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US envoy calls on world to 'urge Iran to de-escalate'

US conducts cyber attack on Iran • Tehran says 'spy drone' violated airspace in May

By Ben Garcia and Agencies

KUWAIT: The US special envoy for Iran yesterday urged "all nations to use their diplomatic effort to urge Iran to de-escalate and meet diplomacy with diplomacy" amid soaring tensions in the Gulf. "We are not interested in... military conflict against Iran, we have enhanced our forces' postures in the region for purely defensive purposes," Brian Hook told journalists in Kuwait.

In mid-June the United States said it would deploy 1,000 additional troops to the Middle East, after a series of tanker attacks in the Gulf it has blamed on Iran despite Tehran's denials of involvement. The US moves came as Iran set a 10-day countdown for world powers to fulfill their commitments under a nuclear deal abandoned by Washington, saying it would otherwise surpass the uranium stockpile limit mandated by the accord.

Hook said his talks in Kuwait focused "how to de-escalate tensions that in the region have been driven by Iran and we discussed how we can deepen our cooperation especially around

the area of maritime security". "The Iranian regime is a threat to freedom of navigation and all nations of the world share an interest in the free flow of commerce and there is much work to be done together," he said. "We need Iran to behave more like a normal nation and less like a revolutionary cause. And if we can imagine a peaceful Iran, then we can imagine a peaceful Middle East," he added.

Hook said the military option is still open after the US' aborted military response on Iran's downing of a US military reconnaissance drone. "Yes, it remains on the table in the event that we are attacked. It is very important to understand our position - in the current environment, our troops are all positioned in a defensive way. We are not seeking war or conflict with Iran - we exerted diplomacy but Iran responded with military force. We currently have about 7,000 troops in the region to ensure that if we are attacked, we are going to respond with military might," he said.

Hook met the Kuwaiti defense minister, the chief of staff of the Kuwaiti military and the Kuwaiti foreign minister and assistant foreign

minister. Kuwait is the current president of the UN Security Council (for the month of June), and Hook said he believes the UN Security Council has special role along with other organizations since this is a global threat that requires a global response.

"We had a very good discussion about the current tension. I explained to them that our Iran strategy has many objectives, but our principal objectives are to deny the regime the revenue they need to run an expansionist and violent foreign policy. The Iranian regime provides assistance and funding to terrorism around the region. They aspire to create a Shiite corridor to dominate the Middle East. So much instability in the Middle East is driven by the Iranian regime," Hook said.

On Friday in Saudi Arabia, the US envoy said Iran has no right to respond to diplomacy "with military force", a day after Tehran shot down the US reconnaissance drone over the Strait of Hormuz - a strategic waterway for the world's oil transits. Iran yesterday said a "spy drone" had encroached its airspace in May

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KUWAIT: Brian Hook, the US Special Representative for Iran, speaks during a press conference yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Saudi launches special residency scheme for expats

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday launched a new special residency scheme aimed at luring wealthy expats as the petro-state seeks to boost non-oil revenue. The scheme offers a permanent residency for 800,000 riyals (\$213,000) and a one-year but renewable residency costing 100,000 riyals (27,000), according to the online portal for registrations. The scheme will allow expats to do business without a Saudi sponsor, buy property and sponsor visas for relatives, the website said.

Analysts say the program will largely benefit wealthy Arabs who have lived in Saudi Arabia for years without permanent residency or multinational companies seeking to do long-term business in the kingdom. The move appears aimed at boosting non-oil revenue as the kingdom seeks to diversify its economy. It was approved by the Saudi cabinet last month, but the portal began accepting applications yesterday.

Saudi Arabia is currently home to some 10 million overseas workers, many of whom are subjected to what labor activists describe as restrictive residency rules. Expat workers are typically sponsored by a Saudi employer and are required to get visas to exit and enter the kingdom. Saudi Arabia has seen a strong exodus of foreign workers in recent years amid rising costs after the government imposed fees on dependents and restricted foreigners from working in certain sectors. The kingdom is also in the midst of an intensifying crackdown on illegal workers that has seen hundreds of thousands expelled over the past two years. — AFP

Erdogan's party loses replay of Istanbul election

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan suffered a major blow yesterday as the opposition candidate in Istanbul's controversial mayoral election re-run romped to victory. Ekrem Imamoglu won the first vote in March by a tiny margin of just 13,000 votes in the city of 15 million. But after being stripped of that victory over controversial claims of fraud, he vowed a "battle for democracy" that turned him into a household name.

With more than 99 percent of ballots counted yesterday night, Imamoglu was winning by more than 775,000 votes - and had 54 percent overall. "It was not a single group or party, but the whole of Istanbul and Turkey that won this election," Imamoglu said in his victory speech. "Mr President, I am ready to work in harmony with you. I convey from here my request to meet with you in the shortest time possible," he added.

Critics accused Erdogan of refusing to give up control of Istanbul, Turkey's economic powerhouse and a crucial source of patronage for Islamic conservatives since he won the mayoralship himself a quarter of a century ago. But Imamoglu, a little-known district mayor at the start of the year, galvanized voters with a

relentlessly positive campaign under the slogan "Everything will be fine". That was in stark contrast to the usual aggressive name-calling of Turkish politics and struck a chord with voters.

He faced the juggernaut of the AKP, which has ruled Turkey since 2002 and remains the most popular political force nationwide. The AKP's candidate, Binali Yildirim, a mild-mannered Erdogan loyalist who oversaw several huge transport projects and served as prime minister, had already struck a conciliatory tone earlier yesterday. "If we have wronged, knowingly or unknowingly, one of our fellow Istanbulites or our challengers, if we have done something unjust, I ask for your forgiveness," he said.

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Ekrem Imamoglu

Ethiopia army chief, local leader killed in failed regional coup

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia's army chief of staff and the head of the northern state of Amhara were killed in two separate but related attacks when a general tried to seize control of Amhara in an attempted coup, the prime minister's office said yesterday. Amhara state president Ambachew Mekonnen and his adviser were shot dead and the state's attorney general was wounded in the regional capital of Bahir Dar on Saturday evening, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's office said in a statement.

In a separate attack the same night, Ethiopia's army Chief of Staff Seare Mekonnen and a retired general were both shot dead in Seare's home in Addis Ababa by his bodyguard. The two attacks were linked, the statement said, without giving details. Abiy's office named

Amhara state security head General Asamnew Tsige as responsible for the foiled coup, without giving details of his whereabouts. Asamnew was released from prison last year after receiving an amnesty for a similar coup attempt, according to media reports.

Abiy took office just over a year ago and embarked on unprecedented reforms in Ethiopia, Africa's second-most populous country and one of its fastest-growing economies. But the premier's shake-up of the military and intelligence services has earned him powerful enemies, while his government is struggling to rein in powerful figures in Ethiopia's myriad ethnic groups fighting the federal government and each other for greater influence and resources.

US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Tibor Nagy, said the attacks were probably prompted by disaffection over Abiy's rise to power and his sweeping reforms. "There are vestiges of the old regime in power. Some of the elites are very unhappy with some of the reforms that... Abiy is taking for a variety of reasons including, I'm sure, some ill-gotten gains."

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ADDIS ABABA: In this videograb, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed addresses the public on television yesterday after a failed coup. —AFP

US peace plan rejected; Arabs pledge \$100m

RIYADH/AMMAN/CAIRO: Arab politicians and commentators greeted US President Donald Trump's Middle East \$50 billion economic vision with a mixture of derision and exasperation, although some in the Gulf called for it to be given a chance. In Israel, Tzachi Hanegbi, a cabinet member close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, described Palestinians' rejection of the "peace to prosperity" plan as tragic.

Set to be presented by Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner at a conference in Bahrain on June 25-26, the blueprint envisions a global investment fund to lift the Palestinian and neighboring Arab economies and is part of broader efforts to

revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. "We don't need the Bahrain meeting to build our country, we need peace, and the sequence of (the plan) - economic revival followed by peace is unrealistic and an illusion," Palestinian Finance Minister Shukri Bishara said yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Arab League yesterday reaffirmed a pledge to pay \$100 million a month to the Palestinian Authority, a day after Washington unveiled its Middle East peace plan. Arab finance ministers meeting in Cairo renewed a promise first made in April to boost "the Palestinian Authority's budget with a \$100 million monthly transfer... as it faces financial burdens", a statement said.

They also insisted, in an implicit rebuke to the White House's economic plan, on the "complete Arab support to the Palestinian state's economic, political and financial independence". The Arab finance ministers also condemned what they dubbed as "Israeli piracy of

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RABAT: Protesters tear a makeshift Israeli flag during a protest in the Moroccan capital yesterday against a US-led economic conference in Bahrain with its declared aim of achieving Palestinian prosperity. — AFP

Behind the wheel, Saudi women savor new freedom

QATIF: Buckling up in a pearl-silver Lexus, Sabeeha Al-Fakher takes the wheel and relegates her son to the passenger seat, a role reversal the 68-year-old Saudi widow never imagined would be possible in her lifetime. Until June 24 last year, the act would have been considered a crime in Saudi Arabia, where hardliners have preached for decades that allowing women to drive would promote gender mixing and promiscuity. Overtaking the world's only ban on female drivers has potentially put thousands of women behind the wheel in the most visible symbol of the conservative kingdom's modernization drive.

Among them is Fakher, a mother-of-five who never thought she would see the reform, which ushered in a new era of freedom and mobility for women.

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Local

Amir, Crown Prince receive top state officials at Bayan Palace

Amir laments death of former Cyprus president



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Speaker of the

National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, as well as Deputy Prime

Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to the President of Cyprus Nicos Anastasiades, expressing his deep sorrow over the death of former president Demetris Christofias. His Highness the

Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent cables of similar sentiments, while Speaker Ghanem sent a cable of condolences to the President of the Cypriot House of Representatives Demetris Syllouris.—KUNA



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



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



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

Kuwaiti ministers receive US Special Representative for Iran

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday the visiting US Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the strong strategic relations between Kuwait and the US, and latest regional and international developments. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Americas Reem Al-Khaled and several other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry.

Meanwhile, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received Hook, who was accompanied by US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. The two sides discussed issues of mutual interest and the strong bilateral relations that the two countries enjoy, the Defense Ministry's Moral Guidance Department said in a statement. In other news, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad met at Seif Palace yesterday with Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Boushehri, and the two sides discussed issues of mutual concern. Officials from the Supreme Council for Planning and Development and Kuwait Municipality attended the meeting.—KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the visiting US Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook. — KUNA photos



First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the visiting US Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook.

Amir prominent supporter of Palestine: Erekat

LONDON: The Executive Committee of the PLO Dr Saeb Erekat praised yesterday Kuwait's strong stance towards the Palestinian cause and specifically commended His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for always being a prominent supporter of the Palestinian people. Erekat's statement after his meeting with Kuwait's Ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Duwaisan and Arab Ambassadors held at the Kuwaiti Embassy in London.

Erekat said the Kuwaiti people and government have honorable stances towards the Palestinian cause and never lacked in fulfilling their commitments, going beyond the human initiative that His Highness the Amir stood for. Erekat is currently visiting the UK where he met many UK officials and parliamentarians, like the Minister of state for Middle East affairs Andrew Morison, Director of the Political Department in the Foreign Ministry Richard Moore, and Leader of the opposition party Jeremy Corbyn. During his meetings, Erekat clarified to UK politicians the importance of acknowledging the Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders and Jerusalem as its capital.

The Conservative Party considered that it is not the right time to announce an official acknowledgment, and Erekat was upset with UK's vote against the decision to unveil the truth on companies working in the Israeli settlements. He also pointed out that, "these settlements based on the Geneva charter is considered a crime and unlawful and we assured the importance of UK's voting on the resolution on list of these companies." Erekat called for more financial support from the UNRWA especially after the US cut off its financial aid stressing the stance of the GCC practically Kuwait along its close Arab countries in its increased support to help to cover what lacking.

There are 544,000 students in the UNRWA schools in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. There are tens of thousands of teachers, who were hurt from the aid cut. The Palestinian leadership and with what is called the deal of the century Erekat said, "Palestinian official previously announced that it will not participate or attend meetings that do not result in outcomes or commitments."

The administration of US President Donald Trump is trying to change references that are specified by the UN and International Law since 1948, as Erekat pointed the administration is trying to exchange the principle of land instead of peace with money. The British government showed its stance clearly towards what is called the deal of the century that "the plan of peace between Israel and Palestine is not based on the principles of both countries as it will fail." Erekat added that the UK has re-affirmed that they will not acknowledge Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and will not transfer their embassy.

In response to a question on the vision of the Palestinian government of peace in the Middle East, Erekat said the vision is proposed by the President Mahmoud Abbas to the UN in February of last year. He clarified that it is concentrating on international law and legitimacy based on the solution of the two countries is centered on the 1967 borders and resolving the refugee crisis as resolution 194 specific to the Arab initiative which includes the release of prisoners. It is not realistic to believe that the US cut off \$844 million in aid that was to be given to the UNRWA and Palestinian hospitals to be offered at the Manama Conference to the Palestinian people, said Erekat.—KUNA



Dr Saeb Erekat

Local

MP Hayef says he may file to grill finance minister

Assembly to start marathon final sessions from today

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MP Mohammad Hayef said yesterday he has delayed until today a decision on whether to file to grill Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf or not regarding a dispute over interest rates on pensioners.

Hayef had reportedly went to the speaker's office determined to file the grilling because the finance minister did not attend a meeting for the assembly's financial and economic affairs committee which was scheduled to debate the issue.

The lawmaker said an extraordinary meeting for the panel has been set for today and that he will only make his decision after the meeting which will discuss a proposal to abolish interest on loans obtained by pensioners from the social security institution.

MP Safa Al-Hashem, member of the committee, said that the panel discussed a number of proposals on the loans of pensioners and decided to give the government some time to come back with a solid proposal. She opposed calls that demanded abolishing the interest on religious basis and also rejected other proposals that want all such loans stopped. The issue was raised during the debate of a grilling against

the finance minister a few weeks ago.

In the meantime, a special session that was scheduled to debate the problem of unemployment among Kuwaiti citizens could not be held due to a lack of quorum. Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem cancelled the session after only 13 MPs showed up with no member of the cabinet which was holding its weekly meeting.

Opposition MP Mohammad Al-Mutair, who was among 10 lawmakers who submitted the request, blasted the government for not coming, saying the government's validity has expired and is not concerned with the stability of the country or dealing fairly with the people. He urged MPs who are still hesitant to make their decision and stop cooperation with the government.

In the meantime, the national assembly starts today marathon sessions to debate a large number of draft laws and also finalize the budgets. Today and on Thursday, the assembly will debate draft laws while on Tuesday and Wednesday it will debate and approve budgets and final statements. The assembly will discuss the state budget and the country's fiscal status on July 1 and hold the closing session of the term on the next day and then go into a four-month summer recess.



Session canceled over lack of quorum

KD 57.1 million added for subsidies in new budget

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Well informed sources said that the finance ministry adjusted the 2019-2020 fiscal year budget, adding KD 57.1 million to be mainly used for subsidies and social benefits. The sources explained that KD 6.5 million will be added for fuel subsidies, 30.2 million for Kuwait Municipality, the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects and Public Authority of Civil Information, KD 38.6 million for the Ministry of Health, KD 14 million to compensate those affected during the heavy rain last winter, KD 15.1 million for the Ministry of Justice, KD 930,000 for Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait developmental research in Africa and increasing the customs department budget by KD 845,000. The source also explained that the Amiri Diwan budget in the new project will be cut by KD 14.3 million, while esti-

mated revenues will be KD 16.38 billion, an 8.6 percent increase compared to the budget of the fiscal year that ended on March 31, 2019. In other news, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel referred the annual follow-up report of the development plan to the parliament, adding that the year 2018-2019 is the fourth in the short-term development plan.

Coeducation ban

Although the new university campus in Shadadiya has been designed according to the coeducation ban law, informed sources said that this law will not be applied in the colleges expected to move into the new campus by the next academic year (2019-2020), and that students will be taught jointly until all colleges move to the new campus. Assistant dean for students affairs at KU's college of business administration Nayef Al-Shemmary announced that his college is preparing to move into the new campus, and that so far, both male and female students will attend classes in the same building.

Work permits

The manpower authority issued an administrative decision amending article 44

Recycling plants

Municipal Council member Abdul Salam Al-Randi inquired about remarks made by the State Audit Bureau on the executive body's failure to deal with garbage disposal companies and recycling plants. Randi also inquired if the municipality has a mechanism to distribute construction debris to various treatment factories for recycling and the procedures followed in such transactions. In other news, and responding to social media reports about spending KD 18 million to maintain the Municipal Council secretariat's general building, Kuwait Municipality explained that this sum had been allocated to build the new Municipal Council building and has nothing to do with maintaining the current one.

Sacrifice project

The Awqaf Secretariat General announced starting preparations for the sacrifice project for this year's hajj and umrah season, cooperating with a number of government and private bodies. Vice secretary general for endowment Mansour Khaled Al-Soqobi stressed that the concerned government and private bodies, including the Zakat House, Kuwait Food Bank, Social Reform Society, Islamic Heritage Revival Society, Patients Fund, Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity, and the Foreign Ministry are keen on executing the project inside and outside Kuwait.

of decision number 522/2018 pertaining work permit regulations, adding boats and marine equipment repair shops and roaming and call taxis to the activities for which work permits are issued.

1,861 expats

Recent Ministry of Education statistics showed the total number of employees working in the ministry's offices are 13,498, including 11,637 Kuwaitis and 1,861 expats. Statistics also show

that the majority of the workforce - 8,413, including 7,659 citizens - works for the general education sector, followed by 1,135 (including 863 citizens) in the financial affairs sector.

Rental fees

The Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued resolution number 2747/2019 pertaining adjusting rental fees collected for utilizing various spaces within Kuwait

International Airport. The decision issued by DGCA Chairman Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah Al-Salem Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah set the fees to be KD 150 a year per square meter inside DGCA buildings, KD 65 a year per square meter for empty land to be built upon, KD 30 a year per square meter for land including shacks, KD 20 a year per square meter for land with shades and KD 5 a year per square meter for empty land.



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem adjourns yesterday's scheduled session due to lack of quorum. —KUNA

Subsidized diesel approved for farmers

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Farmers Union Chairman Abdullah Mohammed Al-Dammak congratulated all farmers on the provision of Wafra and Abdaly farms with subsidized diesel. He thanked His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Oil Minister Khaled Al-Fadhel, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's (KFS) Director Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mikrad and Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) for their endless support and efforts exerted in delivering the diesel. Speaking during a ceremony organized by the union on the occasion, Dammak said that the union's employees will receive applications from the farmers and finalize the provision cards within two days. Dammak said the union managed to get the subsidized diesel for 70 fils (including labor and transport) per liter instead of the market price of 110 fils. He added that diesel rations will be determined according to farm's size, the number of greenhouses and the percentage of agricultural land to the farm area.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Directorate said an accident on Mutlaa Road left one person injured. The accident happened between two water tankers. Abdaly fire station men responded and freed a person who was stuck in one of the trucks. He was medevacked to hospital. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun

What's your plan this Summer ?

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Local



KUWAIT: The Liberation Tower during sunset. — Photo by Ahmad Al-Fallakawi (KUNA)



AMMAN: Jordan's Information Minister Jumana Ghunaimat speaks during the event. — KUNA photos



Advisor at Kuwait's embassy in Amman Adel Al-Zaabi delivers a speech.



The Kuwaiti and Jordanian media forum's secretary general Mansoor Al-Ajmi addresses the audience.

Kuwaiti-Jordanian media forum opens amid growing challenges

AMMAN: Media experts and officials from Jordan and Kuwait assembled in the Hashemite Kingdom's capital yesterday for talks over the difficulties facing the industry. Jordan and Kuwait have long shared an impenetrable relationship, Jordan's Information Minister Jumana Ghunaimat said amid a joint Kuwaiti and Jordanian media forum, sponsored by Prime Minister Omar Razzaz. The talks come at a time where the wider Arab region is plunged into tumult, which highlights the media's increasingly significant role in such times of adversity, the minister explained. The media's role includes but is not limited to efforts to clamp down on fake news and the spread of misinformation that often hide the truth, added the minister. The talks allow Kuwait and Jordan the opportunity for further cooperation, said Adel Al-Zaabi, an advisor at the Gulf state's embassy in the Jordanian capital. He described the forum as a 'window' for dialogue between media specialists from both countries, giving them the chance to exchange views on a wide array of matters. The talks bring into focus the



The Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior participates in the forum.

similarities both nations share on the cultural and intellectual fronts, according to the media forum's secretary general Mansoor Al-Ajmi. The two-day event, attended by

representatives of various Kuwaiti government bodies, features a plethora of seminars and lectures germane to the media. — KUNA

AUB 'proud' to sponsor Ramadan Quran Competition

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced its pride in sponsoring the first Ramadan Quran Competition for the blind and the second for the deaf people organized by Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya Society. Commenting on this initiative, Abdullah Al-Shuaib - Head of Shariah Internal Audit Department at AUB - expressed his pleasure with the success of this Ramadan Competition which comes as a recognition of AUB of the importance of encouraging the people with disabilities to memorize and recite the Holy Quran and understand its numerous noble meanings, especially in the holy month of Ramadan.

Shuaib pointed out that this Quran Competition which AUB used to organize comes in line with the bank vision aiming to support the people with disabilities, harness all potentials and efforts to link them with the Holy Quran and its lofty values and enable them to be integrated into the society. Shuaib expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya Society for their lead role in organizing, supervising, following-up and evaluating this Quran Competition. He wished all participants and winners more excellence and giving in memorizing and serv-



Honoring one of the winners.

ing the Holy Quran. It is noteworthy that Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya Society has commissioned three specialists in sign language to receive those wishing to participate in the deaf category, and to prepare their relevant lists. The Society also named three specialists in the teaching of the Holy Quran and recitations, and prepared an electronic evaluation mechanism for the blind participants. The total number of participants was 48, out of whom 12 participants won first places in half for each category.

In his speech at the closing ceremony to honor the winners in the competition, Dr Ahmad Al-Batini, Chairman of Al-Manabr Al-Quraniya Society, praised



KUWAIT: The winners of the Quran Competition during the honoring ceremony.

the role of AUB which never hesitates to support the disabled in several forums and activities, in the belief of the importance of this category in the Kuwaiti society,

and their rights that rest with all institutions of the civil society, banking institutions as well as government and private sectors.

News in brief

EU to open new mission in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait and the European Union (EU) signed yesterday at the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry an agreement to open an EU mission in the country. Acting Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim and EU Non-Resident Ambassador to Kuwait EU Michele Cervone D'urso and a number of senior officials at the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry attended the signing ceremony. — KUNA

WHO praises Kuwait

KUWAIT: The delegation of consultants and experts of the World Health Organization (WHO) lauded yesterday the level of healthcare in Kuwait. Director of the WHO's international healthcare relations Dr Rehab Al-Wotayan said that the meeting of Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah with the international delegation have achieved great success. "The discussions between the two parties included planning, recommendations and priorities of cooperation between the ministry and the organization in the next two years," she added. — KUNA

Scholarships for 3,294 students

KUWAIT: A number of 3,294 were accepted for scholarship programs at private universities in Kuwait, said an official yesterday. Secretary General of the Private Universities Council (PUC) Dr Habib Abol told the press that students with high-school diplomas and documents of equivalent statuses were accepted in the scholarship programs, indicating that they should follow up with their respective universities to continue the registration process. Dr Abol congratulated the students on being accepted, wishing them the best of luck in their future academic ventures. — KUNA

Official reaffirms Palestine backing

CAIRO: Assistant Undersecretary for Economic Affairs at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance Nabil Al-Abdul Jalil assured yesterday that Kuwait is continuously supporting Arab issues, mainly the Palestinian cause. This came in a statement by Al-Abdul Jalil at the end of an emergency Arab finance ministerial meeting held yesterday to discuss how to provide financial support to Palestinians. The Kuwaiti official reiterated his country's full support for the Palestinian case, saying "We are eager to offer the political and economic support to Palestinian people at both regional and international sides." — KUNA

Local

Saudis' social acceptance of women driving on the rise

Social status quo still differs from one area to another

RIYADH: A few years back it would have been unfathomable for women in Saudi Arabia to drive their vehicles on the streets of the Kingdom. After King Salman Bin Abdulaziz issued a decree to allow women's driving on September 26, 2017, which came to force on June 24, 2018, an increasing number of Saudi women began to exercise their right to own and drive automobiles, a matter leading to drastic changes within main cities of the Kingdom.

On the commercial and business level, advertisements began to show up catering to the needs of Saudi female drivers. Auto-shops, garages, and carwashes also began to assign spaces for women to rest while their cars were fixed and cleaned. Speaking on this issue, Mishaal Al-Tamimi, a repair-shop owner, estimated that five percent of his clientele were women since the royal decree was approved. As the new wave of female clients began to come, the shop dedicated a section for women to rest as repairs on their cars were done, he said, affirming that steps were taken on the shop's part to ensure that they were comfortable.

Meanwhile, Humoud Sayer observed that the situation in big cities was different than in small towns and districts, with less women drivers seemingly seen in the lat-

ter locations. The social status quo differs from one area to another in Saudi Arabia and depending on each individual case, women were allowed to drive to work, schools, shops and so on, said Sayer who indicated that some men preferred that their wives would drive their own vehicles to save time and energy.

While men's input on the matter was appreciated, a number of Saudi women gave their impressions on the relatively new situation. Saudi society's acceptance of women drivers is on the rise and that is evident in the number of drivers, said Moudhi Ali. Ali did not hide the fact that she was apprehensive when deciding to drive; however, the matter changed with what she saw as a need for women to drive and attend to their own businesses. As for hardship, Ali said that she did not face much

since the decree was implemented a year ago, but she stressed that it was important to abide by traffic rules and regulations. Officials should also provide more spaces and facilities for women to park at work since now there were increasing numbers of female employees heading to their jobs, she noted.

Razan Mohammad, a fellow driver, claimed that the number of women drivers in the Kingdom was considerably high, basing her statement on what she saw on the



Some men preferred their wives would drive to save time

road. A large number of women in Saudi Arabia obtained driving licenses while abroad, which made their transition to Saudi roads much smoother, she said, adding that the royal decree to allow women to drive was the correct decision. In an effort to guide and educate women road users, the Saudi Ministry of Transportation issued guide-

lines to help the increasing number of female drivers to better traverse roads whether they were local streets or highways. For those who are still on the fence concerning driving, Saudi authorities approved a measure enabling ride-hailing services driven by women to allow only female clientele to be chosen for rides. —KUNA

Theater group presents Kuwaiti play at FITS

BUCHAREST: A theater group staged yesterday the Kuwaiti play 'Diary Led to Madness' at the Sibiu International Theatre Festival (FITS). The play won the admiration of the audience and appreciation of the organizing committee of the festival. Kuwaiti Director Yousef Al-Hashash said right after the play. He said that the story dates back to an old classical novel, pointing out that it was presented for the first time in an international

festival with about 70,000 scenes from several regions of Romania. Over 3,000 artists from 73 countries, including Kuwait, made about 520 works of art from various kinds, pointing out that the theater team attended with a technical staff composed of 16 people including technicians and directors, along with those in charge of lighting, music and production, he said. The input of Kuwait links original culture to art, presented through theatrical arts to the public, he underlined. The annual FITS is the third largest European festival, held over 10 days with many artists contributing worldwide. FITS comprises of performances and concerts in historical sites with activities and workshops, as well as cultural and artistic lectures. —KUNA



BUCHAREST: Actors perform a Kuwaiti play on stage at the Sibiu International Theatre Festival. - KUNA



KUWAIT: Head of Kuwait National Guard's Public Relations and Moral Guidance Department Colonel Dr. Jedan Fadhel Jedan recently received the board chairman of Al-Berr Charity Mohammed Yousif Al-Muzaini to discuss cooperation on a project for food preservation at Kuwait National Guard Camps. The two sides would cooperate through the project to collect and preserve extra food from camps then distribute it to people in need.

ABK sponsors KU Faculty of Dentistry's graduation ceremony

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently sponsored the graduation ceremony for Kuwait University's Faculty of Dentistry, which was held at the Four Seasons Hotel on June 21, 2019, where 28 students received their degrees in Dentistry. Attending the graduation ceremony on behalf of ABK, Fawzy Al-Thunayan, GM - Board Affairs said: "The bank's support is based on its commitment to the importance of educating Kuwaiti youth. They are not only a valuable asset, they are the future of Kuwait and the country depends on them. The medical professional plays a crucial role in the wellbeing of the society and ABK is proud to be a part of sponsoring this important day as they end their academic life and transition into a life change where they will face important challenges in their career. We wish them every success in their future and takes this opportunity to congratulate each one of them."



KUWAIT: Firefighters stand outside a burning transformer in Kaifan yesterday.

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Restrictions, reforms:
 Saudi Arabia's
 treatment of women

Ruling party candidate wins majority in Mauritania vote



PYONGYANG: This picture shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reading a personal letter from President of the United States of America Donald Trump. —AFP

Kim receives 'excellent' letter from Trump

Talks stalled since collapse of second summit

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un received a personal letter of "excellent content" from US President Donald Trump, the country's state media said yesterday, amid a nuclear deadlock between Pyongyang and Washington. Talks have been stalled since the collapse of a second summit between the two leaders in February after they failed to agree on what the North would be willing to give up in exchange for sanctions relief.

The two sides have blamed each other for the breakdown but both have expressed a willingness to meet again, with Trump saying earlier this month that he had received a "beautiful letter" from Kim. Yesterday, the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported that Trump had written to Kim, who "said with satisfaction that the letter is of excellent content". "Appreciating the political judging faculty and extraordinary courage of President Trump, Kim Jong Un said that he would seriously contemplate the interesting content," KCNA said.

The report gave no further detail about the

content of the letter or when it was sent and received. The front page of North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper carried a photo of Kim holding Trump's letter as he read it in his office. In a statement the White House confirmed "a letter was sent by President Trump and correspondence between the two leaders has been ongoing." South Korea's presidential Blue House said it was aware of the correspondence through its communication with Washington, and described the exchange as "positive".

China holds the key

The KCNA report came just two days after Kim hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping, who wrapped up a highly symbolic visit to nuclear-armed North Korea on Friday. Kim told Xi that his visit was an opportunity to demonstrate "the immutability and invincibility of the DPRK-China friendship before the world", KCNA said, using the abbreviation of North Korea's official name. Analysts say the North's appar-

ently friendly overtures to Trump signaled that Pyongyang was ready to break the deadlock with Washington. "China holds the key to what North Korea wants the most—security guarantee and economic development," Koh Yu-hwan, a professor at Dongguk University in Seoul, told AFP. "After getting China's promise that it will actively help on these two issues, Kim is reaching out to the US." Xi is expected to meet Trump later this month in Japan during the G20 summit and analysts say the Chinese president intends to use his trip to the North as a way of signaling to Trump his influence with Kim.

