a 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque, which is paired with a Multidrive 7S seven-speed automatic transmission. Meanwhile, the new electrified hybrid powertrain combines two power sources consisting of a petrol engine and two electric motors producing 97 hp



Hand-in-hand, Macron and Elton John join forces on AIDS

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron presented rock legend Elton John with France's highest civilian honor on Friday, and urged international mobilization for one of the showman's dearest causes: combating AIDS. "AIDS still exists, still strikes, and continues to advance," Macron told about 2,000 people assembled for the ceremony at the presidential palace.

"We still have a lot to do to convince (people) that they must protect themselves, that it is not a story of the previous generation but of young people today," the president said with the rock star by his side. Macron called for a mass mobilization so that the next meeting of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Lyon, France, in October, will be able to raise \$13 billion for its next three years of work to tackle the three diseases that still fell millions.

"It is simple, we are at a critical moment because we do not know if we will have the money for the next three years," the French leader said, adding the money could save 16 million lives. The Global Fund is credited with saving 27 million lives since its creation in 2002. Macron awarded John, 72, the prestigious Legion of Honor a day after the singer's farewell concert in Paris, describing the Briton as an "icon".

“
AIDS still
exists, still
strikes
”

The ceremony took place on France's Fete de la Musique, when amateur musicians are invited to make music in the streets to celebrate midsummer. John, whose rollercoaster life was captured in the "Rocketman" biopic that wowed critics at the Cannes film festival last month, used the occasion to promote his charity work. Although parts of his five-decade career were consumed by sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, as depicted in "Rocketman", he also used his stardom to promote gay rights and raise funds for HIV/AIDS research and treatment.

"This commitment to music and the fight against AIDS is the story of your life, dear Elton," Macron told the superstar, who sported a jacket with the inscription "Bennie and the Jets" and rose-tinted glasses. John spoke of a special love story with France, and thanked the nation for its commitment to the battle against AIDS. Last year, John announced he would retire after a final global tour, saying he wanted to spend more time with his children with husband David Furnish, who also attended Friday's ceremony.

John's "Farewell Yellow Brick Road" tour kicked off in Pennsylvania in September. The three-year extravaganza, expected to involve some 300 shows, took him to the northern city of Lille on Tuesday and to Paris on Thursday. "I'm going to miss you so much," he told more than 26,000 fans who turned out to see him in Lille. He will also play concerts in Bordeaux and Nimes. — AFP



PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron, right, and British singer-songwriter Elton John arrive to speak to a crowd in the courtyard of the Elysee Palace in Paris. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



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CROSSWORD 2238

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ACROSS

- The extreme end of something.
- A person who is paid to pray for the soul of another.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- Widespread genus or herbs or soft-wooded arborescent shrubs cultivated for their showy flowers.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
- A short composition for a solo instrument.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
- The posterior part of the mandible that is more or less vertical.
- In bed.
- (computer science) The rate at which data is transferred (as by a modem).
- A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Relating to the use of or having the nature of an interrogation.
- A state in the eastern United States.
- A master's degree in fine arts.
- An ancient Assyrian city on the River Tigris and traditional capital of Assyria.
- A town in southeast Iowa.
- Any of various spectacular plants of the genus *Laelia* having showy flowers in many colors.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Lebanon or its people.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A technician who is highly proficient and enthusiastic about some technical field (especially computing).
- Someone who skates.
- God of death.
- Long green edible beaked pods of the okra plant.
- A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
- Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
- Not easy to combine harmoniously.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
- United States poet (1884-1933).
- A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.

DOWN

- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- A material effigy that is worshipped as a god.
- Small beads made from polished shells and formerly used as money by native Americans.
- (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Report or maintain.
- An organized body of related information.
- The base part of a tree that remains standing after the tree has been felled.
- Relating to or resembling a medusa.
- (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
- A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
- A genus of Lamnidae.
- (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
- A piece of furniture that provides a place to sleep.
- Of or related to the genital and urinary organs or their functions.
- A city in southern Japan on Kyushu.
- An oral cephalosporin (trade names Keflex and Keflin and Keflab) commonly prescribe for mild to moderately severe infections of the skin or ears or throat or lungs or urinary tract.
- Make less active or intense.
- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- Separate by avulsion.
- Fish-eating bird of warm inland waters having a long flexible neck and slender sharp-pointed bill.
- A hardy cabbage with coarse curly leaves that do not form a head.
- Not in a state of sleep.
- A member of a senate.
- Hard fat around the kidneys and loins in beef and mutton.
- (used of opinions and actions) Far beyond the norm.
- Dignified manner or conduct.
- Realistic Norwegian author who wrote plays on social and political themes (1828-1906).
- (Greek mythology) Son of Daedalus.
- Any plant of the genus *Erica*.
- An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
- A French abbot.
- An endorsement made in a passport that allows the bearer to enter the country issuing it v l.
- A sudden short attack.
- English actor noted for his portrayals of Shakespeare's great tragic characters (1789-1833).
- Type genus of the Ranidae.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- The square of a body of any size of type.
- Used of a single unit or thing.
- A lyric poem with complex stanza forms.
- Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).

Friday's Solution

Y	A	M		O	D	D	M	E	N	T	S		S	P	A
E	P	A		C	R	A	B	M	E	A	T		C	A	D
A	S	H		T	I	N	D	E	R		O	Z	E	N	A
H	E	A	P		X	E		R	E	C	K	O	N	E	R
			A	B	O		Z	A	I	R	E	S	E		
S	H	M	E	A	R		E	L	D	E	S	T		B	C
M	A	Y	A		A	C	I	D		W	I	E	N	E	R
I	R	O	N	C	L	A	D			M	A	R	I	N	I
L	E	M		H		F	A	C	I	A		A	L	U	M
O	M	A	H	A		T	E	T	A	N	Y			M	E
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A	G	H	A		A	N	A		B		C	A	P		
B	O	I	D	A	E		M	G		B	C	Z	E	M	A
A	F	L		A	M	E	B	I	C		A	A	R	O	N
S	E	A		R	O	S	E	L	L	E		K	E	L	T
E	R	R		E	N	T	R	A	I	N		H	A	L	E

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find yourself wanting to discover more about your roots. Where did you come from? What obstacles did your ancestors face? This is a great time to do some research and discover more about your heritage. Just as the past seems to be of great importance to you, so is the future. You are in a great frame of mind to do some future planning. Get your affairs in order. Spend some time researching the financial investments you have been considering. Change can bring great reward, Aries. This is a great time to develop a financial plan for your future and for the future of your descendants.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may find yourself in a bit of a conflict when it comes to balancing your Home Life and work life. You may find yourself passing an opportunity by at work because it will interfere with time with your family. This may be a hard decision to make at this time, but the payoff with your family will be well worth it. In a time for you to make sure your priorities are straight. You have a strong appreciation of your past. You are able to reflect and realize the obstacles and problems of your past talk to the lessons that made you and you are today. You are able to appreciate hardships and look at them in a more positive manner knowing you will come at a stronger person in the end.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are a practical person with an abundance of common sense. You are able to use both of these qualities as assets to make your way to the top in the career world. You may be feeling a need to change your focus and tighten your circle a bit. You feel as if you need to spend more of your time and attention on you and yours. At this point you may have accomplished your goal in the workplace but feel you need to continue to work on your goal at home. This will be a balancing act to continue to make sure you thrive in every area of your life. Your communication skills are at all time high and you are able to relate and interact with ease to all who surround you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Love and expressing all the deep emotions you have for others becomes very important to you. You may be feeling a need to be needed. Never doubt that you are. You may find yourself in deep appreciation of everyone and everything around you. You are able to find beauty in every situation and in everything that surrounds you. This is time in your life filled with love and others are drawn to your loving ways and kind heart. Be careful today, as all around you becomes so appealing. You may want steer clear of the mall to resist the urge to bring all that catches your eye home with you. Cancer, a shopping spree could not only find you loving all you see, but also wanting to bring home everything you see!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You don't care how, you want it now! This is your attitude when it comes to life today. You have taken love a step farther. Obsession is a more appropriate description of how you feel about your goals. This could be an extremely passionate time in your world. Jealousy and possessiveness may be emotions that play a role in your world. You may find your ambition is in overdrive and you will not stop until you have exactly what you want.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Family seems to be where your focus is. You desire a strong foundation and have been working hard to establish this in your world. You may find someone younger seeking advice and looking to you for assistance. You will be able to guide them with ease. Helping others brings great satisfaction to you and in a way will fulfill the need to be needed you have been desiring. It is a great time to sit and have a meaningful conversation with a loved one. Virgo, you will be able to relate your ideas with ease and grace and this conversation will be very beneficial to your relationship. Today will find you very successful when organizing the actions of those around you. You are very focused on those closest to you. These personal relationships are your driving force and you are in a very content and peaceful state.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Tail Words - Word Search

F	C	O	C	K	T	A	I	L	K	B	L	I	A	T	E	R
S	F	H	Y	R	A	L	K	W	E	P	I	P	L	I	A	T
Q	H	L	L	M	I	L	I	A	T	Y	N	O	P	B	X	E
T	D	I	Q	U	L	T	E	A	C	L	I	A	T	B	O	B
H	U	A	R	W	G	B	Q	A	T	U	Z	N	T	L	L	C
G	C	T	U	T	A	D	K	H	Q	N	R	F	M	I	T	W
I	K	E	N	B	T	U	T	C	I	D	O	T	A	D	W	M
L	T	V	N	X	E	A	R	N	A	G	E	T	A	H	Y	L
L	A	O	A	K	I	O	I	L	H	B	H	T	T	I	K	I
I	D	N	L	P	X	L	I	S	L	T	A	O	L	A		
A	L	N	W	I	S	K	P	D	I	A	U	I	A	I	C	T
T	W	I	A	L	J	S	N	F	B	W	T	Z	A	I	L	T
N	N	T	I	C	A	T	T	A	I	L	I	G	D	T	L	A
D	T	A	I	L	B	O	N	E	U	B	C	Z	I	P	E	O
R	T	S	A	L	E	E	N	T	A	I	L	M	E	P	I	C

BOBTAIL
CATTAIL
COATTAIL
COCKTAIL
COTTONTAIL
CURTAIL
DETAIL
DOVETAIL

DUCKTAIL
ENTAIL
FISHTAIL
HIGHTAIL
PIGTAIL
PONYTAIL
RETAIL
SHIRTTAIL

TAILBACK
TAILBONE
TAILGATE
TAILLIGHT
TAILOR
TAILPIPE
TAILSPIN
TAILWIND

Daily Sudoku

				9		3		
	8							
	5	4		1	7			
	2	9	6		4			3
		5	7		3	1		
6			9		1	5	2	
			2	9		7	5	
							8	
6			1					

Libra (September 23-October 22)



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



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are a practical person with an abundance of common sense. You are able to use both of these qualities as assets to make your way to the top in the career world. You may be feeling a need to change your focus and tighten your circle a bit. You feel as if you need to spend more of your time and attention on you and yours. At this point you may have accomplished your goal in the workplace but feel you need to continue to work on your goal at home. This will be a balancing act to continue to make sure you thrive in every area of your life. Your communication skills are at all time high and you are able to relate and interact with ease to all who surround you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

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. Sagittarius. Reach for the stars! You may just be the one that can touch them.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may feel as if you are encountering negativity and not everyone is supportive when it comes to very sensitive issues you are dealing with in your life. These issues are very personal, and you may just be sharing with the wrong people. You will find someone close to you who will serve as a confidant who is extremely understanding and supportive of all that makes you unique. Capricorn, now is a great time to think outside of the box and follow that new path or project that is calling your name. You may reap great reward from trying something new.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday. The sun came up this morning, and you are still here. Try to focus on the present. Stressing ahead rarely changes outcomes. Many of the "what ifs" you fret about will never happen. Save your energy to deal with the realities. You are flexible, and you have the coping skills to handle whatever comes up. No problem is too large for you to conquer.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are one of a kind. Relationships take on greater meaning in your life. You want everything in your world in its place and everything running smoothly. One thing out of place will cause stress and tension in for you. You have a talent for bringing those around you into harmony and this makes you a wonderful leader. You are placing great focus on your marriage or a close relationship with someone dear to you. This is a great move and will result in a strong bond you have been craving. Pisces, all is well in your world and the steps you are taking will develop feed the deep roots needed for lasting love and support from many close to you.

Friday's Solution

Summer - Solution

P	V	G	V	T	G	C	S	G	N	I	H	S	I	F	S	A
C	S	S	G	O	N	N	P	R	N	H	O	T	O	R	B	V
I	A	E	W	C	I	G	S	N	U	I	S	N	E	A	D	S
C	N	O	O	P	B	G	E	Y	G	N	W	S	T	W	U	
E	D	T	Z	N	M	M	W	K	I	D	O	E	T	T	S	N
C	A	I	G	C	A	M	S	H	R	L	B	Y	D	P	Q	T
R	L	U	R	I	C	E	I	A	E	A	F	J	R	R	N	A
E	S	Q	K	P	U	B	O	N	L	I	H	I	U	Q	A	N
A	G	S	O	L	I	B	Q	L	G	L	N	T	N	N	G	G
M	V	O	B	C	E	C	U	R	T	K	S	S	X	I	P	S
R	T	M	Y	T	A	D	E	F	L	O	G	E	E	Y	Q	P
V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N	E	Z	D	D	S	E	C	Y	
W	L	K	V	C	B	A	R	B	E	C	U	E	N	B	T	O
E	S	A	D	C	Q	S	V	E	N	I	H	S	N	U	S	S

BARBECUE
BASEBALL
BEES
BICYCLE
BLUE SKY
CAMPING
FISHING
FLIES

FLOWERS
GARDENING
GOLF
HOT
ICE CREAM
INSECTS
MOSQUITOES
PICNIC

SANDALS
SKATEBOARD
SPRINKLERS
SUNSHINE
SUNTAN
SWIMMING
VACATION

Friday's Solution

4	2	6	5	8	9	7	1	3
9	5	3	1	2	7	8	4	6
8	1	7	3	4	6	5	9	2
1	8	4	9	7	2	6	3	5
7	3	2	6	5	1	9	8	4
6	9	5	8	3	4	1	2	7
3	6	8	2	1	5	4	7	9
2	4	9	7	6	8	3	5	1
5	7	1	4	9	3	2	6	8

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 2019



People attend the 'Karl For Ever' event to honor late German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld at the Grand Palais in Paris. — AFP

Jumpin' Jack Flash Jagger back on stage after heart surgery

Mick Jagger swaggered back to the stage on Friday in his first concert after undergoing heart surgery in April as the Rolling Stones kicked off a delayed North American tour. The veteran British band opened its No Filter tour in Chicago at the city's 61,500 seat Soldier Field stadium, after delaying the 17-date US and Canada tour to allow for Jagger's medical treatment.

