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Fixing roads, holding culprits accountable important: PM

'Long and grueling' maintenance process will begin in April

KUWAIT: Government preparations to launch an overall grid plan with a focus on execution and maintenance of roads was the emphasis of a cabinet meeting that was headed by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday. "Holding those responsible for shortcomings accountable and fixing damages as soon as possible are the most important issues to be addressed," said the premier during the meeting, which included Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, Justice Minister and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Fahd Al-Afasi, Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri, in addition to high-level state officials.

"What is happening cannot be tolerated or accepted. We have to shoulder our responsibilities towards citizens in this regard, as streets do not belong to us - they are for the public. What has happened is regrettable," Sheikh Jaber said, stressing that the government is an "honest opponent, but whoever is disrespectful and inconsiderate of the public's interests can never be respected or forgiven."

Sheikh Khaled said the aggregate rain the country recently witnessed was equivalent to a year's average. "The mistakes made amount to a crime against Kuwait and the Kuwaiti citizen," he stressed. Describing the maintenance process as "long and grueling", Sheikh Khaled explained that the major challenge will begin by fixing the roads by closing one lane and leaving the rest open, and using the safety lane, which, according to the deputy premier, will save up to 50 percent of maintenance time.

Meanwhile, Saleh said as a "deterrent" penalty, the state's Central Agency for Public Tenders asked concerned government bodies, as well as the private sector, to provide it with names of companies with failing projects in order for them to be deprived of future tenders. Afasi explained that there are two sides of applying punitive penalties on those involved in road mismanagement - penal and civil.

Bushehri noted that concrete steps have already been taken against violators of item 4 of article 85 of the Central Agency for Public Tenders' law. Nevertheless, she added that fixing road damages is the utmost priority, affirming that actual implementation of the plan will start in the first week of April. — KUNA



KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah presides over a Cabinet meeting yesterday. — KUNA

Pompeo visit a chance to sign deals: Jarallah

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said yesterday US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to Kuwait today will be a "significant occasion and chance for signing several deals between both friendly countries in defense, security and customs cooperation". Speaking to KUNA, Jarallah welcomed Pompeo's visit as part of the US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue between both countries, hoping that it would contribute to promoting strategic dialogue and developing its fields.

The senior Kuwaiti official said his country looks forward to successful talks to be held by the US secretary of state with Kuwaiti officials on several cooperation areas, mainly economic, investment and energy ones, as well as security and military cooperation, especially joint counterterror efforts. The Kuwait-US

talks will also involve critical regional issues, chiefly Yemen and Syria, Jarallah pointed out.

The US Department of State said on Friday Pompeo will travel to Kuwait, Lebanon and Israel from March 19 to 23. State Department Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino said in a statement that in Kuwait, Pompeo will lead the US delegation at the third US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue, that will be on many areas of "growing US Kuwait bilateral cooperation, including defense, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, strengthening trade and investment ties, and education".

In Beirut, Pompeo will meet with Lebanese leaders to discuss "the political, security, economic, and humanitarian challenges facing Lebanon". "The secretary's visit will underscore US support for the Lebanese people and Lebanon's legitimate state institutions," it affirmed. In Jerusalem, Pompeo will meet with Israeli officials "to engage on critical regional issues, including countering the Iranian regime's malign influence and reaffirming the United States' unwavering commitment to Israel's security". In Jerusalem, Pompeo will also participate in a meeting with "Israeli, Cypriot and Greek leaders to discuss key energy and security issues facing the Eastern Mediterranean region," the statement noted. — AFP

Three killed in Dutch tram attack, gunman arrested

UTRECHT, Netherlands: Dutch police arrested a man suspected of shooting dead three people and wounding five on a tram in the Dutch city of Utrecht yesterday. Utrecht police announced the Turkish-born suspect, 37-year-old Gokmen Tanis, had been taken into custody. The city was put into lockdown after the shooting, shortly after the morning rush hour, which authorities initially said was an apparent terrorist attack. Police conducted raids in several locations.

But hours after the shooting, the gunman's motive remained unclear. A prosecutor said it could be for "family reasons" and Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency, quoting relatives of the gunman, said he had fired at a relative on the tram and had then shot at others who tried to help her. Reports in Dutch media quoted eyewitnesses as saying the gunman appeared to tar-

get one woman and others who tried to help her. Tanis was reportedly in court in a rape case two weeks ago, broadcaster NOS said.

Helicopters hovered over the usually quiet mediaeval town. Authorities had raised the terrorism threat in Utrecht province to its highest level, schools were told to shut their doors and paramilitary police increased security at airports, other vital infrastructure and at mosques. Authorities later lowered the threat level as a result of the arrest.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte convened crisis talks immediately after the incident, which came three days after a lone gunman killed 50 people in mass shootings at two mosques in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. "Our country has today been shocked by an attack in Utrecht... A terrorist motive cannot be excluded," Rutte said.



Gokmen Tanis

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DAVAO: In this photo taken on March 16, 2019, Darrell Blatchley, director of D' Bone Collector Museum Inc, shows plastic waste found in the stomach of a Cuvier's beaked whale in Compostela Valley. — AFP

Dead whale had 40 kg of plastic in its stomach

MANILA: A starving whale with 40 kilos of plastic trash in its stomach had died after being washed ashore in the Philippines, activists said yesterday, calling it one of the worst cases of poisoning they have seen. Environmental groups have tagged the Philippines as one of the world's biggest ocean polluters due to its reliance on single-use plastic. That sort of pollution, which is also widespread in

other Southeast Asian nations, regularly kills wildlife like whales and turtles that ingest the waste.

In the latest case, a Cuvier's beaked whale died on Saturday in the southern province of Compostela Valley where it was stranded a day earlier, the government's regional fisheries bureau said. The agency and an environmental group performed a necropsy on the animal and found about 40 kg of plastic, including grocery bags and rice sacks. The animal died from starvation and was unable to eat because of the trash filling its stomach, said Darrell Blatchley, director of D' Bone Collector Museum Inc, which helped conduct the examination.

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1,000 feared dead in Mozambique storm

BEIRA, Mozambique: More than a thousand people are feared to have died in a cyclone that smashed into Mozambique last week, while scores have been killed and more than 150 are missing in neighboring Zimbabwe. The city of Beira in central Mozambique bore Cyclone Idai's full wrath on Thursday before the storm barreled on to neighboring Zimbabwe, unleashing fierce winds and flash floods and washing away roads and houses.

"For the moment we have registered 84 deaths officially, but when we flew over the area... this morning to understand what's going on, everything indicates that we could register more than 1,000 deaths," Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi said in a nationwide address.

Continued on Page 24



BEIRA, Mozambique: This handout picture taken yesterday shows people on a roof surrounded by flooding in an area affected by Cyclone Idai. — AFP

Outrage as Ozil invites Erdogan to his wedding

BERLIN: Angela Merkel's chief of staff yesterday joined the growing chorus of criticism of Arsenal's German midfielder Mesut Ozil for reportedly inviting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to his wedding this summer as his witness. The 30-year-old Ozil, who has Turkish family roots, sparked controversy last May when he was photographed with Erdogan, raising questions about the footballer's loyalty to Germany on the eve of their disastrous World Cup campaign.

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LONDON: This file handout photo taken on May 13, 2018 shows President Recep Tayyip Erdogan posing for a photo with German footballer Mesut Ozil. — AFP

Local

Amir receives First Deputy PM, Defense Minister at Bayan Palace

Amir offers condolences to Congolese, Pakistani presidents



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — Amir Diwan photo

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to President of Congo Felix Tshisekedi, expressing condolences over the victims of a train derailment that led to a number of deaths and injuries. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Congolese President. Also yesterday, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Pakistani President Arif Alvi, over the victims of a train blast that led to a number of deaths and injuries. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to the Pakistani president. —KUNA

Kuwait rejects shared supervision over Al-Aqsa Mosque

GENEVA: Kuwait yesterday stressed its full rejection of recent calls for sharing of supervision over Al-Aqsa Mosque and Israel's control over it. This came in a speech by Kuwait's permanent representative to the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations in Geneva, Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, during UN Human Rights Council of discussion of Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Sharing the supervision of the mosque could trigger off religious tensions, especially with continued intentional and unprecedented Israeli provocations, the last of which was the storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Ghunaim said. Kuwait is surprised at international silence toward Israel's policies in providing political and economic incentives to encourage its residents to settle illegally in the occupied territories, he added. Israel's continued Judaization of the city of Jerusalem,

changing its religious and historical landmarks, and the continuation of diggings beneath Al-Aqsa Mosque, are a clear and frank violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Ghunaim stressed. He also expressed Kuwait's condemnation of the attacks on the Palestinian people, and the violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the Israeli army.

Ghunaim affirmed Kuwait's keenness to grant legitimate rights for Palestinian citizens in establishing an independent and sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital under relevant UN resolutions. Kuwait also called on the international community to ensure respect for the principles and provisions of international law and international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, especially as Israel insists on breaking international resolutions, he added. It also called for commitment to resolutions that include the release of

thousands of prisoners, lifting of the unjust siege imposed on the Gaza Strip and the re-opening of crossings, as well as the ending of military checkpoints inside the Palestinian territory, he said.

Last November, Kuwait provided an exceptional contribution of \$42.1 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), raising the total Kuwaiti contributions to the UNRWA budget to \$50 million in 2018, the Kuwaiti diplomat added. This donation reflects Kuwait's continued commitment to support UNRWA's work in protecting the rights of Palestinian refugees, he said. Some Western countries called for the cancellation of the seventh article on the agenda of the council, which aimed at discussing Israeli violations in the occupied Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, but the Islamic and Arab blocs in the council, supported by African, Asian and South American countries, always abort these attempts. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Irani visited Kuwait Times yesterday and discussed matters of mutual concern with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Northern zone to redress economic structural imbalances: Silk City chief

KUWAIT: One of the main objectives of New Kuwait Vision 2035 and its most important project of the northern economic zone was redressing the structural imbalances of the national economy, CEO of the Silk City and Boubyan Island Development Council Faisal Al-Medlej has stated. The ambitious mega project would turn the northern area into a regional commercial hub benefiting from its distinctive geographical location near a large market of up to 200 million people and huge economies whose production exceeds \$1 trillion a year, Al-Medlej projected in a joint news conference following a government and parliamentary meeting on the issue on Sunday.

The political stability in Kuwait and its reputation as a state of institutions would attract investors to the multi-billion dollars project. "We have great chances to turn this zone into a safe gateway for regional trade that ensures the freedom of movement of people, goods and money," he clarified. He stated that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had pushed for teaming up with China to implement this strategic project. The northern economic zone comprises five islands: Boubyan, Failaka, Warba, Miskan and Awha, in addition to a considerable part of the Subiya area with a total area of nearly 1,700 square kilometers, he said.

Job opportunities

Meanwhile, member of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Fahad Al-Rashed emphasized the importance of the project in creating new job opportunities and diversifying national economy. Kuwait in the coming 15 years would need 400,000 to 600,000 jobs for the new entrants of the labor market, he said in the new conference. He stressed that these jobs should be productive ones and with value added to the national economy. He added that



The proposed 'Silk City' project.

the plan would also help diversify Kuwaiti national economy and end dependence on oil revenues.

In the meantime, Chairman of the Parliament's Financial and Economic Affairs Committee MP Salah Khorshid noted that the meeting focused on exchanging viewpoints about the northern economic zone. He, however, stated this mega project still requires more studies and deliberations. The legislative authority is eager to find new sources for income other than oil and to see new strategic development projects provided that they were put forward in a transparent and clear way and they do not contradict the constitution.

Earlier, First Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said the northern economic zone bill does not violate Kuwait's constitution. He, however, said that the northern economic zone law must be flexible enough to attract investors. Sheikh Nasser hoped both executive and legislative authorities would complete the study of the law in the coming weeks. The meeting was also attended by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Fahad Al-Afasi and Central Bank of Kuwait Governor Mohammad Al-Hashel and several members of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development and board of trustees of the north economic zone. —KUNA

Finance Minister meets Yemeni, Nicaraguan ministers



KUWAIT: Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf meets with Yemeni Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Dr Najeeb Al-Ouaj. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf met yesterday with Yemeni Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Dr Najeeb Al-Ouaj, on ways to enhance bilateral economic cooperation. The meeting also touched upon plans to implement development projects that are financed by

donor countries in Yemen, providing basic services and employment opportunities, according to a press statement by the Ministry of Finance. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti minister met with his Nicaraguan counterpart Ivan Acosta, discussing with him ways of bolstering investment and financial cooperation. — KUNA

Kuwait thanks New York for stepping up mosques' security

NEW YORK: Islamic Culture Center of New York's Chairman of Board of Trustees, and Kuwait's UN envoy Mansour Al-Otaibi has expressed gratitude to New York mayor and police chief for their quick response to calls for boosting mosques security after the New Zealand terrorist attacks. In a statement to the press on Sunday, Otaibi, the Permanent Representative to the UN, lauded New York security apparatuses for increasing police presence near mosques and taking all precautionary measures to ensure the safety and security of worshippers in wake of the horrible terrorist assaults on two mosques in New Zealand which claimed the lives of dozens of innocent people.

Otaibi was also appreciative for the sympathy and condolences expressed by Christian, Jewish religious leaders and ordinary people who sent flowers and messages to denounce the heinous crime against innocent Muslim worshippers in New Zealand. Equipped with a semi-automatic weapon, a shooter opened fire on prayer-goers during Friday prayers at two mosques in the city of Christchurch, killing at least 50 people and wounding many others.

On Friday, the UN Security Council adopted a statement, proposed by Kuwait and Indonesia, strongly condemning the New Zealand mosque terrorist attacks, as "heinous and cowardly." Terrorism "constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security," added the statement, describing these acts as "criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed." —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait Bandar Al-Attiya. — KUNA

Defense minister meets Qatari ambassador

KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met yesterday with Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait Bandar Al-Attiya. During the meeting, the two

sides discussed ways of enhancing bilateral relations and the latest developments of common concerns, the Defense Ministry's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations said in a press release. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received yesterday in his office Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud. — KUNA

Local

National Assembly to discuss commerce minister's grilling in today's session

MPs sign petition to debate employment of citizens

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly is expected to debate today a grilling for Commerce and Industry Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan over alleged financial and administrative violations. The grilling was filed by MPs Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie and Mubarak Al-Hajraf who accused the minister of failing to stop wide-ranging financial and administrative violations at the ministry and a number of agencies overseen by the minister.

Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem has said that the grilling is on the agenda of the assembly session today but its debate depends on the minister and the assembly decision. The minister can request a postponement for two weeks but it has to be accepted by the national assembly.

Roudhan had asked the two grillers for

explanation on some points in the grilling and the two lawmakers had responded paying the way for the debate to take place today. The grilling may end in 10 MPs filing a motion for a no-confidence vote and may just finish with recommendations.

In the meantime, 18 MPs signed a request calling on the assembly to hold a special debate on employment for citizens amid rising numbers of Kuwaitis entering the job market. MP Osama Al-Shaheen, who prepared the request, said that the government and the assembly must have a fruitful and comprehensive discussion on ways to create jobs for Kuwaitis. He said that in some cases, Kuwaiti graduates spend years waiting for government jobs while in some other cases, Kuwaiti graduates are offered jobs not suitable to their specialization.

Shaheen said the debate is not expected

to take place today but the assembly will set a date for the special session to allow the government to provide updated date and information on this important issue. The lawmaker said that there are thousands of jobs in both the public and private sector occupied by expatriates and can be replaced by Kuwaitis which will greatly reduce unemployment.

MP Majed Al-Mutairi in the meantime said that the government's draft law for the Silk City and Northern Economic City paves the way for creating 'a state within the state' because the proposed authority for the mega projects will take over specializations of ministries and government departments. He said the assembly encourages development projects but will not accept suspicious projects that involve violating the constitution and the country's laws.



The National Assembly.

Jarallah, US official discuss 'Strategic Dialogue' agenda

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with the visiting Acting US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Satterfield, and discussed topics on the agenda of the Third Kuwait-US Strategic Dialogue and the latest regional and international developments. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Affairs Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar and Assistant Foreign Minister for

Americas Minister Plenipotentiary Reem Al-Khaled as well as US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman.

Meanwhile, Jarallah met with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Chairman Hilal Al-Sayer and several other KRCS officials. They considered the Kuwaiti charity's humanitarian activities and contributions to world countries. During the meeting, the KRCS chief appreciated support provided by the Foreign Ministry to the society. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Acting US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Satterfield. — KUNA

363 SME licenses suspended for violations

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The total number of small and medium enterprise (SME) licenses registered at the Public Authority for Manpower is 7,876 distributed to 4,436 files. Director Ahmad Al-Moussa said in a statement yesterday, that the total number of files suspended for violations is 363, Moussa added, without specifying the type of violations committed. Moussa stressed that the authority will never allow economic activities that violate labor laws and warned that legal actions are immediately taken against violators. A recent report had alleged that a number of SME owners were recently discovered to have been involved in visa trafficking.

Grand Mosque visits

In a letter addressed to the awqaf ministry's assistant undersecretary for cultural affairs, Grand Mosque director Roumi Al-Roumi explained that Muslims and non-Muslims' visits to the Grand Mosque has been organized through official bodies for state visitors since 1994, adding that a fatwa was issued in this regard allowing non-Muslims to visit the mosque to show them Islam's moderation and introduce Islam to them. Roumi remarked that non-Muslim visitors have to follow certain guidelines during the visit, adding that according to travel website Tripadvisor, the Grand Mosque is the second-most visited landmark in Kuwait.

Separately, Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi said a study to privatize tourists' transport stations will be made within Kuwait's fourth structural plan. Responding to an inquiry by municipal councilmember Abdullah Al-Roumi concerning youth centers in Hawally governorate, Manfouhi said the municipality is currently studying requests by beneficiaries to privatize the land plots they are utilizing.

School accident

Ministry of Education's Undersecretary Saud Al-Harbi, the acting assistant undersecretary for public education Fahd Al-Ghais and Hawally educational zone director Mansour Al-Thaferie yesterday visited Abdullah Abdullatif Al-Omar primary school for boys to follow up the accident in which a schoolboy was run over by a catering truck.

During the visit, Harbi heard testimonies of the school administration and some teachers about the accident and urged them all to pay more attention and fully observe safety and security measures inside the school. In addition, Harbi ordered the formation of a special committee to investigate the incident and hold whoever is responsible legally accountable.

In another educational concern, recent educational statistics for the school year 2017-2018 showed a rise in the numbers of teachers, students, schools and classes in all types of schools including public, private, religious and special education institutions. Statistics showed the total number of schools in 2017-2018 was 1,489 compared to 1,483 in 2016-2017, and that the total number of classes was 26,251 compared to 25,773 in the previous year.

Statistics showed that the total number of public schools is 822 with 16,090 classes, adding that there are 566 schools and 99,219 classes in the private sector, 16 special education schools including 240 classes, 11 religious schools including 139 classes and 74 evening schools including 563 classes. In addition, statistics showed that the total number of school students in 2017-2018 is 683,359 compared to 674,470 in the previous year, while the total number of teaching staff members are 85,949 compared to 88,259 in the previous year.

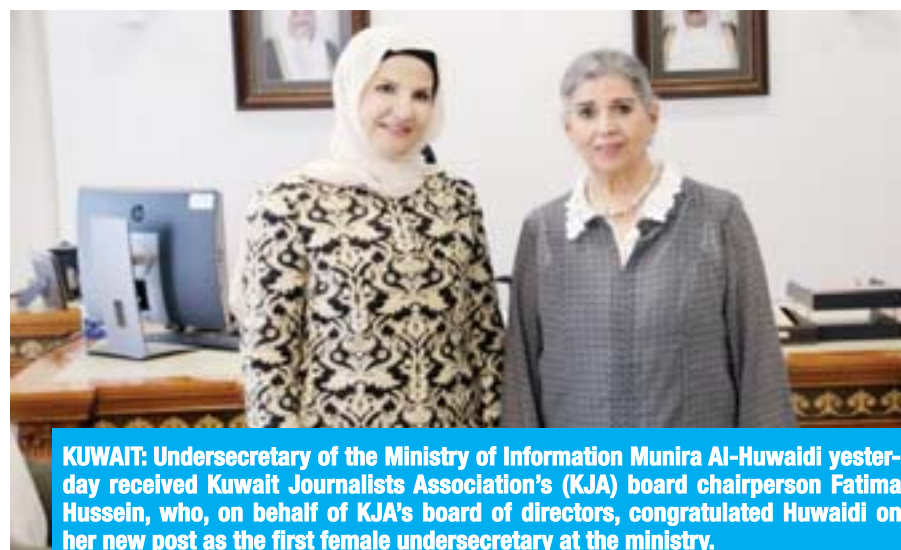
KFSD, KAFCO conduct fire drill



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) carried out an exercise with Kuwait Aviation Fueling Company (KAFCO) to increase preparedness and strengthen coordination during emergencies. The simulation

was about two tankers colliding and a fire breaking out in an aircraft fuel tanker, whose driver is injured. The fire was fought with advanced equipment, while the injured person was taken to hospital. The exercise was supervised by Director of the Airport Fire Department Brig Mohammad Al-Shatti.



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Munira Al-Huwaidi yesterday received Kuwait Journalists Association's (KJA) board chairperson Fatima Hussein, who, on behalf of KJA's board of directors, congratulated Huwaidi on her new post as the first female undersecretary at the ministry.

Expatriate families in 'residential areas' safe

KUWAIT: Chairman of a governmental committee dealing with 'bachelors' living in private residential areas Ammar Al-Ammar said citizens renting their apartments in private 'residential areas' to expat families is not a problem and will not be discussed in the next committee meeting, because the committee's work is limited to renting to bachelors. He said governorates were instructed to report the cases they have received, provided that each governorate submits its report to the committee meeting by April 1.

Meanwhile, the misdemeanors court

struck down a ruling to demolish the fourth floor of a house in Um Al-Haiman, cancelled the owner's fines and made him sign an undertaking of good behavior for three years. The public prosecution had charged the owner with building a fourth floor on his house without a license. The comprehensive court fined the suspect KD 500 in absentia and ordered the removal of the fourth floor. The defendant appealed the ruling through his lawyer, who said his client was forced to build the floor because of the large number of his family members.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Grocer molests 6-year-old in Hawally

KUWAIT: An Egyptian man brought his 6-year-old daughter to the police station and told them she was molested by a grocer at their building in Hawally. In his statements to police, the man said that he was surprised by his daughter's screams after she had gone to a nearby grocery store, where the grocer groped various parts of her body, then attempted to remove her clothes, but she was able to escape from his clutches. Police arrested the suspect and he was sent to criminal detectives, where he confessed to the charges. The father did not want to file charges, but the suspect may be deported.

Search for 'conman'

An Egyptian man was conned by a compatriot who works in a famous Egyptian event planning company. The victim told police that he paid the conman KD 10,000 to organize a concert in Kuwait, on a promise that the man would return the money and pay him his share of the profits after the concert was over. The man disappeared with the money, however,

prompting the lender to report the matter to police. Detectives are investigating.

Fake cop caught

Criminal detectives arrested a Saudi man who claimed to be a detective and mugged an Indian national after tying him with a rope and beating him. The Indian lodged a complaint at a police station about an unidentified person who mugged him after claiming to be a detective. Detectives were able to identify the suspect and he was arrested following fierce resistance. A police source said the Saudi denied the charges, but was detained to continue the investigations.

Traffic dispute

A Kuwaiti woman accused an expatriate of colliding with her car following a dispute over a parking space. The accused denied the charge, adding that the citizen and her husband are attempting to frame him. The citizen went to the police station with her husband and said her luxury car was damaged deliberately in a public parking area and gave them the other car's license plate number. The accused, Egyptian, came to the station when he was called and said the couple wanted to frame him due to previous disputes. Police believed him and he was released, although investigations are still on.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Reflection of Al-Shaab Gate on water during sunset. —Photo by Ahmad Al-Failakawi (KUNA)

Zain platinum partner of Kuwait Yacht Show 2019

Under patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its platinum partnership of the seventh edition of the Kuwait Yacht Show (KYS 2019), considered Kuwait's most awaited nautical event. The show, to be held in Marina Crescent during 26 - 30 March, comes under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Zain's support to this event comes in line with its keenness on being an active participant in the various local and regional projects that contribute to shouldering and advancing national economy, being a leading national company in the Kuwaiti private sector. The event also aims at supporting the local small and medium-sized enterprises segment (SMEs) operating within the marine and boating sectors.

Zain will participate in the Kuwait Yacht Show 2019 through its own dedicated booth to showcase the latest innovative solutions offered through the Zain LIFE smart home portfolio, which includes a number of the latest and most advanced smart home and security devices that can be used to protect personal properties such as boats, yachts, and more.

The Kuwait Yacht Show (KYS 2019) is considered Kuwait's most awaited nautical event specializing in marine and boating services. The event gathers the world's top brands as well as the best local and international specialists that offer world-class services to visitors as per the highest international standards.

Zain's support to this event comes in line with its core objectives that aim at shouldering the advancement of the community as a whole on all levels, where the company reaffirms the principal of partnership through similar efforts with the aim of contributing to the further progress of national economy.

Zain's platinum partnership of KYS 2019 comes in line with its keenness to dedicate more efforts into supporting and empowering Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, as well as taking part in such initiatives that contribute to infusing creativity within the entrepreneurial community through partnering with entities that aim at its development.

Zain's showcasing of Zain LIFE's portfolio of innovative solutions at KYS 2019 is in line with the company's strategy to continue its transformation into an integrated digital lifestyle provider, which is centered around



KUWAIT: Zain's official during the press conference to announce the show.

digital transformation leadership and empowering the community to enjoy a smarter portable lifestyle, as well as using advanced technology solutions to enable an easier and more flexible life.

EQUATE launches 'ELEVATE' program to support equality

KUWAIT: The EQUATE Group is taking employee equality and diversity to new heights, launching its 'ELEVATE' program within the Group's companies around the world and the community at large. The program is sponsored by EQUATE CEO and President Dr Ramesh Ramachandran and endorsed by the EQUATE Management Team.

'ELEVATE' is part of EQUATE's continued investment in its human capital as a driver for its sustainability strategy, which aligns with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the New Kuwait 2035 vision. The launch was held on International Women's

Day March 8 and provided all global employees with the opportunity to recognize and celebrate of the women in their lives and the women of EQUATE.

Explaining the program's goal, EQUATE Senior Executive for Corporate Communications and Government Affairs, Dr Abeer Al-Omar, said: "At EQUATE, we are reaffirming our commitment to equality and diversity within our group and will be sharing our learning with our communities. We aim to achieve our goals by identifying opportunities and encouraging a better understanding to the contribution of a sound diversity policy generates ideas, conversations, and can lead to greater mobility and prosperity in line with the overall business objectives."

'ELEVATE' is another example of a program supported by the EQUATE Group that demonstrates its commitment to sustainability, partnering with public and private bodies, including employees, the society and customers in the fields of human development, environment, education, health, as well as public awareness.

ABK sponsors Faculty of Medicine graduation ceremony

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently sponsored the graduation ceremony for Kuwait University's Faculty of Medicine, which was held at the Symphony Hotel on March 16, 2019, where 90 students received their Bachelor's Degree in Medical Sciences. Attending the graduation ceremony on behalf of ABK was Fawzy Al-Thunayan, GM - Board Affairs who said: "The

bank's support is based on its commitment to the importance of educating Kuwaiti youth. They are not only a valuable asset, they are the future of Kuwait and the country depends on them. The medical professional plays a crucial role in the wellbeing of the society and ABK is proud to be a part of sponsoring this important day as they end their academic life and transition into a life change where they will face important challenges in their career. They will be an invaluable asset to the communities in which they live and work. ABK wishes them every success in their future and takes this opportunity to congratulate each one of them."