Letter diplomacy

Trump and Kim held a groundbreaking summit in Singapore last year—the first-ever meeting between a North Korean leader and a sitting US president—where the pair signed a vaguely-worded deal on denuclearization. But in Hanoi this year, Washington accused Pyongyang of effectively demanding an end to all sanctions for partial disarmament, while the North

said it wanted some measures eased in return for closing all the nuclear facilities at its Yongbyon complex.

Since then, Pyongyang has accused Washington of acting in "bad faith" and given it until the end of the year to change its approach. The two sides have not resumed direct talks, while the North raised tensions last month by firing short-range missiles for the first time since November 2017. Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, said the written correspondence between the leaders was "very meaningful".

"The letter diplomacy shows they are communicating even though there is a lull in talks," Yang said. This is not the first time the two leaders have opted for more traditional means of communication. Less than a month before the Singapore summit, Trump wrote to Kim to call it off, telling the North's leader not to "hesitate to call me or write". And in September 2018, the White House said Kim sent a "very warm" letter to Trump seeking a second summit. —AFP

Qu Dongyu becomes first Chinese to head UN food agency FAO

ROME: Qu Dongyu on Sunday became the first Chinese national to be elected to head the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, clinching the post in the first round of voting. Qu, 55, a biologist by training, won 108 votes, followed by Catherine Geslain-Laneelle of France with 71 votes and Georgia's Davit Kirvalidze with 12, according to official results. "I'm very grateful to all member countries for your active participation," the new FAO chief said after the results were announced. "Thanks also to other candidates who helped make me better. "I will be committed to FAO's original aspirations, mandates and the missions of the organization."

His election to the helm of the Rome-based agency, which brings together 194 member countries, comes as the fight to eradicate world hunger takes a blow from global warming and wars. Hunger blamed on the combined effects of extreme and erratic weather, economic slowdowns, and conflicts, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, has risen for the past three years. FAO has sounded the alarm over rising food insecurity and high levels of malnutrition, and Qu will have to ramp up support for smallholder farms and fisheries to combat the ills of intensive farming, food waste and poverty.

The successor to Brazil's Jose Graziano da Silva will have to put policies in place now in preparation for feeding a world population expected to increase from 7.7 billion people to 9.7 billion in 2050. The UN agency tackles issues that are "important for both advanced and developing countries," Manuel Lafont Rapnouil, from the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), told AFP. They include "food security, (and) agricultural development, but also agrobusiness, trade, biotechnology and, increasingly, climate and environment", he said.

Chinese nationals also run the International Civil Aviation Organisation, the UN Industrial



ROME: Newly-appointed FAO Director-General, China's Qu Dongyu acknowledges applause following the vote during the FAO 41st Conference at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters in Rome. —AFP

Development Organisation and the International Telecommunication Union, as well as leading the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, Rapnouil said. "China is also very concerned to increase the presence of its nationals in the ranks of the United Nations, especially in the highest positions," he said. "It is particularly active in elections for the heads of agencies, funds and programs." Meng Hongwei, the Chinese former head of the international police agency, Interpol, last week pleaded guilty in China to accepting \$2.1 million in bribes, in a spectacular fall from grace for the former vice minister.

Epidemic, trade war

Many analysts had seen Qu as the frontrunner to win the four-year post, which he will take up on August 1. "Beijing has made a big push to get more senior jobs at the UN in the last few years," Richard Gowan, an analyst at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, told AFP. The country is

currently grappling with a swine fever epidemic that has killed more than a million pigs in China, according to FAO figures. It has also had to contend with a trade war with the United States that has forced it to go elsewhere for cereals and soya.

These crises have pushed the food sector to the top of the government's priorities, Beijing said in its bid letter, seen by AFP. Qu has 30 years experience, from developing digital technologies in agriculture, to introducing micro-credit in rural areas. Rival candidate, Georgia's Kirvalidze, a former agriculture minister, had said he believes the private sector has a key role to play in eliminating global hunger.

French candidate Geslain-Laneelle, former head of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), spent her entire career in the agricultural and agri-food sectors at the highest level in France. The first woman to vie for the job has said the FAO should help "develop value chains around agriculture, fisheries and forestry", a reference to the storage, processing and distribution of food. —AFP

News in brief

India stampede kills 14

NEW DELHI: At least 14 people were killed and dozens injured in a stampede at a religious gathering in northern India yesterday, after strong winds caused a large marquee to collapse. More than a thousand people were at the event in Rajasthan state, where Hindu religious sermons were being given. "There was a stampede and it appears some iron pipes also fell causing grievous injuries," senior police officer Khinvi Singh said. He said at least 60 people were injured. Police have launched an investigation to see if rules were flouted by organizers. In a tweet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was quoted by his office as saying the incident was "unfortunate" and wishing the injured a quick recovery. —AFP

Seven killed in collision

NEW HAMPSHIRE: New Hampshire state police investigators encountered what they called the worst scene of their careers after a pickup truck collided head-on with a motorcycle club of US Marine veterans, killing seven and injuring three, officials said on Saturday. The driver of the pickup, who survived, was identified but not arrested after his vehicle hauling a trailer hit at least 10 motorcycles on Friday afternoon on a highway near the White Mountain National Forest. Officials said the motorcyclists were associated with the Jarheads Motorcycle Club, made up of Marine veterans and their families. The pickup driver was identified as a 23-year-old employee of Westfield Transportation of Springfield, Massachusetts, who was driving a company vehicle with a trailer. —Reuters

International

Restrictions, reforms: Saudi Arabia's treatment of women

Male relatives remain in charge of women's lives

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia today marks one year since it allowed women to drive for the first time, a flagship reform as the petro-state seeks to overhaul its ultra-conservative image. But a number of policies remain in place which leave male relatives in charge of major decisions affecting women's lives. Here is where the Sunni Muslim kingdom stands on five key issues:

Education

Saudi Arabia's so-called guardianship system places the legal and personal affairs of women in the hands of their fathers, brothers, husbands and even sons. Women require the formal permission of their closest male relative to enrol in classes at home or to leave the country for classes abroad.

In July 2017, Saudi Arabia's education ministry announced girls' schools would begin to offer physical education classes for the first time, providing they conform with Islamic law. The ministry did not specify whether girls would need permission from their guardians to take part. Saudi Arabia has several women-only universities.

Employment

Restrictions the guardianship system has long imposed on women's employment have been loosened as Saudi Arabia tries to wean itself from its dependence on oil. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, named heir to the throne in June 2017, has promoted an economic plan known as "Vision 2030", which aims to boost the female quota in the workplace from 22 to 30 percent by 2030. King Salman, his father, has signed decrees allowing women to apply online for their own business licenses. The

Saudi police force now also employs female officers.

Travel, driving

Women still require a male guardian's permission to renew their passports and leave the country. But on June 24 last year, women took the driver's seat for the first time in the kingdom's history. While the end of the driving ban was largely welcomed, it did not signal an opening up of political freedoms. Several women's rights activists, including veterans campaigners for the right to drive, were detained just weeks earlier and later put on trial on a host of charges including speaking to foreign journalists.

Personal status

Under the guardianship system, women of all ages require the consent of their male guardian to get married. A man may divorce his wife without her consent. In January, the Saudi justice ministry said courts were required to notify women by text message that their marriages had been terminated, a measure apparently aimed at ending cases of men getting a divorce without informing their partners.

Public spaces

In January 2018, women were allowed into a special section in select sports stadiums for the first time. They had previously been banned from attending sporting events. Saudi Arabia has also reined in its infamous morality police, who for decades had patrolled the streets on the lookout for women with uncovered hair or bright nail polish. Some women in the capital, Riyadh, and other cities now appear in public without headscarves. —AFP



RIYADH: Sabeeha al-Fakher, a 68-year-old Saudi widow, checks the engine oil level of her pearl-silver Lexus, in the coastal town of Qatif, about 400 kilometers east of the capital Riyadh. — AFP

Sudan court orders end to internet blackout

KHARTOUM: A Sudanese court yesterday ordered authorities to end a nationwide internet blockade imposed by the ruling generals after a deadly crackdown on protesters earlier this month, a lawyer said. Crowds of protesters were violently dispersed on June 3 by men in military fatigues, who stormed a weeks-long protest camp outside the army head-

quarters in Khartoum where they had camped to demand that the generals step down.

Internet on mobile phones and fixed land connections was cut across Sudan by the ruling military council, with users saying it was done to prevent further mobilization of protesters. Lawyer Abdelazim al-Hassan said he had filed a petition against the blockade, and on Sunday a court in Khartoum ordered that the services be resumed. "I had filed the case 10 days ago and Judge Awatef Abdellatif ordered the telecommunications department to resume the internet services immediately," Hassan told AFP. Authorities can appeal the decision.

For the generals the internet and social media are a threat. "Regarding social media,

we see during this period that it represents a threat for the security of the country and we will not allow that," military council spokesman General Shamseddine Kabbashi said earlier this month. The internet blockade was an attempt to quell new protests against the generals, who have so far resisted to hand power to a civilian administration as demanded by demonstrators, protest leaders say.

Tens of thousands of protesters were mobilized through online social media apps during the months-long campaign against the now ousted leader Omar al-Bashir. Protest leaders have resorted to neighborhood campaigns to keep their movement alive, with activists mobilizing supporters in night-time gatherings, witnesses said. — AFP

Israeli city cuts Jesus link from name to avoid confusion

JERUSALEM: An Israeli city often confused with its famous neighbor Nazareth, where Christians believe Jesus was raised, has changed its name in the hope of consolidating its separate identity. A poll of over ten thousand residents of Nazareth Illit (Upper Nazareth) overwhelmingly approved the pro-

posal to rename the city Nof Hagalil (View of the Galilee), with Mayor Ronen Plot finalizing the move in a festive Friday meeting.

The city had received governmental approval six months ago to go ahead with the change, with a committee selecting the name that won residents' approval, a municipal spokeswoman said yesterday. Nazareth Illit was established in the late 1950s, just three kilometers and a 10-minute drive from Nazareth, with its name meant to be a temporary fix. "The temporary name became permanent and caused total confusion," spokeswoman Orna Buhbut said, noting that every single mayor in the city's 62 years had attempted-and failed-to change it. Nazareth is the largest Arab city in Israel, and its population of 75,000 is almost entirely Muslim or Christian. — AFP

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International

Ruling party candidate wins majority in Mauritania vote

Anti-slavery campaigner Abeid rejects victory claim

NOUAKCHOTT: Government candidate and frontrunner Mohamed Ould Ghazouani has won an absolute majority in the first round of Mauritania's presidential election, with nearly all votes counted, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) said yesterday. With counting completed in 3,729 of a total of 3,861 polling stations, the 62-year-old former head of the domestic security service won 51.5 percent of the vote, according to data published on CENI's website.

Ghazouani had already declared himself the winner in the early hours of yesterday in the presence of current president Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, his supporters and journalists. The ballot is the first in Mauritania's coup-strewn history that looks set to see an elected president complete his mandate and transfer power to an elected successor, although the opposition has raised concerns the vote could perpetuate a government dominated by military figures.

Some 1.5 million people were eligible to vote Saturday in the vast, predominantly Muslim state, which is approximately twice the size of former colonial power France and has a population of just 4.5 million. Turnout was 62.68 percent, CENI said. Out of the other five candidates, Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid came second with 18.58 percent of the votes and Mohamed Ould Boubacar followed in third place with 17.82 percent, the CENI data showed. Preliminary results had originally been expected today.

Ballot irregularities?

CENI said in a statement that it would continue compiling the results from across the West African desert country before handing them over to the

Constitutional Council. In the meantime, it said it "advises the candidates to show prudence and restraint," and hoped the calm climate seen during the campaign and on voting day would prevail. Both Abeid and Boubacar had complained of balloting irregularities and the expulsion of representatives from some polling stations. However CENI said no major problems had been reported.

Abeid hit out at Ghazouani's claim of victory "while the vote counting is still going on". "Ghazouani's announcement constitutes a falsehood," he said. Ghazouani—who campaigned on the themes of continuity, solidarity and security for the Saharan nation—served as Abdel Aziz's chief of staff from 2008 to last year. The outgoing president is a general who originally came to power in a 2008 coup, won elections a year later and was again elected in 2014 in polls boycotted by the opposition.

Abdel Aziz, who has repeatedly warned that the country could fall back into instability if his chosen candidate is not elected, is credited with reforming the army, clamping down on jihadists and pushing to develop remote regions. Nevertheless, rights groups have accused the government of restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly, while calling on the nation to do more to counter violence against women and slavery, which persists in the deeply-conservative state although it was officially abolished in 1981. Authorities rejected an opposition request for foreign observers at the election. All of the candidates promised improvements in the standard of living, though economic growth at 3.6 percent in 2018 is insufficient to meet the needs of a fast-growing population, according to the World Bank. The



NOUAKCHOTT: Presidential candidate Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, center, casts his ballot at a polling station in Nouakchott during the presidential election in Mauritania. — AFP

World Bank has welcomed the "macro-economic stabilization" of the country, where annual growth is expected to average 6.2 percent between 2019 and 2021. But it

has called for barriers to be removed in the private sector, pointing in particular to corruption, as well as difficult access to credit. —AFP

Democratic White House candidates face grilling on abortion

COLUMBIA: Democrats running for US president in next year's election sat down with voters on Saturday to outline their stance on abortion, a long-simmering issue newly inflamed by attempts to curtail it nationwide. With abortion now among the most-discussed topics in the presidential race, the candidates aimed to impress an audience cheering "Who decides? We decide!" at the conference put on by family planning organization Planned Parenthood.

"If you're not pro-choice, you're not getting my vote," declared 34-year-old Jennifer Egor, who traveled to the forum held in the South Carolina state capital Columbia. "Women's healthcare is everything. It's not just about abortion, it's so much more than that," she said. Attended by 20 of the 23 candidates aiming to unseat Republican President Donald Trump in the 2020 vote, the conference was titled "We decide 2020," a reference not just to what is promising to be a contentious election, but also to the debate over who can choose if and when an abortion is necessary.

Flip-flop

The summit was attended by some of the most prominent Democratic candidates, including female senators Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Amy Klobuchar and Kirsten Gillibrand, as well as small-city mayor Pete Buttigieg and left-wing senator Bernie Sanders. The candidates listened to poignant testimonies from women in the audience and made their own promises to fight for reproductive rights. "It's not 1952. You're not going to lock women in the kitchen, you're not going to tell us what to do," Warren declared to applause. But perhaps the most-scrutinized attendee was former vice president Joe Biden, a frontrunner in the polls whose position on abortion has come under recent criticism. Earlier this month, the 76-year-old reversed his position on the Hyde Amendment, a ban on spending federal tax dollars on abortions unless the life of the mother is endangered, or when a pregnancy results from rape or incest.

While he'd previously supported the amendment, Biden said he'd decided to oppose the measure after a number of southern and midwestern US states in recent months adopted laws drastically curtailing access to abortion. Emphasizing his support for abortion rights during his time in the US Senate, Biden said if elected he would have the 1973 US Supreme Court decision outlining abortion rights, Roe v Wade, enshrined into law.

But his promises weren't enough to sway 67-year-old Deborah Saye, who, together with some friends, had traveled two hours by bus to make up her mind about which candidate to support. "We discussed it, and we don't know whether to believe him or not," said Saye. "We don't really like that he's flip-flopping."

The controversy over Biden's abortion stance shows that "you have to be a strong supporter of abortion rights in order to be a Democratic presidential nominee these days," said Kyle Kondick, a political scientist at the University of Virginia. — AFP



COLUMBIA: Former Vice President, Joe Biden, tells attendees to 'Vote' in the next election at the We Decide: Planned Parenthood Action Fund 2020 Election Forum to Focus on Abortion and Reproductive Rights event in Columbia, SC. — AFP



ISTANBUL: Supporters of Ekrem Imamoglu, candidate of the secular opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) listen on during his last election rally before a re-run ballot in Istanbul. — AFP

Ekrem Imamoglu: Turkey's rising political star

ISTANBUL: A softly-spoken football fan and former district mayor, Ekrem Imamoglu seems to have come from nowhere to become a figurehead of the long-suffering Turkish opposition. Although forced to rerun his Istanbul mayoral electoral campaign after his March victory was annulled due to alleged irregularities, the setback has done wonders for his profile both at home and abroad.

"What we are doing now is a fight for democracy and mobilization for democracy," he told AFP in May. "It will of course be a revolution once we carry it to its conclusion." Little known before the March vote, his win was a massive upset for the ruling party of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose Islamic-rooted political movement had ruled the city for a quarter of a century.

His defiance since being stripped of the mayoralty has boosted his online visibility, not least on Twitter where his following has soared from 350,000 to more than 2.5 million since the first vote. Born in 1970 in the Black Sea coastal city of Trabzon in northeast Turkey, Imamoglu studied business administration at Istanbul University then completed a masters degree in management. He worked in the family construction business before entering local politics a decade ago, becoming mayor of the district of Beylikduzu in western Istanbul in 2014. There, he gained a reputation as a competent administrator in the affluent neighborhood.

One passion he shares with the Turkish president is a love of football. Erdogan was a semi-professional player in his youth, while Imamoglu played at amateur level and maintains links with the Trabzonspor team, having served

as a board member. Imamoglu is also a practising Muslim, which has allowed him to broaden the appeal of the staunchly secular Republican People's Party (CHP) after years of lackluster election performances.

Positive rhetoric

During his first campaign in March, Imamoglu opted for a low-key, on-the-ground approach, hoping discretion would be an advantage against his well-known ruling party rival, Binali Yildirim. Since then, he has come out of his shell, taking a more combative approach over the "extravagant" spending he found during his brief 18-day stint as mayor of the Istanbul municipality. There was controversy last month after CNN Turk appeared to cut short an interview with Imamoglu when he held up placards depicting alleged waste, such as the high numbers of "unnecessary" official cars.

But the key to his success has been a relentlessly positive rhetoric in contrast to the often vicious personal attacks of Turkish politics—and his easy rapport with people on the street, where he is regularly seen taking selfies with voters in bazaars and cafes. "Imamoglu is a very natural man who can talk easily with people," says Zilan Karakurt, who films live videos of Imamoglu's campaign for social media. "This is something not every candidate can do."

His marketing has been astute, particularly his choice of slogan for the new campaign—"Everything will be fine"—which came from a 13-year-old boy called Berkay, who ran after Imamoglu's election bus shouting the line. It has come to epitomize his style of campaigning, and has caught on with businesses and artists who have often been fearful of challenging the ruling party in the past.

After 17 years of AKP rule, it has also brought fresh hope to the CHP, even if the next presidential election is not until 2023. Imamoglu himself remains coy about his future prospects. "Time will tell," he told AFP when asked if he might follow Erdogan's path from the Istanbul mayoralship to national leadership. — AFP

Rescuers scour rubble as Cambodia building collapse toll rises to 18

SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia: Victims of the Cambodia building collapse were buried alive as they slept, a survivor said yesterday, as the death toll at the Chinese-owned site rose to 18 and increasingly desperate rescuers picked through the compacted rubble for any further signs of life. There are fears many more workers may be buried as rescuers had scoured barely half of the debris of twisted metal, glass and large concrete slabs after the seven-storey building collapsed on Saturday in the beach resort of Sihanoukville.

"I'm so lucky to be alive," survivor Phat Sophal, 37, told AFP over the telephone. In an ordeal that began before dawn while workers slept, Phat Sophal said he spent around six hours trapped in the debris, before being pulled out by rescuers on Saturday morning. "At around 4am there was a loud 'bang'... my floor trembled, suddenly the building went down. I was crushed by debris from my waist down," he said.

"My nephew and brother-in-law were also sleeping near me. Everyone was screaming and crying for help. A bit later I stopped hearing them. I don't think they have survived." Around 70 workers were sleeping on the second, third and fourth floors of the seven-storey building, he said, adding Chinese electricians were resting on the upper floors.

The former fishing village of Sihanoukville has seen a Chinese construction boom buoyed by tourists to its dozens of casinos in recent years, with questions raised on the speed of development in a nation notorious for lax safety standards. Three Chinese nationals and a Cambodian landowner have been held for questioning over the building collapse, which Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen blamed on "carelessness" by the construction company.

Fears of more trapped

Local authorities yesterday raised the death toll to 18 — including at least three women — with 24 injured. At least 1,000 rescue workers, soldiers, police, medics and Chinese construction experts have been deployed to the site. Some wore hard hats and oxygen tanks and used pneumatic



SIHANOUKVILLE, Cambodia: Rescue workers carry the body of a victim they dug out from debris a day after an under-construction building collapsed in Sihanoukville. — AFP

drills to chip through concrete blocks, while the relatives of the injured waited at nearby hospitals for news.

One person was pulled alive from the rubble late Saturday—the last survivor to be extracted as of yesterday afternoon. A provincial official said "teams have searched about 40 percent of the debris", prompting concerns the toll will rise. "We fear more bodies are trapped in the debris because the search has not reached the bottom of the building yet," the official told AFP, requesting anonymity. It is not clear how many people were at the site at the time of the collapse.

There are an estimated 200,000 construction workers in Cambodia—about 11 percent of the informal work sector—most who are unskilled, paid day wages and are not protected by union rules, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO). Cambodia has not kept pace with the

construction boom "to ensure safety and health of the sector's workforce," the ILO has said.

The southwestern town of Sihanoukville is awash with Chinese cash that has sparked a building frenzy to cater to mainland tourists flooding the town's city's casinos, beaches and glitzy hotels. Beijing is pouring investment into Cambodia as part of its behemoth Belt and Road initiative, a sweeping trillion-dollar infrastructure program across Asia, Africa and Europe.

Around \$1 billion was invested in the Preah Sihanouk province between 2016 and 2018 alone, and there are around 50 Chinese-owned casinos and dozens of hotel complexes under construction in Sihanoukville. The owner of the building, the head of the construction firm and the contractor—all Chinese nationals—have been detained by Cambodian police. — AFP

International

In border camps, Syrians rely on doctors in trucks, tents

Hospitals collapse under govt bombing

AZAZ, Syria: The Syrian war has inflicted all kinds of hardships on Najwa Abdelaziz but she still manages to make light of one of them. "The uprising ruined my teeth," she jokes while getting dental care for the first time in years in the back of a truck. The 33-year-old could not find help for her toothache even after she fled Islamic State rule and took refuge in northwest Syria. But a dentist in a mobile clinic has now arrived at the Rayyan camp where she lives with her husband and four children in a tent among the trees.

"We kept getting uprooted, so we were cut off from doctors," said Abdelaziz, whose family was smuggled out of Raqqa city some three years ago. They wound up in Syria's northwest corner, the country's last major rebel stronghold.

The camps are overflowing, the doctors are too few, and many hospitals have collapsed under government bombing. In the camps along the Turkish border, often the only healthcare for people like Abdelaziz comes

from mobile doctors and makeshift clinics in tents. "Many just take pills and stay silent about the pain," said Bassel Maarawi, 57, the dentist who goes around seven camps in the border strip held by Turkey-backed rebels. The dental mobile clinic stays at each camp a few months at a time, treating dozens of patients every day who cannot go into town to see a doctor. It belongs to the Independent Doctors Association, a Turkey-based Syrian group also running a free camp facility including a clinic for women, children, and internal medicine as well as a pharmacy.

Maarawi himself was uprooted in late 2016 from his city of Aleppo, where the army crushed rebels with Russia and Iran's help after a bitter siege. The children he treats now, living in the dirt and drinking filthy water, often suffer from malnutrition. "Many people were displaced recently which really affected them mentally, you can see it when they come in," he said. A new wave of fighting has sparked yet another exodus, with hundreds of

thousands of people fleeing an army offensive in northwest Syria since April.

At a camp for some 14,000 people in the border village of Shamari, Ammar al-Omar runs a physiotherapy clinic inside a large tent. The staff - a medical professional and three volunteers he trained - made most of the equipment themselves and get by on just a few donations. They treat everything from back pain to battle wounds for patients including rebel fighters and paralyzed children.

"There are many injuries because of the fierce bombing," Omar said. "The patients can't afford food let alone transportation." Um Mhamad, 29, has carried her son from another camp nearby and walked to the tent clinic for more than two years. An injury at birth had crippled the six-year-old boy, whose family was shuttled out of Aleppo in 2016. "He used to not move at all," she said. "Today, he can crawl and turn on both sides and stand up." — Reuters



AZAZ, Syria: A pediatrician measures a displaced Syrian refugee child at a mobile clinic, in north Azaz, Syria. — Reuters

India rejects US religious freedom report

NEW DELHI: India hit out yesterday at a US report saying religious intolerance was growing under its right-wing government, setting off a new spat ahead of a visit by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. An annual report on international religious freedom released by Pompeo on Friday said Hindu-groups had used "violence, intimidation, and harassment" against Muslims and low-caste Dalits in 2017 to force a religion-based national identity.

Sri Lanka President seeks to roll back his political reforms

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's President yesterday called for sweeping reforms to the country's constitution that he introduced in 2015 to be rolled back, saying they are responsible for political instability. Maithripala Sirisena said the 19th amendment to the constitution—which notably transferred some of the president's powers to the Prime Minister and depoliticized key institutions—should be scrapped because it has led to a power struggle.

"It has triggered instability. There is no single leader," Sirisena told a meeting in Colombo. "People believe that the president and Prime Minister are pulling in different directions." Sirisena came to power in 2015 promising constitutional reform carried out with the 19th amendment, including the reduction of the powers of the executive and giving greater authority to parliament.

The police, public service, election commission and the judiciary were depoliticized—and term limits of the presidency, which were removed by Sirisena's predecessor, were restored. Human rights were strengthened and the president was made answerable to parliament and could be challenged in court. At the time, Sirisena was hailed internationally for the sweeping reforms.

However, in October, he sacked Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and tried to bring his former nemesis Rajapakse back to power. The Supreme Court held his actions were illegal and restored the status quo. Sirisena's attempts to extend his presidential term by a further year was also shot down by the top court. The president does not have the two-thirds parliamentary majority in the current parliament that he needs to change the constitution.

The independent elections commission is due to conduct the next presidential poll between November 9 and December 9. Sirisena has an uneasy relationship with the premier who helped him come to power. The two have clashed openly as the prime minister has made it clear that he wants to contest the upcoming presidential polls. — AFP

Debate in Germany over tie-up between Merkel's CDU and far-right

BERLIN: Until now, a possible tie-up between any of Germany's mainstream parties and the rising far-right AfD movement has always been strictly seen as a political taboo. But what was previously unthinkable could eventually become a reality as Angela Merkel's embattled centre-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party feels compelled to consider other power-sharing options.

One possibility is an alliance with the fiercely anti-migrant Alternative for Germany (AfD), at least at a regional level. Local elections in three states in the east of the country where polls suggest that the AfD could become the strongest political force—Saxony, Brandenburg and Thuringia—is forcing the CDU to re-think its stance.

"We should not rule out a coalition" with the AfD, Ulrich Thomas, one of the regional leaders of the CDU in the central state of Saxony-Anhalt, told local daily Mitteldeutsche Zeitung. "It is not possible now, but we don't know what the situation will be like in two or five years' time." For the time being, the CDU's central leadership rules out any suggestions the party could join forces with the AfD, especially in the wake of the murder of local politician Walter Lübcke earlier this month, allegedly by a right-wing extremist.

But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government insisted that no foreign country had the right to criticize its record. Pompeo arrives in New Delhi on Tuesday for a trip intended to strengthen ties, but already complicated by spats over trade tariffs, data protection rules, US visas for Indians and buying arms from Russia. The US religious freedom report said groups claiming to protect cows-considered sacred by Hindus-have attacked Muslims and Dalits. Christians have also been targeted for proselytizing since Modi came to power in 2014.

"Despite Indian government statistics indicating that communal violence has increased sharply over the past two years, the Modi administration has not addressed the problem," the report said. The Indian foreign ministry rejected the report, saying there was no right "for a foreign entity/government to pronounce on the state of our citizens' constitutionally protected rights". "India is proud

Benin's former president Boni Yayi leaves amid political crisis

COTONOU: Benin's former president Thomas Boni Yayi was in Togo yesterday having left effective house arrest in the country for health reasons, representatives said, as political crisis grips the nation following controversial April polls. Boni Yayi left on Saturday after "his health deteriorated rapidly". Nourouni Atchade, spokesman for his Cwry Forces for an Emerging Benin (FCBE) party, said in an interview with Radio France Internationale, without giving details.

The former leader's surprise departure came after weeks of tension with President Patrice Talon, that saw Boni Yayi confined to his northern Benin home. Protests first erupted in Benin after April 28 parliamentary elections. Several people have died in clashes with police who resorted to gunfire. The crisis has stoked concerns of an authoritarian turn in a country once seen as a democratic example in the region.

The voting took place without any opposition candidate, and all 83 members of parliament now come from the only two parties allowed to take part, both allied to Talon. Changes to electoral rules had effectively barred opposition parties from fielding candidates. The demonstrators had demanded the lifting of a police cordon around Boni Yayi's house in the country's economic capital Cotonou.

The former president left the country without giving an explanation to the authorities, the party spokesman said, while stressing that he was not evading justice. Yesterday morning, a source close to Boni Yayi said he had arrived in Togo's capital Lome, without giving further details.

War of egos

In early June, Boni Yayi had received a court summons but his lawyers had refused due to his health problems and the stress of his home being surrounded by security forces. The republican police on Saturday announced that

of its secular credentials, its status as the largest democracy and a pluralistic society with a longstanding commitment to tolerance and inclusion," spokesman Raveesh Kumar said in a statement.

"The Indian Constitution guarantees fundamental rights to all its citizens, including its minority communities." The United States has sought to boost ties with India as a counterweight to China, and both US President Donald Trump and Modi have highlighted their good relationship. However, India last week imposed higher import tariffs on 28 US items in retaliation to Washington's recent withdrawal of trade privileges for New Delhi. Pompeo wants to use his New Delhi trip to lay the ground for a Trump-Modi meeting at the G20 Summit in Osaka this month. It will be their first since Modi's new landslide election win last month. Pompeo is also to give a speech on the future of the relationship between the two countries. — AFP



ABIDJAN: In this file photo former president of Benin Thomas Boni Yayi is pictured during a meeting with the presidents of Togo and Ivory Coast at the presidential residence in Abidjan. — AFP

Cadjehoun, the district of Cotonou where Boni Yayi's house is, was "free of any police presence" following negotiations between Talon and traditional leaders and officials from Save and Tchaurou, Boni Yayi's hometown.