Opening to a sold-out crowd, the band kicked off with its classic hit "Street Fighting Man" as the Stones frontman, dressed in skinny black jeans and a black and white jacket, strutted across the stage, singing and pumping his

fist. Jagger, 75, underwent heart valve replacement surgery in New York in early April, and in May reassured fans that he was back in shape by posting video on Twitter of him dancing in a studio.

"He (Jagger) went through it very easily," Stones guitarist Keith Richards told the Toronto Sun in an interview ahead of the Chicago concert. "He's in great shape - rocking. As I say, it seemed to be no problem at all really." The 1960s band, whose current members Jagger, Richards, Ronnie Wood and Charlie Watts are now all in their 70s, has played more than 40 tours, making the quartet

some of the most enduring and successful rock musicians of all time.

The Rolling Stones kicked off the No Filter tour in Europe in September 2017, playing the last show there in July 2018. The tour grossed \$116 million in 2018, according to touring industry publication Pollstar, making it the 10th biggest worldwide last year. The North American No Filter concerts will take the band across the United States, and to one date in Ontario, Canada, before ending in Miami on Aug. 31. —Reuters



Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones performs as they resume their "No Filter Tour" North American Tour at the Soldier Field in Chicago. — AFP photos



Ronnie Wood, left, and Charlie Watts of the Rolling Stones perform as they resume their "No Filter Tour" North American Tour at the Soldier Field in Chicago.



Books from the Harry Potter series by author J K Rowling are seen on a shelf inside Widnes Library in Widnes, Britain. — Reuters

Pokemon Go creators release Harry Potter mobile game

The creators of mobile gaming phenomenon Pokemon Go unleashed a new game on Thursday that features Harry Potter and other characters from the wizarding world made famous in best-selling books and blockbuster movies. Harry Potter: Wizards Unite was co-developed by Pokemon Go developer Niantic Inc and AT&T Inc's Warner Bros, which owns the rights to develop entertainment based on author J K Rowling's popular Harry Potter series.

Wizards Unite had been scheduled to debut on Friday, but players in the United States found they were able to download it on Thursday afternoon. Like Pokemon Go, Wizards Unite uses augmented reality and Google mapping to make it look like characters are appearing in the real world. Players see characters, creatures and other elements overlaid on the landscape that they see through their phone's camera as they move around.

In Wizards Unite, users play the role of a new recruit within the Statute of Secrecy Task Force to help solve a mystery. Players can discover artifacts, cast spells and encounter characters from the Potter films and prequel movie series "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them," the developers

said. "You see all your favorite characters and artifacts, whether it's the Sorting Hat, or Buckbeak, or whether it's Harry himself or Newt Scamander," said Jonathan Knight, studio head of Warner Bros. Games San Francisco.

There is also a new story that unfolds within the game, Knight said. "There's a crafting game where you're collecting potion ingredients and creating potions and using them to be a better wizard," he said. Pokemon Go exploded after its introduction in 2016, sending players into city streets, offices, parks and restaurants to search for colorful animated characters. Actress Tiffany Haddish, an avid fan of the Harry Potter books, was given an early look at Wizards Unite.

At a launch event held by Warner Bros., Haddish said her favorite part of the game was that it forces people to move around to search for clues and characters. She said she had lost five to 10 pounds when she was walking around playing Pokemon Go. "I'm about to be starting playing this like crazy," Haddish said. "Maybe I'll lose 10 to 15 pounds. Who knows?" —Reuters



US fashion designer Virgil Abloh acknowledges the audience at the end of the presentation of Louis Vuitton's creation during the men's spring/summer 2020 fashion collection in Paris.



Models present creation by Louis Vuitton during the men's spring/summer 2020 fashion collection in Paris. — AFP photos

Blooming marvelous! Paris men's fashion goes all flowery

On the day that Paris fashion paid tribute to the late great Karl Lagerfeld, designers festooned the men's catwalk collections with flowers. Virgil Abloh took over one of the French capital's most picturesque squares for his Louis Vuitton show and urged a digitally "oversaturated" world to drop its smartphones and "smell the roses". It was quite a declaration for a creator who seems to spend half his life teasing his four million followers on Instagram with his latest genius ideas.

On the historic Place Dauphine, a stone's throw from the label's studios, the American cut loose with his idea of "boyhood bliss" with models carrying kites, red balloons and bundles of wild flowers. Vuitton-clad street vendors handed out crepes with Nutella and champagne, and the square's cafes, bookshop and park benches got a Vuitton rebrand. The makeover even extended to Louis Vuitton tablecloths and ashtrays.

Only 24 hours before, the first black American to lead a major Paris house had filled a converted market with a field of white carnations for his own label, Off White. Abloh seems to be channeling Lagerfeld's famously decadent Paris fashion shows at the Grand Palais, where a star-studded group of his friends and colleagues gathered to remember to the "Kaiser" Thursday, four months after his death aged 85.

Smell the roses

"Stopping to smell the roses de-programs the mind and makes new space for freedom of thought," Abloh insisted, in this age "oversatu-

rated with views and visual data". The designer adorned his pastel-toned Vuitton spring summer collection with sprays of wild flowers—but he was sparing with them in keeping with label's classy casual tradition. Belgium's Dries van Noten, however, went floral fantastic, sowing his flowery prints into more than three quarters of his hugely impressive collection that he insisted was "cocky, feral, flashy... and virile to the max."

The Flemish "king of prints" sewed sequin



petals onto a killer white denim jacket and a more formal black one, before delivering a lesson in tailoring with a line of eight-button, double-breasted suits and flowing navy coats that brought to mind the graphic novel hero, Corto Maltese. Tucked at the waist, Van Noten added a double back pleat to many of his more formal jackets, overcoats and trench coats.

Miyake's maypole

The rich color palette the designer often borrows from Flemish Old Master paintings was cut with leopard, tiger and zebra print trousers, shirts and bags. Issey Miyake also treated fashionistas to a midsummer celebration of Nature, with the label's typically loose and comfy clothes done in blocks of bright primary colors. Models skipped around a maypole in the gardens of the Place des Vosges—the oldest planned square in the French capital—or danced to a band of drummers or played football. Acrobats showed just how forging the brand's pleated creations are by doing body flips under the trees.

There was not a blade of grass in sight at the relentlessly urban avant-gardist Rick Owens' highly personal show, which he conceived as a riposte to US President Donald Trump's "fixtion on a border wall". Yet the half-Mexican maverick—who specializes in a post-apocalyptic LA vibe—dedicated his show to the California-based and United Farm Workers union, whose Aztec eagle symbol appeared throughout the darkly glamorous rock chic collection.

The son of "an Anglo father who worked as a translator for Mexican migrant farm work-



ers" in southern California, Owens said he and his indigenous Mexican mother "learned English together when she started taking me to nursery school." He called the show "Tecuatli" after his grandmother's Mixtec name, and had three Mexican drummers hammer out Aztec ceremonial music to a Nahuatl chant which ended, "This life song you have laid out yourself like flowers..."

Flowers are not Vetements' Demna Gvasalia's thing. The Georgian bad boy genius of the Paris scene is too damn worldly for all that, taking the clothes of minimum-wage prolies and selling them back to the rich, with an ironic wink of course. He staged his show in a branch of McDonald's on the Champs Elysees, with a model in an "I love Paris (Hilton)" T-shirt and another in one that declared in Arabic,

French and English, "Don't shoot."

Others wore security guard garb with "For Rent" signs on their back, or oversized nylon fast-food server shirts with a handwritten "Capitalism" sticker on the pocket. The designer, who also heads Balenciaga, had fun hijacking logos for Heineken beer, Dominos pizzas, Adidas (made to look like a marijuana leaf) and Bose, which he gleefully pointed out means angry or evil in German. Gvasalia also added new twists to his now classic blue striped shirts, biker leathers pants, thigh-high boots and scarf dresses, creating one new one which had skirts as sleeves.—AFP

Dior and Berluti top the class on Paris catwalk

Two of fashion's most gifted menswear designers gave a master class in tailoring on the Paris catwalk Friday. Kim Jones showed why sales have shot up at Dior since he took over last year by hitting all the streetwear sweet spots while reinforcing the label's reputation for effortless elegance. Kris van Assche, his Dior Homme predecessor who moved on to revamp Berluti, produced a sharp and richly colored spring summer collection with a co-ed twist.

Both had trousers worn longer than they have been for a few years, and paid homage to the suit, boot, shirt trinity of classic tailoring. But there all similarities ended. While the Belgian turned up the color volume, Jones bleeds it out to the bare minimum of bleached-out Dior egg-shell blues, pinks and silvery grays. With an all-white replica of the brand founder Christian Dior's office nestling in one corner of the vast set like a marbled relic of classical Greece, Jones went on an archaeological expedition through its archives to find the key to unlock the house's fashion future.

Space age luxury

Along the way Jones turned up some interesting and amusing artifacts of possible space age luxury such as a metallic Rimowa case that doubles as champagne cooler. The designer conceived the set with American artist Daniel Arsham—who Jones said "looks at the present from



the future"—with Dior written out in huge crushed stone letters. But it was the clothes that made the real statement before a starry front row that included Kate Moss, Lilly Allen, Kelly Osbourne and no shortage of celebrity subplots, with Columbian reggaeton star J. Balvin seemingly confirming his romance with former Miss Argentina Valentina Ferrer.

With the color so subtly muted everything was in the sculptural cut. That also left room for a run of laboriously handmade deep blue and orange plisse shirts to do their magic. Classic blue toile de Jouy pattern shirts and see-through news print variants were also given plenty of

room to breath, matched with transparent rubber boots through which Jones had run with a new line of Dior socks. "A lot of us in the studio are really obsessed by footwear," Jones told AFP, and the idea that "you can dress head to toe in Dior".

Berluti unbound

While Jones went deep into Dior DNA, Van Assche cut loose at Berluti, with blocks of daring rich Yves Klein blue and ochre orange suits. It takes a killer cut to get away with that kind of colour and the Belgian master upped the ante by lopping the sleeves off several of his suits and town coats for summer, as well as slitting the pencil trousers at the ankle. With singer Ricky Martin in the front row, the Belgian sent sleek silver-fox older and female models in to mix it up on the catwalk with young bucks in Berluti brown leather suits.

Van Assche saved his big statement for the end with Gigi Hadid in a glorious mint green sleeveless double-breasted suit streaming with picked out marabou feathers. "It's a challenge for me reinventing myself and the DNA (of the brand)," he told reporters after the show. "I refuse to think Berluti should always be about the timeless luxury. It is also supposed to be for now," he added.—AFP



English fashion designer Kim Jones acknowledges the audience after the Dior Homme during the Men's spring/summer 2020 collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP photos



Models present creation for Dior Homme during the Men's spring/summer 2020 fashion collection in Paris.



Mexican artisan Glafira Candelaria Jose, of the Otomi ethnic group, works on one of her designs at her workshop in San Nicolas village, in Tenango de Doria, Hidalgo state, Mexico.

— AFP photos



Designs by Mexican artisan Glafira Candelaria Jose, of the Otomi ethnic group, are seen at her workshop.

FASHION WORLD SHAKEN BY CULTURAL APPROPRIATION CLAIMS

Surrounded by piles of cloth embroidered with vibrant reds, blues and yellows, Glafira Candelaria, a Mexican indigenous artisan, looks disgustedly at a cell phone glowing with photos of fashion house Carolina Herrera's latest collection. It's the dress in "Look 23" of the Resort 2020 collection that particularly infuriates Candelaria, because its bright pattern of animal and floral designs look exactly like the prints covering the walls of her workshop, which her mother and grandmother first created decades ago.

The dress from the New York label is simply a "tribute" to Mexico's artisans, said Carolina Herrera's creative director Wes Gordon. Yet the Mexican government has accused the designer of "cultural appropriation," and 59-year-old Candelaria, who lives in the small central Mexico mountain village of San Nicolas, views it as a blatant rip-off of her

the legendary Venezuelan fashionista stepped down at age 79. Glossy fashion magazines have praised Gordon's new collection as a savvy blend of Latin American influences—a nod to Herrera's roots—with the design house's classic chic. The Mexican government has been less impressed. Culture Minister Alejandra Frausto sent Gordon and Herrera a letter calling on them to publicly explain "on what basis (they) decided to make use of cultural elements whose origins are clearly documented, and how the profits of that use will go to benefit the community."