Benin media delegation visits Kuwait Times

KUWAIT: A media delegation from Benin visited Kuwait Times yesterday as part of its ongoing tour of Kuwait. They were accompanied by Ambassador of Benin to Kuwait Moudjaidou Soumanou Issoufou and other embassy officials, in addition to members from Kuwait's Ministry of Information. The delegation members met with Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, then toured the editorial department and printing press. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KIB sponsors 24th Business Makers Career Fair at KU

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing efforts to support local talents and young graduates, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored the 24th Annual Business Makers Career Fair organized by Kuwait University's (KU) College of Business Administration Office of Students Training and Alumni (OSTA). Running from March 5 to 7, the three-day event was held under the patronage of Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr Jenan Boushehri. The career fair aimed at introducing young Kuwaiti talents to various career opportunities on offer within the private sector.

Held on the KU campus, the career fair sought to introduce students and soon-to-be graduates to the various career opportunities available following their academic careers. KIB's participation aimed at highlighting the wealth of opportunities that are available within Kuwait's finance and banking sector.

In its latest edition, the career fair featured a large number of companies and institutions from across Kuwait, including some of the biggest names from the banking sector. On its part, KIB was represented by a team from its Human Resources Department (HRD) at the bank's dedicated booth. The team also introduced visitors to the nature of working at a bank and advise them on how they can start their professional career at KIB. Additionally, the bank provided visitors with career advice to guide them through choosing suitable future careers.

KIB's participation in this event came as part of its



KUWAIT: KIB is honored for its sponsorship and participation.

dedication to supporting and empowering young, local talent. The bank believes in the importance of guiding enthusiastic youth by providing them with employment opportunities that match their career goals. As part of its leading social responsibility program's youth empowerment pillar, KIB participates in career fairs all year round, as they serve as excellent opportunities to introduce students to the bank - thereby attracting the right caliber of candidates.

It is worth noting that KIB continues to open its doors and focus on attracting young, local talents by providing them with employment opportunities that nurture their skills and capabilities. KIB is always eager to attract talented young Kuwaitis, providing them with valuable employment opportunities that make the best of their skills and capabilities, and help them achieve their full potential. The bank believes that youth are the biggest asset we have as a nation, and the key ingredient to ensure long-term success and development.

Commercial Bank young clients enjoy open day at Tech Zone



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) first account clients flocked to the Tech Zone game arcade at the Avenues Mall, where they were invited by CBK to spend an outstanding open recreational day. The festivity was attended by a large number of kids and their families where they enjoyed over 100 augmented and virtual reality

games in addition to free meals from 'Raising Canes' restaurant at the Tech Zone. The young clients and their families were received by CBK marketing department employees. Notably, 'My First Account' is CBK's account for kids aged up to 14 years, and is the ideal way for parents to secure their kids' future.

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New Zealand pledges gun control as mosque 'gunman' sacks lawyer

Australian teen who egged senator hailed online as 'heroic'



SEVASTOPOL: Russian President Vladimir Putin takes part in a ceremony to launch two power plants in Crimea yesterday. — AFP

Putin in Crimea five years after annexation

President signs laws against 'disrespecting' authorities, fake news

SIMFEROPOL: Russian flags flew across Crimea's main city Simferopol yesterday as President Vladimir Putin flew in to mark the fifth anniversary of Moscow's internationally condemned annexation of the peninsula from Ukraine. Putin used the visit to officially open two new power stations on the Black Sea peninsula, which was almost wholly dependent on electricity from Ukraine before the annexation.

Moscow took over Crimea in March 2014 after months of tensions with Kiev following the ouster of a pro-Russian leader. The move resulted in a major boost to Putin's popularity. But the takeover was denounced by Kiev and the West as an annexation and, along with Moscow's support for separatist forces in Ukraine's east, has prompted wide-ranging sanctions against Russia.

"March 18 is a remarkable day for Sevastopol, for Crimea and for the whole country," Putin said, speaking at a ceremony for the launch of the power plants in the port city Sevastopol. He said the plants' opening represented "another important step to strengthen the energy security of Crimea". Kiev stopped supplying energy to Crimea in late 2015, leaving the peninsula reliant on an underwater cable running from Russia and facing frequent supply problems. The plants were at the center of a scandal last year, after the US sanctioned Russian officials who supplied them with turbines built by German engineering giant Siemens - a violation of European Union sanctions against Moscow.

'No progress'

In Russia, March 18 has been proclaimed the "Day of Crimea's Reunification with Russia" and celebrated with events across the country. In Crimea, it is a public holiday. Authorities set up a stage on Simferopol's main square for the celebrations. Posters that read "Five years of Crimea returning to its native land" hung on shop windows and public transport. "There is a feeling of newness, of independence, of freedom," retired teacher Valentina Dorozhko told AFP. She said she felt "reborn" when Russia took over. But Oleg Ivanov, a man in his 40s, called for Putin to change course. "If we have sanctions imposed on us, then you need to sit down, negotiate and change something," he told AFP. "And if there's no progress, then it's time for someone else to have a go."

Putin signed an agreement on March 18, 2014, with local representatives to make Crimea part of Russia, two days after a referendum condemned by Kiev and the West as illegitimate. Pro-Kremlin media yesterday carried reports of improvements on the peninsula under Russian rule. "There is growing understanding in the world that Crimea is part of Russia and will be forever," Valentina Matviyenko, the speaker of Russia's upper house of parliament, wrote in a column for newspaper Izvestia.

But the liberal press painted a more somber picture, saying the takeover had made Russians poorer

and more isolated from the world. The takeover prompted euphoria and a wave of patriotism in Russia, but five years later Crimea has "stopped being a source of political benefit" for authorities, liberal newspaper Novaya Gazeta said. According to a survey published by the Centre for Public Opinion (FOM) in early March, only 39 percent of Russians believe the annexation brought Russia more good than harm. In 2014, that figure was 67 percent.

'Fake news'

Later yesterday, Putin signed controversial laws that allow courts to fine and briefly jail people for showing disrespect towards authorities, and block media for publishing "fake news". Putin signed off on the legislation against the advice of human rights activists, who warned the laws amounted to censorship and would be abused to further crack down on freedom of speech. The law on disrespecting authorities backs punishment for "offending state symbols" and stipulates hefty fines and jail terms of 15 days for repeat offenders.

Another piece of legislation allows authorities to decide what amounts to "fake news" and gives a media watchdog the power to demand an outlet delete the information. Websites that fail to comply would be blocked. Fines could reach 1.5 million rubles (over \$22,700) if the infraction leads to grave consequences

like death or rioting.

Rights activists say that since first becoming president in 2000, Putin has gradually crushed freedoms in Russia, muzzling critics and bringing television under control. The new legislation takes the crackdown on civil society to a whole new level, they say. Critics say the legislation is vaguely worded and would have large scope for abuse, further complicating the difficult and sometimes deadly work of rights activists and opposition journalists in Russia.

The Kremlin is stepping up media control to counter a fall in Putin's approval rating amid mounting economic trouble, according to activists. "These new prohibitions and punishments are not just a continuation of the repressive legislative and practical measures that began in 2012," Yuri Dzhibladze, president of the Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, told AFP. "This is a completely new level which almost literally repeats the Soviet-era law about 'activities undermining the Soviet system' and 'anti-Soviet campaigning and propaganda'."

The authorities unleashed a major crackdown on dissenters after Putin returned to the Kremlin in 2012 in the face of mass protests. "From now it will be police that will decide what fake news is and what's not," said Alexander Cherkasov of Memorial, a top rights group. "This will lead to a violation of civil rights and freedoms." — AFP

Facing Makkah: Islamic burial for mosque attack victims

JAKARTA: Grieving families of 50 worshippers killed in the Christchurch mosque attacks are anxious to bury their loved ones according to Islamic custom. Graves are being dug in a local cemetery, but under-pressure authorities say they need time to make sure no mistakes are made and that the complex investigation is not harmed. Here are some facts about Islamic funeral and burial rites:

Buried within 24 hours?

Burial doesn't have to be within exactly 24 hours, but the sooner the better as it's seen as showing respect for the dead. Preparations typically start right away and that can mean not waiting for far-away relatives to attend the funeral. The custom comes from the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) instruction: "When one of your men dies, do not keep him in the house for long. Make haste in taking him to the grave and burying him." Families of Muslim passengers who died in the Indonesian Lion Air disaster last year were also upset with the time it took to release the remains of loved ones, which had to be identified first through DNA testing.



CHRISTCHURCH: A group of men pray in Christchurch yesterday, three days after a shooting incident at two mosques in the city that claimed the lives of 50 Muslim worshippers. — AFP

Bathing the dead

A Muslim deceased's body must be bathed prior to burial. Males are supposed to wash men while women are left to do the same with female deceased. However, a man is allowed to wash a woman in special cases, such as the body of his wife. The deceased is stripped of all clothing except for a small covering over the genitals. They are washed three times from head to toe and dressed with fragrances or perfumes. The body is then covered with a shroud made of white fabric.

Facing Makkah

Mourners at the funeral service are advised not to wail too loudly or let their tears touch the body as it could interfere with the deceased's journey to the afterlife. An Imam leads prayers in front of the shrouded deceased before the body is taken to a cemetery. The dead are not placed in a coffin but instead lowered into a dug hole and placed at an angle facing the holy city of Makkah - as is customary for Muslims' daily prayers. — AFP

Indian team to trek miles to reach a lone voter

NEW DELHI: A nearly 20-strong team will trek through some of India's remotest terrain to reach a single voter and collect her ballot in the country's mammoth elections, an official said yesterday. The huge undertaking through jungles and over hills involving polling officials, porters and police underscores the logistical challenges confronting India as it prepares to hold the world's largest election. From the Himalayas to the deserts and lush tropics, 900 million Indians are eligible to cast a ballot over nearly six weeks of voting starting from April 11.

One is Sokela Tayang, 39, the sole registered voter in Malogam - a tiny hamlet in the isolated and contested northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh along the border with China. Dagbom Riba, a local election officer, told AFP a team of 15 to 18 strong would have to proceed on foot for six kilometers (3.7 miles) carrying a ballot box and other voting material through tough terrain to reach Malogam. Once

in the village in Anjaw district, rules dictate they must keep the voting booth open all day-even though just Tayang will be exercising her franchise.

"Even if she casts her vote in the morning, we have to remain open until 5pm in keeping with the election commission guidelines," Riba said. "We are committed to reach out to every single voter so no challenge is big for us." The Press Trust of India news agency reported that the tiny outpost had two voters in 2014, the other being Tayang's husband. But he had enrolled in another electorate this time around, leaving just Tayang on the registry, PTI said. Arunachal Pradesh has several polling stations with just a handful of voters. Eight voting booths will have fewer than 10 people turn up, the election commission says.

The state, south of Tibet, is claimed in part by China, whose forces crossed the border briefly in the 1960s during a war with India. It is one of many remote areas where election officials will have to cart in electronic voting machines to collect ballots during voting between April 11 and May 29. In past elections, these units have been strapped to camels in Rajasthan and taken to desert tribes. In the north, yaks and mules have been recruited and elephants in India's tropical south. Election rules stipulate that no voter should have to travel more than two kilometers to cast their ballot. — AFP

International

'Clear similarities' between Boeing crashes in Ethiopia and Indonesia

What is the MCAS system on the Boeing 737 Max 8?

NEW YORK: Flight recorder data recovered from the wreckage of Boeing 737 MAX planes that crashed in Ethiopia and Indonesia shows "clear similarities," Addis Ababa said yesterday as the US maker announced it was finalizing a software update for its under fire anti-stall system. Pressure was mounting meanwhile on the US Federal Aviation Administration, which insisted it had followed standard procedures in certifying the plane model, even as it was reported to have come under investigation by the Department of Transport.

"The 737 MAX certification program followed the FAA's standard certification process," the agency said in an email to AFP. It said its procedures were "well established and have consistently produced safe aircraft designs." But reported similarities between the March 10 crash of an Ethiopian Airlines 737 Max 8, killing all 157 on board, and the Lion Air crash in October of the same model of plane in Indonesia, leaving 189 dead, have raised serious doubts and triggered Boeing's biggest crisis in decades.

The 737 MAX is a relatively new aircraft, having entered service only in May 2017 as Boeing's answer to Airbus's medium-haul A320 Neo. Ethiopian Transport Minister Dagmawit Moges said Sunday that a study of the flight data recorder retrieved from the Ethiopian plane had shown "clear similarities" to that of the Lion Air flight in Indonesia. She said the parallels would be the "subject of further study."

Pilots had complained

As investigators continue their work, preliminary findings in the Lion crash have focused on a possible malfunction of an anti-stall system known as the MCAS (Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System). Boeing developed that system, because of the unusually forward placement of the plane's engines, to avoid a stall. The manufacturer said Sunday it was close to releasing a long-awaited software patch to the system. "While investigators continue to work to establish definitive conclusions, Boeing is finalizing its development of a previously-announced software update and pilot training revision that will address the MCAS flight control law's behavior in response to erroneous sensor inputs," president and CEO Dennis Muilenburg said.

Experts have questioned the FAA's certification process

after learning that American pilots had lodged serious complaints about the system. According to a Wall Street Journal report Sunday, the FAA had come under an "unusual inquiry" by the Department of Transport over the issue, and has warned officials to safeguard computer files, according to sources quoted by the paper.

The Journal said the probe would zero in on Seattle-area FAA offices. Boeing airliners are built near Seattle. A Seattle Times report Sunday said the FAA had delegated part of the certification process for the plane-including the MCAS-to Boeing engineers. The original safety analysis provided to the FAA by Boeing contained "several crucial flaws," the newspaper said, adding that the process was carried out hastily as Boeing struggled to catch up with Airbus's more advanced work on the A320 Neo. The report was dated 11 days before the Ethiopian Airlines accident, the newspaper reported.

'All requirements... met'

The FAA refused on Sunday to comment on the newspaper reports, noting the various investigations still under way. In the face of budget cuts, the FAA since 2009 has delegated some certification work to aircraft manufacturers or to outside experts, a procedure known as ODA (Organization Designation Authorization). On Sunday, the agency defended its practice, insisting that the 737 MAX had to pass multiple tests and reviews before being authorized to fly.

It said the aircraft's design was minutely examined, ground and flight tests were conducted, and other civil aviation authorities were consulted to ensure the "airplane complies with FAA standards." A statement provided by Boeing to The Seattle Times said that "the FAA considered the final configuration and operating parameters of MCAS during MAX certification, and concluded that it met all certification and regulatory requirements." It said, without elaborating, that there had been "some significant mischaracterizations" of the certification process.

What is MCAS system

Similarities between the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines crashes, confirmed by black box data, have focused attention on an anti-stalling system used in the new Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft. The Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS) is an automated safety fea-

ture on the 737 Max 8 designed to prevent the plane from entering into a stall, or losing lift. Both the Lion Air jet, which crashed in October, killing 189 people, and the Ethiopian Airlines aircraft, which went down a week ago Sunday, leaving 157 people dead, were fitted with the system. Both planes experienced similarly erratic steep climbs and descents and fluctuating airspeeds before crashing shortly after takeoff.

A malfunction of the system was implicated in the Lion Air accident in Indonesia. The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said findings from the crash site and "newly refined satellite data" warranted "further investigation of the possibility of a shared cause for the two incidents." The 737 Max 8 and 9 have been grounded worldwide since the Ethiopia crash, and on Friday industry sources said Boeing plans to upgrade the MCAS system in the "coming weeks."

MCAS was introduced by Boeing on the 737 Max 8 because its heavier, more fuel-efficient engines changed



RENTON: An image of a Boeing 737 MAX 8 is pictured on the exterior of the Boeing Renton Factory in Renton, Washington. — AFP

the aerodynamic qualities of the workhorse aircraft and can cause the plane's nose to pitch up in certain conditions during manual flight. Angle of attack sensors on the aircraft tell the MCAS to automatically point the nose of the plane down if it is in danger of going into a stall. This is done through horizontal stabilizers on the plane's tail which are activated by the aircraft's flight control computer.

According to Boeing, MCAS does not control the plane during normal flight but "improves the behavior of the airplane" during "non-normal" situations. These could be steep turns or after takeoff when a plane is climbing with flaps up at speeds that are close to stall speed. According to the flight data recorder, the pilots of Lion Air Flight 610 struggled to control the aircraft as the automated MCAS system repeatedly pushed the plane's nose down following takeoff. The pilots of the Ethiopian Airlines plane reported similar difficulty before the aircraft plunged into the ground shortly after takeoff.—Agencies

because its heavier, more fuel-efficient engines changed

China says nearly 13,000 'terrorists' arrested in Xinjiang

BEIJING: China yesterday defended its controversial security crackdown in the fractious far west region of Xinjiang, saying nearly 13,000 "terrorists" have been arrested there since 2014. Beijing has come under international criticism over its policies in the region, where as many as one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim minorities are being held in internment camps, according to human rights groups.

The State Council, China's cabinet, hit back again with a white paper saying that the government "is relentless in striking hard, in accordance with the law, at any conduct advocating terrorism and extremism". The document states that Xinjiang has long been part of Chinese territory but that "terrorist and extremist forces" have fomented separatist activities by "falsifying" the region's history.

"Since 2014, Xinjiang has destroyed 1,588 violent and terrorist gangs, arrested 12,995 terrorists, seized 2,052 explosive devices, punished 30,645 people for 4,858 illegal religious activities, and confiscated 345,229 copies of illegal religious materials," according to the white paper. "The counter-terrorism work and the de-extremism struggle in Xinjiang have always been carried out in accordance with the rule of law."

A emphasis is also on "preventive counter-terrorism", the document said, including setting up "education centers" to "eliminate terrorist activities before they are launched". The paper was quickly condemned by a Uighur rights group, which called it a "political excuse

to suppress the Uighurs". "The purpose of releasing the so-called white paper is a means of getting local support for its extreme policies and to cover up human rights abuses," Dilxat Raxit, spokesman of the exiled World Uyghur Congress, said in a statement.

Xinjiang, which shares a border with several countries including Pakistan and Afghanistan, has long suffered from violent unrest, which China claims is orchestrated by an organized "terrorist" movement seeking the region's independence. China has previously denied the presence of internment camps, but have in recent months shifted to calling them "vocational education centers" akin to boarding schools, with students checking in voluntarily.

The "preventive measures" have brought a "marked change" in the region, with people having "a much stronger sense of fulfillment, happiness and security," the white paper said. Last week, a top Xinjiang official said that the camps would "gradually disappear" when there is no longer a need for "education and training".

A Chinese diplomat also defended the camps at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, slamming "ill-intentioned accusations" against the "vocational training centers". But former inmates have said they found themselves incarcerated for transgressions such as wearing long beards and face veils or sharing Islamic holiday greetings on social media. Beijing has also gone on a public relations blitz in recent months, taking journalists and diplomats on tours to visit the region and the centers.

1.5 million detained?

Adrian Zenz, an independent German researcher, estimates there are up to 1.5 million people held in such camps now. "This is based on the fact that we have a range of different internment facilities, many of which have expanding dramatically not only in 2017 but also 2018... and the increasing internment rates among Kazakh and other small Muslim minority groups," he said.

He added that the writing of an "official version" of



BEIJING: A Uighur delegate (center) attends the Xinjiang delegation meeting at the ongoing National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. — AFP

Xinjiang history - much like what has been done in Tibet - allows China to implement tough measures against what it sees as separatism. "Even slight acts of deviance can so quite easily be interpreted as akin to high treason, and punished most severely," Zenz said.

Many Uighurs and Xinjiang experts say the previous violent episodes stem largely from spontaneous outbursts of anger at Chinese cultural and religious repression, and that Beijing plays up terrorism to justify tight control of the resource-rich region. "It is indisputable that Xinjiang is an inseparable part of Chinese territory," according to the white paper. "Uighurs are formed through long-term migration and ethnic integration, not descendants of Turkic people." — AFP

21 soldiers dead as gunmen storm Mali army camp

BAMAKO: Suspected jihadists killed 21 Malian soldiers in a raid on an army camp in central Mali on Sunday, military sources said, after a dawn attack that the armed forces believe was led by a deserter. Driving cars and motorbikes, the attackers stormed Dioura army camp in the Mopti region, in the latest assault on the military as the country grapples with the spread of extremist groups and instability.

"The provisional toll is 21 bodies discovered," said a military source, in figures also confirmed by a local legislator. The attack was carried out "by terrorist groups under the command of Ba Ag Moussa, a deserter army colonel", according to the Malian armed forces. A second military source said there was "a lot of damage". "Our men responded. I saw at least four bodies on the ground," he said.

President Ibrahim Boubakar Keita, on Twitter, said the Malian people were "united against terrible acts", without giving any death toll. Once a beacon of democracy and stability in Africa, Mali in recent years has been dogged by a coup, civil war and Islamist terrorism. Extremists linked to Al-Qaeda took control of Mali's desert north in early 2012, but were largely driven out in a French-led military operation launched in January 2013. In June 2015, Mali's government signed a peace agreement with some armed groups, but the jihadists remain active, and large tracts of the country remain lawless.— AFP

Afghanistan celebrates journalists as violence rages; Press targeted

KABUL: Afghanistan yesterday marked National Journalists Day amid a spike in violence that has already seen four media workers killed so far this year, in one of the most dangerous countries in the world for the press. Gunmen killed Sultan Mahmood Khairkhwah, a journalist working for a private TV channel and radio station in southeastern Khost province, on Friday - the latest media worker to be killed in the war-torn country, which saw its deadliest year on record for journalists in 2018.

"Freedom of expression is the most important achievement for us," Sarwar Danish, Afghanistan's second vice president told a gathering of journalists in Kabul. "During the Taliban regime ... any voice would be considered against their movement. And it is not acceptable to us to put people under censorship and pressure anymore," he said. The attack on Khairkhwah came two days after another journalist was seriously wounded when a sticky bomb ripped through his vehicle in southern Helmand province. Since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001, Afghanistan's media has been one of the country's few success stories. Hundreds of free media organizations have mushroomed, giving rise to a lively and largely free press — something that had never before existed in the country's history.

The media landscape in the Afghanistan today includes



KABUL: Afghan policemen stand guard as people with visa issues queue up outside the Pakistan embassy in Kabul. — AFP

over 100 TV channels, 284 radio stations and just over 400 newspapers and magazines, according to a recent government report. Most of the outlets are private. But growing violence has made the country one of the most dangerous environments for the media. Last month, two journalists were shot and killed when gunmen stormed their radio station in Taloqan, the capital of Takhar province in north-east Afghanistan. The pair, both men in their 20s, worked for Radio Hamsada, a private broadcaster. In January, Afghan

citizen journalist Jawid Noori was snatched from his car and murdered by the Taleban in Farah province, in the country's west. Media watchdog group Reporters Without Borders (RSF) reported that 2018 was the deadliest year on record for journalists in Afghanistan. "Eighteen journalists lost their lives in the line of duty last year," Danish said. According to RSF, 60 journalists and media workers have been killed in Afghanistan since the US-led invasion in 2001 - an average of around three a year.— AFP

Singaporean couple jailed for 'worst of its kind' maid abuse

SINGAPORE: A Singaporean couple was yesterday jailed for abusing a Myanmar maid after the pair force-fed her with a funnel, made her eat her own vomit and threatened to kill her family if she reported the maltreatment. In a case described by Singapore prosecutors as "arguably one of the worst of its kind" in the city-state, the married couple—who were sentenced two years ago over the abuse of another maid—beat and kicked their helper and made her clean the house in her underwear. Moe Moe Than, 32, was also given little food, limited use of the toilet and faced threats that her parents in Myanmar would be killed if she reported the abuse, court documents showed.

District Judge Olivia Low yesterday sentenced the woman, Chia Yun Ling, to 47 months in prison and ordered her to pay a fine. Her husband, Tay Wee Kiat, a former information technology manager, was jailed for 24 months. They were ordered to pay compensation to the maid. Their mistreatment of Than during her employment of nearly a year in 2012 was detailed in more than 20 charges. "In the present case, the accused persons had systematically and persistently abused Moe Moe Than both physically and psychologically throughout the period of her employment," state prosecutors told the court. One charge said Chia, a former senior sales manager, force-fed the maid a mixture of rice and sugar through a funnel after the helper told her she did not have enough food to eat.— AFP

International

'Shameless' scammers seeking to cash in on New Zealand massacre

Emails with links to fake fraudulent accounts were being sent out requesting money

CHRISTCHURCH: Scammers are trying to cash in on the Christchurch mosque massacres, using phishing emails with links to fake bank accounts to ensnare people keen to donate, New Zealand's cyber security body said yesterday. The attack on two mosques in which 50 worshippers were killed, allegedly by a white supremacist, has caused an outpouring of grief and prompted a flood of donations-well over NZ\$7 million (US\$5 million) - to those affected.

But CERT NZ, a government agency that responds to cyber security incidents, said emails with links to fake banking logins or fraudulent accounts were being sent out requesting money following the tragedy. Westpac New Zealand bank warned separately in a statement that scammers were sending emails under its brand to swindle money out of people. The warning was posted on Facebook, where the scam drew a furious reaction from users. "Disgusting these low lives are trying to scam money out of people when they're most vulnerable" wrote one. "What a shameless act," wrote another.

Some NZ\$5.8 million has been donated via online fundraising platform givealittle, and a second-launch-good-has received more than NZ\$2 million. Forty pages have so far been set up on givealittle to bring in donations to help those affected by the mass shooting. Robyn Lentell of the Spark Foundation that runs the platform was quoted as saying by the New Zealand Herald newspaper. New donation pages are "popping up every hour", she said, adding each was "extensively" checked and had warning signs posted if they had not yet been moderated.

NZ pledges gun control

New Zealand will tighten gun laws in the wake of its

worst modern-day massacre, the government said yesterday, as it emerged that the white supremacist accused of carrying out the killings at two mosques will represent himself in court. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said her coalition was unified on the need to reduce the availability of the kind of weapons used by Brenton Tarrant as he went room to room shooting Muslims gathered for Friday prayers.

"We have made a decision as a cabinet, we are unified," she said, flanked by her coalition partner and deputy prime minister, Winston Peters. Peters, whose

New Zealand First party has previously opposed changes, said he backed the prime minister fully. "The reality is that after one pm on Friday our world changed forever, and so will our laws," he said. Ardern, the youthful premier who has become the face of the nation's tragedy, said there would be an inquiry into the horrifying attack, as questions swirl over whether intelligence agencies should have spotted warning signs.

The role of social media has also come under the spotlight, after the gunman livestreamed his rampage on Facebook. A teenager, whose name cannot be published, appeared in court yesterday charged with distributing that footage. Meanwhile, police launched a probe into a bomb hoax that forced an hours-long closure of the airport in Dunedin on Sunday, where Tarrant lived. Grief continued to wash across the nation yesterday, with New Zealanders of all stripes gathering to express revulsion over the killings-and a unified front against racial hatred.

Family and friends outside Al Noor mosque-the scene of the largest massacre-held a sunset prayer session, with their mournful cries echoing through a park as locals looked on. "It just happened to be the time of our



CHRISTCHURCH: Students gesture while singing during a vigil in Christchurch yesterday, three days after a shooting incident at two mosques in the city that claimed the lives of 50 Muslim worshippers.—AFP

evening prayer. Anywhere you are, you can just pray anywhere," Saiyad Raza, who had travelled from Auckland to bury his cousin who died in the shootings, told AFP. Earlier, a Maori cleansing ceremony was performed at the mosque, bringing together indigenous Kiwis, Muslim leaders and local officials.

