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Op-Ed

The wildfire of hate speech



By Antonio Guterres,
UN Secretary-General

Around the world, hate is on the march. A menacing wave of intolerance and hate-based violence is targeting worshippers of many faiths across the globe. Sadly - and disturbingly - such vicious incidents are becoming all too familiar. In recent months, we have seen Jews murdered in synagogues, their gravestones defaced with swastikas; Muslims gunned down in mosques, their religious sites vandalized; Christians killed at prayer, their churches torched.

Beyond these horrific attacks, increasingly loathsome rhetoric is being aimed not only at religious groups but also minorities, migrants, refugees, women and any so-called "other". As the wildfire of hate spreads, social media is being exploited for bigotry. Neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements are growing. And incendiary rhetoric is being weaponized for political gain.

Hate is moving into the mainstream in liberal democracies and authoritarian regimes alike - and casting a shadow over our common humanity. The United Nations has a long history of mobilizing the world against hatred of all kinds through wide-ranging action to defend human rights and advance the rule of law. Indeed, the very identity and establishment of the Organization are rooted in the nightmare that ensues when virulent hatred is left unopposed for too long.

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MANAMA: Jared Kushner yesterday called for the Palestinians to accept the "Opportunity of the Century" that he says will pump \$50 billion into a stagnant economy but told them they must first agree if they want a peace deal. Opening the long-awaited Middle East peace initiative of his father-in-law, US President Donald Trump, at a conference in Bahrain, Kushner insisted that the administration has not "given up" on the Palestinians, whose leadership is boycotting the US-led "economic workshop".

"Agreeing on an economic pathway forward is a necessary pre-condition to resolving the previously unsolvable political issues," Kushner said as he opened the two-day event before a gala dinner. In a data-driven presentation in the style of a corporate executive, the 38-year-old adviser to Trump and family friend of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged the need for a political solution.

"To be clear, economic growth and prosperity for the Palestinian people are

not possible without an enduring and fair political solution to the conflict - one that guarantees Israel's security and respects the dignity of the Palestinian people," he said. But Kushner said that the political plan would come later - and that the Palestinians should first embrace the economic component, which promises billions of dollars in investment in infrastructure, tourism and education.

"My direct message to the Palestinian people, is that despite what those who have let you down in the past say, President Trump and America have not given up on you," he said. While dismissing the mocking description of his peace plan as the "Deal of the Century", he quickly offered another label. "This effort is better referred to as the Opportunity of the Century, if the leadership has the courage to pursue it."

Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday the Kuwaiti parliament is defending fateful Arab and Muslim issues, upon HH the

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BEIRUT: Palestinians hold placards outside the United Nations headquarters to protest against a US-sponsored Middle East economic conference in Bahrain yesterday. — AFP

No-confidence motion filed against Hajraf; Ghanem warns of 'hidden agendas'

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Ten lawmakers yesterday filed a no-confidence motion against Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf after a quick and surprising grilling debate for refusing to abolish interest on loans taken by pensioners. Following the motion, Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem warned against what he

called "hidden agendas" by some MPs and others who are spreading rumors that the Assembly will be dissolved and that the minister had resigned. The speaker denied both.

Opposition Islamist MP Mohammad Hayef on Monday filed to grill Hajraf, accusing him of not fulfilling a promise to abolish interest on loans taken by

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KUWAIT: Opposition Islamist MP Mohammad Hayef gestures during a session of the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Tehran to ditch more nuke curbs as Trump warns of 'obliteration'

TEHRAN: Iran said yesterday it will further free itself from the 2015 nuclear deal in defiance of new American sanctions as US President Donald Trump warned the Islamic republic of "overwhelming" retaliation for any attacks. Tensions between Iran and the US have spiralled since last year when Trump withdrew the United States from the deal under which Tehran was to curb its nuclear program in exchange for relief from economic sanctions.

The two archrivals have been locked in an escalating war of words since Iran shot down a US surveillance drone in what it said was its own airspace, a claim the US vehemently denies. On Monday, Washington stepped up pressure by blacklisting Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and top military chiefs, saying it would also sanction Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif later in the week.

Tehran was defiant yesterday, saying the new US sanctions against Iran showed Washington was "lying" about an offer of talks. "At the same time as you call for negotiations you seek to sanction the foreign minister? It's obvious that you're lying," President Hassan Rouhani said. Rouhani, a pragmatist who won two elections on promises to open Iran up to the world, said the White House's actions were "mentally retarded" - an insult that other Iranian officials have used in the past about Trump, but a departure from Rouhani's own comparatively measured tone over the years. "Tehran's strategic patience does not mean we have fear," he said.

A top security official said Iran would "resolutely" abandon more commitments under the nuclear deal on July 7. Iran had announced on May 8 that it was suspending two of its 2015 pledges and gave Europe, China and Russia a two-month ultimatum to help it circumvent US sanctions and sell oil or it would abandon two more commitments.

"As of July 7, Iran will forcefully take the second step of reducing its commitments" to the nuclear deal, Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, was quoted as saying by Fars news agency. This was so "countries who

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Expat workers face new tests, transfer curbs

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The manpower authority issued a number of decisions to regulate the presence of expat workers in Kuwait, namely those doing technical jobs as per their work permits. Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqel said the regulations will limit all forms of manipulations and eventually put an end to visa trafficking.

"The manpower authority has set very strict measures including banning the change of a worker's profession or educational level except through certain measures," Aqel said, adding that in case of changing professions to become an educator for persons with special needs, a worker will be subjected to specific tests, a measure that will be later applied to other professions.

Aqel said special tests are being currently set for 20 technical jobs and crafts and stressed that the conditions to be followed include commitment to the qualification degree and specialty, the activity practiced, passing the set tests and having the required certificates of experience. Aqel added that transfers will be allowed within the same sector from one technical profession to another based on certain regulations regardless of the educational level or degree, if a worker had entered Kuwait as a technician or craftsman.

Aqel explained that professions for which workers will be subjected to tests initially include auto mechanics, electrical technicians, safety and security supervisors, pipefitters, land surveyors, aluminum technicians, welders, turnery operators, advertisement and publicity representatives, salesmen, irrigation grid technicians, steel reinforcement workers, construction carpenters, asphalt lab technicians, purchase officers, accountants, librarians, legal consultants and legal clerks. Aqel explained that in case a worker desires to change their profession, they will have to depart and return with a new work visa matching the degree they want to use for work.

Homeless Syrians sell furniture to survive

ATME, Syria: For years, Abu Ali sold used furniture and home appliances for a living. But he never thought Syria's war would one day make him homeless and force him to sell his own. His family is one of dozens stranded in olive groves along the Turkish border, who say they have had to sell their basic possessions to ensure survival. "I sold them to provide food, drink and clothes for my children," said the father of five, who now houses his family in a tent.

An opposition bastion in Syria's northwest

has come under heavy regime and Russian bombardment since late April, despite a truce deal intended to protect the jihadist-run enclave's three million inhabitants. The spike in violence in and around Idlib province has killed hundreds of civilians, displaced 330,000 more, and sparked fears of one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the eight-year civil war.

Abu Ali, his wife and their children fled their home in southern Idlib in early May, hitting the road north to seek shelter in the relative safety of the olive groves close to the border. "I used to have a shop to buy and sell used items," such as fridges and furniture in the village of Maaret Hurma, he told AFP, sitting in the shade of a tree near the border town of Atme.

A few days after fleeing his home village, he hired two trucks for 50,000 Syrian pounds (over \$110) to bring "eight fridges, bedroom furnishings, seven washing machines, and sev-

eral gas stoves" up to the olive grove. But under the summer sun in the makeshift camp, the merchandise soon plummeted in value. "I was forced to get rid of it or sell it - even at a very low price," the 35-year-old said, his chin stubble already greying under a head of thick dark brown hair.

For example, the going price for a fridge originally bought for 25,000 Syrian pounds (more than \$55) can be as low as a fifth of that price. In Atme, some families have stored their fridges and other appliances in a single tent to protect them from the elements. Outside, a top-loader washing machine sits in the shade of a tree.

Awad Abu Abdu, 35, said he too was forced to part with all his household items for a pittance. "It was very dear to me. It was all I had accumulated over a lifetime of hard work," said

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ABYAN, Syria: Displaced Syrian men ride with their belongings in a truck as they head to sell them on the outskirts of this Syrian town in the rebel-held western Aleppo province on June 13, 2019. — AFP

Amir, Crown Prince meet Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, as well as Deputy Chief of the Kuwait National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace. — KUNA

Somalia's 59th Independence Day Festival in Kuwait

By Somalia's Ambassador to Kuwait Abdullahi Mohammed Odowa

The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Somali Community in Kuwait celebrate the 59th Independence and Unification Days. Perhaps unlike other countries, the government and the Somali people both inside and in diaspora celebrate a week-long annual Independence Day Festival; this is because three significant events took place during the last few days of colonial history in the Somali territories in the Horn of Africa. First, on June 26, 1960, former British Somaliland got its Independence from Great Britain. Secondly, four days after and on July 1, 1960, the former Italian Somaliland got its Independence from Italy. Thirdly, on the same day on July 1, 1960, the British and Italian Somali colonies have united to form the Republic of Somalia. After 59 years of Independence, the Somali experience shows mixed results of success and challenges concerning state-building endeavors.



The first nine years following Independence, Somalia was one of the first countries in Africa to successfully establish a vibrant multi-party democracy and the rule of law. Unfortunately, the military coup in October 1969 and subsequent years of military rule and dictatorship has resulted in a civil war and state collapse in the country. However, after years of national reconciliation efforts, and to address the grievances of different regions and districts across the country, the Somali people have opted to adopt a federal system of government, and as a result, the country was renamed as Federal Government of Somalia. Furthermore, endowed with the enormous economic potential of untapped natural resources and an essential strategic geopolitical location on the Gulf of Aden, which includes one of the longest coastlines of mainland Africa, and a large population of the Somali diaspora in almost all parts of the world- including North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Middle East and Africa- the future of Somali, is one full of hope and brightness.

The Somali community in Kuwait is one of the oldest community in the country with the first members of the community arriving in the late 1940th and 1950th. However, the majority of the Somali families and experts have arrived in the late 70th. Since then Somali community has been part and partial of the magnificent transformation and development that has been taken places in Kuwait under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. It is important to note that two brotherly people of Kuwait and Somalis share many cultural and traditional norms in common, hence Kuwait has become home far from home for many Somalis who are born and educated in Kuwait.

Palestinian Ambassador thanks Kuwait for their 'pivotal stances'

KUWAIT: The Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub expressed gratitude to Kuwait and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for the pivotal stances Kuwait had been making since the Palestinian dilemma started. Tahboub issued a special statement in which he expressed his own gratitude and "that of each and every Palestinian living in Kuwait" to the Kuwaiti National Assembly and Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem for their support to the Palestinian cause.



Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub

ATO conference supports right of productive life

AMMAN: The 18th General Conference of the Arab Towns Organization (ATO) yesterday acknowledged the right to a healthy and productive life in cities and human settlements, in accordance with social values and religious principles of justice, peace and respect. The conference suggested the contribution of mayors and secretaries of Arab capitals to build local capacities as part of national development plans, underlining the job-intensive growth that integrates all sectors. They also recommended to adopt voluntary work within programs and strategies by ATO and its institutions, considering that cities are essential for community service and platforms for innovation.

Effective role

Local administrations played an effective role in reviving economic development, providing the best services, achieving sustainable development, strengthening social cohesion and establishing real partnerships that benefits the communities and cities. Cities were also encouraged to invest in technology and the digital economy through cooperation between the public and private sectors to contribute to the development of knowledge in the shadow of the huge

technological development in order to intellectualize cities.

Arab cities have become the focus of achievements and competition to major cities in the world, with plans and programs that are consistent with the sustainable development agenda until 2030, said ATO Secretary-General Ahmad Hamad Al-Sabeeh. Sabeeh said the development process can be achieved through joining efforts, openness to gain experience and benefitting from successful experiences to cope with the rapid changes surrounding social, environmental and economic transformations. The teamwork of Arab cities and municipalities will achieve sustainability, prosperity, security and stability, making it safe and livable, he said.

Executive plans

On another point, Amman's Mayor Yousef Al-Shawarbeh underlined the importance of adopting executive plans to promote Arab cities and services provided to inhabitants, pointing out the role of the ATO as an example of Arab cooperation and partnership with the private sector. On the sidelines of the conference, ATO's Secretary-General said that the results of the conference are consistent with the vision and



AMMAN: Arab Towns Organization Secretary-General Ahmad Al-Sabeeh (right) and Amman's Mayor Yousef Al-Shawarbeh are seen during the conference. —KUNA

agenda of the sustainable development until 2030, which Arab cities will follow-up this methodology. Partakers discussed issues of Arab cities, especially regarding the objectives of sustainable development, challenges and changes facing towns, as well as two workshops on topics such as artificial intelligence and the Internet to sustain cities through knowledge management.

ATO is a regional non-profit, governmental organization, specializing in matters of cities and municipalities, established in Kuwait in 1967 to preserve the heritage of Arab cities, modernizing municipal and local institutions, seeking to improve services and facilities to develop them and help member cities on achieving their development projects by providing them with loans and aid.—KUNA



Arabian oryx thrives in Jordan wildlife reserve

AMMAN: The Shaumari Wildlife Reserve in Zarqa Governorate, Jordan, is a safe haven for the thriving Arabian oryx. The reserve, built in 1975 and stretching around 22 square kilometers, is mostly dedicated to the distinctively Arabian deer. The facility had earned the trust of regional and international Arabian Oryx protection organizations, leading to the increase of herds from 11 to around 200.

—Photos by Ghazi Qafaf (KUNA)



Local

UNSC condemns attacks on oil tankers, urge maximum restraint: Kuwait's envoy

Kuwait concerned over growing number of refugees: UN Representative

NEW YORK: The UN Security Council members late on Monday condemned the recent attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf region, which, according to them, represent a serious threat to maritime navigation and energy supply. It also is contravening international rules on freedom of navigation and maritime transport, as well as a threat to international peace and security. This came in a press statement by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi following a closed-door meeting on the situation in the Middle East, which was briefed by UN Undersecretary General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo.

Otaibi's remarks came in his capacity as Council President for June. The members "urged concerned parties and all countries in the region to exercise maximum restraint and take measures and actions to reduce escalation and end tension," said Otaibi. The members also urged parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint in the Gulf region, Otaibi noted. "They urge that differences must be addressed peacefully and through dialogue," he said, noting that council members "will continue to be seized on the matter."

After a two-hour meeting, the council agreed on a statement that did not single out Iran but made clear that all sides should back away from a much-feared military confrontation. That joint stance from world powers came just hours after Trump

slapped new sanctions on Iran, targeting supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and eight Iranian commanders.

As the council met behind closed doors at Washington's request, Iran's UN ambassador told reporters that conditions were not ripe for dialogue with the United States. "You cannot start a dialogue with somebody who is threatening you, who is intimidating you," said Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi, who said the "atmosphere of such a dialogue is not ready yet."

Tensions have soared after Iran last

that Iran was behind recent attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman, using divers who placed mines on the ship's haul. Tehran has denied responsibility for those attacks. The Security Council is set today to discuss the Iran nuclear deal that the United States has exited and that the Europeans are struggling to salvage.

Refugees' numbers

In the meantime, Kuwait expressed concern over the growing numbers of refugees and internally displaced people, calling for preventing conflicts to resolve the situation. Otaibi made those remarks during the UN Security Council's Arria Formula session on meeting the needs of refugees and displaced people, held late Monday. The international community celebrated the World Refugee Day last Thursday as the numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons jumped to about 70.8 million, according to a report by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said Otaibi.

On this matter, the ambassador welcomed the announcement of the African Union on making 2019 the 'Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa.' He expressed full support to Union in resolving this vital issue, as the continent celebrates the 50th anniversary of the 1969 Convention on protecting refugees in Africa.



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks to reporters following a closed-door meeting on the situation in the Middle East on Monday. — KUNA

Three key solution

Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti senior diplomat presented three key solution to face the growing number of refugees, including preventing the breakout of conflicts at early stages, boosting international and regional cooperation and improving the humanitarian conditions for refugees. The growing numbers of refugees and displaced people come with high political and financial costs, said Otaibi, adding that it also affects

regional stability.

Moreover, Otaibi noted UNHCR's efforts to help refugees adapt to their new environment, while also aiding host countries in meeting the needs of refugees. The Arria Formula is an informal arrangement that allows the council greater flexibility to be briefed about international peace and security issues. It has been used frequently and assumed growing importance since it was first implemented in March 1992. — Agencies

Kuwait urges more effort against forces behind terrorism

GENEVA: Kuwait affirmed yesterday its keenness on cooperating with friendly and allied states to face the spreading terrorism, urging the international community to double efforts in facing 'forces of darkness' behind the mushrooming peril. The Kuwaiti stand was expressed by the permanent representative to the United Nations Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, during the 41st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). It was manifested during interactive dialogue with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachete, while examining her regular report about human rights worldwide. Kuwait has presented to the world 'an honorable image' about Islam that rejects extremism and calls for tolerance with other religions. Moreover, it has reacted to baseless charges targeting Muslim states, accusing them of hosting and concealing terrorism, he said.

Denouncing terrorism

Ambassador Ghunaim affirmed Kuwait's denunciation of terrorism and all forms of violent extremism for posing a threat to security and stability of the globe, noting necessity of facing this menace, regardless of motives and justifications and victims' identity, "for terrorism has no religion or identity." The world's continuous suffering from terrorism is painful, and what doubles the pain is the fact that the Arab and Muslim peoples are mostly targeted, thus there is a need to double efforts and enhance international coordination to face the powers of darkness behind it, in shadow of respect for basic human rights, Ghunaim added. The envoy explained Kuwait's deep belief that human rights are comprehensive, support for constructive dialogue among various states for boosting and safeguarding the human rights, based on respect of communities' right for choosing values, principles and approach for their peoples for sake of safeguarding and enhancing human rights.

Kuwait favors such an approach despite polarization, often witnessed within the Security Council quarters, slowing down its performance; therefore everyone should respect other communities' right to choose values and principles and the approach that suit them for protecting and boosting human rights. The Kuwaiti ambassador explained that some parties' bids to dictate their values and cultures at pretext of the human rights is unacceptable, thus accepting the universal-

ity of the human rights does not mean that "we accept the dictation of principles and approaches that contradict with our values and culture and tenets of our religion, Islam."

Kuwait welcomes the commissioner's report concerning status of the human rights across the globe, he said, stressing that Kuwait will continue to support the commission for improving human rights throughout the world, particularly concerning "our brothers in Syria, Palestine and Yemen, as well as concerning the Muslim Rohingya in Myanmar." The commissioner has indicated in her report at some achievements with respect of boosting human rights, efforts that have been exerted to safeguard these rights, particularly in shadow of huge challenges this year in the face of global security and peace.

Bulk of the challenges

Ghunaim expressed regret that a bulk of the challenges in this respect have been witnessed "in our region," amid continuing strife, relocation and killing of brotherly peoples, particularly the most vulnerable. He renewed strong condemnation of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, flagrant violations by the occupation forces against the unarmed Palestinian people, in defiance of international laws and resolutions of the human rights council. He called on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities to ensure respect for international humanitarian principles and laws, expressed regret that these breaches have been taking place amid noticeable diminishing of interest on part of the international community toward the peace process in the Middle East.

With respect of the conditions in Kuwait, he noted that the authorities provide guarantees for human rights for the Kuwaiti people, based on the necessity to bolster democracy and human rights. Respecting human rights has become a main criterion, nowadays, to measure political development and define international relations, he said noting that human rights have turned into a mark of Kuwait's internal and external policies.

The 1962 Kuwaiti Constitution has recognized these rights, in line with the Islamic sharia (law) and international covenants namely the Universal declaration of Human Rights. The Kuwait Constitution is largely in harmony with the world human rights declaration. Article 29 stipulates that people are equal in terms of humanitarian dignity, before the law and regarding rights and duties. He has affirmed Kuwait's diligent work for safeguarding the human rights in a manner that respects the society culture and traditions, hoping that the international community would shoulder the relevant responsibilities by lending support to the higher commission so it may fulfill its asks efficiently. —KUNA

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Local



KUWAIT: MPs and ministers hydrate during yesterday's session, which featured a heated debate of a grilling motion filed against Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf while the outside temperature reached up to 50 C degrees. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Coeducation ban canceled in new public universities law?

Copyright law sends positive message to investors : US Envoy

KUWAIT: The National Assembly approved on Monday a bill on public universities' establishment to help in the development of education and educational institutions, and encourage them to excel and reduce difficulties in all respects. Meanwhile, several reports came out yesterday suggesting that the new law canceled article 41 of the public universities' law, which bans coeducation in state-run universities and colleges. The government did not confirm however whether it had plans to end segregation at Kuwait University and Sabah Al-Salem University City (Shadadiya) colleges in the future based on the new law.

The draft law received approval of 34 members out of the total attendance of 58. Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi said this law is a 'fundamental pillar' in Kuwait's university education. One of the draft law articles states, "Universities are public bodies of scientific research, academic, administrative and financial independence, guaranteeing the freedom of education and scientific research, exempt from taxes and fees." Another article states, "The establishment, consolidation or abolition of public universi-

ties shall be in line of a decree after taking the opinion of the Council of Public Universities." The law paved way for establishment of colleges, research centers and vocational centers, or merging, changing or canceling them. It organized the nomination of the Rector, his deputies, the deans, their assistants, the heads of the scientific departments, as well as general rules and standards for scholarships.

Fundamental pillar in university education

copyright in Kuwait equivalent to international standards. Silverman noted that applying this law would help in securing services and products provided by Kuwaitis and foreigners alike. Kuwait's parliament on Monday approved a copyright law in a bid to protect exceptional works in the fields of arts and science. — Agencies

In the meantime, American Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman said yesterday that the copyright law, which was passed by parliament on Monday, would send a positive message to local and foreign investors. The American Ambassador said in a statement that the legislation would lead to economic diversity in the country. He added that this law is considered a positive step towards making



KUWAIT: Lawmakers vote during a National Assembly session on a draft law on public universities' establishment. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait bourse to lure \$2.8bn with promotion

KUWAIT: Financial quarters are anticipating with interest promotion of Boursa Kuwait on Morgan Stanley index for emerging markets, amid predictions \$2.8 billion might be lured into the national market. This is the third upgrade of the Kuwaiti bourse after a similar move had been taken by FTSE Russel and Standard and Poor's Dow Jones for international indices.

The forthcoming promotion is forecast to lure inflow of idle funds estimated at \$2.8 billion. The process of elevating the national stock market kicked off in 2017, when FTSE Russel enlisted Boursa Kuwait as an emerging market. The promotion that was executed in two phases, in 2019, had drawn \$950 million of inactive liquidity. Simultaneously, Standard and Poor's declared, in December, uplifting the bourse as an emerging market, effective in September.

The Kuwaiti stock exchange had met all terms to qualify for the promotion: enacting regulations and marketing new tools desired by local and foreign



investors, as part of a strategy to create the proper environment for attracting liquidity. The scenario according to Watani Investment Company is as following: If the promotion does not materialize in 2019, there will be very high chances that it will happen in June 2020. And, if the positive announcement is made later today, the execution will begin in May 2020.

However, it remains unknown whether the process will be carried out in two stages. Liquidity is forecast to start flowing into the local market, simultaneously with the announcement, however active investors are believed to have been ready in advance. The SMCI index is forecast to be used by active funds and portfolios, involving \$1.5 trillion, in addition to \$500 billion of stagnant assets. There are other factors that need to be taken into consideration in the upcoming process, namely profits' growths, transparency and corporate governing. — KUNA

but no one was hurt. It added in a statement that the left wing of the Boeing hit a bridge extending from the airport building, while the plane was marshaled by a ground personnel "who committed a mistake in guiding the plane to its parking slot." All passengers and crew were disembarked from the plane's front door and no one was harmed, it said. The return flight was cancelled, said Kuwait Airways, and alternative bookings were arranged for the passengers. Repairs of the wing are underway in order to make sure the plane returns to Kuwait as soon as possible, it said, and it was cooperating with the French authorities to investigate the matter. — KUNA

Kuwait Airways plane's wing hits bridge at Nice airport

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways said on Monday that one of its aircraft experienced an accident after landing at an airport in the French city of Nice,

Kuwait among top five obese nations worldwide

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Associate Surgery Professor and Head of the Organ Transplant Department at Kuwait University Dr Mohammad Jamal said obesity rates are high in Kuwait, adding that the country is among the top five obese nations worldwide. He warned that eating unhealthy food and lack of exercise are among the causes of obesity.

Jamal said Kuwait conducts 5,000 bariatric surgeries annually, adding that the number of patients who need liver transplants in Kuwait is 80 per year. Currently, 20 are on the waiting list, he said, reminding that the cost of a liver transplant abroad is \$1-2 million, while in Kuwait it is about KD 20,000. He said there have been six liver transplants that were ever performed in Kuwait.

Jamal was speaking during a press conference organized by Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, which is one of the healthcare facilities belonging to Mubadalah Investment Company. Jamal said the presence of this hospital in Abu Dhabi is something historic that adds to quality healthcare in the region, and it seeks to have fruitful cooperation with the health sector in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, Head of the Digestive

Disease Institute at the clinic Matthew Kroh said many patients are traveling abroad for treatment related to digestive system diseases, "although now we see an increased number of patients who opt to remain in Abu Dhabi for advanced treatments that are available without having to travel." He said Kuwait is second over the number of patients who prefer treatment at the hospital.

He said 2-3 percent of obese patients undergo surgery, so Cleveland Clinic is

working towards making bariatric surgeries safer, and modern technology will help in this regard. The clinic conducted 35 organ transplants by the end of 2018, 10 of which were liver transplants, and it is negotiating with the health sector in Kuwait to have experts participate in complicated surgeries. It also shares its expertise in robotic surgeries, as it is considered a pioneer in the region by using robots for colon, hernia and obesity surgeries.



KUWAIT: Associate Surgery Professor and Head of the Organ Transplant Department at Kuwait University Dr Mohammad Jamal (right) and Head of the Digestive Disease Institute at the Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi Matthew Kroh attend the press conference.

Nearly 23 workers per each registered SME in Kuwait; authority fights ‘manipulations’

Public life expectancy increased from 50 to 78 years, report shows

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: There are 78,858 workers registered on 3,465 small and medium licensed enterprises in Kuwait, with an average of nearly 23 workers per company, a government official said yesterday. Meanwhile, the number of licenses for entrepreneurs registered with the Public Institution for Social Security reaches 7,734, said Fahd Murad, manager of small and medium enterprises at the Public Authority for Manpower. Meanwhile, he admitted that some entrepreneurs attempt to manipulate the privileges they are given and illegally utilize them, which he said calls for strict control from his department jointly with the inspection and the manpower assessment departments to examine companies' files periodically and make sure they respect the law.

On rumors that some small and medium enterprise licenses were for visa trafficking, Murad said files of companies or employers allowing their workers to work in locations other than the designated ones or sponsor workers they do not actually employ had been frozen and referred to the Ministry of Interior for further investigations pending taking legal actions against them. "The authority will not allow SMEs to become backdoors for visa trafficking," he stressed.

Improved health

The 2018-2019 annual report issued by the Faculty of Public Health at Kuwait University showed that public health has greatly improved over the past two generations, with a rise of life expectancy from 50 to 78 years. However, the report also showed that non-infectious diseases, namely cardiac diseases, diabetes and cancer, in addition to injuries caused by traffic accidents, had increased over the past decades. It also showed that despite the progress made in hospitalization and medical treatment, public awareness remains significant to limit injuries and enhance public health.

In this regard, Kuwait University's deputy rector for the medical sciences' affairs center Adel Al-Henayyan said despite its recent establishment, the faculty managed to achieve a lot and stand side by side with other outstanding public health faculties. Henayyan elaborated that the achievements include launching two public health master programs in vocational and environmental health and health policies and management. He added that teaching staff members published 47 scientific papers in accredited international magazines and took part in 40 local, regional and international conferences and symposiums. "In addition to its dean, Harry Vanue, this recently-established faculty recently added 10 new members to its teaching staff," Henayyan added, noting that the faculty will continue to enhance its academic staff's potentials.



New procedures for bedoons' passports

Bedeons' passports

The citizenship department finalized a number of procedures to issue article 17 passports to bedoons (stateless residents), said informed sources, noting that the new measures include prioritizing those travelling for medical treatment and students. The sources added that the regulations also include allocating Sundays to receive applications from children of Kuwaiti women and those who already have Kuwaiti relatives, Mondays to follow up, scrutinize and do the transactions, Tuesdays for students and treatment abroad patients and Wednesdays

for those included in the 1965 census and military personnel. The sources said the conditions also include holding valid security cards issued by the central apparatus for illegal residents' affairs and having recent security reports.

60 million gallons

The Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) is scheduled to launch today the first phase of using reverse osmosis for water desalination at Doha plant, which is expected to add 60 million gallons of water to the national grid on a daily basis. Informed sources said MEW had recently completed the project's trial operation and that it will today start by initially pumping 15 million gallons into the national grid until it reaches the full capacity of 60 million gallons.

Health insurance

The Central Agency for Public Tenders notified Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) that it was not within its liabilities to demand extending the collective health insurance contract for KPC employees for three more months, said informed sources. The sources added that two thirds of the bureau's members approved a request made by Kuwait Oil Company to make direct contracts to provide data system services at Ahmadi Hospital.

Ports profits

Kuwait Ports Authority's (KPA) profits increased by 57 percent during the fiscal year 2018-2019, said informed sources. The sources added that after studying the authority's final statement, the finance ministry urged the authority not to keep the net profits and deposit them to the state budget because of the financial circumstances the state budget suffers from due to fluctuating oil prices. The ministry also urged KPA to fill the 114 job vacancies it has, be more accurate in setting its budget, conduct enough studies and be more accurate in setting timetables.

Deaths reported in two separate road accidents

KUWAIT: An Iranian woman was detained as she ran over an Asian man on Gulf Road, leading to his death. Policemen and paramedics rushed to the scene and discovered the man was dead. The woman was arrested and taken to Dasma police station for questioning. Meanwhile, a juvenile was killed and two others were injured when the car they were in flipped over on Seventh Ring Road. The two injured juveniles were taken to hospital as the deceased youth's body was recovered by forensics.

Doctor insulted

A doctor in Sabah Hospital said a Kuwaiti man insulted her, as she lodged a complaint at Shuwaikh police station. The doctor was surprised by the citizen - who was with his wife at the maternity department - abusing her verbally, so she called Public Relations, who brought the situation under control. The doctor then went to the station and lodged a complaint. Detectives are investigating.