She called for a "broad discussion of the cultural rights of indigenous peoples," and said Mexico would consider legal action after consulting with the communities whose designs were used. In addition to the Tenango design, she accused the label of "appropriating" embroidery from the

'They should come to us'

Behind Candelaria's house is a single, small room with a dirt floor where her mother, Josefina Jose Tavera, lives. Tavera, 87, created the village's now-famous animal and floral design with her mother, drawing inspiration from traditional embroidery patterns. Her sight is now too poor for embroidering, so Tavera spends her days in the mountains gathering leaves used in indigenous "temazcal," or sweat lodge, ceremonies and hauling them back to the village in a large pack tied around her forehead, as is traditional.

She is indignant when she hears her pattern was used by a major fashion label without credit. "If it weren't for my hands, this work wouldn't exist!" she said in the Otomi language, her face creased with anger. Fashion labels that want to use the Tenango technique "should come to us," said 29-year-old Oliver Lopez, who runs his own small

"Cultural appropriation is something we should all forget," said the designer, who refuses to leave his own Andalusian village where his Palomo Spain label is based.

'It belongs to everyone'

"Culture belongs to everyone. Rather than harming us, (referencing indigenous styles) brings us all a little closer and Mexico to the world," he added, stoutly defending Gordon and the veteran Herrera, who stepped back from designing last year. "It's like people accused me of cultural appropriation for having a frilly (gypsy) dress," he declared.

British designer Kim Jones, who took over last year from Van Assche at Dior Homme, has a more nuanced view, insisting "a huge amount of sensitivity ... has to be put into place. You have to treat everyone with a great deal of respect. I grew up all over the world so you see how things are very particular. In Africa if you go even from village to village you see a different styling. But as long as you speak to the people, work with them and listen to them and celebrate what they do it is fine," he added.

Hard lessons

Jones, however, learned the hard way during his long reign at Louis Vuitton just how fine the line between homage and appropriation can be. Having grown up in Kenya and Tanzania, he referenced the shuka, the famous red and blue checked robe of the Maasai people, in a 2012 Vuitton menswear show.

It sparked protests from some, particularly as the cloth was woven in Scotland.

But in a twist which shows how complex these issues can become, the shuka had its origins in the tartan that Scottish traders and missionaries brought to East Africa's Great Rift Valley in the 19th century. The Maasai have since hired lawyers to wring cash and credit from companies like Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Jaguar Land Rover and other multinationals who have used Maasai iconography. For Jones the thorny issue boils down to two choices, "whether it is cultural appreciation or cultural appropriation".

Designers can get carried away with themselves "trying to make stories out of things but sometimes they do not know the backstory, the history." "But if someone has made the things with the people who actually create them in the first place, that is something that is actually positive," he added. "When I worked with things that have been culturally referenced we either asked permission of the people that worked with it and they get a royalty, or we work with them to make the things, so you are actually helping them, which is really essential." —AFP



Otomi ethnic group designs.



traditional wares. "They're just copying our work. It's not right," the indigenous Otomi woman said in stilted Spanish at her home.

Her poor, rural municipality of Tenango de Doria is the namesake for the intricate and painstaking Tenango embroidery technique, one of several native traditions Gordon used in his collection. "Outsiders are getting rich using our work," she said. "These people could be sued. They should at least apologize." Candelaria's bright textiles sell for about \$65 for a table runner, which takes her six months to make, and \$250 for a full table cloth, which takes around a year and a half. The dresses in Carolina Herrera's latest collection, meanwhile, cost thousands of dollars apiece.

Thorny debate

American designer Gordon, 32, took over from Carolina Herrera's eponymous founder a year ago after

isthmus of Tehuantepec, in southern Mexico, and the country's vibrant "Saltillo" ponchos. "The presence of Mexico is indisputable in this collection," Gordon replied in a statement, saying his aim was to "pay tribute to the richness of Mexican culture." He is not the first designer to land in hot water with the Mexican authorities.

The government has sent similar letters to Zara, Mango, Louis Vuitton and other firms over the years. Mexico could potentially pursue legal action in such cases, according to experts. The International Declaration of Human Rights recognizes intellectual property as a fundamental right, and Mexican copyright law extends protections to artisanal works, as well as a requirement to clearly credit indigenous communities if their traditional designs are used in new products. Carolina Herrera "may have committed an infraction of trade law by neglecting to give credit to the ethnic communities in question," copyright law expert Dafne Mendez told AFP.

design shop out of his home. "They should bring us jobs," added Lopez, who has also incorporated the village's traditional designs into modern-looking mini-dresses—though with less commercial success than Carolina Herrera.

Tougher copyright laws

Some of the country's leaders now want to toughen a copyright law that already protects traditional patterns to punish "plagiarism that different indigenous peoples have suffered". It is a suggestion that sent a chill down the spines of some designers at Paris fashion week. Berluti's new artistic director Kris van Assche—who headed Dior's menswear line for 11 years—told AFP that "when I was at fashion school we learned that there was nothing shameful about taking inspiration from other cultures."

"We must be careful not to attack everybody for everything," the Belgian creator added. Rising young Spanish star Alejandro Gomez Palomo was more dismissive.

Chanel, Fendi host tribute to fashion titan Karl Lagerfeld

Amid colossal portraits and clean lines of black, white and red, Chanel, Fendi and a gaggle of stars paid homage to the fashion titan and Kaiser of mode Karl Lagerfeld on Thursday. The mythic kingpin of the cutting edge died in February, aged 85, devastating the industry after his decades as head of legendary labels Fendi and Chanel as well as his eponymous brand. Stars including Pharrell Williams, Tilda Swinton, Helen Mirren and Cara Delevingne paid homage to Lagerfeld on the stage during a tribute entitled "Karl For Ever."

Blurring the lines of haute couture, theatre and film much as Lagerfeld was known to do, the event consisted of live performances and dramatic readings montaged with a short documentary. Featuring the ever reticent co-owner of Chanel Alain Wertheimer, the film was narrated by Lagerfeld himself, sewn together from

dozens of clips before his death. Looking on, the celebrity-studded crowd featured Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo, singer-songwriter and supermodel Carla Bruni, Valentino creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli, Valentino himself, model Gigi Hadid, editor-in-chief of Vogue Anna Wintour and the first lady of France, Brigitte Macron. The show, conceived by Canadian opera director Robert Carsen, was held in the glass-domed Grand Palais - the same quintessentially stylish structure that housed some of Lagerfeld's most sensational shows, which included elements as spectacular as a 265-tonne iceberg and a replicate Eiffel tower.

"Karl For Ever" sought not only to highlight Lagerfeld's long list of achievements as grand couturier, photographer or publisher, but to highlight the man behind the glasses. The celebration explored his personal passions like

tango, literature and music, and highlighted anecdotes from those who knew him well. Lagerfeld created iconoclastic, spectacle-driven fashion. In this Lagerfeldian world, to be boring was a cardinal sin.

He also brought Chanel back from death's door, reinvigorating the wilting couture house with the modern moxie that has since kept Chanel a lucrative and industry-defining fashion house, a job that required constant reinvention. "It's up to us to adjust to our times," Lagerfeld said in one video. "Evolution can't be stopped, and will not be stopped tomorrow." The tribute punctuated Paris' men's fashion week for Spring/Summer, which wraps up Sunday. —Reuters



British actress and model Tilda Swinton performs on stage during the 'Karl For Ever' event to honor late German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld at the Grand Palais in Paris. — AFP photos



US singer and music producer Pharrell Williams performs on stage.



People attend the 'Karl For Ever' event to honor late German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld at the Grand Palais in Paris.





Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi performs yoga during a mass yoga event on International Yoga Day in Ranchi in eastern Jharkhand state. — AFP photos



Indian yoga practitioners take part in a yoga session on International Yoga Day.



This handout photo released by the Indian Ministry of Defense shows an Indian Army Dog Unit doing yoga poses as part of an event for International Yoga Day.



In this handout photo Chinese Army personnel and Indian Army troops attend a joint yoga session at Nathu La in the state of Sikkim and at Bumla in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.



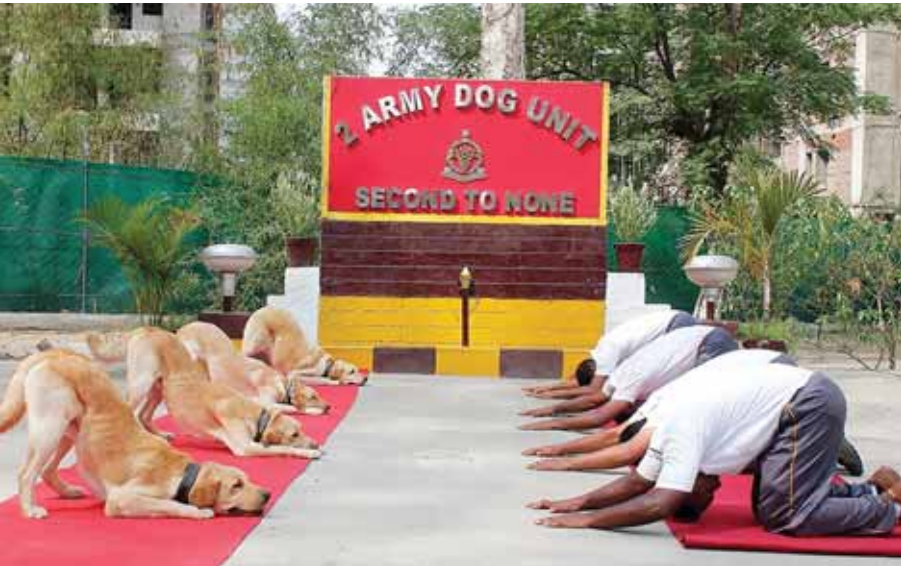
Home stretch: India leads the way on International Yoga Day

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the way for International Yoga Day on Friday, performing sun salutations and other flexible feats in a mass session with an estimated 30,000 other devotees of the discipline. Yoga Day, observed mostly in India but also worldwide on the Northern Hemisphere's longest day, was Modi's idea. It was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly in 2014 and first took place in 2015.

Modi, whose moves in Ranchi in northern India were live-streamed on the internet, this year took to business networking website LinkedIn to extol yoga as a "panacea" for stress and even hate. "In a world where ideologies of hate can potentially divide brother from brother, Yoga stands as a unifying force," Modi wrote. "In a time where health ailments, especially stress-related ailments are rising, Yoga is giving relief and joy."

The theme of this yoga day, the fifth, is "climate action" and Modi said yoga can "foster oneness... with all the flora and fauna with whom we share our beautiful planet". In recent days Modi, 68, fresh from a landslide election victory, has also posted videos to social media featuring an animated version of himself performing different yoga postures. Elsewhere in India, armed forces personnel were due to practice downward-facing dogs and other poses on an aircraft carrier in Mumbai, while in Mysore a golf course was set to become a mass yoga location.

Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice originating in India. The word derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness, the UN's official Yoga Day website says. It has boomed in recent decades, with millions -



This handout photo released by the Indian Ministry of Defense shows an Indian Army Dog Unit doing yoga poses as part of an event for International Yoga Day.

Wave hello to Italy's surf park, one of the world's biggest

The sea isn't visible even from the roof of Milan's towering cathedral, but enthusiasts can now ride waves near the Italian city at one of the world's biggest surf parks. Wakeparadise, which opens to the public on Saturday, is the first such park in Italy and joins a growing list of artificial lagoons in Australia, Dubai, Malaysia, Spain and the United States. The Snowdonia Surf Park in Wales boasts the world's longest artificial wave on its 300-metre lagoon, using a plough and pulley system to create its waves. But Milan boasts "the largest floating surf pool in the world," says park president, Ludovico Vanoli.

Set in Peschiera Borromeo, in a picturesque artificial lake surrounded by trees, it offers 10-metre wide wave, with a maximum height of 1.6 meters. The project, which cost 1.5 million euros, is also environmentally conscious - the wave machine uses renewable energy, while the park bans plastic. Purists have criticized the creation of lagoons that commercialize the sport and remove the element of unpredictability oceans bring, which they argue undermines its free spirit. But others appreciate the chance to train all year round.

Super wave

Vanoli, a keen surfer himself, agrees the experience "cannot be compared to the ocean". "No artificial wave

structure can offer the emotion and feeling of the sea", he said. But "we can give novices the opportunity to approach this sport in a simple, immediate and safe way". And for those already professional at paddling and cresting, the centre gives them "the chance to surf in their lunch break, or after work... or when the sea is flat," he said. The force and waveform can be adjusted to match the surfer's abilities.

Once wetsuits are donned and boards waxed, there are three types of waves available: a gentle one for beginners, a slightly more vertical, medium wave for those with some experience, and a powerful breaker. Fifteen pumps inject 22,000 litres of lake water per second into the pool. "It's fantastic, a super wave... so big. I surfed it a couple of times and I'm still getting my bearings. But it's really fun," surfer Andrew Holzner says.

Good for beginners

Laura Haustein, a 21-year-old German, said it was certainly "a good option for beginners, and a good way to improve". "There's a constant wave, the pressure is always the same. The wave's clean, there's no shock," she said, her board tucked under her arm. Surfers, who can use their own board or rent one, will pay 45 euros an hour to ride the waves, or can book the whole pool for private use for



A general view shows the surfing pool during its inauguration at the Wakeparadise Milano center in Peschiera Borromeo, south east Milan.

420 euros an hour. The site, which is open to anyone over 12 years old, offers training courses too.

There are some 80,000 surfers in Italy, with 35 percent living in Lombardy - the northern region that includes Milan - and 60 percent are beginners, according to Wakeparadise. The park also hopes to attract tourists

keen for a break from the dusty streets of Italy's economic and fashion heartland. Interest is certainly on the rise in the sport, which will make its debut appearance in the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. —AFP



Italian surfer Roberto D'Amico rides a wave. — AFP photos



German surfer Laura Haustein rides a wave.