Dozens of students then paid their respects, with many coming together for a haka-a traditional Maori ceremonial dance that has been performed by groups across New Zealand in the wake of killings. And in Auckland, students at Orewa College gathered to form a

heart and the message "Kia Kaha"- "stay strong" in Maori. The organisers of New Zealand's largest gun show-the Kumeu Militaria Show, near Auckland-announced yesterday they had cancelled the event in the wake of the massacre and because of "elevated security risks". Despite having tightened the rules in the 1990s after the last mass shooting, New Zealand has relatively permissive gun laws, with licences granted to nearly every applicant. David Tipple, the managing director of Gun City, whose online store sold Tarrant four weapons, said he felt no responsibility for the killings.—Agencies

News in brief

Turkey, Iran launch joint raid

ISTANBUL: Turkey and Iran yesterday started a joint military operation against Kurdish rebels on Turkey's eastern border, state-run Anadolu news agency quoted the interior minister as saying. Turkey has recently talked about a possible joint operation with neighbor Iran to counter outlawed militants from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), but this is the first time Turkish authorities have confirmed a raid. "We started staging a joint operation with Iran against the PKK on our eastern border as of 0800 this morning," Suleyman Soyulu said of the operation against the PKK, listed as a terrorist group by Ankara and its Western allies. "We will announce the result later," he said.—AFP

5 Burkina troops killed

OUAGADOUGA: Five members of the security forces were killed in roadside bomb attacks in eastern Burkina Faso at the weekend, officials said yesterday. A policeman and a soldier were killed on Saturday when their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device (IED) in Komienga, a security official said. Late Sunday, three soldiers were killed in the same area by the same technique, another official said. A third person who was in the vehicle was injured and taken to hospital, the official said. The attacks bear the hallmarks of jihadist groups whose insurgency in the Sahel spilled over into Burkina Faso four years ago. More than 300 people have been killed, typically in hit-and-run raids, and the capital Ouagadougou has been hit three times. Attacks using IEDs began in August 2018 and have claimed more than 60 lives, according to a toll compiled by AFP.—AFP

Honduras journalist killed

TEGUCIGALPA: A Honduran reporter critical of the government was shot dead in the south of the central American country, police and rights groups said yesterday. Police in Nacaome, 100 kilometers south of the capital Tegucigalpa, said Leonardo Gabriel Hernandez, 54, was shot and wounded in the street and taken to a clinic, where he died. Hernandez - a Valle TV reporter whom a witness said was on foot when met by someone who opened fire - was a sharp critic of Honduras government. The non-governmental Committee for Free Expression (C-Libre) said Hernandez was the director and presenter of the "El Pueblo Habla" ("The People Speak") program. Spokesman for the National Commissioner of Human Rights, Julio Velasquez, said 77 journalists, broadcasters, owners and employees of media have been murdered in Honduras since 2001.—AFP

Iranian border guard killed

LONDON: An Iranian guard was killed in a fight with an armed group near the western border with Iraq, local media reported yesterday. Iran's armed forces have been stepping up their presence along its borders to prevent smuggling, illegal immigration and militant infiltration. "Last night around 9 pm, the border guards who were trying to stop armed smugglers entering the country had a fight with armed bandits," Tasnim news agency quoted Kiumars Sheikhi, commander of the border guards in Kermanshah province as saying. He said a member of the Baneh county border patrol had been killed in the fight. Sheikhi said members of the armed group were planning a sabotage operation in Iran, but did not give details or say whether they were connected to militant groups.—Reuters

New Zealand's leader tackles tragedy with empathy and resolve

SYDNEY: Scarcely 18 months in office, Jacinda Ardern faces an era-defining tragedy for her country - and is winning praise for meeting the moment with a deft mix of empathy and resolve. Tragedies like the murder of 50 Muslim worshippers in Christchurch can shape nations. They can also derail political careers and cement a leader's place in the history books - for good or for ill.

Barack Obama's tearful public appearance after 20 elementary school children were murdered at Sandy Hook in 2012 and his singing of 'Amazing Grace' at the memorial for slain pastor Clementa Pinckney were seminal moments of his eight years in the White House. Vladimir Putin's first months in office were thoroughly overshadowed by images of him holidaying on the Black Sea as all 118 submariners aboard the sunken Kursk lay dead.

Within hours of the mosque massacres, Ardern was in Christchurch, wearing a headscarf in a poignant show of solidarity with victims' families. The next day, in the capital Wellington, she put on the headscarf again and was seen in emotional embraces with members of the shellshocked Muslim community. The heartfelt expressions of solidarity and shared pain embodied the sense of vulnerability many Kiwis now feel, and offered a powerful rebuttal of the politics of hate.

"She never had to deal with something so horrific," said

On Champs Elysees, shattered glass and smoking ruins

PARIS: It is meant to be one of the world's most elegant streets: more than a kilometer of boutiques, restaurants, sidewalk cafes and fashion outlets vying for tourists' attention. But yesterday, the Champs Elysees looked more like a construction site. On their 18th Saturday of protests against President Emmanuel Macron and his policies, France's Gilets Jaunes ("yellow vest") movement targeted the tree-lined avenue that runs from the Arc de Triomphe, smashing banks, ransacking restaurants, burning newspaper kiosks and looting luxury stores.

From GAP to leather goods maker Longchamp, from Levis to high-end bakery Laduree, a hard core of violent protesters threw cobble stones through pane-glass windows, scrawled graffiti on walls, set fire to half a dozen newspaper stands and torched famed restaurant Le Fouquet's in an orgy of destruction. Whether the Disney store or Samsung, Tissot, Zara or Dior, few major retailers were left untouched by the rampage, which also took in a cinema, Hugo Boss, a Renault branded cafe, an Iran Air office and banks from Societe Generale to HSBC.

Among those that did emerge unscathed, perhaps thanks to heavy boarding-up after previous bouts of vandalism, were Apple's flagship store, Tiffany & Co and Louis Vuitton. Carpenters were cutting wood to board up shattered windows on Monday morning, and glass panes were being replaced in some bus-stops and storefronts, but stretches of the wide avenue remained a mess, with the smell of charred paper and metal hanging over the incinerated carcasses of newspaper kiosks.

"It's a bit of a mess," said Michael Bilaniuk, a tourist from Ontario, Canada who said he had come straight to the Champs Elysees to check out the scene after arriving in France, aware that the Gilets Jaunes had been on the rampage. "It's almost part of the tourist attraction-we've heard and seen so much about the protests, you kind of

Vicki Spencer, of the University of Otago's politics department, "nor has any other New Zealand Prime Minister." But she quickly moved beyond the role of consoler-in-chief to confront the challenges posed by an Australian white supremacist who, unbeknownst to any security agency, was able to come to her country, legally purchase weapons of war, and devastate the nation. Within hours of the tragedy, Ardern started tackling those challenges, declaring: "I can tell you right now, our gun laws will change."

"I know that there is, understandably, grief in New Zealand right now, but there is anger too, there are questions that need to be answered," she said later in one of many televised interviews, the tone both reassuring and firm. "Empathy has always been one of her strengths and never has it shown more," said David Farrar of the popular politically-focused Kiwiblog. "The picture of her in Christchurch wearing a headscarf looking devastated is a powerful iconic image. I think Ardern has been near perfect in her response to the tragedy."

Baby politics

Until the gunman walked into the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch on Friday afternoon, Ardern was better known around the world as a new mother holding down a difficult and busy job. She became an instant champion for working women the world over when she brought her infant daughter Neve onto the floor of the UN Assembly in New York last year. Becoming only the second prime minister in the world to give birth while in office - after Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto in 1990 - allowed the leader of a small, remote nation of just 4.5 million people to enjoy an extraordinarily high profile.

She has graced talk show host Stephen Colbert's couch,



PARIS: A man takes pictures of the wreckage of a newsstand in Paris yesterday, two days after protesters clashed with riot police forces on the Champs-Elysees during the 18th consecutive Saturday of demonstrations called by the 'Yellow Vest' movement.—AFP

want to come and see for yourself what's happened. It's interesting." Nearby, protesters' slogans were written across a storefront and the elegant entranceway to a gallery of shops. "They have millions, we are the millions" read one. Another threatened: "We are a legion, you are pawns, be careful."

'Protest too far'

Since the 'yellow vest' movement began in November, originally as a protest against fuel taxes before morphing into a general denunciation of Macron's politics, the government has struggled to neutralize the threat. While there has been a protest every Saturday in Paris and other cities since November, not all of them have been as violent and destructive as Saturday's, which has made it hard for businesses to predict how to prepare. While some retailers began boarding up their shops after rioting in early December, in recent weeks the numbers joining the protests declined sharply and many storeowners may have thought it was safe to operate normally again.—Reuters



CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern meets with the representatives of the Canterbury Refugee Centre in Christchurch.—AFP

met with celebrities such as Anne Hathaway and shared parenting tips with the panel of NBC's Today Show. Amid a sea of conservative leaders, the 38-year-old has become a hero to the disgruntled centre-left around the world. Like Canadian Prime minister Justin Trudeau, her advocacy for climate action and gender equality has led her to be branded the anti-Trump. Like Trudeau, Ardern has not been shy about expressing her displeasure at Trump's politics or leveraging his unpopularity in New Zealand to boost her own.—AFP

Facebook scrubs 1.5 million attack videos; Criticism goes viral

CHRISTCHURCH: Facebook says it removed a staggering 1.5 million videos showing harrowing viral footage of the Christchurch mosque rampage but criticism of social media giants for failing to block images of the "real-time terror attack" is also spreading fast. As the alleged gunman callously picked off his victims in Christchurch's Al Noor mosque, he livestreamed the gruesome scene on Facebook Live, apparently using a camera mounted on his body, after also tweeting a racist "manifesto."

Facebook said it "quickly" removed the video, plus the gunman's account and Instagram, and in the first 24 hours scrubbed 1.5 million videos worldwide "of which 1.2 million were blocked at upload." Spokeswoman Mia Garlick from Facebook New Zealand said the firm was "working around the clock to remove violating content using a combination of technology and people." But despite pleas - and official orders from authorities - not to share the content, the footage proliferated widely online and experts said the 17-minute video was easily retrievable several hours after the attack that killed 50 people.

According to Facebook's own figures, at least 300,000 videos were not blocked before being uploaded and there is no official data on how many times these were viewed or shared. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said authorities did whatever they could to purge the web of the images but laid the responsibility at the door of the Silicon Valley giants. "Ultimately it has been up to those platforms to facilitate their removal," she told reporters.—AFP

International

In Thailand election, new 'war room' polices the social media

Military-run Thailand strictly limits campaigning online

BANGKOK: In Thailand's election "war room", authorities scroll through thousands of social media posts, looking for violations of laws restricting political parties' campaigning on social media that activists say are among the most prohibitive in the world. The monitors are on the look-out for posts that "spread lies, slander candidates, or use rude language", all violations of the new electoral law, said Sawang Boonmee, deputy secretary-general of the Election Commission, who gave a Reuters team an exclusive tour of the facility.

When they find an offending post, on, for example, Facebook, they print it out, date-stamp it, and file it in a clear plastic folder, to be handed over to the Election Commission and submitted to Facebook for removal. "When we order content to be removed, we'll reach out to the platforms, and they are happy to cooperate with us and make these orders efficient," Sawang said.

Sawang said the tough electoral laws governing social media for the March 24 election, the first since a 2014 military coup, are a necessary innovation aimed at preventing manipulation that has plagued other countries' elections in recent years. "Other countries don't do this. Thailand is ahead of the curve with regulating social media to ensure orderly campaigning and to protect candidates," Sawang said. A Facebook representative said it reviewed requests from governments on a case-by-case basis.

"We have a government request process, which is no different in Thailand than the rest of the world," the representative said. Twitter did not respond to a request for comment. Democracy advocates, worry the social media restrictions laid out by the military government may be impeding parties from freely campaigning. The rules require that can-

didates and parties register social media handles and submit a post to the commission, stating what platform it will appear on and for how long.

Parties and candidates are only allowed to discuss policies, and posts that are judged to be misleading voters or that portray others negatively could see the party disqualified, or a candidate jailed for up to 10 years and banned from politics for 20. Pongsak Chan-on, coordinator of the Bangkok-based Asia Network for Free and Fair Election (ANFREL), said the rules go far beyond combating "fake news" and raise questions about how free and fair the election will be. "The rules are stricter than in any recent elections anywhere. They're so detailed and strict that parties are obstructed," he told Reuters.

'Doesn't bode well for democracy'

The monitoring centre, with a signboard reading "E-War Room", has three rows of computers and stacks of print-outs, with half a dozen workers spending eight hours a day searching for violations of the law. Sawang said another intelligence centre scanned for violations 24 hours a day but it was "off-limits" to media.

The election is broadly seen as a race between the military-backed prime minister, Prayuth Chan-ocha, and parties that want the military out of politics. But the stringent rules have left anti-junta parties fretting about how to campaign online, nervous that they could inadvertently break a rule that triggers disqualification. Up to now, the new rules have not been used to disqualify any candidates though the very threat has had a dampening effect and encouraged self-censorship. —Reuters



CHAIYAPHUM: Phue Thai party candidate for Prime Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan (center) speaks during a rally in Chaiyaphum province yesterday, ahead of the March 24 general election. —AFP

Baby reunited with dad; Indonesia flood death toll hits 79

SENTANI: A baby trapped under rubble after flash flooding destroyed his home in Indonesia has been reunited with his father after the disaster killed the rest of his family, officials said yesterday, as the death toll hit 79. The five-month old was plucked Sunday from debris inside a house where his mother and siblings were found dead in the hard-hit town of Sentani. The tot has since been returned to his surviving father.

"We took the baby to the hospital and had him treated," Papua military spokesman Muhammad Aidi told AFP. "He was in stable condition and has been released. The father was distressed but happy to be reunited with his baby." The news came as Indonesia's disaster agency raised the official death toll from 58 on Sunday, with more than three dozen people still missing.

Indonesia's military took up the grim task of putting the corpses of mud-caked victims into body bags, after flash floods and landslides ripped through the area. Scores have been injured in the disaster, triggered by torrential rain on Saturday. "The death toll could still go up," said national disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho. Rescuers battled mud, rocks and fallen trees in the hunt for survivors, as medical personnel treated the wounded in makeshift tents. "People need food, blankets, clean clothes and clean water," Nugroho said.

State of emergency

In Doyo, one of the most affected areas, a housing complex was littered with huge rocks believed to have rolled down from a nearby mountain, while sediment and waste were piled up on the pavement. The military said 5,700 people have been evacuated from the hard-hit area. "We have over 1,000 personnel searching for more victims," Aidi said. Disaster-prone Indonesia has issued a 14-day state of emergency in response to the floods. Papua shares a border with independent Papua New Guinea on an island just north of Australia. Flooding is common in Indonesia, especially during the rainy season which runs from October to April.

In January, floods and landslides killed at least 70 people on Sulawesi island, while earlier this month hundreds in West Java province were forced to evacuate when torrential rains triggered severe flooding. Meanwhile, three people were killed-including two Malaysian tourists-and some 182 were injured after an earthquake Sunday triggered a landslide on the Indonesian tourist island of Lombok, next to Bali.

The 5.5-magnitude quake is thought to have caused the landslide at the Tiu Kelep waterfall in the north of the island. Lombok was rocked by several earthquakes last summer, killing more than 500 people and leaving over 150,000 homeless. Last September, the country was hit by an earthquake and tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island which killed around 2,200 people. The Southeast Asian archipelago of some 17,000 islands is one of the most disaster-prone nations on Earth, straddling the Pacific Ring of Fire, where tectonic plates collide. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are common. —AFP

Hundreds of India land laws cause confusion, conflict

NEW DELHI: The sheer number and complexity of India's land laws make them inaccessible to most people, researchers warned yesterday, with many sparking the types of conflicts that they are supposed to help resolve. A study of just eight of India's 29 states published by the New Delhi-based think tank the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), showed that there are more than 1,200 laws related to land, alongside about 150 federal laws.

The laws largely deal with reform, acquisition, taxation, land use and records, said

Australian teen who egged senator hailed online as 'heroic'

MELBOURNE: An Australian teen who egged a far-right senator over his offensive comments about the Christchurch mosque attacks has been hailed as "heroic" by internet users, who have raised thousands of dollars in support of his protest. William Connolly, now better known as "Eggboy", cracked an egg over Fraser Anning's head at a press conference in Melbourne Saturday, prompting the senator to hit him in the face repeatedly. The controversial politician had a day earlier triggered outrage by claiming the attack in New Zealand that killed

Namita Wahi, head of the Land Rights Initiative at the CPR, adding that some dated back to the colonial era, and many contradict each other. "We have so many laws but there is no publicly available database where someone can easily access them," she told a land conference in New Delhi.

"With so many laws, and with the added complication of the colonial legacy and post-colonial structure, there are invariably disputes and conflicts," said Wahi, who is now analysing the land laws of the remaining 21 Indian states. Matters related to land and property make up about two-thirds of all civil cases in India, according to a 2016 study by Bengaluru-based legal advocacy Daksh, which found that most involved people with low incomes and only basic education.

More than 22 million cases are pending in India's district courts, according to federal government data. Of these, 7.5 million are

civil cases, and more than 6 million have dragged on for more than five years. Many of the cases are related to inheritance, as states have differing laws, with matters also decided by religion and custom, said Shipra Deo at land rights advocacy group Landesa. While a 2005 federal law gave Hindu women across India equal inheritance rights, several states had since amended the law to discriminate against them, she said. Few women made claims, because they were unaware of the law, or were forced to give up their claims to male relatives, said Deo, who recently researched inheritance laws in Indian states. In nearly a third of the states - mostly in the north - the inheritance provision for women was not equal, she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation on the sidelines of the conference. "In several states, the law does not necessarily follow the spirit of the 2005 law," she said. —Reuters

50 people at two mosques was the result of Muslim immigration to the country.

Connolly's act has spawned viral memes and drawn support from social media users around the world, with one setting up a GoFundMe page which quickly raised Aus\$44,000 (US\$31,000) to cover "legal fees" and "more eggs". An update to the page, which could not be verified, said "EggBoi (Will) plans to send a majority of the money to the victims of the Christchurch terrorist attack". "I donated for his heroic act in front of bigotry and racism. What he did is very inspiring for a young kid," wrote one supporter, Mohamed Majrad.

Another simply wrote: "VIVA EGG BOI!" Anning's remarks had drawn condemnation from across the political spectrum. Prime Minister Scott Morrison described the Queensland senator's comments as "appalling"

and "ugly" with "no place in Australia". Former PM Kevin Rudd dubbed Anning a "racist and a fascist", and encouraged Australians to sign a petition calling for him to be booted out of parliament. The Change.org petition has amassed 1.2 million digital signatures.

Anning brushed off the backlash yesterday, repeating his claims tying Muslim immigration to terrorism and defending his use of violence against the 17-year-old, according to ABC. Victoria Police are investigating the incident, including Anning's response, the national broadcaster reported. Anning has previously drawn controversy by calling for a "final solution to the immigration problem" and claiming that "all terrorists these days are Muslims". Self-confessed white supremacist Brenton Tarrant, from Australia, has been charged with murder in the Christchurch mass shootings. —AFP

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Rohingya 'lost gen' struggles to study in Bangladesh camps

Sixteen-year-old Kefayat Ullah walked to his school in southern Bangladesh in late January, as he had done most days for the previous six years, to find that - despite being one of the top students in his class - he had been expelled. A government investigation had outed him, along with dozens of his classmates, as a Rohingya refugee, a member of the mostly stateless Muslim minority from neighboring Myanmar. "Our headmaster called us into his office and told us that there's an order that Rohingya students have no rights to study here anymore," said the teenager, a small boy with cropped hair and a faint moustache. "We went back home crying."

For years, Bangladeshi schools have quietly admitted some of the Rohingya who live as refugees in sprawling camps on the country's southern coast, and whose numbers have swelled to more than 1 million since violence across the border in 2017. But the new influx has tested the hospitality of the Bangladeshi government, leading them to apply tighter controls on the population. The recent expulsions highlight the struggle of hundreds of thousands of children desperate to study in the world's largest refugee settlement, but at risk of missing out on crucial years of education and the chance to obtain formal qualifications. More than 730,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar after a military campaign in late 2017 that the United Nations has said was executed with "genocidal intent". Thousands more, like Kefayat, were born in Bangladesh after their parents fled earlier waves of violence.

Though Myanmar says it is ready to welcome back the refugees, northern Rakhine state, from where they fled, is still riven by ethnic tensions and violence, and the UN has said conditions are not right for them to return. Bangladesh's Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, meanwhile, has said the country cannot afford to integrate them.

'Hungry for education'

In some countries, governments allow refugees to study in local schools, allowing them to gain recognized qualifications, or permit institutions in the camps to teach the national curriculum. But Bangladesh has not recognized the vast majority of the Rohingya as refugees and does not issue birth certificates for those born in the camps, making their legal status unclear. The government has also forbidden centers in the camps from teaching the Bangladesh curriculum, according to the UN children's agency, UNICEF.

"Many students are depressed and frustrated," said a 21-year-old who asked not to be named because he was continuing to pass as Bangladeshi so he could go to university. "Yes, we are somehow pretending to be Bangladeshi students. Yes, we have got some education. But now, where will we go? The world should think about this: if we can't study, our future will be damaged. We are hungry for education."

In the headmaster's office at Leda High School, piles of textbooks inscribed with the names of some of the 64 expelled students lay stacked in a corner. "We are very sorry and disappointed about the decision," said the principal, Jamal Uddin. "The government is providing everything for the Rohingya - why not education?" But others were relieved. Eighteen months on from the start of the crisis, and with no resolution in sight, some local people are losing patience. In the grassy playground of the school, its founder, 48-year-old Kamal Uddin Ahmed, said the arrival of the Rohingya had been a massive upheaval for the local area. "How do you think I feel?" he said. "We don't mind the Rohingya, but we mind our lives." Intelligence officials who visited said it was "not safe for the country, not safe for our people" to have Rohingya in schools, he said. Rohingya have been accused by some of bringing drugs and crime to Bangladesh.

'Short term'

In a letter to local headmasters dated January, Bangladesh's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission Chief Abul Kalam said that an intelligence report on the situation had been filed with the prime minister's office in November. "It has been seen the trend of Rohingya children's participation in getting education has been increasing," Kalam said in the letter, seen by Reuters, adding that some Rohingya had obtained fake Bangladeshi identity documents through "dishonest public representatives". "It is advised to monitor strictly so that no Rohingya children can take education outside the camps or elsewhere in Bangladesh," he said.

Asked about his order to expel Rohingya children from local schools, Kalam said they were getting an education from learning centres in the camps. "They are not allowed to enrol in Bangladeshi schools as they are not Bangladeshi citizens," he said. But many children and their parents say the hundreds of learning centers operated in the camps by international NGOs and the UN offer mostly unstructured learning and playtime.

Bob Rae, Canada's Special Envoy to Myanmar, who has also travelled to Bangladesh, said Bangladesh authorities including Sheikh Hasina "have emphasized that the refugee camp is supposed to be 'short term' and that to talk about schooling beyond learning centres for very young children would risk giving the impression, to Myanmar and the world, that camps were there to stay".

Secret studying

In the camps, many children study by themselves from tattered textbooks carried from Myanmar or purchased at local markets, where stalls ply a swift trade in copies of the Myanmar curriculum smuggled across the border. Recent fighting in the region has made imports tougher, one stall owner said. "There are many Rohingya who can't get the Myanmar curriculum - we are doing this so we can help them," said 20-year-old Nurul Ansar, the Bangladeshi proprietor of a print shop which specializes in copies of the textbooks, pulling a copy of 'Grade One Primer, Basic Education' from a filing cabinet. —Reuters



French President Emmanuel Macron greets people after the United Nations Environment assembly on March 14, 2019 in Nairobi. —AFP

French companies struggling in East Africa

On a trip to East Africa last week, a beaming French President Emmanuel Macron was driven through the grounds of the Kenyan president's official residence in a locally assembled Peugeot 3008 car. Two days earlier, he toured churches hewn into the rock in Ethiopia. On a visit last year, he went to a Nigerian nightclub. Macron, 41, is trying to recast the style of France's engagement in Africa, where it was once a colonial power, hoping that building warmer cultural and personal ties will help boost business, trade and investment.

He signed contracts worth about €2 billion (\$2.27 billion) while in Kenya, whereas British Prime Minister Theresa May did not conclude any on a similar trip last August. A consortium led by Vinci secured a 30-year concession worth €1.6 billion to operate a highway linking the Kenyan capital and Mau Summit in western Kenya. Renewables firm Voltalia sealed a €70-million contract for a solar power plant and an Airbus-led consortium won a €200 million deal for coastal and maritime surveillance.

But Macron's four-day tour of Kenya, Ethiopia and former colony Djibouti showed how big a battle France faces in Africa, where China, Turkey and others have moved in quickly and aggressively, and competition is fierce from African countries. In 2017, French exports to Kenya, a former British colony, were about \$200 million - about half

Uganda's exports to its neighbor. China exported \$3.8 billion, making it Kenya's biggest trading partner.

The personal touch is vital when competing with China, French officials say. "We've always used that form of diplomacy to implant ourselves," said a French diplomat in the region. "But it becomes all the more important when facing China, because it differentiates us from their contract-oriented, low-cost, low-interest model of doing business."

Tough task

Trade figures across the continent show how tough the task ahead is for France, the world's sixth largest economy. From 2000 to 2017, the portion of all French exports that went to Africa halved from 11 percent to 5.5 percent. The main competition has come from Chinese goods, particularly in French-speaking West Africa. Since coming to office in May 2017, Macron, who spent several months as a diplomat in Nigeria in the early 2000s, has visited 16 African states, with two visits each to Mali and Morocco.

He has focused mainly on long-running relationships in French-speaking Africa, particularly the Sahel, where the responsibilities of the 4,500 French troops deployed there include fighting Islamic State. But he also has sought to build ties with Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia. Last week's trip was a chance for Macron to show that "for too long we

treated these East African countries like Banana Republics and they don't like that," said a former French envoy. "They have resources, financial means and growth. I'm not convinced that what is seen as 'our Africa' (France's former colonies) can offer the business opportunities we have elsewhere on the continent."

France is now seeking more targeted investments in specific sectors. The national development agency pours about 5 billion euros a year into Africa yet that barely scratches the surface alongside the cheap loans, big infrastructure investments and financing by China. "It's not easy to develop these economic links," said Francois Gualme of the French Institute of International Relations, who worked for France's development agency. "There's a political presence, but the economic presence remains small."

In Ethiopia, Macron said he wanted a new economic relationship, but Beijing has also been forging economic ties with Addis Ababa. China rebuilt, and financed through a multi-billion dollar loan, the rail link between the Ethiopian capital and Djibouti that was constructed by the French in 1917. There are many signs of China's presence, including Chinese laborers building skyscrapers or greetings of "Ni Hao" from children. Some Ethiopians resent the Chinese influence and hark back to when French and European influence was felt more widely. —Reuters

This is our truth: In reference to our Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

By Ruben Alfredo Avila Avila
Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the State of Kuwait

A group of countries whose governments are in the hands of neoliberal and rightwing businessmen have united under the tutelage of the Secretary General of the OAS, a certain government of a world power and some countries in the EU - whose extinct glories seek to recolonize our motherland by recognizing a self-proclaimed "Interim President" of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and configuring a coup d'etat against the Constitutional President Nicolas Maduro Moros, elected by popular suffrage on May 20, 2018 as agreed between the government and the opposition on March 1 of the same year, when they signed in Caracas the "Electoral Guarantees Agreement."

According to our constitution, the presidential elections are held in December, although this time they were rescheduled as a result of the dialogue held for several weeks between the government and the opposition in the Dominican Republic under the auspices of its president Danilo Medina and the facilitation of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, former head of the Spanish government and the accompaniment by some governments of the region.

Hours before the signature of this agreement, the congressman Julio Borges (currently a fugitive from the Venezuelan justice for crashing his car against a child and causing his death), received a call from the then President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, and refused to sign the agreement. I will not refer the articles

of our constitution that are convincingly and ignorantly used to give legal sustenance to this new coup attempt, during which the Venezuelan right has been manipulating the media, making it seem as if they were the majority and that they counted "the support of the Venezuelan people", without having any electoral process to validate it.

In this sense, article 72 of our constitution tells us that: All political offices and magistratures of popular election are revocable. After half of the period for which the official was elected for, a number less than twenty percent of the registered electors may request the convocation of a referendum to revoke their mandate. When equal or greater number of electors would have voted in favor of the revocation, provided that the participation in the referendum is equal to or greater than twenty-five percent of the registered voters, its mandate will be considered revoked and will proceed immediately to cover the absolute lack.