Talon on Friday said he had "taken steps" to resolve the political crisis. "I do not have a personal problem with Boni Yayi," Talon said, adding he was "a friend". Most high-profile opponents of Talon now live in exile, fearing legal action against them if they return. Boni Yayi had been seen as a symbol of opposition staying put in the country. He had denounced an "electoral coup" following the April polls, calling for the results to be annulled and for the people to rise up.

"The socio-political life of Benin has for a few years been a prisoner in the war of egos between two individuals: Patrice Talon and Boni Yayi," said political scientist Expedit B. Ologou, president of the CIAAF analysis centre, based in Cotonou. When Boni Yayi was president (2006-2016), Talon was himself forced into exile between 2012 and 2015, accused of "attempted poisoning" against the head of state. However political analyst Gilles Yabi, founder of the Wathi think tank, said "it would be simplistic to think that the political crisis in Benin is a fight between two men." "There seems to be a systematic and methodical plan to control the institutions and the political scene of the country," he said. — AFP

leaders-cannot be told that the party should be closer to the left than to AfD," he told the Sunday edition of Welt newspaper.

There is media speculation that the CDU might team up with the environmentalist Greens party, which made significant gains in the recent European elections, in a power-sharing coalition. But at the head of the CDU, general secretary Paul Ziemiak, 33, has tried to shut down any debate about an alliance with the far-right. "Just to make it clear to everyone: the CDU strictly rejects any coalition or cooperation with AfD," tweeted Ziemiak on Thursday.

Under pressure

Nevertheless, Merkel's party is under pressure and, after a disappointing victory in the 2017 elections, is continuing to struggle at the polls. A survey by broadcaster RTL published Saturday puts the CDU only second with the Greens top and AfD third. September could prove to be a turbulent month for Merkel's CDU in the regional elections in Saxony and Brandenburg, the AfD's heartland.

The Greens insist any local alliances between the CDU and the far-right would be an obstacle to a possible CDU-Green coalition at national level. "It would suddenly increase the distance between us," admitted Greens leader Michael Kellner on Friday. More worrying for both the CDU and Merkel is the pressure being piled on the Chancellor's favored successor, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who is facing increasing challenges within the party.

Kramp-Karrenbauer, who is known in the media as "AKK", came under heavy fire particularly among younger voters last month when she called for limits to free speech around elections. Last week, Merkel, 64, criticized her own party, saying it was too "defensive" and not "open enough". — AFP

Internet blackout imposed on Myanmar's restive Rakhine state

YANGON: An unprecedented shutdown of mobile data across swathes of Myanmar's restive Rakhine state entered a third day yesterday, blocking villagers from the internet in areas where the army is accused of abuses in its battle with ethnic rebels. Myanmar's Ministry of Transport and Communications (MoTC) ordered all mobile phone operators on Friday to suspend internet data in nine townships across Rakhine and neighboring Chin State.

"As a basis for its request, the MoTC has referenced disturbances of the peace and internet services to coordinate illegal activities," Telenor Myanmar said in a statement. The decree was made under the Telecommunications Law, hitting all mobile operators for an unspecified period. Myanmar's army is fighting ethnic Rakhine rebels who want greater autonomy from the central state. The Rakhine are Buddhists and are also fighting in northern Chin state which borders their homeland.

The Rakhine accuse the army of committing abuses—including arbitrary arrests—against them, while the military confirmed it shot dead six Rakhine detainees in late April. Civilians have been killed in crossfires and shelling, even while taking refuge in monasteries. Villagers in Rakhine said the mobile data ban had cut them off from the outside world, where few have personal computers and most people share information on the violence through social media.

"We have no internet at all. We use the internet to share information through (messaging app) Viber," Kyaw Soe Moe, head of Inn Din village in Rathedaung told AFP. Local authorities have also been hit by the blanket shutdown. A police officer in Mrauk U town, home to Rakhine temples but also the seat of ferocious fighting in recent months, said that communication was being hampered.

"We have to use the phone. SMS and fax to report back to our headquarters. Fighting is still ongoing here every day," the officer who did not want to be named told AFP. Rakhine is also home to the remaining Rohingya Muslim population, many confined to squalid camps. Around 740,000 of the stateless group were driven into Bangladesh in a 2017 army crackdown. — AFP

Malaysia calls for 'justice', citizenship for Rohingya Muslims

BANGKOK: Malaysia yesterday said the perpetrators of violence against Myanmar's Rohingya minority must "be brought to justice", in sharp comments delivered at a normally tame regional summit. Myanmar does not recognize the Rohingya as citizens, instead officially labelling them "Bengalis", short-hand for illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh. A military crackdown in 2017 drove more than 740,000 Rohingya into Bangladesh, carrying accounts of rape, mass killings and the razing of villages. UN investigators have called for Myanmar's top generals to be tried for genocide.

But Myanmar's army and de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi have defended the action as necessary to flush out Rohingya militants from Rakhine state. In talks yesterday with Southeast Asian counterparts, Malaysia's Foreign Minister Saifuddin Bin Abdullah called for the "perpetrators of the Rohingya issue to be brought to justice", his ministry said in tweet. He also said repatriation of the minority from the fetid, overcrowded refugee camps of Bangladesh "must include the citizenship of the Rohingya".

Malaysia, a Muslim country which hosts a large Rohingya refugee population, is one of the few members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to speak up for the minority. The 10-member bloc normally abides by a principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs. ASEAN was heavily criticized by rights groups after a report it commissioned lauded Myanmar's work on the repatriation issue. Rakhine state, the western region home to the Rohingya, remains cut by violence. Only a handful of the Muslim minority have returned under a discredited repatriation deal. Myanmar has not offered citizenship to the mass of Rohingya in Bangladesh's camps should they return, while the minority also want safety guarantees and restitution of seized lands and torched villages before agreeing to go back. — AFP



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel gives a speech during the German Protestant Church Day meeting in Dortmund, western Germany. — AFP

Signs of weakening

But Saxony-Anhalt will elect a new regional parliament in 2021 and another local CDU leader, Lars-Joern Zimmer, pointed out that voters of his party and the AfD often held similar views and felt themselves to be part of Germany's "conservative majority". Recently, Germany's former domestic spy chief and a member of the CDU's right-wing, Hans-Georg Maassen, also refused to rule out an alliance at national level, saying "you never know".

Yesterday, the deputy chief of the AfD, Georg Pazderski, suggested that "the united front (against his party) is beginning to crumble". "In particular, the CDU base—which has been massively disappointed by its own

Analysis

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Under Trump, currencies may become next global battleground

US President Donald Trump's renewed focus on what he calls "unfair" exchange rates could presage a new global battlefield that has the potential to do great damage to the world economy. Trump has spent two years attacking the underpinnings of the global trading system, launching multi-front tariff wars on allies and adversaries alike while complaining that the United States has been taken advantage of. Under a proposed new rule that could come into effect as early as next month, the US may impose punitive tariffs on any country it determines is manipulating its currency to make its products more competitive than American goods.

Trump has frequently attacked eurozone countries like Germany for benefitting from a relatively weak currency and last week said, "They have been getting away with this for years, along with China and others." As Trump's attack on European Central Bank President Mario Draghi in the past week shows, once-mundane monetary policy moves could be used as ammunition to justify retaliation. Economists warn this opens the door to a damaging global currency war pitting everyone against everyone.

If Trump follows this new path, likely with the backing of Commerce Secretary and trade hardliner Wilbur Ross, the United States would be vulnerable to retaliation when the Federal Reserve eventually cuts the benchmark interest rate as Trump has demanded they do. Central banks use interest rate cuts to spur a sluggish economy, weakening a currency's value in exchange for boosting exports, which then power economic growth.

Mark Sobel, who served in the Treasury for years under Republican and Democratic administrations, said he has "serious reservations" about the new plan. In his submission to the Commerce Department, he said the rule change is "fundamentally flawed ... and could prove counterproductive and harm the US economy."

Dubious legality

Over the years, lawmakers and presidents from both the Democratic and Republican parties have floated plans to go after governments that manipulate their exchange rate to compete in the global trading system. But the efforts - mostly aimed at China - have always been resisted and eventually abandoned, in part because they were viewed as a violation of global trade rules. And ironically, China has not been intervening in markets in recent years except to keep the yuan from falling, and the currency has instead gained in value since the financial crisis.

Currently, the US Treasury issues a twice-yearly report scrutinizing possible currency manipulation. But since the mid-1990s, the department has never taken the final step of labeling a country as a manipulator, even in the years when China was very active in its efforts to keep the yuan weak. Now the Commerce Department has moved to wrest control of the issue away from the Treasury by proposing a rule modification that would allow it to treat currency manipulation the same as it would a foreign government subsidy that harms American manufacturers.

If approved, Commerce could impose tariffs to offset the weaker exchange rate against the US dollar. The department is accepting comments from the public until June 27, and could implement the change any time after that. According to the proposal, Commerce said it would defer to Treasury's evaluation of whether a currency is undervalued, "unless we have good reason to believe otherwise." That ambiguity raises red flags for economists, many of whom believe Commerce does not have the technical expertise to make that evaluation. The plan "would grant the Commerce Department excessive discretion," Sobel said.

It also is notoriously difficult to calculate objectively whether a particular currency is undervalued and, if so, by how much. For years, the Peterson Institute for International Economics produced a report evaluating exchange rates but stopped "because they were completely arbitrary," the think tank's chief Adam Posen told reporters recently. "China should have been hammered hard in the early, mid-2000s for massive manipulation of the currency," Posen said, but to do so now is "pretty close to absurd". — AFP

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This file photo taken on Jan 9, 2018 shows the destruction of the old city of Mosul with the city's old bridge over the Tigris River in the background. — AFP

Betrayal, guilt, hate: Mosul society still broken

Haytham Salem has not spoken to his sister in years, but this is no ordinary family feud. When Islamic State jihadists overran Iraq's Mosul, he fled but his nephew joined them. Nearly two years since the group was ousted from the northern Iraqi city, seeds of distrust, betrayal and resentment planted during jihadist rule have begun bearing fruit in Mosul. Some families whose members supported IS have become pariahs, shunned by their onetime neighbors and friends.

Others are split by guilt, with relatives who stayed in Mosul after IS' 2014 takeover blaming those who fled for abandoning them to the militants. Salem, 34, and his sister are among those still estranged. When IS burst into their hometown, he escaped to safety in the nearby Kurdish region, while his sister and her children remained in Mosul. "She still reproaches me for not having asked about her. But the jihadists banned cell phones and I had no idea where she was," he says. IS quickly turned Mosul into the Iraqi capital of its so-called "caliphate", enlisting both locals and foreigners to impose its ultra-conservative version of Islamic law. Salem's nephew joined the group, but his whereabouts are now unknown - and his mother, spurned because of her son's actions, has not been allowed to move back into her neighborhood. "The truth is we still don't know what happened to her son, and security forces won't even let her go home," says Salem.

'So much hate'

During IS' three-year reign over Mosul, it restricted communication and travel out of the city and encouraged

residents to report on relatives or neighbors who did not abide by Islamic law. That distrust has lingered, says 30-year-old Raghid Ali, whose family is still suffering the aftershocks of his cousin's enlistment in IS. "After the liberation, I showed security forces where he used to hide. My relationship with my uncle really deteriorated after that," says Ali, who is unemployed.

Mosul was wrested back from IS neighborhood by neighborhood in a blistering, months-long offensive by US-backed Iraqi forces that ended in 2017. While the city has seen some reconstruction, entire neighborhoods are still mounds of rubble, littered with corpses and unexploded ordnance. The social fabric isn't faring much better, says Umm Ali. For years, the 42-year-old housewife was stuck in one IS-held district while her sister was trapped in another. When Umm Ali's nephew was executed by militants, she was unable to reach her sister's home to comfort her. As soon as their neighborhoods were freed, she rushed over to be reunited with her sister and mourn together. But, says Umm Ali, it was too late. "She stubbornly refused to understand that our neighborhood was besieged by the jihadists. She kicked me out of her house," says the mother of three, dressed in a black robe and matching scarf. "I don't know why there's so much hate between Mosul's people today. We should be more compassionate towards one another after everything we lived through."

Repairing the rifts

Consecutive decades of conflict have torn at Iraq's diverse social fabric, with rifts not only between the coun-

try's diverse sectarian communities but within them. After IS, hundreds of thousands of people remain displaced across Iraq - including many with perceived militant ties. To be allowed home, they need to be cleared by security forces and approved by their local authorities. But until then, they remain stuck in camps, where rights groups say they could be re-radicalized.

Mohsen Saber, a shopkeeper in Mosul's historical centre, says the onus was on the Iraqi government "to take some real measures" to resolve these outstanding challenges. "You need to address the issue of the jihadists' families: judge those involved in crimes and reintegrate the rest in society," says the 26-year-old Iraqi. "Some really had nothing to do with IS and even opposed their relatives who became jihadists," he adds.

Sheikh Ali Al-Tamimi, a tribal dignitary, said Iraq's entrenched clan networks could also play a mediating role. Some tribes in the country's Sunni-majority west have already begun facilitating family returns. "A mother, a father, a wife or a child of a jihadist who didn't support the group is not to be blamed," says Tamimi. "Nor can a bearer of burdens bear another's burdens," he added, evoking a Quranic verse.

And Amal Mohammed, a human rights activist in Mosul, says civil society must be integrated - lest the demons of a not-so-distant past make a comeback. "Mosul needs civic education programs in schools and universities to erase these radical ideas," she says. "Otherwise, with the unemployment and government corruption, terrorists will begin recruiting again." — AFP

Morocco's sole refinery battles for survival

Three years after it was liquidated for racking up billions of euros worth of debt, Morocco's sole oil refinery and one-time economic flagship is struggling to attract a buyer and survive. A self-declared "national front" - comprising employees, economists and union leaders - is leading the charge to salvage refining company SAMIR, while a trade court desperately seeks a new owner. They face a tough battle, including a court deadline of July 18 to seal the refinery's fate. The firm was liquidated in 2016 after it was unable to honor some four billion euros (\$4.5 billion at current prices) in borrowing.

The refinery was set up in 1959 by the Moroccan government and sold in 1997 to the Corral group, a Saudi-Swedish enterprise that holds a majority stake of more than 67 percent. Work at the refinery, which had a capacity of more than 150,000 barrels a day, had already wound down a year before it was dissolved. But nearly 800 employees remain on the payroll, albeit on slashed salaries scratched together from company coffers and creditors.

The workers' fate now hangs in the balance, according to staff representative Houcine El Yamani, who has spearheaded efforts by the "national front" to salvage the facility. "We have made tremendous efforts" to pressure the state into reviving SAMIR since work stopped in 2015 at the plant in Mohammedia, between Rabat and the economic hub Casablanca, Yamani said. Such efforts include sit-ins and press conferences. "We still have hope of finding a solution," he added.

A "national front" report submitted last year to Moroccan authorities denounced the 1997 privatization of the refinery as a "big sham" and the sale to Corral as "totally lacking in transparency". "The Corral group did not respect any of the terms of the contract (including pledges to invest funds to develop the refinery), dragging the sole national refinery into an infernal spiral," said the report. The drop in global oil prices in 2014 affected SAMIR, but the "national front" says bad management was the main factor behind the firm's woes, as debts mounted and attempts to satisfy creditors failed.

'Sold to scrap'

After its liquidation in March 2016 by a Casablanca court, a committee of trustees was set up to find a buyer and safeguard jobs for



Morocco's sole oil refinery in Mohammedia, near Casablanca, is seen on Saturday. — AFP

employees. "Around 30 international groups showed an interest," but nothing materialized, Yamani said. The "national front" also said the government could have been more pro-active. "In the absence of any government action, the refinery's assets risk being sold to scrap by the kilogram," the coalition of employees, economists and union leaders said in its report.

Minister of Energy and Mines, Aziz Rebbah, dismissed claims that the government has no interest in salvaging the oil refinery. "We have nothing against it," he told AFP. "If a buyer comes forth we will examine the proposal," he added. Morocco is totally dependent on oil imports and the winding up of SAMIR's operations has left the North African country more reliant than ever on imports of refined oil products. A report earlier this year by the International Energy Agency noted that "the closure of the country's only refinery... has clear implications for the security of oil supply" in Morocco.

The court that liquidated SAMIR three years ago has extended a deadline to keep the refinery open a dozen times. The last extension expires on July 18, when SAMIR will know if it has a buyer or if it will be sold "in bits and pieces", according to Moroccan media reports. As the battle for SAMIR's survival plays out, another legal fight is underway between the refinery's main shareholder, Saudi-Ethiopian billionaire Mohammed Al-Amoudi, and the government. Amoudi - who was arrested in Saudi Arabia in 2017 as part of a vast anti-corruption campaign - is demanding \$1.5 billion in compensation from Morocco over SAMIR's demise, according to Moroccan news website Media24. — AFP

N Macedonia deal 'last straw' for angry Greeks

Five months after angry rallies in major cities against Greece's controversial name agreement with North Macedonia, the issue barely registers in the July 7 election campaign. But the so-called Prespes Agreement between Athens and Skopje that renamed the former Yugoslav republic after a bitter 27-year dispute was a tipping point for many voters, especially in the Greek northern region of Macedonia. "After the crisis, poverty, penury and unemployment, it was the last straw," says Christos Biglikoudis, a resident of Pella, northern Greece. "The government betrayed us. They're selling out our homeland," says the 39-year-old laborer, standing in front of the cafe he was forced to shut down because of the economic crisis.

Behind him, on the town square, stands a statue of Alexander the Great, one of Greece's foremost military heroes. Alexander was born in Pella, once the capital of the ancient Macedonian kingdom and today just across the border from North Macedonia. What was ancient Macedonia today also includes parts of North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Albania. But to many in northern Greece, Macedonia is just Greek. "People here are very angry. I cannot understand how people voted for Syriza," says Biglikoudis, referring to the leftist party of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who brokered the Prespes Agreement with his Skopje counterpart Zoran Zaev.

In European Parliament elections in May, Tsipras' party was defeated by nearly 9.5 points by the conservative New Democracy party, which strongly opposed the name deal as harmful to Greek interests. In that campaign, Syriza lost voters across Macedonia, in some areas falling behind New Democracy by as many as 20 percentage points. The debacle was compounded a week later, when New Democracy took all but two of Greece's regions in local elections.

Tsipras himself has freely admitted earlier that the Prespes Agreement - which saw him and Zaev nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize - was "damaging".

"There was political cost ... there were repercussions nationwide," he told state TV ERT in May. Nikos Marantzidis, a pollster and professor of Balkan studies at the university of Macedonia, argues that the Prespes Agreement gave New Democracy a sorely needed "psychological and moral boost" after years on the defensive.

In the previous election in 2015, the conservatives had to defend themselves against accusations of "collaborating" and "betraying" Greece to its creditors by imposing austerity. This time round, it is Syriza being accused of treason in these parts. "They should be hanged," says Yiannis, a 70-year-old pensioner. "Someone will be found to carry this out, they will not get away."

An unexpected winner

Among it all, there was one unexpected result. The main apparent beneficiary of the Prespes Agreement was a new nationalist party, Greek Solution, which picked up 4.18 percent of the vote nationwide on its first showing, securing a European parliament seat. Greek Solution is headed by Kyriakos Velopoulos, a former far-right lawmaker and journalist who later turned to TV sales. Velopoulos, who is strongly pro-Russian and keeps a photo of Vladimir Putin in his office, has faced ridicule for peddling so-called "blessed" toothpaste purportedly made by Orthodox monks and letters allegedly written by Jesus Christ.

There has also been amusement over the fact that the fledgling party leader, who is balding, is also straight-facedly promoting hair loss lotion. But the controversy hasn't hurt Velopoulos' appeal. His party reached out on social media with patriotic rhetoric, and in some parts of northern Greece finished third in the European ballot with percentages near 8.0 percent. Velopoulos has cast himself as an alternative to neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn, formerly Greece's third-strongest party. Golden Dawn's leadership is mired in a long-running trial over crimes allegedly committed by party members, among them the 2013 murder of an anti-fascist rapper. "We want Greek patriots who are Golden Dawn voters to come to us." — AFP

Business

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SAN JOSE: In this file photo taken on May 1, 2018 Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg speaks during the annual F8 summit at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center. — AFP

Aussie watchdog set to regulate tech giants

'A critical point in considering the impact of digital platforms on society'

SYDNEY: Australia's competition watchdog is poised to call for far-reaching new regulations on Facebook, Google and other tech giants which could have global ramifications for how they make money and choose the content people consume.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's recommendations, if confirmed, would be among the strongest yet in a drive to rein in the power of digital behemoths amid a host of worldwide concerns ranging from anti-trust issues to privacy abuse, and their role in spreading disinformation and hateful content. Following an 18-month inquiry into the power of digital platforms, the ACCC is due to issue its final report by June 30.

It is expected to include proposals for sweeping controls over tech companies' handling of personal data and their use of "opaque" algorithms to rank how they display advertisements, search results and content. In a 328-page preliminary report

issued in December, the ACCC had raised alarm over the "substantial" market power wielded by the likes of Google and Facebook, and notably the "lack of transparency" in their operations.

"We are at a critical point in considering the impact of digital platforms on society," said the report, initiated by the conservative government at the behest of Australia's main media organizations. The report focused particular attention on the huge impact Google and Facebook have had on Australia's news industry, with the number of newspaper and online journalists falling more than 20 percent since 2014 as digital advertising revenues were overwhelmingly captured by the two tech titans.

"While the ACCC recognizes their significant benefits to consumers and businesses, there are important questions to be asked about the role the global digital platforms play in the supply of news and journalism in Australia," it said. A set of preliminary proposals set out in the report, many of which are expected to figure in the final conclusions, include greater regulation over the handling of personal data, similar to Europe's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) introduced last year. It also called for new penalties for invasion of privacy and greater controls on merger and acquisition activity by the biggest digital firms.

Growing power of Big Tech

One of its most radical suggestions is the creation of an Algorithm Review Board to monitor the complex formulae used to deliver advertisements, and rank news content and referral services to news media. The ACCC said such a regulator was needed to ensure the big digital players do not "favor their own business interests, through their market power and presence across multiple markets". "There are also issues with the role of digital platforms in determining what news and information is accessed by

Australians, how this information is provided, and its range and reliability."

ACCC chairman Rod Sims has said regulatory authorities in the United States, Britain, Europe and other areas are closely monitoring the outcome of the Australian inquiry as they all mull possible responses to the growing power of tech titans. Prime Minister Scott Morrison's government has already taken controversial steps targeting Big Tech, including introducing criminal penalties for executives of social media companies which permit the distribution of violent content on their platforms and an unprecedented law forcing tech firms to help security services break encrypted communications.

Tech companies have warned that enacting many of the ACCC's proposed recommendations would be impractical, or lead firms to simply avoid doing business in Australia. "We obviously need really clear rules for the internet that protect privacy,

safety, the economic and social benefits of technology while also protecting competition and innovation," said Sunita Bose, head of the DIGI lobbying group formed by Google, Facebook, Twitter and other firms to deal with Australian regulators.

But, in an interview with Nine media newspapers ahead of the ACCC release, Bose cautioned that some of the watchdog's recommendations, on top of the government's earlier measures, could not only hurt the big players but have an even greater impact on start-ups and smaller firms with limited resources to meet new regulatory demands. She warned in particular against attempts to monitor and regulate algorithms, which she said "constitute highly sensitive commercial information". "The prospect of having to disclose such sensitive information will serve as a deterrent to global digital companies and start-ups initiating or expanding their operations in Australia," she said. — AFP

Protectionism slammed as SE Asian leaders rally to trade pact

BANGKOK: Southeast Asian leaders made an impassioned plea against protectionism at a regional summit in Bangkok yesterday, warning that a dragging US-China trade spat could hammer their export-led economies. Tit-for-tat tariffs between Washington and Beijing have cast a dark cloud over global growth forecasts and experts warn any drop-off in spending by the world's two biggest economies is likely to hit Southeast Asia hard.

Regional leaders are alarmed over "the un-abating tide of protectionism", according to the final statement of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit that closed Sunday in Bangkok. "The winds of protectionism are hurting our multilateral trading system," Thailand's junta leader-turned-premier Prayut Chan-O-cha said. He added the bloc would carry their trade conflict concerns to a G20 meeting in Japan next week.

Leaders also called for urgency in concluding talks on a China-led trade pact this year, which once inked will be the world's

biggest. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) includes all 10 ASEAN economies, plus India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. "It (RCEP) will help off-set any impact from the ongoing trade conflict," said Prayut.

The pact is seen as a mechanism for China to draft the rules of Asia-Pacific trade, following a US retreat from the region as it withdrew from another trade pact at the start of President Donald Trump's administration. But progress has stuttered in recent months, with India digging in over fears cheap Chinese goods could flood its massive consumer markets. Other issues, including dispute settlement and the exclusion of certain goods, still need to be "ironed out", said a Malaysian Foreign Ministry official yesterday. "We've missed the target to sign RCEP for quite a number of years already," Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob told reporters.

Splits over Rohingya

A controversial plan to repatriate the persecuted Rohingya minority and ongoing tussles in the disputed South China Sea were also tackled by leaders at the summit, which Thailand is chairing this year. ASEAN leaders often put out an image of unity during the annual summits. But the forum has been criticized for allowing diplomatic niceties to outweigh concrete action on the sharpest problems facing the region.

One of those is the return of Rohingya Muslims to Myanmar from squalid refugee camps in Bangladesh, where more than

740,000 have fled since a 2017 army crackdown on the stateless minority. Malaysia has been the bloc's most outspoken member on the issue and it called for "citizenship" to be a cornerstone of any repatriation plan.

That flies in the face of Myanmar's official policy, which denies the Rohingya full citizenship and the accompanying rights, instead labeling them "Bengalis" — illegal migrants from Bangladesh. ASEAN has come under fire for suggesting the refugees will repatriate within two years. Virtually none have volunteered to return to Myanmar so far, citing safety concerns and lack of citizenship. A final statement from the weekend summit said ASEAN leaders supported Myanmar's efforts to "facilitate the voluntary return of displaced persons in a safe, secure and dignified manner". The statement did not include the term Rohingya.

Disputes in the flashpoint South China Sea also emerged at the summit, where the Philippines protested Beijing's sweeping claims in the resource-rich waterway. Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte said he was "disappointed" that a much-delayed code of conduct between ASEAN countries and China has seen little progress. Without such a blueprint there was a greater chance "for miscalculations that may spiral out of control," he added. A "Bangkok Declaration" on combating marine waste was also endorsed at the weekend summit, though environmentalists argued it does not do enough to reduce the region's mounting plastic problem. —AFP

Philippine telco to roll out Huawei-backed 5G service

MANILA: The Philippines' Globe Telecom said it will soon launch Southeast Asia's first 5G broadband service next month using Huawei technology, despite US blacklisting of the Chinese giant over cybersecurity concerns. The system uses wireless radios instead of fibre optic cables to deliver service to thousands of customers in a nation that suffers from a lack of fast connections.

US President Donald Trump put Huawei, the world's number two smartphone maker, on a blacklist over national security concerns just over a month ago. Manila is a historic Washington ally, but Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has pulled away to attract Chinese business and investment. Huawei has emerged as a key bone of contention in the wider China-US trade war that has seen tit-for-tat tariffs imposed on hundreds of billions of dollars worth of goods.

Last week its founder, Ren Zhengfei, announced the company would slash production over the next two years as it grapples with a US push to isolate the company internationally. But that has not

derailed the effort in the Philippines, where Globe announced last year that Huawei Technologies and other vendors were preparing fifth-generation fixed wireless broadband.

Globe president and chief executive Ernest Cu said in a statement: "We made a crucial step in fulfilling our goal of connecting more Filipino homes, and our vision of bringing first-world internet to the Philippines." US Defense Secretary Mike Pompeo earlier warned the Philippines and other nations during a visit to Manila in March against using technology from Huawei.

US officials suspect Beijing could use Huawei's products to spy on foreign governments. The company denies the allegations. Apart from Globe, Huawei is also contracted to supply video surveillance gear to a \$400 million Philippine police project to deter crime in several cities. A Philippine police spokesman told reporters last month that they investigated espionage allegations against the Chinese firm, but "have not uncovered any evidence to confirm that Huawei is actually spying". —AFP

Major central banks are shifting to dovish rhetoric

US Federal Reserve, European Central Bank, and Bank of Japan hint at monetary easing

KUWAIT: Undoubtedly a vigorous economic power, the US is now on track to hit the longest economic expansion ever. Unemployment is near its record 50-year low at 3.6%, while inflation remains subdued just below the 2% target at 1.8%. The combination of the two gauges is known as the "misery index", which now illustrates Americans are less miserable than they've ever been as the figure hit its lowest level in 63 years. Nevertheless, investors still have reason to distress as the global economy watches the two largest economic powers battle in a trade war that has shaken markets for almost a year. In addition to the \$250 billion worth of imported goods from China, Trump is prepared to extend tariffs to the remaining \$300 billion.

The US President also blacklisted China's Huawei, citing security concerns which effectively banned US companies from doing business with the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker. In retaliation, China imposed tariffs of 25% on \$110 billion worth of US goods. Limited in its ammunition given the trade deficit, China has also indicated it would strike back through limiting rare earth supplies to the US. These minerals are important to manufacturers of high-tech consumer goods and China is by far the dominant supplier. After over a month with no contact, some traders say chances for a truce are low. Looking ahead, negotiators have confirmed a meeting at the G20 summit on June 28-29 in an effort to unravel the dispute.

The US Federal Reserve held interest rates steady in its meeting last Wednesday, though signaled possible rate cuts of as much as 0.5% over the remainder of 2019. In their statement, Fed officials said US economic activity was rising at a "moderate" rate rather than a "solid rate", and are expecting growth of 2.1% this year and 2% in 2020. The probability of the bank holding rates steady is now minuscule, even as the Fed claims it will wait for a clearer picture on current risks facing the economy. The probability of a cut is now widely anticipated, with Bloomberg pricing a 100% chance of a cut in July. Central banks of Australia, the Philippines, and Indonesia have followed similar paths, hinting at the chance of lower rates.

Increased economic uncertainty and inflation revealing an unexpected drop signaled that an interest rate

cut was looming. Still, whether or not the central bank will trigger pre-emptive monetary easing to keep the expansion in good health is still up for debate. The dovish sentiment shaped a positive response from equities and weakened the greenback. The dollar is on course for its biggest decline since late March, down more than 1.4% versus the safe-haven yen.