French surfer Kyllian Guerin rides a wave.

Classifieds

Sunday, June 23, 2019

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to variable wind, with speed of 12 - 38 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div>SFC. CHART22/06/2019 0000 UTC</div>
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	32 °C	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	32 °C	
ABDALY	44 °C	26 °C	
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C	
JAHRA	44 °C	30 °C	
FAILAKA ISLAND	42 °C	29 °C	
SALMIYAH	42 °C	30 °C	
AHMADI	42 °C	33 °C	
NUWAISIB	42 °C	29 °C	
WAFRA	44 °C	26 °C	
SALMY	43 °C	25 °C	

4 DAYS FORECAST					
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures MAX. MIN.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
Sunday	06/23	Hot	45 °C 32 °C	NW-SE	12 - 35 km/h
Monday	06/24	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	48 °C 31 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 35 km/h
Tuesday	06/25	Very hot	49 °C 33 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	06/26	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	49 °C 33 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:14
Sunrise	04:49
Zuhr	11:50
Asr	15:24
Sunset	18:51
Isha	20:23

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	43 °C
MIN. Temp.	30 °C
MAX. RH	29 %
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, Durairaj Murugaiyan, holder of Indian Passport No. L4907492, Salmiya, Block 9, Al Mugera St, building No. 84, first floor, flat No. 06, issued in Kuwait hereby change name as it appears in my passport from given name: MURUGAIYAN DURAIRAJ to sur-name: MURUGAIYAN and given name: DURAIRAJ for all future purposes. (C 5554) 21-6-2019

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

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

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	220821555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines`	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9



Flight Schedule

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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 23/6/2019					Departure Flights on Sunday 23/6/2019										
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	157	Istanbul	11:15
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	JZR	221	Riyadh	11:20
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	KAC	742	Dammam	12:55	MSC	502	Alexandria	00:10	YYY	0000	Doha	11:30
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	JZR	713	Sohag	00:10	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	JZR	716	Sohag	13:40	JZR	707	Luxor	00:20	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	JZR	212	Jeddah	13:45	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30	JZR	342	Damascus	12:00
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FDB	8191	Dubai	13:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05
KAC	102	London	00:50	UAE	877	Dubai	14:00	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:40	JZR	1075	Doha	12:10
AHY	119	Baku	00:55	KAC	672	ubai	14:00	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05	JZR	123	Dubai	13:10
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15	JZR	723	Alexandria	01:05	ETH	3621	Addis Ababa	13:30
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10	KAC	541	Cairo	13:30
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	QTR	1078	Doha	14:25	JZR	409	Delhi	01:10	MSR	611	Cairo	13:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	792	Madinah	14:40	KAC	677	Dubai	01:40	KAC	515	Tehran	13:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	562	Amman	14:40	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
PGT	840	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	222	Riyadh	14:45	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:55	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:45	AHY	120	Baku	01:55	FDB	8192	Dubai	14:50
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	618	Doha	14:50	JZR	705	Asyut	02:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
YYY	0000	DIJ	02:05	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55	JZR	111	Doha	02:10	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	KAC	118	New York	15:00	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
YYY	9999	DIJ	02:05	JZR	602	Baku	15:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:50	UAE	878	Dubai	15:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	692	Muscat	15:00	PGT	841	Istanbul	02:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	THY	769	Istanbul	03:50	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	546	Cairo	15:50	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	FEG	341	Sohag	16:00	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
PGT	856	Istanbul	03:10	JZR	732	Cairo	16:10	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	FDB	051	Dubai	16:10	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	KAC	502	Beirut	16:15	PGT	857	Istanbul	04:20	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15	QTR	1077	Doha	04:20	FEG	442	Asyut	16:55
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	FEG	241	Alexandria	16:45	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00	YYY	9999	Doha	17:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	SAW	705	Damascus	17:00	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:00	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	JZR	116	Doha	17:05	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:10	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	KAC	103	London	05:20	JZR	531	Dhaka	17:35
JZR	1738	Cairo	04:45	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:35	JZR	1735	Cairo	05:40	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	IRA	665	Shiraz	17:35	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	JZR	124	Dubai	17:40	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00	KAC	503	Beirut	17:40
THY	1414	Trabzon	05:05	JZR	104	Bahrain	18:00	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	242	Alexandria	17:45
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	KAC	621	Doha	17:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	KAC	516	Tehran	18:20	RJA	649	Amman	07:00	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	302	Istanbul	18:20	UAE	874	Dubai	07:10	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	JZR	251	Amman	07:10	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
UAE	873	Dubai	05:40	FDB	063	Dubai	19:05	JZR	121	Dubai	07:15	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:10
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	RJA	640	Amman	19:05	RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05	JZR	113	Doha	07:30	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
QTR	8511	Doha	06:05	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05	JZR	715	Sohag	07:30	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
BAW	157	London	06:10	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20	BAW	156	London	08:00	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	708	Luxor	06:15	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:25	KAC	165	Rome	08:00	IRA	664	Shiraz	18:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	RBG	555	Alexandria	19:40	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00	JZR	501	Lahore	18:35
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40	JZR	211	Jeddah	08:00	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45	QTR	8512	Doha	08:05	JZR	261	Beirut	19:10
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45	IGO	1756	CNN	08:05	QTR	253	Amman	19:10
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	FDB	178	Vienna	19:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:10	KAC	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	177	Vienna	08:35	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	KAC	158	Istanbul	19:55	KAC	501	Beirut	08:45	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	KNE	381	Taif	20:00	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:45
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	166	Rome	20:00	KAC	561	Amman	08:55	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
JZR	724	Alexandria	07:50	KAC	104	London	20:00	KAC	117	New York	09:05	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05	KAC	561	Doha	09:10	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:10	QTR	1085	Istanbul	09:05	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	542	Cairo	20:15	KAC	791	Madinah	09:10	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
JZR	706	Asyut	08:25	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	620	Doha	20:30	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40	KAC	161	Geneva	09:15	KAC	351	Kochi	20:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00	KAC	691	Muscat	09:20	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	ETD	307	Frankfurt	21:00	JZR	601	Baku	09:20	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	302	Abu Dhabi	21:10	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
FDB	085	Dubai	09:40	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40	KAC	333	Trivandrum	21:05
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15	KAC	741	Dammam	09:45	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	THY	764	Istanbul	21:30	JZR	731	Cairo	09:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
KAC	384	Delhi	09:55	KAC	676	Dubai	21:45	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
SAW	703	Damascus	10:00	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	622	Doha	21:50	JZR	301	Istanbul	09:55	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
OMS	223	Muscat	10:35	KAC	564	Amman	21:55	OMA	642	Muscat	10:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05	GFA	210	Bahrain	10:05	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	162	Geneva	22:15	KAC	101	London	10:05	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	ETD	309	Jeddah	22:20	QTR	1071	Ahmedabad	10:40	THY	1403	Dubai	22:25
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:20	IGO	1754	Doha	10:40	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
JZR	114	Doha	11:10	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	JZR	128	Dubai	22:50	KAC	617	Doha	10:40	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
JZR	1736	Cairo	12:05	MSC	405	Sohag	23:15	SVA	513	Istanbul	10:55	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	MSR	614	Cairo	23:30	SAW	704	Damascus	11:00	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
ETH	3620	Addis Ababa	12:30	FDB	071	Dubai	23:35	OMS	224	Muscat	11:15	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
												QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
												JZR	701	Asyut	23:45

Fear and frustration in Iran’s capital after aborted US attack

TEHRAN: Fear of a potential war and frustration over biting sanctions are high in Iran’s capital, after a last-minute decision by the US to pull back from attacking the Islamic Republic. On the surface, it was business as usual on Saturday in Tehran’s bustling Karim Khan Street, a hub for printing parts and materials. Shopkeepers loaded boxes of paper into trucks and print house agents haggled over ink and machine repair prices.

“We still don’t know what’s going to happen,” said print shop manager Mehrad Farzanegan, less than 48 hours after Washington aborted a military operation against three Iranian targets in response to the Islamic Republic shooting down an unmanned US drone. That escalation came after the US and key allies accused Iran of attacking two vessels earlier this month in the Gulf of Oman - a charge it has vehemently denied. “The economic situation deteriorates by the day (and) sanctions get harder”, Farzanegan said.

Last year US President Donald Trump unilat-

erally pulled out from the Iran nuclear deal and imposed biting sanctions on Tehran. “It is the people, the middle class, which is pressured. Just tell us if a war is going to happen - if not, fix the situation,” he added in frustration. Farzanegan’s cousin, 26-year-old computer repairman Alireza, likewise said he was worried about the prospect of war. “War is not the solution, not anymore,” he said.

After withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal in May last year, the US imposed a first round of sanctions in August, before a second round in November sought to slash Iran’s oil exports. The moves have worsened an economic crisis, fuelling inflation and hitting living standards. That has fed into a measure of defiance on the streets of Tehran. Alireza said that while he hopes Tehran and Washington can repair ties, in the event of war, he is ready to stand up and be counted. “The devotion we have to our homeland makes us stand by our nation despite anything that may happen,” he resolved.

Shahram Babayi, a 38-year old programmer,

is also worried about the future. The breadwinner in a family of four, he has long been putting money aside to buy a house, but the spiralling inflation rate made that goal extremely difficult. His savings have finally reached a level where he can afford to buy - but he is rethinking his long-held dream due to the rising threat of military confrontation. “We went to buy the house the other day - and then heard the news. We thought maybe it’s not the best idea,” he told AFP. “The situation is very volatile and there is a chance of a war breaking out,” he said. “We were having dinner and a plane flew over at a very low altitude. It wasn’t a military plane, but everyone freaked out,” he added.

Trump said on Friday that while he did not want war with Iran, if it came to pass, there would be “obliteration like you’ve never seen before”. He has also repeatedly indicated he is open to talks - a stance that has not found favor with Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who earlier this month said his country “has no trust in America”. — AFP



TEHRAN: A woman walks past a mural painting on Palestine Square in the Iranian capital yesterday. — AFP

US writer says Trump sexually...

Continued from Page 1

against my lips,” Carroll wrote. Pinning her against the wall, Carroll says, Trump proceeded to pull down her tights, unzip his pants and penetrate her - all while himself fully dressed - until she finally managed to push him out and run from the dressing room.

Carroll never went to the police because, she said, she was afraid of repercussions. Carroll wrote that she did not come forward sooner because she was afraid of “receiving death threats, being driven from my home,

being dismissed, being dragged through the mud”. “Joining the 15 women who’ve come forward with credible stories about how the man grabbed, badgered, belittled, mauled, molested and assaulted them, only to see the man turn it around, deny, threaten, and attack them, never sounded like much fun,” she wrote.

Trump shot back that Carroll was an attention seeker. “I’ve never met this person in my life. She is trying to sell a new book - that should indicate her motivation,” he said in a statement. “It should be sold in the fiction section.” He also said that New York magazine is a “dying publication” and had tried to “prop itself up by peddling fake news”. The magazine quoted a senior White House official saying that the accusation “was created simply to make the president look bad”, while Trump asked if Carroll had links to his opponents in the Democratic party. — AFP

Johnson domestic ‘row’ rocks UK...

Continued from Page 1

Whoever takes the Tory party leadership in the week beginning July 22 - and therefore becomes prime minister - will face the looming Brexit deadline of Oct 31.

But the race might ultimately turn into a popularity contest between Johnson - pugnacious but affable with a tendency for gaffes - and the more diplomatic, low-key Hunt. The “row” was splashed across the front pages of most newspapers yesterday, and while book-makers were still betting for Johnson, pundits warned the incident could harm his chances. “Much will depend on the next 24 hours and whether the audio said to have been recorded by a concerned neighbor emerges,” said The Times newspaper. “At the very least it will ensure a leadership race that had started to look like a formality might in fact be something of more consequence.”

After the MPs whittled down the original field of 13, it is now up to the 160,000 or so paid-up Conservative

members who select the center-right party’s next leader. According to Times commentator Matthew Parris, the group comprises “classic shire Tories”, as well as poorer urban workers who are anti-European and more populist in their views. The winner will need to succeed where May failed in pushing a deal with the EU through parliament, or face the prospect of leaving without a deal, which MPs have warned could collapse the government and trigger a general election.

With arch-Brexiteer Nigel Farage’s new Brexit Party ahead in the polls, Johnson is widely viewed as the one Conservative who could compete in the party’s heartlands. A poll for The Daily Telegraph - the paper for which Johnson writes a column - showed six out of 10 Brexit Party backers jumping over to the Conservatives should the man known simply as Boris take charge.

Foreign minister Hunt launched an early attack on his rival, accusing him of ducking a television debate. “This is supposed to be his finest hour ... but if you’re going to hide away, that’s not democracy,” he wrote in Saturday’s Daily Telegraph. “Conservative Party members can only make that choice if you have a proper debate and you can’t have that debate if one of the candidates is bottling all opportunities.” Both Johnson and Hunt have vowed to extract better terms from Brussels, something ruled out by European leaders, or walk away without any strings attached. — AFP

Sudan protesters hold night gatherings...

Continued from Page 1

Roadblocks were also set up to secure the entrances of the area. “The campaign keeps us updated with whatever new is happening about the situation in Sudan,” said Mujahed Abdelnaby who was attending the gathering. Sudan’s ruling generals have largely cut internet services in the wake of a deadly dispersal of a sit-in outside the army headquarters where thousands had been camped since April 6.