Policemen offended

A Kuwaiti man escaped from a police station after insulting the head of the station while waiting for a traffic accident report. A police source said the citizen went to the station to get the report, then when he was informed the report was not ready, he caused chaos and insulted a lieutenant colonel who asked him for his ID, but refused and left. A police officer stopped him and asked for his ID again, so he pushed him aside and ran out saying "I must go to a doctor...my blood pressure is high." Investigations are underway.

Filipina beaten badly


An alleged thief forced a Filipina who was in a car he stole to get out after beating her badly. Police went to the scene and learned that the engine was running when it was stolen, and the thief was surprised the woman was in it. The Filipina who was later found said the suspect beat her and forced her out of the car. Detectives are working on the case.


Search for car thief

Police issued a travel ban and arrest warrant against an Egyptian man accused by a Kuwaiti national of stealing his car in Salwa, but he refused to go to the police station. The citizen told Salwa police that his car was stolen by a man he identified, and who he said had a spare key with him. Policemen spent two days calling the suspect but he ignored all calls. Detectives went to the suspect's house, but were told that he did not come to his apartment for days.

Harasser at large

Criminal detectives are looking for a Kuwaiti who blocked two girls in Sharq and deliberately hit their car, then beat them after they ignored his harassment. The girls went to the police station and filed a complaint. A police source said the girls presented medical reports and gave them the license plate number of the suspect's car. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai





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Scores ill, schools closed in Malaysia due to toxic fumes

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Student debt a ‘life sentence’ for millions of Americans



HANOVER: People cool off in a swimming pool in Hannover, western Germany yesterday as temperatures topped 33 degrees Celsius. — AFP

As Europe bakes, governments step in

Unusual warm weather raises the risks of ‘blow-ups’

PARIS: As Europe started to sizzle yesterday at the start of a heatwave that could break records, drivers on Germany's famously-speedy motorways were ordered to slow down and fans at the women's World Cup were showered in health warnings. Meteorologists blamed a blast of torrid air from the Sahara for the unusually early summer heatwave, which could send thermometers up to 40 degrees Celsius in some places on Thursday and Friday.

Experts say such heatwaves early in the summer are likely to be more frequent as the planet heats up. In Germany, where forecasters have warned a June record of 38.5 degrees could be smashed, speed restrictions were placed on some stretches of the usually free-wheeling “autobahns” as the unusually warm weather raises the risks of “blow-ups”—the hot tarmac breaking up and shredding tyres.

A forest fire was raging north of Cottbus, the second-largest city in Brandenburg state. Police said it could take days to put out the blaze in an area that was just recovering from a fire in 2018. The fire was deemed especially dangerous due to the risk of unexploded ammunition left in the area, which is home to a military training facility.

‘Hell is coming’
In Spain, TV weather presenter Silvia Laplana riffed on the doom-filled catchphrase “Winter is coming” from the blockbuster Game of Thrones franchise to describe what lay in store for the country. “El infierno (hell) is coming,” she tweeted alongside a weather map which showed most of the country colored scarlet later in the week.



Bad weather causes catastrophic harvest

“Of course it's hot in summer but when you have a heatwave that is so extensive and intense, during which records are forecast to be beaten, it's NOT normal,” she tweeted. Temperatures are expected to be particularly sweltering in the northeast, with a stifling 45 degrees expected Friday in the

northeastern city of Girona, and 44 degrees in Zaragoza at the weekend. Five northern provinces were placed on an orange high alert for a heatwave on Wednesday, with another five to be added by the weekend.

‘Overdoing’ the warnings?
Authorities were also taking no chances in France, which is still scarred by the August 2003 heatwave blamed for the deaths of 15,000 people, many of them elderly who were left to fend for themselves. In a highly unusual move, Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer on Monday postponed national school exams to next week. Health Minister Agnes Buzyn denied the government was being excessively vigilant. “For all those who know (the risks), obviously it's too much, but if I can avoid unnecessary deaths, I will continue to communicate about prevention,” Buzyn told LCI television, referring to the warnings on radio, TV and public transport.

Players and spectators at the women's football World Cup taking place in cities around France were also being inundated with messages about keeping hydrated. In a rare gesture by FIFA on Monday evening, fans were allowed to bring their own bottles



LIEBEROSE: Wood burns during a forest fire in Lieberose, eastern Germany yesterday as temperatures topped 36 degrees Celsius. — AFP

of water into the Paris stadium where Sweden took on Canada. Phil Neville, the England coach, was sanguine about the impact of the weather on the tournament, however. “There's no excuse, the players are ready for it.”

Meanwhile, French beekeepers and farming groups said they were bracing for a “cat-

astrophic” honey harvest this year after frost damage in winter, an unusually rainy spring, and, now, unusually high temperatures. “In the hives, there is nothing to eat, beekeepers are having to feed them with syrup because they risk dying from hunger,” added the union, which represents many small farms in honey-producing regions. — Agencies

Critics hit out at millions spent on Prince Harry and Meghan’s home

LONDON: Prince Harry and his wife Meghan's new home in Windsor cost £2.4 million (\$3.05 million, 2.7 million euros) of taxpayers' money to renovate, royal accounts showed yesterday, prompting criticism from anti-monarchy campaigners. Queen Elizabeth II's grandson and his wife moved into Frogmore Cottage on the Windsor Castle estate before the birth of their son Archie on May 6.

The residence, west of London, had been split into five separate homes but was turned back into one property in a six-month refurbishment ahead of their move-in. “The property had not been the subject of work for some years and had already been earmarked for renovation,” said Michael Stevens, who runs the monarchy's accounts.

“The building was returned to a single residence and outdated infrastructure was replaced to guarantee the long-term future of the property. “All fixtures and fittings were paid for by their royal highnesses,” added Stevens, whose title is Keeper of the Privy Purse. The cost was revealed as the British monarchy published its accounts for the last financial year. The monarchy is paid for using a slice of the profits from the land it owns, the rest of which go to the government.

The monarchy's official expenditure in the financial

year 2018-2019 was £67 million, including souping up the 1801-built Frogmore Cottage - an increase of almost £20 million on the previous financial year. The renovation and rise in overall spending provoked condemnation from campaigners who want to abolish the monarchy. “This year's increases are outrageous at a time of widespread spending cuts,” Graham Smith, from the Republic campaign group, told The Sun newspaper. “If even one school or hospital is facing cuts, we cannot justify spending a penny on the royals.”

Buckingham Palace refit

Under a deal dating back to 1760, profits from the Crown Estate - the monarch's hereditary land and property portfolio - are surrendered to the Treasury, which in return funds the monarchy's running costs through the sovereign grant. The grant is not income for the royals but pays for the monarch's household staff, property maintenance, official travel, housekeeping and hospitality. The grant amounts to 15 percent of the Crown Estate profits.

For 10 years starting last year, there is an additional 10 percent to cover the reservicing of Buckingham Palace, Queen Elizabeth's official residence in London. The sovereign grant for 2018-2019 was £82.2 million — up from £76.1 million the previous year. The £82.2 million comprised of a £49.3 million core grant plus a further £32.9 million for the Buckingham Palace reserving, replacing old wiring, water pipes and boilers, some of which has not been done since the 1950s.

“The 10-year reserving program presents a unique opportunity for innovation and investment in one of the world's most prestigious and iconic historic buildings, thereby preserving it for future generations,” said Stevens. — AFP

Iran drone downing highlights limitations of unmanned aircraft

WASHINGTON: US drones have been a key tool in conflicts against insurgent organizations such as the Taliban and the Islamic State group, but Iran's downing of one of the aircraft highlights their limitations against more sophisticated adversaries. While drones offer the significant attraction of not putting American lives at risk and can stay aloft for more than a day, allowing for extended surveillance missions, they can be vulnerable to air defenses, are often expensive, and their loss can lead to sensitive hardware falling into the wrong hands.

American drones “are generally not stealthy, they are generally not aerodynamically impressive,” said Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow and director of research in foreign policy at the Brookings Institution. “I believe sophisticated air defenses will continue to have good chances to shoot down an aircraft like an RQ-4 whenever it is in position to do meaningful surveillance of their territories or other assets,” he said, referring to the type of drone brought down by Iran near the strategic Strait of Hormuz last week.

But “it takes quite a bit to target an American military asset, and most countries won't do it just because Iran seems to have ‘gotten away with it’ here,” O'Hanlon said, noting that punishing US sanctions on the country mean it is not emerging unscathed. “These drones were not, generally speaking, designed with

contested airspace in mind,” said Arthur Holland Michel, co-director of the Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College.

“If you looked at the operational history of the RQ-4 Global Hawk, you'll see that it generally avoids denied-airspace environments,” he said. Michel said that Predator drones had been shot down in the Balkans and Iraq, while a stealthy RQ-170 was lost over Iran in 2011, with Tehran claiming to have used it to build a copy of its own. “There are some possibilities for operating in contested airspace, but generally no, this is a system that if someone wants to shoot it down, they probably can,” he said.

‘Tremendously important’

But American drones have proved “tremendously important” in “counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency style operations,” said Michel. US forces have used drones to gather intelligence, monitor enemy forces and watch battles and raids unfold in real-time in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. “They really showed their value in being able to track individual, moving targets persistently over extended periods of time,” he said. The loss of the US drone - coupled with attacks on tanker ships the US has blamed on Iran - has seen already-high tensions between the two countries spike further, raising fears of an unintended slide toward conflict that both sides have said they want to avoid.

US President Donald Trump ordered strikes on Iranian targets last week but said he called them off “10 minutes” before they were to have been launched, and Washington has now imposed sanctions on Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and a string of military leaders. In the event of a war, US drones might paradoxically be safer, O'Hanlon said. — AFP

International

Downed US drone was in Iranian airspace: Moscow

Iran silence on US talks offer ‘deafening,’ Bolton says

MOSCOW: The US drone shot down by Tehran last week was in Iranian airspace, the head of Russia's Security Council said yesterday, despite US claims to the contrary. "I have information from the defense ministry of the Russian Federation that this drone was in Iranian airspace," Russian news agencies quoted Nikolai Patrushev as telling reporters in Jerusalem.

Patrushev was in Jerusalem for talks with US and Israeli officials, as tensions run high after Iran shot down the US spy drone on June 19 and US President Donald Trump considered, then cancelled, a retaliatory strike. Iran insists the drone violated Iranian airspace near the Strait of Hormuz, but the Pentagon denies it entered Iranian territory.

Iran silence ‘deafening’

Meanwhile, US National Security Advisor John Bolton yesterday described as "deafening" Iran's apparent silence on an offer to negotiate with Washington. "The president has held the door open to real negotiations," Bolton told journalists in Jerusalem. "In response, Iran's silence has been deafening," he added. Bolton is in Jerusalem for what Israel described as unprecedented talks with his Russian and Israeli counterparts, along with meeting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Speaking alongside the US advisor, Netanyahu said there was "a wider basis for cooperation between the three of us than many believe." Bolton's comments come a day after the United States imposed sanctions on top officials of Israel's archfoe Iran. The measures against supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and others have led to a "permanent closure of the path to diplomacy" according to Iran's foreign ministry.

Tensions are running high after Iran shot down a US spy drone last week and Trump considered, then cancelled, a retaliatory strike. Bolton said Tehran has carried out "attacks upon American personnel and assets in the Middle East" and accused the Islamic republic of seeking nuclear weapons. Tehran denies it is seeking nuclear weapons and says its program is for civilian use only.

But more than a year after Washington pulled out of a landmark deal between Tehran and world powers, which sought to limit Iran's nuclear activities, Bolton said the US remains open to negotiations. "All that Iran needs to do is to walk though that open door," he said. Iran's president said Washington's decision to impose sanctions on its top diplomat and other senior officials proved the US was "lying" about talks. "At the same time as you call for negotiations you seek to sanction the foreign minister? It's obvious that you're lying," President Hassan Rouhani said in a meeting with ministers broadcast live on TV.

Iranians mock Trump

In another development, US President Donald Trump was mocked by Iranians yesterday after mixing up the country's current supreme leader with his predecessor who died 30 years ago. "The assets of Ayatollah Khomeini and his office will not be spared by these sanctions," Trump said Monday as he announced new measures against Iran's supreme leader and top officials. But the Islamic republic's founder and revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini died in 1989, and the country has since been led by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"Trump doesn't know that Ayatollah Khomeini has passed away and that Ayatollah Khamenei is the leader of Iran," tweeted Sara Masoumi, diplomatic correspondent



This undated US Air Force file photo shows a photo of a RQ-4 Global Hawk unmanned surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft. The United States launched cyber attacks against Iranian missile control systems and a spy network after Tehran downed an American surveillance drone. — AFP

for the reformist daily Etemad. "Has this narcissist been waiting for (a dead man) to call him?" wrote another Twitter user, after Trump last month said he would like Iran to phone him. One social media user suggested "Trump

took revenge" for Khamenei reportedly mispronouncing the president's name as Ronald. But one Twitter user suggested there was a plot in the White House to make the US president "look like a lunatic!" — Agencies

Mauritania opposition rejects election results

NOUAKCHOTT: Mauritania's opposition parties Monday rejected the provisional results of the presidential election, won by a former general and ally of the outgoing head of state. Saturday's election had been billed as an historic event for the conservative Saharan desert nation, marking the first democratic transition in its coup-strewn history.

But opposition parties said flaws in the vote had strengthened their fears of a power grab by the military. "We are going to organize protest demonstrations, it's our constitutional right," Mohamed Ould Moloud, who joined three other losing candidates, told a press conference late Sunday after the CENI electoral commission published the results.

The ruling party's candidate, Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, won the presidency outright with 52 percent of the vote in the first round of voting, according to the

results which must still be confirmed by the country's constitutional council. Ghazouani easily beat main opposition opponents Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, an anti-slavery activist credited with 18.58 percent of the vote, followed by Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubacar, a former prime minister, with 17.87 percent, according to the official figures. Journalist Baba Hamidou Kane and political newcomer Mohamed Lemine El-Mourteji El-Wavi, each garnered under three percent.

Multiple irregularities

Mauritania's outgoing President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, a general, came to power in a coup in 2008, and Ghazouani was his chief of staff for a decade. "Multiple irregularities... have eliminated any credibility" in the elections, said Boubacar. "We reject the results of the election and we consider that they in no way express the will of the Mauritanian people." He vowed the opposition would use "every legal means" to challenge the outcome. However, the four losing candidates called off a planned protest at the electoral commission headquarters on Monday.

Ethiopia mourns murdered army chief and others

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian military and religious leaders yesterday condemned the assassinations of the army chief and other top officials at an emotional funeral service at which Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed wept openly throughout. Abiy, facing a monumental challenge to his leadership and reformist agenda, dried his eyes with a white handkerchief as mourners wailed around him but he did not speak at the service.

"The crime was not committed by foreign forces but by our own people, and this makes it very painful," Patriarch Abune Mathias of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church said during the ceremony for army chief Seare Mekonnen and a retired general who was killed alongside him. The crowd of well over 1,000 people was composed primarily of soldiers in military fatigues, while relatives of the dead and government officials were mostly all black.

Ethiopia has been left reeling after apparently co-ordinated attacks went after top leaders in what officials said was an "attempted coup" in northern Amhara state. On Saturday, what the government described as a "hit squad" entered a meeting of top Amhara officials and opened fire, killing regional president Ambachew Mekonnen, his top adviser and the state's attorney general.

A few hours later in Addis Ababa, some 500 kilometers away, army chief Seare was shot dead by his bodyguard. The visiting general was also killed. Analysts have said that while the details are murky, the incidents highlight the political crisis in the

country, with Abiy's democratic reforms having unleashed ethnic violence and turmoil as different groups jockey for resources and power.

Lost forever

At the Addis ceremony, mourners began wailing and crying out long before proceedings began. "They have sacrificed a lot for this country," one woman shouted in Amharic. "We love them, but now we have lost them forever." The entire hall stood as the coffins of the two men were carried in by generals and draped in the Ethiopian flag. The wailing grew louder when a screen showed Abiy, wearing all black and sitting next to Ethiopian President Sahle-Work Zewde, sobbing and bowing his head in prayer.

Soldiers strained to hold back tears as speakers recounted the dead military leaders' long careers and battlefield triumphs. Delivering a eulogy for Seare, a military commander described him as a fearsome fighter who "knew how to win." "He was very courageous and mentored many soldiers after him," the general said.

"It would be one thing if he were killed in battle or because of some dispute. But what did he do to deserve this?" said deputy chief of staff General Birhanu Jula. "We will continue the struggle that he started." A son of the retired general drew applause when he said: "They are heroes and heroes never die."

At the end of the ceremony, Abiy walked up to the two coffins and saluted them. As a brass band played, the coffins were placed in a black van that took them to Bole International Airport. The men are being flown to Mekelle in their native Tigray region to be buried. Ethiopian authorities have said the attacks were masterminded by Amhara security chief Asaminew Tsige, who was gunned down by police while on the run on Monday. — AFP



TEHRAN: An Iranian woman walks past a mural painting depicting the late founder of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (right) and Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in the Iranian capital yesterday. — AFP

Souring Iran-US ties and tension

TEHRAN: Relations between Tehran and Washington have gone from bad to worse since the United States unilaterally withdrew from the international deal on Iran's nuclear program in May 2018. Here are key developments in the bitter standoff.

US quits

On May 8, 2018, President Donald Trump announces the US withdrawal from the 2015 pact, saying "we cannot prevent an Iranian nuclear bomb under the decaying and rotten structure of the current agreement". The move heralds the reinstatement of US sanctions. The US warns other countries to end trade and investment in Iran and to stop buying its oil or face punitive measures. But US allies Britain, France, Germany - who were also parties to the deal alongside Russia and China - insist Iran has abided by its commitments and say they are determined to save the agreement.

Twelve conditions

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says Tehran would be within its rights to scrap the curbs it agreed in the deal. But he calls on the remaining parties to save it. On May 21, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo outlines 12 tough conditions from Washington for any "new deal". They include not only new nuclear commitments but also a complete scaling back of Iran's regional role.

Sanctions

On August 7, Washington reimposes a

first set of sanctions that target Iran's access to US banknotes and key industries, including cars and aviation. Major international firms halt their activities or projects in Iran. On November 5, the United States reimposes a second package of sanctions aimed at significantly reducing Iran's oil exports and cutting it off from international finance. At the end of January 2019, Britain, France and Germany launch a trade mechanism in a bid to allow Tehran to keep trading with EU companies bypassing US sanctions. No transaction has taken place under the system to date.

Terrorism

On April 8, Washington designates Iran's ideological army, the Revolutionary Guards, a "foreign terrorist organization". Tehran immediately declares Washington a "state sponsor of terrorism" and blacklists its forces in the region as "terrorist groups".

End of waivers

On April 22, Trump announces his decision to cancel sanctions exemptions enjoyed by eight countries on oil imports. On May 8, Iran says it has decided to suspend commitments it made under the nuclear deal, some immediately and some after 60 days if no progress is made on sanctions relief. They include restrictions on the level to which Iran can enrich uranium and modifications to Iran's Arak heavy water reactor that were designed to prevent the production of plutonium as a byproduct. Trump announces new measures against Iran's steel and mining sectors.

On May 12, four ships, including three oil tankers, are the target of mysterious "sabotage" acts in United Arab Emirates waters. The United States and Saudi Arabia accuse Iran, which denies any involvement. On June 13, two oil tankers are attacked in the Gulf of Oman. — AFP

Khashoggi fiancee calls for international probe

GENEVA: The Turkish fiancee of murdered Saudi journalist and dissident Jamal Khashoggi yesterday appealed for an international investigation into his "premeditated" killing amid evidence of high-level Saudi involvement. Khashoggi, a Washington Post contributor and US resident, was killed last October by Saudi agents while at Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul to obtain paperwork ahead of his wedding to Hatice Cengiz. "There is an urgent need for an international investigation of this murder," Cengiz said at an event on the sidelines of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, speaking through a translator.

Her comments came after the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Agnes Callamard, released a damning report that found "credible evidence" linking Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the killing. The independent rights expert, who does not speak for the United Nations but reports her findings to it, called on UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to initiate an international criminal investigation into the case.

"I don't think the world can afford to turn a blind eye or to turn the page on a killing such as that of Mr. Khashoggi," Callamard, who also took part in yesterday's event, said. Riyadh initially said it had no knowledge of Khashoggi's fate, but later blamed the murder on rogue agents, and Saudi prosecutors have absolved the crown prince of responsibility. But Callamard's report said probes by Saudi Arabia and Turkey "failed to meet international standards regarding the investigation into unlawful deaths".

Political murder

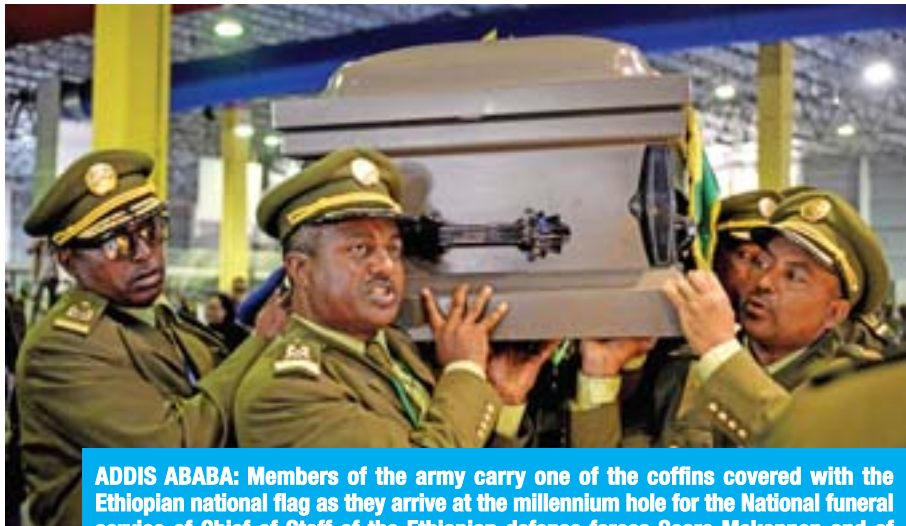
The report said there was evidence of the crime scene being "thoroughly, even forensically, cleaned" by the Saudis, in what "may amount to obstructing justice". "The investigation that is run in Saudi Arabia is not legitimate," Cengiz said, hailing Callamard's report as "significant" and helped avoid the case being "swept under the carpet". "A country is accused of a murder... It is really a huge scandal," she said.

Cengiz, who was standing outside the consulate on October 2, 2018, waiting for her fiancee as he was being murdered inside, lamented that she had "been a witness of horrendous murder, political murder." She said that she had yet to recover from the experience, pointing out that Khashoggi's body, which is known to have been dismembered, has not been found. "Since I couldn't see his body, I still had a hope, like, is he really constrained somewhere... is he alive?" she said.

But she insisted that her fiance's murder was far more than a personal trauma. "We are not talking about a personal matter. We are talking about a massacre, we are talking about an assassination and premeditated murder" with international implications, she said. "I don't want this incident to remain on a piece of paper," she said, referring to Callamard's report. Initiating an international criminal investigation into the case would be "the reconfirmation of the legitimacy of the United Nations", she said. — AFP



GENEVA: Turkish writer and fiancée of the murdered Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi Hatice Cengiz attends a side event during the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva yesterday. — AFP



ADDIS ABABA: Members of the army carry one of the coffins covered with the Ethiopian national flag as they arrive at the millennium hole for the National funeral service of Chief of Staff of the Ethiopian defense forces Seare Mekonnen and of Major-General Geza'e Abera. — AFP

International

US Democrats head south to woo crucial demographic - black voters

More than 20 candidates flock to US southeastern state

ROCK HILL: Breaking bread, attending church services or visiting historically black universities, Democratic candidates descended on South Carolina last weekend appealing to African-American voters, a potential key to victory in their race for the White House. More than 20 candidates seeking to challenge the Republican Donald Trump flocked to the southeastern state courting a demographic that, while just 12 percent of the US population, could play an outsized role in picking the 2020 Democratic nominee.

Addressing a cheering crowd of 600 in the small city of Rock Hill on Sunday, liberal senator Bernie Sanders accused Trump of seeking to “divide us up” along ethnic lines-while his own campaign was bringing people “together.” “It brings us together in the struggle for economic justice, for social justice, for racial justice and for environmental justice.”

The gathering was in a gymnasium on the campus of Clinton College, founded in the late 19th century to accommodate black students, and 40-something voter Stephonia Wright appreciated Sanders's choice of location. She has yet to decide among the two dozen Democrats in the field. They include ex-vice president Joe Biden, who leads national polls and is a favorite among African-Americans; Senator Kamala Harris, who is black; and Pete Buttigieg, the young mayor of South Bend, Indiana who faces a crisis back home after the killing of a black man by a police officer.

“This is so thick,” a smiling Wright told AFP of the crowded race. “So we’re going to have to wait ‘til we get closer to the primaries (to see) who emerges from the ashes.” Until then, candidates are tripping over themselves wooing voters in a state where blacks represent a majority of the Democratic electorate. They could prove all the more decisive in choosing who faces Trump in November 2020, as South Carolina is the fourth of 50 states to vote in the nomination process, and the first with such a prominent black population.

The victor here could benefit from strong black support throughout the campaign. Hence the political passion that seized the capital Columbia last weekend, when virtually all major Democratic candidates piled in to attend multiple large-scale events and host smaller meet-and-greets to reach out to voters one on one. On Friday, Kamala Harris, the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, held court with an intimate group of women.

Senator Cory Booker, another prominent black candidate in the historically diverse field, was warmly welcomed at a Columbia parish's faith breakfast Saturday, while Sanders delighted customers with a surprise stop Sunday at a Rock Hill restaurant. But it is Biden's name that currently resonates, largely due to the 76-year-old's eight years as the right hand man to the nation's first African-American president Barack Obama, beloved among black voters. Biden “can get the country back on track,” assured Eva Gordon, 75, who arrived in her Sunday finest at Zion Baptist Church, a center of Columbia's 1960s civil rights struggle.

Exaggerated controversy

And what of the firestorm touched off by his recent remarks recalling the “civility” with which he and two avowed segregationists worked together during Biden's early years in the Senate? “It seemed... blown out of proportion,” said 65-year-old Ida Washington, who came to listen to Biden and several other candidates at the famous fish fry hosted by popular African-American congressman James Clyburn, who also rushed to Biden's defense last week.

The urgency confronting Buttigieg in Indiana, where a fatal shooting of a black man by a white police officer has set his city on edge, has highlighted how the thorny issue of race has crept into the 2020 campaign. The shooting forced Buttigieg to return home, missing Clyburn's event, and a prime opportunity to introduce himself to thousands



ROCK HILL: Supporters of Senator Bernie Sanders, wait for their presidential candidate inside the gymnasium at Clinton College, a historically black college in Rock Hill, South Carolina. — AFP

of black voters. “A lot of African Americans identify as moderate as opposed to liberal and that may also be helpful to Biden” at this early stage in the race, said Kyle Kondik of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.

The African-American electorate is “not a monolith,” explained Johnnie Cordero, chairman of South Carolina's Democratic Black Caucus, at a gathering for millennial black voters where candidates joined in eat-

ing from platters of spicy chicken wings. But there are a number of issues that draw attention across the black electorate, including wealth inequality, criminal justice reform, and whether the US government should pay reparations to Americans harmed by slavery and its legacy. “Those are the issues that the candidates need to be addressing if they want the support of the black community,” Cordero said. — AFP

News in brief

Car rams into US embassy

SEOUL: A vehicle carrying over two dozen disposable gas canisters rammed into the US embassy in central Seoul yesterday just days before US President Donald Trump's scheduled visit, Seoul police said. The 40-year-old driver, who has not been identified, was arrested on the scene, they said. Police said the car was carrying 28 butane canisters when it ploughed into the embassy's main gate, partially damaging it. Trump travels to the South Korean capital this weekend after attending the G20 summit in Japan. Earlier this week, a Seoul official told reporters that Trump was considering a visit to the demilitarized zone that divides the two Koreas. — AFP

Drone sightings disrupt flights

SINGAPORE: Drone sightings have disrupted flights at Singapore's main airport for the second time in a week, authorities said, as the devices increasingly cause havoc for air traffic worldwide. About 18 arrivals and departures were delayed and seven flights diverted at Changi Airport late Monday “due to bad weather and unauthorized drone activities”, the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore said. The disruption lasted about an hour, it said. Last week Changi, one of Asia's busiest hubs, closed one of its runways for short periods due to unauthorized drone flying, disrupting dozens of flights. It is against the law in Singapore to fly a drone within five kilometers of an airport without a permit. Drones are increasingly disrupting flights at airports around the world. London's Gatwick was paralyzed for 36 hours in December following repeated drone sightings, with tens of thousands of passengers affected. — AFP

Bulgaria busts smuggling ring

SOFIA: Bulgarian authorities have broken up a major organized crime ring thought to have smuggled thousands of migrants from Afghanistan en route to western Europe, prosecutors said yesterday. The gang smuggled the migrants - predominantly boys under the age of 16 - over the Maritsa river bordering Turkey and helped them cross illegally through the forests into Serbia, prosecutor Siyka Mileva told journalists. While authorities have not given an exact figure of how many people were smuggled, they believe the gang was active since early 2017 and Mileva said “there were transfers every week” in groups of “30-40 people at a time”. In total, eight men have been indicted: an Iraqi man alleged to be the ringleader, one Syrian, four Afghans and two Bulgarians. — AFP

Sri Lanka execution fears

COLOMBO: Amnesty International raised yesterday fresh concerns that Sri Lanka may soon end a 42-year moratorium on capital punishment and hang 13 men convicted of drug offences. The London-based rights group said it was “alarmed” over media reports of preparations to resume hangings although the country still does not have a qualified hangman. “Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena must immediately halt his plans to resume executions for at least 13 prisoners convicted of drug-related crimes,” Amnesty said in a statement. Sirisena in February announced he would carry out the first executions in 42 years within less than two months, but he is yet to sign any death warrant, officials said. He said this was in response to spiraling narcotics-related crime inspired by President Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines. The president has also appealed to human rights organizations not to pressure him on his decision. — AFP

Trump on rape accuser: ‘She’s not my type’

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Monday once again vigorously denied allegations by a magazine advice columnist that he sexually assaulted her in the 1990s in a New York department store dressing room, adding: “She's not my type.” Trump made the comment in an interview with The Hill, a political news outlet, that touched on the allegations from E. Jean Carroll, who says in her new book that the alleged rape occurred in the mid-1990s.