The only truth is that the opposition did not request the recall referendum when half of President Nicolas Maduro's term was fulfilled for a very simple reason: they were not and will never be a majority. The only majority with which they count is that of a self-proclamation before the international rightwing, the Secretary General of the OAS, the Lima Cartel (Group of Latin American rightwing governments) and on social media, by mandate of an international power. On the other hand, President Nicolas Maduro does have the legitimacy of the one that gives him the original power; that is the power that emanates from our glorious Venezuelan people. That is our truth...

Remote Cape with 'world's cleanest air' offers smog respite

As much of Asia wheezes, coughs and snuffles its way through another smog season, one isolated and windswept corner of Australia is serving as the global standard for clean air. With panoramic views of swaying tussock grass and the vast crystalline expanse of the Southern Ocean, Tasmania's beautiful Cape Grim peninsula is an unlikely reference point for the scientific world. But since 1976, this wild and blustery spot has been home to the Cape Grim Baseline Air Pollution Station - a small Australian government facility with the seemingly eccentric task of bottling air.

"Our job is essentially to find air as clean as you're likely to find anywhere in the world and measure just how polluted it is," Sam Cleland, the officer in charge of the station, told AFP. Looking out from his office atop the high sea cliffs, the nearest landmass to the west is Argentina, and there is nothing to the south except Antarctica. The facility's isolated location makes it perfect for collecting what many have dubbed the cleanest air in the world - what air would be like without choking exhaust fumes or industrial smoke.

When the wind blows from the southwest, Cleland and his team capture a sample using finely tuned instruments. Their kit is so sensitive that delivery trucks chugging down the dirt track from the nearest town - an hour away - are all logged, in case they potentially skew the readings.

Clean air economy

While the world's most polluted cities struggle to attract talent or manage chronic illnesses, residents around Cape Grim have made a virtue of their relatively pristine environment. Local beef is marketed with links to scientific papers on air quality, the number of wind farms has increased, and tourism is a growing sector. Mike Buckley, a "rain farmer" from the Cape Grim Water Company, has taken things to another level, harvesting water falling "from Earth's purest skies."

"Most waters of the world are spring waters," he explains as he looks out over a system of tarps, sluices and reservoirs set back from the coast. "The rain that comes off the Great Southern Ocean, that's what we depend on." Buckley said, adding that his remarkably sweet-tasting water is little more than H2O and trace amounts of sodium picked up from the sea. "It will have a little bit of sodium but it's very neutral and it's very soft," he said. "In nor-



This photo taken on Feb 25, 2019 show Sam Cleland, the officer in charge of the Cape Grim Baseline Air Pollution Station in Tasmania. —AFP

mal spring water, you'll have high magnesium, you'll have some naturally occurring nitrates, phosphorus, potassium." Buckley says the monitoring station and the clean air it measures have helped local produce stand out in a competitive market. "This probably wouldn't work without the monitoring station at Cape Grim," he admitted. "Yes, we sell the romance," he said, adding: "But look, there's 43 years of data that says this is the cleanest mix of air in the world."

Changing planet

But even Cape Grim is not immune to rising levels of pollution. When the wind blows from the north - coming from Melbourne or Sydney - it is possible to pick up the chemical signature of individual factories in operation that day. The facility has detected a rise in ozone depleting gases originating from as far away as China, Cleland explained. Even the cleanest air from the southwest is changing rapidly. "You can see over the last 2,000 years that CO2 levels in particular - but all of the major greenhouse gases - were at a fairly steady level," he said.

Ice cores show that CO2 was around about 275 parts per million for most of the last million years. "By the time we started measuring CO2 here, in 1976, it was already up to 330, since then we have progressed to where we are now, about 405," he added. Passing that level of four hundred parts per million earlier this decade echoed worldwide, serving as an ominous warning that climate change policies were insufficient. The levels of carbon dioxide found at Cape Grim now are akin to those found in some towns at the start of the industrial revolution. Cleland warned: "What we're seeing in the atmosphere now is probably unprecedented in Earth's history." —AFP

Business

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'Best Bank in Kuwait 2019'14 KAMCO wins 'Best Debt Bank
in the Middle East - 2019'16 Microsoft holds 'banking edition' of
CISO for Kuwaiti FSI Professionals

BAKU: Oil ministers attend a press conference at the end of the 13th meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) of OPEC and non-OPEC countries in Baku yesterday. —AFP

OPEC scraps April meeting, keeps oil cuts

US sanctions on Iran and Venezuela key factors

BAKU: Oil producer group OPEC yesterday scrapped its planned meeting in April and will decide instead whether to extend output cuts in June, once the market has assessed the impact of US sanctions on Iran and the crisis in Venezuela.

A ministerial panel of OPEC and its allies recommended that they cancel the extraordinary meeting scheduled for April 17-18 and hold the next regular talks on June 25-26. The energy minister of OPEC's de facto leader, Saudi Arabia, said the market was looking oversupplied until the end of the year but that April would be too early for any decision on output policy.

"The consensus we heard ... is that April will be premature to make any production decision for the second half," the Saudi minister, Khalid Al-Falih, said.

"As long as the levels of inventories are rising and we are far from normal levels, we will stay the course, guiding the market towards balance," he added.

The United States has been increasing its own oil exports in recent months while imposing sanctions on OPEC members Venezuela and Iran in an effort to

reduce those two countries' shipments to global markets. Washington's policies have introduced a new level of complication for the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries as it struggles to predict global supply and demand.

"We are not under pressure except by the market," Falih told reporters before the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) meeting in the Azeri capital, Baku, when asked whether he was under US pressure to raise output. US President Donald Trump has been a vocal critic of OPEC, blaming it for high oil prices.

Trump's sanctions policies have been the key factor behind a price rally, many OPEC members say, having removed more than 2 million barrels per day (bpd) of Iranian and Venezuelan crude from the market.

Brent oil prices hit a 2019 peak above \$68 per barrel last week. Saudi Arabia needs a price of around \$85 per barrel to balance its budget.

OPEC and its allies agreed in December to cut output by 1.2 million bpd - 1.2 percent of global

demand - during the first half of this year in an effort to boost prices. The JMMC, which also includes non-OPEC Russia, monitors the oil market and conformity with supply cuts. Asked if he had been updated on whether Washington would extend its waivers for buyers of Iranian crude, which are due to end in May, Falih said: "Until we see it hurting consumers, until we see the impact on inventory, we are not going to change course."

Inventory levels and oil investments are the two main factors guiding OPEC's action, Falih said, adding that oil industry estimates show that \$11 trillion of investments will be needed over the coming two decades to meet demand growth. Oil inventories in developed countries continue to fluctuate, he said.

"Our goal is to bring global inventory levels down to more normal levels - and even more importantly, to proactively protect against a glut," he said.

"Another important metric is the state of oil investments ... we are not seeing an investment trend that will get us even closer to the required figures."

Russian news agencies quoted Energy Minister Alexander Novak as saying ahead of yesterday's meeting that Moscow was on track to meet its reduction target. He suggested the next OPEC+ meeting should take place in May instead of April, saying time was needed to understand the impact of US sanctions on OPEC members Iran and Venezuela.

"It is hard today to plan your activities for months ahead, because the volatility is high because of the sanctions. We have to take these uncertainties into account in making decisions on the market," Interfax quoted Novak as saying on Sunday.

President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of a nuclear accord with Iran in May last year and reimposed sanctions on Tehran. From April 28, US companies and citizens will be barred from dealing in Venezuelan crude, as Washington intensifies measures against President Nicolas Maduro's government. But Trump has also urged OPEC to take steps to lower prices, saying in a tweet last month: "Oil prices getting too high. OPEC, please relax and take it easy." — Agencies

Gulf Bank partners with Dell to drive regional innovations

By Islam Al-Sharaa

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank, one of the leading financial institutions in Kuwait, yesterday announced their strategic agreement with Dell Technologies for a digitally transformative project. Taking significant steps towards sustaining business continuity and scalable data mobility, the bank will leverage industry-leading storage management and data protection solutions by Dell Technologies, to ensure maximum return on their investment.

This collaboration was announced at the Dell Technologies Forum held at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel in Kuwait. Themed 'Make it Real', this one-day free event brought together Dell Technologies' seven technology powerhouses together, to help organizations in Kuwait accelerate national and business transformation initiatives with speed and purpose.

Kuwait's strategic Vision 2035 centers on transforming the country into a world class financial hub, with the private sector leading economic activities, fostering competitiveness, and creating an enabling business environment. With this primary goal at the heart of their transformative efforts, Gulf Bank aims to be at the front-

lines of emerging industry innovation and embrace data-driven banking - which is evolving as a key driver of operational and competitive differentiation.

To this end, Gulf Bank planned to modernize their IT infrastructure with a robust and flexible data management backbone that can effectively store and protect the growing volume of data from multiple sources. Therefore, this project with Dell Technologies is divided into two critical parts - data management and backup.

To realize efficient data management, continuous data availability, seamless mobility and accelerate data center modernization, Gulf Bank will leverage Dell Technologies VPLEX and RecoverPoint solutions. These solutions are purpose-built to ensure operational agility and flexibility to match IT infrastructure to the speed of changing business needs. In addition, VPLEX and RecoverPoint will help Gulf Bank expand their operations across 3 data centers in the future.

To comply with offshore data regulations set by Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) and manage operational overhead costs for storing long term retention data on tapes, Gulf Bank has opted to deploy Data Domain and Deduplication technology to speed backups and reduce costs. These market-leading solutions by Dell Technologies will also help the bank to save valuable floor space, simplify operations, improve disaster recovery, reduce backup and recovery risks and importantly, enable a tapeless environment.

With this agreement, Gulf Bank alongside Dell Technologies aims to empower their business and propel their transformation journey to offer maximum value to



KUWAIT: Dr Waleed Al-Hasawi (right) and Javier Haddad exchange documents. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT: Javier Haddad with Same Saber (right), Country Manager - Kuwait at Dell Technologies

their customers. Thereby making a concerted effort to support and help Kuwait realize its ambitious vision to become an economic powerhouse.

Dr Waleed Al-Hasawi, General Manager of Information Technology at Gulf Bank said, "To win today's market and ensure business sustainability, it is critical that financial institutions change their direction and elevate their pace of business innovation. Keeping this in mind, we at Gulf Bank wanted to set our foundation for the new digital era. To do this, our first step was to choose a trusted partner who could not only help us imagine our IT environment, but also help us as an organization to ensure effective outcomes. And, we hope

our partnership with Dell Technologies enables us to achieve this vision."

Javier Haddad, General Manager - Gulf at Dell Technologies, said, "It is always great to see established organizations look at technology as a platform to uncover the answers of tomorrow. Therefore, we are pleased to be a part of the transformation journey embarked by Gulf Bank. Their vision to modernize and simplify data management to unlock new enterprise capabilities and offer more value to their customer, is something we advocate completely. We look forward to helping Gulf Bank build a benchmark by being fully committed to investing our expertise in this relationship."

Business

KFH holds AGM, approves distribution of 20% cash dividends, 10% bonus shares

In 2018, KFH redefined several core aspects of growth



KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held its annual general Assembly (AGM) yesterday and approved the Board of Directors' recommendation of distributing 20 percent cash dividends and 10 percent bonus shares to shareholders.

Chairman's Message



Hamad Al-Marzouq

Praise be to Allah Almighty, and Peace and Blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his Family and Companions.

Esteemed Shareholders,

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatu Allah Wabarakatuh...

On behalf of myself, my fellow colleagues and members of the Board of Directors of Kuwait Finance House ("KFH" / the "Bank"), I would like to present to you the KFH Group Annual Report for the year 2018.

KFH's performance in 2018 was unique and outstanding. I'm very proud of the remarkable achievements we have made this year. KFH Group's distinguished capabilities and strengths have enabled the Group to be a trustworthy partner in all regions where it operates. These characteristics have placed KFH Group in a leading position in the GCC as the safest financial institution for the year 2018 according to Global Finance Award. This award reflects remarkable customers trust and confidence, KFH Group credibility and acceptance on regional and international levels. It also reflects KFH's highly distinguished trademark in a promising market which offers great opportunities.

We have managed during the year to transform KFH vision and mission into a reality and reap the harvest of implementing the Board approved long term strategy to diversify sources of profit, mitigate risks, optimize cost, increase operating income from core banking activities, divest several non-strategic investments successfully and achieve inter-group harmony in terms of performance to ensure sustainable growth and profitability as affirmed through positive indicators, robust financial position and well-balanced sustainable growth over the last four years which have witnessed highly significant positive performance.

In pursuit of expansion and strategic growth opportunities on both regional and international levels to cope with the accelerating developments witnessed in the banking sector worldwide, KFH has focused on considering several opportunities and alternatives to enhance its position regionally and globally.

In continuation of our leading role in global development of sharia-compliant financial services, the performance of the first Islamic bank in Germany - KT Bank AG, core pivot to Europe, has been highly impressive as it achieved significant positive results and proved our vision of investment feasibility. KFH has continued its hedging policy to encounter all local and global variables and overcome economic fluctuations efficiently in regions where it operates. It has adopted conservative policies to enhance precautionary provisions and target a robust financial position with a view to focus on core banking activities, high asset quality, adequate capitalization and high level innovation and distinction.

KFH's strategy relied on three core pillars to achieve

its priorities. Pillar 1 targets growth and expansion of the customers base by providing distinguished and unique banking services. Pillar 2 targets transformation of fast developing financial technology, thus availing and implementing new technology to achieve customers' satisfaction and expectations through embracing of advanced revolutionary digitalization process as part of KFH business transformation program. Transformation to FINTECH application shall grant KFH access to highly advanced electronic banking services as the base of its services for the year 2018 and thereafter. Pillar 3 aimed to achieve highest levels of efficiency and appropriate utilization of operational activities and resources to achieve development and growth in all business lines.

KFH's transformation journey to electronic banking continued by releasing several initiatives and improvements on electronic banking channels, aiming to provide top notch services to customers including website, electronic banking applications on smart phones, e-corp, online for companies, Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and advanced robotic technology in certain operations. KFH succeeded in granting its customers access to all banking transactions and availing finance at any time and place.

Our efforts for the year 2018 were crowned with the inauguration of the first fully automated electronic branch, comprising of high tech systems and advanced self-service machines, being the kick-off point to open similar branches in the near future and apply KFH's ambitious plan. KFH business sectors continue their endeavor to introduce innovative products and services to customers e.g. KFH has released KFH Xpress Service for electronic money transfer to beneficiaries worldwide. On the other hand, KFH endeavors to assimilate the Blockchain technology where money transfer services are provided through RippleNet.

Group main financial indicators continued their ascending trend through enhanced profitability. Net shareholders profit exceeded KD 227.4 million as at the end of 2018 i.e. an increase by 23.5 percent compared to approximately KD 184.2 million for the previous year. Earnings per share reached 36.36 fils i.e. an increase by 23.4 percent compared to 29.46 fils for the year 2017.

Total assets reached KD 17.8 billion i.e. an increase by 2.4 percent. Our strategy succeeded in achieving cost optimization where total operating expenses ratio reached 39.2 percent of total operating income, thus continuing its decline for the fourth year respectively. Meanwhile, depositors accounts increased to reach KD 11.8 billion i.e. an increase by 1.6 percent compared to 2017.

Return on average shareholders' equity increased to reach 12.4 percent in 2018 compared to 10.2 percent for 2017. Capital Adequacy Ratio reached 17.47 percent in 2018.

Net financing income reached KD 527.3 million in 2018 i.e. an increase of 18.5 percent compared to the preceding year. Total operating income reached KD 746 million i.e. an increase by 4.6 percent compared to 2017. Net operating income reached KD 453.5 million i.e. an increase by 11.1 percent compared to the last year.

Our well balanced performance comes on the back of the positive inter-connection at the group level, well planned and effective execution of our unified strategy which is characterized by appropriate integration, coordination among all concerned parties whether at Head Office or other various countries where KFH operates e.g. Turkey, Bahrain, Malaysia, Germany and Saudi Arabia. A set of successful strategic initiatives has been applied as core pillars to enhance governance and banking services at the group level.

As we are committed to realize exceptional earnings for shareholders on the long run, the Board of Directors has given its recommendation to the General Assembly to distribute cash dividends of 20 percent and bonus shares of 10 percent.

Positive ratings

KFH has retained all positive ratings rendered by global credit rating agencies in addition to many other outstanding awards presented by globally recognized institutions. KFH shares have been listed in FTSE

Russell Index for emerging markets in Kuwait. These are all positive indicators to the successful implementation of the set plans and the outstanding performance.

The outstanding credit rating given to KFH by global rating agencies reflects KFH's leading and pioneering position. Fitch Rating Agency has affirmed its rating for KFH at A+ Long Term and F1 Short term with a stable outlook. Moody's Rating Agency affirmed KFH rating at A1 Long Term and P-1 Short Term with a stable outlook.

Continuing its track record, and affirming its leading and pioneering position based on several standards set by highly specialized global neutral organizations to reflect its role as the leading Islamic organization in Kuwait and worldwide, KFH has received the Global Finance award of the safest Islamic Financial Institution in GCC for the year 2018. KFH has also won Best Bank for High Net Worth Clients award from Euromoney.

KFH financed major projects in Kuwait. It was a mandated lead arranger for Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company for KD 390 million syndicated facility that had a KD 156 million Islamic tranche, as well as, financing 50 percent of LIMAK's KD 249.2 million facility for the construction of Kuwait International Airport's new passenger terminal. Moreover, KFH extended a KD 120 million facility for MENA Homes Real Estate Company (a Kuwait Projects Company Holding "KIPCO" subsidiary) for the development of Hessa Al-Mubarak District project.

On both regional and international levels, KFH has arranged a syndicated finance transaction for Duqm Refinery amounting \$500 million, bearing in mind that total value of the transaction reached \$4.6 billion. KFH-Turkey has financed the Canakkale Project in Turkey through a KD 72 million finance transaction, which is part of a total finance transaction provided by several global financial institutions and banks of KD 800 million.

Group Treasury and Financial Institutions continued to integrate and develop an effective liquidity management process at the group level through diversification and provision of stable finance, development of human resources, implementation of high technology systems and highly developed structures to develop and enhance customer service by providing innovative sharia-compliant solutions for Group Treasury and Financial Institutions.

Group Treasury expanded its investment activities in Sukuk as KFH investments in the Sukuk market increased during the last two years to exceed KD 1.5 billion in 2018. While KFH is operating as a market maker for the active Sukuk market to ensure marketing of Sukuk in secondary market, Group Treasury continued to retain its leading role as a supplier of International Islamic Liquidity Management (IILM) Sukuk, thus out-performing regional and international banks.

On the other hand, Group Treasury has sought to innovate new products and add several hedging solutions to protect KFH investments in various regions where it operates by using sharia-compliant currency exchange transactions and profit Swaps against existing hedging products. Treasury has managed to centralize all Kuwait treasury activities and integrate the same with Group subsidiaries to ensure inflow of foreign currency, optimize costs and execute transactions at competitive rates to ensure development and enhancement of productivity and efficiency.

Kuwaitization

The year 2018 was a challenging year from a Human Resources perspective where we have continued our efforts in developing and attracting national talent in addition to transforming their academic and professional status in Islamic Banking and Finance. KFH Group committed to meeting required changes in regulations while maintaining efficient staff cost ratios. Nationalization remains a core focus for the KFH Group where we continued attracting and developing seasoned professionals as Bankers of the Future. We have shown exceptional progress in implementing our Human Resources Strategy where we reached a Kuwaitization ratio of 69 percent, thanks to Kuwaitis making up 97 percent of our recruitment and our continued focus on building and promoting our talent from

within KFH which has lead KFH Kuwait to be an industry leader in terms of Nationalization indicators and Kuwaitization ratios.

To strengthen the relationship between the bank and its' employees, KFH was keen on organizing events and taking advantage of occasions to communicate with all employees and to strengthen relations while maintaining positive interaction on a personal and professional level due to the importance of that in improving the general image of the bank and the performance of its employees. By doing so, KFH Group Entities continued advancing its Group Employee Engagement Scores in 2018 where our Group Employee Engagement Score reached 78 percent with a growth of 5 percent. Our continued focus on attracting and retaining our employees lead to recognizing Kuveyt Turk Participation Bank as one of the Top 3 organizations in Turkey in terms of employee engagement.

Development of our Successors and High Potential Employees across the Group has been high on our agenda for this year where we have successfully concluded a series of intensive courses with Harvard Business Publishing, INSEAD, and IMD to build their capabilities as KFH Group Future Leaders.

We have expanded, in 2018, our social participation and contributions activities in local society where KFH has donated KD 11.2 million to Zakat House based on its belief in the significance of performing Zakat obligation and placing it in sharia-compliant channels to better serve society and highlight the human side of our business.

We would like to avail this opportunity to convey our sincere thanks and appreciation to all our shareholders and customers for their continuous support. We are confident that we will, by the grace of Allah, achieve rewarding returns for shareholders and depositors. I would also like to avail this opportunity to thank our Group employees and members of the Fatwa and Sharia Supervisory Board for their continuous endeavor and constructive contributions.

Finally, I would like to convey our sincere thanks, gratitude and appreciation to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah safeguard and protect him, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah safeguard him, and His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, may Allah safeguard him. Our thanks and appreciation are also extended to His Excellency Dr Mohammed Al-Hashel, Central Bank of Kuwait Governor and all regulatory authorities for their ongoing support to the banking sector in the State of Kuwait.

May Allah Grant us Success
Hamad Abdul Mohsen Al Marzouq
Chairman



Mazin Al-Mahed

Group CEO's Message

Exceptional growth and bright future

Since inception, progress for KFH meant providing an alternative through "sharia-compliant" banking products and services for customers' financial needs. Today, KFH's growth and advancement stand as a more

Business

productive and effective pioneering financial model, providing retail and corporate customer care to achieve the highest prosperity for society. The KFH brand wherever it operates is a symbol of utmost trust. KFH has built this trust through a long journey of successful partnerships with various tiers of customers. We fully believe that the bank's success is conditioned to customers' security and satisfaction.

KFH was keen, over a 40 year journey, to provide the utmost level of care and service to customers and societies. This goal was achieved through gradual and clear regional and strategic growth towards the future. We focused on developing our employees' talents to build responsible and talented future leaders. We have innovated a new financial system based on genuine social values. We comprehend market needs and the actual momentum of the regions where we operate. To achieve gradual sustainable growth and lead our team and customers to further progress, we have provided specially designed services and accounts to fulfill their expectations and achieve a continuous increase in assets, income and managed funds, thus proving our gradual growth with sustainable positive results.

In 2018, KFH redefined several core aspects of growth and progress by endeavoring to achieve exceptional growth involving time management and progress. KFH has considered, during the year, several opportunities to achieve further growth, strength and stability.

Regional power provides a strong, unleashed position to support our local commitment to growth. We have the ability to grow along with various customers' needs and according to their changing styles. KFH's strength has attracted several opportunities for our customers, societies, employees and the region in general. We have ensured sustainable progress and growth through appropriate utilization of resources to achieve a positive and effective change. Our markets in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Malaysia and Turkey embody the concentration of our regional power and provide a vast scheme of services and products, thus enabling customers to have access to several alternatives, resources and services through our widely spread branch network.

KFH has a prosperous future, by the grace of Allah, by achieving sustainable success and availing proper opportunities. As a leading and pioneering bank we invest in our employees, facilities and our ability to provide outstanding retail services which have acquired the full satisfaction of customers including small companies aiming to obtain capital to achieve further progress or provide a service to corporate, trade and industrial sectors to enhance growth or real estate customers who wish to purchase and invest in properties.

Distinct Financial Indicators

KFH recorded a net profit at KD 227.4 million in 2018 i.e. an increase by 23.5 percent compared to the preceding year. Furthermore, financial indicators achieved clear improvements and growth over the last four years. Profit for the year resulting from the Group's local activities in Kuwait increased remarkably to reach KD 162 million in 2018 compared to KD 37 million in 2014. As KFH Group heads towards a global spread and expansion, seeking better investment opportunities and returns, profit for the year resulting from international operations approximated KD 101 Million in 2018.

Total assets increased to reach KD 17.8 billion as at the end of 2018. On the Middle East level, assets increased as at the end of 2018 to reach more than KD 12.2 billion i.e. an increase by 15 percent compared to its volume 4 years ago, thus representing 69 percent of total assets in 2018 compared to 62 percent in 2014. KFH efforts succeeded in giving KFH an effective presence in The Euro Zone and Turkey where assets represent 26 percent of total assets (2014: 24 percent). Assets in Europe and Turkey exceeded KD 4.5 billion as at the end of 2018 with an increase of 10.3 percent compared to 2014.

Digital retail banking services

In the year 2018, KFH has embraced the digital revolution by adopting innovative solutions using FINTECH, thus contributing to the exceptional growth of KFH. Kuwait banking sector witnessed for the first time in Kuwait the birth of a fully automated comprehensive electronic branch in Ishbiliya area (KFH - GO) which provides 24 hour service via electronic systems and self-service machines, thus eliminating traditional methods where customers await service from employees. Ten similar branches are expected to be opened mid next year. Banking and commercial services shall be enhanced through the internet and mobile phones. XTM and ATM machines shall be increased to accommodate all new innovative technologies, artificial intelligence, active systems and robotics for transactions in addition to our core branches network.

Retail and Private Banking

KFH inaugurated five banking lounges in various branches for Awlawyya customers, "Nukhba" and Ruwaad" as part of the bank's vision to provide banking services based on high global standards. KFH is committed to quality and distinction in developing the appropriate environment to provide services via a modern design and transformation to the modern generation of e-banking to satisfy customers' inspirations and reflect KFH's pioneering global role. Accordingly, KFH could benefit from lower costs and provide better service to customers. Expansion was achieved in the direct sales team to reach 100 employees with an increase in direct sales presence in more than 30 different locations. To increase geographic expansion and serve customers in new areas, new branches were opened in Qairawan Mall and Arabia Mall.

As we celebrated our 40th anniversary with our customers and shareholders, we have redefined several core aspects of our services to cope with their requirements and ensure that our service level remains extraordinary. In four decades of customer service, our reputation grew, rendering us as the prime Islamic banking leader in Kuwait. Our financial expertise has helped our customers to plan their future, and demand increased on products we provide through our business lines. We are committed to focus on being partners with our customers rather than just being a service provider. In order to accommodate the society's banking preferences, we have advanced to a non-cash payment banking technology as there was substantial demand for our digital services.

To ensure that our customers and partners receive all available tools to fulfill their needs in the best possible manner, we have added new services to our line of products including Visa Platinum - Smart Pay and New Visa Signature with variable advantages as part of our customer care scheme. KFH continues to provide and enhance diversified services and products to fulfill customers' inspirations and enhance the bank's global leading position. Our continuing endeavor in this respect has been crowned with KFH winning the Visa Global award of the Fastest Growing Debit Portfolio in Kuwait in 2018.

KFH sales of the Visa Global Card increased by 32 percent during summer 2018 compared to the same period last year i.e. highest growth ratio in 4 years for the Visa card.

KFH focused on developing ATM machines by adding 7 new services, thus providing more comfort and ease for customers and achieving many of their practical requirements and needs around the clock through an advanced set of services including cash withdrawal using QR Codes instead of the ATM card. Customers are able to use their civil ID or mobile No. for withdrawal, updating civil ID information, activating new ATM cards, changing PIN codes and using KFH Xpress instant and swift money transfer in a competitive way to almost any destination worldwide.

Private banking continued its approach to provide outstanding banking services. KFH provided money delivery service for private banking customers 7 days a week throughout the year, thus enhancing customers' satisfaction level. In line with our integration strategy at the Group level, management has continued to facilitate account opening procedures at KFH Turkey, KFH Bahrain and KFH Malaysia through the coordination of account opening process at Kuwait Head Office.