The crowds who were initially demanding the ouster of veteran leader Omar Al-Bashir stayed put after his fall to call on the generals who took over to hand power to civilians. But on June 3 armed men in military fatigues launched a bloody crackdown on the encampment, killing more than 100 people according to medics linked to protesters. Official figures stand at 61. Since then campaigning has been restricted, particularly with increased deployment of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces across Khartoum.

The forces, which are led by the deputy chief of Sudan’s transitional military council, are accused by protesters of leading the encampment’s dispersal. The council, which had previously vowed not to disperse the sit-in, denied ordering the violence and said it had only planned a purge of a nearby area called Colombia notorious for drug peddling.

‘No longer scared’

Last week, protest leaders from the Alliance for Freedom and Change started organizing daily simultaneous gatherings to revive the protest movement. “We just want to keep the communication going with the

people to confront the blackout imposed by the military council,” said Waheeb Mohamed Saeed, a leading activist within the alliance. Ahead of his speech at Jabra, he explained the campaigns are circulated via text messages and word of mouth among residents.

Demonstrators, meanwhile, started chanting to rhythmical beats their catchcry of “freedom, peace and justice”, “We will bring civilian rule no matter how long it takes,” they vowed. Similar rallies, gatherings and marches were regularly announced online, drawing thousands prior to the sweeping Internet blackout. “We have been calling for the resumption of internet services as part of conditions to restart negotiations,” Saeed said.

Talks between protest leaders and the military council had collapsed before the dispersal of the sit-in. Both sides recently agreed to mediation efforts led by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Protest leaders say the mediation is pegged on releasing all detainees and ensuring freedoms. But the military council’s chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan called for “unconditional” negotiations to be resumed. “If all fails, we will press ahead with peaceful forms of escalation including civil disobedience,” Saeed said.

Following the sit-in dispersal, businesses across Sudan were shut and residents stayed indoors after protest leaders called for a nationwide general strike. Last week, hundreds of protesters took to the streets reviving calls for civilian rule across several Sudanese states including the capital’s twin city Omdurman. Dozens of employees from private companies and ministries, including oil and information, held silent demonstrations outside their offices in Khartoum.

For Lamia Babiker, who was attending the Jabra gathering, the deadly dispersal of the sit-in only rekindled the protest spirit. “Now people can tell what’s right and what’s wrong,” she said. “People from several districts were killed and others have been missing since the dispersal. We are no longer scared.” — AFP

US plans to raise \$50bn, create 1m...

Continued from Page 1

The White House cast the plan - to be discussed in more detail in Bahrain with finance chiefs of oil-rich Gulf Arab states - as historic. “Peace to Prosperity represents the most ambitious and comprehensive international effort for the Palestinian people to date,” the White House said in the economic plan. “It has the ability to fundamentally transform the West Bank and Gaza and to open a new chapter in Palestinian history - one defined, not by adversity and loss, but by freedom and dignity,” it said.

It said that the plan aimed to raise more than \$50 billion over the next decade, with a goal of more than doubling Palestinian gross domestic product. The White House said the initiative had the power to transform the troubled Palestinian economy by creating more than one million jobs - bringing the unemployment rate down to the single digits, in line with developed economies. In a step likely to outrage Palestinian leaders, it said that money would be administered by a multinational development bank as a way to ensure better governance and prevent corruption.

The plan also proposes nearly a billion dollars to build up the Palestinians’ tourism sector, a seemingly impractical notion for now given the frequent flare-ups between Israeli forces and militants from Hamas-ruled Gaza, and the tenuous security in the occupied West Bank. The Trump administration hopes that other countries, principally wealthy Gulf states, and private investors, would foot much of the bill, Kushner told Reuters.

Veteran Palestinian negotiator Hanan Ashrawi dismissed the proposals yesterday, saying: “These are all intentions, these are all abstract promises” and said

only a political solution would solve the conflict. Kushner made clear in two interviews with Reuters that he sees his detailed formula as a game-changer, despite the view of many Middle East experts that he has little chance of success where decades of US-backed peace efforts have failed.

“I laugh when they attack this as the ‘Deal of the Century’,” Kushner said of Palestinian leaders who have dismissed his plan as an attempt to buy off their aspirations for statehood. “This is going to be the ‘Opportunity of the Century’ if they have the courage to pursue it.”

The 38-year-old Kushner - who like his father-in-law came to government steeped in the world of New York real estate deal-making - seems to be treating peacemaking in some ways like a business transaction, analysts and former US officials say. Palestinian officials reject the overall US-led peace effort as heavily tilted in favor of Israel and likely to deny them a fully sovereign state of their own.

Kushner’s attempt to decide economic priorities first while initially sidestepping politics ignores the realities of the conflict, say many experts. “This is completely out of sequence because the Israeli-Palestinian issue is primarily driven by historical wounds and overlapping claims to land and sacred space,” said Aaron David Miller, a former Middle East negotiator for Republican and Democratic administrations.

White House officials have played down expectations for Manama, which will put Kushner just across the Gulf from Iran at a time of surging tensions between Tehran and Washington. Kushner, for instance, is calling it a “workshop” instead of a conference, and a “vision” instead of an actual plan. He stressed that governments would not be expected to make financial pledges on the spot. “It is a small victory that they are all showing up to listen and partake. In the old days, the Palestinian leaders would have spoken and nobody would have disobeyed,” he said. — Agencies

Iran vows to confront US...

Continued from Page 1

Under pressure to respond to the high-stakes incident near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, Trump said the US was prepared to hit “3 different sites” Thursday night but that he scrapped the strikes “10 minutes” before they were to have been launched. “I asked, how many will die. 150 people, sir, was the answer from a General,” the president tweeted, saying he concluded it would not have been “proportionate to shooting down an unmanned drone”.

According to excerpts of an interview with NBC’s “Meet the Press” conducted Friday morning at the White House, Trump said he had not given final approval to strikes against Iran, and that no planes were in the air. “But they would have been pretty soon. And things would have happened to a point where you wouldn’t turn back or couldn’t turn back,” he said. He added that he did not want war with Iran, but if it came to pass, there would be “obliteration like you’ve never seen before”.

Yesterday, Trump said that he would be Iran’s “best friend” and that the Islamic republic could be a “wealthy” country if it renounced nuclear weapons. “We’re not going to have Iran have a nuclear weapon,” Trump told reporters outside the White House as he prepared to depart for Camp David for meetings on the situation with Iran. “When they agree to that, they’re going to have a wealthy country. They’re going to be so happy, and I’m going to be their best friend. I hope that happens.”

“Let’s make Iran great again,” he added, tweaking for the occasion his main domestic political mantra. He said yesterday that more sanctions were on the way, without elaborating. “Everyone was saying I’m a warmonger, and now they say I’m a dove,” Trump said yesterday as he was peppered with questions about the Iran drama. “I think I am neither, if you want to know the truth. I’m a man with common sense, and that’s what we need in this country, is common sense.”

2019 Trafficking in Persons Report...

Continued from Page 1

Agencies have also increased raids against illegal domestic labor recruitment offices that exploit runaway domestic workers - referring recruiting violators to the public prosecutor and victims to a government-run shelter.

While Kuwait has come a long way, there is more that the government of Kuwait needs to do to fully meet internationally recognized minimum standards. The Trafficking in Persons Report lists these recommendations:

- Increase investigation, prosecution, and conviction of traffickers under the 2013 anti-trafficking law.
- Screen for trafficking indicators among vulnerable populations to ensure victims are not wrongfully penalized or deported for acts that traffickers compelled them to commit.
- Reform the sponsorship-based employment system; allow workers to change employers without

employer approval and cease prosecution of workers who flee their employment.

- Increase investigation and punishment of employers who confiscate workers’ passports.
- Train officials to proactively identify and refer to protection services victims of trafficking.
- Continue to strengthen enforcement of the domestic labor law to ensure workers’ rights are protected.
- Eliminate worker-paid recruitment fees.
- Open a shelter to accommodate male trafficking victims.
- Hold regular meetings of the national committee to strengthen implementation of the national anti-trafficking strategy.
- Raise anti-trafficking awareness, particularly among vulnerable populations, including domestic workers.

The Kuwaiti and US governments continue to work closely together on this issue. We look forward to even greater cooperation and further progress in the coming year in our mutual commitment to end human trafficking. Congratulations to domestic workers on their day, and to Kuwait for its progress in combatting trafficking in persons!

Barty overpowers Strycova to set up Birmingham final with Goerges

Barty admits turning down Murray ‘hardest decision ever’

BIRMINGHAM: Ashleigh Barty moved to within one victory of the world number one ranking, beating Czech Barbora Strycova 6-4 6-4 yesterday to reach the final of the Nature Valley Classic in Birmingham. The 23-year-old Australian, fresh from her maiden Grand Slam triumph at the French Open, sent down 11 aces and fired 24 winners to dispatch world number 51 Strycova in 84 minutes and stay in the hunt for her third title of the season.

“I felt I had really good rhythm on my serve today,” Barty, who is aiming to displace Japan’s Naomi Osaka at the top of the rankings, said. “It was important for me today to try and almost make it a boring match and make it a little bit kind of serve and first shot and dominate on my part.”

Barty, who could become the first Australian woman to top the rankings in more than 40 years, faces her doubles partner Julia Goerges in the title clash today. World number 19 Goerges, who is seeking her second title of the season, dominated Petra Martic in the other semi-final to win 6-4 6-3.

Barty and Goerges have a 1-1 head-to-head record but the Australian won their previous clash en route to claiming the Zhuhai crown last year. “I have to prepare and do the best that I can tomorrow and try and play a good tennis match,” Barty added.

“If I win, it’s a bonus. There are all things that come with it, but those things are not what I’m worried about.”

Earlier, Barty admitted that her decision to reluctantly rebuff Andy Murray’s offer to play mixed doubles at Wimbledon was “the hardest decision” she has ever had to make. Murray revealed on Thursday that Barty was one of the players he had approached about playing mixed at Wimbledon but she rejected the opportunity as she is already playing singles and women’s doubles with Victoria Azarenka at the All England Club next month.

“When Andy texted me asking me to play, I was a little bit shocked,” she said. “Obviously I would have loved to have grabbed the opportunity to play with Andy, and I think it was the hardest decision I have ever had to make as to whether I’m playing an event or not.

“I took some time to think about it, and playing three events is just a little bit too much. I was very flattered but said to him, ‘I think there are some pretty good options out there for you’. I’m sure he’ll find someone.”

Australian star Barty made the Birmingham semi-finals on Friday by beating Venus Williams 6-4, 6-3 and now stands just two wins from becoming the world number one. Barty will edge ahead of Naomi Osaka at the top of the rankings by taking the Birmingham title and on Friday she extended her winning streak to 10 matches against five-time Wimbledon champion Williams.

“I feel like every match is getting a little bit better and better on the grass, and it’s just nice to give myself another opportunity to get on the grass courts and to play another singles match,” said Barty. “It’s always a privilege to play against a champion like Venus.

“She’s done incredible things for our sport. She’s inspired generations to pick up a tennis racquet. Any time you get to play against her, it’s a real privilege.” Williams made the better start as the 39-year-old took a 4-1 first-set lead.

Barty, though, is also at ease on the grass and responded in style by romping through the next five games to take the set. The Australian had to stave off break points in her opening service game of the second set, but then took control with two breaks of the Williams serve to set up a meeting with Barbora Strycova in semi-finals.

Strycova got the better of an all-Czech battle to beat Kristyna Pliskova 6-2, 6-4 to reach the last four in



BIRMINGHAM: Australia’s Ashleigh Barty returns to Czech Republic’s Barbora Strycova in their women’s singles semi-final tennis match at the WTA Nature Valley Classic tournament at Edgbaston Priory Club in Birmingham, central England yesterday. —AFP

Birmingham for the fourth time in six appearances. In the other semi-final, German Julia Goerges takes on Petra Martic, who survived five match points to oust former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko.

Martic trailed 5-2 in the second set having lost the first on a tie-break, but rallied to win the next five

games before tearing through the third 6-1. “I still can’t believe that I won this match,” said Martic.

Goerges, a Wimbledon semi-finalist in 2018, was far more comfortable in a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Yulia Putintseva who had knocked out world number one Osaka on Thursday. — Agencies

In-form Brumbies, Hurricanes book Super Rugby semi spots

CANBERRA: A clinical Brumbies crushed the Sharks yesterday to book a Super Rugby semi-final date with the Jaguares, while the Hurricanes clung on to beat the Bulls and set up a showdown with the Crusaders.

On a freezing night, the Australian conference winners won their eighth match in a row at Canberra Stadium by taming the Durban-based Coastal Sharks 38-13 to end South Africa’s interest in the competition.

It sets up a difficult last four clash in Buenos Aires next weekend against a Pumas-heavy Jaguares, who reached the semis for the first time on Friday with a 21-16 home victory over the Waikato Chiefs.

Nine-time champions Canterbury Crusaders will host the second semi-final after overwhelming Otago Highlanders 38-14 to reinforce their status as favourites for a third consecutive title.

Fellow New Zealanders Wellington Hurricanes stand in their way after a narrow 35-28 victory against the Northern Bulls, with four tries apiece and only two penalties by Jordie Barrett keeping their noses in front.

But it is an ominous task for the ‘Canes with the Crusaders unbeaten in a playoff at Christchurch since Super Rugby launched in 1996 — a sequence of 22 matches.

The ACT Brumbies, who have won nine of their past 10 games, are angling for a third Super Rugby crown and first since 2004, with tries from Pete Samu (2), Henry Speight, Joe Powell and Matt Lucas keeping them on track.

“I’m really proud, I thought the Sharks threw a lot at us at various times,” said captain Christian Lealiifano. “The way the boys just connect for each other and dig deep was really special to see tonight in front of our home fans. The boys have been amazing all year.”