“I'll say it with great respect: Number one, she's not my type. Number two, it never happened. It never happened, OK?” Trump said in the interview, which was conducted in the Oval Office. The president added that Carroll was “totally lying” when she made her claims. “I know nothing about this woman. I know nothing about

her,” he said. Carroll's account, revealed last week in an excerpt of her new book that was published by New York magazine, makes her at least the 16th woman to have accused Trump of sexual misconduct before he became president.

She said that in a chance encounter at the Bergdorf Goodman store in Manhattan, Trump - then a real estate developer - asked her for advice on buying lingerie for an unnamed woman. Then jokingly, they each suggested that the other should try it on. “The moment the dressing-room door is closed, he lunges at me, pushes me against the wall, hitting my head quite badly, and puts his mouth against my lips,” wrote Carroll, who works for Elle magazine.

Pinning her against the wall, Carroll says, Trump proceeded to pull down her tights, unzip his pants and penetrate her - all while himself fully dressed - until she finally managed to push him out and run from the dressing room. On Monday, Carroll told CNN that he “just went at it” after he cornered her. “It was a fight,” she said. “With all the 15 women or 16 who have come forward, it's the same. He denies it. He turns it around. He attacks. And he threatens.” Carroll never went to the police because, she said, she was afraid of repercussions. — AFP



US Journalist E Jean Carroll

Student debt a ‘life sentence’ for Americans

LOS ANGELES: Haley Walters is five years away from earning her law degree. If everything goes according to plan, she will be under a mountain of \$100,000 in student debt by the time she enters the work force. Like millions of Americans, Walters is paying a steep price for an education that will likely weigh her down financially for much of her adult life. “I think the student debt crisis is truly a life sentence,” the 19-year-old Californian said. With 45 million borrowers owing some \$1.6 trillion, the debt burden of American college graduates has exploded in recent years.

It has emerged as a key issue in the 2020 presidential campaign, with candidate Bernie Sanders unveiling an ambitious plan Monday to erase all student loan debt. “Somebody who graduates from a public university this year is expected to have over \$35,000 in student loan debt on average,” said Cody Hounanian, program director of Student Debt Crisis, a California non-profit that assists students and fights for reforms. According to official statistics, 71 percent of US students are burdened by such debt, with minorities the hardest hit.

“Black women particularly are the most impacted group with the highest student debt total per graduate,” Hounanian said. Despite scholarships and financial aid available to many, the cost of higher education is such that the majority of students are unable to repay their loans on schedule. “When borrowers leave school, they're in a program that's supposed to take 10 years... but more and more are enrolling in federal programs that are actually 20 or 25 years in length,” Hounanian said.

In the long term, the loan balance for such people increases, interest accrues, and the debt burden just keeps going upwards, he added. Hounanian spoke of his own experience as an example. “I had \$30,000 in student loan debt, I pay over \$150 a month, and that's in one of these

affordable repayment programs,” he said. “By doing that, my loan balance is actually increasing. I'm not covering even the entire interest that's accrued.” “I'm paying every month,” he added, “just to be more in debt.”

‘System isn’t working’

Several experts interviewed said it's not unusual to have two generations in one family burdened with student debt. That's the case for Walters, who just graduated with a two-year degree in political science from Pasadena City College, near Los Angeles. While she managed to go through that school without accumulating debt, come autumn she will be entering the prestigious - and much more expensive - University of California Berkeley, with a law degree the ultimate goal.

Despite being awarded scholarships, Walters said she will still have to take out loans to pay for nearly \$20,000 in annual fees. “That is basically going to turn into loan after loan after loan... each with individual interest rates and individual payments,” Walters sighed. She said she grew up listening to her mother, 58, bemoan the student debt that still haunts her. “I would hear my mom talk about... how it was basically crippling our finances,” she recalled. “You know, we couldn't go on vacation, sometimes I didn't get school supplies for the new school year, sometimes we got fewer birthday pres-

ents.” Walters said she hopes student debt will be a key issue in the 2020 White House race. For some candidates, it is already front and center.

‘The system isn’t working’

Sanders's “revolutionary” bill aims to erase all student loan debt and make public colleges tuition-free - and he wants the financial industry to help pay for it. “The American people bailed out Wall Street,” Sanders said, referring to lenders deemed “too big to fail” during the late 2000s recession. “Now it is time for Wall Street to come to the aid of the middle class.” Democratic candidate Elizabeth Warren also has a debt cancellation and free public college plan. “My dad grew up in an extremely poor family in southern California,” said Walters. “The only reason he went to university was because it was free.”

Tuition, however, is not the only financial burden of students. In California, for example, housing and living expenses represent more than half of the \$35,000 needed annually on average for public university. Hounanian said it was crucial to address those issues to ensure students don't end up saddled with heavy debt before starting their professional lives. “The system isn't working for students,” he said. “It's working for profiteers, for big companies and for those who are making money off of students and borrowers.” — AFP



PASADENA: Haley Walters (center) marches with her class at the Pasadena City College graduation ceremony in Pasadena, California. — AFP

Abused as ‘dirty’, gay newlyweds fear backlash

ZHONGGLI: Although Jovi Wu and Mindy Chiu made history last month as one of the first lesbian couples in Asia to marry legally, they are fearful that conservatives may reverse Taiwan's landmark law. The businesswomen and their six-year-old daughter, Allison, were verbally abused when they demonstrated in support of same-sex marriage last year, ahead of a referendum that came after the top court set a two-year deadline for legalization.

One woman took a leaflet from Allison, looked at it, threw it on the ground and then called their family “sickening and dirty”. 36-year-old Chiu said from her home in a suburb of Zhongli district, an hour's drive from Taiwan's capital, Taipei. “(I asked her) do you have to say this in front of a child - that we are sickening, we are dirty? What we are trying to say is that we're just the same, like you,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Hundreds of same-sex couples married on May 24 after President Tsai Ing-wen signed into law a bill endorsing same-sex marriage - a controversial move which has divided the self-ruled island, seen as a beacon of liberalism in Asia.

Although two-thirds of Taiwanese voters - some 7 million people - rejected the proposed reform in the November referendum, parliament passed a law legalizing gay marriage to beat the constitutional court deadline of May 24. Far from signaling a shift towards broader acceptance of homosexuality, the couple fear the legal victory will spark a backlash from conservatives who believe marriage should remain between a man and a woman.

“It will be messy at the start,” said 38-year-old Wu, who gave birth through in vitro fertilisation (IVF) in Thailand - using an egg from her former partner and a sperm donor - as Taiwan does not allow surrogacy. “Anti-homosexual groups will continue to argue how can we enjoy the same rights? How can we change Taiwan's traditions and values? They will intensify their smear campaign and continue to hurt us.”

Wu's concerns highlight how socially conservative attitudes prevail across much of Asia, five decades after the Stonewall riots in the United States that are widely regarded as the birth of the LGBT+ rights movement. The Coalition for the Happiness of Our Next Generation, one group seeking to overturn Taiwan's gay marriage law, said the public will “strike back” as it mobilised support to vote against Tsai in January elections, when she seeks a second term.

“If we can oust these legislators who supported same-sex marriage, there is a likelihood for change after 2020,” said the group's president Tseng Hsien-ying. “The only type of marriage people in Taiwan can accept is between a man and a woman. This (same-sex union) is destroying the institution of marriage and distorting our family values.” Growing up in an abusive family in Taiwan's rural west, repeatedly beaten up by her father, Wu wanted to give her own daughter the best she could. — Reuters

International

Turkey court lifts house arrest on US consulate staff Canturk

Turkey to lose F-35 warplane if Russia arms deal goes ahead

ISTANBUL: A Turkish court yesterday lifted the house arrest of a US consulate staffer charged with terrorism offences, just days before President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is due to meet US counterpart Donald Trump, an embassy official said. Mete Canturk is one of three consulate staffers arrested for links to a group accused of an attempted coup in 2016. Canturk, a Turkish citizen, still faces trial and is barred from leaving the country, with his next hearing set for October 2. US charge d'affaires Jeffrey Hovenier welcomed the decision to release him from house arrest.

"We continue to see no evidence to support the charges brought against him and we reiterate our call for this process as well as other processes involving our unjustly detained staff to be resolve quickly, transparently and fairly," said Hovenier. Relations between Ankara and Washington have been strained over several issues, including Turkey's purchase of a Russian missile defence system and US support for a Kurdish militia in Syria. Erdogan is due to meet Trump this week on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan.

A Turkish-American former NASA scientist, Serkan Golge, detained in Turkey for nearly three years on similar terrorism charges, was released in May. Another Istanbul consulate staffer, Metin Topuz, who also faces espionage charges, is due back in court this week. A third staffer, Hamza Ulucay, from the Adana consulate, has already been sentenced to 4.5 years for "aiding a terror

organization". They are suspected of links to US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen, whom Ankara blames for orchestrating the failed coup.

Russia arms deal

Meanwhile, the US envoy to NATO said yesterday that US will stop Turkish forces flying and developing its F-35 stealth jets if Ankara goes ahead with the purchase of a Russian air defense system. Washington and its allies have urged fellow NATO member Ankara not to install the S-400 system, saying that would let the technology learn how to recognize the F-35s, which are built to avoid tracking by enemy radars and heat sensors.

But Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan vowed anew yesterday to press on with the S-400 purchase despite allies' concerns. "We will hopefully start to receive the S-400 systems we purchased from Russia next month," Erdogan told members of his AK Party in parliament. "Turkey is not a country that needs to seek permission or bow to pressures. The S-400s are directly linked to our sovereignty and we will not take a step back."

Turkey has said its S-400 deal with Russia is final, exacerbating a diplomatic rift with the United States already widening over conflicting strategy in Syria, Iran sanctions and the detention of US consular staff. "Everything indicates that Russia is going to deliver the system to Turkey and that will have consequences," Kay Bailey Hutchison, the US ambassador to NATO, said in Brussels. "There will be a disassociation with the F-35 system,

we cannot have the F-35 affected or destabilized by having this Russian system in the alliance," she told reporters.

The United States says the jets, made by Lockheed Martin Corp., give NATO forces a number of technological advantages in the air, including the ability to disrupt enemy communications networks and navigation signals. Turkey produces parts of the F-35s fuselage, landing gear and cockpit displays. Hutchison said Ankara was an important partner in that production but that security concerns about Russia were paramount. "So many of us have tried to dissuade Turkey," she said.

Problems with alternatives

The United States offered Turkey the more expensive Patriot anti-missile defense system, and then with a discount, but there were issues with the US ability to deliver the Patriots quickly. Turkey also says that NATO allies have not helped it during times of heightened security concerns, and it therefore had to seek alternatives, and Russia came into the picture, Germany and the United States stationed Patriot surface-to-air missile batteries in Turkey on a temporary basis in 2013 but moved them out in 2015, citing demands on assets elsewhere.

Washington also warned Ankara that it will face US sanctions over the agreement with Moscow, a move that could deal a significant blow to Turkey's ailing economy and its defense industry. Turkey has dismissed the US warnings, saying it would take the necessary



ANKARA: Turkish President and leader of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party Recep Tayyip Erdogan makes a speech during his party's parliamentary group meeting at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in Ankara yesterday. — AFP

measures to avoid complications, and proposed to form a joint working group with Washington to assess concerns. It has said US officials have yet to respond to the offer. The Pentagon has already stopped training Turkish pilots on the jets.

Erdogan is expected to discuss the issue with US President Donald Trump at the G20 summit in Japan later this week. One senior NATO diplomat said that was probably the

last chance of finding a solution. NATO defense ministers, who meet for two days in Brussels from today, are not planning to formally raise the issue, but there could be some diplomacy in informal meetings, diplomats said. "It's not over until its over, but so far Turkey has not appeared to retract from the sale," Hutchison. "The consequences will occur, we don't feel there's a choice in that." — Agencies

Scores ill, schools closed in Malaysia due to toxic fumes

KUALA LUMPUR: Scores of people have fallen ill and hundreds of schools have been closed in Malaysia due to toxic fumes believed to have come from a chemical factory, authorities said yesterday. It was the second serious incident involving poisonous gas in Pasir Gudang district, in southern Johor state, in three months after thousands of people became sick in March when waste was dumped in a river and emitted noxious fumes.

Residents first noticed the fumes wafting across the industrial area late last week and many people, including schoolchildren, started vomiting and developing breathing difficulties. Johor chief minister Sahrudin Jamal said 75 people had so far been sent to hospital for treatment, according to official news agency Bernama.

Authorities have now ordered the closure of all 475 educational institutions in the area until Thursday, including three institutes of higher education, 111 public schools, 14 private schools and 347 kindergartens. The latest incident is not believed to be linked to the first. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad vowed to act against those responsible. "It seems like there are factories that are not very concerned about safety," he



PASIR GUDANG: Emergency personnel wearing protective suits check the air quality in Pasir Gudang yesterday, after toxic fumes were reported in the area. — AFP

said. "We have to identify those responsible for causing the pollution and take stern action against them."

Residents expressed anger over the latest toxic leak. "This is also affecting our livelihood as many people are shying away from buying food in this area," Normah Ahmad, a 63-year-

old trader, told The Star newspaper. "I hope the authorities will take this seriously." It was not clear what had caused the latest incident. Sahrudin said authorities were investigating 30 chemical factories in the area. After the March incident, three men were arrested and charged over dumping waste. — AFP

Parents of Indian girl who died in US desert 'desperate' for asylum

ARIZONA: The parents of a 6-year-old migrant girl from India who died of heat stroke in an Arizona desert said they sought asylum in the United States because they were "desperate." "We wanted a safer and better life for our daughter and we made the extremely difficult decision to seek asylum here in the United States," said the girl's mother, Ms Kaur, 27, and her father, Mr Singh, 33, in a joint statement released through the US Sikh Coalition that did not give their first names.

"We trust that every parent, regardless of origin, color or creed, will understand that no mother or father ever puts their child in harm's way unless they are desperate." The girl, identified as Gurupreet Kaur, died in a remote desert area west of Lukeville, Arizona, a US border town 50 miles southwest of Tucson, after her mother left her with other Indian migrants she was traveling with to go in search of water, a medical examiner and US Border Patrol said.

The girl's death earlier this month, the second recorded fatality of a migrant child this year in Arizona's southern deserts, highlighted the danger of summer heat as a surge of migrant families, mainly from Central America, cross the US-Mexico border to seek asylum. Gurupreet's father has been in the United States since 2013 with a pending asylum application before the New York immigration court. Singh and Kaur, both Sikhs, had not seen each other since 2013, approximately six months after Gurupreet was born, according to the statement.

According to Indian media reports, the parents are from Punjab. Gurupreet's body is being flown to New York City for her funeral. An increasing number of Indian nationals are entering the United States from Mexico, according to immigration officials. Indian asylum seekers range from Sikhs claiming political persecution to lower caste "untouchables" facing death threats for marrying outside their class, according to immigration lawyers.

They are among thousands of African and Asian migrants also making the arduous journey, led by smuggling cartels. Gurupreet's mother was released from an Arizona ICE processing facility on June 18 and allowed to travel by bus to New York City, where she has a notice to appear before an immigration court. Up to May 30, the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner, which records migrant deaths in much of Arizona's southern deserts, counted 58 such fatalities, most due to heat. It recorded 127 deaths in 2018. — Reuters

Indian police arrest publisher in midnight raid

SRINAGAR: Police arrested the publisher of one of the most widely read newspapers in Indian-controlled Kashmir in a midnight raid over a decades-old case, the police and his brother said yesterday, highlighting the difficulties facing media in the region. Tension has run high in the Himalayan region since more than 40 Indian police were killed in a February suicide car bomb attack by a militant group based in Pakistan.

Muslim-majority Kashmir is at the heart of more than seven decades of hostility between nuclear archrivals India and Pakistan. Each claims it in full but rules only a part. Ghulam Jeelani Qadri, 62, a journalist and the publisher of the Urdu-language newspaper Daily Afaaq, was arrested at his home in the region's main city of Srinagar, half an hour before midnight on Monday.

"It is harassment," his brother, Mohammad Morifat Qadri said. "Why is a 1993 arrest warrant executed today? And why against him only?" Qadri was released on bail after a court appearance yesterday. The case

dates from 1990, when Qadri was one of nine journalists to publish a statement by a militant group fighting against Indian rule in Kashmir. An arrest warrant for Qadri was issued in 1993, but it was never served.

Qadri had visited the police station involved in the arrest multiple times since the warrant was issued, most recently in 2017 to apply for a passport, his brother added.

Asked why Qadri was arrested at night, Srinagar police chief Haseeb Mughal told Reuters, "Police were busy during the day." The Kashmir Union of Working Journalists condemned the arrest, saying it seemed to be aimed at muzzling the press. "Qadri was attending the office on a daily basis and there was absolutely no need for carrying out a midnight raid at his residence," it said in a statement.

Journalists in Kashmir find themselves caught in the crossfire between the Indian government and militant groups battling for independence. Both sides are stepping up efforts to control the flow of information, with the situation at its worst in decades, dozens of journalists have said. India is one of the world's worst places to be a journalist, ranked 138th among 180 countries on the press freedom index of international monitor Reporters Without Borders, with conditions in Kashmir cited as a key reason. — Reuters



COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan Special Forces soldiers perform as they demonstrate their skills at Maduroya Special Forces training camp, some 314 km east of Colombo. — AFP

Sri Lankan police overturn council ban on Muslims

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's police yesterday stepped in to prevent a local council from banning Muslim traders from a weekly fair in another backlash from the devastating Easter attacks blamed on Islamic extremists. The local government body had ordered minority Muslims not to participate in the farmer's market in the town of Dankotuwa, 47 kilometers north of the capital.

"We got a court order against the Wennappuwa Pradeshiya Saba (council) because we can't allow this Islamophobia," local police Superintendent KAB Kumarapeli told AFP by telephone. He said the local council chairman representing a political party affiliated to former president Mahinda Rajapakse ordered Muslims to

stay away, saying their presence could trigger violence in the region.

The region has a high concentration of Christians who suffered the most in the April 21 suicide bombings that targeted three churches and three hotels. At least 258 people were killed and nearly 500 wounded in the attacks. However, police said there was no basis for yesterday's action by the council when communal tensions had eased and the region was returning to normality after several days of anti-Muslim riots last month.

"We have asked courts to take action against the council chairman for causing tension between communities," Kumarapeli said adding that a hearing has been scheduled for Friday. Sri Lanka has been under a state of emergency since the Easter Sunday suicide bombings blamed on a local jihadi group which pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group. At least one Muslim man was killed and hundreds of Muslim-owned businesses, homes, vehicles and mosques were destroyed in the riots last month. — AFP

CONSUMER PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

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Kenya tribe divided over women's land rights after ruling

A few months ago, the idea of coming home with a hoe in one hand and a sack of freshly harvested potatoes in the other was only a dream for Rachel Korir. When her father died in 2012, his land in the village of Kapcheboi, in western Kenya, automatically went to his two sons, in line with the customary law of the Kipsigis tribe to which the family belongs. Because Korir, now 70, and her five sisters were all married, tribal rules dictated that they were not entitled to any of their father's land.

"Even when I tried to work for (my brothers) plucking tea on the farm for money, they refused to offer me the job and gave it to other people from the village," said the mother of seven, sitting on a bench outside her small hut. But in April, after a legal battle that lasted almost 20 years, Korir and her sisters got the title deeds to five acres (two hectares) of land each, in a case that land rights groups are calling a landmark victory for the women of Kenya's indigenous tribes.

"This is a welcome ruling that allows not only women but married women for that matter to inherit their father's land," said Pauline Vata, executive director at Hakijamii, a Nairobi-based advocacy group fighting for social and economic justice. Land ownership in Kenya is usually vested in fathers who customarily pass it on to their sons, making it hard for women to secure rights except through their husbands. Women and their children are often evicted if the husband dies or they divorce.

Women in the East African nation were allocated less than 2 percent of about 10 million hectares of land that was registered between 2013 and 2017, according to research by the Kenya Land Alliance, an advocacy network. However, the country's constitution states that all women have equal rights to own property, regardless of whether they are married or not, Vata noted. "The case affirms what our laws have been saying all along," she said. Korir said ever since she and her sisters won the case, many women have come to her for advice on their own struggles to get a share of their families' land. But the ruling has divided tribes in parts of Kenya's Rift Valley, with some people seeing it as a positive step toward equal access to land and others fearing it undermines the traditional laws that have guided generations.

'Milestone decision'

Korir said her fight for a share of the family land started in 1999. After separating from her husband, she moved back into her parents' home. Her brothers had come of age and married by then, so their father had already given them their share of his 42-acre farm, in line with Kipsigis tradition. With no source of income, Korir asked her brothers to give her one acre of the farm so she could grow crops to sell and pay for her children's school fees.

But they refused, she said. Instead, they tried to evict her from the house, and several of their fights ended with them calling the police on her. She was arrested and jailed four times. "My father bailed me out, promising to give me a portion of the land," she said. "But he never did." Korir eventually filed a court case against her brothers for her share of the family's land, convincing her sisters to join her in the lawsuit.

When her father died in 2012, a friend advised her to seek help from the Kenyan Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) advocacy group to speed up her case against her brothers. According to the customs of the Kipsigis, an unmarried woman can inherit land, but it must be less than her brothers. If a woman is married, it is assumed she has access to land through her husband, so she has no right to her father's land, explained Vata, the social justice advocate.

A father can leave land to his married daughter in his will, she said, but to do so is considered such a taboo that few men dare. In 2014, a High Court judge ruled in favor of the six sisters. According to land rights experts, this was the first time married Kipsigi women had been given the legal right to an equal share of their father's land. After years of delays as the brothers filed a series of appeals, all of them denied, the sisters were officially given their land in April. The judge's "milestone decision" to challenge customary law and uphold the equal right to property that Kenya's constitution gives all citizens has set a precedent that "should be protected at all costs," said Janet Anyango, legal counsel at FIDA.

Some fear the ruling undermines their traditional laws and customs, however. "Our culture and identity as the Kipsigis is at stake when such a ruling is made, oblivious of our customary law," argued Bishop Paul Leleito, chairman of the Myoot Kipsigis Council of Elders. Leleito said the council is calling on the government to amend the constitution's protections against gender discrimination, noting that the constitution also guarantees the protection of culture as "the foundation of the nation". — Reuters

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



This combination of pictures shows Democratic presidential candidates Marianne Williamson, former governor John Hickenlooper, former US vice president Joe Biden, Andrew Yang, Sen Bernie Sanders, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, Sen Michael Bennet, Rep Eric Swalwell, Sen Kamala Harris, Sen Kirsten Gillibrand, Rep Tim Ryan, Rep Tulsi Gabbard, Sen Amy Klobuchar, Gov Jay Inslee, Julian Castro, Sen Cory Booker, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, former representative John Delaney, Beto O'Rourke and Sen Elizabeth Warren. Democrats will hold the first and second group primary debates of the 2020 presidential campaign season today and tomorrow in Miami. — AFP

Biden vs rest of Dems in 1st 2020 debate

For Democrats seeking to challenge Donald Trump in 2020, the rubber meets the road in Miami this week, where Joe Biden will defend his frontrunner status as presidential candidates finally square off face to face. Americans are bracing for the nation's biggest political debate since the slugfests of 2016, a two-night showdown beginning today with 20 Democrats vying for a breakout moment that could showcase their talents, or see them stumble on the world stage.

Former vice president Biden, now in his third White House bid, is the candidate to beat in the most crowded, most diverse field in modern US election history. The 76-year-old leads comfortably in all polls, and will be under pressure to convince millions of voters watching in prime time that he deserves to remain in pole position despite an uproar over his recent comments about the "civility" between him and avowed segregationists in the US Senate.

Like most of his rivals, Biden spent much of last week-end sharpening his message ahead of the debate by wooing residents of early-voting South Carolina. "I'm here to tell you, I hope to be your nominee," Biden told applauding voters in Columbia. "But here's the deal: whomever the Democratic nominee is, we have to stay together and elect a Democrat president of the United States."

Nipping at Biden's heels is a pack of candidates including liberal Senator Bernie Sanders, who is polling second; progressive rising star Senator Elizabeth Warren; young gay mayor Pete Buttigieg; and others desperate to emerge as a viable alternative to the man who was Barack Obama's

vice president. With 24 Democratic contenders now in the race, the debate will have a freewheeling feel. Party organizers chose the top 20 based on poll numbers and fundraising, splitting them into two groups of 10.

Warren, polling third, will take center stage on the first night at 9:00 pm (0100 GMT Thursday), inheriting a prime spot to make her case as she debates ex-congressman Beto O'Rourke, senators Cory Booker and Amy Klobuchar, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio and former San Antonio mayor Julian Castro, each of whom is trying to breathe new life into their campaigns. But the main event is likely to be Day 2, when the more moderate Biden goes head to head with Sanders, 77, and Buttigieg, an up-and-coming mayor of South Bend, Indiana who is half Biden's age.

On issues like healthcare and economic inequality, the Democratic socialist Sanders pushed the party towards more progressive positions following his protracted 2016 nomination battle with Hillary Clinton. He has pledged to use the debate as a platform to emphasize his support for universal healthcare, his opposition to the Iraq war and to "disastrous trade agreements." In short, he will emphasize his differences with rival Biden.

"For Biden the debates are a good test of how secure his support is," Kyle Kondik, of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics, told AFP, adding that he believes Biden has a "tenuous" early lead in the nomination battle. Tensions have simmered recently after Biden's controversial remarks about the "civility" he shared with two segregationist senators decades ago, when he first joined the

Senate. The comments earned rebukes from rivals Booker and Harris, the two prominent African Americans in the race. They and the other younger candidates - Buttigieg, O'Rourke, Castro, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard - will be looking to draw contrasts with their elders at the debate broadcast on NBC, MSNBC and Telemundo.

'Defeat Donald Trump'

Like Biden, Buttigieg enters the event singing with race-related controversy, after the fatal shooting of a black man by a white officer in South Bend led to black residents jeering the mayor at a town hall meeting. It is the first national-scale test for Buttigieg, a military veteran who rose from virtual unknown earlier this year to a top-tier contender. Some lesser known non-politician candidates could spark interest including entrepreneur and automation-soothsayer Andrew Yang. Tension has simmered on the party's left flank, where Sanders and Warren are the two flag bearers. Each has called for stronger controls on financial markets, expanded healthcare, and partial or total elimination of student loan debt. "Whether it's Biden or Elizabeth Warren or anybody else, what I believe is that in fact I am the strongest candidate to defeat Donald Trump," Sanders told CNN last week. The president himself will not be involved in the biggest political showdown yet in 2019, although he hinted he'll be watching and could weigh in via Twitter. "I wasn't thinking about it, but maybe I will now," Trump teased to Fox News recently. — AFP



Boris Johnson

No Mother Theresa

Ed Costelloe, the chair of the group Conservative Grassroots, says most party members want Johnson because they see him as a savior who can deliver Brexit amid opposition from the political establishment. "Brexit cannot be achieved by a civil service, administrative approach. It has to be achieved like big guns blazing a la Trump," Costelloe said, referring to US President Donald Trump's unconventional, combative

approach to politics. "Boris is a flawed character and flaky but most politicians are underneath," he added.

Costelloe said former prime minister David Lloyd George, who led Britain to victory in World War One, and US President John F Kennedy were examples of successful politicians with flawed personal lives. "It would be lovely to have Mother Theresa as prime minister, but it ain't going to happen," he said. Hunt, Johnson's rival, has also promised to deliver Brexit but - like May - he voted 'Remain' in the 2016 referendum and says he would consider a delay to ensure a smooth exit - two factors that make party members suspicious about his commitment.

By contrast, Johnson was the public face of the 'Leave' campaign and says Brexit will happen on Oct. 31 "deal or no deal". Some members certainly see Hunt, 52, as a safer bet. Mary Douglas, a Hunt supporter and Conservative councillor in Wiltshire, southern England, draws a parallel with the United States, where she thinks voters made a mistake in backing Trump despite concerns about his character. "I am so keen that we do not repeat that mistake because it is my strong view that you get the ruler you deserve. I would hate for us to be in the same position as America," she said.

But many members think only a charismatic, unambiguously pro-Brexit leader like Johnson can ensure victory in an election - which may come quite soon, given the deadlock in parliament - over left-winger Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party and Nigel Farage's new Brexit Party, which topped the European Parliament election in Britain last month mainly at the Conservatives' expense. "Corbyn, like it or not, is a popular figure who can energize crowds, get headlines and make people stop and follow him," Stephen Canning, a Conservative councillor in south-east England. "We need a leader of the Conservative Party who can do exactly the same, and to me Boris Johnson is the only one of the two of them ... who could really electrify audiences and build a following." — Reuters

Libyan women set up businesses against the odds

When inflation began eating into her state-paid salary Libyan architect and assistant professor Seham Saleh started selling drawings over the internet to help pay the bills. She joins a growing number of Libyan women launching start-ups in the conservative Arab country, where many still think a woman's place is in the home but where the strains on personal and family income following years' of political chaos have forced women to look for more work.

Libya has only a tiny private sector, which means there is a market for locally-produced goods. The economy is dominated by the state, which employs most adults under a structure set up by Muammar Gaddafi, who was toppled in 2011. Men are the traditional breadwinners, although around 30 percent of women were in the labor force as of 2015, according to a UN report. "I cannot live on my assistant professor salary of 1,000 dinars (\$256) even if it is paid out," said Saleh. She has been selling drawings of people in Libyan dress or book marks she created on a computer. "Thank God... people wanted to buy the products," she said. She also does freelance work as an architect.

Once one of the richest countries in the region, the chaos and civil war that ensued after the fall of Gaddafi has seen Libya's living standards erode. Little is now produced in Libya other than oil, even milk is imported from Europe. Cumulative inflation over the last four years has seen real incomes lose more than half of their purchasing power, and the government effectively devalued the dinar last September.

A cash crisis means public servants often do not get their salaries paid out in full. Lenders have no cash deposits as the rich prefer to hold their cash themselves, rather than deposit it in a bank. Women rarely had jobs outside of sectors such as teaching, although the need for more family income has changed the situation, said Jasmin Khoja, head of a women's business support venture. Her organization, the Jusoor center for studies and development, has trained some 33 would-be female entrepreneurs, offers legal advice and office space as women often can't afford their own. — Reuters

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2019

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WASHINGTON: Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell speaks at a news conference after a Federal Open Market Committee meeting. —AFP

Trump bashes ‘stubborn child’ Fed

US to mark its longest period of expansion on record

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Monday lashed out at the Federal Reserve, accusing the central bank of standing in the way of major economic expansion by refusing to cut interest rates. The president's Twitter outburst was only his latest episode of rock throwing at policymakers who are meant to be shielded from political pressure but who have contended with his barbs since last year.