Various finance products

The Individual Financing Department focuses on providing finance facilities to retail customers willing to obtain real estate financing e.g. residential, investment, commercial, industrial or handcraft. The department provides various finance products to fulfill retail customers' needs to finance existing or under construction real estate or develop land and supervise the respective completed stages. The department is currently developing several finance projects to be announced soon, thus granting retail cus-

tomers various opportunities and alternatives to benefit from available finance products at flexible and competitive financial terms and conditions by introducing new real estate financial concepts. This has contributed to the creation of a special imprint and mark for KFH, thus increasing our customer base and KFH market share in real estate finance.

To provide a distinguished service to this segment of customers, the individual financing department has established several portfolios managed by highly qualified and experienced account managers, thus ensuring continuous contact whether directly through field visits or SMS.

On the other hand, KFH opened, during the year, the largest automotive showroom in the Middle East to provide commercial services and automotive finance services.

Meanwhile finance services provided at the automotive agent premises covered more showrooms, increasing from 54 to 58. Car rental and lease to own services are also offered at most of the automotive agent showrooms.

Corporate Finance

Over the last 40 years, credit and investment services were a significant part of KFH's overall success. We made a modest start enhanced by the will to assist our customers to achieve present success and future planning. Today, we have a department supervising assets exceeding KD 5 billion in value.

KFH participated in major finance transactions for various sectors including oil and petrochemicals sectors. Also, it has participated in financing many other major projects in other vital sectors including infrastructure and construction projects. KFH plays a major role in supporting the national economy, financing mega projects, enhancement of the execution of Kuwait's development plan and vision. Transactions include a KD 124.6 million finance transaction to LIMAK company to complete the new terminal project. Furthermore, it has signed a Euro 200 Million finance transaction for the construction of Canakkale flying bridge in Turkey, signed a memorandum of cooperation with KIPCO Company to finance the customers of Hissa Al-Mubarak District real estate project in addition to a KD 120 million finance transaction in favor of MENA Homes Co.

Treasury and financial institutions

KFH Group continued its leading role as a trust worthy organizer of sovereign and private Sukuk worldwide. KFH Capital, in cooperation with Group Treasury, has acted in 2018 as the joint lead arranger for the main issuances of Sukuk in the region. Major issuances include Oman Sukuk worth \$1.5 billion, Dubai Islamic Bank Sukuk worth \$1 billion and First Abu-Dhabi Bank's first Sukuk approximating \$650 million. Furthermore, International Islamic Liquidity Management (IILM) has placed KFH as the of top rank dealer in the main dealers list which comprises several international and regional banks, thus affirming KFH position as the core player in the short term Sukuk market.

Group Treasury continues to apply innovative technology to execute automated transactions and settlements in partnership with Bloomberg for capital market activities. Group Financial Institutions Department has developed new credit lines for highly rated banks for better distribution of risk while maintaining a cautious balance and diversification to achieve the highest returns on available liquidity. The department succeeded, in cooperation with several local and regional banks, to arrange mega finance transactions e.g. \$250 million syndicated finance transaction in favor of



Kuwait International Bank. Also, it has participated in several finance transactions in cooperation with International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation including the finance of government oil supplies to member countries.

Operations and information technology

KFH continued its transformation process to e-banking after upgrading its infrastructure. Transactions processed through e-channels reached more than 65 percent of total transactions. Electronic transactions reach around 4 million transactions monthly. Considering the cooperation between the Operations Department and the Information Technology Department at KFH, to transform to a new automated system for settlement of customer claims on ATM systems, we have succeeded in launching a centralized SWIFT correspondence network for international payments at the Group level. On the other hand, KFH has joined the Digital Payments Network (Ripple), thus improving business efficiency, optimizing cost, focusing on technical expertise and investing in strategic initiatives to provide the best customer service. In pursuit of the most advanced technology systems to provide a high-tech customer service, KFH has invented, for the first time in Kuwait, a specialized charity deductions system to establish charity deductions without the need to fill in the charity deduction application form.

Human resources

Group Human Resources made significant leaps during this year where KFH Human Capital capabilities have been further transformed leading to a more engaged, enabled, and vibrant workforce.

During this year, we continued building momentum and further strengthening our employment brand across our Group. We have constantly attracted talented individuals across the Group where National Talent made up 99 percent of our recruitment this year (97 percent in KFH Kuwait). Our talent retention ratios remain favorable when compared with our peers thanks to the effective practices we have built into our Talent Acquisition domain.

Group Human Resources persists with the execution of many initiatives across the Group where the standardization of best practices across the Group remains a core focus. We have continued rolling out Oracle HR in our Group Entities where previous roll-out exercises have reaped benefits through oversight and control over our Human Capital.

In KFH Kuwait, we increased the pool of leaders for the future by 45 new individuals. Identified High Potential Employees (HiPos) were then enrolled in rigorous focused programs led by first-class providers including Harvard Business Publishing to further refine the skills and capabilities of our HiPos. The year 2018 program for Successors included a major investment on a Group Level where leaders were enrolled in specialized programs developed in liaison with three of the top Business Schools in the world: Harvard Business School, INSEAD, and IMD.

KFH Kuwait continues to be amongst the leaders in Kuwaitization Ratio amongst its peers with a ratio of 69 percent. We also ensured effective career progression of our Kuwaiti Nationals as part of our Middle Management, and we have internally promoted eighteen Kuwaiti Branch Managers from within KFH, while Kuwaiti Nationals now make up more than 60 percent of the Executive Leadership Team thanks to constant

emphasis on internal progression.

This year was a significant year for the Employee Survey, our largest initiative covering more than 10,000 employees across our Group. Participation rate maintained a record high of more than 85 percent which shows our employees commitment to providing their inputs where the relevant initiatives and actions taken resulted in a significant change in KFH Group. KFH Group sustained its upward trajectory for the third year in a row with the Employee Engagement score reaching 78 percent, thus continuing its industry leadership in this indicator.

Furthermore, Group HR applied industry leading methods on how to recognize Key Talent with over twenty recognition opportunities all aimed at improving our overall contribution thus resulting in enhanced engagement and commitment. KFH continued supporting its employees this year through providing scholarships to talented Kuwaiti individuals to obtain both Graduate and Undergraduate Degrees where we congratulated the third batch of employees on their graduation. Group HR continues to make significant progress in attracting and growing talent which will result in more development and growth, leading to further performance improvement by the grace of Allah across KFH Group.

Risk and compliance

Group risk, Compliance and Internal Audit departments have provided remarkable and significant support in the assessment of the efficiency of the bank risk management process at the Group level. KFH continues to adhere to CBK and Capital Markets Authority regulatory instructions in regard to internal control and governance by applying several initiatives including the three-year-risk strategic review plan. Group Internal Audit Department applies international internal audit standards issued by the International Institute of Internal Auditors. On the other hand, our Legal Department has developed its services and allocated an office at KFH Head Office for the Ministry of Justice employees of the Real estate Registration and Authentication Department to provide services to KFH customers without the need to refer to the Ministry head office. Sharia Department witnessed qualitative development including recruitment of new staff and implementation of an ambitious plan to develop its employees. Sharia department employees received international professional certificates in Sharia audit.

Shari'a department plays a significant role in applying Fatwa and Sharia Supervisory Board (FSSB) decisions to all KFH sectors. The department has prepared a follow up plan for KFH subsidiaries to ensure compliance with Sharia regulations and related FSSB decisions, develop regulatory follow up reports to Sharia Committee and concerned authorities and ensure safety of the subsidiaries activities Sharia wise. Several initiatives have been launched aiming to spread Shari'a knowledge and awareness and enhance moral values and principles among employees, customers and related parties.

Awards and recognitions

Continuing the remarkable record and affirming KFH's position as a leading and pioneering bank in accordance with global standards, thus reflecting its position as the leading Islamic Bank in Kuwait and worldwide, KFH won the "The Safest Islamic Financial Institutions In The GCC 2018" award by Global Finance. KFH also won Best Bank for High Net Worth

Clients award from Euromoney.

In this context, we have received continuous global confirmation ratings for capital and assets quality. Today, we are able to achieve future satisfaction of our customers and shareholders by increasing our employees experience through training and guidance. We made strong foundations to meet all customer and society's future needs.

KFH & society

KFH continues to enhance its leading CSR position through a set of various social initiatives and contributions, comprising of more than 200 initiatives in 2018. Such initiatives highlighted the bank's keenness to execute its diversified and comprehensive social responsibility. Initiatives have aimed to cover various fields through business plans and programs carried out by the bank to cover education, health, awareness, environment, special needs, youth, sports and voluntary works. Also, they include social Takaful to enhance the concept of efficiency in achieving comprehensive social growth.

Youth represent the main priority of KFH strategy. For better achievement of this strategy KFH has concluded an agreement of cooperation with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs to provide an integrated system of youth care and support of the owners of minor projects, students' graduation projects and scientific researches.

KFH was keen on reaching various society tiers by enhancing its presence in all global social events and initiatives launched by international organizations through social media channels, and various social service activities. To affirm this significant role, KFH has participated in several global and regional conference e.g. meetings of IMF and International Bank of Indonesia, "Invest in Kuwait" conference held at Silicon Valley - USA, "Islamic finance: Global Thesis" held by the Central Bank of Kuwait and Islamic Finance Services Council, Islamic Banks Conference - 3rd Global Forum of General Council of Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions, Annual conferences in Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI), Private Sector Social Responsibility Conference to support human rights in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Rights Commission. KFH has also participated in conferences held by students unions on both local and international levels.

On the other hand, KFH continued its endeavor to spread and uphold banking and finance culture, disclose financial indicators through the Live Webcast Analyst Conference to all interested parties and investors worldwide, issue economic and real estate publications and expand internet and social media posts in cooperation with Thomson Reuters, thus increasing numbers of followers on the Group social media accounts. Our Legal Department has taken all legal procedures to protect intellectual rights of KFH publications in regard to Real-estate Reports.

Our success is mainly attributed to our employees endeavors and the valuable trust which our customers and shareholders have bestowed upon us. We would like to convey our sincere thanks and appreciation to KFH Board Members and the Shari'a Board for their distinguished efforts to enhance KFH credibility. We shall always seek to execute our plan in a systematic and orderly fashion and achieve more success for our reputable organization.

Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh
Group Chief Executive Officer

Business

Global Finance names NBK 'Best Bank in Kuwait 2019'

Al-Fulaij: Award reflects NBK's strong results and its promising future

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) was named the "Best Bank in Kuwait - 2019" by Global Finance, as it unveiled its 26th annual listing of the best banks in 150 countries.

Winners in the World's Best Banks Awards 2019 were selected based on objective criteria considering the following aspects: growth in assets, profitability, geographic reach, new business development and innovation in products. Moreover, Global Finance's editorial review board relies on the opinions of equity analysts, credit rating analysts, banking consultants and other key banking executives.

"This year's winners demonstrated their ability to attentively meet their customers' needs and achieve positive financial results in addition to their

good future planning, despite the unfavorable operating conditions in the markets in which they operate.

NBK-Kuwait CEO Salah Al-Fulaij said: "Winning the "Best Bank in Kuwait - 2019" award is a strong testament of the trust our customers place in The bank and a reflection of NBK's strong results and its promising future. It also proves our unwavering ability to meet rising challenges through prudent planning for the future by following our path to successfully complete our digital transformation journey as part of NBK's diversification strategy."

"Our focus on digital transformation is a key element in maintaining our leadership which we gained through positioning ourselves ahead

of our peers through providing the best banking services and products", Al-Fulaij added stressing that the rapid pace of technological advancement poses additional challenges, especially as the bank strives to ensure the utmost safety and security measures to its customers. Founded in 1987 and headquartered in New York City, Global Finance is one of the leading financial magazines with a mission to publish specialized economic reports and analysis. Its monthly circulation exceeds 50,000 in over 188 countries around the world.

The awards ceremony will be held on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Washington, DC, next October.



Salah Al-Fulaij

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 17th March 2019 announcing the names of its winners for the week from the 10th March till the 14th March 2019, in which five winners will receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:

- Yaseen Abdulla Alelaiwi
- Abdallah Mohammad Falah Alresheedi
- Hamza Abbas Abdulwahab Bahroh
- Amal Ahmad Mohammad Almoamen
- Zahra Ahmed Mohammad Mahdi

The first Gulf Bank Al-Danah's quarterly draw 2019 for the prize of KD 150,000 will be held on 27 March 2019, the second quarterly draw 2019 will be held on 26 June 2019, for the prize of KD 250,000, and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 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.

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced on the 13th of March 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 Abdulrazaq M Kamal.

20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Waleed Yaqob Al-Ali, Naif Nazieh Abdualrhman, Faisal S Al-Dousari, Fatemah Abdurrahman Al-Kandari, Noumah Saif Al-Talah, Adel AbedAli Hasan, Najat Allawil Farhan, Jawad Abdurrahman Al-Saffar, Mohammad Khaled Al-Dosari, Raghad Faisal AlKanderi, Faisal Meadhead Alhuwailah, Taha Saeed Zuhair, A Wahid Ali Khalil, Abdulla Khamis Mohammed, A Aziz Hussain Dashti, Hamed Saeed Abdulaziz, Khalil Darwish Ahmed, Fatima A Wahid A Amir, Faris Saleh Khalifa, Kameela Ahmed Hussain.

Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents 21 weekly prizes comprised of a grand prize of KD 10,000, 20 prizes of KD 1,000 each in addition to the monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000

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. One powerful new aspect of the Al-Hassad Islamic Account is the prize draws on the holy occasion of both Eid Ul-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.

Infiniti Q50, QX60 win 2019 Vincentric Best Value in America awards

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, announces that two Infiniti models received recognition in the 2019 Vincentric Best Value in America awards: the 2019 Infiniti Q50 sport sedan was named a winner in the Luxury Mid-Size Sedan segment, and the 2019 Infiniti QX60 was a winner in the Luxury Large SUV/Crossover segment for the third consecutive year.

Vincentric measures cost-of-ownership using eight different cost factors: depreciation, fees and taxes, financing, fuel, insurance, maintenance, opportunity cost and repairs. Using a statistical model, Vincentric identified the Best Value in America winners by measuring which vehicles had lower than expected ownership costs given their market segment and price. More than 3,000 vehicle configurations were evaluated using a range of annual mileage intervals and insurance profiles.

One of Infiniti's best-selling models, the Q50 sports sedan delivers a rewarding driving experience with a variety of innovative powertrain options, including the VR-series 3.0-liter V6 twin-turbo

engine, which was named to the prestigious Ward's 10 Best Engines list for two years in a row. The INFINITI Q50 also offers more advanced safety features than the competition, including world's first technologies such as Predictive Forward Collision Warning, Around View Monitor with Moving Object Detection and Backup Collision Intervention.

The popular and highly awarded Infiniti QX60 offers the best of both luxury and practicality with a combination of family-oriented features as well as a welcoming, carefully crafted design inside and out. With a third row of seating, the spacious interior adjusts to customers' needs. For the 2018 model year, the QX60 introduced a breakthrough technology designed especially for active families - Rear Door Alert. The new Rear Door Alert system, standard on all 2018 QX60 models, can help remind customers of things that may be forgotten in the rear seat, such as pets, valuables, dry cleaning, groceries and more.

Other available driver assist technologies include: Around View Monitor with Moving Object Detection; Lane Departure Warning and Lane Departure Prevention; Backup Collision Intervention; Blind Spot Intervention; and Intelligent Cruise Control (Full-Speed Range). Also offered are the advanced Predictive Forward Collision Warning system and Forward Emergency Braking with pedestrian detection.



Infiniti Q50



Infiniti QX60

KAMCO wins 'Best Debt Bank in the Middle East - 2019'

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment firm with one of the largest AUMs in the region, won the "Best Debt Bank in the Middle East - 2019" prestigious title from the renowned Global Finance Magazine. Throughout the past year, KAMCO completed 9 investment banking transactions that amounted to over \$1.8 billion, achieving a track record of 131 successful transactions worth around \$20.4 billion, in addition to advisory services for local and regional clients.

KAMCO was honored with the "Best Debt Bank in the Middle East - 2019" title in an exclusive survey that will be published in Global Finance Magazine's next April issue. Award winners were invited to attend the awards ceremony taking place later this year on October 19,

2019 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Global Finance editors, with input from industry experts, selected KAMCO based on a multi-criteria approach that includes: reviewing market share, number and size of deals, service and advice, structuring capabilities, distribution network, efforts to address market conditions, innovation, pricing, after-market performance of underwritings and market reputation.

Commenting on the achievement, Omar Zaineddine, Senior Vice President and Head of Debt Capital Markets at KAMCO, said, "At the core of our business is to continuously deliver on a promise. Our clients are enterprises that contribute to their respective economies through products and services. They provide wealth to their constituents be it shareholders or employees. When the client identifies a compelling event to raise funds from the debt markets, this is always driven by a need to deliver on their promise to their stakeholders. Having an advisory team, who understands that need and delivers on the promise, is paramount. This award acknowledges the team's dedication throughout the year in supporting our clients to prosper by further expanding their funding options."

He also said, "As our footprint expands to cover other markets in the Middle East, our regional team will bring fresh ideas to their clients in the core

markets. Our clients would be able to capitalize on our longstanding track record in bridging between debt issuers and investors."

Global Finance, founded in 1987, has a circulation of 50,050 and readers in 189 countries. Global Finance's audience includes senior corporate and financial officers responsible for making investment strategic decisions at multinational companies and financial institutions. Its website - Gfmag.com - offers analysis and articles that are the legacy of 32 years of experience in international financial markets. Global Finance is headquartered in New York, with offices around the world. Global Finance regularly selects the top performers among banks and other providers of financial services. These awards have become a trusted standard of excellence for the global financial community.



Omar Zaineddine

Ooredoo Group launches Blockchain initiative

DOHA: Ooredoo Group yesterday became one of the world's first communications companies to launch a global Blockchain Initiative, which aims to open the floodgates for organizations to adopt blockchain solutions to drive digital business growth and innovation and transform daily lives.

Blockchain is a fast-growing digital enabler, with safe, secure, and reliable "distributed ledger" technology providing a permanent digital record of ownership that allows every part of a transaction to be verified. While many organizations may know blockchain powering cryptocurrency, there are wider applications of blockchain empowering solutions that can save time and money, and can enhance information security and privacy.

Showing the strong business adoption, global blockchain spend will grow over 10-fold from \$1.5 billion in 2018 to \$11.7 billion by 2022, according

to a recent report by IDC.

As a true digital enabler, Ooredoo Group already works closely with public, private, and academic sectors in its global footprint to develop blockchain solutions that can create new value in the digital space and enrich people's digital lives. Ooredoo Group's new Blockchain Initiative is an open call for innovators to develop blockchain partnerships, solutions, and protocols across business-to-business and business-to-consumer sectors.

Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani, Group Chief Executive Officer, Ooredoo, said: "Blockchain will facilitate new digital business models and revenue in the next five years - helping organizations to run better and to transform people's daily lives. Using blockchain, organizations and their customers can optimise costs, find new levels of efficiency, transparency, and trust, and enable secure digital payments." For example, property developers can provide smart contracts for ensuring titles, deeds, and facilities management are accurate and secure. Banks can better track cross-border payments, and logistics companies can track and trace products. Healthcare providers can enable digital patient records to optimize treatment. Mega-event organizers can introduce virtual digital payment tokens for merchandise and food and beverage. Sports teams can have real-time athlete health and performance

metrics and also manage fan loyalty programs.

With Ooredoo Group's Blockchain Initiative, Ooredoo aims to leverage its experience and industry-leading solutions in blockchain combined with 5G, cloud, and the Internet of Things to deliver the biggest benefits to organizations and to customers. Ooredoo's Blockchain Initiative is also bringing together subject matter experts from across the company's global footprint and business units, including small- and medium-sized businesses, commercial, digital, and legal.

Sheikh Saud, said: "Our Blockchain Initiative aims to open the blockchain floodgates, leveraging global best practices to deliver localised innovation across many of the world's fastest-growing markets. Our open call to blockchain innovators will also explore integrating blockchain with artificial intelligence and machine learning, cloud, and the Internet of Things."



Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani

What's On



Mesbah and Al Attar star in the Arab Youth Festival

As a part of the Arab Youth Festival organized by LOYAC Academy of Arts (LAPA) in cooperation with Al Shaheed Park for the third year in a row. The festival began on Sunday, March 17 on the open stage at Shaheed Park at 8pm. The shows began with talented artist Abdulaziz Al

Mesbah whose voice filled the theater with joy and applause. Young artist and star of The Voice, Hassan Al Attar also performed a hit collection of songs. The closing was a duet by the artists who both performed the song "Wink" by Abdullah Al-Ruwaished.



ACK hosts membrane technology workshop

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) hosted a workshop about the use of economically sustainable membrane technology for water desalination with distinguished guests from around the world. The workshop was organized by ACK Scientific Research Center and sponsored by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The objective of the workshop was to bring together academics and professionals from the water sector to learn about the most economically and environmentally friendly water technologies and its application for water treatment and management in Kuwait.

Among the distinguished speakers were Professor Adel Sharif, winner of The Queen's 2011 Anniversary Prize for Water Research and Director of the Centre for Osmosis Research and Applications at the University of Surrey; Mansour Ahmed, Acting Program Manager for the Water

Desalination Technologies Program at the Water Research Center of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR); and Pouya Rezai, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at York University, and Researcher in the Field of Microfluidics.

The opening speaker was Professor Sharif who noted the importance of the role of science and technology in achieving water security. "Water, food and energy are the most important commodities for our existence and survival," said Professor Sharif. The desalination of brackish water and seawater were among the solutions he focused on for gaining a new supply of water.

Professor Sharif went on to explain the use of the membrane process for desalination, and how it's growing worldwide. He also explained how the energy used by membrane technology has been decreasing over the years thanks to advancements in technology. "Innovation is solving tomorrow's problems today," said Professor Sharif. From his end, Mohammed Abdul-Niby, Dean of School of Engineering at ACK, described the workshop as a success and thanked the speakers for their contributions to it.



Burgan Bank's new 'Haleeb O Heil' restaurant offer

Burgan Bank is inviting its customers to enjoy a 10% discount at one of the most popular restaurants in Kuwait, "Haleeb O Heil". The latest offer is part of the Bank's aim to ensure every customer receives the chance to experience a wide range of privileges. With over five branches in Kuwait and one in Dubai, "Haleeb o Heil" is incorporating a modern approach to its offerings, the restaurant offers a diverse range of cuisines while it is particularly known for its traditional Kuwaiti food. In the same way, "Haleeb O Heil" offers classical traditional music that creates an entertainment and lively atmosphere, meanwhile, the customers enjoy their meals.

Pamper your mom at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa

Every mother is the most special female in each person's life and Mother's Day is a time to express to her how special she is. To mark this occasion on 21st of March 2019, the resort offers delectable dinner options at exquisite and award-winning restaurants. Spend some wonderful time while savoring the hotel's specially created menus, and surprise your mother at Garden Cafe with a lavish Mother's Day dinner buffet prepared by the hotel's renowned chefs and visually indulge in the spectacular views of the sparkling Arabian Gulf in the distance, priced at 22KD per person, from 7 pm to 11.30 pm. Book a table of four or more, and leave your mother's bill on us!

Additional dining options are also available at the luxurious resort. For mothers with an Italian palette, award-winning restaurant Olio is the perfect enticing place for authentic taste of Italy with a Venetian ambience and magical view of the Arabian Gulf Sea. For

those who are meat-lovers, Pepper Steakhouse Restaurant offers flame-grilled steaks where she can indulge in a selection of the finest meat cuts. Mothers who indulge in seafood can enjoy an eclectic maritime experience at Salt, entering a breathtaking world of under the sea themed restaurant, from 7 pm to 11.30 pm. Book a table of four or more, and your mother will receive a delicious complimentary main dish.

Last but not least, award-winning Talise Spa has created the perfect package for Mother's Day as all mothers deserve a pampering and relaxing haven. Talise Spa offers the perfect escape; you can treat your mother to a special 60-minute Mother Daughter Massage to spend precious time together in the luxurious private suite where the double suite of the Spa will be decorated with a unique set up, priced at 100KD. Your mother will be able to use the Spa's world class facilities, including sauna, steam room, experience showers and more. To show her how much she is appreciated, our Mother's Day spa package makes the ideal gift of relaxation. Special Mother's day vouchers are also available at the Spa where you can preplan her spa gift specifically tailored to her needs and preferences. It's the perfect occasion to show your mother how much she deserves, so why not say it with our Stay Different experiences.

South African embassy closure

On the occasion of Human Rights Day, the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa will be closed on Thursday 21st March 2019 and will reopen on Sunday, 24th March 2019 with its official office hours from 8:00 to 16:00 & the Consular Section operation hours will be from 8:30 to 12:30. For Emergencies please contact 94924895.



Photos show Belgium Ambassador to Kuwait Piet Heirbaut inaugurating the visit Belgium promotion at Souk Safar Avenue Mall over the weekend.



Kuwait blood bank holds get-together

Staff members from the Kuwait central blood bank and their families held a get-together on 22nd February at Fahahel Takkara hall. The group consists of members

association including nurses and technicians at the blood bank. The program was conducted on chairmanship of Blesson Sam Thomas, president of IIKCBB and Annamma Jhon secretary of IIKCBB. The annual report presentation was done by Rakhi while a dashing cultural program with children and family was anchored by Jomon Thomas and Blessy Cherian. The new committee members for next working year were also selected.

Health & Technology

Microsoft holds 'banking edition' of CISO for Kuwaiti FSI professionals

KUWAIT: Microsoft yesterday held the 'Banking Edition' of its CISO Executive Series - a series for an elite set of top Chief Information Security Officers for the Kuwait's Finance sector professionals. The event, held at the JW Marriott, Kuwait City was specifically tailored for the country's banking industry to enable its professionals to overcome the rising challenges in the cyber-security landscape and meet the security objectives of their business. The summit comes amid continuous rise of cyber-attacks targeting public and private sector organizations and aims to empower professionals to better protect their company perimeters.

Microsoft experts including Ramon Bosch, Principal, Risk & Compliance, Microsoft EMEA, Volkan Verim, Technical Sales Professional, Security Microsoft Gulf, and Mohammed Zayed, Microsoft 365 & Cyber-Security Solutions Lead for Microsoft Kuwait, delivered insightful presentations and demonstrations around Cyber Security.

The sessions covered a holistic approach and introduction to Microsoft trust principles such as security, privacy, compliance and transparency. The attendees also learned about protecting organizational identities and ensuring data privacy and encryption of information including data classification, compliance policies and practices to meet Financial requirements. Moreover, the Kuwaiti CISOs were engaged into discussions to shed light

on the importance of how the migration of core data and applications can help increase security and bring agility to their operations.

A Microsoft Digital Transformation research on cybersecurity found a troubling threat landscape in the region. Some 63% of respondents said their company lost either productivity or data to a cyber incident in 2018; 46% of these victims were affected more than once; and almost one in 10 victims reported incidents "once a week or more".

"Today's CISOs must manage their organization's risk in the face of rising challenges and the ever-expanding scale and sophistication of today's cyber threats." Said Mohammed Arif, Regional Director, Modern Workplace & Security, Microsoft Gulf. "Balancing these challenges with business needs to collaborate, innovate, and grow requires an always-on, multifaceted approach to security."

With events like our CISO executive series, we aim to create awareness amongst the security professionals of Kuwait and introduce truly intelligent security capabilities that we can offer, in order for them to harness these technologies and better protect their digital estates to achieve more." The Microsoft CISO executive event concluded with key takeaways from all perspectives of cyber security and proved to be a strong platform for security professionals from across Kuwait to network with peers and engage with subject matter experts.