Thanks to predominantly dovish central banks, equities closed at record highs following the announcements. The US benchmark S&P 500 hit a YTD high of 2,964 last week, reflecting the Fed's dovish tilt prior to the G20 meeting next month where the US and Chinese presidents will meet and discuss a trade deal. Government debt in the US continued to rally, with demand for safer assets pushing the yield on the benchmark 10-year treasury under the 2% mark for the first time since 2016 at 1.9740. Gold prices also reflected the race to safe havens, reaching a five-year high of 1,410 on Friday.

EUROPE

ECB similarly hints at monetary easing

The European Central Bank's monetary policy has somewhat mimicked that of the US Federal Reserve in supporting their respective economies. Yet the response to the stimulus in Europe has been far more timid than that of the US, with ECB president Mario Draghi pointing to the increase in trade conflicts as an explanation. Draghi claims that these problems remain highly relevant as tensions have created a sharp slowdown in global trade which has spilled over to the Eurozone given its largely export-oriented economies (most notably in Germany).

German industrial production fell 1.9% within Q2 of 2019, far worse than expectations of a 0.4% decline. As trade uncertainty may lead business to delay investments, the worry is that the manufacturing weakness will spill over to other parts of the economy. Looking at inflation, the euro-zone figure slowed to 1.2% in May, down from 1.7% in April. The labor market remains sturdy, with unemployment at its lowest level since the financial crisis at 7.6% and noteworthy rises in wages. The euro sank just below the psychological level of 1.12 at 1.1179 initially following Draghi's comments, though has since recovered and is currently trading at around 1.1366.

UK

BOE expects zero growth in Q2 2019

Unlike both the ECB and Fed which have both signaled willingness to lower interest rates unless global outlook improves, the Bank of England struck a less dovish tone. The bank voted unanimously to keep interest rates on hold at 0.75% and stuck to their message that rates would need to rise as long as Britain avoids a detrimental no-deal Brexit. However, economic growth is expected to drop to zero in the second quarter as the BOE claimed, "underlying growth in the UK appears to have weakened slightly in the first half of the year relative to 2018 to a rate a little below its potential".

Still, the UK economy has been remarkably resilient in the face of Brexit uncertainty. With record employment numbers and wage growth largely outpacing inflation, economists feel there are little signs that inflationary pressures are building up to a point that would justify an early rate rise. Financial markets, which are not focused almost entirely on Brexit developments, also have global trade tensions to take in.

The next likely candidate for Prime Minister - Boris Johnson - has claimed he will leave the UK with or without a deal by the October 31st deadline, stating his commitment to present an agreement he believes the EU will settle on. However, the EU has repeatedly claimed their unwillingness to renegotiate, leaving a possibly problematic outcome. Relentlessly struggling since the 2016 Brexit referendum, the sterling fell to its near YTD lows of 1.2504 against the dollar last week and has since recovered to around the 1.2742 level.

ASIA

Stubborn inflation

Joining the US and ECB, the Bank of Japan has also dropped hints of additional easing as the trade war mounts pressure on the slowing economy. Governor Kuroda made an effort to dispel rumors that the BOJ has run out of ammunition, saying the central bank would combine interest rate cuts with bigger asset buying if needed. "Downside risks regarding overseas economies are big, so we must carefully watch how



they affect Japan's corporate and household sentiment," the BOJ said in a statement announcing the policy decision. Fighting stubbornly weak inflation has forced the BOJ to maintain massive stimulus programs even as dramatically low rates hit financial institution's profits. With rates already below zero and a huge bond buying program, analysts feel the BOJ has little tools remaining to fight a possible recession. Despite years of stimulus, annual core inflation hit 0.9% in April, still far from the BOJ's 2% target.

Commodities

Oil prices soared Friday on tensions in the Middle East after Iran shot down a US military drone. Also adding support to oil prices was the announcement of rate-cut possibilities by the Fed which would stimulate the US economy, the world's largest oil-consuming country. Tensions have been high in the region, which is the source of more than 20% of the world's oil output. Strains began with the June 13 attacks on two tankers near the Strait of Hormuz - a crucial passage-way for oil supplies in the gulf - which Washington blames Tehran for and Iran continues to deny. The trade war had sent oil prices lower in recent weeks after Brent reached a 2019 high of \$75 per barrel in April. It is currently trading at a June high of \$65 per barrel. OPEC and its allies look set to extend its deal on cutting 1.2 million barrels per day of production, reconvening on July 1st and 2nd.

Carrefour sells China business to Suning.com

PARIS: French supermarket giant Carrefour said yesterday it had agreed to sell 80 percent of its China business to leading Chinese retailer Suning. One of the world's biggest food retailers, the French group is in the middle of a major reorganization, with the deal valuing its Chinese operations at 1.4 billion euros (\$1.6 billion), the company said in a statement.

"The purchase price for the acquisition of 80 percent of Carrefour China shares is 4.8 billion renminbi, or 620 million euros," it said, indicating the deal was expected to be completed by the year's end. This price is subject to a closing adjustment mechanism, based on the evolution of Carrefour China's net financial debt and working capital, it added. The implied enterprise value of 1.4 billion euros includes debt and minority interests.

Carrefour Group will retain a 20-percent stake in the business and two of the seven seats on Carrefour China's supervisory board, although it includes a clause which provides "several liquidity windows" for it to sell that stake. Present in China since 1995, Carrefour operates a network of 210 hypermarkets and 24 convenience stores, and last year posted sales of 3.6 billion euros, down almost 10 percent on the figure for 2017. A major appliance seller and e-commerce platform, Suning.com is one of the largest non-government retailers in China, running a network of over 8,881 stores in more than 700 cities. —AFP

What's next for EU top jobs? Five things to know

BRUSSELS: European leaders failed to agree Friday on a package of senior nominations on the team that will guide the EU for the next five years, with divisions still too deep for compromise. The heads of government are due back in Brussels on June 30 to choose a new president of the European Commission to replace Jean-Claude Juncker and Brussels' most senior officials.

Spitzenkandidat spurned

Since 2014 and the Lisbon treaty, the EU has experimented with a process that would give first dibs for top jobs to the party that comes out first in EU elections. As usual, the centre-right European People's Party — the political movement backed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel — came out the winner last month, though with a historically low share of the vote.

The Spitzenkandidat — or lead candidate — for the EPP is German MEP Manfred Weber. French President Emmanuel Macron says Weber doesn't have enough left to take the EU's top job, head of the European Commission, having never been a national leader or high-profile minister. After the summit on Thursday, Macron said he viewed the Spitzenkandidaten process as dead — with none of the group leaders commanding a majority — and said new names were needed to fill the biggest roles.

Who now?

Merkel was not ready to pronounce the parliament's preferred nomination process dead and buried, but she took note that 46-year-old Weber does not appear to enjoy enough support to win through. In which case, who will lead the Commission and what does that mean for the bagging over the posts of president of the European Council, speaker of parliament or EU foreign policy high representative? The current

head of the Council, former Polish premier Donald Tusk, who is overseeing the appointment says the 28 leaders have agreed that the jobs package must better represent Europe as a whole.

This means find at least two women for top jobs, and tying to strike a balance between east and west, between large countries and small ones, founding members and new arrivals. All this, plus, each of the four main political "families" in the majority coalition — the conservative EPP, the socialist S&D, the Liberals and the Greens — are seeking a share of the cake.

Who gets the Commission?

Juncker's post in the union's Berlaymont headquarters is the most sought after post and arguably the most powerful, a chief bureaucrat with an increasingly political role. In recent years it has been dominated by the centre-right EPP, but Juncker was also a former Luxembourg prime minister and he owes the job as much to his friends on the Council as to parliamentary support.

Weber, while a veteran European Parliament lawmaker, has no executive experience or wide political base and was opposed by Macron and many other leaders. Nevertheless, diplomats say the Council members expect the EPP as the most powerful, if diminished, group to have to provide the nominee. The most commonly cited alternative is Michel Barnier, a former French minister and European commissioner who led the union's negotiations with Britain over its imminent Brexit divorce.

Barnier's Brexit role gave him a chance to tour European capitals and to brief national leaders in what often seemed a proxy campaign. But would Berlin back a Frenchman after Macron torpedoed Weber? Looking eastwards and south, two Croats have also been named in connection to the top job, President Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic — a former NATO deputy secretary-general — and Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic. Bulgaria's Kristalina Georgieva, a former commissioner turned chief executive of the World Bank, might also be asked to return from Washington.

What else is open?

The next most prestigious job in Brussels is that of president of the European Council, currently Tusk, who represents EU heads of state. The next president will start work on



DORTMUND: German Chancellor Angela Merkel gives a speech during the German Protestant Church Day (Kirchentag) meeting. —AFP

December 1 for five years. Belgium's outgoing liberal premier Charles Michel and Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė have been linked to the role. The European Parliament is due to start its next session on July 2 and may move quickly to elect a new speaker — also given the title "president" — to replace Italian EPP member Antonio Tajani.

The EU leaders will, however, want to influence that choice as it is a bargaining chip in the broader top job game. They will also have to find a replacement for Federico Mogherini as the European High Representative for foreign affairs. And lastly, at some point the leaders will have to decide on a new director of the European Central Bank, although this is being treated separately from the main package.

Why June 30?

The leaders have only given themselves a week to break the logjam, but they want to meet and make their nominations before the new parliament sits. But the delay also gives six of the most powerful leaders — from France, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain — a chance to meet on the sidelines of the Osaka G20 summit in Japan. And it is there, far from the political intrigue of Brussels, that the decision may be made. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	303.950
Euro	348.630
Sterling Pound	390.420
Canadian dollar	231.670
Turkish lira	53.510
Swiss Franc	314.650
US Dollar Buying	296.600
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.833
Indian Rupees	4.375
Pakistani Rupees	2.022
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.717
Nepali Rupees	2.728
Singapore Dollar	225.900
Hongkong Dollar	38.916
Bangladesh Taka	3.585
Philippine Peso	5.918
Thai Baht	9.889
Malaysian ringgit	77.737
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.107
Qatari Riyal	83.537
Omani Riyal	789.994
Bahraini Dinar	807.630
UAE Dirham	82.809
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.750
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.216

Yemen Rival/for 1000	1.221
Tunisian Dinar	107.020
Jordanian Dinar	429.460
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.232
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.590
Canadian Dollar	230.080
Sterling Pound	388.065
Euro	346.750
Swiss Frank	297.770
Bahrain Dinar	807.360
UAE Dirhams	83.060
Qatari Riyals	84.295
Saudi Riyals	81.855
Jordanian Dinar	429.480
Egyptian Pound	18.185
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.718
Indian Rupees	4.362
Pakistani Rupees	1.934
Bangladesh Taka	3.596
Philippines Peso	5.895
Cyprus pound	18.065
Japanese Yen	3.825
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.731
Malaysian Ringgit	74.235
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.635
Thai Bhat	10.875

Turkish Lira	52.595	
Singapore dollars	221.307	
BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.381508	0.395408
Czech Korune	0.005478	0.014778
Danish Krone	0.042212	0.047212
Euro	0.339312	0.353012
Georgian Lari	0.131848	0.131848
Hungarian 0.001145	0.001335	
Norwegian Krone	0.031719	0.036919
Romanian Leu	0.004794	0.081959
Russian ruble	0.004794	0.004794
Slovakia	0.009078	0.019078
Swedish Krona	0.028468	0.033468
Swiss Franc	0.305665	0.316665
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.202910	0.214910
New Zealand Dollar	0.194752	0.204252
Asia		
Canada Dollar	0.224909	0.233909
US Dollars	0.299850	0.305150
US Dollars Mint	0.300350	0.305150
Bangladesh Taka	0.003002	0.003803
Chinese Yuan	0.042770	0.046270

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036978	0.039728
Indian Rupee	0.003775	0.004547
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002754	0.002934
Korean Won	0.000251	0.000266
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069873	0.075873
Nepalese Rupee	0.002674	0.003014
Pakistan Rupee	0.001413	0.002183
Philippine Peso	0.005782	0.006082
Singapore Dollar	0.218933	0.228933
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001349	0.001929
Taiwan	0.009975	0.010155
Thai Baht	0.009524	0.010074
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.791663	0.808163
Egyptian Pound	0.018197	0.021557
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000209	0.000269
Jordanian Dinar	0.423796	0.432796
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021324	0.045324
Omani Riyal	0.783162	0.788842
Qatar Riyal	0.079220	0.084160
Saudi Riyal	0.079967	0.081267
Syrian Pound	0.001288	0.001508
Tunisian Dinar	0.099210	0.107210
Turkish Lira	0.045831	0.055676
UAE Dirhams	0.081329	0.083029
Yemeni Riyal	0.000988	0.001068

Business

Angola bounces back after a slump in fuel production

‘It is a new era. I see a growing interest from investors’

LUANDA: Angola is bouncing back after its fuel production slumped last year to a decade low as President Joao Lourenco steers reforms vital to the country's economy and wins approval from oil majors. "It is a new era. I see a growing interest from investors," says Guido Brusco, vice-president for sub-Saharan Africa of Italian giant ENI. "We should come back to 2012/2013 to see the same level of interest" as that now being shown by investors, Brusco told AFP on the sidelines of a conference earlier this month in Luanda.

France's Total, the premier operator in Africa's second-largest oil producer after Nigeria with output of 650,000 barrels per day, confirms as much. "There is a business environment which could lead us soon to sign several agreements," says a Total spokesperson. "A new page of Angola's petrol industry is clearly opening."

The arrival of Lourenco, who succeeded Jose Eduardo dos Santos who ruled for 36 years, has marked a radical step for the OPEC-member country. When Lourenco took office oil prices were struggling to come back from a slump going back to 2014 but he has launched a string of initiatives in order to tackle falling production.

With oil Angola's primary resource, that was an overriding priority given that production of "black gold" last year slid just below 1.5 million bpd, its lowest level for 10 years — the consequence of low prices and a freezing of new projects. "We were in an environment of low prices and firms found it difficult to get responses from (state producer) Sonangol to advance dossiers," an oil sector source who requested anonymity told AFP.

Before embarking on reforms Lourenco first spent several months consulting the industry to pinpoint means of relaunching activity. A series of policies, including tax perks, were introduced, enshrined in several presidential decrees which, Brusco says, have

managed to "improve the investment climate." Brusco says he served on a committee to deliver proposals to that effect "and the government endorsed those proposals."

Tax perks

Those decrees have allowed the development of resources which had previously been unviable and to relaunch exploration programs. The results of the favorable legal framework soon emerged. Within 12 months, Brusco says, ENI had discovered five fields. "Total and other actors are reevaluating a number of dossiers they had put on hold as unviable but which today could function," given the tax advantages, says the oil sector source.

Those include so-called satellite fields near to blocs which have already been exploited. Britain's BP and US rival ExxonMobil are also angling for new investments in Angola, according to Adam Pollard, senior upstream analyst for sub-Saharan Africa with Wood Mackenzie. "We have already seen new projects sanctioned by Total (Zinia 2, CLOV Phase 2 and Dalia Phase 3) and ENI, BP and ExxonMobil are also planning new investments," said Pollard.

Lourenco has also wielded a new broom at Sonangol, bringing changes to an influential firm which is also the biggest contributor to state coffers.

First, the president laid off COE Isabel dos Santos, daughter of the former head of state amid suspicions of financial wrongdoing — which Africa's richest woman roundly denies. Lourenco has also removed from Sonangol one of its key tasks — granting exploration and drilling permits, with that task now performed by new separate entity, the National Oil and Gas Agency (ANPG).

Lourenco explains such reforms are designed to "restructure" the sector in Angola and "create the con-



This file photo taken on November 8, 2018 shows a view of the Kaombo Norte, a Floating Production Storage and Offloading vessel (FPSO), a project operated by Total, the French multinational oil company, about 250km off the coast of Angola in the Atlantic Ocean. —AFP

ditions for making private investment attractive." And that is not all. Lourenco vowed to top industry players earlier this month that Angola is going "to intensify efforts to renew reserves and temper the large decline of oil production." In order to turn the sector around

dozens of new blocs are set to be sold off in the coming months. Luanda recognizes an urgent need to advance. Without new projects coming on stream production could slide below a million bpd by 2023, the Ministry of Oil warns. —AFP

Planned coal plant blackens mood in Kenya's idyllic Lamu

LAMU: In the Lamu archipelago, fishermen ply the channels between lush mangrove forests while life in an ancient Swahili town idles at the pace of the donkeys and boats which are the main means of transport. Life has changed little over the centuries in this part of Kenya's north coast, however residents fear their pristine environment will soon be blighted by a coal-fired power station spewing noxious gases.

"I think it is going to be terrible, it is going to destroy a lot of the environment here," says Thabit Omar Mohamed, 29, as he unwinds his fishing line from a block of wood, skewers a piece of shrimp on the hook, and tosses it into the water. "We believe so many people are going to have problems with their health like cancer, disease," he said.

Kenya's government is planning to build a 981 megawatt coal plant in Kwasasi, about 20 kilometers (13 miles) from Lamu town, a UNESCO world heritage site that is the oldest Swahili settlement in Africa. However construction has been stalled for years due to resistance from locals, and the National Environmental Tribunal will on Monday rule on the fate of the project, with activists contesting the conduct of an environmental impact assessment.

The natural beauty of the archipelago includes wide, endless beaches and waters rich in coral and marine life including five species of threatened turtles. Tourism and fishing are the main sources of income, and the former is only now recovering eight years after a British

couple was kidnapped on an island north of Lamu. If the coal plant is built, tourists "won't come to Lamu. It will be like a few years back," bemoans Mohamed's uncle Ali Sultan, who is out fishing with him. When not fishing, Sultan is a tour guide, and the small boat they are on, named "Lamu Uber", is also used to ferry tourists up and down the island.

Heritage in danger

The Kenyan government argues that the power plant is essential to drive economic growth, pointing to the use of coal by "highly developed" countries. However critics are baffled by a decision to turn to coal at a time when much of the world is doing the opposite and investing in increasingly cheaper renewable energies.

Especially as Kenya already leads in this regard, with most of its energy currently coming from hydropower, geothermal and wind sources. The country also committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent under the Paris Agreement. "We want development in Lamu but a coal power plant is not what we are asking for," said Khadija Shekuwe Famao of Save Lamu, a community group contesting the plant's construction.

Research by Greenpeace has shown the plant will increase air pollution and lead to acid rain, while a cooling system which pumps warmed water back into the ocean could kill off marine life and coral reefs. UNESCO last week called for a halt to the plant's development ahead of its meeting in Azerbaijan in July, raising the possibility of the site being added to the list of World Heritage in Danger in 2020.

'Costly error'

The bulk of the \$2 billion project is being financed by China and it will be developed by Amu Power, a joint venture between a Kenyan firm and Oman's Gulf Energy. Construction will be carried out by China Power Global. The coal plant is part of a mega-project which includes the



LAMU: This picture taken on June 18, 2019 shows boys trawling a net to catch fish in low tide as other residents carry on with their daily activities on the nearby beach at the resort town of Lamu, a UNESCO world heritage site that is the oldest Swahili settlement in Africa. —AFP

construction of a port in Lamu, as well as highways and oil pipelines linked to landlocked South Sudan and Ethiopia.

The ambitious project is called Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET), and construction is well underway, with one of the first berths of the port nearly completed. The project has already had a severe impact on the environment, say Sultan and Mohamed, with dredging covering a key coral reef with silt and devastating a popular fishing spot.

In 2018 a court ordered the government to pay more than 4,500 fishermen compensation of \$18 million, a decision now under appeal. Last week, a report by the US-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis warned that electricity from the plant may cost consumers 10 times more than projected.

The report said the plant would be a "costly error" for the country, with the 25-year contract requiring a capacity pay-

ment of \$360 million annually even if no power is generated at the plant. It says that Kenya's energy demand growth has been much lower than estimated, due to lower than expected economic growth. The government's own 2017-2037 power development plan warns that if moderate growth continues as it has, the plant will be "grossly underutilized".

However Amu Power's chief operating officer Cyrus Kirima denies these concerns, insisting the electricity generated will be a fixed 7.8 US cents per kilowatt. He added that the coal plant would use the latest technology, which reduces emissions, and will also desalinate water for consumption on the water-scarce islands. "I think there is no point of getting scared by the coal plant, technology has evolved," he said. But most residents are not convinced. "LAPSSET, it has a lot of impact, but at least it is understandable. For the coal, there is no way you can understand it," said Famao. —AFP

Buy Mobil oil and win: KAICO celebrates 70 years of partnership with ExxonMobil

KUWAIT: KAICO, the exclusive distributor of Mobil lubricants in Kuwait since 1950, is celebrating 70 years of valued service to the Kuwait market, and is now offering a 'scratch and win' promotion with Mobil oil. Any customer who buys KD 5 worth of Mobil petrol engine oil gets a chance to win a trip to Formula 1 Abu Dhabi, gold coins and free Mobil 1 and Mobil super oil change. Every customer will be a winner - the promotion is valid until August 4, 2019. This offer is available at all KAICO outlets and major dealers in across Kuwait.

KAICO, which was established by the Al-Shaya and Al-Sagar families in 1936, has built a reputation over the years, with great pride associated with one of the leading global lubricants

brand ExxonMobil in Kuwait. KAICO General Manager Ashish Tandon described the relationship between Mobil lubricants and its customers: "Ours is a partnership driven by a common desire, which is to provide unsurpassed engine protection with lower oil consumption. Also, we always reiterate our commitment to provide customers the best Mobil products coupled with a great customer experience at all strategic locations in Kuwait and introduced door to door oil change facilities at your doorstep fully equipped by experienced technicians."

Sadiq Ali, Divisional Manager for Tyres and Lubricants, asked if all drivers are aware when to change oil. How often should they check and change oil? And importantly, choosing the right oil. "We at KAICO don't just supply you with the right lubricant for your needs - we also offer a range of lubricants related services, including oil condition monitoring, oil storage solutions, surveys and training. Most survey results have shown that even during the hot summer the product is performing beyond our customers' expectations. We have associated with major car dealers in Kuwait, supplying the leading synthetic oil in the world - Mobil 1 with all API and SAE grades," he said.



BoE boss dismisses claim on 'standstill'

LONDON: Bank of England Governor Mark Carney on Friday dismissed Boris Johnson's claims that there would be a "standstill" trade arrangement, in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Johnson, who is leading the race to become Britain's next prime minister, had argued this week that current arrangements would continue after Brexit, citing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) article 24 of the World Trade Organization treaty.

"There will be no tariffs, there will be no quotas because what we want to do is to get a standstill in our current arrangements under GATT 24, or whatever it happens to be, until such a time as we have negotiated" a free trade agreement, Johnson had said in a televised debate on Tuesday. However, Carney flatly denied that this would be the case in an interview with BBC Radio 4 on Friday. "The GATT rules are clear. GATT applies if you have an agreement, not if you have decided not to have an agreement or have been unable to come to an agreement," Carney said.

The BoE chief added that, if the EU wanted not to apply tariffs to British goods, then it would have to lower tariffs also to the rest of the world. "We should be clear that not having an agreement with the EU means there are tariffs automatically because the EU have to apply the same rules to us as they apply to everyone else," Carney continued. "We should be clear that 'no deal' means 'no deal' — it means there is a substantial change in the trading relationship with the EU. "That may be the choice that the country takes but it should be a choice that is taken with absolute clarity in terms of what that means." —AFP

Business

Nissan launches bold and powerful refreshed 2019 Maxima in Kuwait



KUWAITL Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain Company (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Nissan vehicles in the State of Kuwait, recently unveiled the new 2019 Nissan Maxima in its showroom located in Al Rai and Ahmadi. With captivating performance stance, 19-inch diamond-cut wheels, boomerang signature LED lighting framing the enlarged V-motion grille, the Maxima also offers Nissan Safety Shield 360, a suite of advanced driver-assist systems that supports the Nissan Intelligent Mobility vision to redefine how cars are driven, powered and integrated into society.

The launch of the Maxima across the region comes following an impressive world debut at the 2018 Los Angeles Auto Show in November last year. The model continues its reputation as an exciting near-luxury sports sedan with its 300-horsepower 3.5-liter V6 engine and sport-tuned steering, braking and suspension. Brand survey results from the region showed that Nissan Maxima was voted as #1 in the sedan segment vs. competitors in areas such as personality, inspired styling, exciting to drive, trendy, good driving performance and distinctive design.

The new 2019 Maxima embraces the visionary

Nissan Intelligent Mobility philosophy - which provides technology in a way that moves people to a better world. For Maxima, this includes the availability of Nissan Safety Shield 360, a suite of six advanced active safety and driver-assist technologies designed to help provide 360 degrees of active driver assistance, crash avoidance and pedestrian detection.

Safety Shield 360 includes Automatic Emergency Braking with Pedestrian Detection, Blind Spot Warning, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Lane Departure Warning and High Beam Assist. In addition to Safety Shield 360, the 2019 Maxima also expands the availability of Intelligent Cruise Control (ICC), High Beam Assist (HBA) and Traffic Sign Recognition (TSR).

Maxima's aggressive, updated exterior appearance was created by Nissan Design America in La Jolla, Calif. and features a more voluminous front grille with a deeper V-motion flow that carries into the hood and down the body to the redesigned rear tail lamps and rear fascia. The standard jewel-like LED headlights and Nissan Signature Daytime Running Lights add to the Maxima's premium, high performance appearance, along with the new, deep fascia design. The new rear

fascia includes integrated quad-tip exhaust finishers, while a new sport rear spoiler is also added to the Maxima SR grade. In addition, a new premium exterior paint color, Sunset Drift, has been added to the Maxima color palette.

Amazing inside features

Inside, the dramatic Maxima body is a driver-oriented cockpit and comfortable seating for all five occupants. Enhancing the Maxima's already high level of quality and premium luxury appointments is a new seat insert pattern and charcoal headliner and pillars for SR grades. The SR grade features special Rakuda Tan semi-aniline leather appointments, similar to that available on the Nissan GT-R Premium Interior Package.

The interior retains the Maxima's "Gliding Wing" interior layout that emphasizes the horizontal movement and easy access to all controls, but offers updated trim finishes and materials. Depending on grade level, the instrument panel, door panels, steering wheel insert, stitching, seat materials, headliner, pillars and A-pillar speaker grilles have been upgraded, providing a

more premium look and feel.

The 2019 Maxima also comes equipped with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, with 8-inch multi-touch color display, Bluetooth(r) Hands-free Phone System and Streaming audio via Bluetooth. The new Maxima's selection of audio and infotainment choices include a Bose(r) Premium Audio system with 11 speakers. Available Nissan Door to Door Navigation adds directions that move from your compatible smartphone to Maxima's touch-screen seamlessly. If you end up parking several blocks away, it can send a walking route to your phone.

The one-line destination search simplifies the process of finding a destination by providing a single text box to search for a Point of Interest or address. Lastly, over-the-air updates allow owners to update the audio unit software and maps via WiFi or a USB device without making a trip to the Dealer. Nissan Al Babtain invites its customers to visit its showrooms to experience the new Maxima - one of the best among Nissan's sedan line-up that showcases practicality, futuristic technology, design and an engaging time on the road.

VIVA's 'Al Neira' quarterly draw winners to be announced soon



KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, will announce soon the winners in the quarterly 'Al Neira' draw campaign, for both VIVA Postpaid and Prepaid customers. Customers earn 1 chance for every KD 1 they spend, increasing their chances to win every time they spend. With a grand total of more than \$ 300,000 to give away, VIVA gives its customers a wonderful opportunity to win 4 amazing cash prizes quarterly of \$10,000 each for three quarters, and a mega prize of \$200,000 at the final draw. Customers are able to accumulate winning chances upon any VIVA transaction through Direct Debit, VIVA website, VIVA Kiosks, VIVA App or by calling 102. Customers can enter the Draw by sending 300 to 567 as SMS for Free.



Al Tijari announces winners of Al Najma weekly account

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly draws on Al Najma Account and the draw on the "Salary and Cash on Top" campaign. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Latifa Al Jean. The results of the draw were as follows:

1- Al Najma weekly account - the prize of 5,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars and was for the share of Mr Adel Safar

Mohammad Mohammad.

2- The "Salary & Cash on Top campaign" prize of 1,000/- Kuwaiti Dinars and was for the share of Mr Shabnan Mohammad Al Ajmi.

The Bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000/-, monthly prize of KD 20,000/- and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000.

Al Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more

Burgan Bank names lucky winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

- HAROUN ABD ALHUSSAIN MOHAMMAD BAHMAN
- ADEL MAHMUD MOHAMMAD BIN NEKHI
- MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH ALI
- MUSAEED ABDULLAH HOMOUH ABDULLAH
- ABBAS AHMAD HAMAD ALHADDAD

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with

more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers Daily and Quarterly Draws, wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win. For more information on opening a Yawmi account, the new quarterly draw or on any of the bank's products and services, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch, or simply call the bank's Call Center. Customers can also log on to Burgan Bank's www.burgan.com for further information.

GBK to announce winner of 2nd Al Danah quarterly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is conducting the second quarterly Al Danah draw of the year to announce the winner of the KD 250,000 prize. The announcement, which will take place live on air on FM 88.8 'Q8 Pulse' (Nabd Al-Kuwait) during the "Diwanat Al Yaqout & Al Ansari" program, will be held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

Customers also have until June 30, 2019 to enter the third quarterly Al Danah draw of the year. The third draw of the year will be held on September 25, 2019 with a prize of KD 500,000. The fourth and final draw will take place on January 16, 2020 and will culminate in the announcement of the 2019 Al Danah Millionaire, who will receive a grand prize of one million Kuwaiti Dinars.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. A minimum of KD 200 is required to open an account and the same amount must be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to the account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the daily draw within two days.

To take part in the upcoming Al Danah quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw. Al Danah chances are added on a daily basis, meaning the more customers save and the longer they save for, the higher their chances are of winning! Furthermore, loyal customers are always rewarded, with the chances accumulated during the previous years rolling over to the next year's draws. Terms and conditions apply.

The Al Danah draws are all approved by and held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce. Gulf Bank has partnered with Ernst and Young Kuwait (EY) with

reference to the "Al Danah Prize Draw"

system in order to assist in assessing processes, technical controls considering relevant parameters and provide recommendations that are in line with industry leading practices.