However, economists say it is in fact in large part because of Trump's own trade policies that the central bank is now considering cutting rates for the first time in a decade as the risks of recession grow. "Despite a Federal Reserve that doesn't know what it is doing... we are on course to have one of the best Months of June in US history," Trump tweeted. "Think of what it could have been if the Fed had gotten it right.

(...) Now they stick, like a stubborn child, when we need rate cuts & easing, to make up for what other countries are doing against us. Blew it!" According to Trump, if not for the Fed, the US economy would be expanding by an annual rate of four or five percent while the Dow Jones Industrial Average, a marquee of Wall Street success, would be "thousands of points higher." With 10 years of growth, the world's largest economy next month will mark its longest period of expansion on record. At the same time, it has begun to give off mixed signals.

On one hand, surveys of consumer confidence and business activity are running hot, unemployment is still near 50-year lows, and consumer spending has been strong in recent months. But other more worrisome signs are afoot, as the boost from 2017's tax cuts fades

along with that of last year's fiscal stimulus. Growth in the second quarter is forecast to be about half the pace of the first, manufacturing has continued to weaken and business investment has declined.

And Trump has threatened to jack up tariffs on another \$300 billion in Chinese imports, which could send shockwaves through the global economy. As a result, the Fed last week left benchmark US lending rates untouched for the fourth time this year and the bank is signaling it could cut soon rates exactly as Trump wants. But, rather than aiming to unleash pent-up US economic might, a cut will be warranted if the economic outlook deteriorates, according to Fed Chairman Jerome Powell. Persistent trade friction and slowing global growth, among other factors, had "strengthened" the

case for looser monetary policy, he said. Oxford Economics on Monday predicted the Fed will in fact cut rates three times by next year, noting that "with fiscal stimulus dissipating and global growth waning amid elevated trade tensions, the risk of a pronounced slowdown into 2020 is non-negligible."

The specter of higher and higher tariffs has weighed on investment decisions, dented confidence and helped slow global manufacturing. Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a Republican economist and former director of the Congressional Budget Office, told AFP the US economy has seen a sudden and unexplained bout of weakness in the first half of 2019. "The biggest thing that's happened in there is a whole series of tariff moves by the president," said Holtz-Eakin. "That's the only real policy move we've had."

The United States has not seen back-to-back quarters of GDP growth greater than five percent since 1999, a time when the Fed had interest rates around five percent — or twice what they are now. And many economists say returning to such levels is simply not in the cards, given the country's aging population and sluggish productivity growth. Holtz-Eakin, who publicly argued in favor of congressional Republicans' 2017 tax cuts, doubted the Fed was blocking the breakout of growth that Trump described, describing five percent growth as "implausible." "When the prior administration had rates at zero percent for a decade, why didn't the economy grow at seven percent?" he said. "This is convenient logic but I don't think it is grounded by anything in fact." —AFP

India warns foreign e-commerce firms like Amazon, Flipkart

NEW DELHI: India has told foreign e-commerce firms such as Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart that they must ensure compliance with new foreign investment rules aimed at deterring them from providing steep online discounts, three sources familiar with the discussions told Reuters. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has said that while the government was prepared to listen to concerns about its new foreign direct investment rules (FDI), it was committed to protecting small traders from predatory behavior by foreign-funded companies, the sources said.

The comments were made by Goyal during a closed-door meeting on Monday with several e-commerce companies. It comes in a week when U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, is due to visit New Delhi — he is expected to arrive late on Tuesday — and trade tensions have heightened between the two countries.

India from Feb 1 imposed new e-commerce FDI rules to help hundreds of thousands of small traders, but small businesses and a right-wing group close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party say there are still issues. They allege big online retailers use complex business structures to circumvent federal rules, and still burn billions of dollars to offer discounts. Amazon and Flipkart say they've complied with the rules and deny any wrongdoing. Both companies, and the US government,

protested against the rules in January, saying they would force firms to change their business structures, Reuters has reported.

Goyal during the Monday meeting defended the government's new FDI policy, saying the rules should in no way be violated by any company, both in letter and in spirit. The government will not allow e-commerce firms' discounting practices to affect small shopkeepers, Goyal said, according to three industry executives in attendance. "The minister was clear and direct," said one of the executives.

Flipkart CEO Kalyan Krishnamurthy in a statement said the company looked forward to working with the government and Goyal had engaged "in a candid, positive & progressive" discussion. Amazon said it welcomed the "open & candid discussions & the promise of continuing engagement" with the government, adding it was committed to supporting various Indian government initiatives. In a statement yesterday, the commerce ministry said it had formed a committee to hear grievances on issues related to FDI in e-commerce, adding it will ensure small retailers thrive in the country. It did not detail discussions around the question of steep online discounts.

The government brought in the new policy in February after complaints from small Indian traders who said the e-commerce giants used their control over inventory from affiliated

vendors to create an unfair marketplace in which they offered major discounts. Such practices are now prohibited. The rules led to a brief disruption of Amazon's online operations in February and shocked Walmart, which had just months before invested \$16 billion in acquiring control of India's Flipkart in its biggest ever deal.

The United States government and American firms have voiced concerns about several recent Indian policies. Other than stricter e-commerce rules, India has demanded companies to store more of their data locally. In 2017, the United States lodged a written protest against India's decision to cap medical device prices.

Goyal has had a series of meetings since last week with foreign and Indian e-commerce firms and technology companies with an aim to iron out policy issues. He has also discussed what government press releases describe as "threats" local firms face from "large foreign competition". On Monday, concerns around online discounts available on Amazon and Flipkart were discussed specifically during the meeting, with both companies asked by government officials about how they price products online, the sources said.

Amazon and Flipkart argued they provide logistics support and other services to small Indian retailers who use their e-commerce platforms to boost their businesses, said the third source who attended the meeting. "Goyal said he doesn't want uncertainty for businesses ... he talked about having an inclusive policy that protects interests of all stakeholders," said one of the sources. — Reuters

Johnson urges EU to abstain from tariffs in no-deal Brexit

LONDON: Boris Johnson, the leading contender to become Britain's next prime minister, said yesterday it would be "bizarre" if the EU opted to impose tariffs on British goods in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Johnson, vying with foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt to replace outgoing premier Theresa May, insisted her divorce deal struck with the bloc but repeatedly rejected by MPs was "basically dead".

The ex-London mayor told a radio phone-in that Britain must "get ready to come out without an agreement" and the European Union should match his plan not to impose any tariffs under such a scenario. "It would be very bizarre if the EU should decide on their own — we wouldn't put up tariffs — to impose tariffs on goods coming from the UK," he told LBC talk radio. "It wouldn't be in the interests of their businesses, let alone their consumers."

"It would be a return to Napoleon's continental system," he added, invoking the 19th-century French emperor who attempted to blockade Britain in the Napoleonic Wars. During the radio phone-in, former foreign secretary Johnson delved further into his Brexit strategy if he were to be elected Conservative leader — and therefore prime minister — by party

members next month.

The 55-year-old said he wants to "take the serviceable bits" of May's withdrawal agreement, while scrapping the "backstop" provision — hated by ardent Brexiters — intended to keep the Irish border open. Johnson said he would withhold paying the EU Britain's £39 billion (\$50 billion) bill while the two sides negotiate a free trade agreement during an implementation period prolonging current terms. However European leaders have vowed they will not allow London to cherry-pick only the parts of the divorce deal it likes, and that the backstop must remain in place.

If Brussels maintains that stance, Johnson said he would ask EU leaders to agree to freeze existing arrangements for up to 10 years while they negotiate their future relationship. That could happen under a provision in World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules, but he acknowledged "there has to be agreement on both sides" for such an arrangement. Johnson insisted a way could be found through the political impasse that has led Brexit to be delayed twice already. "Let's be more positive about this," he said. "It's time this country frankly stopped being so down about its ability to get this thing done." — AFP

Business

Investors rushing to safety on rising US-Iran tensions

‘Investors (are) switching their attention once again to gold’

LONDON: Rising tensions between the United States and Iran dampened the mood in equity markets yesterday as investors turned to safe havens the yen and gold, with the latter striking a near six-year high. Oil prices steadied despite the US imposing further sanctions on key crude producer Iran, with investors bidding their time ahead of next week's key OPEC meeting on output.

Traders looked ahead also to crucial trade talks due this week between US President Donald Trump and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping. “Geopolitical tensions weighed on the (stock) markets on Tuesday after the US imposed new sanctions on Iran,” said Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell. “Investors (are) switching their attention once again to gold as a safe-haven asset.”

The precious metal struck \$1,439.65 an ounce yesterday, its highest level since September 2013, with a softer dollar lending additional support, according to traders. Japan's currency, viewed also as a haven investment, jumped to a near six-month high at 107.41 yen to the dollar. Meanwhile the return on 10-year German government bonds, another safe haven investment, hit a record low of -0.33 percent, which means investors are paying Berlin to hold their money.

Bitcoin held above \$11,000 after breaking the marker on Monday for the first time in 16 months. The latest round of US sanctions against Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and military top brass meanwhile meant the “permanent closure of the path to diplomacy” with Washington, the Islamic



KARACHI: Pakistani stock brokers monitor share prices on computer monitors during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX). — AFP

republic's foreign ministry said. Trump unveiled the new restrictions on Monday, days after Iran shot down a US drone that Tehran said had entered its airspace.

Foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi's tweet provided a catalyst to sell Asian shares yesterday. However European stock markets were steady in afternoon deals, with Wall Street also little changed at the opening. Traders were keeping tabs on developments in the China-US trade standoff as both countries' leaders prepare for crunch talks on the sidelines of this week's G20 summit in Japan. World stock markets last week rallied after Trump flagged positive

phone talks with Xi.

Yesterday, Chinese state media said top-level negotiators for both sides had held more discussions ahead of the meeting, and “exchanged opinions on economic and trade issues”. The call took place “at the request of the US side” and they agreed to maintain contact, the Xinhua news agency said. “The prolonged trade war between the two largest economies has downgraded global growth as more barriers to trade means higher prices,” said OANDA senior market analyst Alfonso Esparza. “Optimism remains high, but more details need to emerge before the market can fully price in how far apart the two sides really are.” — AFP

Canada cryptocurrency exchange founder stole funds before death

OTTAWA: A trustee's audit of bankrupt Canadian cryptocurrency exchange QuadrigaCX has discovered that its late founder siphoned millions of dollars from clients and spent it on himself and his wife. Court-appointed monitor Ernst & Young said in a report that QuadrigaCX's late president Gerald Cotten had transferred the funds from customers' accounts to other cryptocurrency exchanges and then used the money to buy luxury goods, real estate and travel-and to cover his trading losses. According to the report, “significant volumes of cryptocurrency were transferred off platform outside Quadriga to competitor exchanges into personal accounts controlled by Mr Cotten.”

“It appears that user cryptocurrency was traded on these exchanges and in some circumstances used as security for a margin trading account established by Mr. Cotten,” it said. “In addition, substantial amounts of cryptocurrency were transferred to wallet holders whose identity the monitor has been unable to confirm.”

Cotten's wife Jennifer Robertson had previously said in an affidavit that the company had been unable to access encrypted computers that her late husband was believed to have used to store the cryptocurrencies, putting millions of dollars out of reach. The files, for which Cotten alone had the passwords, were referred to as cold wallets. Ernst & Young said it had identified 76,000 QuadrigaCX users that are owed a total of Can\$215 million (US\$163 million), but the firm has been able to recover only Can\$33 million to date.



QUEBEC: In this file photo taken on March 19, 2018 a technician inspects the backside of bitcoin mining at Bitfarms in Saint Hyacinthe. —AFP

Skeptics had suggested Cohen faked his death. The report doesn't delve into that question but notes that Cohen had not maintained any proper accounting records over the past three years, and transferred large amounts of money without any oversight. At the same time, he and his wife “acquired significant assets including real (estate) and personal property” and “frequently travelled to multiple vacation destinations often making use of private jet services.” QuadrigaCX had announced mid-January that Cotten died of complications from Crohn's disease on December 9 while volunteering at an orphanage in India. He was 30. Nova Scotia's high court in February granted his wife's bankruptcy application on behalf of the company. — AFP

FedEx sues US govt over restrictions

NEW YORK: American logistics giant FedEx sued the US government on Monday, saying Washington's restrictions on exports and imports due to growing trade disputes and sanctions created an “impossible burden” for delivery firms. The announcement of the lawsuit comes as Beijing and Washington face off in a trade war that has seen both sides exchange

steep tariffs on hundreds of billions in exports.

The US has also sought to bar Chinese telecom giant Huawei from the American market and limit its ability to purchase US technology. A statement by the delivery firm said the restrictions placed “an unreasonable burden on FedEx to police the millions of shipments that transit our network every day” or face heavy fines. The company said it was impossible for employees to determine “the origin and technological make-up of contents of all the shipments it handles and whether they comply with” US laws.

The statement was released hours after China called on FedEx to explain why a parcel from Huawei to the US went undelivered, in the

second spat between the two companies in less than a month. FedEx CEO Fred Smith told US broadcaster Fox News that “Huawei is just emblematic of this problem,” referring to what he described as the “confusing situations” that can emerge when employees sought to comply with the restrictions.

“Under the Department of Commerce's regulations, we are expected to be the policeman for these export and import controls,” he said. “Despite the fact that we handle 15 million shipments a day, if we make an error on any one of them... we can be fined \$250,000 per piece.” IT publication PC Mag said on Friday a FedEx package to the US that contained a Huawei phone was returned to the UK. — AFP

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report At 02:00 PM Previous Day					
Global Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Dow Jones	26,719.13	26,727.54	8.41	▲	0.03
NASDAQ	8,031.71	8,005.70	-26.01	▼	-0.32
S&P 500	2,950.46	2,945.35	-5.11	▼	-0.17
Financial Times	7,416.69	7,406.84	-9.85	▼	-0.13
DAX	12,274.57	12,270.62	-3.95	▼	-0.03
CAC 40	5,521.71	5,513.12	-8.59	▼	-0.16
Swiss	9,898.85	9,935.78	36.93	▲	0.37
Nikkei 225	21,285.99	21,193.81	-92.18	▼	-0.43
Toptix	1,547.74	1,543.49	-4.25	▼	-0.27
Hang Seng	28,513.00	28,185.98	-327.02	▼	-1.15
Straits Times	3,311.53	3,304.27	-7.26	▼	-0.22
MENA Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait	5,809.95	5,829.40	19.45	▲	0.33
Saudi Arabia	8,598.97	8,569.14	-29.83	▼	-0.35
Dubai	2,639.84	2,623.47	-16.37	▼	-0.62
Abu Dhabi	5,015.34	4,989.41	-25.92	▼	-0.52
Bahrain	1,454.78	1,462.05	7.27	▲	0.50
Qatar	10,505.34	10,450.59	-54.75	▼	-0.52
Oman	3,911.22	3,890.89	-20.33	▼	-0.52
Lebanon	858.26	858.26	0.00	-	0.00
Jordan	1,855.89	1,852.86	-3.03	▼	-0.16
Tunisia	7,123.28	7,154.33	31.05	▲	0.44
Global Currencies Exchange Rate					
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound
Kuwaiti Dinar		12.2664	3.2846	2.8850	2.5772
Saudi Riyal	0.08152		0.2678	0.2352	0.2101
US Dollar	0.30445	3.7345		0.8783	0.7846
Euro	0.34662	4.2517	1.1385		0.8933
Sterling Pound	0.38802	4.7596	1.2745	1.1194	
Swiss Franc	0.31171	3.8236	1.0239	0.8992	0.8031
Japanese Yen	0.00284	0.0349	0.0093	0.0082	0.0091
Australian Dollar	0.21229	2.6041	0.6973	0.6123	0.5470
MENA Currencies Exchange Rate					
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal
US Dollar		0.30445	3.7345	0.3740	3.6270
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2846		12.2664	1.2286	11.9133
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08152		0.1002	0.9712
Bahraini Dinar	2.6735	0.81395	9.9842		9.6968
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08394	1.0296	0.1031	
Omani Riyal	2.6099	0.79458	9.7466	0.9762	9.4660
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08324	1.0211	0.1023	0.9917
Egyptian Pound	0.0601	0.01831	0.2246	0.0225	0.2181
Global Interest Rates					
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.13	2.44	2.69	2.94	3.13
US Dollar	2.37	2.40	2.31	2.18	2.14
Euro	-0.44	-0.42	-0.37	-0.38	-0.28
Sterling Pound	0.69	0.72	0.77	0.85	0.95
Swiss Franc	-0.84	-0.80	-0.72	-0.68	-0.58
Australian Dollar	1.25	1.21	1.10	1.02	0.94
Japanese Yen	-0.14	-0.14	-0.07	-0.02	0.04
Global Bond Yields					
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year	
United States	1.73	1.74	2.01	2.53	
Europe	-0.74	-0.66	-0.33	0.25	
United Kingdom	0.57	0.60	0.81	1.43	
Commodities					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait Oil	64.08	64.08	0.00	-	0.00
Brent	66.62	66.84	0.22	▲	0.33
West Texas	57.78	57.68	-0.10	▼	-0.17
Gold	1419.15	1428.60	9.45	▲	0.67
Silver	15.43	15.42	-0.01	▼	-0.07

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	303.750
Euro	347.950
Sterling Pound	389.560
Canadian dollar	231.340
Turkish Lira	52.690
Swiss Franc	313.790
US Dollar Buying	296.400

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.839
Indian Rupees	4.375
Pakistani Rupees	2.021
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.720
Nepali Rupees	2.737
Singapore Dollar	225.580
Hongkong Dollar	38.909
Bangladesh Taka	3.583
Philippine Peso	5.910
Thai Baht	9.905
Malaysian Ringgit	77.685

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.054
Qatari Riyal	83.482
Omani Riyal	789.474
Bahraini Dinar	807.090
UAE Dirham	82.754

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.750
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Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.204
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.220
Tunisian Dinar	106.950
Jordanian Dinar	429.180
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.211

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer

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

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

British Pound	0.380010
Czech Korune	0.005523
Danish Krone	0.042292
Euro	0.338689
Georgian Lari	0.107085
Hungarian 0.000977	0.001167
Norwegian Krone	0.031695
Romanian Leu	0.056353
Russian ruble	0.004842
Slovakia	0.090969
Swedish Krona	0.028847
Swiss Franc	0.305940

BUY

Europe	0.393910
0.014823	
0.047292	
0.352389	
0.107085	
0.036895	
0.073203	
0.004842	
0.019069	
0.033647	
0.316940	

SELL

0.215014	
0.204907	
0.224827	
0.233827	
0.304950	
0.304950	

Australasia

Australian Dollar	0.203014
New Zealand Dollar	0.195407
America	
Canadian Dollar	0.224827
US Dollars	0.233827
US Dollars Mint	0.304950

Asia

Bangladesh Taka	0.002999
Chinese Yuan	0.042709

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036821
Indian Rupee	0.003772
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017
Japanese Yen	0.002753
Korean Won	0.000253
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069825
Nepalese Rupee	0.002672
Pakistani Rupee	0.001396
Philippine Peso	0.005785
Singapore Dollar	0.219017
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001348
Taiwan	0.009659
Thai Baht	0.009540
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.791133
Egyptian Pound	0.018184
Iranian Riyal	0.000084
Iraqi Dinar	0.000209
Jordanian Dinar	0.423513
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021302
Omani Riyal	0.782643
Qatar Riyal	0.079165
Saudi Riyal	0.079913
Syrian Pound	0.001288
Tunisian Dinar	0.100409
Turkish Lira	0.045888
UAE Dirhams	0.081275
Yemeni Riyal	0.000987

0.039571

0.004544

0.000023

0.000293

0.000268

0.075825

0.003012

0.002166

0.006085

0.229017

0.001928

0.009839

0.010090

0.00013

0.807633

0.021544

0.000085

0.000269

0.432513

1.000000

0.000250

0.045302

0.788323

0.084105

0.081213

Business

Future of Kuwaiti economy under the microscope at London event

‘We welcome cooperation with the UK and Kuwaiti private sectors’

LONDON: Some of Kuwait's top public- and private-sector leaders, as well as a range of international investors, came together in London on June 17 to bring new momentum to Kuwait's development vision at the latest The Business Year event, The Role of the Private Sector in the Future of the Kuwaiti Economy. The event coincided with 120 years of UK-Kuwait friendship, and sought to bring new energy to Kuwait's plans for a diversified future and its bold Vision 2035.

After a welcome address by The Business Year CEO Ayse Valentin, HE Dr Nayef F Al-Hajraf, Kuwait Minister of Finance, kicked off the event, discussing the significance of 120 years of UK-Kuwaiti finance, while also delving into the future of Kuwait and highlighting the significance of young Kuwaitis in a post-oil environment. On the role of the ministry, he stated that, “We will continue providing all necessary financing to make sure all projects are completed and infrastructure upgraded.” On Kuwait-UK relations, he said: “We welcome cooperation with the UK and Kuwaiti private sectors. With the help of the UK private sector, we hope we can achieve another 120 years of friendship between our two countries.”

Director-General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah made a presentation on Kuwait's advantages and potential, primarily highlighting the legislative and legal atmosphere and available investment opportunities, which are aimed at achieving economic diversification and promoting the private sector's

role in the economy. He said Kuwait boasts great potential to be a significant destination for attracting investment in the region, pointing to progress in the field of developing and streamlining investment-bearing legislation and procedures. Sheikh Meshaal also said the holding of the conference in London comes within the framework of achieving Kuwait's 2035 development plan, and of promoting Kuwait's advantages. He noted that the aim of these conferences in major capitals is to attract direct added-value investments that provide jobs to young Kuwaiti people.

Among other speakers were Sir Roger Gifford, City of London Corporation and Chair of Green Finance Institute, Sylvain Broyer, Chief Economist EMEA at tS&P Global, Vomic Shah, Head of Origination at UK Export Finance (UKEF), Mazin Saad Al Nahedh, Group CEO of Kuwait Finance House, and Baroness Morris of Bolton, UK Trade Envoy to Kuwait.

Digital connectivity

Mazin Saad Al Nahedh concentrated on the two main pillars he suggests will change Kuwait's financial landscape, namely digital transformation in the banking sector and goals contained within Kuwait's Vision 2035. “The 2030s will be the age of ‘me,’ with personalized services offered via the help of digital connectivity and AI models.” He continued, “this trend will enhance the role of the private sector in the economy as it is a key part of Kuwait's efforts to become a finance hub.”

Waleed Khaled Alkhashti, Chief Corporate Communications & Relations



Officer at Zain Group, spoke on behalf of Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi. Alkhashti spoke about the expansion of the role of Zain and its focus on digital transformation, innovation, the creation of ecosystems together with the public sector, and the role of women. He emphasized the need to encourage more people from the public sector into the private sector.

Later, Kuwait's financial sector and its role in continuing privatization was the focus of a second panel. Participants included Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK), Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, CEO of KAMCO, Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed, Chairman of the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), and Roger Winfield, CEO Kuwait at HSBC Bank Middle East Ltd. Under the microscope was the role of Kuwait's banks in financing Kuwait's lofty

development goals, the privatization story of Boursa Kuwait, Islamic finance, and how foreign investors evaluate the current landscape.

Public-private dynamics

Finally, a panel on digital economy and entrepreneurship gathered Fahad Al Sharekh, Founder & General Partner at Tech Invest Corporation, Abdullah Al Mutawa, former CEO of Carriage, Athbi Alenezi, Co-founder & Managing Partner of Just Clean, and Henadi Al-Saleh, Chairperson of Agility. Discussing the tech start-up ecosystem, Fahad Al Sharekh talked about the difficulty of creating a sufficient ecosystem, suggesting that even London was struggling compared to places like Silicon Valley. “I think Kuwait needs a lot of work in terms of the legislation sector, the banking sector, and the education sector,” he summarized. Henadi Al-Saleh dis-

cussed the significance of blockchain in the future of logistics and praised the public-private dynamics on show in Kuwait.

Discussing the role of women in the sector, she drew attention to the fact that over 50% of Agility's venture capital team are women. Fahad AlSharekh, discussing the need to create more private-sector jobs, stated that, “The biggest problem is a lack of meaningful jobs. An accountant in the public sector will be doing relatively the same thing as an accountant in the private sector. But if we can create more niche, meaningful jobs, such as digital marketing or branding roles, which do not exist in the public sector, we can encourage more people into the private sector.” Athbi Alenezi spoke of changing attitudes, with young Kuwaitis slowly getting used to the pace of the private sector, reflecting on his own experiences of running a successful start-up.

Nissan shareholders approve post-Ghosn governance overhaul

YOKOHAMA: Nissan shareholders yesterday approved an overhaul intended to strengthen governance at the crisis-hit Japanese automaker, still reeling from the Carlos Ghosn scandal and facing tensions with its French partner Renault. Shareholders voted in favor of a series of reforms, including the establishment of three new oversight committees responsible for the appointment of senior officials, pay issues and auditing.

They also approved the election of 11 directors as the firm restructures, among them two Renault executives as well as current Nissan CEO Hiroto Saikawa. The reforms are designed to put Nissan on a more stable footing after the shock caused by former boss Ghosn's arrest on multiple financial misconduct charges.

Adding to the company's operational woes, net profit fell to a near-decade low in the last business year and it has already warned of “a difficult business environment” for the next 12 months. But the reform plan nearly fell apart after Renault, which owns 43 percent of Nissan, complained it did not have enough of a say in the new structure.

Crisis was averted when Nissan suggested Renault chairman Jean-Dominique Senard sit on the appointments committee, and CEO Thierry Bollore on the audit committee. However, Renault will not be represented on the new committee on pay — possibly reflecting longstanding rancour in Japan over Ghosn's high compensation compared to most Japanese CEOs.

Under pressure

Saikawa has himself come under pressure, both for the disastrous financial performance of the firm and because the Ghosn protegee is seen as a legacy of that era. He opened the meeting Tuesday at Nissan's headquarters in Yokohama outside Tokyo by offering “sincere regrets”



YOKOHAMA: Shareholders enter the Nissan shareholders general meeting. —AFP

over the tumult that has engulfed the firm in recent months. Saikawa assured shareholders he would protect the independence of Nissan, part of a three-way alliance with Renault and Japan's Mitsubishi Motors.

Ghosn has accused Nissan executives of seeking to block his plans to more closely integrate the Japanese firm with Renault. And Saikawa said yesterday that “autonomy” would remain important for Nissan, while vowing to work with Senard to keep the alliance going in “the most sustainable way”.

He said the sensitive issue of the current structure of the tie-up could need to be reconsidered “if imbalance becomes a factor of instability”. The three-way alliance is the world's biggest-selling auto group, but it has been seriously strained by November's shock arrest of Ghosn, considered one of the auto industry's most powerful executives.

Since then, Nissan has accused Renault of having too much weight in the group, and of keeping it in the dark over its tie-up plans with Fiat Chrysler (FCA), which collapsed over reservations expressed by the French government. “Rebuilding a bond of trust is not very easy,”

noted Tatsuo Yoshida, an analyst at Sawakami Asset Management.

Senard told shareholders the FCA merger talks were meant to strengthen Renault's alliance with Nissan. “I beg you to believe me on that. There was no aggressive intention towards the company I am the director at,” he said. Senard told a small group of journalists after the meeting that the recovery of Nissan was “the absolute priority.”

“In the state the company finds itself, you would have to be blind or deaf not to understand that it is the main priority. The rest is secondary,” said Senard. Ghosn, who has been sacked from all his roles at the auto firms, awaits trial in Japan on charges of under-reporting millions of dollars in salary and of using company funds for personal expenses. Ahead of the meeting, 67-year-old shareholder Hideo Yamada said he thought “there will be another round of tensions ahead” between Renault and Nissan, as they struggle to rebuild their relationship. Kiyoshi Shimizu, 70, said he was “70 percent in favor” of the proposed governance reforms, but “30 percent worried that it may slow the (management) speed”. “It will be impossible to make quick top-down decisions,” he said. —AFP

Tax us more: US billionaires

NEW YORK: “Tax us more!” was the message on Monday from about 20 super-wealthy Americans who urged presidential candidates to back higher taxes on the wealthiest to confront climate change and other priorities. “America has a moral, ethical and economic responsibility to tax our wealth more,” said the group, which included George Soros, Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes, descendants of Walt Disney and the owners of the Hyatt hotel chain.

“A wealth tax could help address the climate crisis, improve the economy, improve health outcomes, fairly create opportunity, and strengthen our democratic freedoms. Instituting a wealth tax is in the interest of our republic.” Signers pointed out that fellow billionaire Warren Buffett has said he is taxed at a lower rate than his secretary. The letter alluded to support among Democratic presidential candidates for higher taxes on the super-wealthy, including Pete Buttigieg and Beto O'Rourke.

But the letter noted broad bipartisan support for taxing the super-wealthy, saying “some ideas are too important for America to be part of only a few candidates' platforms.” It praised a proposal by Senator Elizabeth Warren that would lift taxes on those with more than \$50 million in taxes, a measure expected to affect the 75,000 wealthiest families.

The letter was signed by 18 people representing 11 families, plus one anonymous person. Many in the



DAVOS: In this file photo taken on January 24, 2019 Hungarian-born US investor and philanthropist George Soros delivers a speech on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting. — AFP

group have been associated with progressive initiatives on issues such as climate change and the growing wealth gap. Of about 40 countries, the United States is the sixth highest in terms of wealth concentration, according to data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Taxing the super-wealthy “would slow the growing concentration of wealth that undermines the stability and integrity of our republic,” the letter said. “Today, major policies seldom come to pass without the prior support of wealthy elites or other wealthy interests. Division and dissatisfaction are exacerbated by inequality, leading to higher levels of distrust in democratic institutions— and worse.” —AFP

What a ‘No-deal Brexit’ means for the UK economy

LONDON: Boris Johnson, the front-runner to be Britain's next prime minister, has raised the prospect of a shock for the world's fifth-biggest economy by pledging to leave the European Union on Oct 31 without a transition deal if necessary. Johnson's rival, foreign minister Jeremy Hunt, says he too would be prepared to lead Britain into a no-deal Brexit, but would be more flexible about the departure date. Here is an outline of the potential economic impact for Britain of leaving the EU without the cushion of a transition.