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Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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

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

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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
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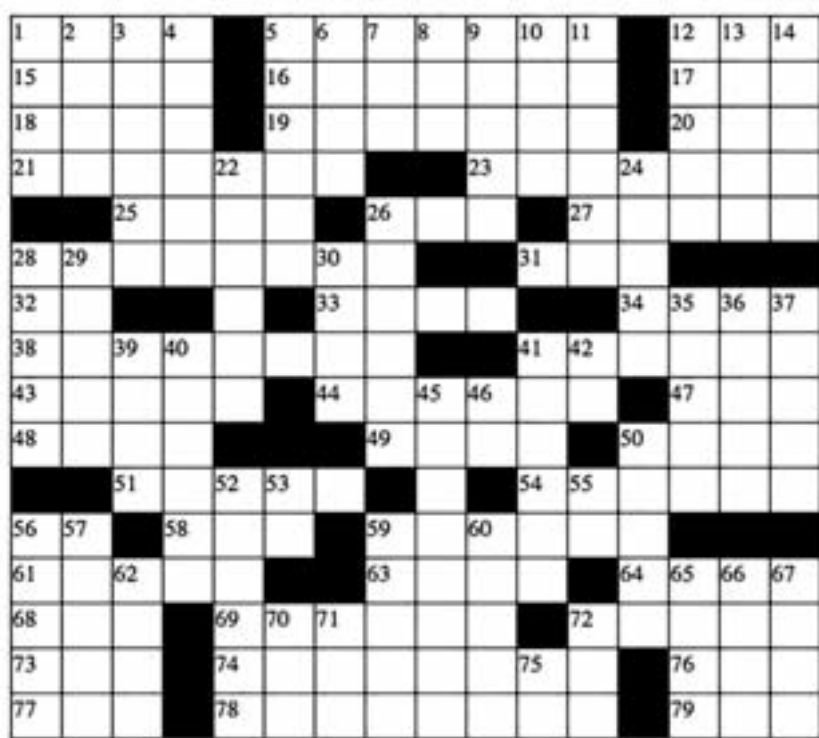
Scope of clinical Practice.

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- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.

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Stars

CROSSWORD 2161



ACROSS

1. Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
5. (Greek mythology) A river in Hades across which the souls of the dead were carried by Charon.
12. The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.
15. Surrealist Spanish painter (1904-1989).
16. European annual grown for forage.
17. A loft for storing hay.
18. Any of a class of alcohols having 2 hydroxyl groups in each molecule.
19. Small Asian deer with small antlers and a cry like a bark.
20. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
21. The number of which a given number is the logarithm.
23. Any of various insects that feed and form galls on conifers.
25. Heal or recover.
27. The basic unit of money in Sierra Leone.
28. Loud confused noise from many sources.
31. Type genus of the family Myacidae.
32. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
33. Advanced in years.
34. Minute floating marine tunicate having a transparent body with an opening at each end.
38. Expanded in scope.
43. A yellow pungent volatile oil (trade name Agene) formerly used for bleaching and aging flour.
44. (Babylonian) The chief Babylonian god.
47. The compass point that is midway between north and northeast.
48. English actor noted for his portrayals of Shakespeare's great tragic characters (1789-1833).
49. Made of fir or pine.
51. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
54. Surveying instrument consisting of the upper movable part of a theodolite including the telescope and its attachments.
56. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
58. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
61. Perennial mountain rice native to Mediterranean region and introduced into North America.
63. (prefix) Half or partial.
64. A Hindu prince or king in India.
68. An enclosed space.
69. Any of several tropical and subtropical tree-like herbs of the genus Musa having a terminal crown of large entire leaves and usually bearing hanging clusters of elongated fruits.
73. Relating to or containing the azo radical.
74. The condition of having no arms.
76. A sudden loss of consciousness resulting when the rupture or occlusion of a blood vessel leads to oxygen lack in the brain.
77. A yearning for something or to do something.
78. Someone who engages in drinking bouts.
79. A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.

DOWN

1. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
2. (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
3. The Fate who spins the thread of life.
4. The environmental condition.
5. Remote city of Kazakhstan that (ostensibly for security reasons) was made the capital in 1998.
6. The dull explosive noise made by an engine.
7. Adult female chicken.
8. Standard time in the 5th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 75th meridian.
9. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
10. Toward the mouth or oral region.
11. In a nice way.
12. (psychoanalysis) An idealized image of someone (usually a parent) formed in childhood.
13. French sculptor noted for his renderings of the human form (1840-1917).
14. A native or inhabitant of Sweden.
22. City in northeast Pakistan.
24. Property that is leased or rented out or let.
26. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
29. An area in which something acts or operates or has power or control.
30. A complex red organic pigment containing iron and other atoms to which oxygen binds.
35. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
36. East Indian tart yellow berrylike fruit.
37. Appeal or request earnestly.
39. An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
40. Anneal or toughen by a process of gradually heating and cooling.
41. A family of languages of the Fula people of west Africa in the sub-Saharan regions from Senegal to Chad.
42. A slate in northwestern North America.
45. Tighten one's belt.
46. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
50. Extremely small in scale or scope or capability.
52. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
53. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
55. Being one more than fifty.
57. Affect with wonder.
59. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
60. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
62. (computer science) A graphic symbol (usually a simple picture) that denotes a program or a command or a data file or a concept in a graphical user interface.
65. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
66. An island in Indonesia south of Borneo.
67. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
70. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
71. Government agency created in 1974 to license and regulate nuclear power plants.
72. A broad flat muscle on either side of the back.
75. Not out.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You feel the need to hunker down, get to work and make more of your life. You had or have a wonderful job. Now you need to make it better and more profitable. You feel like your family looking at yourself now. Who am I, is that nagging little question? Now that I'm able to do as I please, what do I please? You can't explain your feelings to others now, Aries. There's no reason to try except to keep family relations smoother. Keep conversation on your reasoning and your life to a minimum. Thank all for their assistance. This is a perfect time to live with new circumstances and new ideas. You don't even know how to express everything you feel to yourself yet.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Day dream for work? Yes, you can. When you zone out today it's all about work. After all, concentrating on and creating in your mind what you desire and then putting your plan into action is how you make that goal occur. You can do this easily today. The stars are with you now, Taurus. You have a desire to work hard at the moment and make something better for everyone involved. You're even taking the extra step of considering how to best create a healthier lifestyle too. You don't have to go to the gym to work out. You can clean the flower beds, sweep the porch or any other mundane chore that requires you to move.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Karma is at work today. Remember yesterday when you were listening aptly to the latest gossip. Well, today it's your turn to be the center of that particular attention. You're walking on egg shells because you don't like the topic. You're unsure who knows and you want to keep it under wraps. Remember no good deed goes unnoticed, Gemini. Try to keep from basking in someone else's misery unless you want to feel the feeling. Keep your head down at work and do just that, work. Think about making your life healthier too. Maybe a change of diet such as cutting out most refined sugars or getting a little more exercise such as walking fits the bill.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Making your work better is paramount to you at the moment. Someone at work worries you about their motives. You don't think they have the best interest of work at heart. You appreciate the responsibility you've taken on where your work place is concerned. It's now like your child and you're protective. Cancer. Making the most of your life is still on your mind since you had such a nice day yesterday. Putting yourself first is a primary effort but worth it, you think. Take care of you first or you can't take care of others you love including your work.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your love of law and order will be put to the test today, probably by some well-worked news story. Your thoughts about following society's laws also pertains to keeping things in order in your own life. That means getting your office and home clean and orderly. You'll start at work today and coworkers will probably soon follow. Your health is also up there in your thoughts as to how to make yourself better with exercise and eating a little healthier. Leo. The realization of what the past has done in your life to get you to where you are today makes you realize just how important your dealings are for your future.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Taking care of business means a lot to you. You're working towards getting what you need through any type communication you can to make your life better now. Curiosity killed the cat they say but that's not your case, Virgo. You're full of curiosity for anything that looks or sounds a little different. You figure you can find new ways of doing things if you look at even what some consider taboo. Sex is on your mind big time. If you don't have a lover then you're looking. There's a form of exercise you can really get into, you think. Happy hunting.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Work is about all you can think about now. You want organization, everything has a place and everything in its place. That's a need. Taking care of business is your motivation because you know it brings you rewards. The reward of home, food, clothing and more are something you've been thinking of lately. If anyone goes against you on this thought pattern, you're ready to fight, Libra. That's not good. You could fly off the handle too easily and get bad feedback as a result. Keeping your temper is the way to win friends and influence enemies. Your health and making it better, Libra, is a strong, intuitive influence now too.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today you need to be at work. The mundane aspect of it draws you in after days of meditation on what you should do and how you should proceed with your life both at work and at home. Each affects the other. Practicality is why you love work today. It supplies a need for organization. Your health is concerning you and it could be because you've been stressed. Walking in nature might help part of that. Plus, you may want to check your diet out for the best foods to relieve that stress and give you more energy. Take time with family and friends because they sustain you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Taking care of business is your modus operandi for this morning of work. You need everything in its place so that you can see at a glance what you need to work on most. Generally, your work place is neat as a pin for that very reason. Keep your irritations to yourself although you meet with a few today. Work goals take considerable consideration now. It's a need but so is keeping yourself healthy. If you feel overwhelmed or allow yourself to get overly tired you could need to take some time off work, not something you want to do. Eat better and get more moderate exercise seems to be your new motto.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Taking care of business is your modus operandi for this morning of work. You need everything in its place so that you can see at a glance what you need to work on most. Generally, your work place is neat as a pin for that very reason. Keep your irritations to yourself although you meet with a few today. Work goals take considerable consideration now. It's a need but so is keeping yourself healthy. If you feel overwhelmed or allow yourself to get overly tired you could need to take some time off work, not something you want to do. Eat better and get more moderate exercise seems to be your new motto.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Work is in the utmost position in your mind now. You live to work and you work to live. It provides material compensation and emotional satisfaction. You find yourself in opposition to some workmates especially when they question your conventionality. You know who you are, what you believe and where you want to go in life. They have no idea. They're not people you invite into your personal side of life. Besides, you don't really care that some people have issues with you. Aquarius, consider the source and get on with life.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Frustration is a fact of life today. No matter how hard you try at work now, you feel as if you're not being heard. You want to organize but you can't seem to get it all together. You sure have issues with trying to get others more organized too. Feeling loved is a true need now and makes you want to be pleasant around others but you have your limits. Some of your coworkers or friends do quite well around you right now while others irritate the heck out of you. You feel pushed and pulled, Pisces, can't make up your mind, unsatisfied. It'll get better.

Wordsearch Puzzle

90's Songs 5 - Word Search

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

- | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|
| ANGELS | HANDS | MY BODY |
| ANOTHER NIGHT | HOLD ON | RELEASE ME |
| CANDY RAIN | HOOK | SHY GUY |
| CUPID | IRONIC | SWEET LADY |
| DITTY | JEREMY | THE POWER |
| FLY AWAY | KISS ME | TUBTHUMPING |
| FORTUNATE | LAST NIGHT | WHAT'S UP |
| FROZEN | MIAMI | |

Yesterday's Solution

90's Songs 4 - Solution

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

- | | | |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| AGAIN | FUNKDAFIED | RUNAWAY |
| BABY, BABY | IRIS | SLAM |
| BAILAMOS | LOVE IS | SPOONMAN |
| BELIEVE | MOUTH | SUMMER GIRLS |
| BOOMBASTIC | NAME | TODAY |
| EMOTIONS | NO SCRUBS | UNSKINNY BOP |
| EPIC | NOBODY | WEAK |
| FANTASY | REAL LOVE | |

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2019



People watch prize winner falla "L'Antiga de Campanar", during the Fallas festival in Valencia on March 17, 2019. Fallas are gigantic structures made of cardboard portraying current events and personalities in which individual figures or Ninots are placed. The Fallas will be burnt in the streets of Valencia today as a tribute to Saint Joseph, patron saint of the carpenters' guild. — AFP

From hardship to hope, Singapore's migrant poets find their voices

In dorms on Singapore's fringes or employers' backrooms, a growing number of migrant workers are using poetry to shed light on their hidden struggles and reconnect with their roots. The tiny Southeast Asian nation of 5.6 million counts on a about 1 million migrant workers from countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia, China and Myanmar to fuel its powerhouse economy, working in sectors from construction to services and home help. Although horrific labor abuse cases are rare in the rich city-state, campaigners say migrants grapple with unpaid salaries, having their travel documents withheld and massive debts racked up in fees they pay agents to get work.

Often tucked away in dormitories for foreign workers and only seen in public on Sundays, their day off, scores of migrants are writing poetry and short stories offering a rare insight into their little known worlds. "When I write, I am happy. When people read our work and accept us as human beings, we are happy," Indonesian domestic worker Deni Apriyani told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Hailing from a sleepy village in Indonesia, 29-year-old Apriyani moved to Singapore in 2013 to become a domestic worker as she wanted to buy land for her father, a farmer, back home.

Working from dawn to dusk looking after an expatriate family, she started writing poetry on her mobile phone at the end of her 14-hour work day as an outlet for her frustration as she struggled to adjust to life in the new city.

Softly-spoken Apriyani won a poetry writing competition for migrants in 2017 and one of her poems was published in a book last year that brought together more than 60 works by Singaporean writers and migrant workers. "You call them sluts, you call them useless, you call them shameful, but did you know the stories behind them?" she asked in the poem "Murderers", which highlighted the stigma facing migrant workers who try to find love in the city.

Award-winning

The growing focus on writing by migrant workers began about five years ago with poetry contests organized by advocates that aimed to use literature to break down barriers between foreign workers and Singaporean society. These competitions have now branched out to other parts of Asia which also rely heavily on migrant workers, including Malaysia and Taiwan. In Singapore, their poems are found in bookshops and public libraries, with Bangladeshi construction worker Md Sharif Uddin's "Stranger to Myself" winning best non-fiction title at the prestigious Singapore Books Awards last year. Stories of migrant workers are also gaining attention in other artistic formats.

"A Land Imagined", an award-winning film about low-paid migrants in Singapore, was released domestically last month, with local critics hailing it as a "historic milestone in Singapore cinema". Singaporean author and poet Jamal

Ismail said migrants' unique experiences and work have enriched the island's literary scene. "They might not write beautifully but there is an abundance of humanism in them," he said, during a workshop where he offered guidance to a group of migrant poets.

He recounted how he was struck by a poem by a migrant domestic worker who likened her life in the city to that of a cockroach, and another who told him she had not been paid for six months. "They are marginalized and they feel lonely. When you're lonely, that is when you reflect on what is the meaning of life? That is something they have that is so powerful," he said. Singapore's government maintains migrant workers are well protected, and the country remains a popular destination for foreign laborers as they generally enjoy higher wages than in other parts of the region.

Sales of migrant workers' books are low compared to more mainstream writers, but local publishers said their potential is enormous. "They really struck a chord and there was empathy," said Ng Kah Gay from Singapore's Ethos Books, which in 2016 published "Me Migrant", the city-state's first book by a migrant labourer, Bangladesh's Md Mukul Hossain, with 3,000 copies sold to date. "Migrant workers are someone whom we're so familiar with but sometimes we don't see them, they are invisible. These books flesh out their lives for us to experience, their emotions." "It's so important for them to be seen not just as an economic machine but they have their own voice," Ng said.

Goh Eck Kheng from Landmark Books, which has sold 700 copies Uddin's award-winning "Stranger to Myself" in two print runs so far, said literature gave migrant and local writers a platform to embrace each other's work. "In that way, literature is a social leveler," Goh said.

'Freedom of thought'

Translation is the main hurdle for the work of migrant poets to flourish according to Shivaji Das, an Indian-born writer who works in Singapore and has been organizing the annual migrant poetry writing competitions since 2014. Scribbling on cement bags or tapping on their mobile phones after nightfall, workers usually write in native languages like Bengali, Indonesian or Chinese before their work is translated.

Publishers said migrant workers also have to compete for attention with a pool of emerging local and foreign writers. But for many of the workers, writing merely is a way to ease their homesickness and document their lives in a different city - as well as a form of empowerment. Fazley Elahi, a Bangladeshi worker who writes poems and set up Migrant Library Singapore a year ago, said reading and writing in his native language reconnects him to his roots after living away from home for a decade. Manned by volunteers, the library has a collection of about 800 books in different languages that are common among migrant workers such as Bengali, Indonesian, Tagalog and Chinese.

It also holds writing workshops for aspiring writers and runs a mobile library project that goes to workers' dorms. In poetry, says Elahi, there are no limits to what he can say which gives him a sense of liberation. "It is the freedom of thought that we treasure," said the 30-year-old. — Reuters

Retired musicians enjoy 'grand finale' at Verdi home

Nearly 120 years after Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi called it his "most beautiful work", ageing musicians still play out their days at his Casa Verdi retirement home. Piano music resonates down the corridors of the sumptuous Milan palazzo, while a singer performs in the vast main room for dozens of pensioners, who were once professional musicians themselves. With around 60 residents who have all dedicated their lives to music, the sound of music in one form or another is everywhere. "This place is paradise," says Marisa Terzi, 79, who arrived four months ago. "For me, music is everything, and I didn't expect to find such a fantastic place."

"It's everything but a rest home! It's a holiday home," she laughs. "Time flies... in the morning there's a pianist, and everyone comes to listen, even those in wheelchairs. "We all sing together, it's so beautiful, and then there are concerts all afternoon." Terzi, a singer and composer, moved in because she says she had "no more family". "I'm lucky, because I really feel at home here," she adds. Romanian-born musicologist Bissy Roman, 94, is also happy to be in a place where residents can play music themselves, enjoy listening to others play it and are surrounded by fellow musicians.

"There came a time when I felt like I was all alone in the world, I didn't have anyone anymore, and the Casa Verdi was the last solution: dying with music in my heart and near my musician companions," she said, having lived in Russia, France and the United States during her long life.

'A real miracle'

Verdi, who composed operas such as "Aida" and "La traviata", was himself elderly when he decided at the end of the 19th century to create a "rest home" in what was then the countryside outside Milan. The neoclassical palazzo, designed by Camillo Boito, the brother of one of Verdi's favorite libretto writers, was built to allow impoverished musicians to live out their days in dignity. According to his own wishes, the Casa Verdi only opened in 1902, a year after the composer died aged 87.

Almost 120 years later, the home is run by the Giuseppe Verdi Foundation and has neither debts nor public funding, which is "a real miracle", said the home's president Roberto Ruozi. Residents make a monthly contribution based on their means. However this amount always comes to "less than a fifth of the running costs", with the lion's share covered by income from past investments, Ruozi said. "Verdi left the rights to his royalties to Casa Verdi, which was for 60 years a non-negligible sum, part of which was invested" in 120 apartments that are today rented out, he added.

The home has also received donations, such as one of about six million euros (\$6.8 million) from the daughter of Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini, which are subsequently invested. "We get room and board, there's medical help. We're looked after marvelously and we have everything: rooms to play the piano, a concert hall..." said pianist Raimondo Campisi, 71.

He came here four years ago after living for 20 years on a boat in Beaulieu-sur-Mer in the south of France. He spent his career travelling the world playing the piano. Besides retirees, the Casa is also home to around 15 music students, some from Milan's renowned La Scala Academy, as part of a project to connect different generations started in 1999.

Generations

Just like her fellow musicians from Italy, Japan or South Korea, 30-year-old soprano Marika Spadafino appreciates the mix. "I speak a lot with the pensioners, they listen to me sing, give me tips," said the southern Italian native. "They know how to share their experiences. For me, coming from a family where no one played music, it's really important. "And when things don't go well, they know how to console you and give you the strength to go on," said Spadafino.

Nevertheless, passions can run high at times among the group of musicians. "Put 60 artists living together, oh la la, you can just imagine!" said Campisi. The Casa Verdi has a waiting list of around 10 people, who will have to bide their time for a spot until a current resident dies. "I hope I'll be here a little longer," said Terzi. "But we all know that we'll die here, so we're always ready." — AFP



A music sheet for Otello lies on a piano inside Casa Verdi, a retirement home for musicians created in December 1899 by Italian opera composer Giuseppe Verdi.



Retired Italian pianist Raimondo Campisi came to Casa Verdi four years ago after living for 20 years on a boat in Beaulieu-sur-Mer in the south of France. — AFP photos



Musical instruments adorn the Casa Verdi retirement home, ready to be played by around 60 retired musicians staying there.

Lifestyle | Gossip



Marina was worried about working with boyfriend Patterson on new music

Marina vowed to never work with her boyfriend Jack Patterson again after her first collaboration with his band Clean Bandit. The 33-year-old pop star - whose real name is Marina Diamandis - worked with the dance group on 2017 song 'Disconnect' but after that track she made an initial decision to avoid more studio time with Jack because she thought their songwriting would be too influenced by their romance. In an interview with V Magazine, she said: "After that we didn't write together again, because I just found it too weird. I thought, what am I going to write

about? Being in love with you? It won't work." However, Marina changed her mind about working with her man and features on 2018 Clean Bandit tune 'Baby' along with Luis Fonsi and that track will be included on her upcoming new LP 'Love + Fear' which drops on April 26. The album is the singer's first studio effort since 2015's 'Froot' and will be the first released under her new singular Marina moniker as her previous three records were credited to Marina and the Diamonds. It is split into two eight-song collections, with each collection exploring psychologist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' theory that humans

are only capable of experiencing those two emotions. The record took two years to make and was recorded in London, Sweden and Los Angeles with several songwriters and producers, including Noonie Bao, Sam De Jong, Oscar Gorres, Camille Purcell, Justin Parker and Joe Janiak. Marina also announced a UK and North American tour in support of the album, including a show at London's iconic Royal Albert Hall on May 3.

Jackie Chan to star in mountain epic Climbers

Jackie Chan is to star in mountain climbing epic movie 'Climbers'. The 64-year-old actor will appear alongside Wu Jing in the upcoming action film - helmed by Hong Kong filmmaker Daniel Lee and produced by the Shanghai Film Group - about the first Chinese mountaineers to conquer Mount Everest, according to The Hollywood Reporter. The movie will tell the story of the real-life expedition of Wang Fuzhou, Gonpo and Qu Yinhua, who made the first ever ascent up Mount Everest's North Ridge in 1960 and notably left a small statue of Chairman Mao on the mountain before returning to rescue another member of their group who was unable to make the whole journey. The other two climbers in the group will be played by Jing Boran and Hu Ge, whilst Zhang Ziyi will also be part of the cast as a Chinese meteorologist who assists the expedition. Shooting on the project is underway in China and is expected to be released on China's patriotic holiday National Day of the People's Republic of China or during Chinese New Year in 2020. Action legend Chan will soon reprise his role as Detective Inspector Yang Naing Lee in a new 'Rush Hour' film alongside Chris Tucker as Detective James Carter in a fourth installment in the buddy cop franchise. The series kicked off in 1998 with Brett Ratner's first film which saw the two police officers from Los Angeles and Hong Kong respectively thrown together to bust an international crime syndicate. The last film, 'Rush Hour 3', was released in 2017. Spilling that the two stars are actively "working on a few things for the script" for a new sequel, Tucker, 47, said: "It's not in pre-production. We're working on a few things [for] the script. Jackie wants to do it. I want to do it. The studio wants to do it. We're trying to get it together. It looks like it's coming together."



Pulp Fiction theme writer Dick Dale has died



Dick Dale, who provided the theme song for 'Pulp Fiction', has died at the age of 81. The legendary surf guitarist - whose 1962 version of Greek folk song 'Misirlou' played over the opening credits of the classic 1994 movie - passed away on Saturday evening, his bassist Sam Bolle has announced. The musician - who was credited with pioneering a genre based on Californian surf culture and was known for his fast strumming style, inspiring acts like The Beach Boys and Jimi Hendrix - had a long history of ill health, including renal failure, diabetes and cancer, however the cause of his death is not yet known. 'Pulp Fiction' director Quentin Tarantino previously praised the guitarist and believed his version of 'Misirlou' "throws down the gauntlet" and set a standard for his movie to live up to. He said in the rock critic Gary Graff's book 'Pulp Fiction: The Complete Story of Quentin Tarantino's Masterpiece': "Having 'Misirlou' as your opening credit, it's just so intense. "It just says you're watching an epic, you're watching a big, ol' movie. "It just throws down a gauntlet that the movie now has to live up to." Hollywood actor Seth Rogen was among the stars who took to twitter to pay tribute to Dale. Replying to a Tweet by Rolling Stone magazine, who described Dale as the "King of Surf", Seth said: "Once I drove an hour and half to see Dick Dale perform at a horse track, and it was wonderful. RIP. (sic)" Billy Idol also paid tribute to the late guitarist, writing on Twitter: "Sad 2 hear the 'King of the Surf Guitar' Dick Dale has passed on, RIP...(sic)" Dale was born in 1937 as Richard Anthony Monsour in Boston, Massachusetts to his father who had emigrated from Lebanon and a mother who was Polish Belarusian and his guitar style was inspired by his heritage - using Middle Eastern and Eastern European melodies as well as "exotic" scales. He is survived by his wife Lana and their son Jimmie.



Rak-Su: We'd never ride a trend to top the charts

Rak-Su would rather stay true to their roots than "ride a trend" just to top the charts. The popular four piece - made up of childhood friends Mustafa Rahimtulla, Ashley Fongho, Jamaal Shurland and Myles Stephenson - had a taste of chart success when their 'X Factor' winner's single 'Dimelo', featuring the Fugees star Wyclef Jean and producer Naughty Boy, shot straight to number one in the iTunes chart within 24 hours of them being crowned winners of the ITV talent show in 2017. The band - who released their second EP 'Rome' last month - are quite happy to make music that they know their huge following will love, and would never makes songs for commercial gain. Ashley told the Daily Star newspaper: "We are so happy to be doing what we love and to have such huge support. "We don't think about charting or riding a trend at all. "I'd love to say we are geniuses but we just write the

music we love. "We've grown a lot since then [The X Factor] and although we look back at all our songs really fondly, I'd like to think we've bettered ourselves." Jamaal added of their "old school" sound: "We've always been into old school R&B. "It's a really big influence. "All our preferences are slightly different, so it's all our influences that have created us." Meanwhile, the group has set their sights high on collaborators for the future, with the likes of Jay-Z, Frank Ocean and Camila Cabello on their wish-list. When asked who they'd like record with, the four-some said: "There are so many artists we'd like to work with, in the future. "All the people we kinda grew up listening to and that our tastes have been molded by like Usher, Babyface, Jay-Z, Skepta, Frank Ocean, Camila Cabello. I mean she's good in it, Little Mix there's actually so many."

Paul 'would love' to star in Breaking Bad movie



Aaron Paul "would love" to star in a 'Breaking Bad' movie. The 39-year-old actor played Jesse Pinkman in the acclaimed drug drama from 2008 to 2013 and showrunner Vince Gilligan revealed back in November that he is working to create a new movie set in the same universe as the original TV series. Aaron is keen to reprise his role as Jesse but he insists he "hasn't heard anything" about the project. Speaking at the Sun Valley Film Festival, Aaron said: "Rumors are funny - I once heard a rumour that I was being cast as Han Solo, I haven't heard anything about the 'Breaking Bad' movie but if there is one and it comes together I'd love to be a part of it." The 'BoJack Horseman' star went on to explain that his co-star Bryan Cranston - who portrayed mild-mannered teacher-turned-drug baron Walter White - isn't likely to make it into the movie because he dies, so the film "has to star Jesse". He said: "If it were to happen, yes, I would love to do it. In case you haven't caught up on the TV series, Walter dies, so ... it has to star Jesse." Bryan, 62, previously admitted that although it doesn't seem very likely he'll appear in the film, he would jump at the chance to reprise his role in any capacity should the screenwriter ask him. He said: "I would, absolutely [be in it]. It's Vince Gilligan. If Vince Gilligan asked me to do it, sure, absolutely. He's a genius." Though not much is known about the potential plot of the 'Breaking Bad' movie, 'Why Him?' actor Bryan hopes it will allow some of the other characters' journeys to be completed. He added: "It's a great story, and there's a lot of people who felt that they wanted to see some sort of completion to some of these storylines that were left open. "This idea, from what I was told, gets into at least a couple of the characters who were not completed as far as their journey. "I can't wait to see all those people again ... even if I just come by to visit!"