They got a sensational start with Samu running 35



CANBERRA: Sharks player Hyron Andrews (L) gets past Brumbies player Tom Banks (R) during the Super Rugby match between the ACT Brumbies and South Africa’s Coastal Sharks in Canberra yesterday. —AFP

metres to score barely 60 seconds into the match. A set-piece from a lineout put them further in front with Speight dotting down and Lealiifano converting both tries. Two penalty kicks from Curwin Bosch, one a huge effort from the half-way line, kept the Sharks in touch, but a second converted try from Samu on a rolling maul sent them into the break with a 24-6 lead.

The momentum shifted in the second stanza with centre Andre Esterhuizen driving over for a converted Sharks try on 56 minutes to close the gap as the Brumbies desperately defended. But with nine minutes left scrum-half Joe Powell spotted a gap and dashed 30 metres for the home team’s fourth try before Lucas sealed the win in the dying seconds.

In Wellington, replacement back Salesi Rayasi was the Hurricanes’ hero-turned-villain with two tries as they shot to a 29-14 lead before being sent to the sin-bin which sparked a late Bulls revival. “It was play-offs footy. The first half was good and then they came back

in the second half and it went down to the wire,” a relieved ‘Canes captain Dane Coles said.

“There were a couple of big moments in that second half, obviously the sin-binning. We dropped the ball and they scored points. The little mistakes can have a massive effect.” The under-sized Hurricanes pack held their own as they steadily built a lead.

TJ Perenara, Ben Lam and Rayasi scored tries, all converted by Beauden Barrett, as they turned 24-14 ahead with the Bulls points from tries to Warrick Gelant and Cornel Hendricks, both converted by Handre Pollard.

But after Rayasi scored his second just after the resumption, the Bulls pack used their superior size to win a penalty try from a deliberate knockdown by Rayasi, which saw him yellow carded. After Jordie Barrett booted his first penalty, the Pretoria-based Bulls closed within four points when Hendricks crashed over for his second try. — AFP

Johnson hat-trick as Kiwis trounce Tonga

WELLINGTON: Shaun Johnson produced a three-try masterclass on his return to his former club homeground as New Zealand exacted revenge over Tonga with a 34-14 victory in their rugby league clash in Auckland yesterday.

The Kiwis scored six tries and were up 34-4 before Tonga staged a late rally to narrow the gap. It was the first clash between the two sides since Tonga’s epic 28-22 victory in the 2017 Rugby League World Cup.

Ten members of that Tonga side lined up again for the long-awaited rematch, but this time there was to be no miracle outcome for the Pacific Islanders. They scored one try in the first half, to Warriors centre Solomone Kata, but even then they were already behind on the scoreboard after an early touchdown by Brandon Smith, converted by Esan Masters.

Johnson, rated the best player in the world in 2014 but unwanted by the Warriors at the end of last season, wound back the clock as he dummed and stepped his way through the Tongan defence. Now with the Cronulla Sharks, Johnson scored two tries before half-time and another after the break. Jahrome Hughes and Joseph Manu added further tries for New Zealand as they opened up a 30-point margin, before Sio Siua Taukeiaho and Daniel Tupou crossed the line late for Tonga. — AFP

Unheralded Sucher seizes Travelers Championship lead

NEW YORK: Zack Sucher pulled away atop a crowded leaderboard on Friday at the Travelers Championship, taking a two-shot lead as he battles to regain his US PGA Tour status. “Absolutely, it feels great,” said the 32-year-old who has played mainly on the Korn Ferry Tour-the developmental circuit formerly known as the Web.com Tour. “A lot of work to be done, but right now it’s feeling great.”

Sucher, part of a six-way tie for the lead on Thursday, had an eagle and four birdies in his five-under par 65 and was two strokes in front of 2011 PGA Championship winner Keegan Bradley and Chez Reavie, who finished in a tie for third at the US Open last week.

Knee and ankle injuries forced Sucher out of his second US PGA Tour season in 2017. He sought a medical extension and after surgery to repair two ligaments and a tendon in one ankle he says he is finally playing “pain free” although he is still recovering from knee tendon trouble.

“I just feel a lot better in my game right now,” said Sucher, who was sidelined for more than a year and is now ranked 505th in the world. “After

being out, just this year in general I’ve felt a whole lot better.” “This will be a little bit of a different feeling being in the final group of a PGA event,” added Sucher, who has been in contention “plenty” on the developmental tour. “After the first few swings I’ll settle in and be hopefully good to go.”

Reavie and Bradley both carded four-under par 66s on the par-70 TPC River Highlands course in Cromwell, Connecticut. It was a further stroke back to Americans Bronson Burgooon and Ryan Moore on 132, with Australian Jason Day and England’s Paul Casey in a group tied at seven-under 133.

Former world number one Day, playing his second tournament since securing the services of Tiger Woods’ former caddie Steve Williams, had seven birdies in his seven-under 63.

“It was disappointing to shoot even par yesterday because I know I played a lot better than the actual score showed,” said Day, who had four birdies in a row in his outward nine. “To capitalize on the opportunities that I had out there today, I definitely need it.”

World number one Brooks Koepka, flirting with the cut line early in his round after an opening bogey, birdied five of six holes from the third through the eighth in a four-under 66 that saw him make the weekend at three-under.

But those who failed to make the cut included former world number one Jordan Spieth-whose second-round 69 still left him two-over-and five-time major winner Phil Mickelson, who had two double bogeys in a six-over 76. — AFP

Aliassime powers past Tsitsipas into Queen’s semis

LONDON: A tantalising glimpse of a future men’s tennis rivalry ended with Canadian teenager Felix Auger-Aliassime beating Stefanos Tsitsipas to become the youngest player in 20 years to reach the semi-finals of the Queen’s Club championships on Friday.

The 18-year-old continued a remarkable year with 7-5 6-2 defeat of the floppy-haired Greek who most believe is the most likely of the new generation to start winning Grand Slams. He is the youngest player to reach the semis at the prestigious Wimbledon warm-up tournament since Lleyton Hewitt, also 18 in 1999. Given the way he has taken to the London lawns, it would be no surprise if he emulated Boris Becker who famously won the title as a 17-year-old in 1985.

Blocking his path next will be 37-year-old Spaniard Feliciano Lopez, the 2017 Queen’s champion, who prevented an all-Canadian semi-final by beating Milos Raonic 4-6 6-4 7-6(5).

In the other side of the draw fourth seed Daniil Medvedev became the first Russian to reach the semi-finals of the tournament in the professional era as he had too much firepower for Argentina’s Diego Schwartzman. Medvedev, 23, used his skidding ground strokes to great effect in a 6-2 6-2 win. He will play Frenchmen Gilles Simon who beat compatriot Nicolas Mahut 7-6(5) 5-7 7-6(3) in a match lasting three hours 20 minutes.

“It’s great to be the first Russian to be in the semi-finals and a bit surprising, maybe it’s the first time I made history! Now I want to put the bar a bit higher,” Medvedev, who is at a career-high 13 in the rankings, said. Teenager Auger-Aliassime was ranked outside the top 100 at the start of the year but has rocketed up the charts to 21. Despite playing his third match in 24 hours after rain delays earlier in the week, he looked as fresh as a daisy against world number six Tsitsipas, who lacked his usual spark after a similarly busy schedule on Thursday.

Auger-Aliassime, who mixes easy power off both wings, athleticism and a heavy-duty serve, had already seen off Grigor Dimitrov and Nick Kyrgios on his Queen’s debut. And once he had staved off a couple of break points early on against Tsitsipas and pounced to break in the 12th game he dominated to maintain the hold over the Greek he beat three times when they met as juniors.

The Canadian broke in the second game of the second set and a weary-looking Tsitsipas, who required some treatment on his shoulder, faded fast. Afterwards, a candid Tsitsipas claimed Auger-Aliassime was a better player than him, despite leading him in the rankings and being the youngest player to have wins over Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal. “He’s the most difficult opponent I’ve ever faced, and I think it’s going to take a couple of tries to beat him,” Tsitsipas said. “I have to accept that he’s better than me.”

Auger-Aliassime, remarkably composed for someone so young, played down those comments, but oozes confidence. “I think this year I just kind of found my rhythm, I just found my beat, and I think I have been on the right track,” Auger-Aliassime, who had never played a Tour level grasscourt tournament before reaching the final in Stuttgart last week, said. “I feel I can go all the way here.” — Reuters

Cardinals spoil Pujols’ return to St Louis with a 5-1 victory

Mariners pile up runs, hold off Orioles 10-9

LOS ANGELES: Marcell Ozuna had three hits and three RBIs for the St. Louis Cardinals, helping them spoil the long-awaited return of Albert Pujols in a 5-1 win against the visiting Los Angeles Angels on Friday night. Pujols played 11 seasons and won three National League Most Valuable Player awards for St. Louis before signing with the Angels following the 2011 season. Pujols received a standing ovation in each of his three plate appearances and again when he was removed for a pinch runner after beating out an infield single to lead off the seventh inning. Ozuna hit a solo home run in the sixth to give St. Louis a 2-1 lead in the opener of the three-game series. Ozuna also had two RBI singles, and Jose Martinez contributed two hits and an RBI for the Cardinals.

RED SOX 7, BLUE JAYS 5 (10 INNINGS)

Christian Vazquez hit a two-run, two-out home run in the bottom of the 10th inning, and Boston came back to defeat visiting Toronto as Brandon Workman (6-1) pitched around a walk, a stolen base and an intentional walk in the top of the 10th to earn the win. Vazquez's ninth homer of the season came against Jordan Romano (0-1), who had pitched around a walk and struck out three in the ninth before striking out the first two batters in the 10th. However, he then hit Marco Hernandez with a pitch to keep the inning alive for Vazquez. Randal Grichuk homered and had three hits and three RBIs for the Blue Jays, who led 5-1 before the Red Sox rallied with three runs in the seventh and one in the eighth.

MARINERS 10, ORIOLES 9

Kyle Seager's two-run homer broke a tie in the third inning, and host Seattle built a 10-3 lead and then held on for a victory against Baltimore. Dylan Moore and Mac Williamson also homered for the Mariners, and leadoff hitter Mallex Smith went 3-for-3 with a double and four runs. The Mariners have won three consecutive games for the first time since April 18-20. The Orioles took their 10th straight defeat. Mariners right-hander Mike Leake (7-6) struggled but earned his 100th career victory. In 5 1/3 innings, Leake allowed eight runs (seven earned) on 11 hits, with no walks and two strikeouts. Seattle's Austin Adams pitched two scoreless innings of relief, and Roenis Elias tossed the ninth for his ninth save.

YANKEES 4, ASTROS 1

Gary Sanchez and Gleyber Torres hit two-run homers and host New York extended its winning streak to seven games by beating Houston as the Yankees matched their longest winning streak of the season and also homered for the 24th consecutive game, one shy of the team record set from June 1-29, 1941. Sanchez homered for the third straight game and moved into a

tie for the AL lead with new teammate Edwin Encarnacion with his 23rd homer. The catcher gave the Yankees a 2-0 lead in the third when he hammered a changeup by Brad Peacock (6-5) into the left-center field bleachers. The Yankees welcomed Aaron Judge back into their lineup after he missed two months with a strained left oblique. Judge batted leadoff for the first time in his career and was 0-for-4.

NATIONALS 4, BRAVES 3

Stephen Strasburg bounced back from a rough outing, and young outfielders Victor Robles and Juan Soto led Washington past visiting Atlanta for the Nationals' fifth win in a row and 18th in their last 25 games, pulling within one game of .500 for the first time since April 24. The Braves had won 11 of 13 but couldn't hold a 3-0 lead as Dallas Keuchel (0-1), who signed a one-year contract with the Braves about two weeks ago, made his first major league appearance this season. Strasburg (8-4), who gave up four homers in his previous start, went six innings and allowed three runs on five hits with five strikeouts and three walks. Wander Suero pitched the ninth, picking up his first major league save after allowing the first two batters to reach.

METS 5, CUBS 4

Jeff McNeil starred at the plate and in the field, hitting a home run and later adding a go-ahead RBI single before making a key defensive play to end the eighth inning of New York's win over host Chicago. New York ended a two-game losing streak and won for just the second time in six games. The Cubs had their two-game winning streak snapped as they lost for the seventh time in 11 games. The two-hit game was the fourth straight multi-hit effort for McNeil, who has 47 multi-hit games in his first 125 big league games-the most ever by a Mets player in that game span.

TWINS 8, ROYALS 7

Max Kepler's RBI single in the eighth helped Minnesota erase the second of a pair of three-run deficits and avoid its first three-game losing streak of the season in defeating host Kansas City. The Royals lead the major leagues with 26 losses in games in which they held the lead at some point. They have been outscored 177-125 after the sixth inning this season. Right-hander Ryne Harper (3-0), the Twins' third pitcher, picked up the win, despite allowing a run on two hits in his one inning. Taylor Rogers picked up his ninth save in 11 chances. Jake Diekman (0-5) took the loss for Kansas City.

MARLINS 2, PHILLIES 1

Sandy Alcantara pitched 7 2/3 strong innings, and backup catcher Bryan Holaday slugged a home run as visiting Miami upended Philadelphia, sending the



ST LOUIS: Jose Martinez #38 of the St Louis Cardinals hits an RBI single against the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim in the seventh inning at Busch Stadium in St Louis, Missouri. — AFP

Phillies to their fifth straight loss despite an exciting play from Roman Quinn, who stole home in the third. The Marlins beat Aaron Nola (6-2), who struck out 10 in eight innings, allowing just two runs, one earned. Nola threw strikes all night — 82 of them out of 107 total pitches. He allowed six hits and one walk, getting nine ground-ball outs. However, Alcantara (4-6) matched Nola's brilliance, throwing a career-high 112 pitches and allowing eight hits, four walks and one run. He struck out six and threw 75 strikes. Sergio Romo pitched a scoreless ninth for his 14th save.