UK economy

The Bank of England estimates a worst-case Brexit — involving border delays and markets losing confidence in Britain — could shock the economy into a 5 percent contraction within a year, nearly as much as during the global financial crisis. Output in a less severe but still disruptive no-deal Brexit — in which Britain and the EU avoid snarl-ups at the borders, for example — would fall by around 3 percent.

Over the longer term, Britain's finance ministry says the economy could be 8 percent smaller by 2035 after a no-deal Brexit than if it stayed in the EU. The hit would be bigger if migration slowed sharply. The BoE also sees a risk in Britain's wide current account deficit which leaves Britain reliant on “the kindness of strangers,” in the words of Bank Governor Mark Carney. A no-deal Brexit could turn foreign investors off British assets. Brexit supporters have accused the BoE of scare-mongering but acknowledge the economy is likely to take a short-term hit. Former BoE Governor Mervyn King has said Brexit's long-term costs might not be very different from staying in the bloc.

Trade

Brussels says a no-deal Brexit would mean British exports would be hit with import tariffs which stand at around 2-3 percent for non-agricultural goods but are higher for some goods such as cars and farm products. Johnson says Britain could avoid those tariffs, under world trade rules. That claim has been rejected by the BoE's Carney, trade minister Liam Fox and the EU's top trade official who say it would need an agreement with the EU.

For its part, Britain plans to eliminate import tariffs for many products for up to a year in the event of a no-deal Brexit. That would help reduce the inflationary hit to consumers but would expose many British companies to tougher competition. Manufacturers are worried about border delays which would hurt their just-in-time production schedules.

Britain's auto industry group has said delays could cost 50,000 pounds (\$64,000) every minute in a worst-case scenario. Brexit supporters say the use of cameras and tracking technology would ease any border problems and that exports would flow freely once Britain gets an EU free-trade deal. Deals with faster-growing nations such as the United States, India and China would be a big boost for Britain, they say. But Britain's official budget forecasters say the benefits of such trade deals are likely to be small. — Reuters

Bombardier sells regional jet division to Mitsubishi

MONTREAL: Canadian manufacturer Bombardier announced yesterday the sale of its CRJ Series regional jet program to Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) for US\$550 million, effectively exiting the commercial passenger aircraft sector.

The deal with Mitsubishi, which has been seeking to break into aviation, comes after Bombardier recently sold a majority stake in its new medium-range C Series jetliners to Airbus, which has been renamed A220, and its Q Series turboprop line to a Canadian investment fund. The sale of the 75- to 100-seat CRJ line — along with its service and support networks in Montreal, Quebec City and Toronto; Bridgeport, West Virginia; and Tucson, Arizona — is expected to close by the end of 2020.

In a statement, Bombardier said Mitsubishi will also assume liabilities totaling \$200 million, and take over all maintenance, support, refurbishment, marketing and sales activities for the aircrafts. Mitsubishi president Seiji Izumisawa said the CRJ will compliment the development and production of its SpaceJet family of commercial jets as it pursues future growth in this sector. —AFP

Business

Meet the HUAWEI P30 Pro packed with a super camera and super performance

KUWAIT: Over the years, smartphone photography has come a long way. From clicking pixelated pictures that can take long processing times to today's filters and effects. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that photography has become a key element in the modern smartphone. Keeping this as a primary focus, Huawei recently unveiled the latest members of the HUAWEI P series, a lineup known for its emphasis on photography called the HUAWEI P30, with the HUAWEI P30 Pro leading the trio of smartphones boasting a super powered camera setup and hardware that boosts performance to the next level.

Not one, or two, or three, but four cameras!

Huawei did not shy away from incorporating more than one camera into the HUAWEI P30 Pro. The all-new Leica quad camera setup features a 40MP primary camera with the new HUAWEI SuperSpectrum Sensor, a 20MP ultra-wide angle camera, an 8MP telephoto camera with SuperZoom and HUAWEI's ToF Camera. Upfront the HUAWEI P30 Pro rocks a 32MP camera, all packed into the HUAWEI P30 Pro's sleek body.

One of the key innovations seen on the HUAWEI P30 Pro is the new HUAWEI SuperSpectrum Sensor, built into the 40MP main camera. This new sensor supports one of the highest ISO ratings seen on smartphones at 409,600 resulting in stunning photos even in difficult conditions. Thanks to the combined powers of the phone's f/1.6 aperture, 1/1.7 inch RYYB CFA on the main camera which adopts Red, Yellow and Blue pixels letting in red and green light to the sensor. This results in up to 40 percent more light entering the sensor, thus creating brighter photos and videos with higher photosensitivity, even in conditions with no light.

The camera setup also includes the HUAWEI SuperZoom, a periscope styled lens cleverly designed to fit in the sleek and elegant body of the HUAWEI P30 Pro. This



state-of-the-art design uses a prism element that bends light at a 90-degree angle, allowing for 5x optical zoom, 10x hybrid zoom and an impressive 50x digital zoom. This is complemented by Huawei's Optical Image Stabilization and on board AI Image Stabilization, minimizing camera shakes at high zooms. Thanks to this stabilization, images and videos taken even at extreme zooms will not be blurry or pixelated, making nothing is too far for the HUAWEI P30 Pro, even the moon.

The HUAWEI ToF Camera, an exclusive to the HUAWEI P30 Pro is also a key part of the new camera module. With its rich bokeh and sophisticated depth information-capturing capabilities, the ToF camera supports multi-level, depth of field effects and portrait segmentations capable of identifying even the smallest details, delivering one of the best portrait shots on a smartphone.

The HUAWEI P30 Pro houses a 32MP front camera, which is paired with deep-learning algorithm-assisted facial recognition and image segmentation support. By having these technologies work in tandem, photos come out crisp and more natural, even in tough-to-shoot conditions. In addition to the high-end camera hardware, the HUAWEI P30 Pro also features powerful

image stabilization technologies that brings together Optical Image Stabilization and HUAWEI AI Image Stabilization (AIS). This delivers the best stabilization offered by Huawei, be it a long exposure shot, snapshot, low light shot or even a video.

Twice the fun with HUAWEI Dual-View Video

On the HUAWEI P30 Pro, users can enjoy a brand new way of shooting videos with the HUAWEI Dual-View Video1. By using multiple cameras, users can now capture a close-up and wide angle video at the same time, on one screen. While shooting on this mode, the display will be split into two screens, both of which can have their magnification adjusted. Not only does this mode spark creative ideas to shoot videos, but also helps while capturing sporting matches and concerts, where the user can have the wide-angle screen focused on the match or stage, and the close-up screen focused on the player or performer.

Super powered hardware

The HUAWEI P30 Pro is powered by a large 4,200 mah battery that is capable of providing users with almost an entire day of extensive use. Complemented by the 40W



Huawei SuperCharge, users can charge up approximately 70 percent in just 30 minutes. Additionally, the HUAWEI P30 Pro also supports 15W Wireless Charging and houses a unique Wireless Reverse Charge feature. Thanks to this, users can place their friend's phones or other devices, even from other brands, including earphones and wearables on the phone to instantly start charging it, provided it supports the Qi Wireless Charging Standard.

At the heart of the HUAWEI P30 Pro lies the Kirin 980, HUAWEI's flagship processor and its most powerful smartphone chipset yet. The Kirin 980 is capable of enhancing performance and efficiency it's new and improved hardware focused on performance and efficiency. Along with improving performance and efficiency, the Kirin 980 can also adapt to AI scenes such as face and object recognition, object detection, image segmentation and intelligent translations. This allows users to take perfect shots, even of moving subjects with clear focus.

The chipset also uses Mali-G76 as its GPU, which works with the new GPU Turbo 3.0 to maximize gaming performance. The new graphics solution greatly improves the efficiency of games, enhancing gaming graphics and removing lag ensuring

smoother gameplay. The HUAWEI P30 comes with 8GB of RAM, ensuring faster processing and shorter load times. In terms of storage, users can opt between 256GB or 512GB options, perfect for saving all those precious memories.

No compromise on looks

As powerful as this hardware can be, Huawei ensure that there was no compromise on design, with its engineers fitting everything into a sleek, stylish body. Boasting a new design with the concept of "The Aesthetics Design", the HUAWEI P30 Pro come packaged in an IP68 rated body that keeps it safe from dust or water while showcasing the beauty of salt flats.

Meanwhile, up front the HUAWEI P30 Pro features an all-new 6.47 inch FullView display with a curved OLED screen, which bends into the edges of the screen for a borderless viewing experience. The screen supports a resolution up to 2340x1080, filling out the entire display with sharp details and bright colors. The display also houses the In-Screen Fingerprint sensor that allows users to unlock their phone by just placing their finger on the screen. The HUAWEI P30 Pro is now available at all major retail outlets and HUAWEI stores.

GBK announces winners of Al Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 23rd June 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 16th until 20th June 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:

Abdullah Khaleel Rayes Kamal
Naser Mesfer Abdullah Alhubaini
Ali Molla Khalaf Alazmi
Veerendra Mohan Lal Rathore
Ebrahim Mohammad Ahmad Alawadi
Gulf Bank's second Al Danah quarterly draw for the prize of KD 250,000 will hold today, 26 June 2019, and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD500,000 will be held on 25 September 2019. The final Al Danah draw for KD 1,000,000 will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience.



Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD200 at any given time, a KD2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met.

Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al Danah 2019 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw. Furthermore, loyal Al Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the

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

The Al Danah draws are all approved by and held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce. Furthermore, Gulf Bank have partnered with Ernst and Young Kuwait (EY) with reference to "Al Danah Prize Draw" system in order to assist in assessing processes, technical controls considering relevant parameters and provide recommendations 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 was conducted to advise on any potential areas of improvements.

Joyalukkas Exchange opens branches in 3 new locations

KUWAIT: Joyalukkas Exchange, the money exchange arm of Joyalukkas Group, further enhanced its presence in the Kuwait region with the inauguration of 3 new branches. The new branches were inaugurated by Mr Antony Jos, Director, Joyalukkas Exchange in the presence of other dignitaries and customers.

"Kuwait is a key market for Joyalukkas Exchange, we have a strong history here with our jewelry business and the response to our Exchange business has been as positive. I take this opportunity to thank the residents of Kuwait for their patronage and support and



AUB congratulates winners of Al Hassad weekly draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced on the 19th of June 2019 the winners of its weekly draw of Al Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners. Al Hassad has have over 850 prizes, over a 12 month period. The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Kefayah Kadhem Saleh.

20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Abdulrahman Y Al Saif, Walid Imad Khamaane, Nazmi Mulla Yousef, Bader M Ahmad, Jawad Ali Hassan, Hanan Mohammad Al Mulla, Mona Abdul Wahab Al Terkait, Malallah Mohammad Al Kandari, Reem A Zaman, Fahad Ali Al Sulaiti, Qablan Mohammad Al Ebayyan, Zainab Abdulla Al Haddar, Ahmed Ali Al Malliki, Santhanam Anand, Fathiya Hasan Al Alwanti, Martina Horan, Janet Paton Langley, Khurshid Jewan Mohammad, Sasikumar Korangode Balakrishnan and Isa Jaber Ebrahim.

Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 4 quarterly mega prizes of KD 250,000 that will help the lucky winners achieve their dreams and aspirations in addition the monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000. One powerful new aspect of the Al-Hassad Islamic Account is the prize draws on the holy occasion of both Eid Al Fitr and Eid Al Adha, when

the winning customers will receive the Eid prizes of KD 100,000 each. May the Eid always bring prosperity and blessings to the Islamic nation.

Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 21 weekly prizes comprised of a grand prize of KD 10,000 and 20 prizes of KD 1,000 each. In addition to the highly attractive package of the prizes, there will be the annual expected profits on, which makes the Al Hassad account a useful tool for family and other savings, both for the short term and for the longer term - a fact which well appreciated by a large multitude of new and old customers.

To be eligible to participate in the draw, the customer should have a minimum balance of KD 100, whereby the customer has two chances to participate, with a maximum of 30,000 chances per draw, in addition to annual profits for all participants. Every KD 50 invested for at least 15 days entitles the customer to one chance in the each draw. The longer the customer keeps his balance the bigger the changes of participation in the draw. Draws are held every Wednesday at AUB Kuwait or AUB Bahrain depending on the draw plan. On the occasion Ahli United Bank congratulate its winning customers, and commented that there are many chances to win waiting for our customers

Al-Tijari first bank in Kuwait to accept 'UnionPay' cards

KUWAIT: In coping with "New Kuwait Vision 2035" aiming to transform Kuwait into a regional financial hub and with a view to streamline the trade traffic between China & Kuwait which is growing and expanding and within its ongoing efforts to provide the best banking services, the Bank announced that UnionPay Cards can be accepted via the Bank's POS terminals and in-branch ATMs & those located in shopping centers and commercial complexes.

This step comes in view of the agreement signed between the Bank and "UnionPay International" - one of the world's leading payment brands. This step will also allow the Chinese visitors & businessmen holding UnionPay cards issued in about 48 countries across the world to financially transact and pay the value of their purchases in Kuwait in an easy and secured manner. UnionPay International is



the only payments company that links China with the rest of the world and it is the world's largest payment card issuer with nearly 6.69 billion cards.

During the official launch of the agreement that was attended by UnionPay's Regional Country Manager, Mr Hany Al Deeb, Mr Hameed Ibrahim Salman/General Manager -Retail Banking Division stated that the cooperation with UnionPay for acceptance of the cards issued by UnionPay International comes as a part of the cooperation agreement between the Bank & the Company, explaining that there will be subsequent and additional steps where the Bank will issue cards bearing the logo of "UnionPay" to enable merchants and visitors to pay the value of their purchases in China effortlessly and easily

by using this card that will be immediately accepted across all stores in China.

From his part, Mr Abdulaziz Malak Abdulaziz Malak/Assistant General Manager - Card Center -Retail Banking Division, said that all point of sale terminals with merchants dealing at present with Commercial Bank of Kuwait or those intending to obtain their point of sale terminals from Commercial Bank of Kuwait would be able to accept payments from any customer holding any card with UnionPay international logo issued from any institution around the globe empathizing that merchants wishing to obtain point of sale terminals from Commercial Bank may contact the Merchants Relation Unit in the Bank's Head Office branch or may visit the Bank's website

What's On



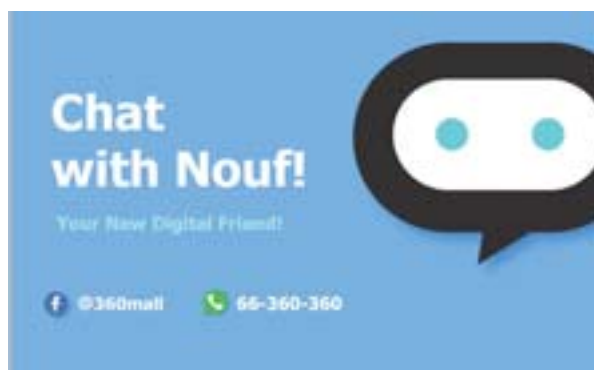
360 Mall launches region's first-of-its-kind AI Chatbot

Kuwait's 360 Mall has become the region's first shopping and leisure destination to launch an AI-driven, bilingual chatbot - 'Nouf' - available on customers' most used and favorite platforms, which makes it easier than ever for customers to engage with the iconic retail and entertainment centre.

Nouf was introduced to the public last week through an interactive activation at 360 Mall where the mall initiated a call-out for all Noufs in Kuwait. With the participation of over 360 Noufs, the announcement of the launch of the Nouf Chatbot was made to a crowd of anticipating customers who were also celebrated by the mall through branded giveaways and gifts.

360 Mall customers now have instant access to 'Nouf' who can talk to them in both Arabic and English, via a range of the region's most popular social media and digital platforms without having to download apps. Once Nouf's number is stored, customers can immediately talk to her, at any time of the day or night, on WhatsApp or via Facebook and Webchat.

"We're using transformative and game-changing AI technology to make our customer-experience and journey as simple and easy as possible, which is a winning combination for our visitors and our tenants alike,"



explained Aram Mkrtchyan, Deputy General Manager - Marketing. "Nouf is currently in its beta version and will continue to evolve and develop to better serve our customers."

Chatting to 'Nouf' is almost like talking to a friendly, human personal assistant, through the use of artificial intelligence. "This means 'Nouf' can listen carefully to customers, understand their precise needs and provide far greater insight on the brands and services available than is provided on standard, script-fed chatbots, which

are usually just a re-run of website text," added Mkrtchyan. "Nouf goes much beyond this, just as 360 Mall has gone beyond the norm to ensure the utmost convenience. What's more, 'Nouf' has a bright and witty personality, which makes her fun to talk to."

For instance, on learning of a customer's food preferences, 'Nouf' can make dining recommendations, or she can suggest brands for certain items and give directions to any store, restaurant or facility from the precise place in the mall the visitor is communicating from. 'Nouf' can also direct customers to specific outlet types, provide their contact numbers and website addresses and guide shoppers through 360 Mall's many event and entertainment options.

"It's almost like having a personal assistant that is entirely dedicated to you on the other end of the line," said Mkrtchyan. "Nouf will hugely improve the shopping experience for all 360 Mall visitors, which is also a big boost for our tenants. She knows where specific brands can be found and can direct shoppers to their websites to discover the latest deals."

360 Mall's investment in 'Nouf' is part of its ongoing aim of setting a new standard for the shopping experience and the entire customer's journey. "We have set

benchmarks for luxury, facilities, dining and entertainment and are now adopting the very latest in technological advancements to thrust our customer's journey forward," said Mkrtchyan.

Though 'Nouf' is a beta-chatbot under test mode with 360 Mall, there are already plans to further extend her range. "We are embracing the convenience of the conversational commerce era ensuring customers will no longer have to send enquiries via emails or call our customer service to obtain information from the mall. We are committed to providing customers with a more interactive experience as a first stop on the way to full digitisation and gamification of shopping," he added.

'Nouf's' chat channels were chosen because of their high penetration in Kuwait and the wider region. WhatsApp has the Middle East's highest active user penetration rate, averaging three hours a day. 360 Mall Facebook followers can also interact with 'Nouf' on Facebook Messenger and the bot is available via 360 Mall's website - www.360mall.com. "Customers can start chatting with 'Nouf' by simply visiting www.360mall.com/nouf and choosing their preferred social media messaging platform," explained Mkrtchyan.

GUST Computer Science students recognized for outstanding Capstone projects

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) recognized its Senior Computer Science students in a ceremony led by GUST President, Professor Walid Bouhamra and university management for their out-

standing achievements on their capstone projects last semester. The students were praised by the President and faculty alike, and were awarded certificates and a cash prize of KD50 for each student as a token of encouragement and appreciation. The projects divided 27 students into eight different groups to work on varying projects. In addition to using posters and fliers, seniors conducted live tests of their apps to the audience to fully explain the idea behind their creations, and how they could be used to benefit their communities. The university continuously strives to support its students' talents and hone them into practical skills to use as tools for a successful future.



The outgoing German Ambassador Karl Berger hosted a luncheon for local media at Babel restaurant.



Jabriya to be listed among healthy cities

The 'Positive Kuwaiti' voluntary team recently responded to the wishes of Sheikhha Azza Jaber Al-Ali and of Jabriya residents to register their area on the list of healthy international cities. Headed by Narjis Al-Shatti, the team explained the significance of healthy cities on both individuals and

societies, adding that the program also helps achieve HHH the Amir's vision in turning Kuwait into an international financial hub as part of Kuwait's 2035 vision. The team also explained the conditions of registration and the coordination needed amongst various government bodies to do so.

Greetings



Happy birthday to our little princess Aamina Imran who is turning 3 today. God Bless you and may you have a prosperous future ahead. Best wishes and love from Papa, Mama, Grand Parents, Aunties, Uncles and Cousin Brothers Abdullah, Osama, Ali, Umar, Hassan, Mohsin, Talha and Sisters Fatima, Ayesha, Meeqat.

Health & Technology

Russian and North American astronauts return to earth

Russians dominate the rankings for cumulative days spent in space

DZHEZKAZGAN: The first crew to blast off to the International Space Station following a launch accident that deepened doubts over Russia's space program returned to earth safely yesterday. NASA astronaut Anne McClain, veteran cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko of Roscosmos, and Canadian Space Agency record-holder David Saint-Jacques emerged from the space craft to applause from support crews, after touching down near the Kazakh city of Dzhezkazgan.

Live footage from the landing site broadcast on NASA television showed the three sitting in chairs smiling as they were attended to by staff ahead of a journey back to Moscow for Kononenko and Houston for McClain and Saint-Jacques. Arriving at 0247 GMT to warm conditions, Kononenko joked that he was "happy to see any kind of weather" after coming back from space. The trio's launch on December 3 was the first after a Soyuz rocket carrying Russia's Aleksey Ovchinin and US astronaut Nick Hague failed in October just minutes after blast-off, forcing the pair to make an emergency landing. They escaped unharmed but the failed launch was the first such incident in Russia's post-

Soviet history and a new setback for the country's once proud space industry.

Record-breakers, space tourism

McClain, Kononenko and Saint-Jacques had been optimistic ahead of their successful launch and remained upbeat throughout their time aboard the orbital lab which is seen as a rare example of cooperation between Russia and the West. "A beautiful night pass over Africa on my last night on @Space_Station," tweeted 40-year-old McClain, who completed two spacewalks during her virgin mission to the ISS. Fellow first-time flyer Saint-Jacques broke the record for the longest single spaceflight by a Canadian astronaut, previously held by Robert Thirsk. Thirsk clocked 187 days at the ISS in 2009 during a typical six-month mission, while 49-year-old Saint-Jacques' mission will stand at 204 days.

The record was helped along by the fact that the launch was moved forward to December 3 from December 20 for operational reasons - possibly as a confidence booster after the accident. The returning trio were given a ceremonial send off Monday as they exited the ISS by Ovchinin, Hague and NASA astronaut Christina Koch, who arrived at the lab in

March on a fresh mission. Russians dominate the rankings for cumulative days spent in space, with the Kononenko reaching 737 days.

That leaves the 55-year-old sixth in the all-time standings and just a typical ISS mission short of beating the 879-day record set by 60-year-old Roscosmos colleague Gennady Padalka in 2015. Since 2011, Russia is the only country to oversee manned launches to the ISS. But last year's failed launch, multi-billion dollar corruption scandals at Roscosmos and the emergence of private sector competitors like Elon Musk's SpaceX have combined to put into question Moscow's future dominance.

NASA said earlier this month that it will be opening the ISS up to space tourists for the first time next year with 30-day visits expedited by SpaceX and Boeing expected to cost around \$58 million per person. Russia has flown seven tourists to the ISS but is set to increase that number beginning in 2021, according to Roscosmos, which struck a deal with American company Space Adventures earlier this year. US businessman Dennis Tito was the first space tourist to the ISS, paying Russia around \$20 million for the trip. — AFP



DZHEZKAZGAN: Ground personnel carry NASA astronaut Anne McClain shortly after landing in a remote area outside the town of Dzhezkazgan (Zhezkazgan), Kazakhstan yesterday. — AFP

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- 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
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Surgery Department
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Academic Certificates - Training

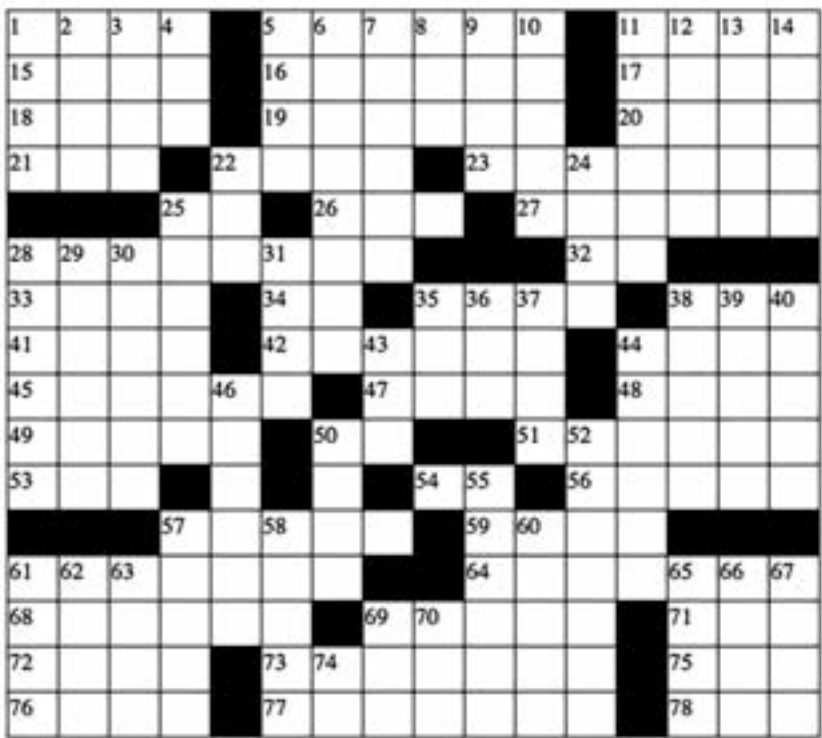
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- (IFSO) member .
- Faculty member of (BEST).
- Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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CROSSWORD 2241



ACROSS

- 1. A French abbot.
- 5. A long hooded overcoat.
- 11. One of the common people.
- 15. A sudden short attack.
- 16. A mite of the genus Acarus.
- 17. The capital and largest city of Fiji (on Viti Levu island).
- 18. In bed.
- 19. Xerophytic evergreen shrubs.
- 20. Having an eye or eyes or eyelike feature especially as specified.
- 21. A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.
- 23. The sport of gliding on skates.
- 26. (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir known for his beauty and skill with bow and skis.
- 27. The process of taking food into the body through the mouth (as by eating).
- 28. Not capable of movement or of being moved.
- 32. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- 33. A set of two similar things considered as a unit.
- 34. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 41. Other than what is under consideration or implied.
- 42. From 40 million to 58 million years ago.
- 45. Any of several plants of the genus Manihot having fleshy roots yielding a nutritious starch.
- 47. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
- 48. A whetstone made of fine gritstone.
- 49. Lower in esteem.
- 51. Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus Acacia.
- 53. A pass between mountain peaks.
- 54. A radioactive transuranic element.
- 56. Fear resulting from the awareness of danger.
- 59. The highest level or degree attainable.
- 61. Relating to or lying near the palate.
- 64. Of or relating to a septum.
- 68. An involuntary vibration (as if from illness or fear).
- 71. (often followed by `of') A large number or amount or extent.
- 72. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- 73. Of or relating to the Iberian peninsula or its inhabitants.
- 75. A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
- 76. An informal term for a father.
- 77. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- 78. A rapid escape (as by criminals).