The study was conducted in line with industry standards and control requirements relevant to similar prize draw schemes wherein a detailed review of prize draw management system, along with draw scheme parameters, data

extraction for draw, filtration of customers as per defined business criteria, and necessary system interactions were conducted to advise on any potential areas of improvements. To participate in this year's quarterly and annual draws, customers must keep the balance required by the Al Danah account. To deposit into their Al Danah account, customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 58 branches, or opt to directly transfer through the online banking service.

10,000, add to this they will automatically enter the weekly draw on KD 1,000. As for the expatriate customers categorized under Premier Banking Account with a salary KD of 1,700 and above, they will get instant cash gift.

The retirees with pension KD 1,000 & above will also get an instant cash gift of KD 150 when transferring their pension to the Bank and automatically enter the weekly draw on a prize of KD 1,000 and avail the benefits of this campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees working in private & public sector as well as the retirees. Further, the campaign provides customers with the opportunity to get additional benefits and take advantage of the advanced & unrivalled services & products the Bank provides to its customers to meet their needs and expectations.

What's On



Indian Embassy in Kuwait organizes International Yoga Day

The Embassy of India, Kuwait, organized the 5th Edition of International Day of Yoga in the embassy premises in the evening of June 20, 2019. Ambassador Ali Sulaiman Al-Saeid, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, was the Chief Guest of the event. Kamel Al-Abdul Jaleel, Acting Secretary General, National Council for Culture, Art and Letters, and Dr Tarek Elsheikh, Representative of the UN Secretary General and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), were the guests of honor for the evening.

The event started with Indian traditional ceremonial lighting of the lamp. A video message by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India was delivered on the occasion. The two guests of honor expressed their compliments and underscored the relevance of yoga in today's world. They appreciated the efforts of the Government of India towards spreading Yoga practice across the globe, highlighting that Yoga has the potential to promote Peace and Harmony.

The Ambassador of India Jeeva Sagar commented that yoga today is a global movement. The main attraction of the event was the on-stage performance of yoga exercises by yoga experts. The yoga celebration at the Indian Embassy was graced by about 400 people, including members of Diplomatic Corps, Kuwaiti friends, and members of the Indian diaspora.

KFH honors winners of Quran competition

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) recently honored the winners in the Quran memorization and recitation competition held under the title of "Illuminate your house with Quran" for participants up to the age of 25. 600 participants took part in the competition organized as part of KFH's Ramadan activities. The jury panel included 18 members including the previous winner of the Islamic World Quran competition, Sultan Al-Sarram.



Citibank, INJAZ Kuwait celebrate Annual Global Community Day

The employees of Citibank Kuwait, along with their families and friends recently celebrated the annual Global Community Day. This year's theme was "Decent Work and Economic Growth", the eighth goal of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In partnership with INJAZ Kuwait, Citibank Kuwait's volunteers delivered the Entrepreneurship Master Class program to 60 students from the Kuwait English School at the school's premises.

The EMC program is a one day workshop that introduces students to the concept of self-employment and entrepreneurship. It gives the students the opportunity to practice their teamwork by engaging in group activities meant to expand their horizons and direct their thinking towards their professional future in a fun way. Each volunteer led a group of students who were challenged to compete against each other to come up with the best business idea. The winning team received medals at the end of the program.

Fatah Adour, CEO of Citibank Kuwait, who was one of the judges during the EMC program said: "Global Community Day is an annual event that brings together Citi's employees to give back to the communities we work and live in. This is the first time I volunteer in INJAZ's EMC program and found it very rewarding. I was also impressed with all the ideas presented which show the children's potential to become entrepreneurs and business owners in the future".

The second event was a visit by INJAZ students to Citibank for the Job Shadow Program also under INJAZ umbrella. This program teaches the students about CV writing skills, interview skills and gives insight to them on working in an international financial institution like Citi. One of the students thanked Citibank Kuwait for the opportunity saying: "I learned a lot today about banking and did not realize that there are various departments that work on clients' accounts and play an active role in the economy. I am definitely now considering to go into banking after this visit to Citibank".

INJAZ Kuwait CEO Laila Hilal Al Mutairi said: "I would like to thank Citibank Kuwait for supporting our journey all these years in empowering youth to own their economic success and for contributing their time, efforts and knowledge in helping train students from Kuwait's high schools to universities. Because of our partners' support and their belief in our mission, we have reached

90,000 youth and worked with 7,000 volunteers in more than 200+ educational institutes since our establishment in 2005". This annual day of service offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities to work alongside community and non-profit partners to help improve our cities and neighborhoods.

Since the inaugural Global Community Day in 2006, Citi volunteers have contributed over 4 million hours of service to Global Community Day projects in hundreds of cities. This year, we continue to track how projects are helping to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The featured activities below show how this year's projects are contributing to select SDGs, including: Zero Hunger (SDG 2); Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3); Quality Education (SDG 4); Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8); Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11); and Climate Action (SDG 13).

Events include: Asia Pacific

In China, Citi volunteers are making care packages and hand-painting shoes for underserved children in the Yunnan Province. Aligning their efforts with Pathways to Progress, Citi volunteers in Sydney, Australia will plan a series of workshops to help youth develop career aspirations, enhance their employability skills, and succeed in a competitive job market. In the Philippines, Citi volunteers are addressing environmental and social issues by creating recycled plastic bottle "eco bricks," which will be used in public school building projects, and promoting equality and inclusion by walking alongside Paralympics athletes.

Europe, Middle East and Africa
In London, United Kingdom, Citi volunteers are holding a Sports Festival Day to



harness the power of sport as a developmental tool for young people to promote long-term active habits, improved well-being and employability skills. In an effort

to improve air quality in Warsaw, Poland for low-income and vulnerable communities, Citi volunteers will be planting anti-smog plants and mini herb gardens. In alignment

with Pathways to Progress, Citi volunteers in Kuwait will be using their skills to train young people from low-income communities on writing a winning cover letter and interviewing for jobs successfully.

Latin America

Citi volunteers in El Salvador are collaborating with Glasswing International to help youth increase their knowledge in financial education and employability skills. Focusing their efforts on neighborhood revitalization, Citi volunteers in Bogotá, Colombia will be painting colorful murals in a local community. The largest of the murals, a butterfly, will stand as a symbol for new beginnings. Citibanamex volunteers in Mexico are participating in a range of activities to help disadvantaged populations, including running a national food drive and assisting Paralympic athletes.

North America

Citi CEO Mike Corbat joined Citi volunteers in Toronto, Canada to help preserve a manmade conservation park through planting activities. In New York City, Citi volunteers are engaging in a range of activities across the five boroughs, including clearing debris and preparing plant beds, mentoring young people, packing food and building bikes for children from underserved communities. Citi volunteers in Los Angeles County are working in partnership with Homes4Families (formerly Habitat for Humanity - Santa Clarita) on a community landscaping project for low-income veterans.



Health

How depression affects the cancer caregivers: Physician, heal thyself

A doctor commits suicide every day in US, the highest rate of any profession

WASHINGTON: Ashley Sumrall was an early career brain oncologist when she got a case that would stay with her for the rest of her career. Losing a patient is far from rare in her field: 90 percent of the people she sees will go on to die as a result of their illness. But David was different. A former White House aide, he had come into her care after years of experimental trials failed to halt the advance of his glioma.

She believed he would be a difficult case because of his initial refusal to accept muscle-destroying steroids but over time she became so involved in his care that losing him was akin to losing a member of her own family. "It sounds cliched, but it's truly a disease that affects their whole family. So you're caring for the individual and their spouse or caregiver, their adult children, you know, you're connected to that whole family," the assistant professor at the Levine Cancer Institute in North Carolina said. Cancer is a devastating diagnosis for the patient and their loved ones, but an under-examined area is its impact for those involved in its care, who are at higher risk for anxiety, depression and burnout.

Burnout

A report last year by the American Psychiatric

Association found that a doctor commits suicide every day in the US, the highest rate of any profession - 28 to 40 per 100,000, which is more than twice the rate for the general population. "We know that physicians in general don't ask for help for their mental and physical health as soon as others," said Bill Eley, an oncologist and associate dean of the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia.

"For oncologists, people die, and you walk with them through that. And we're ill prepared for the stress that's physical, emotional and spiritual, that we undergo." Burnout and the ever present pressure of showing value-the US hospital system measures how busy doctors are, but doesn't account for how valued they are by patients-are factors most commonly quoted by professionals who study the problem.

But the stressors are even more intense for oncologists for several reasons, explained Michelle Riba, a psychologist and director of the PsychOncology Program at the University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center. "We have long relationships, we often hold the key to their survival. There's no room for errors, it's a pressure cooker," she said. Eley agreed: "We see tragedy

after tragedy. And we go see the next patient. And we go see the next patient. And there's very little attention to processing grief and sadness and suffering in our systems."

Longer relationships

Beyond that is the amount of suffering patients undergo in the cancer treatments prescribed by their doctors, including the most dreaded chemotherapy and all the destructive side effects it brings. One case that Eley recalls vividly was a 28-year-old woman who had a rare cancer called sarcoma. The treatment left her unable to swallow and she was left drooling, "which just makes it all the more painful."

And although cancer treatments today are more advanced and life-prolonging than ever before, that too, paradoxically, brings its own challenges, adds Eley. "Thankfully we have longer and longer relationships with our patients. And I think when you have relationships with people, and you lose them, they die, you are sad, and you suffer." At one point early on in his career, Eley lost interest in the things in life that gave him joy, such as dancing. — AFP

Anger over re-introduction of tampon tax in Tanzania

NAIROBI: A decision by Tanzania's government to reintroduce a tax on sanitary pads and tampons has angered women in the country, with one activist yesterday saying it would have "heavy consequences" for women. Taxes on female sanitary products — which are basic necessities — have come under increasing scrutiny across the globe, and Tanzania in 2018 decided to join those nations scrapping Value Added Tax on pads and tampons.

However the tax was re-introduced during the unveiling of this year's budget last week. Finance Minister Philip Mpango said removing the tax was counter-productive, as retailers had not lowered their prices. "Whatever the reason given by the government, the re-introduction of this tax is an unfortunate decision with heavy consequences for most women and girls," Anna Henga of the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) told AFP. "The government should rather try and understand why the exemption did not lead to the expected results, and then correct the errors in the application of the exemption." Henga called for a "subsidy" of the products, or for them to be freely distributed in public health centres. — AFP

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Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
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- Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

- Dermatology board certified.
- Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

SPECIALIZED IN:

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- Laser Treatments.
- Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- Body & Face Contouring.
- Injectable Fillers & Botox.

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Dar Al Shifa Hospital
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DR KHALED ALMERRI
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Department: Heart & Vascular Center

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- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
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ENT Specialist

- Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
- Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the British Laryngological Association
- Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- Member of the European Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

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- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
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- Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- Breast surgeries
- Hernia repair
- Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- Surgery for reflux disease
- Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com
Tel: 1886677

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- Single Port Surgery
- Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abdomen
- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- WART Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistaloscope)
- Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve-Gastroectomy
- Gallstones & Abdominal Hernia Surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- American Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of American College of Surgery
- Canadian Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- American Board of Surgical Critical Care

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

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DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

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Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

- Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- (IFSO) member .
- Faculty member of (BEST).
- Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

Scope of clinical Practice.

- Bariatric surgeries.
- Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- G.I. surgeries.
- Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228 Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Closer Center Mazaya Building

Stars

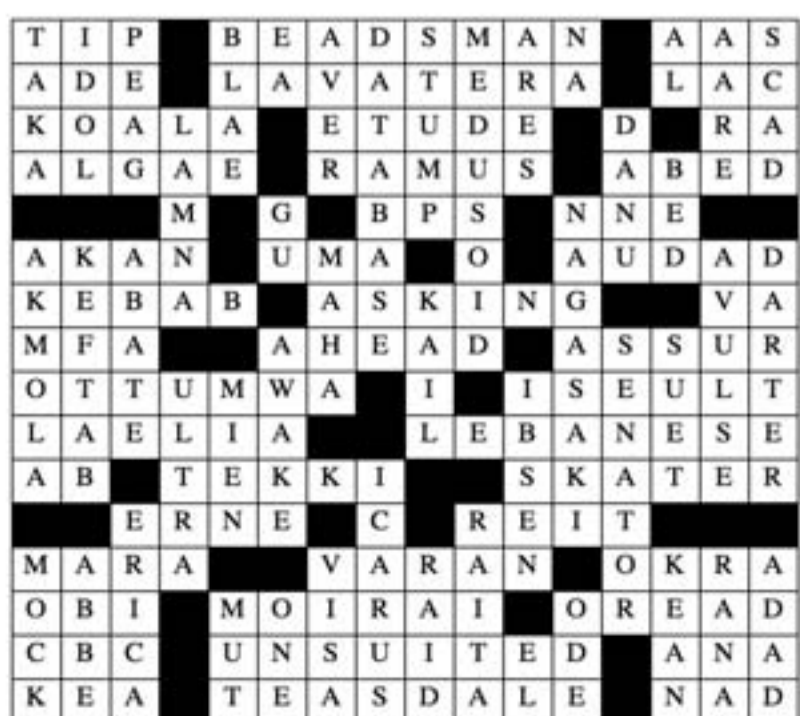
CROSSWORD 2239



ACROSS

1. A state-chartered savings bank owned by its depositors and managed by a board of trustees.
 4. A thrombolytic agent (trade name Activase) that causes fibrinolysis at the site of a blood clot.
 12. A master's degree in fine arts.
 15. The month following March and preceding May.
 16. The intellectual conception of a thing as it is in itself, not as it is known through perception.
 17. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
 18. Towards the side away from the wind.
 19. Tell or deposit (information) knowledge.
 20. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
 22. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
 24. Arboreal snake of central and southern Africa whose bite is often fatal.
 25. Any of several short-billed Old World rails.
 26. A family of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in southeastern Asia.
 27. (Greek mythology) The Muse of lyric and love poetry.
 29. A radioactive transuranic element.
 31. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
 33. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
 37. The limits within which something can be effective.
 40. An associate degree in applied science.
 42. Dry brandy distilled in the Armagnac district of France.
 46. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
 47. Pain in the gums.
 50. An audiotape recording of sound.
 51. Speaking a Slavic language.
 53. A member of the Pueblo people living in northern New Mexico.
 55. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
 58. Constituting or relating to a tail.
 60. Any of numerous ornamental shrubs grown for their showy flowers of various colors.
 63. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
 65. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
 66. A town in western Kentucky on the Ohio River.
 68. An ideal instance.
 73. Any property detected by the olfactory system.
 74. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
 77. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
 78. Support resembling the rib of an animal.
 79. A learned person (especially in the humanities).
 81. A notable achievement.
 82. An adherent of any branch of Taoism.
 83. English translator and Protestant martyr.
 84. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- DOWN**
1. A master's degree in library science.
 2. A detailed description of design criteria for a piece of work.
 3. Some abrupt occurrence that interrupts.
 4. Black tropical American cuckoo.
 5. A punctuation mark () used to indicate the separation of elements within the grammatical structure of a sentence.
 6. Type genus of the Tupaia.
 7. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
 8. Any of numerous tropical or subtropical American plants of the genus Verbena grown for their showy spikes of variously colored flowers.
 9. The brightest star in Scorpius.
 10. Conforming to truth.
 11. Order by virtue of superior authority.
 12. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
 13. A slick spokesperson who can turn any criticism to the advantage of their employer.
 14. A river in northern England that flows southeast through West Yorkshire.
 21. Relating to or situated in or characteristic of the tropics (the region on either side of the equator).
 23. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
 28. A public promotion of some product or service.
 30. Wild and menacing.
 32. A genus of Psittacidae.
 34. Surveying instrument consisting of the upper movable part of a theodolite including the telescope and its attachments.
 35. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
 36. Any organic compound formed by adding alcohol molecules to aldehyde molecules.
 38. Type genus of the Amidae.
 39. A heavy silvery toxic univalent and bivalent metallic element.
 41. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
 43. The 13th letter of the Greek alphabet.
 44. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
 45. Sound recording consisting of a disc with continuous grooves.
 48. Young sheep.
 49. Functioning correctly and ready for action.
 52. Membrane of the young sporophore of various mushrooms extending from the margin of the cap to the stem and is ruptured by growth.
 54. A state of Uganda and site of a former Bantu kingdom.
 56. Cast again, in a different role.
 57. The cry made by sheep.
 59. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
 61. A city in north central Nigeria.
 62. (Philippine) A dish of marinated vegetables and meat or fish.
 64. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
 67. German chemist who was co-discoverer with Lise Meitner of nuclear fission (1879-1968).
 69. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
 70. A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
 71. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
 72. A quantity of no importance.
 75. The federal department responsible for safeguarding national security.
 76. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
 80. Being one more than one hundred.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Inspire others to come out of their shells today, Aries. Have them join you on the sunny side of the street. Share your cheer with other people and lead them into boisterous discussions about the world. You will be on cloud nine, with a great deal of strength behind your happy-go-lucky emotions. Keep things light and don't worry about tomorrow until it comes.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Keep your cool if something goes wrong today, Taurus. Don't be so impatient about fixing a problem that you end up doing something rash. You may do more damage than you would if you just let things sit for a couple days. Mull over the situation, talk it out with others, and approach the issue at another time with a different frame of mind.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Play the lottery today, Gemini. The concept for you is profit with no effort. The windfall will come when you least expect it. The less you try to shape things, the more they will generally flow in your favor. Enjoy the day and don't sweat the details. Things will work themselves out. People may be quite emotionally charged, but don't let their behavior throw you off balance.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

If you meet someone new today, Cancer, break him or her in gradually. Don't spill all the beans at once. Let the person warm up to your intense emotional nature before you unleash it full force. People are going to need their space, so make sure you allow enough room for emotional and physical freedom. Think about taking a long trip or short vacation of some sort.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Spare no emotional or monetary expense today, Leo. Whatever you put into this day will come back to you tenfold. Feel free to indulge and delight in your fun-loving nature. This day speaks of freedom from restraint of all kinds. Break the chains and explore new worlds in your mind and your physical surroundings. Don't say no when the adventure bus comes around to pick you up.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today isn't a day to stay inside and sulk, Virgo. Put the past behind you and move on. Grab opportunities with both hands and rev your engine into high gear. Stop looking at what lies behind and focus on the wide-open horizon in front of you. This is an excellent day to turn up the heat and start brewing some new adventures. Transform your life into an action movie with you as the star.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Get your favorite music out of the closet today, Libra. Have a dance party in your living room and liven things up with some freshly cut flowers on your table. This is a great day to direct your energies outward into the world. Go on a radical adventure that you didn't think was possible. Plow headfirst into new projects and let your good luck carry you through. Don't worry about the details.



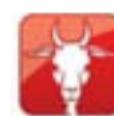
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

It may be extremely hard for you to make decisions about anything today, Scorpio. Don't stress about work or the things you need to get done. With today's aspects, it's a day that shouldn't be filled with sour energy from the past. You experience a rebirth every time you wake up in the morning. Venture forth into new adventures!



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today should run quite smoothly for you, Sagittarius. You will find that there's a great deal of power fueling your emotions and that you're able to take that power to the extreme. Use your strong, dynamic nature to win the hearts of others. Lead the charge toward good-natured fun. You will be laid-back, easygoing, and adventurous. Take a long-distance trip in your mind.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Don't get upset if people don't take you quite as seriously as you'd like today, Capricorn. It's in the nature of the day to keep things light and uplifting. Come out of the intensity of the last couple days and laugh out loud. Don't stress over things you don't understand. Go with the flow and keep smiling. You can't go wrong as long as you join in the good cheer and merriment of the day.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You might find that something or someone is purposefully trying to make things difficult for you today, Aquarius. It might seem like you're trying to get a handle on the issues, but somehow things are slipping through your fingers. Don't make any major decisions, and certainly don't try to herd people into corners. Let others have their freedom and consider simply riding out the storm.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Lay low today, Pisces. Don't try to force any answers from people. Eat a healthy breakfast and stay away from caffeine. Relate to people on an intellectual or philosophical level and discuss the meaning of life. If you're looking for sympathy, you may need to wait a couple days. People aren't in the mood. They just want to be left alone.

Wordsearch Puzzle

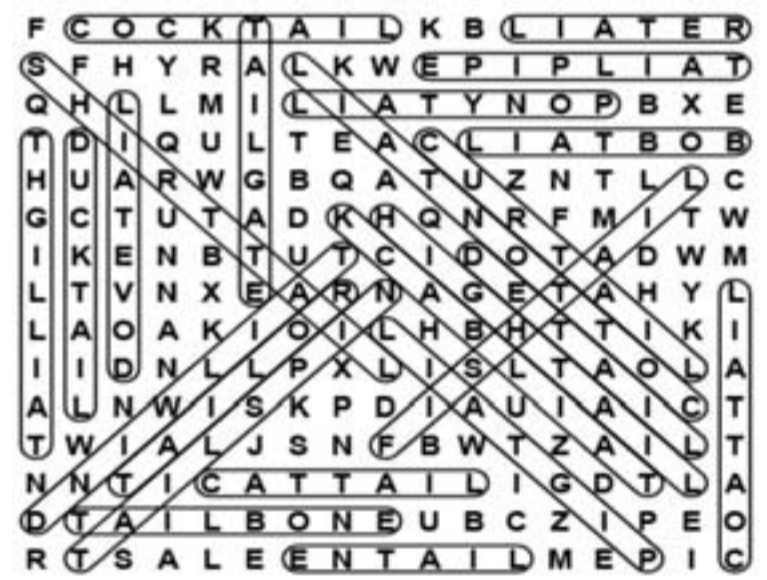
Weather 1 - Word Search



- | | | |
|------------|-----------|-------------|
| BAROMETER | HAIL | SUNNY |
| CELSIUS | HOT | TEMPERATURE |
| CLOUDS | HUMIDITY | THUNDER |
| COLD | LIGHTNING | TYPHOON |
| DRIZZLE | MIST | WIND |
| DROUGHT | OVERCAST | |
| FAHRENHEIT | RAIN | |
| FLURRIES | SNOW | |

Yesterday's Solution

Tail Words - Solution



- | | | |
|------------|-----------|-----------|
| BOBTAIL | DUCKTAIL | TAILBACK |
| CATTAIL | ENTAIL | TAILBONE |
| COATTAIL | FISHTAIL | TAILGATE |
| COCKTAIL | HIGHTAIL | TAILLIGHT |
| COTTONTAIL | PIGTAIL | TAILOR |
| CURTAIL | PONYTAIL | TAILPIPE |
| DETAIL | RETAIL | TAILSPIN |
| DOVETAIL | SHIRTTAIL | TAILWIND |

Daily SuDoku



hard

Yesterday's Solution



very hard

Lifestyle

MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2019



This combination of pictures shows contestants posing as they take part in the third edition of the French Beard Championships in Paris. — AFP

Lost version of Delacroix masterpiece discovered in Paris



A modello (a preliminary painting) for the artwork entitled 'Les femmes d'Alger' painted by French painter Eugene Delacroix is on display at the Mendes Gallery in Paris. —AFP

A newly discovered version of Eugene Delacroix's Orientalist masterpiece, "Women of Algiers" went on display for the first time in Paris on Thursday. The lost study for the painting by the French Romantic painter which inspired generations of artists including Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cezanne was discovered in a Paris apartment 18 months ago. Since then experts have been retracing its history and carrying out X-ray and infra-red tests on the picture. Like the much larger version in the Louvre, it shows a reclining wealthy woman and a black servant.

The canvas disappeared after it was sold in 1850 by the French diplomat Charles-Edgar de Mornay, with whom the painter went to North Africa in 1831, shortly after the French conquest of Algeria. Delacroix, who was brought up by Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord, known as Talleyrand-one of the most famous diplomats in European history-and was introduced to de Mornay by the ambassador's official mistress, the actress Mademoiselle Mars.

Huge interest from museums

De Mornay also bought the monumental version in the Louvre as well as another scene of women in Algiers now in the Fabre Museum in Montpellier, to which Van Gogh

and Gauguin made a pilgrimage to see in 1888. The Mendes Gallery in Paris, where the "Women of Algiers" study is now on show, said there had been huge interest already in the painting from museums and collectors. It said that the Montpellier version was thought to be lot number 118 in the de Mornay sale, but a stencil of that number was found on the back of the newly discovered canvas.

Gallerist Philippe Mendes discovered the work in the Parisian apartment of a female collector. It was later authenticated by Delacroix expert Virginie Cauchi-Fatiga, who believes it was probably painted in 1833 or 1834, a few months before the artist presented his masterpiece at the Paris Salon. Mendes said the painting, which will be shown shortly "outside Europe" after its Paris show ends on July 11, allows us to see "an essential marker in the long gestation of... this mythic painting". This "major discovery" comes a week before a "lost" Caravaggio will go under the hammer in Toulouse in southwest France, the city where it had laid under an old mattress in an attic for 100 years. Auctioneers estimate that the grisly biblical scene, "Judith and Holofernes", should sell for between 100 and 150 million euros (up to \$170 million). Some Italian experts, however, suspect the canvas is a copy made at the same time as the fiery Milanese artist painted it. — AFP



Chinese artist Ai Weiwei attends a news conference for his exhibition 'Everything is art. Everything is politics' displayed at Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Dusseldorf, Germany. — Reuters

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei turns to opera with 'Turandot'

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, known for his politically charged contemporary works, will try his hand at opera by directing "Turandot", which is set in his homeland. The Rome Opera said on Friday Ai will direct Giacomo Puccini's work and design the sets and costumes. It will open in March at the mid-point of the 2019-2020 season and be the first theatrical work for the 61-year-old artist. Turandot, set in China, is the story of Prince Calaf, who falls in love with the cold-hearted Princess Turandot. But in order to win her hand, he first must solve three riddles. He does but she still refuses.

"Turandot", which debuted in Milan in 1926, contains one of music's most famous arias - "Nessun Dorma," made globally famous when the late Luciano Pavarotti sang it at the 1990 World Cup. Ai, who was detained for nearly three months in his homeland in 2011 and is known for his criticism of Communist-run China's stifling of free expression, hinted that his "Turandot" will not pull any punches. "This 'Turandot' will be from my point of view," Ai, who has been based in Berlin since 2015, said in a statement released through the opera house.

"It will be an opera immersed in the contemporary world, the present cultural and political struggles represented through Puccini's story." Ai, who quietly visited the Rome theatre last month to review the space, is no stranger to controversy in countries beside his native China. In April, he unveiled a work in Mexico telling the story of 43 students likely massacred five years ago in a case that exposed government stonewalling and complicity in abuses, a frequent theme for the artist. — Reuters

Rap superstar Cardi B indicted over strip club brawl

A grand jury has indicted Cardi B over her alleged involvement in a New York strip club brawl, a spokeswoman for Queens prosecutors said Friday, with court documents showing 14 new counts including two felonies against the rap superstar. Initially facing only misdemeanor charges over the 2018 incident, the Bronx rapper in April had rejected a plea deal from the Queens district attorney's office. That offer would have given the 26-year-old Grammy winner conditional discharge if she pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor.

The new charges include two felony counts of attempted assault with intent to cause serious physical injury, according to the case docket. The felony classification would not spell jail time, according to New York state law, but could result in probation that could impact Cardi B's heavy touring schedule. Her lawyer did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment. The rapper's arraignment is scheduled for June 25.

On August 29, 2018, Cardi B was in the Angels Strip Club in Queens when her group reportedly lobbed bottles, chairs and a hookah smoking device, which police said bruised a female employee in the legs. That October, police charged the artist with assault and reckless endangerment over the incident. She allegedly ordered an attack on two sisters working at the club because one of them slept with her husband, the rapper Offset. —AFP

No Michael Jackson costume for Brussels' peeing boy

Brussels has decided against decorating its iconic Manneken-Pis statue in a Michael Jackson costume as planned for the 10th anniversary of the US pop icon's death, officials said Friday. The decision was made in the wake of a new documentary, "Leaving Neverland", which since its release this year has revived claims the singer sexually abused children. "The city council of Brussels has not been insensitive to the documentary and has chosen to adopt a cautious position," a spokesperson told AFP.

Brussels' famous Manneken-Pis statue of a nude young boy has been cheekily urinating into a Baroque fountain for 400 years. He is dressed about 130 times a year in various outfits often donated by organizations or embassies to mark a special occasion or event, such as the Chinese new year or the start of football's World Cup. Manneken-Pis was initially scheduled to dress as Michael Jackson on June 25 on the initiative of a Belgian fan club, a decision approved by the previous city government.

"Leaving Neverland" relaunched the accusations of pedophilia against the pop icon and was broadcast at the end of March in Belgium. Belgium was the scene of the Marc Dutroux case, a pedophilia scandal that made headlines around the world and is still in everyone's memory in the country. The Belgian criminal was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2004 for the murder of four young girls he had previously kidnapped and raped. Two others who were also raped survived their confinement. —AFP



In this file photo US popstar Michael Jackson addresses a press conference at the O2 arena in London. —AFP



Starsailor's James Stelfox: Liam and Noel Gallagher don't sell like Oasis did

Starsailor bassist James 'Stel' Stelfox says Liam and Noel Gallagher can't match Oasis' success anymore. The 43-year-old musician admitted the industry has changed so much since the band released their debut album 'Love Is Here' - which peaked at number two in the UK Album Charts - in 2001, and he pointed to the changing fortunes of the sibling rivals as evidence of the change. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, he said: "It's really difficult to sell records now. "Even if you look at Liam and Noel recently, I think they had hit records last time but if you look at the sales and what they used to do, it's just not the same. The whole record industry has changed." While Oasis' debut album 'Definitely Maybe' has sold over 2,000,000 copies in the UK alone since its 1994 release, Liam's chart topping solo debut 'As You Were' sold over 300,000 copies when it was released last year, and Noel's latest High Flying Birds LP 'Who Built the Moon?' went to number one in 2017 with sales of 78,000 album-equivalent units. The 'Silence Is Easy' band had a rivalry with the Britpop legends in the early 2000s when Noel reportedly called singer James Walsh

a "c**k". The 'Don't Look Back In Anger' star reignited things last weekend when he asked if people jumped overboard when Walsh started to sing on the ferry over to the Isle of Wight Festival. The singer responded on Twitter: "Ha ha. The fact people are still arsed he had a go at us almost 20 years ago & he's still biting is genius" Stel didn't acknowledge the feud, and he explained that the changing industry meant there was less pressure on some artists than there was in their heyday. He said: "We're not as popular as we used to be in 2001 until 2004, something like that, but that's the way it goes... "If we'd tried some of these things 15 years ago, we wouldn't have got them on the record. But now you just think, let's make a record for ourselves as much as other people." And he revealed Starsailor will be keeping busy as they start work on the follow-up to 2017's 'All This Life'. He said: "I think we'll get through the festivals this summer, and then we'll get into the studio and get in down. The last album we did was quite a quality a record really, so we'll try and keep to that same level. Hopefully!"