DODGERS 4, ROCKIES 2

Rookie Matt Beaty hit a game-ending, two-run home run, and Walker Buehler recorded a career-high 16 strikeouts as Los Angeles earned a victory over visiting Colorado in a battle of the top two teams in the National League West. In a showcase of star power, Rockies offensive catalysts Nolan Arenado and Charlie Blackmon hit home runs, two of just three hits against Buehler, who threw a complete game. Los Angeles' Cody Bellinger also hit a home run.

In the bottom of the ninth, Max Muncy walked with two outs, and Beaty hit his second homer of the season, to center off Jairo Diaz (1-2).

REDS 11, BREWERS 7

Jose Iglesias had four hits and drove in two runs as Cincinnati stretched its season-best winning streak to six games with a win over host Milwaukee. Iglesias singled in two runs in a three-run first inning, one night after driving in four runs in Cincinnati's 7-1 victory to open the four-game series. Iglesias went 4-for-5 and added two runs and a stolen base. Nick Senzel was 2-for-3 with a solo homer and stolen base before leaving the game with a headache in the fourth inning. Yasiel Puig posted a two-run homer, three RBIs and a stolen base, and Jose Peraza tripled and added two RBIs.

WHITE SOX 5, RANGERS 4 (10 INNINGS)

Yolmer Sanchez drove home the winning run on a safety squeeze and the bullpen contributed 4 2/3 innings of one-run relief as Chicago topped Texas in Arlington, Texas. Sanchez guided a sacrifice bunt down the first base line to score Eloy Jimenez, who singled earlier in the inning and advanced to third on a Tim Anderson single. Jimenez and Anderson had two hits apiece. White Sox pitchers recorded 12 strikeouts, including five straight spanning the eighth and ninth innings, to help force extras. Alex Colome navigated a leadoff walk in the 10th to earn his 16th save in as many chances. — Reuters

S Lanka celebrates shock victory over England

COLOMBO: Streets in Sri Lanka were lit up by fire-crackers and front pages celebrated victory after the national cricket team's stunning World Cup win over England. Residents in the capital Colombo and across the nation celebrated wildly after as low-ranking Sri Lanka unexpectedly beat England on their home soil by 20 runs to open up the race for a semi-final spot.

"Battered and bruised Lions decimate empire," the local Daily Mirror said while the Island daily front-page the match report with a bold banner headline: "SRI LANKA BEAT ENGLAND."

President Maithripala Sirisena welcomed the "competitive spirit" of the national team while Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was among the first to congratulate the team.

Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne praised Lasith Malinga and fellow veteran Angelo Mathews-whose painstaking 85 not out helped them recover from a collapse to three for two. Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga said earlier in the week that Karunaratne and his team had improved during the current tournament.

"When we look at the team, they have improved a lot compared to where they were before the tournament. Our weakness is the team management," Ranatunga said on Monday. Last week, the team faced censure after failing to fulfil their media duties following the damaging defeat against Australia.

Karunaratne's side were beaten by 87 runs at the Oval, leaving their hopes of progressing to the semi-finals hanging by a slender thread. Sri Lanka's refusal to meet the media came days after their team manag-

Malinga still a big-game hunter: Jayawardene

MANCHESTER: Former Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene praised Lasith Malinga for his ability to step up in big games after the paceman inspired his country's shock World Cup win over England.

Malinga returned figures of four for 43 to help Sri Lanka dismiss England for 212 as they stunningly beat the hosts by 20 runs in Leeds on Friday. The 35-year-old, often criticised for his unathletic body, rolled back the years at Headingley when he



LEEDS: Sri Lanka's Dhananjaya de Silva (2L) celebrates taking the wicket of England's Chris Woakes for two runs during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between England and Sri Lanka at Headingley in Leeds, northern England. — AFP

er Asantha de Mel slammed the ICC's treatment of the squad.

De Mel blasted the quality of pitches, practice facilities, transport and accommodation at the World Cup. "This is a World Cup where the top 10 countries are taking part and I feel that all the participants should be treated equally," de Mel was quoted as saying by Sri Lankan newspaper Daily News.

De Mel also criticised Sri Lanka's team bus-saying it

removed England openers James Vince and Jonny Bairstow.

He then got rid of dangermen Joe Root and Jos Buttler to leave England in turmoil. It was a welcome riposte to the social media doubters who poked fun at Malinga when he was photographed with his shirt off exposing a portly belly before the England match.

"It's not about the six pack, it's about the skill and Lasith Malinga showed that in spades in Sri Lanka's win over England," Jayawardene wrote in his column for the International Cricket Council.

"He has done it so many times for Sri Lanka over the years but it was great to see him at his best. He was on a mission with the new ball. "Big players perform in big games and that is what he did, removing Root and then Jos Buttler who could have won the game for England as well."

Coming into the game as underdogs, Dimuth

was more cramped than the double-decker vehicles provided to other teams-blasted the net facilities at Cardiff as "unsatisfactory" and complained the squad's hotel in Bristol lacked a swimming pool.

Sri Lanka-who have now beaten England in four successive World Cups-next play South Africa in Durham a week on Friday and Malinga said: "We want to carry on the momentum and confidence into the other matches." — AFP

Karunaratne's side blew open the race for semi-final places with their unexpected victory and Jayawardene said that is good for the tournament.

England, bidding to win the World Cup for the first time, suffered their second defeat of the group stage following an equally surprising loss to Pakistan. "It's a great win for Sri Lanka, but also for the World Cup and it opens things up a little," said Jayawardene.

"The top four so far have a lot of matches against each other coming up, so they will inevitably drop some points. "You look at New Zealand, Australia and England who all have to play each other which does make it interesting.

"That leaves Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the West Indies with a chance to close the gap if they can pick up a few more wins." Sri Lanka, the 1996 champions, are fifth in the 10-team table, as they hunt a top four finish. — AFP

Sarfaraz urges angry Pakistan fans to stop World Cup abuse

LONDON: Embattled Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed has pleaded with furious fans to stop abusing his team ahead of today's World Cup clash against South Africa.

Pakistan's painful defeat against bitter rivals India in Manchester last Sunday sparked a furious reaction from supporters, with ex-pats living in Britain taking out their frustrations on the players. Imam-ul-Haq and Babar Azam were reportedly abused and shouted at while at lunch on Thursday, with fans claiming players responded by pushing them.

Pakistan's players were advised to be cautious following the incidents in London this week and Sarfaraz admitted the team and their families have been troubled by the taunting, which included social media trolling.

"Players have their personal lives," Sarfaraz said on the eve of Pakistan's must-win game against the Proteas at Lord's. "Whatever they (the public) think, they write it on social media. That hurts, too much.

"Players are affected psychologically. Such things should not happen." The 1992 champions are close to World Cup elimination after winning just one of their five matches. They not only need to win all their four remaining matches to have a realistic chance of reaching the semi-finals, but also improve their inferior net run-rate.

Sarfaraz admitted fans will inevitably show their anger after such a disappointing World Cup for his country. "I know you cannot stop anyone," said Sarfaraz, who was abused by a fan while at a shopping centre with his family.

"Our fans are emotional and these same people lift us when we win. "But if they feel sad on a defeat we also feel the same way. We feel it much more because we are playing for Pakistan." The video of the incident involving Sarfaraz went viral on social media, leading to condemnation of the fan who later apologised to the Pakistan captain on Twitter.

"Our families get affected," said Sarfaraz. "If someone is hitting, then pushing anyone that's not good. So the request is to talk about cricket. "Social media and media are not in our control. They are so big that you cannot stop them. — AFP

Sanchez sends Chile into Copa America quarter-finals

Chile top Group C with perfect six points ahead of their clash with Uruguay

SALVADOR: Alexis Sanchez put a miserable club season with Manchester United behind him as he sent Chile into the Copa America quarter-finals with the winning goal in Friday's 2-1 win over Ecuador.

Jose Fuenzalida gave reigning champions Chile an eighth-minute lead but Enner Valencia equalized for Ecuador from the spot. Sanchez bagged the winner, his 43rd goal for his country, but Chile finished with 10 men after Gabriel Achilier's red card a minute from time.

The 30-year-old Sanchez started only nine Premier League matches, scoring just once, in an injury-interrupted season for the Red Devils in which he struggled to make an impact when he did play.

But he scored for the second game running in Salvador as Chile joined Colombia as the only teams to qualify for the knock-out stages after their first two games. However, he revealed afterwards that he turned his ankle during the first half, aggravating an old injury. "I think I have a sprain, I hope it's not too serious. At half-time they strapped it up, I played on with a bit of pain," he said.

Chile top Group C with a perfect six points ahead of their clash with Uruguay at Rio's iconic Maracana tomorrow. Ecuador are left staring elimination in the face after a second straight defeat, knowing they must beat Japan in Belo Horizonte on Monday to stand any chance of progressing.

"We put in a huge effort but we're making the mistake of switching off and that's why they scored silly goals," moaned Valencia. "We'll try and beat Japan and then see where that takes us."

Chile began as they had left off in their 4-0 thrashing of Japan last Monday, opening the scoring after just

eight minutes. Ecuador made a hash of clearing a corner and Fuenzalida sent an angled volley from the edge of the area into the far bottom corner.

Ecuador brought the same muscular approach to the game that had seen them reduced to 10 men in their opener against Uruguay-a 4-0 loss. Sebastian Mendez found himself in the referee's book after just three minutes for a robust challenge on Charles Aranguiz.

However, it was Chile who were lucky to reach the break with a full complement after goalkeeper Gabriel Arias suffered two rushes of blood to the head. First he clattered into Mendez inside the area, allowing Valencia to chip home the equalizer from the spot on 28 minutes.

Arias escaped further sanction, though, and that saved him five minutes before the break when he charged rashly out of his area to try to beat the speedy Romario Ibarra to the ball on the flank.

Ibarra went down from the slightest brush of contact and after a lengthy VAR delay, Arias was shown a yellow card. In what proved a niggly encounter, referee Patricio Loustau showed nine yellow cards and a red. "We lacked the intelligence to control the game after the first goal," said Chile coach Reinaldo Rueda.

"Ecuador reacted really well and equalized in a moment in which we lost our shape." Chile were back in front early in the second period after more poor Ecuador defending. Aranguiz was allowed to turn and cross far too easily on the right and Sanchez was left unmarked at the back post to side-foot a volley beyond the despairing dive of Alexander Dominguez.

Ecuador were bossing possession but were toothless up front, while Sanchez and Eduardo Vargas provided far greater cut and thrust for Chile. — AFP



SALVADOR: Chile's Charles Aranguiz (L) and Ecuador's Jefferson Orejuela vie for the ball during their Copa America football tournament group match at the Fonte Nova Arena in Salvador, Brazil. — AFP

Egypt grind out win to launch Africa Cup of Nations

CAIRO: Mohamed Salah's Egypt started their bid for a record-extending eighth Africa Cup of Nations trophy on Friday with a 1-0 win over Zimbabwe in Cairo in the opening game of a tournament expanded to 24 teams and played in June and July for the first time.

Liverpool star Salah, on a redemption mission with Egypt after injury derailed a miserable World Cup campaign last year, looked sharp although the hosts needed a 41st-minute goal by Mahmoud 'Trezeguet' Hassan to get off to a winning start in Group A.

Man of the match Mahmoud Alaa said after the victory: "I congratulate all the Egyptian people on the first win." The defender added: "We should be better in the upcoming matches. Our aim in this competition is to win the title."

In keeping with April's spectacular tournament draw under the gaze of the Sphinx, a striking 30-minute opening ceremony preceded kick-off in Cairo, where a backdrop of pyramids and statues from Egyptian mythology mixed with elegant dancers set the stage for a fireworks display to illuminate the ground.

The arrival of the Egyptian players for the warm-up induced a deafening roar from the capacity 75,000-crowd, who predictably reserved the loudest reception for Salah as his name was read out among the starting line-ups. With the temperature having dipped to a more palatable 27 Celsius (81 Fahrenheit) by the start Egypt-the tournament favourites and 2017 runners-up-immediately looked threatening, with Salah orchestrating much of the attack as he swung in a pair of teasing crosses, the second forcing Edmore Sibanda to tip over a looping Marwan Mohsen header.

Salah was again involved 10 minutes later, intricately exchanging passes on the edge of the Zimbabwe box to carve out a chance for Abdallah Elsaid, whose shot was palmed away by Sibanda before Trezeguet lashed over the rebound.

As Zimbabwe struggled to develop any sort of rhythm with outstanding midfielder Khama Billiat contained, Salah again had a boisterous, largely red-clad crowd on their feet when he wriggled past his marker only to shoot over from a difficult angle.

A blocked attempt by Zimbabwe captain Knowledge Musona represented the southern Africans' lone gen-



CAIRO: (From L) Egypt's midfielder Tarek Hamed, Zimbabwe's midfielder Marvelous Nakamba, Zimbabwe's midfielder Ovidy Karuru, Egypt's midfielder Amr Warda fight for the ball during the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) football match between Egypt and Zimbabwe at Cairo International Stadium. — AFP

uine attempt in the first half as a dominant Egypt eventually broke through just before the interval.

Zimbabwe's efforts to play out from defence backfired and the talented Trezeguet, formerly of Anderlecht and now with Kasimpasa in Turkey, shifted the ball onto his right foot before sweeping clinically into the far corner.