DOWN

- 1. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- 2. A small cake leavened with yeast.
- 3. A coffin along with its stand.
- 4. A doctor's degree in education.
- 5. A white crystalline oxide used in the production of calcium hydroxide.
- 6. A port and fashionable resort city on southern Mexico's Pacific coast.
- 7. A promise.
- 8. Canadian hockey player (born 1948).
- 9. The third day of the week.
- 10. Physicist honored for advances in solid state electronics (born in Japan in 1925).
- 11. A genus of Bothidae.
- 12. A Bantu language.
- 13. A member of the Tungus speaking people of Mongolian race who are a nomadic people widely spread over eastern Siberia.
- 14. An emblem (a small piece of plastic or cloth or metal) that signifies your status (rank or membership or affiliation etc.).
- 22. A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
- 24. A former copper coin of Pakistan.
- 25. A wind from the north.
- 29. The capital and largest city of Equatorial Guinea on the island of Bioko in the Gulf of Guinea.
- 30. (Roman Catholic Church) A book containing all the prayers and responses needed to celebrate Mass throughout the year.
- 31. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
- 35. A crystalline rock that can be cut and polished for jewelry.
- 36. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- 37. Area around the altar of a church for the clergy and choir.
- 38. Type genus of the Phocidae.
- 39. (Norse mythology) Race of ancient gods sometimes in conflict with the Aesir.
- 40. Thick like cream.
- 43. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
- 44. A Swiss house.
- 46. A region of northeastern Italy on the Adriatic.
- 50. Made of fir or pine.
- 52. The shape of a bell.
- 55. A sheet or band of fibrous connective tissue separating or binding together muscles and organs etc.
- 57. A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
- 58. Of or relating to or containing barium.
- 60. Of or like a cecum.
- 62. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
- 63. A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.
- 65. Absent without permission.
- 66. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- 67. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- 69. A young woman making her debut into society.
- 70. Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
- 74. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if your sexual needs are one of the issues you seem to place great focus on today. You desire power and control. These desires may lead to greater interest in healing and investing. The great mysteries of life and death seem to intrigue you. You may feel much support and harmony in your life now. Surrounded by friends and loved ones is the place for you. You may find yourself having a great time this evening surrounded by the children and younger people in your life. It seems these younger people look at you with much admirations and strive to be more like you. Continue to set a good example for these children, Aries. Great reward could come from investing in the lives of others.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You know who and what are the priorities in your life. Your sense of appreciation is heightened. This is a time you are able to beam with pride when you look at your life situation. You are highly respected and others admire you for what a success you have become. Be sure to appreciate the fact that others seem to always look to you for advice and guidance. Remember to take time for you. You may tend to take the problems of those you love to personally. You can not carry the weight of the world on your shoulders alone. Spend time this evening to unwind. This could prevent you from becoming overwhelmed.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This seems to be a time of great focus on your relationship. You may find yourself searching for and discovery all of the beauty this world has to offer. You find beauty in your surroundings each today, but today you seem to have a greater appreciation for it. This is a very satisfying experience for you. Peace and harmony are great desires in your world and you are entering a phase where you will feel this way often. You may find that your relationships are the key to your emotional success. You may find yourself surrounded with love and support today. Focus on your loved one today and you may find this is where your needs will be fed.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Things really seem to be going your way. It is your time to shine. You may feel as if the world is revolving around you. Enjoy each breath you take. Live life to the fullest and seek the beauty in all that surrounds you. You are beaming with pride and a sense of accomplishment and others will be drawn to you today. Enjoy this feeling and spread joy wherever you go.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

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



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

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

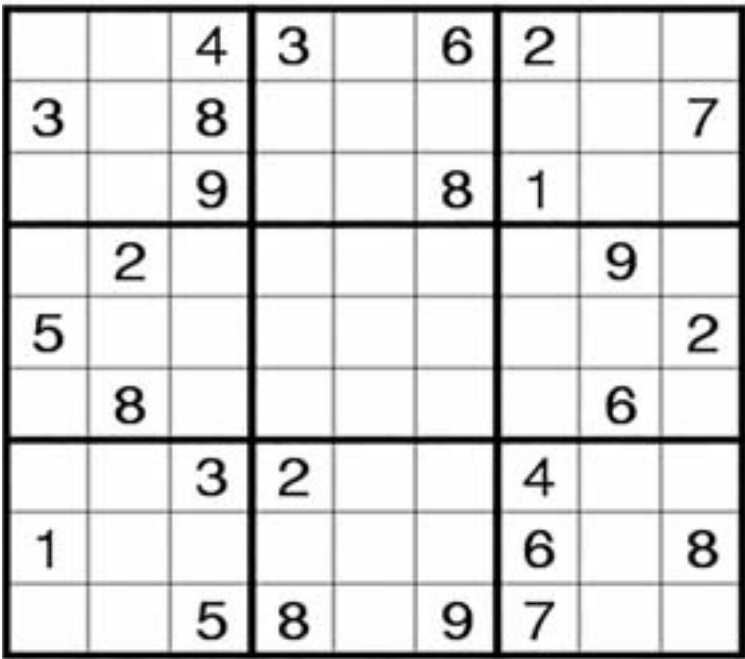
Wordsearch Puzzle

Winter 1 - Word Search



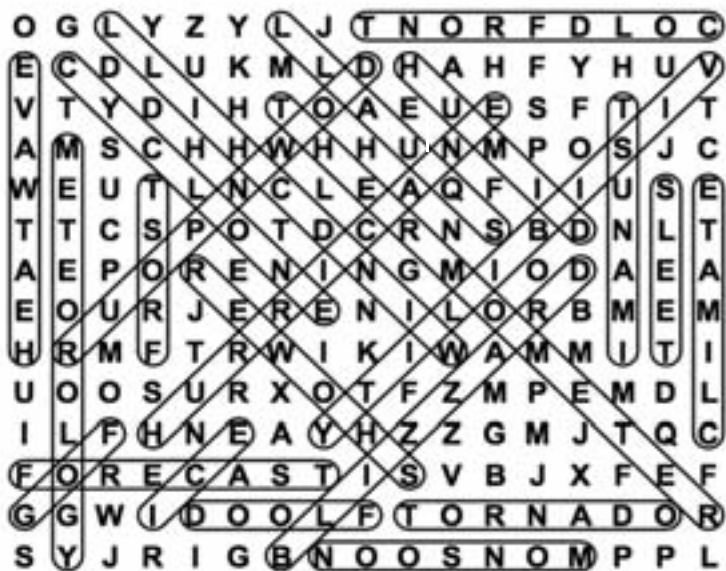
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| BLACK ICE | ICICLES | SNOWMAN |
| COLD | MITTENS | SOUP |
| FIREPLACE | SCARF | STORM |
| FOG | SKATES | TOBOGGAN |
| FROST | SKI PANTS | WINTER TIRES |
| HIBERNATION | SLEET | WOOL SOCKS |
| HOLIDAYS | SNOW PLOW | |

Daily Sudoku



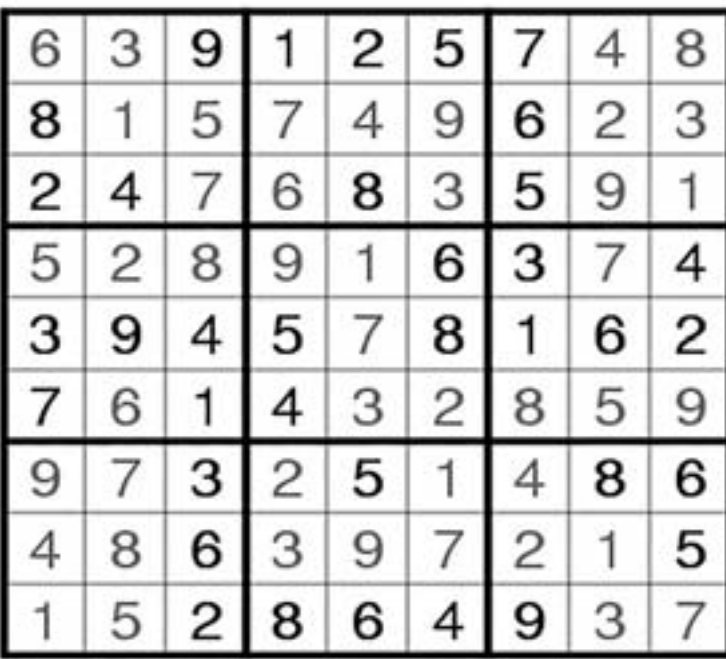
Yesterday's Solution

Weather 2 - Solution



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| BLIZZARD | HEAT WAVE | THERMOMETER |
| CLIMATE | HUMID | TORNADO |
| COLD FRONT | HURRICANE | TSUNAMI |
| CYCLONE | ICE | VISIBILITY |
| DOWNPOUR | METEOROLOGY | WIND CHILL |
| FLOOD | MONSOON | |
| FOG | SHOWER | |
| FORECAST | SLEET | |

Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2019



A woman forms bubbles at Lhoknga beach, Aceh province.— AFP

BTS fans get chance to manage their idols in new game

A million fans of K-pop boy band BTS have signed up to have the singers at their fingertips when a mobile game about them is released this week, according to reports. "BTS World"-set to be released in 176 countries in 14 languages on Wednesday-is a role-playing game where the user is the band manager, recruiting and training the musicians and guiding the group in their quest for stardom. Managers and agents are the driving force behind the K-pop industry, exerting extensive control over their stables of stars, rather than musicians forming bands themselves and working to get spotted.

BTS have developed a global following in recent years, becoming the first K-pop group to top charts in the US and Britain with a string of sold-out shows in Los Angeles, Chicago and London's Wembley Stadium. The floppy-haired musicians, whose ages range from 21 to 26 and who often sport earrings and lipstick, appeal to a generation that feels comfortable with the idea of fluid gender identity.

Their hit single "Boy With Luv" broke the YouTube record for the most views in 24 hours, with 74.6 million hits when it was released in April. "BTS World" includes exclusive photos and videos of BTS and video calls with the band members. Using another mode within the game, a player can select a BTS member to go back to his childhood and a life away from the stage - perhaps even as a strawberry farmer. The demand for the app has prompted its publisher Netmarble-South Korea's biggest

mobile-app creator-to plan a new game featuring the septet which is in its "early stages", a company executive told AFP.

Netmarble could not disclose the number of users who have pre-registered for the game, the official said, but South Korean reports estimated the figure to be around one million. The verified Twitter account of "BTS World" has 1.3 million followers, with each of its 90 posts retweeted hundreds of thousands of times. "I don't play mobile games but I can't wait for BTS World," said Jessica Kim, a 33-year-old fan in Vancouver who travelled twice to Los Angeles to attend BTS concerts. The game is free to download, but users can pay to speed up the process-each time a mission is cleared, a new BTS video or photo is unlocked. BTS-or Bangtan Sonyeondan, which translates as Bulletproof Boy Scouts-maintain close relationships with their fans, flooding social media with selfies, videos and tweets in Korean and English.

Their popularity has translated into billions of dollars in profits for their company, Big Hit, which is even collaborating with Barbie maker Mattel for BTS dolls. South Korean performers such as Psy-whose 2012 hit "Gangnam Style" became the first video to top a billion views on YouTube-have previously broken into Western markets, but none have achieved BTS' sustained success. — AFP



A man walks past an advertisement for the role-playing game 'BTS World' at a subway station in Seoul yesterday. — AFP

Pamela Anderson splits with 'monster' French World Cup-winning boyfriend



In this file photo Marseille's defender Adil Rami (left) and US actress Pamela Anderson arrive to take part in a TV show in Paris.— AFP

Former "Baywatch" star Pamela Anderson has revealed she has broken up with France World Cup-winning defender Adil Rami, calling him a "monster" who "scammed" her. Anderson's two-year romance with the Marseille player 18 years her junior has been closely followed in France, especially when Rami became a cult hero of the 2018 World Cup campaign in Russia despite not playing a single minute. But the couple's romance appears to have ended abruptly, with Anderson accusing Rami of cheating on her.

"The last (more than) 2 years of my life have been a big lie," Anderson, 51, said on Instagram. "I was scammed, led to believe... we were in 'big love'?" "I'm devastated to find out in the last few days that he was living a double life." The actress and model said Rami "used to joke about other players who had girlfriends down the street in apartments close to their wives. He called those men monsters. But this is worse. He lied to all... He is the monster." Rami's representatives did not reply to AFP when asked to respond to Anderson's claims. Anderson has two sons from a previous relationship with Motley Crue rocker Tommy Lee. — AFP

Argentine filmmaker Martel to chair Venice film fest

Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel will chair the jury of the 76th edition of the Venice Film Festival, organizers of the world's oldest movie gala said Monday. "It is an honor, a responsibility and a pleasure to participate in this celebration of cinema, of humanity's immense desire to understand itself," Martel said in a statement. The 52-year-old has directed four critically acclaimed feature films: 2001 drama "The Swamp", adolescent flick "The Holy Girl" (2004), psychological thriller "The Headless Woman" (2008) and period drama "Zama" (2017). "Four feature films and a handful of short films, in just under 20 years, have made Lucrecia Martel the most important Latin American director and one of the greatest in the world," said the festival's director Alberto Barbera.

"In her films, the originality of her stylistic research and the rigour of her staging are at the service of an uncompromising vision of the world, dedicated to exploring the mysteries of female sexuality, group and class dynamics,"



Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel

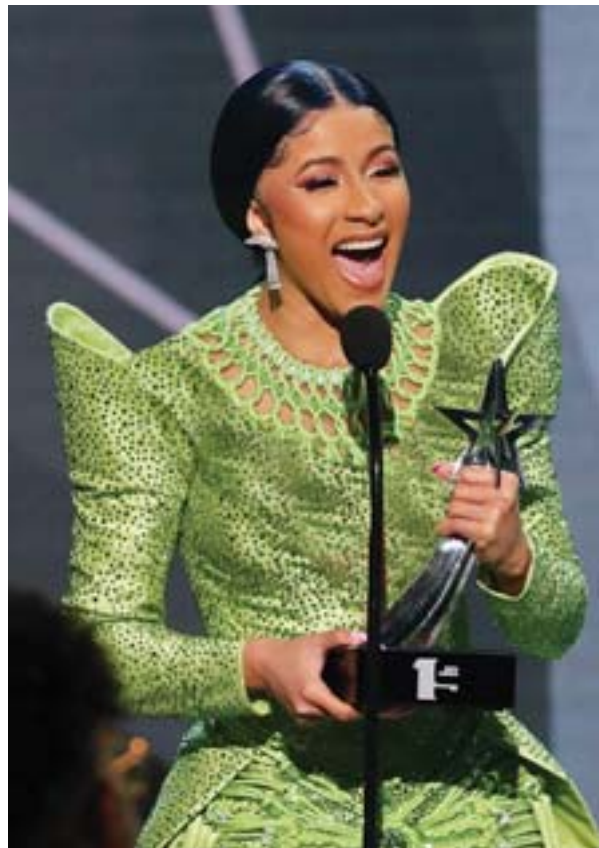
he added. The jury chaired by Martel at the festival, which opens August 28, will award eight prizes including the famous Golden Lion. In the past few years Venice has played host to several films that have gone on to win at the Oscars, including Alejandro Inarritu's "Birdman" (2014), Thomas McCarthy's "Spotlight" (2015) and Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma" (2018).—AFP

Bill Murray to get Lifetime Achievement award at Rome fest

A-list star Bill Murray is to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Rome Film Festival while director Ron Howard will unveil a documentary about Italian opera singer Luciano Pavarotti, organizers said Monday. Murray, 68, who starred in films including Ghostbusters (1984), Groundhog Day (1993) and Lost in Translation (2003), will also host a public talk at the festival, which runs from October 17 to 27 in the Italian capital.

The award will be presented by American Wes Anderson, who directed the actor in "The Grand Budapest Hotel" and "The Life Aquatic". The festival, now in its 14th year, will also feature a talk with director and producer Ron Howard, the man behind "Apollo 13" (1995) and "The Da Vinci Code" (2006), who will present his documentary on legendary tenor Pavarotti, who died in 2007. His flick will be released this summer in US and British cinemas. — AFP





Cardi B accepts the Album of the Year award onstage during the 2019 BET awards at Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos



Nipsey Hussle's family accepts the Humanitarian Award in honor of Nipsey Hussle onstage.



Lil Baby accepts Best New Artist onstage.



Lil Baby performs onstage.



Reverend Al Sharpton accepts the Dr. Bobby Jones Best Gospel/Inspirational Award sponsored by State Farm onstage.



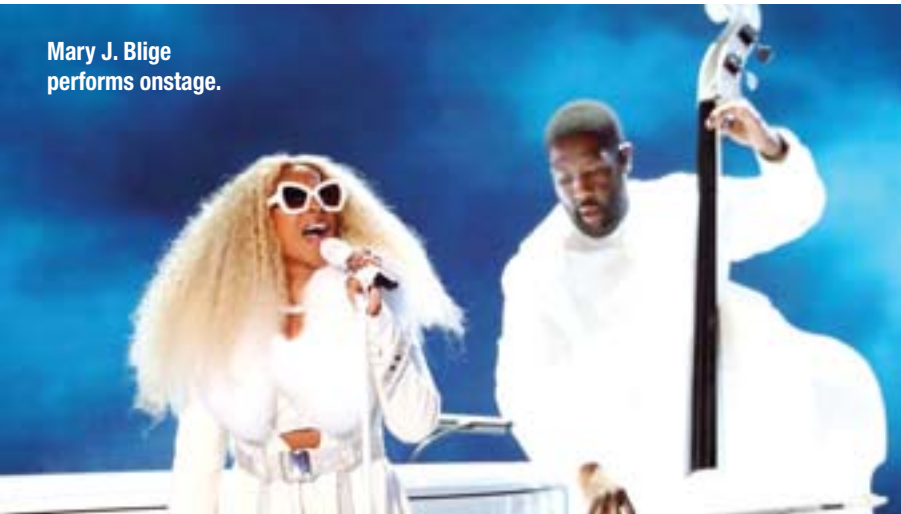
Ella Mai accepts the Coca-Cola Viewers' Choice Award for 'Trip' onstage.



Mary J. Blige performs onstage.



Mary J. Blige accepts the Lifetime Achievement Award.



Mary J. Blige performs onstage.



Host Regina Hall speaks onstage.



Billy Ray Cyrus (left) and Lil Nas X perform onstage.

BET AWARDS BOTH ENTERTAINED AND MOVED

The most popular group at Sunday night's BET Awards has never had a record deal. The men, who as boys were known as the Central Park Five, took the stage to introduce Grammy Award-winning singer H.E.R. Kevin Richardson, Antron McCray, Raymond Santana, Korey Wise and Yusef Salaam are now known as the Exonerated Five, and they received a standing ovation. Their story was the basis of the Netflix limited series "When They See Us," which dramatized their experiences of being wrongly convicted in a 1989 rape case in New York. The show has stoked strong feelings about how they were mistreated, subsequent struggles and eventual exoneration.

Korey Wise, Raymond Santana Jr, Yusef Salaam, Antron McCray, and Kevin Richardson speak onstage at the 2019 BET Awards. The 19th annual event celebrates the best in African-American culture. The show kicked off with a performance by the most-nominated artist of the night, Cardi B. The rapper kept it hot with a lap dance for her husband, fellow artist and Migos member, Offset, as she and a host of dancers turned it out.



Marsai Martin accepts the Youngsters Award onstage.

There were several buzz-worthy moments during the show. Rapper Snoop Dogg had Twitter scratching its head with his win for the Dr. Bobby Jones gospel award. Billy Ray Cyrus sealed his invitation to the family cookout with his performance with Lil Nas X, who is now the reigning rapper of country music with his viral hit, "Old Town Road." The audience was on their feet singing along to the song, which has stoked debate about whether it's



(From left) Takeoff of Migos, Mustard, and Quavo of Migos perform onstage.

country or hip hop. Yler Perry turned the stage into a pulpit while receiving the Ultimate Icon Award.

Perry, who went from writing and starring in plays to owning his own studio, spoke about learning to turn pain into powerful stories. "When I built my studio, I built it in a neighborhood that is one of the poorest black neighborhoods in Atlanta, so that young kids could see that a black man did that and they can do it, too," Perry said. "The studio was once a Confederate army base, which meant that there were Confederate soldiers on that base plotting and planning on how to keep 3.9 million Negroes enslaved. Now that land is owned by one Negro."

Mary J. Blige was presented a lifetime achievement award from Rihanna and performed a medley of her hits. There were tributes to the late director John Singleton, who died in April following a stroke, and rapper Nipsey Hussle, who was gunned down March 31 in Los Angeles near a clothing store he owned.

Hussle's family accepted his award, and DJ Khaled and singer John Legend participated in a musical tribute." Host Regina Hall gave the audience a little Beyoncé/"Homecoming" parody at the beginning of the show, which played off Hall being a native of Washington D.C. Singer Sugar Bear kicked off a tribute to D.C.'s go-go music with the classic 1980s song, "Da Butt." Hall's friend and fellow D.C. native Taraji P. Henson hopped on stage to join her in the energetic dance.

— <https://edition.cnn.com>



List of winners

Video of the year

Childish Gambino, "This Is America"

Best female R&B/pop artist

Beyonce

Best male R&B/pop artist

Bruno Mars

Best female hip-hop artist

Cardi B

Best male hip-hop artist

Nipsey Hussle

Best new artist

Lil Baby

Best group

Migos

Best collaboration

Travis Scott featuring Drake, "Sicko Mode"

Album of the year

Cardi B, "Invasion of Privacy"

Viewers' choice award

Ella Mai, "Trip"

Dr Bobby Jones best gospel/inspirational award

Snoop Dogg featuring Rance Allen, "Blessing Me Again"

Best actress

Regina King

Best actor

Michael B. Jordan

Best movie

"BlackKkKlansman"

Young stars award

Marsai Martin

Sportswoman of the year

Serena Williams

Sportsman of the year

Stephen Curry

BET HER award

H.E.R., "Hard Place"

Video director of the year

Karena Evans

Best international act

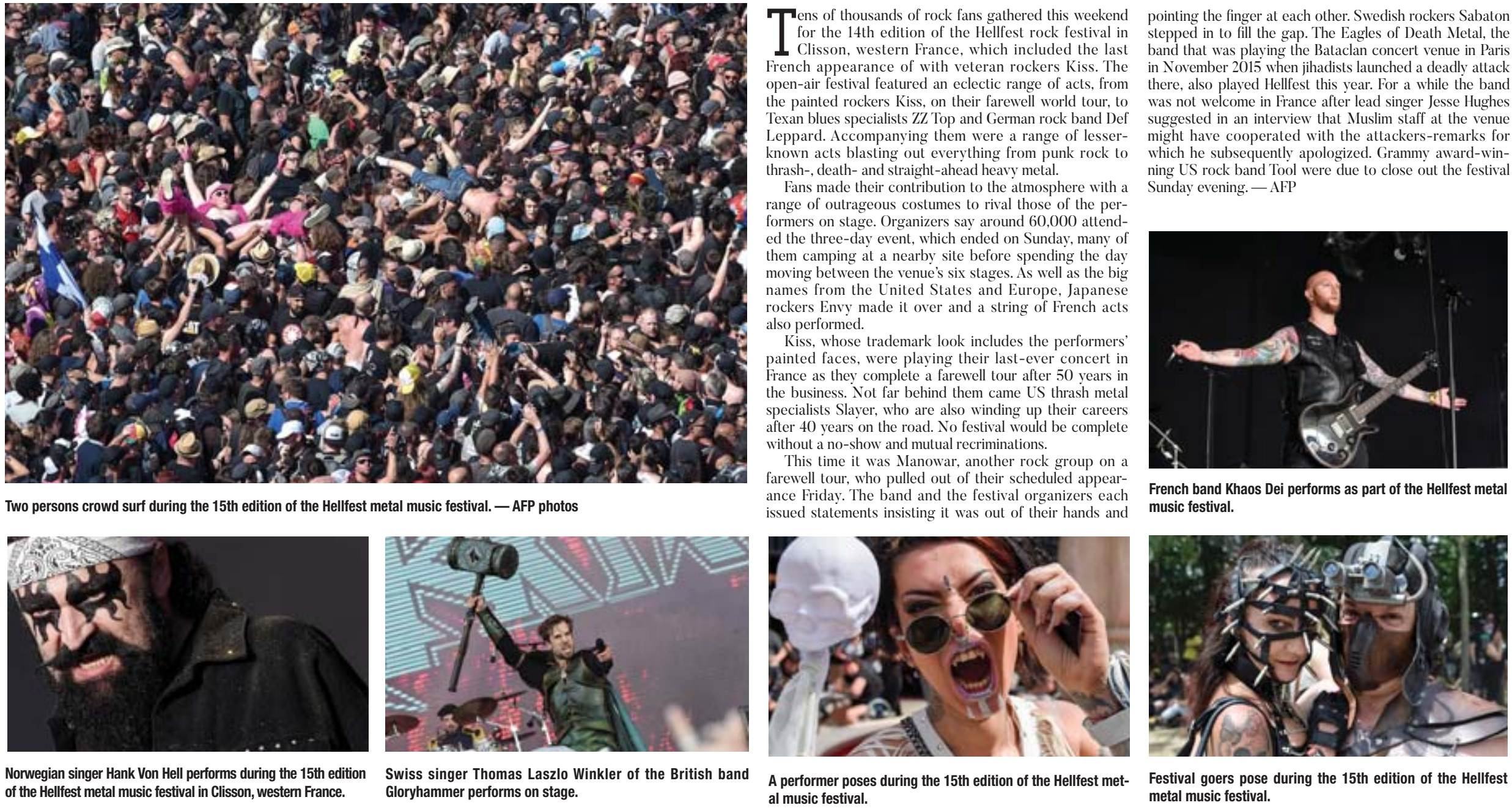
Burna Boy (Nigeria)

Best new international act

Sho Madjozi (South Africa) .



Hellfest: The sound, the fury and the twilight of rock gods Kiss





A worker carries boxes with tobacco leaves at a tobacco farm in Esteli, Nicaragua.



A worker smokes a cigar at a cigar factory in Esteli, Nicaragua.



Nicaraguan Sergio Torres, marketing manager of the company Plasencia Cigars, looks at tobacco leaves at a tobacco farm in Esteli.

NICARAGUA PUFFING UP STATUS IN RAREFIED WORLD OF PREMIUM CIGARS

From “rich and full-bodied” to “complex with hints of licorice,” aficionados exhaust the lexicon to capture the essence of Nicaragua’s most highly-prized produce—not wine, but cigars, which are especially popular in the United States. The recognition turns the vibrant green hills of Esteli, in the troubled Central American country’s northwest, into a hive of activity come harvest time. Here, 800 meters (2,620 feet) above sea level, half of the population of 110,000 is employed in the tobacco industry—picking, drying or curing, or rolling cigars in factories. “No one has soil as good for tobacco as Nicaragua,” explains Nestor Plasencia, whose family business is one of the country’s leading cigar exporters, as he sits and savors the sweet aroma of one of their creations.

Nutrient-rich volcanic soil and know-how imported from Cuba more than 50 years ago, as well as a knowledgeable workforce have set Nicaragua apart when it comes to growing flavorful top-quality tobacco. Apart from Esteli, the two other tobacco-growing regions are the Condega and Jalapa valleys in the north, each with their own distinct soils and minerals. Part of the lure of Nicaraguan tobacco is that “the same seeds planted in different soils and climatic regions give different flavors,” Plasencia said, between spiraling puffs.

Cuban cigars may easily outsell the lesser-known Nicaraguan product in Europe, but Nicaraguan brands have taken advantage of the crippling US embargo on Havana—in place since 1961 — to sell to the Americans. Nicaraguan cigar exports to the US have increased by 40 percent since 2008, reaching 140 million cigars in 2018, outstripping the Dominican Republic and Honduras, according to figures from the Cigar Association of America (CAA).

Nicaragua’s industry is a young one—it was started by Cuban exiles who fled Fidel Castro’s revolution in 1959. When the Central American country’s civil war ended at the start of the 1990s, the industry started to flourish.



A worker puts tobacco leaves to dry at a tobacco farm in Esteli.

“My family started in tobacco in Cuba in 1865. Today we operate in Nicaragua and Honduras,” says Plasencia, whose father hails from the Caribbean island.

Cuban know-how -

Today, the country has 70 factories producing more than 5,000 brands, says the director of the Nicaraguan Chamber of Tobacco Producers, Wenceslao Castillo. Karina Rivera, a quality control supervisor at Plasencia Cigars, tests an average of eight cigars a day. “If I see that it’s not at the level of quality demanded by customers, we report immediately to find out where the problem is,” she said. Smokers say a lot is going on in a cigar during puffs, tasting richness, balance and complexity—a variety of flavors and aromas that have helped several Nicaraguan brands conquer the US market. In 2018, American trade magazine Cigar Aficionado named seven Nicaraguan brands in the top 10 of its annual ranking.



A worker of a tobacco factory smokes a cigar.

As for the Best Cigar of the Year, the “E.P. Carrillo Encore Majestic” is made in the Dominican Republic, but with Nicaraguan tobacco, the magazine says. “The strength of the Nicaraguan tobacco industry is our focus on quality, which is why we are today the largest exporter of premium cigars to the United States,” Castillo says proudly.

Fermentation and aging

It’s clear that in the rarified world of premium cigars, names are important. To the aficionado, in clubs and the best bars, they trip off the tongue—La Opulencia Toro, La Imperiosa, Villiger La Vencedora Churchill... “We believe that 60 to 70 percent of our success is due to the way tobacco is dried and the time spent on fermentation and aging—we don’t rush things,” says Castillo. “The trilogy of this success is the soils, the microclimate and the people, the care they put into their work,” says



A woman works at a cigar factory in Esteli.

Plasencia, who runs two factories in the Central American country and exports 15 million cigars a year to the United States.

The cigar industry has had to do more than resist climatic changes to survive. It’s one of the few to emerge largely unscathed from the political and economic crisis that has rocked Nicaragua for more than a year, after a violent crackdown on anti-government demonstrations left more than 325 people dead and forced 62,000 into exile. It also put 400,000 out of work in an economy that had enjoyed annual 4.0 percent growth, according to the private sector. “If it weren’t for these factories, Esteli would surely be deserted,” says 43-year-old Silvia Moreno, who has worked in the tobacco industry for half her life. — AFP

OMEGA awards the winners of the Stephen Hawking Medal for Science Communication

‘A special Speedmaster prize for Buzz Aldrin, Elon Musk, Brian Eno and the makers of the Apollo 11 documentary.’

The Swiss watchmaker OMEGA has awarded four unique Speedmaster watches to the winners of this year’s Stephen Hawking Medal for Science Communication at the 2019 Starmus V Festival in Zurich, Switzerland. On stage were the winners including Brian Eno, for his contribution to the popularization of science: Apollo 11, a documentary by Todd Douglas Miller, for its breakthrough look at the famous space mission; and a special Lifetime Achievement Award for OMEGA ambassador Buzz Aldrin, whose legendary passion for space continues to inspire us today. A medal and watch will also be separately presented to Elon Musk, for his accomplishments in space travel and for humanity.

The Stephen Hawking Medal for Science Communication is one of the world’s most celebrated science communication awards. With its partnership of the Starmus Festival, OMEGA is proud to align itself with the prize and contribute specially crafted timepieces for the annual winners.

Presenting the watches on stage was Raynald Aeschlimann, President and CEO of OMEGA. He later said, “It’s a great honor to be here amongst so many esteemed names in the science community. I know these winners are truly deserving of the medal and they have all shown a great commitment to human understanding and progress. OMEGA has its own pioneering history and future in space, so we are thrilled to join the celebrations and share in this common quest for excellence.

The winning watch is a Speedmaster Moonwatch crafted in 18K

Sedna gold. The model is known as the “First OMEGA in Space,” and is based on the iconic watch that astronaut Walter Schirra wore during the Sigma 7 mission of the Mercury program in 1962. Today’s updated design features a brown polished ceramic bezel ring and a matt chromium nitride tachymeter scale, as well as brown PVD subdials and a central opaline silvery dial. The watch is distinguished by its caseback, which includes the words, “WINNER OF THE STEPHEN HAWKING MEDAL FOR SCIENCE COMMUNICATION”, as well as a laser-engraved medallion that follows the exact design of the medal itself. This includes the Starmus logo and images of Alexei Leonov during the first human spacewalk and the “Red Special” guitar of Queen’s Brian May.

The Starmus Festival, a combination of science, art and music, helps the general public understand and appreciate science. Since 2011, it has included performances and presentations from astronauts, cosmonauts, Nobel Prize winners and prominent figures from science, culture, the arts and music. For the 50th anniversary year of the Apollo 11 mission, this year’s festival included a remarkable roster of science and space luminaries, including Apollo astronauts such as OMEGA ambassador Charlie Duke - the youngest person to walk on the moon. Also joining the speaker roster was Nicole Stott, also an OMEGA ambassador and veteran astronaut who has worked on both the International Space Station and the Space Shuttle.



Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin (left) and President and CEO of OMEGA, Raynald Aeschlimann.



Cooing doves an attraction in Singapore’s birdsong contest

Just after dawn in Singapore, about 150 black-and-white striped zebra doves were hoisted in their cages on to tall poles in a large field for a singing competition. The contest, popular among retirees in the ageing city-state and Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, is fiercely competitive and top performers can be worth thousands of dollars. But the prizes are more about trophies and bragging rights. Jason Tan, 66, a Singapore resident born in Thailand who has won the competition dozens of times, said he finds the cooing of the birds, domestically known as ‘merbok’, relaxing. “It’s not easy to come by a beautiful bird that can perform,” Tan said, introducing his entrant, a relative novice at 17 months old. “His tone is like a human singer, beautiful and sweet, and echoey.” Sunday’s competition, which lasted four hours in the middle of a nondescript housing block in a central Singapore neighborhood, is one of several held each year. The doves are divided into three categories depending on the pitch of their songs, and three judges decide the winners. Jerry Lye, a Malaysian who has been judging birdsong since the ‘90s, said the best songs feature a crescendo.

“You have to listen out for the birdsong that has more texture, that is sweeter, that has a long ending, the middle has to be short, and slow...If it’s like that, then they will be at the top, so that is considered a good bird.” Tan, whose bird finished third, left a little disappointed but optimistic for the dove’s singing career. “The first time, second time, cannot be successful. Rome wasn’t built in a day, it took me 50 years,” he said. — Reuters

Wednesday, June 26, 2019



BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate north westerly wind changing to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 38 km/h.