Kellin Quinn: I was in a really dark place

Sleeping With Sirens frontman Kellin Quinn was at his "lowest point" following the release of 'Gossip'. The 33-year-old rocker - who has seven-year-old daughter Copeland Quinn with wife Katelynne - is now six months sober but he admitted he was in a "really dark place" as a result of not enjoying making music anymore after the release of their 2016 major label (Warner Bros. Records) record. But as soon as he gave up alcohol and got back into the studio with his bandmates - Justin Hills, Gabe Barham, Jack Fowler and Nick Martin - to work on the material that now makes up their fifth album, 'How It Feels To Be Lost', their first on Sumerian Records, that all changed and the "depressed and anxious" thoughts he had fuelled by booze disappeared. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, Kellin said: "The last two years I'd got to a point where it was me blowing my top in a way. "I got to a point where I was boiling and boiling until it all boiled over. "I was probably at my lowest point. "I was drinking myself to [oblivion] ... just really depressed and anxious. "Because of that drinking it was fuelling that and making it worse." The 'If You Can't Hang' singer admitted he had thoughts about giving up on the band but now they are in a really good place and making their "best" work to date. He continued: "I just decided if I am going to continue doing this I am going to need to love doing it again. "I wasn't loving it.



Aguilera 'emotional' as Genie in the Bottle turns 20

Christina Aguilera felt "all types of emotional" as she marked the 20th anniversary of 'Genie in a Bottle'. The 38-year-old pop star asked her six million followers to share their own memories of the hit track from her 1999 self-titled album as she thanked her fans for "riding with me all these years" on Saturday. Alongside the artwork for her debut album, on which 'Genie in a Bottle' was the lead single, she wrote on Instagram: "Hi loves! Today marks 20 years since #GenieInABottle was released... got me feeling all types of emotional! "At just 18 years old, I remember coming home from Japan and seeing that it had reached #1 on the Billboard charts and feeling so grateful and happy that you guys loved it as much as I did. Thank you thank you thank you for riding with me all these years. My fighters, I love you! #xxtina." The 'Beautiful' hitmaker also relayed some interesting facts about the recording of the song, including that it was made in a tiny home studio and that she shot the scene on a beach in Malibu, in which she rocks a crop top and shorts, in "freezing" weather. Just before the hit single turned two decades old, Christina admitted she would "feel good" if her children wanted to follow in her footsteps. The 'Fighter' hitmaker - who began performing in talent shows as a child and landed a role on 'The All-New Mickey Mouse Club' when she was 13 - would "support" Max, 11, and Summer, four, if they asked to become singers and is confident she has the knowledge to help guide them to stardom.



MIKA RELAUNCHING MUSIC CAREER UNDER REAL NAME

Mika is relaunching his music career under his real name, Michael Holbrook. The 'Grace Kelly' hitmaker - who had a string of hits in the early 00s - will return with brand new album 'My Name Is Michael Holbrook' on October 4, his first record in four years, and he has admitted it took him two years to figure out where he wanted to take his music career next. He told the Daily Star newspaper's Wired column: "It's almost like I'm starting again, turning over a new page. "I'm called Mika but also Michael Holbrook. That's my father's name and I'm actually Michael Holbrook junior, the third. "It's an old American family with a lot of tradition but also a lot of secrets I didn't really know about." The record has been inspired by the 'We Are Golden' hitmaker's time spent in the US and started off with the track 'Tiny Love'. He said: "It's my fifth album so I wanted a new point of view. "It took me two years to figure out what I was going to do. "So I went on a road trip to the States and when I got back I wrote a song called 'Tiny Love'. It opens with the phrase: 'My name is Michael Holbrook and I was born in 1983.' Michael's new tunes are about family and his mum and sisters will appear on the album, which sees him open up about things he's never discussed publicly before, and he compared it to the "bold colors" of his debut LP 'Life in Cartoon Motion', released back in 2007. He teased: "It's not sombre or dark or sad, it's the opposite. It's a different side of me. "I sing a lot about stuff that's happened in my life that I haven't spoken about before. "About my brother and sisters and my mum. "There's even an appearance by my mum and sister on the record. "It's personal but with an enormous amount of joy that will make you dance and cry.

Serge Pizzorno: The studio is like a holiday

Serge Pizzorno feels like he's "on holiday all the time" when he's working on new music in the studio. The Kasabian guitarist ends up spending his downtime in the studio working on new material when the group take time off and he's realized that's because he doesn't feel like he needs a proper break because he loves his job so much. He said: "I've gotten to the bottom of that. It's because I think I'm on holiday all the time. "What I love doing happens to be the job that I do." And with the 'Empire' hitmakers currently on an extended break, Serge felt the time was right to work on his first solo album. He added to Q magazine: "This just felt like the time to do it. "After six albums you need to reset everything, get out of the cycle and have something else to think about. Get out of your normal routine and just go. 'Boof.'" The 38-year-old musician enjoyed the fact he's had no pressure to match the group's success or meet fan expectations with his solo record, 'The S.L.P.'. He said: "We've been lucky that the fans have followed us when we've made sidesteps and twists and turns. "We've been able to explore and experiment but there is definitely that thing in your mind of headlining Reading and Leeds, headlining Glasto, playing these huge gigs and having the big single - which I love - but it was nice to be able to not think about that and to go in thinking it could be absolutely anything I want, a total blank." But Serge was "surprised" by how "melodic" the tracks he's written for the record have turned out to be.



Beverley Knight felt outcast in racist music industry

Beverley Knight says it was "easier" for record labels to "market" someone with "European features" when she started her music career. The 46-year-old singer has opened up about the racism she experienced when she first entered the music industry in 1994, and the star revealed that she felt "insecure" and like a "square peg in a round hole" because of the way she looked. She said: "It was easier to market someone who was much lighter, with more 'European' features. [I felt like] a square peg in a round hole. "I've always been an optimistic, happy, and driven person, and I was very secure about myself in my music. "But I was a boffin. And I was insecure about how I looked. "I felt I had all the things that were needed - strong music and vocals - except what a star was meant to look like. "Then I started to put on weight in my mid-20s, which made me feel sluggish. I just felt terrible about my appearance." The 'Greatest Day' hitmaker insisted that she is finally feeling confident about her looks and admitted that since hitting age 40, she earns a "natural respect" from people. She told HELLO! magazine: "It took years and years, but now, in my later 40s, I'm secure. If people try to tell you what you should be doing, at this age, you can slap them down very quickly. There's a respect that's naturally afforded to you."



Pavarotti's rare duets with Bono, Sting and more released

Pavarotti's rare duets with Sting, Bono and James Brown are set to be released for the first time. Decca Records are releasing six live performances by the late great Italian operatic tenor - whose full name was Luciano Pavarotti - with some of world's biggest rock and soul stars. The special release is to accompany Ron Howard's film about the star - who died in 2007 of pancreatic cancer at the age of 71 - which features never-before-seen footage, concert performances and intimate interviews. The songs are from the 'Pavarotti And Friends' charity concerts, which took place in Modena, Italy - the 'Nessun Dorma' hitmaker's hometown - between 1992 and 2003 to benefit War Child and more. It was there Pavarotti teamed up with U2 frontman Bono for a performance of Schubert's 'Ave Maria'. Late soul legend Brown's rendition of 'It's A Man's Man's World' with the tenor and 'When We Dance' with former Police star Sting have also been made available. The latest additions come after the release of 'Too Much Love Will Kill You' with Queen's Brian May and Roger Taylor, 'You're The First, My Last, My Everything' with Barry White and 'Perfect Day' with Lou Reed. Plus there is a rarity in the form of 'Miserere', which Pavarotti co-wrote with Italian rocker Zucchero and Bono, which was a duet with Pavarotti and his peer, Andrea Bocelli.



*Anna Wintour
loves flip-flops*



Anna Wintour has given flip-flops her seal of approval. The 69-year-old Vogue editor-in-chief has opened up about her style go-tos in a rare Q&A on Vogue's YouTube channel, and surprisingly the fashion mogul revealed that she "loves" the summer sandal, even though she prefers people who are "dressed" smartly. She said: "I love a flip-flop! Personally, I'm not too big a fan of casual. I prefer when someone errs on the side of dressed. "There was a member of our team who turned up at the Met Gala recently without a tie and wearing a hat, and I'm not sure that I approved." Anna also revealed that she doesn't often "wear a handbag" despite it being one of the go-to accessories. She said: "To be honest, I rarely wear a handbag but I am told by my team here at Vogue that it's all about the cross-body handbag. "Which makes a lot of sense to me because it's practical, hands-free. You can bicycle around Manhattan enjoying Central Park and they also come in every shape, size, fabrication, so that would be my tip for the season."

The fashionista also insisted that she keeps her personal wardrobe simple and full of print dresses because it makes "decision making easier". Speaking in her 'Go Ask Anna' video series, she said: "I have a wardrobe full of print dresses so every morning I go to one of my print dresses of choice and put it on. It makes decision making a lot easier!" Anna went on to reveal that she thinks the biggest misconception about fashion is that it is frivolous and she has praised Andrew Scott, the Head Curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in New York City, for treating clothes as items of "historical" significance. She said: "I do think a misconception about women and because they love fashion, they might be frivolous and not someone to be taken seriously. "What is so thrilling to me about working with Andrew Bolton at the Costume Institute and the Metropolitan Museum of Art is that he puts costume into a historical context that can show how important fashion is in being a reflection of our culture because I feel that helps explain to people that there is so much more to fashion than just what they see on the surface." The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute is the venue for the annual Met Gala.

Shawn Mendes' tour outfits inspired by Elvis Presley

Shawn Mendes is paying homage to "style icon" Elvis Presley with his tour outfits. The 20-year-old Canadian singer/songwriter has just kicked off the North American leg of his eponymous tour and the pop star's long-time stylist Tiffany Briseno has revealed that Shawn's wardrobe contains nods to many of his favorite artists, including the late King of Rock 'n' Roll Elvis, Bruce Springsteen and late guitar hero Jimi Hendrix. Briseno said: "The goal is for Shawn to make his mark in a world of past and present style icons. Taking inspiration and paying homage to some of the greats such as Elvis, Bruce Springsteen and Jimi Hendrix. "Having been with him since he was 16, his style has evolved through a few stages since then. At first he had a stage when he'd really just wear what he wanted, which I'd call the 'plaid stage,' then we elevated his style a bit when he started wearing leather jackets and black jeans. Now, I'd say we have moved onto what I'd call the 'natural rock star' stage."

And Shawn was also "inspired" by the late funk legend James Brown - who died in 2006 - to incorporate the idea of "de-layering" into his on stage performances. Speaking to US Vogue, Tiffany added: "The approach for tour is much more raw and lived-in compared to some of our past award shows and other performance looks. We have also integrated the idea of de-layering throughout the entire show. Starting with a lightweight jacket and ending in a cut-off tee or staple tank top. This approach was inspired by icons like James Brown and the use of his cape—the idea of using clothing to create more anticipation for the audience."



Ralph Lauren receives honorary knighthood

Ralph Lauren has received an honorary knighthood from Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace in London on Wednesday. The 79-year-old fashion legend - who was recognized for his services to fashion - has become the first American designer to be awarded with the UK's highest honor and was presented with the insignia by The Prince of Wales at a private ceremony in London. And Ralph - whose label is celebrating its 50th anniversary - admitted the accolade is "very special" to him and revealed that his iconic designs have always been "inspired" by British culture. He said: "To have the honorary KBE conferred on me by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and presented to me personally by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is an honor I have humbly accepted.

"I have always been inspired by the history, traditions and culture of Great Britain and the historic relationship our two countries have shared. This is one of the most meaningful honors bestowed at this very special moment in my 50th anniversary." When the knighthood was announced in November 2018, the British consul general to New York and Her Majesty's trade commissioner for North America, Antony Phillipson, said that Ralph had been chosen for the accolade because he has been a "vanguard for the global fashion industry" for "nearly half a century".

In a statement, Antony said: "I warmly congratulate Ralph Lauren on this award that recognizes these efforts and achievements over the past 50 years. In his storied career in fashion, business, and philanthropy, Mr Lauren has played a key role in forging transatlantic cultural and economic connections. "As creator and visionary of the Ralph Lauren brand worldwide, Mr Lauren has been a vanguard for the global fashion industry and American style for nearly half a century. "In addition, monumental philanthropic efforts, especially in the realm of public health, cancer research and treatment in both the US and the UK, have led to benefits felt by citizens around the world."-Bang Showbiz

Kim Kardashian West covers grandmother's veins using her beauty line



Kim Kardashian West has covered up her grandmother's veins using her new body make-up collection. The 38-year-old reality star - who has formulated her own skin perfecting range for her KKW beauty line - has taken to Instagram to demonstrate the products from her much-anticipated line, and Kim used her 84-year-old grandmother Mary Jo 'MJ' Campbell as a test model to show the range's incredible concealing power. Kim posted a series of videos and photos of her applying the body foundation on MJ on her Instagram account and captioned the content: "My grandma MJ asked me about my Body Makeup and wanted me to come over to help cover her veins. "North [West] & I went straight to her house & showed her exactly how to use it & I love how happy she is with the results! Swipe to see how amazing this before and after is on MJ! (sic)"

The 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians' star will launch her Skin Perfecting Body Shimmer, Loose Shimmer Powder for Face & Body, Body Brush and Skin Perfecting Body Make Up Foundation in seven inclusive shades on Friday and Kim went on to address the products transfer. She added: "Let's talk about the transfer. I've been using body makeup for over a decade now and in my experience you either get coverage that doesn't transfer but it's super dry and looks fake or its the opposite and really moisturizing but completely transfers. My new @kkwbeauty Body Makeup is in between.

Men's spring/summer 2020 fashion collection in Paris



Models present creations by Lanvin during the men's spring/summer 2020 fashion collection in Paris yesterday. —AFP photos



French businessman Olivier Baussan, owner of the Provencal confectionery of Roy Rene, and founder of L'Occitane en Provence and Oliviers & Co, poses for a picture at the manufacture of Roy Rene in Aix-en-Provence, southeastern France. — AFP photos



Photo shows pistachios at the Provencal confectionery of Roy Rene in Aix-en-Provence, southeastern France.



Patrice Alibert, "nougatier", prepares pistachios to make nougat.

FRENCH FARMERS SEEK A PISTACHIO BONANZA

Pistachios are a staple of the vaunted French aperitif, but the nuts come from thousands of miles away—a situation a handful of farmers in the southern Provence region hope to change. Although wild uncultivated pistachios can be found across the hills hugging the Mediterranean Sea in southern France, remnants of trees brought over from Syria by the Romans, it is vineyards and fruit orchards that dominate the rugged landscape. But now, weather conditions that can increasingly include long dry spells could herald the return of drought-resistant pistachio trees in the coming years.

"It's a gamble but we're not crazy, we've got both feet on the ground," said Jean-Louis Joseph, co-founder of an association which aims to promote the homegrown nuts. This year, he planted 600 pistachio trees amid the grape vines, olive trees and truffle oaks on his plots in the Luberon region, their young trunks protected from deer by electric fencing. He chose two varieties, one from Greece and another called the Kerman Pistachio which originated in Iran, a major pistachio producer.

The Kerman, a high-yielding variety, is also used extensively in California and other US states, the world's other top source of the nuts. It will take at least five years for Joseph to harvest his first organic crop, but already the young trees are producing their distinctive bright red flowers. "Oh, I'm sure it'll work. The trees are beautiful, all the ones I bought have taken root, we did everything right," Joseph told AFP. He said that his

research had turned up records of Crusaders having brought back pistachio trees, and of local pistachio vendors at Provence markets in the 19th century. But while pistachio farming persisted in Spain and Italy, it eventually died out in France.

Dessert demands

Only around 10 hectares (25 acres) of pistachios are currently planted in France, a figure Joseph's association hopes will double by next year. It makes for a very small part of the 770,000 hectares of *Pistacia vera*, the nut's scientific name, that are planted worldwide, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization. Beyond the snacking market, Joseph and his colleagues also hope to sell their French nuts to cosmetics groups who use pistachio oil, while also winning over pastry chefs and ice cream brands.

They have already lined up one major buyer: Olivier Baussan, founder of the L'Occitane en Provence chain of cosmetics and beauty products and owner of the Confiserie du Roy Rene confectionery business. His Confiserie factory in the city of Aix-en-Provence goes through five tons of American and Spanish pistachios every year to turn out 50 million marzipan-inspired calisson sweets, a local specialty. Baussan has pledged to buy the first French pistachio crops.

"I thought we would find them easily in Provence but that's not the case at all," Baussan told AFP, at his facto-

ry. "The current prices we see for American pistachios would be a very, very good prices for local farmers," he added. Renowned pastry chef Pierre Herme would also be interested in sourcing French pistachios, according to a spokeswoman, who said he currently works with Iranian nuts.

Tough trees

Pistachio trees could prove a welcome crop complement for Provence farmers, who have seen longer and drier summers in recent years, which most scientists attribute to climate change. The hardy trees need only minimal irrigation and can withstand periods of high heat or extreme cold, "which are going to be back-to-back," said Joseph, whose association is still small but has drawn around 300 people at recent meetings. He said that he's had several periods of four to five months without rain in the last few years, "something that hardly ever happened before."

Pistachios could also thrive on the rocky slopes where mainstays like apricots or cherries aren't viable, providing a lifeline for farmers in more challenging weather conditions. Officials say that one-fourth of farms across the southeastern Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region have disappeared over the past decade. "You're better off planting pistachios instead of selling your land to a property developer," said Georgia Lambertin, head of the agriculture board for the Vaucluse department. — AFP

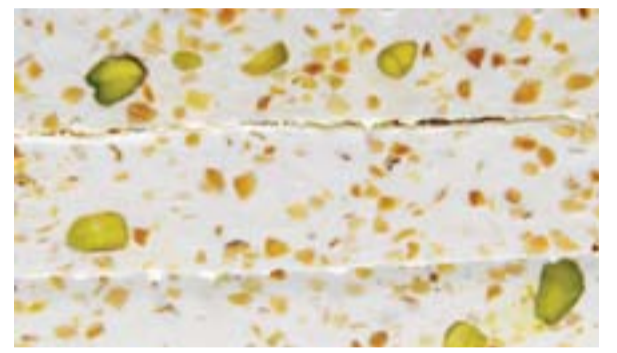


Photo shows nougat with pistachios.



With gay couple as stars, Mexican telenovela set to make history

A Mexican soap opera that debuts yesterday is set to make television history as the country's first telenovela to feature a gay couple as the leading characters. "Juntos, El Corazon Nunca se Equivoca" (Together, the Heart is Never Wrong) from Mexican network Televisa centers on two teenagers who move to Mexico City to attend a university. The couple - Aristoteles (Emilio Osorio) and Cuahutemoc or 'Temo' (Joaquin Bondoni) - first appeared on the Mexican soap "Mi Marido Tiene Mas Familia" (My Husband Has More Family), which ran from 2017 until February this year.

Among the most watched shows in Mexico, its final episode attracting nearly four million viewers, according to Televisa. Telenovelas are hugely popular in Mexico and can influence national dialogue on social issues across Latin America. The first gay kiss in socially conservative Brazil on the soap "Amor a Vida" in 2014 was seen as a historic moment in gay rights. They are exported around the world, and "Mi Marido Tiene Mas Familia" was broadcast in the United States on its largest Spanish-language station, Univision.

Word of a spinoff show featuring Aristoteles and Temo, or 'Aristemo' as they are known, sent fans into a frenzy on social media. "It was a dream come true," said Sofia Estefania Palacios Osorio, 21, on Twitter. "There is so much machismo, discrimination and taboos around LGBT couples," she wrote. "It's going to help more people see that it's something normal, that love is love." Mexican telenovelas have featured gay characters but they are relegated to secondary roles, while lesbian relationships have only been represented in the past few years.

LGBT+ characters have featured increasingly on soap operas around the world, from the first openly lesbian character on "All My Children" in 1983 to the first transgender

character on a British soap, "Coronation Street," in 1998. "Mi Marido Tiene Mas Familia" was honored by the US-based LGBT+ media advocacy group GLAAD last month, and the two actors and producer Juan Osorio were honored also at the Mexico City LGBT+ film festival in May.

"It shows that there are a lot of people, and a lot of young people of different ages who are interested in being able to connect with this kind of story," said Santiago Pineda, one of the writers of both the original show and its spinoff. LGBT+ supporters say the show has brought greater acceptance of gay romance, and the spinoff is a key moment for gay visibility.

"For people of my generation, a lot of us had to have a delayed adolescence, because at that age, it was unimaginable to show affection or even think of having a romantic relationship," said Alex Orue, head of It Gets Better Mexico, an LGBT+ youth support group. Pineda said he and writing partner Pablo Ferrer never saw sexual diversity represented on television when they were young.

"We wanted it to be a friendlier approach so that everyone could see that Aristoteles and Temo, beyond their sexual orientation, were both people with dreams, goals, fears and aspirations," Pineda told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Despite progress on LGBT+ rights, Mexico remains a conservative, Catholic country where gay people often may face violence and discrimination.

According to a 2012 study from local rights group ADIL, half of LGBT+ people bullied at school had experienced depression, while a quarter had contemplated suicide. "Having this kind of representation, at a mainstream level, at this scale, in Mexico ... is very positive," Orue said. According to Ferrer, the show has even helped some viewers speak up. — Reuters

The French Beard Championships



Contestants pose before taking part in the third edition of the French Beard Championships in Paris. — AFP photos

Classifieds

Monday, June 24, 2019



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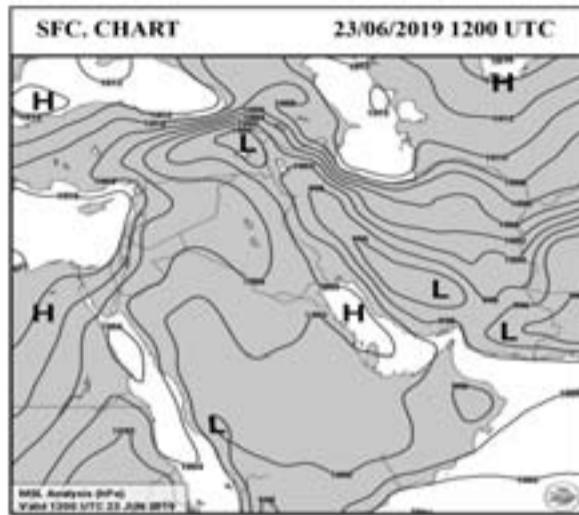
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

BY DAY: Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light south easterly wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	33 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	30 °C
ABDALY	46 °C	28 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	47 °C	32 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	42 °C	30 °C
SALMIYAH	39 °C	32 °C
AHMADI	37 °C	34 °C
NUWAISIB	40 °C	29 °C
WAFRA	44 °C	28 °C
SALMY	45 °C	27 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	06/24	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	47 °C	30 °C	SE-NW	08 - 32 km/h
Tuesday	06/25	Very hot	51 °C	31 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	06/26	Very hot causing rising dust over open areas	50 °C	34 °C	NW	15 - 50 km/h
Thursday	06/27	Very hot causing rising dust	51 °C	35 °C	NW	20 - 55 km/h

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

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	44 °C
MIN. Temp.	30 °C
MAX. RH	31 %
MIN. RH	10 %
MAX. Wind	N 46 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 surname: 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

Airlines

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



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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 24/6/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 24/6/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MSC	412	Asyut	00:15
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	713	Sohag	01:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	KAC	677	Dubai	01:40
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	111	Doha	02:10
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	PGT	859	Amman	02:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	THY	769	Istanbul	03:50
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	RBG	1552	Alexandria	04:30
RBG	1551	Alexandria	03:15	JZR	1735	Cairo	04:40
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:00
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
KAC	382	Delhi	04:55	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	JZR	251	Amman	07:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	RBG	121	Dubai	07:15
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	BAW	550	Alexandria	07:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	BAW	156	London	07:40
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	KAC	173	Munich	07:55
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	MSR	602	Cairo	08:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	193	Tarabzon	08:10
JZR	702	Asyut	06:10	KAC	181	Paris	08:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	IGO	1756	CNN	08:10
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	RBG	214	Sohag	08:15
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	KAC	163	MXP	08:35
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
MSR	601	Cairo	07:00	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	157	Istanbul	08:55
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	KAC	561	Amman	08:55
JZR	714	Sohag	07:20	KAC	121	AGP	09:00
RBG	211	Luxor	07:25	MSC	402	Alexandria	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	117	New York	09:05
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	QTR	1085	Doha	09:10
MSC	401	Alexandria	08:00	IRA	666	Esfahan	09:10
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	741	Dammam	09:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	731	Cairo	09:45
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	KAC	195	BJV	09:50
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	KAC	505	Beirut	09:50
KAC	384	Delhi	09:10	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	JZR	301	Istanbul	09:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	OMA	642	Muscat	10:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	KAC	101	London	10:05
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	GFA	210	Bahrain	10:05
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:40	QTR	1071	Doha	10:30
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
MSR	3132	Cairo	11:00	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	JZR	221	Riyadh	11:20
THY	1282	Trabzon	11:05	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	12:10	JZR	309	BJV	11:45
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	AXB	396	Kozhikode	11:50
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	MSR	3133	Cairo	12:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	THY	1283	Trabzon	12:00
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05

News

US peace plan rejected; Arabs

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Palestinian public funds". Israel collects taxes on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, but withheld \$138 million in transfers in February over Palestinian payments to political prisoners jailed for attacks against Israelis.

The lack of a political solution, which Washington has said would be unveiled later, prompted rejection not only from Palestinians but also in Arab countries with which Israel would seek normal relations. From Sudan to Kuwait, commentators and ordinary citizens denounced Kushner's proposals in strikingly similar terms - "colossal waste of time", "non-starter" and "dead on arrival". Egyptian liberal and leftist parties slammed the workshop as an attempt to "consecrate and legitimize" occupation of Arab land and said in a joint statement that any Arab participation would be "beyond the limits of normalization" with Israel.

"Homelands cannot be sold, even for all the money in the world," Egyptian analyst Gamal Fahmy said. "This plan is the brainchild of real estate brokers, not politicians. Even Arab states that are described as moderate are not able to openly express support for it." Commentator Sarkis Naoum at Lebanon's An-Nahar newspaper said, "This economic plan, like others, won't succeed because it has no political foundation."

Jawad Al-Anani, a former senior Jordanian politician, described widespread suspicion after Trump's decisions to move the US embassy to Jerusalem and recognize Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights. "This is an unbalanced approach: it assumes the Palestinians are the more vulnerable side and they are the ones who can succumb to pressure more easily," he said. "This is a major setback for the whole region."

Azzam Huneidi, deputy head of Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood, the country's main opposition said: "The economic plan is the sale of Palestine under the banner of prosperity in return for peace and with no land being returned ... and with the bulk of the funds shouldered by Gulf Arab states ... A deal with Arab money."

While the precise outline of the political plan has been shrouded in secrecy, officials briefed on it say Kushner has jettisoned the two-state solution - the long-standing worldwide formula that envisages an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. The Palestinian Authority is boycotting the Bahrain meeting, saying only a political solution will solve the problem. It said Kushner's "abstract promises" were an attempt to bribe Palestinians into accepting Israeli occupation. The White House has not invited the Israeli government to Bahrain.

US-allied Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, will take part in the Bahrain gathering along with officials from Egypt, Jordan and Morocco. Lebanon and Iraq will not attend. "Those who think that waving billions of dollars can lure Lebanon, which is under the weight of a suffocating economic crisis, into succumbing or bartering over its principles are mistaken," parliament speaker, Nabih Berri, said. Lebanon's Iranian-backed Shiite group Hezbollah, which wields significant influence over the government, has previously called the plan "an historic crime" that must be stopped.

Thousands of people marched through the Moroccan capital Rabat yesterday to express their solidarity with

the Palestinians and their opposition to the Kushner plan. "We came here to speak in one voice as Moroccans and express our rejection of all conspiracies that target the Palestinian cause," Slimane Amrani, vice secretary general of the kingdom's co-ruling Islamist PJD party told Reuters.

Arab analysts believe Kushner's economic plan is an attempt to buy off opposition to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land with a multi-billion dollar bribe to pay off the neighboring hosts of millions of Palestinian refugees to integrate them. After Israel's creation in 1948, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon absorbed the most Palestinian refugees, with some estimates that they now account for around five million.

"It is disingenuous to say that this plan is purely economic because it has a political dimension that has implications that are incongruous with the political aspirations," said Safwan Masri, a Columbia University professor. "A big part of the \$50 billion will go to neighboring states to settle the Palestinian refugees in those countries." Mohamad Hage Ali, a fellow at Beirut's Carnegie Middle East Center, said: "I see it failing miserably while benefiting US adversaries in the region," a reference to Iran.

In recent years, Iran's bitter rivalry with a bloc led by Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia has increasingly pushed the Arab-Israeli struggle into the background. While Riyadh and its allies have welcomed Trump's harder line against Tehran, which has cast itself as the guardian of Palestinian rights, critics accuse Saudi Arabia, the custodian of Islam's holiest places, of abandoning the Palestinians. Muslim scholars in the region, who would have in the past rallied popular opinion in support of the Palestinians, were largely silent hours after the plan was released, in a sign of a crackdown on dissent in several Arab countries.

Ali Shihabi, who heads the Arabia Foundation which supports Saudi policies, said the Palestinian Authority was wrong to reject the plan out of hand. "It should accept it and work on delivering the benefits to its people and then move forward aggressively with non-violent work ... to seek political rights," he tweeted. Emirati businessman Khalaf Ahmad Al-Habtoor also criticized the Palestinians' refusal to go to Bahrain. "There is no harm in listening to what will be placed on the table," he wrote last month.

Yet even in the Gulf, backing for Kushner's plan is limited. "The deal of the century is a... one-sided concession, the Arab side, while the occupier wins everything: Land, peace and Gulf money," said Kuwaiti parliamentarian Osama Al-Shaheen. Kuwaiti researcher Mitham Al-Shakhs predicted Washington would be unable to implement the plan through diplomacy and might have to impose it by force. "(Trump) gave Israel Jerusalem and the Golan, and every day he gives them gifts at the expense of the Arabs."

Majed Al-Ansari, a political sociology professor at Qatar University, called it laughable and unrealistic. "The idea of moving from land-for-peace to money-for-peace, is insulting to the Palestinian cause," he said. "It is very clear that Kushner's idea is about paying for Palestinian approval of Israel taking over all their land and basically giving no concessions to the Palestinians."