Trezeguet, who scored three times in five qualifiers for the event, was quickly sensing another when his curling 20-yard strike was flicked behind by a sprawling Sibanda early into the second half.

The Zimbabwe goalkeeper felt the brunt of a crunching collision with Mohsen on the hour, producing a courageous stop to deny the forward after a clever first touch created the opportunity.

Sibanda was again tested low to his right by a Salah effort on his weaker foot, with Egypt 'keeper Mohamed El Shenawy finally called into action to handle a speculative Billiat drive just before the second of two mandated heat breaks on 70 minutes.

It appeared Salah's moment was going to arrive in the final minutes but Elvis Chipezeze, on for the injured Sibanda, plunged low to his right, when substitute Amr Warda perhaps offered the forward a better option across the face of goal. Egyptian hearts were momentarily in mouths when an unmarked Evans Rusike rose to meet a cross but he was unable to keep his header down, allowing Egypt to emerge with an opening victory in their quest to win the competition for the fourth time as hosts in five editions.

Assistant coach Hany Ramzy said: "These are the first three points in a long competition. The match was difficult, and maybe at some stages we made it hard on ourselves." The Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda are the other teams in Group A and they meet Saturday at the same venue, while Nigeria begin their campaign against newcomers Burundi in Alexandria.

Guinea meanwhile take on Madagascar, the second of three countries appearing in the event for the first time. — AFP

with Burundi and victory over Mali. The spotlight will also be on forward Andy Delort, a late call-up after Haris Belkebla was dropped from the squad for baring his backside online. Delort is the least of many footballers born in France of Algerian descent to switch allegiance after representing their country of birth at age-limit levels. Kenya are back at the Cup of Nations after a 15-year absence and captain and midfielder Victor Wanyama from Tottenham Hotspur is the stand-out player among the Harambee Stars.

MOROCCO V NAMIBIA

The contrast between coaches Herve Renard of Morocco and Ricardo Mannetti of Namibia in Cairo could not be greater ahead of the first Group D match. France-born Renard, already a Cup of Nations-winning coach with Zambia and the Ivory Coast, is under massive pressure to complete a hat-trick in his second appearance with Morocco. Although regarded as an African football powerhouse, Morocco have lifted the Cup of Nations only once, and that was 43 years ago when there were only eight finalists. Morocco hammered Namibia 5-1 in a previous meeting and while the margin might be less this time, an Atlas Lions win seems likely in a group including the Ivory Coast and South Africa. Mannetti is under no pressure having got the Brave Warriors to the tournament against the odds and he has warned rivals that "even small dogs have teeth". — AFP

SENEGAL V TANZANIA

Senegal are ranked 22 in the world and Tanzania 131, making this the biggest mismatch on paper of the 36 first-round matches in Egypt. Even without talisman Mane, it would be a shock if the Teranga Lions failed to secure maximum points against the second lowest-ranked side in the competition, above only Burundi. Many pundits believed Senegal would go all the way two years ago, but they fell to eventual champions Cameroon in the quarter-finals after Mane missed a penalty in a shootout. The huge ranking gap between the countries does not concern Tanzania coach Emmanuel Amunike, a Cup of Nations winner as a player with Nigeria 25 years ago. "Do not be surprised if you see some of these so-called big teams packing their bags early and heading home," he said.

ALGERIA V KENYA

Regular underachievers Algeria boast a prolific scorer in Baghdad Bounedjah, who has seamlessly transferred great club form to the national team, for the other Group C match. After scoring 39 goals in 21 starts for Qatari club Al Sadd last season, he netted in both of the Desert Foxes' warm-up matches, a draw

Japan and Qatar not just making up Copa America numbers

RIO DE JANEIRO: Japan and Qatar's participation in the Copa America may have raised eyebrows in some quarters but the two Asian nations have already proved they didn't turn up in Brazil just to make up the numbers.

Qatar began their Group B campaign by fighting back from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 with Paraguay before a late Duvan Zapata goal denied them a point against Colombia in their next match.

And while a youthful and inexperienced Japan side was taught a harsh lesson in clinical finishing by Chile in a 4-0 defeat, they were then on the wrong end of two controversial VAR decisions in their 2-2 draw with Uruguay.

Both sides may only have one point from two group games so far but they know that victory in their final pool encounters will likely see them into the knock-out rounds. "We want to be protagonists on the pitch, our players have the quality to do that," said Qatar's Spanish coach Felix Sanchez.

"We're a team that never gives up," he added about the Asian champions. Today, Qatar face a disjointed and underwhelming Argentina for whom Lionel Messi has been unable to spark into life.

And he knows that a victory over Qatar, which Argentina almost certainly need to avoid being knocked out of the competition, is anything but a foregone conclusion. "You don't win matches any more just by pulling on the jersey," warned the Barcelona star, who turns 32 tomorrow.

Having paid for their wastefulness in front of goal and naivety at the back against Chile, Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu rang the changes ahead of their clash with Uruguay. "They showed a lot of courage to play the game," Moriyasu said of his players, lauding their "defiant spirit" against a "top" team. Having thrashed 10-man Ecuador 4-0 in their opener, Uruguay had to come from behind twice to snatch the draw with Japan.

Barcelona striker Luis Suarez, who equalized the first time from the controversially awarded penalty, insisted the 15-time Copa winners had not underestimated their Asian opponents.

"We knew the result against Chile the other day was unreliable," he said. Japan came to the tournament with a squad made up mostly of under-23 players likely to be available next year for the Tokyo Olympics. When Moriyasu announced his 23-man squad last month, 17 of the players were uncapped.

Two friendlies and two Copa America matches later, and nine of those have since made their debut. But despite fielding such inexperienced line-ups, Japan have impressed with their speed and industry, as well as a willingness to attack.

While many fans may have regarded the two Asian invitees as amongst the weakest sides in the tournament, both have proved they are no push-overs. But not everyone has welcomed them with open arms. "I've never seen a European championships where they've invited a South American team," complained Paraguay's Argentine coach Eduardo Berizzo.

"It could sound unpleasant to say it now that we've played Qatar, but I truly believe that the Copa America should be played between American teams, all integrated in one tournament: CONCACAF and CONMEBOL." CONMEBOL is the South American governing football federation that organizes the Copa America, while CONCACAF groups countries from North and Central America, and the Caribbean. — AFP

No Mane, no problem, says Senegal coach ahead of Tanzania clash

CAIRO: Powerful Senegal will launch their 2019 Africa Cup of Nations campaign against Tanzania in Cairo today without Liverpool star Sadio Mane, but coach Aliou Cisse is unconcerned.

The 27-year-old forward is serving a one-match ban after being yellow-carded twice during qualifying for the biennial showcase of African football. "His absence should not in any way bother us," stressed Cisse, who was part of the Senegal team that finished runners-up to Cameroon in the 2002 Cup of Nations, their best showing.

"Certainly the presence of Sadio is beneficial, but without him we remain strong," added the former Paris Saint-Germain midfielder ahead of the Group C clash. Mane also missed the opening match of the 2015 tournament in Equatorial Guinea against Ghana owing to a calf injury.

25 Barty overpowers Strycova to set up Birmingham final with Goerges



26 Cardinals spoil Pujols' return to St Louis with a 5-1 victory



27 Sanchez sends Chile into Copa America quarter-finals



SOUTHAMPTON: India's Mohammed Shami (C) delivers a ball during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between India and Afghanistan at the Rose Bowl in Southampton, southern England, yesterday. — AFP

Shami hat-trick seals India win

Jasprit Bumrah is the player of the match

SOUTHAMPTON: Mohammed Shami took a dramatic hat-trick to finally clinch a thrilling 11-run win over Afghanistan after the minnows threatened one of the biggest shocks in World Cup history in Southampton yesterday.

Afghanistan, appearing at only their second World Cup, lost the toss but restricted India to 224 for eight in their 50 overs, giving themselves a genuine chance for a huge upset.

They were well set at 106-2 in the 29th over, even though the run-rate was starting to edge up, but two wickets in one over from paceman Jasprit Bumrah removed Rahmat Shah and Hashmatullah Shahidi.

Mohammad Nabi and Najibullah Zadran batted sensibly to keep their side in the hunt, but when Zadran was caught by Yuzvendra Chahal off Hardik Pandya, Afghanistan were 166-6 in the 42nd over.

Nabi was still there in the final over, with 16 required and drilled Shami's first ball down the ground for four. With an incredible triumph within touching

distance, Nabi was caught by Pandya at long on two balls later.

Shami then clean-bowled Aftab Alam and Mujeeb Ur Rahman to seal a nerve-jangling win with a hat-trick. "We bowled really well. We did well in batting, but credit to Bumrah for how he bowled in the last two or three overs," frustrated Afghanistan captain Gulbadin Naib said.

"The total was not that much but you need 80s or 100s — 30 or 25s are not enough. "If you chase 250 then middle order batsmen should go longer and take responsibility." Earlier, an increasingly fraught India were furious when the umpire turned down a huge lbw shout at the start of the 29th over from Bumrah, who rapped Shah on the pads-Virat Kohli's side had no reviews left.

Just three balls later Shah, on 36, top-edged a hook and Chahal took a fine low catch running in from fine leg, sending the massed ranks of flag-waving Indian supporters wild. With his final ball of the over Bumrah

turned the game sharply back in India's direction when Shahidi could only offer up a simple caught-and-bowled chance and he departed for 21.

Bumrah-the world's top-ranked one-day international bowler-finished with figures of 2 for 39 from his 10 overs, bowling superbly at the death. Shami finished with figures of 4-40.

"When the captain has so much trust in you, it gives you a lot of confidence to express yourself. That helps me keep a clear head," said man-of-the-match Bumrah. "There was reverse swing, so you had to rely on your yorkers."

Afghanistan have been the whipping boys of the tournament in England and Wales, often looking out of their depth against the more established teams. Yesterday's match was only the third one-day international between the two teams and defeat for India would have been a major embarrassment despite last year's tie in the Asia Cup.

India were on the back foot right at the start of the

match when in-form opener Rohit Sharma, who has scored two hundreds so far in the tournament, was dismissed for just one by off-spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman.

The rest of India's powerful top order all got established, with Kohli making 67 from 63 balls, but none went on to play a decisive innings for the two-time champions. They hit just 16 boundaries-including only one six.

Off-spinner Mujeeb was particularly impressive, conceding just 26 runs in his 10 overs, while leg-spinner Rashid Khan bounced back from the most expensive spell in World Cup history against England to take 1-38.

Kohli, who scored half-centuries against Australia and Pakistan, reached his third consecutive fifty of the tournament off 48 balls, with four fours, but was caught by Shah off the bowling of Nabi.

Kedar Jadhav reached his fifty off 66 balls, giving the scorecard a look of respectability and the total ultimately proved just too much for Afghanistan. — AFP

Hamilton powers to French Grand Prix pole ahead of Bottas

LE CASTELLET: Lewis Hamilton timed his best lap to perfection yesterday when he took pole position ahead of his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas with a blistering late effort at the French Grand Prix.

The five-time world champion, who had struggled to match the Finn's pace in the previous two practice sessions, reeled off a fastest lap in one minute and 28.319 seconds to beat him by 0.286 seconds.

It was the 86th pole of his career for Hamilton, who

won last year's race from pole, and a record-increasing 63rd front-row lock-out for Mercedes. Hamilton has taken 60 of his poles with Mercedes.

It was a master-class from the dominant Silver Arrows team while their rivals laboured in pursuit, with Monegasque Charles Leclerc taking third for Ferrari ahead of Max Verstappen, fourth for Red Bull.

British rookie Lando Norris impressed with a fine effort to take fifth ahead of his resurgent McLaren team-mate Carlos Sainz and, surprisingly, a despondent Sebastian Vettel finished down in seventh in the second Ferrari after a gearbox issue during Q3.

Daniel Ricciardo was eighth for Renault ahead of Frenchman Pierre Gasly in the second Red Bull and Antonio Giovinazzi of Alfa Romeo. "It's not an easy track," said Hamilton. "It's very technical and Valtteri has been very quick all weekend. I've been chipping away and the last two laps were the ones."

Bottas said: "I think Lewis had a really good lap. It's between super close between us all weekend and it's about fine details." A happy Leclerc said: "At the end, I am pretty happy with my lap and unfortunately it wasn't enough! A good start will be very important tomorrow." On an afternoon of searing heat and a gusty wind at the remote Le Castellet circuit, the track temperature was 55 degrees as the session began and the air was 30, conditions that ensured plenty of complaints about the smooth, if slippery, asphalt surface.

As he had on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning, Bottas was quick to set the pace and topped Q1 ahead of Hamilton with Leclerc a close third.

Out went Daniil Kvyat, of Toro Rosso, who will start at the back of the grid after taking a new engine, Romain Grosjean in his Haas, Lance Stroll of Force India and the two Williams of George Russell and Robert Kubica.

Both Mercedes and Ferrari started Q2 on mediums and Hamilton responded with a lap in 1:29.520, only for Bottas to reply with 1:29.437, taking an extra lap to do so. As these are intended to be their race-starting tyres, Hamilton's more cautious approach may have preserved some life he can make use of today.

Alexander Albon, 11th for Toro Rosso, also impressed but missed out on the top-ten shootout along with Kimi Raikkonen in the second Alfa, Nico Hulkenberg of Renault, Sergio Perez and Kevin Magnussen. On their first Q3 runs, it was Hamilton on top by two-tenths with Leclerc third and Vettel forced to pit after missing an upshift-his gearbox not responding as required. That left the four-time world champion, already in a solemn mood after the rejection of Ferrari's appeal against the Montreal penalty which cost him victory in Canada, sounding ironically grim ahead of the final showdown. — AFP