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	06/26	Very hot with a chance for rising dust	50 °C	33 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Thursday	06/27	Very hot with a chance for rising dust	50 °C	34 °C	NW	15 - 50 km/h
Friday	06/28	Very hot with a chance for rising dust	49 °C	34 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Saturday	06/29	Very hot	49 °C	34 °C	NW-VRB	10 - 35 km/h

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	48 °C
MIN. Temp.	29 °C
MAX. RH	36 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	N 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Clinics

Airlines

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



Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 26/6/2019				Departure Flights on Wednesday 26/6/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	RBG	JZR	554	Alexandria
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	115	Doha	13:25
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	MSR	611	Cairo	13:45
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	102	London	00:50	RJA	645	Amman	14:15
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	CLX	7912	Hanoi	14:20
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	RBG	218	Asyut	14:35
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	FDB	8192	Dubai	14:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	105	Bahrain	15:00
4KLM	4446	Bahrain	01:40	GFA	191	Tbilisi	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
QTR	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
ETH	1086	Doha	02:40	SAV	501	Jeddah	15:45
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	JZR	125	Dubai	15:50
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	KAC	105	London	15:55
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	644	Muscat	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	FEG	242	Alexandria	16:55
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
KAC	796	Madinah	04:25	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	382	Delhi	04:55	KAC	155	Istanbul	17:35
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	KAC	503	Beirut	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	UAE	858	Dubai	17:50
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	OMS	226	Muscat	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:10
JZR	708	Luxor	06:15	SVA	521	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	GFA	191	Dubai	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
KAC	206	Istanbul	06:50	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
MSR	601	Cairo	07:00	JZR	261	Beirut	19:10
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	FDB	064	Dubai	19:45
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	19:55
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	RJA	641	Kochi	20:05
UAE	853	Dubai	08:25	KAC	351	Amman	20:30
JZR	706	Asyut	08:25	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30

Iran air defense missiles must be taken seriously: Experts



TEHRAN: An Iranian woman walks past a mural illustrating ancient Persian poetry yesterday. — AFP

Tehran to ditch more nuke curbs as Trump...

Continued from Page 1

interpreted Iran's 'patience' with weakness and inaction realise that Iran's answer to the American drone's violation of its airspace will be no different than its reaction to devious political efforts to limit Iranian people's absolute rights," he added.

The statements came as US national security adviser John Bolton, on a visit to Iran's archenemy Israel, said Washington had "held the door open to real negotiations" but that "in response, Iran's silence has been deafening". Bolton also warned Iran against disrupting a Bahrain conference on Middle East peace that got underway yesterday night. "Iran has engaged over the past couple of months in a long series of unprovoked and unjustifiable attacks," he said. "In that kind of environment, threatening the conference in Bahrain is always a possibility," he said. "It would be a big mistake for Iran to continue this kind of behavior."

In a series of tweets, Trump warned Iran against any attack on US interests. "Any attack by Iran on anything American will be met with great and overwhelming force. In some areas, overwhelming will mean obliteration," said the US president. Iran and the US broke off diplomatic relations in 1980 over the hostage crisis at the US embassy in Tehran following Iran's Islamic revolution. Since quitting the nuclear deal and reimposing sanctions on Iran, Trump has moved to choke the country's economy, blacklisted its Revolutionary Guards as a "terrorist

organization" and nearly launched a military strike in retaliation to Iran downing the US spy drone.

Zarif said the drone had violated Iranian airspace, a claim the US denies. But Russia, a key ally of Tehran, backed Zarif's version of events. Washington has also blamed Iran for mid-June attacks on two tankers in sensitive Gulf waters, a claim Iran hotly refutes. Trump has said he is ready to negotiate with Iran "with no preconditions" and that Iran could have a "phenomenal future". "We do not ask for conflict," he said, adding that depending on Iran's response, sanctions could end tomorrow or "years from now."

But Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said the new sanctions meant "permanent closure of the path to diplomacy with Trump's desperate government". Rouhani also mocked the logic of black-listing the supreme leader, who has few assets and no plans to visit the US. "To sanction (the supreme leader) for what? Not to travel to America? That's cute," he said. Rouhani noted there had been chances for talks between the two sides.

Zarif met former US secretary of state Rex Tillerson several times before Washington unilaterally withdrew from the nuclear deal in May 2018 and reimposed sanctions. "You do not seek to negotiate. If you did, we could have," Rouhani said. Zarif, a political moderate, was a key architect of the deal under which Iran agreed to curb its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. But both he and Rouhani have accused Washington of waging an "economic war" on Iran since pulling out of the accord. Amid a flurry of diplomatic activity, the UN Security Council on Monday issued a unanimous call for dialogue to address the standoff between the United States and Iran. China yesterday urged "calm and restraint" as tensions grew. — Agencies

DUBAI: The shooting down last week of a sophisticated US drone by an Iranian missile demonstrates that Tehran's air defense capabilities can pose a challenge to US air superiority, experts say. The Global Hawk, an advanced US navy surveillance drone, was flying at high altitude - it can reach 60,000 feet (18 km) - early Friday local time when it was struck by a ground-to-air missile by Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards.

"The shooting down of the drone shows Iran is revealing a capability and choosing to message it to the United States," said Becca Wasser, an analyst at Rand Corp. "The fact that Iran was able to shoot down the drone demonstrates that they have developed or purchased fairly significant capabilities and are skilled at employing these systems." Wasser noted an Iranian claim that it had used a home-made surface-to-air missile (SAM) system to shoot down the drone. "If true, this would be significant because it is a domestically produced capability that Iran could replicate and potentially provide to proxy groups throughout the region to threaten US and partner militaries," she told AFP.

According to the Military Balance - an annual publication by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) - Iran has 32 batteries of Russian-made S-300 ground-to-air missiles that have been delivered by Moscow since 2016. They are seen as posing a serious threat. The Islamic Republic has also developed Iranian versions of these missile systems, including the Bavar 373, SAM Tabas and SAM Raad which are regularly displayed at military parades. The Revolutionary Guards claim that they shot down the US drone with a Khordad 3 missile, a version of the SAM Raad.

Senior Iranian officials and military officers have welcomed the strike and warned against a possible US retaliation. "The enemy dispatched its most advanced, smartest and most sophisticated surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft to the forbidden area and everyone saw the shooting down of this unmanned

aircraft," Iran's navy commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi said on Monday. "I say confidently that this crushing response can be repeated and the enemy knows this," he said.

The former head of a French intelligence service, who asked to remain anonymous, said that if the US air force sends large numbers of aircraft over Iran, they should be prepared for some losses, because Iranian forces will be prepared. "That said, in the case of the drone, it may not have had sufficient counter-measures - to deceive, deflect or outmaneuver the missile - and the Americans thought that the Iranians would not dare" shoot it down, he told AFP.

Dan Gettinger, co-director at the Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College, New York, said the Global Hawk is a large plane that flies slowly. The plane "is not a stealthy aircraft - it's very large" with a wingspan of 40 m, similar to a Boeing 737, Gettinger said. The drone's fate is "definitely going to be taken into account in future operations," Gettinger told AFP. He said the incident is also reminiscent of the time the Soviet Union shot down a U-2 spy plane in 1960. That event, targeting a piloted craft, "is a large part of the reason why the US started developing drones in the first place", Gettinger said.

Experts however say that the latest incident does not mean Iran is capable of building a firewall against the air force of the world's largest military, whose superior firepower and electronic warfare capabilities are overwhelming. At the end of 2015, just after Moscow agreed to sell the S-300 systems to Tehran, a move Israel tried in vain to prevent, the head of the Israeli Air Force General Amir Eshel said the missiles posed "a significant but not insurmountable challenge".

Douglas Barrie, senior fellow for military aerospace at IISS, said Iran had shown it is capable of shooting down a large drone. But, he said, "this is a long way from being able to sustain air defense operations in the face of a significant attack involving missile strikes and counter-measures to degrade its air defenses." — AFP

Homeless Syrians sell furniture...

Continued from Page 1

the former construction worker, who fled the village of Tramlu with his wife and six children. "I sold all our home's furniture for just 50,000 Syrian pounds," he said, dressed in a faded grey t-shirt fraying around the collar. After transport costs, he was left with only half that amount to feed his family, he said. Abu Abdu accused buyers of "cheating us, exploiting the displaced", but said he had no other choice. "Everything's so expensive... and there are no organizations looking out for us," he said.

The Idlib region is supposed to be protected by a buffer zone deal signed by Russia and rebel backer Turkey in September. But the accord was never properly implemented as militants refused to withdraw from the

planned cordon. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an alliance led by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate, took over administrative control of the region in January.

In the town of Atareb - about 30 km from Atme, in Aleppo province - Abu Hussein received a new delivery at his shop of second-hand household appliances and furniture. "Every day, more than ten cars arrive loaded up with items the displaced try to sell us," said the 35-year-old. "This means we have to pay relatively low prices, because the supply is so high" and it's hard to then sell them all, he said.

Back in Atme, 50-year-old Waleeda Derwish said she hoped she would find someone to buy her fridge, washing machine and television, to help her provide for her eight children. The widow transported the electrical items to "save them from bombing or looting" in Maaret Hurma, she said, a bright blue scarf wrapped around her wrinkled face. Now the appliances represent the family's only lifeline, she said. "I'm forced to sell them. How else are we supposed to live?" — AFP

No-confidence motion filed against...

Continued from Page 1

retired people from the social security agency. The grilling was placed on the agenda of the first session in the next term starting in October but the minister surprised the Assembly yesterday by asking that his grilling be debated immediately, and the Assembly agreed.

The minister categorically denied that he had promised during a grilling two weeks ago to abolish the controversial interest because this can be done only through legislation. But Hayef and at least one lawmaker insisted that the minister made the pledge as part of efforts to convince Hayef to withdraw his name from a list of lawmakers who had planned to file a no-confidence motion against the minister after the first grilling.

Hayef withdrew his name at the last minute and foiled the motion, because he was the tenth MP on the list who signed the motion. Under Kuwaiti law, 10 MPs are needed to file a no-confidence motion against ministers. Ghanem said some circles have been circulating that the Assembly will be dissolved as a way of con-

vincing more MPs to support the no-confidence motion. He said dissolving the Assembly is in the hands of HH the Amir, adding he is confident the Assembly, elected in 2016, will complete its four-year term.

Hajraf denied reports that he had submitted his resignation, saying that the grilling had finished and he did not quit. Ghanem said the voting on the motion will take place on July 3 in accordance with the law, and after that the Assembly's term will come to an end, which means that the closing date has been delayed by one day.

During the debate, Hayef accused the minister of providing MPs with false information and pledges over the cancellation of the interest, and that he failed to fulfill his promise. The minister categorically denied that he had made the promise, saying that he cannot concede public funds and any measure like this needs a law from the Assembly.

After the grilling, the Assembly debated and approved the budgets and final accounts of eight government bodies that include the authorities of ports, industry, telecom, roads, youth and printing the Holy Quran, in addition to the budgets of the Assembly and the Credit Bank. MPs however clashed over demands by some to abolish the Quran printing authority, saying it was functioning. Islamist MPs strongly defended the authority and recounted its achievements. The Assembly continues to debate budgets today.

The wildfire of hate speech...

Continued from Page 1

We recognize hate speech as an attack on tolerance, inclusion, diversity and the very essence of our human rights norms and principles. More broadly, it undermines social cohesion, erodes shared values, and can lay the foundation for violence, setting back the cause of peace, stability, sustainable development and human dignity.

In recent decades, hate speech has been a precursor to atrocity crimes, including genocide, from Rwanda to Bosnia to Cambodia. I fear that the world is reaching another acute moment in battling the demon of hate. That is why I have launched two United Nations initiatives in response. First, I have just unveiled a Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech to coordinate efforts across the whole United Nations system, addressing the root causes and making our response more effective.

Second, we are developing an Action Plan for the UN to be fully engaged in efforts to support safeguard religious sites and ensure the safety of houses of worship. To those who insist on using fear to divide com-

munities, we must say: Diversity is a richness, never a threat. A deep and sustained spirit of mutual respect and receptivity can transcend posts and tweets fired off in a split second. We must never forget, after all, that each of us is an "other" to someone, somewhere. There can be no illusion of safety when hate is widespread.

As part of one humanity, it is our duty to look after each other. Of course, all action aimed at addressing and confronting hate speech must be consistent with fundamental human rights. Addressing hate speech does not mean limiting or prohibiting freedom of speech. It means keeping hate speech from escalating into something more dangerous, particularly incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence, which is prohibited under international law.

We need to treat hate speech as we treat every malicious act: by condemning it, refusing to amplify it, countering it with the truth, and encouraging the perpetrators to change their behaviour. Now is the time to step up to stamp out anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred, persecution of Christians and all other forms of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Governments, civil society, the private sector and the media all have important roles to play. Political and religious leaders have a special responsibility to promote peaceful coexistence. Hatred is a danger to everyone - and so fighting it must be a job for everyone. Together, we can put out the wildfire of hate and uphold the values that bind us together as a single human family.

Kushner pitches 'Opportunity of...

Continued from Page 1

Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's directives. Ghanem's remarks were made regarding an emergency statement issued on Monday by the National Assembly calling on the government to boycott the Bahrain workshop.

This statement represents the Kuwaiti people, and the government has translated its content on the ground, Ghanem said. "All of us follow His Highness the Amir's directives in this matter that we are proud of," he noted. He stressed that the statement issued by MPs expresses principles of the Kuwaiti society, and its historical, sharia and constitutional commitment, in line with the desire of the Kuwaiti people and most Arab nations in this regard.

Ghanem thanked the Kuwaiti government for its honorable stances towards Arab and Muslim issues, lauding its decision on boycotting any meetings in which any Zionist entity attends. He also commended the Kuwaiti government's stances at the UN Security Council.

The Palestinian Authority and its rival Hamas have both denounced Kushner's so-called "Peace to Prosperity" initiative, saying it amounts to a bid by the unabashedly pro-Israel Trump to buy them off in return for not enjoying their own state. Saeb Erekat, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said that the Trump administration "is insinuating that they know what is best for the Palestinian people" without addressing the underlying issue of Israeli occupation. "Such inciting campaigns aim at making the people and leadership of Palestine accept the dictations, threats and tyranny of both the US and Israel - and they are doomed to fail," the veteran Palestinian negotiator said in a statement earlier yesterday.

Hundreds of Palestinians took to the streets in the occupied West Bank to denounce the conference, burning pictures near Hebron of Trump and the king of Bahrain. In unprecedented scenes, the kingdom welcomed dozens of Israelis including academics and journalists despite the lack of diplomatic relations. The United States has hailed the workshop as bringing together the Israelis with Gulf Arabs due to their mutual hostility towards Iran.

Netanyahu, who has also criticized the Palestinian boycott, has spoken in recent months of annexing parts of the West Bank, a move that could effectively end hopes of a two-state solution. The Trump administration has hinted that its political plan will not mention a Palestinian state - a sharp shift from the goal of years of US diplomacy. Trump has already taken landmark steps to support Israel including recognizing bitterly contested Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and Kushner is a family

friend of Netanyahu.

Saudi Arabia, which sent its finance minister, in a statement said it supported "all international efforts aiming to achieve prosperity in the region". But it also called for a "comprehensive and just peace" and reiterated its call for an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital. Jordan and Egypt, the only two Arab nations to have signed peace deals with Israel, were attending but only sent mid-level officials.

Prominent figures taking part in the Bahrain conference included International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde, World Bank President David Malpass and former British prime minister Tony Blair. Richard LeBaron, a former US diplomat in the Middle East, said that the Trump administration fully expected that the Palestinians would stay away. But Bahrain allows Kushner to portray Palestinian leaders as not caring about their own people as he keeps advancing Israeli interests, said LeBaron, now a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council think tank. "The 'failure' of the Manama workshop will be success for the Trump strategy," he wrote in an analysis. "It will permit Kushner and his colleagues to claim that they tried their best to address the situation and allow them to blame others for not cooperating."

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called on UN member states yesterday to fund the agency that works to help Palestinian refugees as he opened a donors' conference for the body, which is boycotted by the US. The conference was being held the same day the Trump administration was presenting in Bahrain the economic part of the long awaited Middle East peace plan. More than a year ago the Trump administration stopped sending money to the UN agency for the Palestinians, called UNRWA and called for it to be dissolved, saying it was no longer justified 70 years after the start of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the creation of Israel.

"Today, I humbly ask all donors to maintain their support for UNRWA at last year's level," said Guterres. "We know what is at risk: education for a half million children; 8 million healthcare visits a year; emergency relief for 1.5 million. In Gaza alone, one million Palestine refugees depend on UNRWA for food," he said. Last year, UNRWA relied on extra money from member states and internal savings to cover a \$446 million budgetary hole. This year it unveiled a budget of \$1.2 billion, unchanged from 2018.

Unless enough money is pledged yesterday, the agency could fall back into the red by the end of the month, Guterres warned. And that could mean delaying school openings in late August or September, the agency says. Founded in 1949, UNRWA runs schools and provides health care for some five million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. Israel and the United States do not like the fact that Palestinian refugees can pass on refugee status to their children and want to reduce the number of people receiving aid from UNRWA. The Palestinians say this violates their rights. — Agencies

Sports

Yankees tie homer-streak record in win over Jays

Greinke homers, D-backs stop Dodgers' win streak

NEW YORK: Giancarlo Stanton hit his first homer of the season to highlight a seven-run sixth inning, and the New York Yankees tied a major league record by homering for the 27th straight game Monday night before holding on for a 10-8 victory over the visiting Toronto Blue Jays. The Yankees matched the mark set by the Texas Rangers in 2002 and won for the ninth time in 10 games by holding off a late Toronto comeback attempt. Aaron Hicks connected for the record-tying drive when he got a hold of a fastball by Aaron Sanchez (3-10) and lined it into the right field seats for a three-run shot that gave New York a 3-2 lead in the fifth inning. Stanton's 445-foot drive to a social gathering area beyond the center field fence put the Yankees up 10-2. CC Sabathia (5-4) allowed two runs and six hits in six innings while striking out a season-high nine hitters and issuing two walks. Aroldis Chapman gave up an unearned run in the ninth before sealing his 22nd save.

INDIANS 3, ROYALS 2 (10 INNINGS)

Jason Kipnis homered to lead off the 10th inning, and host Cleveland recorded a victory over Kansas City. Kipnis deposited a 1-0 slider from Wily Peralta (2-4) over the wall in right-center field for his sixth homer of the season and his third career walk-off shot. Rookie Bobby Bradley and Jose Ramirez each had an RBI double for the Indians, who have won four in a row and nine of their past 11 games. Brad Hand (4-2) picked up the win after retiring the side in order in the 10th inning.

DIAMONDBACKS 8, DODGERS 5

David Peralta drove in the go-ahead run in a four-run eighth inning, pitcher Zack Greinke hit a home run, and Arizona stopped Los Angeles' six-game winning streak with a victory in Phoenix. Arizona's Ketel Marte, returning to the lineup after missing two games because of a groin cramp, went 2-for-4 to tie Luis Gonzalez's franchise record with seven consecutive multi-hit games. Greinke gave up four runs and seven hits in six-plus innings. He struck out six and walked

one. Yoan Lopez (1-1) pitched a scoreless eighth inning for his first career victory in 45 appearances, and Greg Holland got the last out for his 11th save of the season and the 200th of his career.

ROCKIES 2, GIANTS 0

Jon Gray combined with three relievers on a six-hit shutout, and David Dahl provided all the offense with a two-run home run, giving Colorado a victory at San Francisco. Gray combined with Jairo Diaz, Scott Oberg and Wade Davis on Colorado's fourth shutout of the season, all of which have been recorded on the road. The Colorado foursome outdueled Drew Pomeranz and two Giants relievers, who combined to allow just five hits while striking out 13. Pomeranz tied a career high with 11 of those strikeouts. Dahl delivered the game's only scoring after a one-out single by Charlie Blackmon in the third inning. The left-handed hitter went the opposite way to left field against Pomeranz.

RED SOX 6, WHITE SOX 5

Marco Hernandez beat out an infield single with the bases loaded in the bottom of the ninth inning to lead host Boston past Chicago. Hernandez beat the throw of shortstop Tim Anderson, who got to the ball in the hole but couldn't get the runner on a jump throw to first. Andrew Benintendi came home after starting the inning with a double off Jace Fry (1-3) as the Red Sox battled back to tie the score on three separate occasions in the late innings. Eduardo Nunez was responsible for two of the rallies, including an RBI single grounded through the infield in the eighth inning to knot the score at 5. Brandon Workman (7-1) got the win, striking out Anderson (four K's) with a runner on second to end the top of the ninth. It was the only batter Workman faced.

PHILLIES 13, METS 7

Jean Segura. Rhys Hoskins, Jay Bruce and Maikel Franco homered to lead host Philadelphia past New York. Segura led the way with four hits, Franco added three hits and three RBIs, and Cesar Hernandez had



NEW YORK: Giancarlo Stanton #27 of the New York Yankees hits a three run home run against the Toronto Blue Jays in the sixth inning at Yankee Stadium in New York City. — AFP

three hits. Scott Kingery also had three hits for the Phillies, who snapped a season-long seven-game losing streak. Bryce Harper added a pair of doubles and two RBIs. The Phillies, who had a season-high 19 hits, had scored 12 runs combined in their previous five games. Philadelphia starter Zach Eflin (7-7) tied his career high by giving up 11 hits to go along with six runs in five innings. Michael Conforto, Todd Frazier, Wilson Ramos and Dominic Smith homered for the Mets.

CUBS 8, BRAVES 3

Jon Lester pitched six strong innings and sparked

a five-run rally that put the game away with a fifth-inning single, leading Chicago to a win over visiting Atlanta. Lester (7-5) allowed two runs, both unearned, on five hits with no walks and seven strikeouts. Lester singled with one on and none out in the fifth, then the next five batters each drove in a run to make it 7-0 — all runs charged to Atlanta starter Julio Teheran (5-6). During the outburst, Chicago got an RBI double from Kyle Schwarber, run-scoring singles from Kris Bryant and Anthony Rizzo, an RBI double from Javier Baez and a run-scoring grounder by Willson Contreras. —Reuters

Refreshed Kerber relishing emotional return to Wimbledon

LONDON: Angelique Kerber was born on Germany's Baltic coast, but for her Wimbledon feels like the green, green grass of home. Especially this year when she will walk back through the All England Club gates as defending champion.

It is not new territory for the 31-year-old former world number one who on two other occasions arrived for the start of a Grand Slam having won it the year before. But she has never experienced that at Wimbledon-the title she cherishes the most.

"I think maybe it's the same but different in some ways because Wimbledon was the tournament I was looking forward to win one day," left-hander Kerber said at Eastbourne this week. "I think when I get there it will be very emotional and I will have a lot of great memories. I'm really happy to go back there and enjoy the memories, the people, the place.

"It's always really special, but especially this time." Kerber won the Australian Open and US Open in a remarkable 2016, but struggled the following year. She was back to her best last year, reaching the semi-final of the Australian Open, the quarters in Paris, before convincingly beating Serena Williams in the Wimbledon final when many had already given the title to the American.

This year there has again been a slump although illness and injuries, rather than the loss of drive of 2017, have been the root cause. An ankle injury during the claycourt season left her struggling and she lost in the first round of the French Open. That, she says, may have been a blessing.

"I feel much better after Paris, I had 10 days off for recovery and rehab, and right now I'm feeling good, the pain has gone, I'm not sick and I feel ready again," she said. "That's the most important thing for me, to be able to be ready to fight, I'm in match mode. I'm hungry after having a little break, I feel motivation and the energy. "It's a good sign." After the drudgery of clay, Kerber looked immediately at home on the Mallorca



Angelique Kerber

grass last week, beating former Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova and grasscourt threat Caroline Garcia before losing in the semi-final to Swiss Belinda Bencic.

Few players move better on grass than Kerber and her stock Wimbledon photograph could be one of her getting low, knees almost scraping the grass, to fire a backhand. "Grass is more natural for me than clay," the world number five, who owns a 30-10 record from her 11 Wimbledon, said.

"The serve is a big thing on grass. You have to play different on the first two balls after the serve or the return. The next few shots must be really aggressive." The other image would be her collapsing to Centre Court that sunny Saturday a year ago when she com-

pleted a 6-3 6-3 defeat of Williams having played near-perfect tennis.

"I've watched the video of the match a couple of times," she said. "I took all my chances that day." While the pressure will be amped up in a few days when Kerber leaves the chilled out surrounds of Eastbourne and heads to Wimbledon, she believes she is well-equipped to handle it and start another title quest.

"Everything starts from zero and everyone would like to beat me," Kerber said. "It is a pressure but I learned from the other two times I was defending slams that I must just focus on the next opponent, the next step, the next practice, same as when I won the slams. Keep it simple." — Reuters

Wimbledon seeding system disrespects world rankings: Nadal

MADRID: Rafael Nadal has complained about Wimbledon's seeding system after the Spaniard was placed at number three, behind Roger Federer, for next week's grand slam in London. The other three major tournaments all match their seeding to the official world rankings but Wimbledon uses its own formula to dictate the order, combining ranking points with form in grass-court competitions.

It means Nadal will be seeded three and Federer two at the All England Club this year, despite their positions being the reverse in the rankings list. "Wimbledon is the only tournament of the year that does it like this," Nadal told Spanish television channel Movistar on Monday night.

"Obviously it would be better to be two than three but if they think I have to be three I will accept three and fight to win the matches I have to win. "Having

said that, the only thing that doesn't seem right about this issue is that it is only Wimbledon that does it. If they all did it, it would seem more correct.

"It's not only about my particular case. There have been many occasions when players have played well all year on all surfaces but Wimbledon does not respect the ranking they have earned. "And for this reason they get more complicated draws."

Nadal is yet to play an official match on grass this year while Federer warmed up for Wimbledon last week by winning his 10th title at the grass-court tournament in Halle. Federer and top seed Novak Djokovic will be at opposite ends of the Wimbledon draw, separated until the final, but Nadal is guaranteed to have either Federer or Djokovic in his half, and could meet them in the semis.

"For me personally, it means if I am three, to get to the final, Djokovic or Federer will be in my half," Nadal added. "But that can only happen in the semi-finals and to get there I have to win five matches. Today I'm far away."

Nadal claimed his 18th major title earlier this month by winning the French Open for a record-extending 12th time. He now sits behind only Federer's 20 grand slam triumphs in the all-time list of male champions. — AFP



Rafael Nadal

Federer looks to turn number nine Wimbledon dream into reality

LONDON: Historically, emotionally and statistically, Roger Federer remains the man to beat at Wimbledon even at the 21st time of asking. Forget the creaking knees and advancing years-the Swiss will be 38 in August-not many in SW19 will bet against their adopted favourite achieving Wimbledon history with a ninth men's title to equal Martina Navratilova's record singles mark.

Victory would consolidate his position as oldest male champion, a record he set in 2017 when he won his eighth title without dropping a set at the age of 35 years and 342 days. Federer's cheerleaders will point to the confidence gleaned from 2019 tournament wins on the hard courts of Dubai-his 100th ATP title-and Miami.

This year's Wimbledon lead-up has been wrinkle-free after a positive showing at the French Open, where he lost in the semi-finals to Rafa Nadal, and his traditional grass tune-up at last week's Halle Open, where he triumphed for the 10th time.

But look through the glass differently and 2019 may tell a whole new story. Perhaps Federer's decision to compete at Roland Garros for the first time in four years was actually an acknowledgement that his great powers are waning.

Federer knows that every opportunity to boost his Grand Slam tally of 20 trophies must be grasped or risk being eclipsed by the rejuvenated Nadal.

The Spaniard's victory in Paris took his Grand Slam total to 18 while Novak Djokovic has won three of the last four blue-riband events to bring his career tally to 15. It is possible to make a strong case for all three, with Nick Kyrgios last week making special mention for Federer, whom he predicted will "be hard to beat" on his favourite surface.

Former French Open finalist Alex Corretja is another who has flagged up Federer. "Federer played a great claycourt season, which gives him the belief he can win Wimbledon again," said the Spaniard.

Grass has always suited Federer's aggressive style, which is based on footwork, pace and ability to find sharp angles. Perhaps the only remaining question is whether the Swiss has the stamina to slug it out against the game's young guns.

As always the aim remains to win but now it is to do so without expending too much energy. Last year there were signs that the balance is more difficult to achieve and the eight-times champion squandered match points against Kevin Anderson before exiting in the quarter-finals. Despite Anderson's raw power, few at Wimbledon expected Federer to lose that day because for so many years Wimbledon victories came so naturally.

All that can be said with certainty is that should anyone beat the man who has already pocketed \$124 million in prize money, he should consider himself champion in waiting. — Reuters

Sports

Pakistan’s Azhar questions New Zealand toughness ahead of clash

Pakistan must win the match for a chance to reach semi-finals

BIRMINGHAM: Pakistan bowling coach Azhar Mahmood questioned New Zealand's ability to win the biggest matches ahead of today's World Cup clash in Birmingham. Kane Williamson's side are undefeated at the tournament in England and Wales, with five wins in six games, plus one no result.

In contrast, Pakistan must win the match at Edgbaston if they are to maintain a realistic chance of reaching the semi-finals after a poor start to the tournament in England and Wales. Mahmood, a former all-rounder who played in three World Cups for Pakistan, said New Zealand had a good record early in tournaments but often wilted under pressure at the business end. "New Zealand's history is such that they get there winning, winning and then when a crunch situation comes up, in the semi-final, or quarter-final, they don't do that well," Mahmood said yesterday. "It can happen to any team. Everyone has to have a bad day. Hopefully New Zealand have it tomorrow."

New Zealand, who have never won a World Cup, have reached the semi-finals six times and lost to Australia in the 2015 final in Melbourne. During the current tournament they have coped well in pressure situations, coming out on top against Bangladesh,

South Africa and the West Indies in tight finishes.

But Pakistan have a good record in matches between the two sides, winning six of their eight World Cup encounters, including semi-final victories in 1992 and in the 1999 edition, also in England.

Pakistan started their campaign slowly at the 1992 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand but beat New Zealand twice and went on to lift the trophy for the first and only time. "If you see the 1992 World Cup and this one, there are a few similarities," said Azhar. "But we're not thinking like that. Australia were in a similar situation in the 1999 World Cup (which they won).