Emirati political scientist Abdulkhaleq Abdulla said the Palestinians are entitled to reject Kushner's plan because it does not meet their minimum aspirations. "The plan is not even palatable to the wider audience in the region. It will be a self-off of a just cause," he said. "The Gulf states will have a hard time to force it on the Palestinians. They will have a hard time convincing the Palestinians ... it's not what people expect after years of conflict and struggle." — Agencies

the AKP also losing the capital Ankara in March.

"The AKP elites will probably try to de-emphasize the election and act like it's no big deal," said Esen.

Erdogan has indeed already played down the importance of the re-run, saying last week that the choice of mayor was "only a change in the shop window" since the AKP controls almost two-thirds of the city's districts. But it was a bitter loss for AKP voters, with some in tears at the party headquarters yesterday night. "Let them rejoice while they can, they will see..." vowed retired shopkeeper Mehmet. Despite recent setbacks, Erdogan and his party remain the most popular force in Turkish politics. For many conservatives, Erdogan remains a hero who has brought prosperity and fiercely defended the country's interests since taking over in 2003. — AFP

"The American government must act responsibly to protect the lives of American troops by avoiding misconduct in the region."

Trump, who spent Saturday huddling with his advisers, initially said he was keen to be Iran's "best friend" - if the country agreed to renounce nuclear weapons. "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," he told reporters. "We are putting major additional Sanctions on Iran on Monday," tweeted Trump, who has also deployed additional troops to the Middle East. "I look forward to the day that Sanctions come off Iran, and they become a productive and prosperous nation again - The sooner the better!"

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo added: "When the Iranian regime decides to forgo violence and meet our diplomacy with diplomacy, it knows how to reach us. Until then, our diplomatic isolation and economic pressure campaign against the regime will intensify." A minister from Britain's Foreign Office was in Tehran yesterday to meet top Iranian diplomats for "urgent de-escalation" of tensions, yet the Iranian party said the talks were "repetitive".

Minister of State for the Middle East Andrew Murrison had the "usual talking points", said Kamal Kharazi, the head of the Strategic Council of Foreign Relations at Iran's foreign ministry. These included saying a European payment mechanism to help Iran with US sanctions "will soon become operational, that Britain has always supported the (nuclear deal) and has its own problems with America... such talks that have always been repetitive," Kharazi added. "#EconomicTerrorism brings tension," Zarif tweeted, adding it was "prudence" that prevented a war breaking out between Tehran and Washington.

Meanwhile, Iranian lawmakers chanted "Death to America" during a parliament session yesterday. "America is the real terrorist in the world by spreading chaos in countries, giving advanced weapons to terrorist groups, causing insecurity, and still it says 'Come, let's negotiate,'" the parliament's deputy speaker, Masoud Pezeshkian, said at the start of a session broadcast live on state radio. "Death to America," chanted many lawmakers. The chants, often repeated since the 1979 Islamic revolution which toppled the U.S.-backed Shah, came weeks after Trump said in a US television interview: "They (Iranians) haven't screamed 'death to America' lately."



People attend a rally in Prague demanding the resignation of Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis yesterday over allegations of graft in a protest that organizers and local media claim drew around 250,000 people, which would make it the largest since the fall of communism in 1989. — AFP

Behind the wheel, Saudi women...

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"I still don't believe it," she said, zipping past younger drivers in her native eastern city of Qatif. Her husband, who passed away a decade ago, secretly taught her how to drive during trips to neighboring Bahrain in the 1990s, despite the risk of infuriating family patriarchs.

The reform has freed many Saudi women from their dependence on private chauffeurs and male relatives. "We feel like (we were) in a cage before," said Munirah Al-Sinani, a 72-year-old mother of four, driving in the nearby city of Dhahran with her husband in the passenger seat. "Open the cage. We fly, we go wherever."

The move was part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's much-trumpeted reform drive aimed at overhauling the conservative petro-state, long criticized over its treatment of women. But as authorities detained several veteran women's rights campaigners in the weeks before the ban was lifted, it became clear that the reform drive would not include greater political freedoms.

However, with the kingdom tightening its purse strings amid low oil prices, their new-found mobility allows women to join a labor market chronically short of female workers. Some three million women could receive licenses and start driving by 2020, according to consultancy firm PwC. Only a handful of driving schools for women have cropped up in Saudi cities, where applicants have rushed to learn to drive cars and even Harley-Davidson motorbikes - scenes unimaginable until recently.

But in a society steeped in conservatism, many say they have endured sexism and aggression. Social media is rife with memes of traffic pileups blamed on women driv-

ers, along with condescending messages advising women to "avoid wearing makeup" while driving. More alarmingly, arsonists "opposed to female drivers" torched a woman's car near the holy city of Makkah last July, Saudi media reported. The woman had reportedly started driving to save money - she had been spending much of her salary on hiring a driver. Since then local media has reported at least five more arson attacks on women's cars in several cities.

Many women also face opposition from family members, in a country where women are often only as free as their "guardians" - husbands, fathers and other male relatives - allow. Women need a guardian's permission to study, get married or even renew passports. That is not the case for driving licenses, but it is unclear what legal recourse women have if guardians physically prevent them from taking the wheel. Fakher recalled asking two conservative Qatif families: "Why are you stopping the girls?" She was accused of "interference" and told that their fathers were hell-bent on preventing their daughters from driving. The women appeared to have no say in the matter.

The crackdown on female activists that preceded the reform sparked a torrent of global criticism and cast a spotlight on the kingdom's human rights record. The government put 11 women on trial this March amid claims that some were tortured and sexually harassed by interrogators. Saudi authorities deny the charge. Most of the 11 were veterans of the campaign for the right to drive, including some who took part in the kingdom's first driving protest in 1990.

The women were charged with speaking to international journalists, diplomats, and human rights organizations. Eight have since been temporarily released, but still face trial. Observers said the crackdown aimed to send a clear signal that the state is the sole agent of change. Still, many Saudis say decades of fearless activism played a role in ending the ban. "They paved the way for us," said Fakher. — AFP

Erdogan's party loses replay of...

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Conceding defeat later in the day, Yildirim congratulated Imamoglu and wished him good luck. "It's a colossal defeat for Yildirim but also Erdogan. His gamble (in calling for a replay of the election) backfired," Berk Esen, assistant professor of international relations at Ankara's Bilkent University, told AFP. It comes as an economic slump and rising prices have dented the president's reputation for economic stewardship, with

US envoy calls on world to 'urge Iran...

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about a month before it downed the American drone as part of a series of escalatory incidents between Tehran and Washington. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted a map saying the US-made MQ9 Reaper drone - also widely used for carrying out military strikes - had entered his country's airspace on May 26.

Iran shot down the US Global Hawk drone on Thursday, saying it had violated its airspace near the strategic Strait of Hormuz - a claim the United States denies. US President Donald Trump called off a planned retaliatory military strike Friday, saying the response would not have been "proportionate", with Tehran warning any attack would see Washington's interests across the Middle East go up in flames.

Yesterday, US national security adviser John Bolton cautioned Iran against misinterpreting the last-minute cancellation. "Neither Iran nor any other hostile actor should mistake US prudence and discretion for weakness," Bolton said in Jerusalem. The downing of the US drone came after a series of attacks on tankers in the congested shipping lanes of the Gulf, which Washington has blamed on Tehran, exacerbated already-tense relations between the two countries. Iran has denied responsibility for those attacks.

With the military option called off, Washington secretly launched cyber-attacks against Iranian missile control systems and a spy network in response to the downed drone, according to US media reports. US media said the attack crippled computers used to control missile launchers and a spying group tracking ships in the Gulf. Iran is yet to officially react to the claim, but Fars news agency called the move a "bluff" and said it was meant to "regain lost reputation for the White House" following the downing of its drone.

Iran has said it would respond firmly to any threat against it and warned yesterday of the risks of a military confrontation. "If a conflict breaks out in the region, no country would be able to manage its scope and timing," Major General Gholamali Rashid said, according to Fars.

Ethiopia army chief, local leader killed in...

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Nagy told reporters in Pretoria, South Africa. "It's certainly not clear sailing for him (Abiy) from now on. He has an incredible number of issues he has to deal with," said Nagy, a former U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia.

The shooting in Bahir Dar occurred when the state president - an ally of Abiy - was holding a meeting to decide how to put a stop to the open recruitment of ethnic Amhara militias by Asamnew, one Addis-based official told Reuters. Asamnew had advised the Amhara people to arm themselves in preparation for fighting against other groups, in a video spread on Facebook a week earlier and seen by a Reuters reporter. Abiy donned military fatigues to announce the attempted coup on state television on Saturday evening. Residents of Bahir Dar, about 500 km north-west of Addis, said there was at least four hours of gunfire on Saturday evening and some roads had been closed off. "The situation in the Amhara region is currently under full control by the Federal Government in collaboration with the regional government," Abiy said in Sunday's statement.

The US Embassy tweeted it had heard reports of gunfire in Addis Ababa on Saturday night, and some residents told Reuters they heard six shots in a suburb near the country's Bole International Airport around 9:30 p.m. local time. The capital was quieter than usual yesterday, with fewer cars or pedestrians on the streets. Brigadier General Tefera Mamo, the head of special forces in Amhara, told state television that "most of the people who attempted the coup have been arrested, although there are a few still at large." He did not give details about Asamnew.

Since taking power, Abiy has released political prisoners, removed bans on political parties and prosecuted officials accused of gross human rights abuses, but

his government is battling ethnic bloodshed once held in check by the state's iron grip. Now some of Ethiopia's ethnic groups are disputing the boundaries of the country's nine federal states, or arguing that they too should have regional governments, claims that threaten the dominance of other groups.

Amhara is home to Ethiopia's second largest ethnic group of the same name and their native tongue, Amharic, is also the country's official language. Anti-government protests that lasted three years and eventually forced former prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn to resign in 2018 had begun in the neighbouring state of Oromia but quickly spread to Amhara. Demonstrators were angered by grievances over land rights, political and economic marginalization - issues that Abiy is now racing to address. "He (Abiy) seems to be dismantling the EPRDF (ruling coalition) and is entertaining thoughts of altering the architecture of federalism, but he hasn't given any clear direction he's heading in," said Matt Bryden, the head of regional think-tank Sahar Research. "That uncertainty is creating a lot of competition and ... driving a lot of the friction and violence."

Abiy also changed many senior security officials when he came to power, Bryden said, creating more uncertainty that allowed armed groups that would once have been quashed to flourish. Abiy's changes have not gone unchallenged. A year ago, he survived a grenade attack that killed two people at a rally. In October, hundreds of soldiers marched on his palace demanding more pay. He defused the situation by doing push-ups with them but later accused them of trying to derail reforms.

The Internet was down across Ethiopia yesterday, although the government made no statement about this. Authorities have cut off the Internet several times previously for security and other reasons. Ethiopia is due to hold parliamentary elections next year, although the electoral board warned earlier this month that they were behind schedule and that instability could cause a problem for polling. Several opposition groups have called for the elections to be held on time anyway. — Reuters

Sports

Yankees drop Astros to extend their season-high winning streak to eight

Braves storm back to beat Nationals 13-9

NEW YORK: Giancarlo Stanton drove in his first four runs of the season on a pair of two-run singles as the host New York Yankees extended their season-high winning streak to eight games with a 7-5 victory over the Houston Astros on Saturday night. The Yankees picked up their latest win on a night when they blew a pair of two-run leads and homered for the 25th straight game, tying the team record set from June 1-29, 1941. New York is two shy of the all-time record set by the Texas Rangers from Aug. 11-Sept. 9, 2002, and became the seventh team to homer in 25 straight games. In the bottom of the seventh, Austin Romine forged a 5-5 tie with a solo homer into the right field seats off Ryan Pressly (1-1). It came after Jonathan Holder (5-2), in relief of Yankees starter Masahiro Tanaka, allowed a two-strike, two-out, three-run homer to Yordan Alvarez in the top of the seventh. DJ LeMahieu followed Romine's second homer of the season by reaching on an infield hit, and Aaron Judge reached on catcher's interference. After the runners moved up a base on Luke Voit's groundout, Stanton hit a 107 mph ground ball to third base that deflected into left field off third baseman Yuli Gurriel as he attempted to make a diving stop, bringing home LeMahieu and Judge.

Giants 7, Diamondbacks 4

Five relievers combined to shut out the Arizona Diamondbacks on two hits over the final five innings, allowing the San Francisco Giants to hold on for a victory over their National League West rival in Phoenix. Alex Dickerson, who drove in six runs in his Giants debut in Friday's 11-5 win, tormented the Diamondbacks again, this time with two doubles that combined to drive in three runs. The Giants overcame a 3-0 deficit and led 5-4 when manager Bruce Bochy pulled starter Tyler Beede in favor of Trevor Gott (4-0) after Arizona's David Peralta led off the fifth inning with a double.

Dodgers 5, Rockies 4 (11 innings)

Alex Verdugo had four hits and hit two home runs, including the walk-off blast, as Los Angeles rallied to defeat visiting Colorado in a near mirror-image of Friday's series opener. One day after rookie Matt Beatey ended a victory on a ninth-inning homer, it was another Dodgers rookie to rip his first game-ending home run. Verdugo's second home run of the game was his seventh of the season. Raimel Tapia hit a home run and rookie starter Peter Lambert pitched five solid innings in his fourth career outing but the Rockies dropped to 0-5 against the Dodgers this season and lost on consecutive days following a successful three-game sweep at Arizona.

Twins 5, Royals 3 (10 innings)

Minnesota scored twice in the top of the 10th inning to defeat host Kansas City as Luis Arraez led off the inning with a single and moved to second when Jake Cave was hit by a pitch. After Jorge Polanco flied to left, CJ Cron's ground ball eluded Hunter Dozier at third to score Arraez. Nelson Cruz struck out, but Eddie Rosario's double scored Cave to give the Twins an insurance run. Trevor May (2-1) pitched the ninth and picked up the win for the Twins. Wily Peralta (2-3) took the loss for the Royals. Blake Parker picked up his 10th save in 11 chances. Miguel Sano led off the second inning with a 454-foot bomb to center for his ninth home run of the season. He has more home runs (12) and RBIs (43) against the Royals than he does against any other major league team. Cave led off the eighth inning for the Twins with his first home run of the season, a 437-foot shot to right center. One out later, Cron planted one in the left field bullpen.

Blue Jays 8, Red Sox 7

Boston reliever Ryan Brasier walked Eric Sogard and

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. with the bases loaded to force in two runs—including the go-ahead run—in a three-run eighth inning and visiting Toronto came back to win. Freddy Galvis and Rowdy Tellez homered for the Blue Jays, who overcame a 6-0 deficit and scored four runs in the seventh to close the gap to one. Christian Vazquez homered for Boston. The Blue Jays tied the game in the eighth against Matt Barnes (3-2) on an infield single by Teoscar Hernandez, who took second on a wild pitch and scored on Cavan Biggio's single. Barnes walked the next two batters to load the bases and was replaced by Brasier, who walked Sogard and Guerrero to give Toronto a two-run lead. Nick Kingham (3-1) struck out three and walked one in two innings to earn the win.

Cardinals 4, Angels 2

Albert Pujols provided one of the few highlights for visiting Los Angeles in a loss to St. Louis, but his home run and the standing ovations every time he came to the plate, were memorable for many who previously watched him win two World Series titles and three National League Most Valuable Player awards with the Cardinals. Pujols played 11 seasons in St. Louis before signing with the Angels following the 2011 season. This series is his first trip back. The home run by Pujols was the lone blemish against St. Louis right-hander Dakota Hudson (6-3). He went seven innings, allowing one run and five hits for his eighth consecutive quality start. Marcell Ozuna homered against St. Louis for the second straight game, a two-run blast into the third deck in the sixth, stretching the lead to 4-0.

Braves 13, Nationals 9

Freddie Freeman had two hits and drove in five runs and Dansby Swanson lashed out two hits with four RBIs, including a key three-run homer, as Atlanta stormed back to beat host Washington in Washington, DC. The Braves, who trailed 8-4, have won 12 of their last 15 games. Washington was trying to reach the .500 mark for the first time since April 23, but its bullpen gave up nine runs, including three by Trevor Rosenthal in the seventh when he failed to retire a batter. Washington, which had won a season-high five straight games, led 8-4 before the Braves scored four in the seventh and four in the eighth. Juan Soto was 3-for-4 with four RBIs for the Nationals.

Brewers 6, Reds 5

Milwaukee's Yasmani Grandal homered and had two RBIs as the Brewers broke their five-game losing streak with a win over visiting Cincinnati after Grandal had a solo homer, double, two runs scored and a walk in a 2-for-3 day batting from the leadoff spot. Mike Moustakas went 2-for-4 with a double and a run. Christian Yelich was 0-for-3 and had his 18-game hitting streak broken. Reliever Matt Albers (4-2) collected the win with 1 1/3 innings of hitless relief. Lefty closer Josh Hader recorded six straight outs to notch his 18th save in 19 chances, striking out four.

Athletics 4, Rays 2

Matt Chapman highlighted a two-run seventh inning with a tie-breaking double, sending Oakland to victory over visiting Tampa Bay, the A's fourth in six games against the Rays over the past two weeks. After twice seeing one-run leads disappear, the A's took charge for good in the seventh, when Beau Taylor drew a leadoff walk from Rays reliever Diego Castillo (1-6). After a single by Marcus Semien, Chapman laced his go-ahead double to center, scoring pinch runner Josh Peghey. The Rays chose to load the bases by intentionally walking Matt Olson, but after Castillo got Kris Davis to hit into a fielder's choice with the out at home, he hit Ramon Laureano with a full-count pitch, allowing the



NEW YORK: Max Stassi #12 of the Houston Astros is tagged out by shortstop Didi Gregorius #18 of the New York Yankees during the sixth inning of a baseball game at Yankee Stadium on June 22, 2019. — AFP

inning's second run to score.

Indians 2, Tigers 0

Rookie Aaron Civale (1-0) scattered two hits and struck out six over six innings in his major league debut as host Cleveland beat Detroit after Jose Ramirez ripped an RBI triple in the second inning and rookie Oscar Mercado had an RBI single in the third. The Indians have won seven of their last nine overall and moved a season-high six games over .500. They outscored Detroit by a 34-12 margin over the past nine days to win each of the five games. JaCoby Jones and Niko Goodrum each collected two of the six hits for the Tigers, who have surrendered 53 runs while losing seven of their last eight games.

Rangers 6, White Sox 5

Nomar Mazara homered twice and Lance Lynn pitched resiliently after a shaky first inning to help host Texas beat Chicago in Arlington, Texas. Mazara connected against White Sox starter Odrisamer Despaigne for both homers. He also drilled a towering home run estimated at 505 feet in Friday's series opener. Lynn (9-4) went seven innings, allowing five runs and six hits, with six strikeouts and one walk. After allowing four runs in the first inning, the right-hander settled down and retired 13 in a row during one stretch. Lynn is 7-2 in his past 11 starts. White Sox shortstop Tim Anderson went 3-for-4 with a home run, a double and a career-high-tying four RBIs. Anderson highlighted Chicago's first inning outburst with a two-out, bases-clearing double and scored on Yolmer Sanchez's double one batter later.

Mets 10, Cubs 2

Pete Alonso, Todd Frazier and Wilson Ramos homered, Zack Wheeler pitched seven strong innings, and New York cruised over host Chicago as the Mets scored in each of the first six innings and came within one run of matching their season high. Alonso has 26 home runs, setting a record for a National League rookie prior to the All-Star break. The blast tied Alonso for the Mets' franchise record for most home runs by a rookie, matching Darryl Strawberry in 1983. Jason Heyward had two singles and a double to lead the Cubs at the plate. Wheeler (6-5) limited the Cubs to one run on five hits. He walked one and struck out five.

Marlins 5, Phillies 3

Wilkin Castillo's go-ahead two-run double capped a three-run seventh inning for visiting Miami, which went on to beat Philadelphia, sending the Phillies to their sixth straight loss and dropping them to 6-13 this month. The Marlins have won three straight, including the first two games of the three-game series. The Phillies carried a 3-1 lead into the seventh, thanks to a pair of third-inning solo homers by Bryce Harper and Rhys Hoskins and a fifth-inning RBI single by Harper. But the Marlins rallied against Adam Morgan (2-2), who, in his first appearance since coming off the injured list, gave up three runs on two hits and a walk.

Pirates 6, Padres 3

Adam Frazier drove in two runs and Elias Diaz and Jung Ho Kang added one each in a four-run eighth inning that boosted Pittsburgh to its third straight win by beating visiting San Diego. With the game knotted 2-2, Starling Marte opened the eighth with a triple against Craig Stammen (5-4). Josh Bell walked, and Colin Moran was intentionally walked, loading the bases before Frazier chopped a two-run single up the middle. Diaz followed with an RBI base hit, and Kang hit a sacrifice fly for a 6-2 lead. Jose Osuna hit a two-run homer for Pittsburgh. Manny Machado hit a solo homer for the second day in a row and had an RBI single for San Diego, which has lost two straight.

Orioles 8, Mariners 4

Jonathan Villar and Anthony Santander hit home runs and Andrew Cashner pitched six solid innings as Baltimore snapped a 10-game losing streak with a victory against host Seattle. Domingo Santana homered for the Mariners, who were wearing the uniforms of the 1969 Seattle Pilots on Turn Back the Clock Day. Seattle had a three-game winning streak end. Cashner (7-3), a right-hander, allowed two runs on five hits, with one walk and three strikeouts. Trailing 1-0, Villar hit a three-run homer off Mariners left-hander Tommy Milone (1-2) with one out in the top of the fourth. With one out, Pedro Severino lined a single to left and Renato Nunez followed with a double to left to send Severino to third. Villar then hit an 0-1 pitch over the fence in left. — Reuters

Afghanistan learning 'day by day' at WCup

SOUTHAMPTON: Afghanistan captain Gulbadin Naib said his inexperienced team were learning "day by day" despite the pain of losing to India when in sight of a famous World Cup win on Saturday. The unfancied Afghans, playing in just their second World Cup, restricted Virat Kohli's title contenders to 224 for eight in 50 overs in Southampton and were always in with a chance of an upset.

But a Mohammed Shami hat-trick finally ended their resistance and condemned them to an 11-run defeat - a sixth straight loss at the tournament in England and Wales. "At the start of the tournament, when we played the first four games, we lost really badly, and also we played against England and now India as strong sides and the other favorites of the tournament," Naib told reporters. "So I think we're now getting better and better day by day. This is the team I wanted actually. Also in the batting side. So this is a good sign.

"These kinds of teams don't give you a single chance and also credit goes to the Indian side, how they bowl, how they field. We did a lot of things good, but in the end we missed it." Naib, who was only made captain of the one-day side in April, bemoaned the fact that his batsmen did not go on to play decisive innings. "When we chase this kind of total, like 220, 250, the middle order should go to 50 or 80. Thirty, 20 runs is not enough," he said.

But he said despite the agony of defeat, Afghanistan would take a lot of positives from their performance against unbeaten opponents captained by his favorite player. A win



SOUTHAMPTON: Afghanistan's captain Gulbadin Naib plays a shot during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between India and Afghanistan at the Rose Bowl in Southampton. — AFP

would have been just the second in their history at World Cups after they notched a single victory, against Scotland, at the 2015 edition. "When you're playing this kind of team, you learn a lot of things," he said. "We learn it with your mistakes. Yeah, the score is chaseable, but I think we didn't take our responsibilities, especially on the batting side.

"We are sad because we had a chance to beat this kind of team. In the World Cup, it's a big achievement for any team. But the big teams, they didn't give a single chance. "Today we missed an opportunity to win, to beat India. India is one of the best sides. It's my favorite team. Always my favorite team, and I support the Indian team when I'm watching the Indian team. "My favorite is also Virat Kohli, and I played against him. So today I missed the opportunity to beat them. But India is one of the best teams now." — AFP

Jittery Jazz holds on to win Korea Open

SEOUL: Rising Thai talent Jazz Janewattananond blew a substantial lead on the back nine but still held on to win the Korea Open by a single stroke from local Hwang Inn-choon at Cheonan yesterday. The world number 62's final round one-over-par 72 proved enough to secure his fourth Asian Tour title on six-under 278 for the tournament at Woo Jeong Hills Country Club. Jazz had started the day with a two-shot cushion and three birdies on a flawless front nine gave him a five-shot lead at one stage.

Calamity struck at the par-four 11th hole, though, when the 23-year-old found the water with an iron and three-putted on the green for a triple bogey seven that cut his lead to one stroke. Hwang, up ahead, failed to capitalize, however, as he fluffed a short par-putt at the 13th but Jazz lost the extra shot again with a bogey after another three-putt on the 14th green. The nerves increased for Jazz again at the 17th when, with Hwang having boomed a huge drive down the 18th fairway, the Thai left himself with a 15-foot putt for par.

Taking up the long putter that he adopted only two weeks ago, Jazz nailed the putt before paring the 18th with a tap-in to clinch the title. "A national title is always a big thing so I'm really grateful and honored to win this tournament," Jazz said. "It's a very tough golf course, I got away with most of it but some of the holes coming in I was struggling. The pressure was on and after that seven, everything was harder."

Hwang, who finished with a 70, had the considerable consolation prize of a place at his first major championship at the age of 44 after securing one of two spots up for grabs at next month's 148th British Open at Royal Portrush. With Jazz, who will move to the brink of the top 50 in the world with the victory, and third-placed American Chan Kim already qualified, South Korean Jang Dong-kyu, who shared fourth, claimed the other ticket to Northern Ireland. — Reuters



KSSC's General Assembly approves financial reports

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting Sport Club (KSSC) General Assembly unanimously approved the administrative and financial reports for the year ending March 31. An accounts auditor was also appointed during the meeting that was held at the club. President of Kuwait and Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations, Chairman of the board of KSSC Eng Duajj Al-Otaibi appreciated the confidence of the assembly in the board of directors, and hoped the board continues its performance that led Kuwait shooting to continue making its achievements in all arenas.

He added "we were happy the

members of the assembly were available and were informed about the shooting sport achievements, and wished it continues on this successful path. Al-Otaibi dedicated the achievements to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, government and Kuwaitis.

Meanwhile Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federation's Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi thanked the general assembly for approving the reports and continued support of the board of directors. He also appreciated the support of HH the Amir, HH the Crown Prince and the Public Authority for Sports.

Sports

Federer crushes Goffin for unbelievable 10th Halle title

'My future is open': Federer looks ahead to life after tennis

HALLE WESTFALEN: Roger Federer will head to Wimbledon in high spirits after waltzing past Belgium's David Goffin in straight sets to win a record-extending 10th title at the ATP event in Halle yesterday. Federer, 37, beat Goffin 7-6 (7/2), 6-1 to secure his 102nd career singles title and remain unbeaten on grass so far this season. "It's unbelievable. I never thought when I first played here that I would win 10 titles," said Federer.

"I've never won a tournament 10 times before, so I will remember forever that I did so here in Halle." The Swiss star is chasing a ninth Wimbledon crown in London next month as he looks to extend and defend his record of 20 career majors. Long-term rival Rafael Nadal moved to within just two titles of Federer's record with his 12th French Open triumph earlier this month, while world number one Novak Djokovic is just five short with 15 career majors.

Federer endured a rough ride in the early rounds in Halle, battling to hard-fought, three-set victories over Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and Roberto Bautista Agut. Things got easier in the latter stages as he thrashed Andy Murray's new doubles partner Pierre-Hugues Herbert in the semi-finals before dispatching Goffin yesterday. Federer held off three break points early in the first set before prevailing in the tiebreaker. An unsettled looking Goffin then gifted Federer the opening game of the second set with a double fault on break point.

From there, the Swiss never looked back, breaking Goffin twice more on his way to a 10th Halle title. "I thought David was actually better than me in the first 10 games," said Federer. Goffin added: "I thought I started really well, there was great intensity in the first

set. "I had opportunities, but you have to take them against Roger. This guy is pretty good." It is the first time Federer has reached double figures at any individual tournament. He has triumphed eight times at both Wimbledon and the Dubai Open, and has won his home tournament in Basel on nine occasions.

'My future is open'

Meanwhile, Federer said that he is still unsure of what he will do when his playing days are finally up. Federer, 37, is aiming for a ninth Wimbledon title and a 21st major next month, but admitted that it will soon be time to call time on his glistening career. "It's a shame, because I am at the end of my career now, and it has gone by so quickly," he said after reaching the final of the ATP event in Halle for the 13th time.

"That is good sign, though, because it shows that it has been enormous fun." "My career has been a blessing. I wouldn't have done anything differently, apart from the mistakes I made when I was younger which we all make." The Swiss veteran said he was still unsure of what he would do when he finally hung up his rackets. "My future is open. Some players need a very clear plan of what they will do after tennis, but I don't," he said. "I want to have flexibility, for my family. There will be plenty of opportunities." "I have my foundation, and I have various sponsors who I have been with a long time who will stay with me after my career," Federer warned that he may not play too many exhibition matches after his retirement. "Of course I want to keep doing things in tennis, and maybe play some exhibition matches or charity matches," he said. "On the other



HALLE WESTFALEN: Roger Federer from Switzerland poses with the trophy after he won his final match against David Goffin from Belgium at the ATP tennis tournament in Halle yesterday. — AFP

hand, I will have to see how fit I can stay and how fit I want to stay." "I will have to see whether I want to play exhibition matches at a low standard," he laughed.

Federer also said he was planning "six months to a year" ahead for the time being as he looks to continue winning tournaments. The Swiss still faces a fight to

defend his record number of majors from his rivals. Rafael Nadal moved to within just two titles of Federer's mark with his 18th Grand Slam title at the French Open, while Novak Djokovic has 15 majors to his name. "The main thing is not to get injured, because my health comes first," said Federer.—Agencies



LAUSANNE: International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach (center) reacts as he receives the new key of the Olympic house, the new IOC headquarters, from senior architect Jan Amundsen (4th left) during the inauguration ceremony yesterday. — AFP

IOC inaugurates new headquarters as 2026 Games vote looms

LAUSANNE: The International Olympic Committee inaugurated its new headquarters in Lausanne yesterday, the 125th anniversary of the organization which is preparing to select the host city for the 2026 Winter Olympics. Built at a cost of about 130 million euros (\$147.76 million), the modern glass and steel structure has a solar-paneled roof and was constructed in the place of the old headquarters on the shores of Lake Geneva.

"On this very day ... Pierre de Coubertin founded the International Olympic Committee and revived the Olympic Games," IOC President Thomas Bach said. "He saw this as a way to promote peace among nations and people." The German told an audience of IOC members, international federations and representatives of the 206 national Olympic Committees.