"If they lost any games, they would have been out. We are in that situation now. But for us, every match is a final, that is how we are looking at it. We know that if we perform poorly anywhere, we could be out."

Mahmood praised in-form paceman Mohammad Amir, who has taken 15 wickets in five matches. "Amir has started pushing his lengths up a little, allowing himself to swing the ball," he said. "That has been key for us. It's very important for us that he gives us early breakthroughs and he has that ability. "His skills and ability have always been exceptional."— AFP



BIRMINGHAM: Pakistan bowling coach Azhar Mahmood addresses media representatives at a press conference at Edgbaston in Birmingham, England yesterday on the eve of the ICC World Cup match between Pakistan and New Zealand. — AFP

Afghan poster boy Rashid buckling under weight of expectations

MANCHESTER: No other spinner headed into the World Cup with a burden of expectation heavier than the one on Rashid Khan's shoulders but seven matches into the tournament and the poster boy of Afghan cricket is buckling under the weight.

His reputation, earned largely in franchise cricket, preceded him in England but success has eluded him in a tournament he was supposed to set alight. England is not exactly a spinner's paradise though.

South African old warhorse Imran Tahir and Bangladesh talisman Shakib Al Hasan are the only two spinners among the tournament's top 10 bowlers. Right-arm quick Gulbadin Naib is the highest placed Afghan with nine wickets from seven matches—all of which his team have lost to be rooted to the bottom of the standings.

With just four wickets from seven outings, Rashid, currently the top ranked Twenty20 bowler, is not even the best spinner in his team. Mohammad Nabi has seven from seven and Mujeeb Ur Rahman—another off-spinner—has five from five.

Batsmen initially treated Rashid with respect before Eoin Morgan destroyed him in Manchester where the leg-spinner's 9-0-110-0 went down as the worst figures in World Cup history. No bowler in the tournament has been hit for more sixes than the dozen he has conceded so far.

"He is not bowling (at the level) where I want him," captain Naib, who defended Rashid after the Manchester mauling saying it was a one-off day, said after Monday's loss to Bangladesh.

"But he is trying hard, he is giving his 100 percent." The 20-year-old endured another wicketless day at the Hampshire Bowl on Monday, even as Mujeeb got three while Shakib returned the tournament's best figures of 5-29 on the same slow track.

The closest he came to tasting success was when he trapped Shakib leg before. The batsman instantly reviewed it and eventually got the decision overturned with ball-tracker suggesting the delivery would have just sailed over the stumps.

His frustration was evident too as Rashid remonstrated with team mates who put up another shabby fielding display marked by spilled catches, misfields and overthrows. Naib, who reckoned his team bled extra 30-40 runs on field, said he could sympathise with Rashid.

"I'm also disappointed with our fielding like him. There was an occasion when he was very angry with a fielder," Naib added. "If we do not field well, it upsets the bowlers. Rashid is one of those players, who is trying to do well in all three departments. But again, we gave away extra runs, and naturally he was very upset."— Reuters

Lara admitted to Mumbai hospital

MUMBAI: West Indies batting legend Brian Lara was admitted to a hospital in Mumbai yesterday after complaining of chest pain, Indian media reports and sources said. The 50-year-old Trinidadian was rushed to hospital after he complained of discomfort during a promotional event, the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said, quoting a source close to the player.

"He is fine and will be discharged soon," the source told PTI. Lara was in Mumbai to take part in events organised by Star Sports, the official broadcasters of the ongoing cricket World Cup.

"He complained of chest pain and uneasiness this morning and was sent for a routine check-up. He is fine now," a source at the broadcaster, who asked not to be named, told AFP. One of the best batsmen of all time, Lara holds two world records—the highest Test score of 400 not out, and the highest first class knock of 501 that he scored in the English county championship in 1994. The former skipper retired in 2007 after a dismal West Indies campaign in the World Cup.—AFP

Less crash, bang, wallop need of the hour for Windies, says Lloyd

LONDON: West Indies need to rethink their tactical approach and pace their innings better at the Cricket World Cup if they are to get the best out of a side full of talent, according to cricketing great Clive Lloyd.

West Indies are eighth in the standings after six matches having won just one game—a seven-wicket demolition of Pakistan in their opening match.

Jason Holder's side, however, could have been in a much stronger position heading into their next match against India in Manchester on Friday had they not lost to front-runners New Zealand narrowly or let Australia off the hook.

"West Indies could be one of the best teams around—they have the talent," Lloyd said in his column for the International Cricket Council.

"Ultimately, the difference has been that the West Indies just aren't settling in and making big scores (and) they're not putting the clinical finishing touches necessary to win games."

The Guyanese, who captained the West Indies to the first two World Cup titles in 1975 and 1979, said the five-run loss to New Zealand was the perfect illustration of his argument.

The West Indies had a blistering start, but suffered a top-order collapse and only a rearguard maiden century from all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite meant they got close to New Zealand's 291 for eight.

The approach was criticised by fast bowling great Michael Holding during his commentary of the New Zealand match, stating he felt the side lacked the ability to buckle down.

Banks ready to fill Folau void in Wallabies backline

MELBOURNE: Tom Banks has long been known for his blistering pace and the ACT Brumbies fullback is also showing a knack for timing as his strong run of form leaves him well placed to grab Israel Folau's vacant Wallabies jersey ahead of the Rugby World Cup in Japan.

With the Brumbies the only Australian team to make the Super Rugby playoffs, the 25-year-old Queenslander has had the perfect stage to impress Wallabies coach Michael Cheika with his rivals for the number 15 shirt left on the sidelines.

A couple of Banks line-breaks helped set up two of the Brumbies' tries in their 38-13 quarter-final win over the Sharks in Canberra over the weekend and he will look to sustain his strong form against the Jaguares in Buenos Aires on Friday.

A win over the Argentine side would secure the Dan McKellar-coached Brumbies their first final since 2013 and a shot at their first championship since the last of their two titles in 2004. Banks has every reason to believe he can play a meaningful part in Buenos Aires, having proved himself something of a road warrior this season.

He has scored a try in seven of the Brumbies' last eight matches outside of Australia, including one in the 20-15 defeat by the Jaguares in April, the last time the teams met. Banks has plenty of fans among past Wallabies players and media pundits, including former Australia and Brumbies outside back Joe Roff, who rates him the "complete" package.

But Banks, who made his test debut last year, is reluctant to look too far ahead. "You've probably got to put (the World Cup) aside," he said. "It's in a lot of people's minds at the moment but my sole focus at the moment is definitely the Brumbies and inadvertently if we can do really well as a team and get deep into the finals that will really help our World Cup chances."

Folau was Cheika's go-to fullback for most of his 73 tests but the dual international was sacked last month for a controversial social media post and has launched legal proceedings against Rugby Australia.

Melbourne Rebels captain Dane Haylett-Petty and



MANCHESTER: West Indies' Chris Gayle stretches during a training session at Old Trafford in Manchester, north-west England yesterday, ahead of their 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match against India. — AFP

ity to buckle down.

Holding said that some of the top-order batsmen seemed to have the mentality that if they scored "80-odd" before they got out they had done their job and it was then up to the rest of the side to get the team home. Holding's fellow Jamaican Chris Gayle raced to 87 against New Zealand but was dismissed in the 24th over to leave his side at 152 for five. Lloyd added that if his former side had a player like New Zealand captain Kane Williamson, who scored 148 by accumulating runs and waiting for the bad ball he could put away, they would have won



Israel Folau

New South Wales Waratahs utility back Kurtley Beale are also in the running for the Wallabies number 15 jersey and both have experience wearing it.

But with their teams eliminated from Super Rugby, neither have another chance to stake their claim before Cheika picks his squad for the abridged Rugby Championship. The Wallabies won only four of their 13 tests last year, their worst season in decades, and their prospects of winning a third World Cup in Japan seem gloomy.

However, Banks says Cheika need only look to the Australian capital to find players ready to bring a winning mindset into Wallabies camp. "It's been a really good journey for me, my time down here in Canberra has been really enjoyable," said Banks, who joined the Brumbies in 2017 after managing only two appearance in two seasons for the Queensland Reds. "I think the culture down here is the best team culture I've been a part of. "They probably bring the best out of players."— Reuters

more games in England. "Had the West Indies batsmen turned some of those 50s, 60s and 70s, 80s into hundreds they would have been in a better position in the points standing," Lloyd said, highlighting the fact that six West Indies players, besides Brathwaite, had passed 50 during the tournament. "Against New Zealand, they were well aware of the asking rate; all they had to do was knock it around. It wasn't about playing big shots.

"I just hope that they've learned from their mistakes and that they can rectify them because they are talented cricketers." — Reuters

Shakib keeps flag flying for World Cup all-rounders

MANCHESTER: All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is a rare talent who could command a place in the Bangladesh team as either a batsman or a bowler in an age of increasing specialisation in cricket.

The 32-year-old has others for company at the World Cup, including West Indies captain Jason Holder and England's Ben Stokes. But today's all-rounders do not have the same profile as they did during a golden era in the 1980s when England's Ian Botham, Pakistan's Imran Khan, Kapil Dev of India and New Zealander Richard Hadlee vied for top-dog status in the global game.

Shakib, the world's top-rated all-rounder in one-day internationals, inspired Bangladesh to a convincing win over Afghanistan with his five wickets and 51 runs on Monday, matching Yuvraj Singh's feat for India at the 2011 World Cup.

Shakib has scored 476 runs with two centuries and three fifties in six games in England and Wales and has also picked up 10 wickets.

Stokes and New Zealand's Colin de Grandhomme have also caught the eye during the round-robin phase but Shakib, a left-arm spinner and left-handed batsman, has been the standout all-rounder.

Former West Indies paceman Ian Bishop said such players remained sought after. "Everyone wants an Imran Khan (the current Pakistan prime minister who led his team to a 1992 World Cup triumph) or Shakib Al Hasan but they don't fall out of the trees," he said.

"Every team wants one of those (all-rounders). You don't go out and buy those. The core of the team is always built around the specialist but the all-rounder still has its place. "If you look at New Zealand and Colin de Grandhomme chipping in. England have a number of guys who are specialist bowlers but they can also bat and that is what makes them such a strong unit."

India have unearthed Hardik Pandya as a genuine all-rounder to follow in Kapil's footsteps but he is yet to fire fully at the World Cup. England star Stokes made his presence felt in a losing cause against Sri Lanka when he hit an unbeaten 82 and bowled five overs for just 16 runs.—AFP

Sports

USA, Sweden reach quarter-finals as women's World Cup heats up

Sweden will face Germany on Saturday

PARIS: Megan Rapinoe scored two penalties as defending champions the United States beat Spain on Monday to set up a mouthwatering quarter-final against hosts France at the women's World Cup, with Sweden joining them in the last eight.

On another day in the limelight for VAR, Sweden's goalkeeper Hedvig Lindahl made a brilliant second-half penalty save as her country edged out Canada 1-0 in Paris, meaning they advance to a similarly enticing tie against Germany.

The showdown between the holders and the hosts had seemed inevitable from the moment the draw was made back in December, but after France laboured to beat Brazil in extra time on Sunday, the USA did not find the going easy against Spain in Reims.

Rapinoe's first penalty gave Jill Ellis's team an early lead after Tobin Heath was brought down in the box by Maria Leon.

However, Jennifer Hermoso pounced to equalise moments later after Becky Sauerbrunn had been caught in possession, and Spain held their own after that against the World Cup favourites. They were undone, though, by another penalty awarded for what looked a very slight touch on Rose Lavelle from Virginia Torrecilla.

The penalty was confirmed after a VAR check and Rapinoe smashed the ball into the same corner with 15 minutes left to give the USA the tightest of wins and line up the French. "I hope it's wild and crazy and the fans are crazy and that there's tonnes of media around it and it's just a big spectacle," Rapinoe said of Friday's match. "I think it's going to be incredible for the women's game. You have two heavy hitters meeting in the knockout rounds and this is everything you want."

It is not what Spain wanted, and the penalty that

decided the game left a bitter taste in their mouths.

"I didn't touch her... they blew for that penalty because it was the United States," a distraught Torrecilla said.

In Paris, more than 38,000 fans saw Sweden edge out fifth-ranked Canada 1-0 at the Parc des Princes thanks to a solitary second-half goal scored by Stina Blackstenius, superbly set up by Kosovare Asllani.

Sweden then held on for the victory thanks to Lindahl, who dived to her right to keep out Janine Beckie's 69th-minute penalty awarded after a VAR review showed Asllani had stopped a Desiree Scott shot with her arm.

"I was so happy, just pure joy, and my teammates felt the same way," said Lindahl, when asked to describe her emotions after saving the spot-kick.

That was the 22nd penalty awarded at this World Cup, equalling the total tally from the 2015 tournament and underlining the influence of Video Assistant Referees, although VAR later intervened to overturn a spot-kick awarded to Sweden.

Sweden will face Germany on Saturday in a repeat of the gold medal match at the 2016 Olympics, which the Germans won 2-1. "I had the best preparation today that you could have for a match like that. I listened to four albums by Neil Young, who is Canada's top performer," said Sweden coach Peter Gerhardsson.

Asked what music he would listen to before facing Germany, Gerhardsson went for some industrial metal. "It will be Rammstein. They released a new album and it will be heavy going on Saturday so that will work just fine." Today the last two quarter-final places will be decided as Italy take on China in Montpellier before European champions the Netherlands meet 2011 World Cup winners Japan in Rennes. The temperature



PARIS: Sweden's forward Stina Blackstenius (C) celebrates after scoring a goal during the France 2019 Women's World Cup round of sixteen football match between Sweden and Canada, at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. — AFP

could be a particular concern in the first of those matches as a heatwave grips much of France. In Paris on Monday night, the temperature remained close to 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) after the match

kicked off at 9pm local time, and it is set to get hotter in the coming days. FIFA said that "cooling breaks" may be needed during games to protect players from the effects of the heat. — AFP

Neymar accepts pay-cut in 'verbal agreement' with Barca: Reports

MADRID: Neymar is ready to cut his salary by 12 million euros to leave Paris Saint-Germain as part of a "verbal agreement" reached between the Brazilian

and Barcelona, according to reports in the Spanish press.

PSG are yet to sanction the sale of their star striker, who they paid a world record 222 million euros to sign from Barca only two years ago.

But Neymar is reportedly eager to return to Spain and Barcelona are prepared to take him back, with Spanish sports newspaper Diario Sport claiming a five-year contract has been agreed.

The newspaper says the terms include Neymar reducing his salary from around 36 million euros at PSG to the 24 million euros he received at Barca in 2017, while also dropping his 26-million euro court case against the Catalan club.

Neymar claims he was due the amount before leaving as a loyalty bonus. Barcelona sports newspaper Mundo Deportivo has reported Neymar will also have to make a public apology to the club's fans for the manner of his departure.

The 27-year-old had spent four years at Camp Nou, winning the Champions League in 2015 and two La Liga titles. He had formed a brilliant attacking trio alongside Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez. Any return for Neymar would likely require Barca to raise funds through sales. Antoine Griezmann is expected to join from Atletico Madrid for 120 million euros while Frenkie de Jong has already signed for 75 million euros from Ajax. — AFP

Qatar future bright after tough Copa America debut

PORTO ALEGRE: Qatar may have fallen at the first hurdle in their South American adventure but the 2022 World Cup hosts showed enough in Brazil to suggest the future is bright for the Maroons.

They arrived at the Copa America as an unknown quantity as far as the locals were concerned but despite losing two of their three matches, Qatar proved competitive enough to ensure they won't be a surprise package next year when making their second appearance in the South American showpiece.

"There were times that we played well. We have to keep working hard," said Qatar's Spanish coach Felix Sanchez. "It's a young team looking at the next three years. We need to work hard to be strong when we get there."

Qatar have never qualified for the World Cup and will take part for the first time as hosts in 2022. Despite their modest history and tiny indigenous population, the gas-rich Gulf state has lofty ambitions and took a pair of important steps this year.

In February in the United Arab Emirates, they overcame a hostile home crowd-provoked by a political spat in the Gulf region-to win the Asian Cup for the first time, having never before gone beyond the quarter-finals.

And their participation in the Copa America-the oldest continental national team competition in the world-has exposed Qatar to a higher level of tournament than they've ever faced before.

Despite a positive start when they fought back from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 with Paraguay, it proved a chastening experience following defeats by Colombia (1-0) and Argentina (2-0). But Colombia's Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz, who has a lot of experience playing against Qatar having coached Iran for eight years, feels there is more to come.

"Qatar are here to show that there's football in Asia and if you don't respect their characteristics, their teamwork... look what happened with Paraguay," said Queiroz before his side played the Qataris.

"They go to 2-2 and Qatar could have won it."

Although Colombia dominated, Qatar held on grimly for 86 minutes and created several chances on the counter-attack before eventually falling to a Duvan Zapata header.

"It was a very difficult match and it was very important to be patient," said Colombia midfielder Gustavo Cuellar after the game. "We managed to counter their threat which was the rapid transition from defense to attack." Qatar's has been a patient project, and many years in the making.

Sanchez, a product of Barcelona's renown La Masia training center, joined Qatar's Aspire Academy-which aims to develop elite athletes-in 2006. Having coached Qatar's under-19, under-20 and under-23 teams he took over the top job from Uruguayan Jorge Fossati in July 2017. And it's been an immediate success with Qatar beating Japan 3-1 to win the first major title in their history in February. But for bouts of naivety, Qatar could realistically have made the knock-out stages in Brazil.—AFP



BELO HORIZONTE: Ecuador's Angel Mena (C) is marked by Japan's Ayase Ueda (L) as Japan's Ko Itakura look on during their Copa America football tournament group match at the Mineirao Stadium in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. — AFP

Heartache for Japan, Ecuador as draw sends Paraguay into Copa quarters

RIO DE JANEIRO: Japan and Ecuador were left heartbroken as their 1-1 draw in Belo Horizonte on Monday saw them miss out on the Copa America quarter-finals, with Paraguay qualifying instead.

Uruguay, meanwhile, topped Group C as Edinson Cavani's goal eight minutes from time gave them a 1-0 win over champions Chile, who also qualify, at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium.

Japan and Ecuador faced a must win match in their bid to reach the knock-out stages as one of the two best third-placed finishers. Peru had already secured their spot from Group A while Paraguay, in Group B, were left sweating on Monday's result having finished their campaign on Sunday with two points from three games.

Shoya Nakajima gave Japan the lead on 15 minutes with a goal validated by VAR, but 10 minutes from half time, Angel Mena equalized for Ecuador. Japan substitute Daizen Maeda was put clean through late on but saw his effort saved by goalkeeper Alexander Dominguez.

Deep into stoppage time teenage sensation Takefusa Kubo had the ball in the net but a dramatic winner was ruled out for offside after consulting VAR.

It meant Japan missed out on goal difference while Ecuador came up a point short. Paraguay will play hosts Brazil in the first quarter-final tomorrow in Porto Alegre. Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu had recalled 18-year-old

Kubo but it was Nakajima who proved the Blue Samurai's most potent weapon, at one point trying to chip Ecuador's goalkeeper from halfway. He and Ecuador's Enner Valencia both fired early shots over before Nakajima gave Japan a 15th minute lead with a shot from outside the box.

It was originally disallowed but then validated following a VAR review. Japan's Eiji Kawashima saved a shot from Valencia but Ecuador were level on 35 minutes after the veteran goalkeeper failed to hold a Robert Arboleda effort, allowing Angel Mena to tuck home the rebound.

Almost immediately, new Real Madrid signing Kubo came to life and forced a save out of Dominguez. Japan impressed with their pace and team-work in the first half but Ecuador's outfit of strapping, muscular specimens had a clear physical advantage.

Nakajima turned provider for Naomichi Ueda in the second half but Dominguez saved the Japan midfielder's header while Kawashima denied Ayrton Preciado. Maeda had a chance to win it in the dying moments when put through by Kubo but couldn't beat Dominguez. And Kubo, nicknamed the "Japanese Messi" saw his hopes of becoming the nation's hero dashed by VAR.

In Rio, Chile knew they needed only a draw to keep hold of top spot in Group C and avoid Colombia-the only team with a perfect group stage record-in the quarter-finals. They took no risks and began with a back three, recalling Gonzalo Jara-no stranger to Uruguay's forwards.

He was involved in a pair of controversial incidents in 2013, when he touched Luis Suarez's testicles during a match, and two years later when he tried to insert a finger in Cavani's backside. Chile, playing with greater urgency, were on top for the first 20 minutes with Alexis Sanchez lashing an early shot over the bar and Uruguay goalkeeper Fernando Muslera saving from Charles Aranguiz and Eduardo Vargas. Uruguay found their feet, though, and Suarez pounced on a defensive mistake to nip around goalkeeper Gabriel Arias, but he was forced wide and the chance was snuffed out.—AFP

Salah seeks first goal at Cup of Nations in Egypt

CAIRO: Superstar Mohamed Salah gets a second chance to score his first goal at the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations when hosts Egypt face the Democratic Republic of Congo in Group A today. The recent Champions League winner with Liverpool was unable to convert several chances against Zimbabwe last Friday as Egypt won 1-0 in the opening match of the tournament.

"Mohamed Salah was among those who missed chances, but I was satisfied with our performance," admitted Mexican coach Javier Aguirre. Victory over the Congolese, who performed poorly when losing 2-0 to Uganda, could clinch a last-16 place for the Egyptians with one match to spare.

Here, AFP Sport previews the Group A double-header with Uganda playing Zimbabwe in the first match in Cairo, and the Group B showdown between Nigeria and Guinea in Alexandria.

Egypt v DR Congo

After four days of small crowds, a capacity 75,000 crowd is expected in Cairo to cheer Egypt as they seek a third win in four Cup of Nations meetings with the DR Congo. There will be contrasting pressures on the teams with the Pharaohs eyeing a second-round place and the Leopards fighting for survival after a horror first outing. "We must learn to handle the pressure of being among the favourites in order to realise our goal of becoming African champions," said Aguirre. DR Congo came to Egypt as one of the most unpredictable qualifiers having finished third in 2015 only to make a timid quarter-final exit two years ago. "We let our country down against Uganda," confessed captain Youssouf Mulumbu. "It was a bitter lesson for us and we plan to correct the situation quickly."

Uganda v Zimbabwe

Having won a Cup of Nations match for the first time in 41 years, Uganda coach Sebastien Desabre has warned his Cranes against overconfidence when they confront Zimbabwe. "It was wonderful to win after such a long time, but we must keep our feet on the ground and remain humble and focused," warned the Frenchman. "I was very impressed by Zimbabwe against Egypt and nothing less than a top-class performance from us will deliver three more points." Should Uganda and Egypt triumph, both will be guaranteed last-16 places, leaving Zimbabwe and DR Congo to try and fill one of four spots reserved for the best third-place finishers. "Our brave performance against Egypt is history and only a victory over Uganda will bring us back into contention for automatic qualification," said Zimbabwe coach Sunday Chidzambwa.

Guinea v Nigeria

Neither team impressed in their Group B openers with Nigeria one-goal winners over debutants Burundi and the defensive weaknesses of Guinea exposed when held by Madagascar, another newcomer. Nigeria coach Gernot Rohr blamed illness for a lacklustre showing and it took an exquisite back-heel pass from Ola Aina to set up substitute Odion Ighalo for a late 1-0 win. "Some players started training only a few days before the match after becoming ill due to the change in climate from wet Nigeria to hot Egypt," said Rohr. "We are thrilled to be here after failing to qualify for the last two Cup of Nations and I expect a much better performance against a very good Guinea side." — AFP

25 Refreshed Kerber relishing emotional return to Wimbledon



26 Pakistan's Azhar questions New Zealand toughness ahead of clash



27 USA, Sweden reach quarter-finals as women's World Cup heats up



Australia crush England to reach s-finals

Second straight defeat for England after their shock 20-run loss to S Lanka



LONDON: England's Ben Stokes plays a shot during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between England and Australia at Lord's Cricket Ground in London yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Australia captain Aaron Finch hit a hundred before left-arm quicks Jason Behrendorff and Mitchell Starc shared nine wickets as the reigning champions thumped England by 64 runs at Lord's yesterday to book their place in the semi-finals of the World Cup.

Finch made exactly 100 in a total of 285-7 before England slumped to 221 all out with 32 balls left. The recalled Behrendorff took 5-44 — his first five-wicket haul in a one-day international-while Starc became the leading bowler at the tournament with 19 scalps thanks to a haul of 4-43.

For England, who entered the showpiece event as the top-ranked side in ODI cricket, this was a second straight defeat after their shock 20-run loss to Sri Lanka. The host nation, bidding to win a first World Cup title, can still qualify for the semi-finals but they are likely to need to beat at least one of India and New Zealand in their remaining two group games.

"There are teams that you have confidence playing against but I have had plenty of low scores against England as well," said man-of-the-match Finch.

"It was nipping around first thing. We were as tight as we could be and then took advantage of any width."

England's reply saw them lose a wicket off just the second ball of their chase, with the struggling James Vince-only playing because Jason Roy was out with a hamstring injury-bowled by a Behrendorff inswinger. Starc then took two wickets in nine balls.

Test skipper Joe Root was plumb lbw to an inswinger for eight before England captain Eoin Morgan (four) fell into a hooking trap when a top-edge was held safely by Pat Cummins at fine leg.

Australia, who had lost 10 of their previous 11 ODIs against England, were in complete charge with the hosts now 26-3. England have surged to the top of the ODI rankings on the back of aggressive run-scoring

but the worry for Morgan's men is that too many of their top-order appear to know only one way to bat.

CARELESS ENGLAND

Jonny Bairstow, for example, fell next to a careless hook off Behrendorff before Stokes and Jos Buttler (25) repaired some of the damage with a fifth-wicket stand of 71. Buttler was well caught by Usman Khawaja, running round and staying just inside the deep square leg boundary off Marcus Stoinis.

Stokes defiantly hit Glenn Maxwell for two sixes in three balls but, shortly before completing his fifty, the all-rounder pulled up with a calf injury.

Starc was brought back to take a key wicket and duly obliged with a thunderbolt yorker, his 18th wicket of the tournament, that ended Stokes's 115-ball innings of 89, including eight fours and two sixes.

Stokes's dismissal left England 177-6 in the 37th

over and effectively ended the contest. Starc ended the match when he dismissed Adil Rashid.

Earlier Finch, dropped on 15, and fellow opener David Warner (53) came through some testing early overs to share a stand of 123 as too many of England's pacemen, with the exception of Chris Woakes, dropped short. The skipper's exit sparked a late flurry of wickets but Australia had enough runs on the board.

Both Warner, the World Cup's leading run-scorer, and Steve Smith were booed as they entered and exited the field following their recent return from year-long bans for ball-tampering.

Finch went to his century thanks to a misfield by Woakes but next ball he miscued a hook off Jofra Archer and Woakes held the catch at fine leg.

The skipper faced 116 balls, with 11 fours and two sixes in his second century of this World Cup following his 153 against Sri Lanka. — AFP

Tearful Antetokounmpo named NBA's Most Valuable Player

LOS ANGELES: Milwaukee Bucks star forward Giannis Antetokounmpo was named the NBA's Most Valuable Player for the 2018-19 regular season on Monday.

The 24-year-old from Greece wept as he accepted the honor at the glitzy NBA Awards show broadcast from Santa Monica, California, becoming the youngest MVP since Derrick Rose was the youngest winner ever in 2011. Antetokounmpo beat out 2018 MVP James Harden of the Houston Rockets and Oklahoma City Thunder forward Paul George for the honor. Antetokounmpo, in his sixth season with the Bucks, averaged 27.7 points and 12.5 rebounds as he led Milwaukee to the best regular-season

record in the league with 60 wins and 22 defeats. They reached the Eastern Conference finals where they fell to the Toronto Raptors, who would go on to lift the title.

"I want to thank my team, my teammates," Antetokounmpo said. "It takes more than one person to win 60 games. Every time I walked to the locker room I saw my teammates were ready to fight, they were ready to go to war with me."

He also thanked a coaching staff led by head coach Mike Budenholzer, who was named Coach of the Year earlier in the evening.

And he cited the management and ownership of the club "for believing in me

when I was 18 years old back in Greece," Antetokounmpo struggled to get the words out as he also gave thanks to his late father, Charles Antetokounmpo, who died in 2017. "Every day I step on the floor, I always think of my dad," he said.

Antetokounmpo became the first Bucks player named MVP since 1974 when Kareem Abdul-Jabbar - a three-time MVP in Milwaukee - took home the award. NBA legend Abdul-Jabbar introduced Antetokounmpo as a finalist during the show. Antetokounmpo also joined Hakeem Olajuwon (Nigeria), Tim Duncan (US Virgin Islands), Steve Nash (Canada) and Dirk Nowitzki (Germany) as the only international MVPs.

Slovenia's Luca Doncic won the Rookie of the Year award after a stellar campaign for the Dallas Mavericks. Doncic, 20, joined Jason Kidd as the only Mavericks to win Rookie of the Year, Kidd sharing the honor with Detroit's Grant Hill for the

1994-95 season.

Doncic was widely expected to scoop the award despite a late-season surge by Atlanta point guard Trae Young, the player for whom Doncic was traded on draft night in 2018.

Doncic averaged 21.2 points, 7.8 rebounds and 6.0 assists for the 33-49 Mavericks, compared to Young's averages of 19.1 points, 8.1 assists and 3.7 rebounds for the 29-53 Hawks.

He became the second player, after 1961 Rookie of the Year winner Oscar Robertson, to average at least 20 points, seven rebounds and six assists per game in his first year. His eight triple-doubles were third-most by a rookie behind Robertson's 26 and Ben Simmons' 12. Cameroon's Pascal Siakam, who starred in his NBA Finals debut for Toronto, was named Most Improved Player. Siakam, 25, scored a playoff career-best 32 points in powering the Raptors over defending

champions Golden State in a 118-109 game-one victory in the championship series.

Siakam, who beat out D'Angelo Russell and De'Aaron Fox for the award, averaged 16.9 points, 6.9 rebounds and 3.1 assists per game in 2018-19. That was up from 7.3 points per game, 4.5 rebounds per game and 2.0 assists per game the previous season. He made 79 three-pointers in the regular season compared to 29 in the previous campaign.

The Los Angeles Clippers' Lou Williams won the Sixth Man of the Year award as top reserve for the second straight year and third time in his career. He won in 2015 with the Toronto Raptors.

Defensive Player of the Year went to Utah's French center Rudi Gobert. The "Stifle Tower" won the award for the second straight season, beating Antetokounmpo and George in the final voting. — AFP