"This Olympic House, which we are inaugurating today, is a reflection of this mission and of our values." According to the IOC, the new building, designed by Danish architects 3XN and inspired by the shape of a dove with a large central staircase made of five rings, meets stringent environmental and sustainability standards.

It will house all 500 IOC employees under one roof instead of several locations around Lausanne as was the case in the past.

"Of course, we wanted to bring together everyone, the Olympic family and all IOC staff, under one roof," Bach said. "At the same time, we want the Olympic House to incorporate the elements of sustainability, credibility and youth. The building reflects these three elements that are so central to our mission." After the festivities it is back to business on Monday when the IOC will elect the host city for the 2026 Winter Games with Italy's Milan and Stockholm the only candidates in the race.

Four others—Swiss city Sion, Japan's Sapporo, Austria's Graz and 1988 hosts Calgary in Canada—dropped out in mid-race, scared off by the size and cost of the Games. About 100 members are expected to vote at the IOC session on Monday afternoon with both Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and his Swedish counterpart Stefan Lofven in town to support their respective candidacies. Italy last hosted winter Olympics in Turin in 2006 while winter sports powerhouse Sweden has never hosted the Winter Games.—Reuters

Smikle upsets Dacres to win Jamaican discus title

LOS ANGELES: Traves Smikle scored an upset win over world leader Fedric Dacres in the men's discus throw on Saturday at the Jamaican National Championships in Kingston. Dacres came into the nationals on the back of a monster performance less than a week ago when he threw 70.78 meters at a IAAF Diamond League event in Rabat, Morocco. He struggled on Saturday, fouling three of his attempts and could only get a 63.49m as Smikle upstaged him with a 64.50m toss. Chad Wright finished in third place with 60.66m. Both Smikle and Dacres have achieved the World Championship qualifying standard.

There were no surprises in the women's shot put where World Championship finalist Danniell Thomas-Dodd won the event with a throw of 18.52m beating defending champion Lloydricia Cameron (16.89m) and Nayoka Clunis, who took third place with a 16.34m. The 100m champions from Friday night remained on course for the double after qualifying from the 200m semi-finals on Saturday. Yohan Blake, the men's 100m champion, was an easy winner in his semi-

final heat, running 20.42 seconds.

Rasheed Dwyer, who was third in the 100m on Friday, also won his heat in 20.33 seconds while Julian Forte ran 20.54 seconds to advance. Aniel Miller ran a personal best 20.57 seconds to book his spot. Women's 100m champion Elaine Thompson and runner up Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce both won their semi-final heats to qualify for Sunday's final of the 200m. With world champion Omar McLeod using his wild card for the upcoming Doha World Championships, the men's 110m hurdles promises to be an exciting final after three men all ran 13.66 seconds in the semi-finals on Saturday.

World and Olympic Games medallist Hansle Parchment won the second heat with 13.66 seconds. Commonwealth Games champion Ronald Levy won the first heat with a 13.66 and Orlando Bennett won the third heat with a 13.66. Olympic Games medallist Shericka Jackson ran a 50.69 seconds in the semi-finals to lead the women's 400m. Rusheen McDonald's season's best 45.25 seconds was the fastest among the men in the 400m.—AFP

Fairytale return for Andy Murray

LONDON: Former world number one Andy Murray's dream return continued on Saturday as he and Feliciano Lopez progressed to the doubles final at Queen's, beating the defending champions in the semi-finals. The 32-year-old, who is making his first competitive appearance since what he termed "life-changing" hip surgery, and his partner Feliciano Lopez came through 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 10-7 against John Peers of Australia and his Finnish partner Henri Kontinen.

"It was a good match. We obviously had some chances to finish it in the second set," said Murray. "I'm very happy to be in the final." Murray, who said he felt zero pain in his hip but that his back was stiff and his arm tired from serving, said he had not expected to get this far. "I didn't have high expectations at all," he said. "Yeah, I think things have probably got a little bit better maybe with each match, as well. "I didn't expect to be playing in the final, no, that's for sure." Murray, who was surprised to hear Maria Sharapova had offered to be his partner in the mixed doubles at Wimbledon despite him slapping her when she failed a dope test, had attracted a visit from former Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho whilst he was practicing before his match. "Yeah, he just wished me well," said Murray.

"Was asking a bit about my hip and asked him what he was up to, try and see if he was going to come to Arsenal," added the avid Gunners fan with a smile. Murray may have been the reason for keeping the stands packed although they thinned out a bit by the end-but he owed a lot to an extraordinary effort by 37-year-old Lopez. The Spaniard effectively stayed on centre court for most of the day-winning his singles semi-final in three sets. Then he and Murray polished off their



Britain's Andy Murray

unfinished quarter-final before a marathon effort in the doubles semi-final. Lopez said that if anyone had told him he would have played this much a week ago he would have said they were "crazy." He was also generous in his praise of Murray. "What Andy showed me basically is he is a great champion," said Lopez. "I mean he went through two surgeries. He's here playing again. "I'm learning a lot of things from him, no? He's so competitive, he loves winning."

'What was I doing'

Lopez—who Murray may regret overlooking as his doubles partner for Wimbledon—earned a pat on the back from Murray. Murray chastised himself for a mess he made of one shot in the first set, asking: "What was I doing?" However, his brilliance was epitomized when he fired an unstoppable forehand winner off a Kontinen serve to secure a break point and they moved 6-5 ahead when Peer fired long.

Murray raised his fist and said "come on" as he ran back to his seat, but Lopez stayed

standing, his herculean efforts perhaps beginning to tell. Murray's serve in the following game came under pressure, but he showed great agility and touch to race to the ball and stroke it down the line, earning a grin from Lopez. That moment of inspirational play boosted them and they sealed the set 7-5. Murray and Lopez were constantly chatting to each other, even as one waited to receive serve, and something the Spaniard said provoked the two-time Olympic champion into a wry smile.

Lopez was broken early in the second but as the sun went down behind the clubhouse the spectators wrapping themselves in towels to keep warm—they broke back and then broke again, leaving Murray to serve for the match. However, he was broken and the defending champions went on to win the tie-break. Murray and Lopez, though, were not to be denied and, despite some nervy moments in the champions tie-break, they came through and just about had the energy to embrace each other and raise a hand to the crowd at the end.—AFP

Relentless Hamilton wins French GP to extend Mercedes' unbeaten run to 10

LE CASTELLET: Lewis Hamilton extended his championship lead and continued his relentless run of success when he scorched to an emphatic victory ahead of Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas at the French Grand Prix yesterday. The defending five-time champion repeated his pole-to-flag triumph of 2018 with a flawless drive to his fourth win in succession, sixth this season and 79th of his career.

His victory extended Mercedes' unbeaten start to the 2019 season to eight races and their overall winning streak to 10, the Silver Arrows leaving their main rivals trailing in their wake again. After eight of this season's 21 races, Hamilton leads the championship with 187 points ahead of Bottas on 151. "It's definitely been a really good weekend," said the Briton. "It's such a challenge out there and I live that, really trying to find the edge."

"I couldn't do it without this incredible team and we are creating history—and I am so proud to be part of it," Hamilton reflected. In sweltering conditions, he extended his title race lead over Bottas to 36 points—with Charles Leclerc finishing a strong third following a determined drive in his Ferrari. Bottas, who resisted a late charge from Leclerc, said: "Ultimately, Lewis was quicker today and I couldn't match his pace." Leclerc said: "I gave it everything, but the Mercedes are just too quick."

Max Verstappen was fourth for Red Bull ahead of four-time champion Sebastian Vettel in the sec-

ond Ferrari and the resurgent McLaren of Carlos Sainz. Vettel, who started seventh after a troubled qualifying, took a late pit stop for fresh tyres and snatched fastest lap and a track record by 0.024 seconds from Hamilton in the final seconds.

Daniel Ricciardo was seventh for Renault ahead of Kimi Raikkonen of Alfa Romeo and Nico Hulkenberg in the second Renault with Lando Norris finishing 10th despite hydraulics problems in the second McLaren. The race began with a track temperature of 57 degrees Celsius and an air temperature of 30, sizzling conditions that ensured a difficult afternoon for tyre-wear. Hamilton made a smooth start with Bottas and Leclerc following him on the opening lap, the Englishman soon opening up a gap of more than a second, by the end of lap one, and 1.5 by lap three.

On lap six, Vettel finally passed Norris for sixth. The British rookie responded at Signes, but Vettel resisted while Hamilton, at the front, reeled off another fastest lap. Vettel continued his progress, passing Sainz into the chicane on lap seven for fifth, 18 seconds adrift of the leader, but back in the main scrap behind him. By lap 12, Hamilton was 2.5 seconds clear of Bottas, but the Finn responded with a fastest lap of his own.

Ricciardo was the first man to pit after 15 laps, sparking a sequence of reactions that saw his direct rivals respond, all switching to 'hard' compound tyres. After the leading cars had pitted



LE CASTELLET: Winner Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton celebrates with his trophy on the podium after the Formula One Grand Prix de France at the Circuit Paul Ricard in Le Castellet, southern France yesterday. — AFP

Hamilton had pulled clear by 12 seconds reeling off fastest laps. If the outcome looked inevitable, it seemed so to Leclerc as well. When Ferrari asked him if he could push more, he replied: "I could, but it not good for the tyres. So, no..." Like the spectators, he may have been aware that since Le Castellet rejoined the calendar, Mercedes have topped every session and won both races.—AFP

Sports

Nigeria need late Ighalo goal to break down debutants Burundi

Nigeria's Kalu 'stable' after collapsing in training

ALEXANDRIA: Nigeria needed a late goal from substitute Odion Ighalo to claim a 1-0 win over a brave Burundi side playing their first-ever match at the Africa Cup of Nations on Saturday. Ighalo, set free by Ola Aina's clever flicked pass, side-footed the ball past Burundi goalkeeper Jonathan Nahimana in the 77th minute, four minutes after coming on in the opening Group B match.

It was tough on Burundi who refused to be overawed and enjoyed slightly the better of the first half, with Frederic Nsabiymva heading against the crossbar from a set-piece. "We couldn't have produced a better performance because Burundi were very organized," said Nigeria coach Gernot Rohr. "We knew Burundi were unbeaten in the qualifiers, and we knew the first matches would be difficult. These teams don't have anything to lose, they know us and know how to organize against us."

Fearless and uninhibited, Burundi gave as good as they got in an entertaining first half as they forced Daniel Akpeyi to make two difficult saves and hit the crossbar. Cedric Amissi had Burundi's first chance when he latched onto a ball sent over the top of the Nigeria defense and unleashed a powerful volley which Akpeyi did well to block. Akpeyi was also tested by Gael Bigirimana's swerving 30-metre free kick, before a looping Frederic Nsabiymva header from a set-piece bounced off the top of the crossbar.

Nigeria were dangerous down the flanks with

Samuel Chukwueze and Alex Iwobi although most crosses were cut out by the Burundi defense. Paul Onuachu was closest in the 14th minute with a header which forced a good save by Jonathan Nahimana. Nigeria replaced captain John Obi Mikel with Ahmed Musa just before the hour in a bid to add to some speed to the attack but they continued to fail to make the final pass count. However, one moment of inspiration settled the game. Aina wrong-footed the Burundi defense with his backheeled pass and left Ighalo to place a perfect finish wide of the goalkeeper.

In another development, Nigeria forward Samuel Kalu is in a "stable condition" after collapsing during training due to dehydration, the Egyptian Football Association said, amid a sweltering start to the Africa Cup of Nations. "The health situation of Nigeria's player Samuel Kalu is stable after undergoing the necessary medical tests following his fall during his team's training due to a heart muscle failure," the Egyptian FA wrote in a statement.

The Bordeaux player was suffering from "dehydration after losing a large quantity of fluids" on Friday, it added, before stating that Kalu "is in a stable condition and can play" against Burundi in Alexandria on Saturday. It is the first time the tournament is being played across June and July, with temperatures in Egypt expected to hover between 35 and 38 Celsius (95-100.4 Fahrenheit) over the next month. —Agencies



ALEXANDRIA: Nigeria's players celebrate their victory during the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) football match between Nigeria and Burundi at Alexandria Stadium on June 22, 2019. — AFP

Clinical and ruthless Brazil please coach

SAO PAULO: Brazil coach Tite praised his team's effectiveness as the hosts stormed into the Copa America quarter-finals as Group A winners following Saturday's 5-0 thrashing of Peru. Brazil had been jeered by their own fans in their opening two pool matches - a 3-0 win over Bolivia and 0-0 draw with Venezuela - but it was all cheers in Sao Paulo as they secured top spot. "We were creative, precise, clinical and effective," enthused Tite. "It was one of the best matches during his reign in terms of keeping the ball and getting in behind the defense, he added.

And he recognized that it was the Selecao's fast start that made the difference, taking the lead after just 12 minutes through Casemiro. "Since we scored in the first half we had to maintain that tempo," he said. "We kept the same attitude and we were still creating chances in the 47th minute of the second half." The game was over as a contest by half time after further goals from Roberto Firmino and Everton.

A Dani Alves strike early in the second half piled more misery on Peru and even after Willian scored in the last minute, Gabriel Jesus won a stoppage time

penalty. Peru goalkeeper Pedro Gallese made amends for giving it away by saving Jesus's spot-kick. "We carried on creating chances even at 5-0," said assistant coach Cleber Xavier. Captain Alves said Brazil improved in every match during the pool stage. "We're improving: from the first to the second, to the third match," said the Paris Saint-Germain full-back.

The manner of victory also allowed Brazil to get back in the good books of a notoriously demanding public. They were jeered at half-time against Bolivia in a match they went on to win 3-0. And the boo-boys were back for their goalless stalemate with Venezuela. "When you manage to score a goal, it calms you down and gives you continuity for the rest of the match," said Alves. "And when the goal doesn't come, it seems to create anxiety." For Peru, they now face a tense wait to find out if they will make it into the knock-out stages.

Venezuela leapfrogged them with a 3-1 win over Bolivia and Peru are now hoping to finish as one of the two best third-placed teams. Jefferson Farfan said "it was one of the toughest" matches of his life, but worse still for goalkeeper Pedro Gallese, whose horror gaffe cost Peru the second goal. He was also partially at fault for the first and third and gave away the late penalty. "The whole team spoke with Gallese, he's calm, he has everyone's support," said Farfan. "Obviously we all made mistakes. Everyone played badly today." —AFP



SAO PAULO: Brazil's coach Tite is pictured during the Copa America football tournament group match against Peru at the Corinthians Arena in Sao Paulo on June 22, 2019. — AFP

Giampaolo hope to turn clock back for fallen giants Milan

MILAN: New AC Milan coach Marco Giampaolo said Saturday he was ready to seize the opportunity to turn the clock back for former European greats AC Milan days before taking over at the San Siro. The 51-year-old former Sampdoria boss replaces Gennaro Gattuso on a two-year deal reported to be worth two million euros (\$2.2 million) annually.

"I worked really hard to get this chance," Giampaolo, who will take over on July 1, told Milan TV. "Milan are the most successful and one of the most important clubs in Europe. This is a great opportunity for me. "Milan's history speaks of a club that always sought the beauty in football and the aesthetics along with the result. "I'm happy and motivated, the path will be long because you never finish building, but I am very happy to start this adventure." Giampaolo replaces former Milan player Gattuso who quit last month after leading the club to a fifth-placed finish in Serie A. Sporting director Leonardo also left the club with former players Zvonimir Boban and Paolo Maldini brought in as part of an overhaul at the cash-strapped seven-time European champions.

"I was struck by their seriousness, competence and passion," said Giampaolo of technical director Maldini and chief operating officer Bohan. "They are top level figures and their passion is contagious." Frederic Massara has also been appointed as club sporting director, arriving from league rivals Roma. Giampaolo led Sampdoria to ninth-place last season having previously coached teams including Siena, Empoli, Brescia and Cagliari.

"At the start of my career, I'd lose to Milan often, but more recently achieved a few victories," he continued after Sampdoria beat Milan at the San Siro last March in Serie A. "Playing at San Siro is always an exciting moment, as there's no coincidence it's called La Scala del Calcio. "I consider it the most fascinating stadium in Italy." Champions Juventus, Inter Milan and Roma have also had coaching changes with second-placed Napoli continuing under former Chelsea and Real Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti.

"I think with the return of Maurizio Sarri (Juventus) and Antonio Conte (Inter Milan) along with the many talented coaches in Serie A, it'll be even more competitive than last season," added Giampaolo. Owned by a US hedge fund Elliott Management, AC Milan will have a tight transfer budget due to Financial Fair Play restriction and are also in a legal battle with UEFA over whether or not they feature in Europe next season. The club won their last Champions League title in 2007 and their 18th Serie A crown in 2011. — AFP

Uruguay and Chile set for high-stakes Copa America clash

RIO DE JANEIRO: Fireworks could be in store when reigning champions Chile and record 15-time winners Uruguay meet in the Copa America today at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium. It will be the fourth edition running of the oldest continental competition in international football in which the South American rivals meet and memories are still fresh of the controversy surrounding their stormy 2015 clash.

Uruguay, then the reigning champions, finished the quarter-final encounter in Santiago with nine men after Edinson Cavani and Jorge Fucile were given their marching orders in a 1-0 defeat. Cavani's dismissal was the most controversial as he received a second yellow card just after the hour mark for flicking a hand into Chile defender Gonzalo Jara's face. Cavani, though, was left incensed as Jara had appeared to shove a finger up the forward's backside prior to his reaction, and his misdemeanour went unpunished.

Uruguay defended doggedly after that but fell to a Mauricio Isla winner 10 minutes from time. And tempers boiled over in the final minute when Fucile was given his marching orders, sparking a mass confrontation involving players and officials from both sides. Cavani and Jara were both hit with two-game bans over the earlier incident while Uruguay coach Oscar Tabarez, who entered the field during the late melee, was suspended for three matches for insulting the referee.

It wasn't the first time that Jara had been involved in a controversial sexual assault on a Uruguay player. In 2013, he and Luis Suarez had a running battle on the pitch in a World Cup qualifier that reached its zenith when Jara touched the Uruguay forward's testicles, and received a retaliatory punch for his troubles. Jara may not be able to spark a ruckus this time around, though, as the 33-year-old is no longer a regular starter.

'Well-oiled' Chile

And Paris Saint-Germain forward Cavani has preferred to focus on the challenge ahead rather than past quarrels. Claiming top spot in Group C is what's at stake, with Chile needing only a point to secure that, which would also be enough to ensure Uruguay's place in the quarter-finals. "We know that Chile have a well drilled game plan, we've known it for a long time: they're well oiled," Cavani said on Saturday in Rio. "We know what kind of rivals Chile



RIO DE JANEIRO: Uruguay's players attend a training session at Fluminense Training Center in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on the eve of a Copa America football match against Chile. — AFP

are," he added.

Uruguay have a far better record than Chile in the teams' head-to-heads, winning 18 times to just seven in previous Copa America matches. But Chile have won the last two, going on to lift the Copa America in both 2015 and 2016 — their only two continental triumphs. Whoever wins the group will play either Peru or the third-placed finisher in Group B in the quarter-finals, and that could be Argentina.

But Cavani says potential future opponents will have no bearing on how either side approaches the match, particularly with Colombia awaiting the second-placed finishers. "When you take to the field the only thing you want is to win," said the 32-year-old. "It's after the match that you start looking at and studying the next match." Both sides might be missing key players for the clash with full-back Diego Laxalt and midfielder Matias Vecino injured for Uruguay.

Chile, in the meantime, have doubts over their two main stars, Manchester United forward Alexis Sanchez and Barcelona midfielder Arturo Vidal. In their all-time record, Uruguay have won 42 of 78 matches between the two sides, with 18 draws and as many Chile victories. Many of those matches have been dirty affairs with fights amongst players, foul play and even punch-ups in the stands. With what's at stake and recent history to boot, today's Maracana encounter could prove combustible. — AFP

Briefs

Real eye women's team

MADRID: Real Madrid will launch a women's team which will compete in the top flight from next season, Spanish media reported. Spanish newspaper El Pais said Madrid have purchased CD Tacón, based in the Spanish capital who have won promotion to the Liga Iberdrola, for 400,000 euros. The club will be absorbed by the 13-times European champions and will train and play at Real's training ground. Madrid declined to comment on the reports. Real have long been criticized for not having a women's team while their biggest rivals Barcelona and Atletico Madrid regularly compete for titles. — Reuters

Kuwait to host GCC Games

KUWAIT: Head of the organizing committee for GCC women's Games Sheikha Naima Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said on Saturday that the sixth session of Gulf women sports would begin next October in Kuwait. In a news statement, Sheikha Naima added that competition would possibly include equestrianism, with the aim of developing women's role in sports. The competition includes so far 10 games except for equestrianism. Kuwait hosted the first edition of GCC women's Games in 2008, under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

WCup in ASEAN's sights

BANGKOK: Southeast Asian nations could launch a joint bid to host the 2034 World Cup, Thailand's foreign minister said Saturday, a bold play to bring the biggest sporting show on earth to a football-mad region for the first time. The only Asian hosts of the World Cup so far have been Japan and South Korea, in 2002. China is widely seen as the next Asian frontrunner to hold the tournament, with its massive sporting market, wealth and infrastructure to match. But the 10-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) bloc, meeting in Bangkok this weekend, is keen to steal a march on the regional superpower. "Government sectors think this can happen... 15 years from now," Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai told reporters after talks with his counterparts. — AFP

Indian F2 driver banned

LE CASTELLET: Indian Formula Two driver Mahaveer Raghunathan has been banned for a race after collecting nine penalty points in a single afternoon at the French Grand Prix. The 20-year-old, who competes under a Dutch licence, infringed three virtual safety car procedures in Saturday's race at Le Castellet and was handed three points for each infringement. Added to the points he already had, Raghunathan reached the 12 point limit that triggers an automatic ban, meaning the Chennai-born driver will miss next weekend's round in Austria. The MP Motorsport driver has yet to score a point this season. In April he was given a 10-place grid penalty after he took the chequered flag twice at the Bahrain season-opener, continuing at racing speed for an extra lap after the finish. — Reuters

US thump Trinidad and Tobago

OHIO: The United States scored five second-half goals on the way to a 6-0 rout of Trinidad and Tobago in Ohio on Saturday to book their place in the Gold Cup quarter-finals. The result, which also put Panama through to the next round, avenged a US defeat in 2017 that saw them miss out on the World Cup for the first time since 1986. After Aaron Long opened the scoring with a header in the 41st minute, Gyasi Zardes netted a double to make it 3-0 midway through the second period. Christian Pulisic and Paul Arriola got in on the scoring act to make it 5-0 before Long completed the rout with his second of the game in the last minute. — Reuters

25 Yankees extend season-high winning streak to 8 games



26 Federer crushes Goffin for an 'unbelievable' 10th Halle title



27 Uruguay and Chile set for high-stakes Copa America



Pak condemn woeful S Africa to exit



LONDON: South Africa's Aiden Markram is bowled during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between Pakistan and South Africa at Lord's Cricket Ground yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Pakistan condemned South Africa to World Cup elimination and kept alive their own slender chances of advancing to the semifinals with a 49-run win at Lord's yesterday. Chasing 309 to remain in the hunt for a last four berth, South Africa's survival bid petered out on 259-9. Disciplined Pakistan bowling saw Shadab Khan and Wahab Riaz take three wickets each as South Africa surrendered without a fight. Faf du Plessis's side had already been roughed up by Haris Sohail's brilliant 59-ball innings of 89 in Pakistan's 308-7.

South Africa's fifth defeat in seven World Cup matches confirmed their embarrassingly early exit, with matches against Sri Lanka and Australia still to play. For just the second time in their history, and the first time since 2003, South Africa have failed to reach the World Cup knockout stages. The post-mortem into a woeful World Cup campaign will raise pointed ques-

tions about the futures of captain Du Plessis and coach Ottis Gibson.

South Africa have been beset by problems on and off the field - starting when AB de Villiers' late offer to come out of retirement for the World Cup was rejected. Their campaign got off to the worst possible start when they were thrashed by hosts England in the tournament opener. Alarm bells were ringing even louder after a dismal defeat to Bangladesh in their second game and by the time India brushed them aside, it was clear South Africa were in turmoil. An injury that ruled key pace bowler Dale Steyn out of the tournament was another setback.

Their only win to date was against minnows Afghanistan and their mountain of issues proved too much for the uninspired Proteas players to overcome as they slumped to a tame exit. Pakistan were also playing for their World Cup survival and mustered a far more

whole-hearted effort in the must-win clash. To the delight of their army of fans, who turned Lord's into a vibrant mass of green, Sarfaraz Ahmed's side could still make the semifinals. Their second win of the tournament gives them life with three matches remaining in the battle to finish in the top four in the 10-team group stage.

Hour of need

Bangladesh's 322-3 against the West Indies was the only successful chase of more than 250 in this World Cup and South Africa never looked like emulating that feat. Their task was made all the more difficult when veteran Hashim Amla was trapped lbw by Mohammad Amir for two in the second over. The Proteas managed only 38 from the first 10 overs and as, the pressure mounted, Quinton de Kock fell for 47, caught on the boundary by the diving Imam-ul-Haq for Shadab's 50th ODI wicket.

On 91-2 in the 20th over and with the required run-rate climbing, South Africa needed a big innings from Du Plessis. Encapsulating a turbulent World Cup for the skipper and his team, the skipper could not get the job done in their hour of need. He perished for 63 when a mistimed swipe against Amir ballooned high in the air for Sarfaraz to take a simple catch. Rassie van der Dussen went in similar fashion, skying Shadab to give Mohammed Hafeez a catch that pushed South Africa towards the exit.

Sohail's dashing display had set the tone for a dispiriting day for South Africa. The 30-year-old, dropped following Pakistan's opener against the West Indies, made up for lost time as he demolished South Africa's beleaguered bowlers. Hitting nine fours and three sixes in his ruthless blitz, Sohail gave Pakistan a shot of adrenaline after Babar Azam's more sedate 69 laid the foundations for victory. —AFP

Shami World Cup hat-trick is reward after his struggles

SOUTHAMPTON: Mohammed Shami's World Cup hat-trick that sealed India's victory against Afghanistan was the ultimate reward for his hard work after a "long journey" back to full fitness. The 28-year-old paceman has had to cope with weight issues, injury and a legal quarrel with his estranged wife. In 2018, Shami's central contract was withheld because of allegations of domestic violence, although it was later reinstated.

He also struggled with injury that saw him spend nearly a year on the sidelines and led to weight gain. A fit-again Shami, lean and hungry, was back in the mix for the one-day international series against the West Indies in October and has not looked back since. "This is a long journey, maybe around two years. Post-injury, I had put on weight and I could feel that," he said after India's win on Saturday.

"After one spell, I would feel tired and there would be tightness in my knee. I had a surgery too. At that point in time, I could sense that if I had to continue playing cricket, I'd better do something extra. "I have cut down on my food, I follow a diet and people laugh about it when I tell them that. It's not strict but I avoid stuff doctors tell me to. I don't eat sweets or bread. It has helped me a lot." Shami, appearing in his first match of the tournament in place of injured paceman Bhuvneshwar Kumar, was handed the responsibility of bowling the final over of the tense game in Southampton.

Afghanistan needed 16 to win off to reach their target of 225 with three wickets in hand and Mohammad Nabi ratcheted up the nerves by hitting the first ball for four. But Shami kept his nerve to bowl a dot delivery and then



Mohammed Shami

struck three times in three balls. "There was no time to think, you just had to back yourself and your skills," he said. "I didn't want to try variations because that increases the chances of going for runs. "MS Dhoni told me to keep bowling yorkers. He said 'don't change anything now, you can get a hat-trick'."

"Getting a chance in the playing XI is a bit of luck. As far as the hat-trick is concerned, it is a rarity at least in the World Cup," said Shami, who returned figures of 4-40. It was only the second Indian hat-trick in a World Cup game after paceman Chetan Sharma took one against New Zealand at the 1987 World Cup. "Great bowling by Shami. After 31 years he joined me in the hat-trick club," Sharma said. "He is one our best fast bowlers around and should have got the man-of-the-match award (which went to bowler Jasprit Bumrah, for his 2-39)." — AFP

Morocco gifted win as Namibia concede late own goal

CAIRO: Namibian Itamunia Keimuine headed an 89th-minute Hakim Ziyech free-kick into his own net to gift Morocco a 1-0 victory yesterday in the opening Africa Cup of Nations Group D match. It was cruel blow for the minnows from southern Africa, who lived up to their Brave Warriors nickname by taming the much-vaunted Atlas Lions. Relief was etched on the face of Morocco coach Herve Renard as the final whistle blew after an unconvincing start by one of the competition favorites.

Renard is the only coach to win the Cup of Nations with two countries, guiding outsiders Zambia and previous underachievers the Ivory Coast to success between 2012 and 2015. "We battled because of the good organization of Namibia, the heat, and the fact that we were playing our first match," said Frenchman Renard. "The most important thing was to take three points and I hope Namibia will pose problems for the Ivory Coast and South Africa."

Namibia coach Ricardo Mannetti said: "I had to comfort my players, especially the player who scored the own goal. "I am so proud of my boys for the way they executed our tactics. Sometimes the game plan may not be nice to watch, but I was up against very experienced coach, a very experienced team." As the match kicked off in 36 degree celsius (97 fahrenheit) heat at the Al Salam Stadium, the bookmakers, the FIFA rankings and Cup of Nations history favoured Morocco.

Morocco are 10/1 joint fifth favorites with bookmakers to win the title, 43 years after the only time they lifted a trophy that symbolizes African national team supremacy. The Atlas Lions lie 66 places above the Brave Warriors in



CAIRO: Morocco's forward Hakim Ziyech (left) is marked by Namibia's defender Danzil Hooseb during a 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) football match at the Al Salam Stadium yesterday. — AFP

the FIFA world rankings and they triumphed 5-1 on the previous occasion they met, 11 years ago. However, while Morocco enjoyed 60 percent possession during the opening 45 minutes in the sweltering Egyptian capital, they rarely troubled Morocco goalkeeper Lloyd Kazapua.

It was a defender, right-back Nabil Dirar, who came closest to ending the stalemate with a fiercely struck 11th-minute shot from long range that flew just over the crossbar. This was one of six goal attempts by the north Africans during the first half, but only two were on target. Mannetti had warned his Group D opponents before the tournament that "even small dogs bite" and his side were a calm, well-organised outfit in the first half.

The second half was a replica of the first with Morocco pressing continuously and Namibia defending with discipline and intelligence. —AFP