Chang Chen joins Dune reboot

Chang Chen has joined the cast of the 'Dune' reboot. The 42-year-old actor is set to portray physician Dr. Yueh, who serves the Atreides family, in Denis Villeneuve's take on the sci-fi literary classic. Chen and the legendary filmmaker were both on the jury at the Cannes Film Festival last summer. The Taiwanese actor joins the ever-growing cast for 'Dune, which is being adapted from Frank Herbert's novel of the same name. 'Dune' tells the complex story of a fallen noble family's attempt to control a desert planet named Arrakis and its export, a rare drug called melange - also known as "the spice" - which is vital to space travel and the most sought after commodity in the universe. 'Bird Box' star David Dastmalchian recently joined in the role of Piter De Vries - played by Brad Dourif in David Lynch's 1984 film - a Mentat (human who serves the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen (Stellan Skarsgard) and is addicted to the spice. De Vries is a human who is specially trained to perform mental functions rivaling the computers that are forbidden in this universe. The all-star cast of the production also includes Timothee Chalamet as the lead character Paul Atreides, Rebecca Ferguson, Dave Bautista, Charlotte Rampling and Javier Bardem, whilst Jason Momoa has also been attached to the project. Zendaya and Oscar Isaac are also in talks for roles. The project is being created by Legendary Entertainment, and Villeneuve will produce alongside Mary Parent and Cale Boyter. Villeneuve also wrote the script for the flick with the help of Eric Roth and Jon Spaihts. Legendary acquired the film and TV rights in 2016 after signing a deal with Herbert's estate for his iconic tome. Villeneuve previously admitted 'Dune' has always been his "dream project" as he was obsessed with the original film growing up. Filming is due to commence in Budapest and Jordan in spring and the film is set to be released next year.



Larson's Captain Marvel will lead 'entire' MCU, says Feige

Kevin Feige says Captain Marvel will lead the "entire" Marvel Cinematic Universe in the future. The president of Marvel Studios has revealed that Brie Larson's Carol Danvers from first Marvel female led standalone film will be at the "forefront" of the next wave of MCU movies and insisted that introducing Brie, 29, at this year's Comic-Con was one of the "highlights of his career". In 'Captain Marvel: The Official Movie Special', Kevin said: "When we found out that Brie Larson might be interested in joining our world, we had a number of meetings. She was a huge fan of the character in the comics. One of the highlights of my career at Marvel was introducing her at Comic-Con and having her come out on stage and stand there with literally almost everybody else from our movies. There she was at the forefront, and it was a great foreshadowing - not just for how audiences are going to embrace Brie as this character, but also for how Captain Marvel is about to take the lead and be at the forefront of the entire Cinematic Universe." 'Captain Marvel' has so far grossed \$760 million worldwide making the highest earning film of 2019, so far. Meanwhile, Brie previously revealed she hopes 'Captain Marvel' will spark a global conversation about diversity. She shared: "With films like this, that do end up going international, because a lot of the time, with smaller movies, you don't know if they will or not, it means you get to have a really extensive conversation, and I'm so grateful that this film has so many pockets in it." — Bang Showbiz



Lifestyle | Fashion

Barbara Palvin named Victoria's Secret Angel

Barbara Palvin says becoming Victoria's Secret's newest Angel is the "ultimate career high". The 25-year-old model - who has worked with the lingerie giant intermittently for over six years - will be joining the brand as their first-ever Hungarian model, and the star admitted that the new move came at a perfect time because she is "finally" happy in herself and her body. Speaking to PEOPLE, she said: "I've been keeping this a secret for three months. It's the ultimate career high! When I was 13, I saw the VS Fashion Show and said, 'One day I will get there.' Three or four years later, I shot with Victoria's Secret PINK for the first time.

"Now, I feel like I was destined to do this. Victoria's Secret caught me at the perfect time, because I'm finally happy with myself and my body." The model first walked in the legendary Victoria's Secret Fashion show in 2012

and modeled in multiple campaigns before returning to the catwalk for 2018's iconic New York show, and now Palvin will be joining the likes of resident Angels Elsa Hosk, Romee Strijd, Jasmine Tookes and Stella Maxwell. Palvin - who is in a relationship with actor Dylan Sprouse - has revealed that her beau "couldn't believe" the news but always "knew" she would make it as a permanent angel for the prestigious label. She added: "He couldn't believe it. Then he was like, 'I told you. I knew it.'"

Palvin then ran downstairs at 5:30 a.m. to tell her parents the happy news. She said: "They were half-asleep, but they were freaking out. First they thought something was wrong, but then I repeated myself and they were so happy. My mom cried a little bit, and my dad fist-bumped my shoulder, like he usually does." The brunette beauty posted a video on Instagram announcing the much-antic-

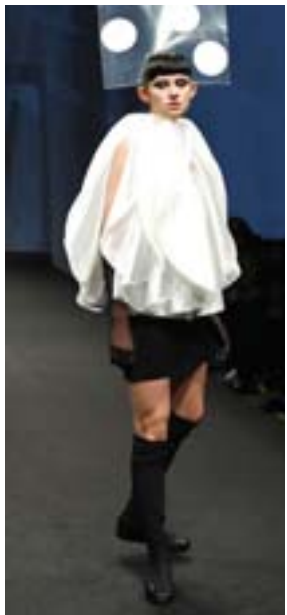
ipated news on Thursday where she shared a clip showcasing her previous work with lingerie brand. She wrote: "OFFICIALLY A @victoriasecret ANGEL! I don't know where to begin but I'll try: I never thought it would happen and it has exceeded all my expectations. I'm very excited to announce that I'm officially a @victoriasecret ANGEL! Thank you for believing in me.

"There were times where I let my own thoughts hold me back and it was a hard climb away from those but my family, my team, Ed, and everyone at VS they were always there to support me and uplift me. I am proud to represent Hungary, and most importantly, all of you in this new chapter of my life! Thank you all so much again (sic)". — AFP

Barbara Palvin



Japanese designer Junko Koshino (front left) and Fukushima governor Masao Uchibori (front right) greet guests after the 'Fukushima Pride' show at Tokyo Fashion Week. — AFP photos



Cate Blanchett loves to 'recycle and rework' outfits

Cate Blanchett loves to "recycle and re-wear" timeless outfits. The 49-year-old actress tries to "hold onto" couture garments that she has acquired over the years and re-work the "beautifully made" pieces because "fashion always looks backwards". Speaking to UK Vogue, she said: "I love fashion. I see it all as costume. That's where it springs from [for me], an interest in character and costume - but also when you get to work with great designers or people who are so good at tailoring or interested in forward-looking ideas. "If you look at people like Roksanda Ilincic and her incredible collection where she smashes those extraordinary colors and patterns together, it is really inspiring.

"Recently I was unpacking stuff and I found an Armani suit that I've had since 1997. You hold onto these things; you don't necessarily need to have the latest and the new. "So, if you have something that's beautifully made, you keep it and you re-wear it. Fashion always looks backwards to look forward, so why can't we just recycle and re-wear?" The 'Thor: Ragnarok' star signature fragrance when she was growing up was "lavender" or "violet" because it was what her grandmother always smelt like. She added: "I was given my first fragrance while I was at drama school, my

friend gave me a Clinique perfume that she didn't like. I had absolutely no money.

"But I think probably even earlier than that I wore perfume. I must have smelled like lavender or violets because that's what my grandmother smelled of. "For me, growing up with my mother and grandmother, and remembering their scents, I felt like one day I'm going to be allowed through the portal into womanhood and I, too, will wear a fragrance." — Bang Showbiz



Cate Blanchett

Alannah Walton grateful to be 'discovered' on Instagram

Victoria's Secret model Alannah Walton will forever be grateful for being "discovered" by a modelling agency on Instagram. The 18-year-old Australian beauty was recruited by IMG in 2014 via their Instagram model scouting initiative 'We Love Your Genes', and from that moment her fashion career has gone from strength-to-strength with the highlight, so far, seeing her selected to walk in the Victoria's Secret Show in New York City in 2018 which saw her strutting her stuff in the lingerie extravaganza with the likes of Adriana Lima, Stella Maxwell, Gigi Hadid and Candice Swanpoel.

Speaking to Vogue Australia, she said: "As a model, I was discovered on Instagram by IMG actually. So their scouting team reached out to me, and I was about 15 at the time. They sent me a message and said that if it was something that I was interested in, they'd love to talk to me. Maybe two months later, I went in and met IMG in Sydney and it all sort of happened and I signed a contract on that day. "I think Victoria's Secret really selects the majority of the girls that they want to see, and then they go forward to the agencies and say they want to see X, Y and Z."

Ahead of the Victoria's Secret Show, Alannah trained in the gym daily to keep her physique in the best possible shape, and also made sure to keep her diet as "clean as it's ever been", even ditching her favorite condiments to aide her eating plan. She added: "I was boxing every single day. I had a boxing trainer. So I'd make sure that I'd go every single day. And then I would generally add in Pilates in the afternoon as well. But I

think the biggest thing for me was, I just - I never had a day off. And I had never done that before in my life. So I was going every single day without a doubt, and then my diet was as clean as it has ever been.

"No sauces, no salts, I just kept it very simple and I tried my best to continue afterwards, but I definitely had a little bit of food fun afterwards! My body actually sort of didn't like eating bad food afterwards, because it was so used to having such healthy food, that it didn't really let me!"

Alannah also confessed that she "zoned out" just before she was about to walk the runway because it was such a surreal experience. She said: "We have about six or seven hours for hair and makeup and prep so that can be quite long but my hair and makeup was finished within two hours. So I had a lot of time to sit around and reflect on what I was about to do. But once we actually got dressed, I honestly don't remember it from then on. It felt like it was done within 30 seconds! I think it was just from the nerves. I sort of zoned out and had no idea what was going on." — Bang Showbiz

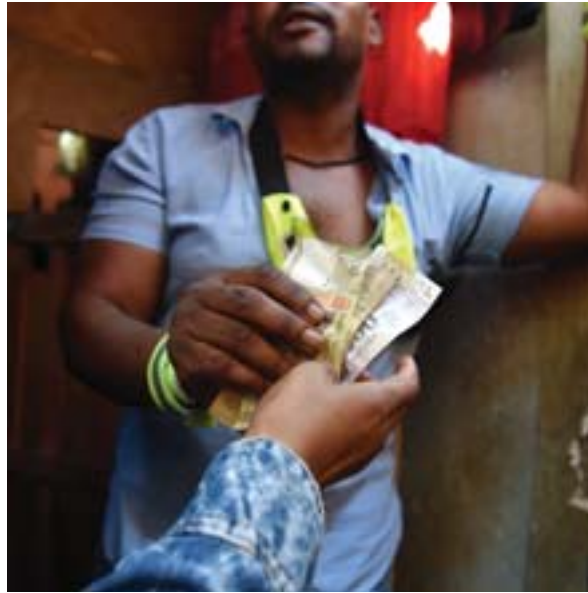


Alannah Walton

Lifestyle | Features



Cubans look for clothes in a market, in the center of Port-au-Prince. — AFP photos



A Cuban woman pays a vendor for clothes in a shop, in a market in the center of Port-au-Prince.



Cubans are seen in the reflection of sunglasses, while shopping for clothes in a market, in the center of Port-au-Prince.



Cubans (center) shop for clothes in a market, in the center of Port-au-Prince.



Cubans shop for clothes in a market, in the center of Port-au-Prince.



A Cuban woman shops for clothes in a market in the center of Port-au-Prince.

Cubans turn Haiti into unlikely shopping oasis

You wouldn't think the poorest country in the Americas would be anyone's shopping dream. Yet Haiti has become just that for Cuban merchants. Cubans, in the region's only communist country with a still mostly state-led economy, face very high prices and not much selection at all. So at the Hippolyte street market in Haiti's capital, vendors amid piles of clothing and shoes-call out in Spanish trolling for their likely clients: Cubans on short shopping trips. They will exchange your Cuban pesos to Haitian gourdes, they promise. "I buy everything: clothes, electronics, shoes ... In Cuba, it's so expensive and, above all, there is not all this choice," explains Wilfredo Sotolongo, checking the size of beach sandals he was buying.

At home in Cienfuegos, southeast of Havana, the 39-year-old was on his third trip to Port-au-Prince. He never stays as long as a week, and his shopping missions are carried out with almost military precision, in this one small area of Haiti. Just a few meters (yards) away, his compatriot Maria Carmen from Sierra Maestra, in southwestern Cuba, was in cutthroat negotiations on a lot of women's underwear. "They limit us to 30 kilograms (66 pounds) of luggage at home. And we can't have more than twelve items of the same kind: twelve T-shirts, twelve jeans, twelve bras," she explains, a roll of tape on her wrist to seal her purchases in a huge plastic bag.

"When the sellers do lots of ten, we (Cubans) do not have a problem, sometimes we divide things up between us to meet the

rules: we all know each other on the plane," she joked. Just as many American or other western shoppers might be interested in outlets, or online bargains, some Cubans-struggling to make ends meet in their country's devastated economy-are finding it ever more worthwhile to pop over to Haiti to stock up. Cuba's state-run stores offer a range of goods that seem expensive in the country of 11 million. Most people make from \$20 to \$30 a month. Launched in 2010, the Haitian airline Sunrise now serves the Cuban cities of Havana, Camaguey and Santiago with four to five weekly flights for each of these destinations.

'Little Havana'

Cubans are easy to identify in the terminal of Port-au-Prince airport. They are the ones juggling big bundles of clothes, flat-screen TVs or even toys-with not a suitcase in sight. "I think the Cubans are making a lot of money or they would not come back as often," said Ketia Louis, at her mother's stall at the Hippolyte market. "We do not sell expensive stuff here. But it's too expensive for many Haitians: now the vast majority of my clients are Cubans-so I like them," said the 27-year-old.

A neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, located near the airport, has even started to be called "Ti Havana" - "Little Havana" in Creole-because so many of its winding streets include cheap hotels popular with locals from the island to the west. Near a restaurant dec-

orated with a painted portrait of Cuban revolutionary hero Ernesto Che Guevara, Yamel was picking out hair accessories with the few gourdes she had left.

"The visa, the airline tickets and the hotel for three days: in Havana, I have an agency that takes care of everything," she explained. It may be more expensive, but it is less complicated than visiting the Haitian embassy, where people are asked many questions, said the young woman, who preferred not to give her last name. She said she paid \$900 for the package of services-but offered no details about how she could afford such a high price. Even a Cuban doctor's salary does not top \$30 a month, and the government is sensitive about income inequality. This was her fifth trip to Port-au-Prince in one year. So what does she do with all her purchases?

"All this is for me and for my family," she says, before putting an index finger to her mouth-suggesting the truth is another story. Despite sometimes dangerous areas around the Hippolyte market, linked to clashes between gangs, Yamel wants to continue her back-and-forth between the two countries. "We are so close, we couldn't not," she said. "Cuba and Haiti are one family." — AFP



'Captain Marvel' clobbers the competition to stay atop box office

Female-led superhero movie "Captain Marvel" took in an estimated \$69.3 million over the weekend, out earning the combined North American totals of the next nine films, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported Sunday. The Disney/Marvel blockbuster had a huge opening last weekend-the biggest ever for a female-fronted superhero flick-and, with the foreign total of \$494 million added in, "is now assured of ultimately earning \$1 billion," according to the Hollywood Reporter.

The film, which stars Brie Larson as a former fighter pilot who gains superpowers and finds herself embroiled in a galactic conflict, has already passed the lifetime takes of superhero adventures including "Ant-Man and the Wasp" and "Iron Man 2," according to Variety. Far back in second spot for this three-day weekend was a new animated production from Paramount, "Wonder Park," at \$16 million.

The film, set in an amusement park based on the imaginings of a young girl (Brianna Denski, whose previous work included a Lysol commercial), has far to go to make up the nearly \$100 million Paramount spent to make it. Jennifer Garner, Matthew Broderick, Mila Kunis

and John Oliver also provide voices. In third was another new release, CBS and Lionsgate's teen drama "Five Feet Apart," at \$13.2 million. It stars Haley Lu Richardson and Cole Sprouse as teens who fall in love while being treated for cystic fibrosis, a disease that requires them to keep a distance from each other.

Universal's "How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World" took in \$9.3 million for fourth place. Voiced by Jay Baruchel, America Ferrera, Cate Blanchett and F. Murray Abraham, it tells the story of young Hiccup and his dragon Toothless on their quest to find a dragon utopia. And in fifth was Lionsgate's "A Madea Family Funeral" at \$8.1 million. Actor/director Tyler Perry, who plays the irreverent title character, says it will be the last in the profitable Madea series.

Rounding out the weekend's top 10 were:

- "No Manches Frida 2" (\$3.9 million)
- "Captive State" (\$3.2 million)
- "The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part" (\$2.1 million)
- "Alita: Battle Angel" (\$1.9 million)
- "Green Book" (\$1.3 million) —AFP

Streaming wars heat up as rivals queue up to challenge Netflix

Some of the biggest names in media and tech are gearing up to move into streaming, in what could be a major challenge to market leader Netflix. Apple is expected to make its move with an announcement March 25 on its media plans, with a war chest estimated at some \$1 billion and partners including stars like Jennifer Aniston and director J.J. Abrams involved in content. Walt Disney Co. has announced its new streaming service Disney+ will launch this year, as will another from WarnerMedia, the newly acquired media-entertainment division of AT&T. The new entrants, with more expected, could launch a formidable challenge to Netflix, which has some 140 million paid subscribers in 190 markets, and to other services such as Amazon and Hulu.

"It's really going to change the industry," said Alan Wolk, co-founder of the consulting firm TVREV who follows the sector. Wolk said he sees seven or eight powerful players in streaming which will lead to "huge competition for new shows and hit shows." These rivals are coming into the segment which has been transformed by the spectacular growth of Netflix and a growing movement by consumers to on-demand television delivered over internet platforms. In the US alone, an estimated six million consumers have dropped pay TV bundles since 2012, while on-demand services such as Netflix, Hulu and Amazon have been surging, according to Leichtman Research. But just as Netflix has disrupted traditional "linear" television, rivals are now moving to disrupt Netflix.

Feeling pain

Netflix is likely to feel pain, not only from the new rivals, but also from the loss of content from the big libraries of Disney and Time Warner. These Hollywood firms "have big libraries, so the cost of their content is much lower than it will be for Netflix, which has to pay for all its content," said Laura Martin, analyst with the research firm Needham & Co. "Netflix will lose subscribers to these new entrants," Martin said. AT&T's WarnerMedia will launch its service later this year that combines the content from its premium HBO channel (known for "Game of Thrones") and the

vast Time Warner library of films and shows.

Disney's service will have its films and TV shows, along with the library it is acquiring from Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox, a deal closing in the coming days. That includes the "Star Wars" and Marvel superhero franchises and ABC television content. JP Morgan analyst Alexia Quadrani predicts Disney will eventually scale up to become as big as Netflix, or even bigger by signing up 45 million US subscribers and 115 million internationally.



In this file photo US actress Jennifer Aniston walks on stage during the 46th American Film Institute Life Achievement Award Gala at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood. — AFP

Quadrani cited Disney's "unmatched brand recognition, extensive premium content, and unparalleled ecosystem to market the service." The analyst said Disney benefits from its global ecosystem that develops good customer relationships from its theme parks, hotels, cruises, and consumer products. Wolk agreed that Disney "is in a good spot" because of its strong brand and content but predicted that consumers may be overwhelmed by the growing options. "I think there will be a lot of churn," Wolk said. "People will subscribe to one service to watch one show, and then it becomes easy to cancel and take another."

No panic, yet

Some analysts say Netflix has no reason to panic-yet. "Netflix has figured this business

out, they know what consumers want," said Dan Rayburn, a streaming media analyst with Frost & Sullivan. But Rayburn said that over time, rivals may be able to leverage their user base and infrastructure to eat away at Netflix's advantage. "What does Netflix own? Nothing," Rayburn said. "If you're Amazon or AT&T you can give this stuff away and be a loss leader, that's the big value." Still, he said any company that wants to challenge Netflix needs to be "quick and nimble" and that it remains to be seen if the legacy players can do that.

Richard Greenfield of BTIG Research also questioned the capability of the legacy entertainment firms to compete in the world of new media. "We believe legacy media has missed their window to compete with Netflix (and other tech platforms) unless they are willing to truly go all-in," Greenfield said in a recent research note.

'Innovator's dilemma'

Greenfield said that means moving the focus away from the box office and getting better control of content. "Disney is battling a classic innovator's dilemma that makes it hard for them to truly pivot to direct-to-consumer, not to mention, they and the rest of legacy media do not really appreciate how important technology is to success in direct-to-consumer streaming," Greenfield wrote. Daniel Ives of Wedbush Securities said Apple could be the wild card, but that the iPhone maker might need to acquire a content provider like CBS or Sony Pictures to be a major player.

Apple "is definitely playing from behind the eight ball in this content arms race with Netflix, Amazon, Disney, Hulu, and AT&T/Time Warner all going after this next consumer frontier," Ives said in a note to clients. "While acquisitions have not been in Apple's core DNA, the clock has struck midnight for Cupertino in our opinion and building content organically is a slow and arduous path, which highlights the clear need for Apple to do larger, strategic (deals)." — AFP

Classifieds

Tuesday, March 19, 2019

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STATE OF KUWAIT
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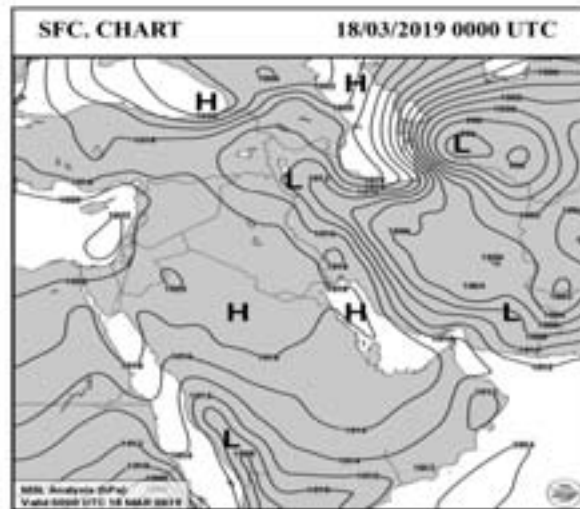
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Warm with light to moderate freshening at times variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 40 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 30 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING: No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	25 °C	16 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	25 °C	11 °C
ABDALY	25 °C	12 °C
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C
JAHRA	25 °C	14 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	24 °C	15 °C
SALMIYAH	24 °C	18 °C
AHMADI	24 °C	16 °C
NUWASIB	26 °C	12 °C
WAFRA	25 °C	12 °C
SALMY	24 °C	12 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	03/19	Warm	25 °C	09 °C	NW	12 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	03/20	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	26 °C	12 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Thursday	03/21	Warm and Partly cloudy	25 °C	13 °C	VRB-NE	08 - 26 km/h
Friday	03/22	Warm and Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	24 °C	14 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:36
Sunrise	05:55
Zuhr	11:56
Asr	15:23
Sunset	17:58
Isha	19:15

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	25 °C
MIN. Temp.	14 °C
MAX. RH	99 %
MIN. RH	20 %
MAX. Wind	NW 64 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Huzefa Lukmani, holder of Indian Passport No. M5452033 and Civil ID No. 288112902143 has changed my name from Hujefa to Huzefa Lukmani hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Huzefa Lukmani. (C 5502) 19-3-2019

Medapati Samelu S/o Medapati Rama Rao (old name) residing at 5-24, Kolmanpeta, Kumudavalli, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh - 534210. Solemnly declare that my name (previously called) Medapati Samelu (old name) changed as Medapati Raju (new name). (C 5501) 18-3-2019

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22087426
FlyDubai	22924455
Qatar Airways	22414400
KLM	22423888
Royal Jordanian	22425747
22418064/5/6	
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 19/3/2019				Departure Flights on Tuesday 19/3/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	254	Amman	00:05	JZR	1075	Doha	13:00
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	KAC	545	Cairo	13:30
THY	766	ISL	00:30	JZR	113	Doha	13:30
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
JZR	722	Alexandria	00:55	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	102	London	01:20	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	775	Jeddah	15:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	743	Dammam	15:55
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
RBG	211	Luxor	03:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	FEF	342	Sohag	16:25
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
MSR	606	Luxor	03:10	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	105	Bahrain	16:55
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00	SYR	342	Damascus	17:00
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
JZR	716	Sohag	04:40	QTR	1073	Doha	17:50
UAE	873	Dubai	04:55	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	253	Amman	18:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	JZR	501	Lahore	18:40
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	362	Colombo	06:10	JZR	721	Alexandria	19:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:25	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
THY	6376	Istanbul	06:30	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
BAW	157	London	07:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	20:05
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	GFA	214	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	708	Luxor	07:15	NIA	0162	Cairo	20:30
JZR	358	Kochi	07:35	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:35
FEF	241	Alexandria	07:40	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
KAC	304	Mumbai	08:20	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
IRA	675	Lar	09:40	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
JZR	410	Delhi	10:00	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
KAC	624	Doha	10:40	KAC	303	Mumbai	22:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
JZR	122	Dubai	11:10	ICV	675	Hong Kong	22:45
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	RBG	214	Sohag	23:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	795	Madinah	23:15
JZR	142	Al Najaf	12:50	QTR	1083	Doha	23:25
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50				

Mosque attack 'shows blind spot on white nationalism'

HONG KONG: The carnage unleashed in Christchurch by a white supremacist has highlighted what analysts say is the global problem of a far-right threat that frequently flies beneath the intelligence radar. Like other extremist groups, racist ideologues have leveraged the power and reach of the internet to disseminate violent ideas, and give advice on the logistics of terror. And while not a well-defined group with a core leadership, they represent a "blind spot" for security services, says Amarnath Amarasingam, a researcher at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue.

Bridging this gap - instead of focusing primarily on Islamist militants - needs to be a priority. "We're able to - in multiple sectors of government and policy... connect random knife attacks inspired by (the Islamic State group) to a global terrorist movement with some ease," Amarasingam wrote on Twitter after the Christchurch attack. "But we struggle to do this with white nationalism, the all right, etc. We need to quickly rethink this blind spot."

Brenton Tarrant was steeped in a neo-fascist, anti-Muslim ideology, according to a rambling "manifesto" he posted online before the massacre of 50 people at two mosques last week. He was not on any watch lists and travelled abroad extensively. New Zealand will "look at what all relevant agencies knew or could or should have known about the individual and his activities, including his access to weapons and whether they could have been in a position to prevent the attack," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said yesterday. The probe will also look at "travel movements... his use of social media and his connection to others".

While critical details and connections have yet to be discovered by investigators, the Christchurch attack has sparked a wave of questions about counter-terrorism policies against rightwing extremists. Experts say the white nationalist movement is a cohesive one, binding together people from disparate bits of the world on a platform that preaches an imagined, racially "pure" ideal. It is one that rejects immigration, and has an often

violent antipathy towards Jews, Muslims, and women.

In a 2011 article that has begun circulating on the internet since the mosque attacks, analyst Thomas Hegghammer of the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment described violent white nationalism as "a new doctrine of civilizational war". It is "the closest thing yet to a Christian version of Al-Qaeda", he said. "Many forms of rightwing terrorism are international terrorism, drawing on international networks, ideas, and personalities from around the world," wrote Daniel Byman, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Brookings Institute. "An Australian travelling to New Zealand to attack mosques is one example."

Analysts say one factor that has emboldened extremists like Tarrant is the rise to power of rightwing populists and anti-immigrant parties across the world. "The demonization of Muslim communities, often by politicians who later act shocked and angry when violence occurs, contributes to societal polarization and inspires violence," wrote Byman. Critics in the United States point to the anti-immigrant ethos of President Donald Trump's "America First" rhetoric as one such example.

Trump's expression of sympathy in the wake of Christchurch has been attacked as tepid - a position exacerbated when he told reporters white nationalism was not a growing problem. "I don't really. I think it's a small group of people that have very, very serious problems, I guess," Trump said. In Australia, successive governments - including the current administration of Prime Minister Scott Morrison - have been accused of stoking anti-immigrant sentiment as an election strategy.

Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton defended Canberra's counter-terrorism policies, claiming Australian authorities were alert to the threat of the extreme right. "These extremist groups - neo-Nazis, or white supremacists, extreme right-wing groups - whatever term you want to apply to them, they've been squarely on... (the) radar," he said. New Zealand, howev-

a role model, especially for young Turks in Germany. "Footballers are symbolic figures in our society, with whom people identify with much more than ministers," added Braun. "And so the question is raised: how much does someone wearing the German national jersey stand for Germany?"

Braun's comments come after German politician Cem Ozdemir, whose parents are Turkish, said on Sunday that he found it "inappropriate" for Ozil to invite the Turkish leader. Ozil - one of the world's most popular footballers on social media with 31 million followers on his official Facebook account, 19.1 million on Instagram account and 23.9 million on Twitter - has an obligation as a role model, added Ozdemir. Another lawmaker, Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, was equally unimpressed by his invitation to Erdogan.

"The wedding is the private matter of Mesut Ozil, but he is a world star, who people look up to, so of course it's a pity from a political point of view," Lambsdorff told newspaper Welt. Ozil has dated Gulse since 2017 and the couple announced their engagement in June 2018. The Arsenal midfielder, a third-generation German, whipped up a political storm when he was pictured alongside Erdogan last May. Criticism intensified after the red-faced defending champions crashed out of the first round of the World Cup in Russia. In the wake of the World Cup fiasco, Ozil announced his resignation from the national squad, saying: "I am German when we win, an immigrant when we lose". — AFP

its own, emaciated and weak," regional bureau director Fatma Idris told AFP. "(The) animal was dehydrated. On the second day it struggled and vomited blood."

The death comes just weeks after the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternative released a report on the "shocking" amount of single-use plastic in the Philippines, including nearly 60 billion sachets a year. The Philippines has strict laws on garbage disposal but environmentalists say these are poorly implemented. The problem also plagues the archipelago's neighbors, with a sperm whale dying in Indonesia last year with nearly six kilograms of plastic waste discovered in its stomach. In Thailand, a whale also died last year after swallowing more than 80 plastic bags. A green turtle, a protected species, suffered the same fate there in 2018. — AFP

Mehmet Tanis said he had since remarried and now lives in the central province of Kayseri. "I have had no dialogue, no contact with my son for 11 years. We have not spoken to one another since 2008," he told DHA. "He did not have an aggressive attitude - but 11 years have gone by. What happened, what has he experienced? I know nothing whatsoever," Mehmet Tanis said.

The shooting took place in Kanaleneiland, a quiet residential district on the outskirts of Utrecht with a large immigrant population. "It's frightening that something like this can happen so close to home," said Omar Rahhou, who said his parents lived on a street cordoned off by police. "These things normally happen far away but this brings it very close, awful." Witness Daan Molenaar, who said he had been sitting at the front of the tram when the shooting started, told national broadcaster NOS he did not believe it was a terrorist attack. "The first thing I thought was, this is some kind of revenge or something, or somebody who's really mad and grabbed a pistol," he said.

The streets of Utrecht were emptier than usual and mosques in the city kept their doors closed yesterday. Police screened off the site where at least one body lay covered near the tram. Dutch television showed counter-terrorism units surrounding a house in Utrecht and sniffer dogs being put to work. Utrecht, the Netherlands' fourth largest city with a population of around 340,000, is known for its picturesque canals and large student population. Gun killings are rare in Utrecht, as elsewhere in the Netherlands. — Agencies



CHRISTCHURCH: Students attend a vigil yesterday, three days after a shooting incident at two mosques in the city that claimed the lives of 50 Muslim worshippers. — AFP

er, now intends to find out if there are failings in how its intelligence and law enforcement are set up in the face of the threat posed by individuals like Tarrant who can go around the world - often without stringent visa requirements. Dutton said Tarrant had spent only 45 days in Australia during the last three years.

The 28-year-old travelled extensively for years and said in his online screed that he first began considering an attack in 2017 while in Western Europe, where he was shocked by the number of immigrants. Such ideas are spread regularly on online platforms like the neo-Nazi

forum Stormfront, or 8chan, a messaging board notorious for misogynistic posts and far-right conspiracy theories.

How the extreme right organizes online and spreads these views presents a unique challenge, despite the vast electronic monitoring infrastructures deployed by governments. To counter it, tech firms - especially social media giants - need to respond with the same rigor as they use to identify and filter jihadist content. "Similar methods need to be employed for other, equally lethal, forms of hate like anti-Muslim, racist, and anti-Semitic violence," said Byman. — AFP

Outrage as Ozil invites Erdogan...

Continued from Page 1

After 92 appearances for Germany, including a key role in the 2014 World Cup victory, Ozil suddenly quit the national squad last July, accusing German football officials of racism. On Sunday, Germany's top-selling tabloid Bild reported that Ozil, 30, and his model fiancée Amine Gulse, 25, a former Miss Turkey, personally presented Erdogan in Istanbul with an invitation to their wedding this summer, asking the Turkish leader to appear as the footballer's witness.

The invite immediately drew sharp criticism in Germany, whose government has been sharply at odds with Ankara over a range of human rights questions in recent years. Helge Braun, a CDU politician and chief of staff to German Chancellor Merkel, told Bild it "makes one sad" that Ozil would make a such a move despite having already been sharply criticised by the German public over his first meeting with Erdogan. "The fact that this has continued will have disappointed a lot of football fans - me too!" said Braun.

The politician accepted Ozil's was "a private decision" which one must respect, but appealed to the footballer as

Dead whale had 40 kg of plastic...

Continued from Page 1

"It's very disgusting and heartbreaking," he told AFP. "We've done necropsies on 61 dolphins and whales in the last 10 years and this is one of the biggest (amounts of plastic) we've seen." The 15.4-foot (4.7-m) long whale was stranded in Mabini town on Friday where local officials and fishermen tried to release it, said the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. "It could not swim on

Three killed in Dutch tram attack...

Continued from Page 1

"The first reports have led to disbelief and disgust. Innocent people have been struck by violence... We are now doing everything we can to find the perpetrator or perpetrators as soon as possible. That is now our complete focus."

The mayor of Utrecht, Jan van Zanen, said three people had been killed and nine injured, three of them seriously. The number of injured was later lowered to five. Dutch police issued an image of Tanis and warned the public not to approach him. The suspect had had previous run-ins with police, the prosecutor said. Local broadcaster RTV Utrecht said earlier the suspect was known to police for both minor and major crimes, including a shooting in 2013.

The father of the suspect said his son should be punished if found responsible, a Turkish news agency reported. "If he did it he must be punished," the DHA agency quoted Mehmet Tanis as saying. Gokmen's family originally hails from Yozgat in central Turkey, media reports said. His father revealed he had lost contact with his son having returned to his homeland in 2008 after divorcing his wife, DHA reported. She remained in the Netherlands with Gokmen.

Bahrain has little room for maneuver in economy reboot

MANAMA: As the weekend kicks off in Bahrain, Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti cars jam the capital's roads and hotel lobbies fill with visitors looking for bars, restaurants and other night-time entertainment. A new sales tax introduced this year means government coffers will gain with every glass of wine sold and shisha pipe smoked, but that's still not enough to plug a large gap in the island kingdom's finances and wean it off aid from richer neighbors.

Saudi Arabia, along with Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, came to the rescue of Bahrain last year when a prolonged period of lower oil prices pushed its public debt to nearly 93 percent of annual economic output. Their \$10 billion bailout pledge, along with Bahrain's inclusion in JPMorgan's emerging market indexes, have transformed its bonds from a busted bet to a boom for investors.

The price of Bahrain's 2028 dollar bonds has risen by a third from a record low last June when the country looked in danger of default. But that upward trajectory could go into reverse if Manama does not tackle its spending overruns. With an overall deficit last year equivalent to 11.7 percent of annual economic output, according to an estimate by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Bahrain would need to introduce a raft of new taxes and spending cuts to eliminate its budget deficit by 2022, a target set as part of its bailout.

1,000 feared dead in Mozambique storm...

Continued from Page 1

"This is a real humanitarian disaster," he said. "More than 100,000 people are in danger". Aerial photographs released by a Christian non-profit organization, the Mission Aviation Fellowship, showed groups of people stuck on roof tops with flood waters up to window level.

"The scale of damage... (in) Beira is massive and horrifying", the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said. Ninety percent of the city of some 530,000 people and its surrounding area has been "damaged or destroyed," it said in a statement. "The situation is terrible. The scale of devastation is enormous," the IFRC's Jamie LeSueur said. "Almost everything is destroyed. Communication lines have been completely cut and roads have been destroyed. Some affected communities are not accessible."

A large dam burst on Sunday and cut off the last road to Beira, he said. Sofala Province governor Alberto Mondlane warned that the "biggest threat we have now, even bigger than the cyclone, is floods because it's raining more and more". Emma Beaty, coordinator of a grouping of NGOs known as Cosaco, said: "We've never had something of this magnitude before in Mozambique. Some dams have broken, and others have reached full capacity, they'll very soon open the flood gates. It's a convergence of flooding, cyclones, dams breaking and making a potential wave: Everything's in place so we get a perfect storm."

Nyusi said the Pungwe and Buzi rivers in central Mozambique "have burst their banks and engulfed entire villages". "Communities are isolated and bodies are floating" on the waters, he said. "Flying roofing sheets beheaded people," Rajino Paulino recounting the

But the country's rulers are wary of austerity measures roiling sectarian tensions among the populace and of taxes, fees and spending cuts dampening growth. Instead, the government has set its sights on trying to grow the local economy to boost revenues and balance the books. Investments in the fintech sector, a major oil and gas find and the development of Bahrain as a hub for foreign companies wanting to tap into the larger Saudi Arabian market are all initiatives touted by the government as future sources of revenue.

But they are not seen as sufficient to close the gap by 2022. The IMF said this month that it expects the economy to grow around 1.8 percent this year, the same pace as last year, and said additional reform efforts were needed. "We still think there will be deficits at the end of the period," said Trevor Cullinan, sovereign credit analyst at Standard & Poor's, which like the other main rating agencies has a junk rating on Bahrain's debt. Bahrain's ministry of finance and national economy said the country's fiscal program was on track to deliver a balanced budget in 2022. "This is a comprehensive and credible plan which, through a combination of spending reductions and revenue measures, is already delivering significant progress," the ministry said in a statement.

A recovering oil price, along with new excise taxes and cuts in subsidies for water and power consumption have helped shrink Bahrain's deficit from a record 18.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015. As part of the bailout from its Gulf allies, Bahrain agreed to introduce a 5 percent value added tax (VAT), as well as further subsidy cuts and a voluntary retirement plan for state workers. But the government has ruled out taxing income or company profits, partly to continue attracting business to a region where such taxes are non-existent. — Reuters

moment the cyclone smashed into Beira. "We are sleeping rough, we are eating poorly and we don't have houses anymore," Paulino said. Beira international airport was closed because of cyclone damage but later reopened.

In neighboring Zimbabwe, Idai left 89 dead and at least 150 more missing, according to a toll compiled by AFP. It swept away homes and ripped bridges to pieces, leaving destruction that the acting defense minister, Perrance Shiri, said "resembles the aftermath of a full-scale war". "There was a lot of destruction both on our facilities and on people," said Shiri, speaking on television from the affected eastern highlands region. Some roads were swallowed up by massive sinkholes, while bridges were ripped to pieces by flash floods, according to an AFP photographer.

"This is the worst infrastructural damage we have ever had," Transport and Infrastructural Development Minister Joel Biggie Matiza said. The eastern district of Chimanimani was worst-hit, with houses and most of the region's bridges washed away by flash floods. The most affected areas are not yet accessible, and high winds and dense clouds have hampered military rescue helicopter flights. Two pupils and a worker at a secondary school in the area were among those killed after a landslide sent a boulder crashing into their dormitory.

Soldiers on Sunday helped rescue the surviving nearly 200 pupils, teachers and staff who had been trapped at the school in Chimanimani. Joshua Sacco, lawmaker for Chimanimani, told AFP that between "150 to 200 people" are missing. The majority of them are thought to be government workers, whose housing complex was completely engulfed by raging waters.

cnTheir fate was unknown because the area was still unreachable. "We are very worried because all these houses were just suddenly submerged under water and literally washed away and that is where we have about 147 missing," he said. Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa cut short a visit to Abu Dhabi, saying on his return home on Monday, "we are deeply grieved as a nation". His government has come under fire for failing to evacuate people in time. — AFP

Sports

Thiem topples 'legend' Federer to win Indian Wells championship

Andreescu soars after Indian Wells breakthrough

INDIANA WELLS: Dominic Thiem claimed his first Masters 1000 title after coming from a set down to defeat Roger Federer 3-6 6-3 7-5 and win the BNP Paribas Open on Sunday in Indian Wells. Momentum swung in Thiem's favour in the deciding set when he smacked a forehand winner down the line to break Federer and take a 6-5 lead.

The Austrian fell on his back and covered his face with his hands when Federer, who had been bidding for a record sixth Indian Wells title and 101st tournament victory, netted on match point. The 25-year-old Thiem, who rose four places to a career-high world number four yesterday, paid tribute to his opponent.

"It is such a pleasure to compete with you, to learn so much from you, and to play with one of the biggest legends of all time," he told the 20-times Grand Slam champion during the trophy presentation ceremony.

"I feel like it's not my right to congratulate you, you have 88 more titles than me, so I'm just hoping you play more and we can have some other big finals," he said with a laugh. Federer was gracious in defeat after falling in the final in the Southern California desert for a second consecutive year.

"It has been a great week for me even though it didn't work out today," he said. "What a great week for Dominic. Wonderful playing at the very end and throughout the week. You deserve it." Federer raced to an early lead, winning the first three games before wrapping up the first set in the Southern California desert.

But baseline specialist Thiem kept his composure and levelled the match in the



INDIANA WELLS, CA: Dominic Thiem of Austria holds the championship trophy after his men's singles final victory against Roger Federer of Switzerland on day fourteen of the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden on March 17, 2019 in Indian Wells, California. — AFP



INDIANA WELLS: Bianca Andreescu of Canada poses with the winner's trophy after defeating Angelique Kerber of Germany in the women's singles final on Day 14 of the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden on Sunday in Indian Wells, California. — AFP

second, gaining traction by extending rallies and unleashing a torrent of high-kicking serves to keep Federer off balance. Federer's own serve lost some of its bite in the crucial game in the third set with the score tied at 5-5.

"The game he broke me I didn't serve very well, so I think he took advantage of that fact," said Federer, who was not overly down about the defeat. "I just got my 100 (career title) in Dubai and I had a good

week here," the 37-year-old said.

"Really there is no reason to get down. Plus there is more to look forward to in Miami." Thiem will also play in Miami, hoping to complete the "Sunshine Double" with a victory there after his Indian Wells win.

Earlier, Canadian teenager Bianca Andreescu rocketed up 36 places to a new best of 24th in the WTA rankings a day after her historic triumph at Indian Wells. The 18-year-old Andreescu beat Germany's

Angelique Kerber in Sunday's final to become the first women's wildcard to win the Indian Wells title.

Andreescu, with just one Grand Slam main draw victory to date, continued her meteoric rise having been ranked 243rd as recently as last October. Wimbledon champion Kerber moved up four places to fourth as Naomi Osaka stayed top of the pile despite crashing out in the last 16 in a failed title defence.

Simona Halep, who also lost in the fourth round, slipped from second to third as the Romanian was replaced by Petra Kvitova. Belinda Bencic continued her resurgence as she broke back into the top 20 after reaching the Indian Wells semi-finals, a run that included a victory over Osaka.

The 21-year-old Swiss won her first title in four years at Dubai last month after a string of injuries and a slump in form threatened to derail her career. — Agencies

Asian Clubs handball tourney begins tomorrow

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Director of Asian Handball Clubs Tournament Nawaf Al-Jarayed said the Higher Organizing Committee (HOC) is ready for the event, and reflect a good image of Kuwait that has the ability and competence to host major tournaments following the sports suspension abroad.

Al-Jarayed said HOC was keen on relying on Kuwaiti youth in all tournament committees due to our confidence in them and ability to ensure the success of the event. He said several sub-committees were formed for the tournament that will start tomorrow (Wednesday), at Kuwait Sports Club, to serve participating delega-



Nawaf Al-Jarayed

tions, adding that the tournament is very important for Kuwait handball, as it will help in developing the game after the international suspension, which is the sought after goal of Kuwait Handball Federation.

Meanwhile, Kuwait handball team coach Saeed Hajazi said the team prepared well to compete adding that Qatari camp achieved its goals, as players exerted major efforts in complying with the training program. He expected tough competition due to a large number of teams who are expected to win.

He said our goal is clear, which is to compete for the title, but we are acting according to a gradual strategy, as we plan to get past the first round, then go for the title.

Kazema handball team coach Rabeih Gharby said his team is ready and well prepared for the Asian tournament, despite the difficulty to organize a training camp because most players are committed to their jobs.

He said Kazema team is looking forward to a good performance despite the lack of foreign participation for a long time, adding that his team has the elements that qualify them to achieve its goals, especially after signing three Serbian players.

He said despite the group's difficulty, chances remain equal for the three teams to reach the second round of the tournament.

Japan's 'Ice Prince' Hanyu skips worlds practice

SAITAMA: Japan's "Ice Prince" Yuzuru Hanyu skipped training yesterday ahead of this week's world figure skating championships, triggering fresh fitness fears over the Olympic champion. The 24-year-old, who retained his Olympic title last year after an injury-hit build-up, opted against an early morning practice in Saitama as he continues to recover from strained ankle ligaments that sidelined him for December's Japanese nationals.

Hanyu's coach Brian Orser insisted he was "very confident" the two-time world champion would be fit, guaranteeing a fresh wave of "Yuzu-Mania" from the skater's legions of adoring female fans who shower him with stuffed Winnie the Pooh bears after his performances.

But with Hanyu struggling, American Nathan Chen arguably starts as a slight favourite to defend his world title, despite having to balance his studies at Yale university. "I'm really glad I gave myself a shot to attempt both," said the 19-year-old, who landed a record six quad jumps in a programme at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games in winning the free skate, though still finished outside the medals.

"My skating has been going well too, so I can't complain. The worlds is a whole other ballgame." Hanyu's arrival in South Korea last year was also shrouded in mystery after he twisted his ankle just weeks before the Olympics.

The snake-hipped superstar has been training in secrecy once more in the run-up to the world championships in Saitama, where he captured his first world title in 2014 a month after winning gold at the Sochi Olympics.

Hanyu needed painkilling shots in Pyeongchang, where he became the first man to capture back-to-back Olympic figure skating gold medals in 66 years.

His gutsy performance broke the internet, while Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe admitted he had got so excited watching on television he almost squashed a tangerine to a pulp.

Meanwhile, fellow Japanese Shoma Uno, who took silver behind Hanyu at the 2018 Olympics, also skipped practice on Monday-to the disappointment of more than 200 waiting press.

Few would bet against Hanyu should he recover, but Chen and Uno-who swept to gold at the recent Four Continents meet with a record-breaking free skate-will push him close.

The host nation will be hoping teenage sensation Rika Kihira can replicate her form during a remarkable senior debut season as she seeks to become the first Japanese women's world champion since Mao Asada in 2014.

Kihira stormed to victory in both her grand prix events, the Grand Prix Final and the Four Continents, and the 16-year-old promised to put on a show for the home fans.

Olympic champion Alina Zagitova will be her biggest threat as the Russian tries to atone for a fifth-place finish at last year's worlds. — AFP

Jones to call up 'pressure coach' after Scotland slump

TWICKENHAM: Eddie Jones will bring in a specialist coach to help his side play better under pressure after a stunning Six Nations implosion against Scotland raised questions about the team's ability to mount a challenge for this year's World Cup in Japan.

Jones loves cricket and his England side sometimes give the appearance of being 'flat-track bullies' who struggle when a decent opponent has the temerity to play well against them for a spell in a match.

This was evident in their second-half slump from a winning position during a defeat by eventual Grand Slam champions Wales in Cardiff last month and even more apparent in Saturday's astounding Calcutta Cup clash with Scotland.

England surged into a 31-0 lead by 30 minutes on their Twickenham home ground before a thrilling match ended in a 38-38 draw, with the Scots only denied a famous victory by replacement fly-half George Ford's converted stoppage-time try.

It was an extraordinary finish to a Six Nations that had started so promisingly for England with a win away to defending champions Ireland, with their last competitive match before the World Cup gets underway in September leaving Jones' men with some awkward questions.

Jones, however, believes the problems are "fixable" in the intervening months even though he traces their origin back to the last World Cup four years ago when hosts England, then coached by Stuart Lancaster, suffered an embarrassing first-round exit after pool defeats by Wales and Australia.

Those reverses led the Rugby Football Union to sack Lancaster and appoint

experienced Australian coach Jones, who was in charge of the Wallaby side that lost the 2003 World Cup to an England team under the control of Clive Woodward-famous for his mantra of TCUP or Thinking Correctly Under Pressure.

"It's about how the team thinks under pressure," said Jones, who took off captain Owen Farrell after the fly-half made errors that led directly to two Scotland tries.

"It's like we have some hand grenades in the back of a jeep and sometimes they go off when there's a lot of pressure. We have a few of them and we've got to get rid of them."

Jones, who at the last edition of the global showpiece coached Japan to a huge upset win over South Africa, added of England: "The team has probably had it since the 2015 World Cup and we've been working on a process to fix it. We will get it right, but it takes time.

"Sometimes it takes longer than you'd like to fix it, but it is fixable. It comes in when you get under pressure, a lot of pressure, and you can't work out a way to get back to what you want to do.

"I've got one person that's going to help us that's a bit of an expert. I'm not sharing that name with you now. I haven't used her before." England did not know what it was to lose at the start of Jones' reign but he said: "When we won 18 games in a row, we still had those problems. And they have come to the fore in a couple of games recently which is beneficial for us because it's made it quite clear what we have to fix to be the best team in the world."

It appeared the team lacked the collective maturity to cope with the impact of the flamboyant attacking game they played in Saturday's first half. They may now be in danger of over-correcting and settling back into a more traditional Red Rose forward orientated game when some of the silky skills on show at Twickenham could yet prove useful come the World Cup.

But Ben Youngs, now England's most-capped scrum-half, offered an illuminating summary of their failings in Saturday's match when he said they had been "too loose, too flippant with the ball". — AFP

McIlroy wins Players Championship by one stroke in Florida

FLORIDA: Rory McIlroy celebrated St Patrick's Day in style by becoming the first player from Northern Ireland to win the Players Championship, emerging as the last man standing to beat Jim Furyk by one stroke in Ponte Vedra, Florida on Sunday.

On a day when 15 players at one stage were within two shots of the lead, McIlroy eventually emerged from the pack, overcoming an early double-bogey by displaying enough maturity to hang tough before moving in for the proverbial kill.

McIlroy carded two-under-par 70 at the famous TPC Sawgrass course in Ponte Vedra Beach to win a championship that was first held in 1974, when it was won by Jack Nicklaus.

McIlroy finished at 16-under 272 to edge American Furyk, who with a gimme birdie at the final hole threatened to become the event's oldest winner at the age of 48. "Sawgrass and I didn't have the greatest relationship starting off," McIlroy told reporters, referring to missed cuts in his first three appearances from 2009-11.

"It's a massive win on a course (where) I've had mixed results. I had to show a lot of character out there. Any time I looked at the leaderboard I was pleasantly surprised I hadn't fallen two or three shots behind. "That gave me a little bit of encouragement to keep going and play a great back nine. I am just thankful that it was my turn this week." With Furyk already in the clubhouse, the 29-year-old McIlroy knew what he had to do as he played the final three holes.

After a birdie at the par-four 15th, he used his power to reach the par-five 16th in two shots and a two-putt birdie gave him the lead. McIlroy then safely negotiated the water-lined final two holes with tap-in pars to clinch the most prestigious tournament outside the four majors. Furyk shot 67 to finish alone on 15-under.

"There's a little disappointment, thinking maybe I played well enough to win," said the American. "Rory obviously felt differently." It was Furyk's 31st runner-up finish on the PGA Tour, the same number as Tiger Woods who has also won 80 times compared to his compatriot's 17.

Englishman Eddie Pepperell (66) and Venezuelan Jhonattan Vegas (66) finished two strokes behind McIlroy in a tie for third. Pepperell and Vegas sank monster birdies at the par-three 17th, Pepperell sinking a rollercoaster 50-footer before Vegas one-upped him with a 70-footer.

Overnight leader Jon Rahm floundered, the Spaniard making three bogeys in the first four holes and compounding his misery by dunking his tee shot into the water at the par-three 17th.

He shot 76 and finished equal 12th on 11-under. McIlroy's win came after close calls at all five of his previous starts this year. He will head to the Masters next month brimming with confidence, needing a victory at Augusta National to complete the grand slam of all four modern majors.

"I'm just really proud of myself the way I played the last few holes," he said. "(I was thinking) why not me? This is my tournament and I've got to finish it off. "I kept telling myself on the way to the 17th tee, just make three more good swings, that's all you need to do and this thing is yours. — Reuters

Sports

Afghanistan beat Ireland for 'historic' first Test victory

DEHRADUN: Afghanistan claimed their first ever victory in Test cricket yesterday, beating fellow newcomers Ireland in what captain Asghar Afghan hailed as a historic day for the war-torn country. Afghanistan and Ireland both achieved full member status of the International Cricket Council in 2017, becoming only the 11th and 12th teams to play the long format of the sport beloved of purists.

Rahmat Shah and Ihsanullah Janat scored fifties as Afghanistan chased down 147 to beat Ireland by seven wickets on day four of the one-off game in the north

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard on the fourth day of the one-off Test between Afghanistan and Ireland in Dehradun, India, yesterday:

Ireland first innings 172 (T. Murtagh 54 not out, G. Dockrell 39; Y. Ahmadzai 3-41, M. Nabi 3-36)

Afghanistan first innings 314 (R. Shah 98, A. Afghan 67; S. Thompson 3-28)

Ireland second innings 288 (A. Balbirnie 82, K. O'Brien 56; R. Khan 5-82)

Afghanistan second innings (target 147; overnight 29-1)

M. Shahzad c Poynter b McBrine 2

I. Janat not out 65

R. Shah st Poynter b Cameron-Dow 76

M. Nabi run out (Murtagh/Poynter) 1

H. Shahidi not out 4

Extras: (w) 1

Total (3 wickets, 47.5 overs) 149

Fall of wickets: 1-5 (Shahzad), 2-144 (Shah), 3-145 (Nabi)

Did not bat: A. Afghan, I.A. Khil, R. Khan, Y. Ahmadzai, W. Momand, W. Salamkheil

Bowling: Dockrell 22-7-58-0 (w), McBrine 13-5-35-1, Cameron-Dow 5.5-0-24-1, Murtagh 5-3-15-0, Thompson 1-0-9-0, Balbirnie 1-0-8-0.

Result: Afghanistan beat Ireland by seven wickets

Indian city of Dehradun. "It's a historic day for Afghanistan, for our team and our people," Afghan said.

"We have been playing for a while, we have been playing first-class cricket, so we have that composure. The bowlers were very good, Rashid (Khan), Yamin (Ahmadzai)," he added. Afghanistan were steered to their target by a 139-run partnership between Shah, who made 76, and debutant Janat, who hit an unbeaten 65.

Shah, a top-order batsman, registered his second fifty of the match after making 98 in Afghanistan's first innings score of 314. With three needed to win, Afghanistan lost Shah and then Mohammad Nabi in successive deliveries before Hashmatullah Shahidi came to the crease and hit the winning boundary.

"I want to congratulate all the lads in the team, they have been absolutely brilliant," said Afghan. "We have got a few games before the World Cup and we want to make every opportunity count," the captain added.

Cricket has become the national sport of Afghanistan, torn apart by decades of war, with many of the Afghan players cutting their cricketing teeth in refugee camps in Pakistan. The country gained one-day international status in 2009 and have qualified for their second 50-over World Cup in England and Wales, due to begin on May 30. They have also been part of four Twenty20 World Cups.

They have made India their base since 2015, far away from the guns and bombs of their home country. Last year they made the leap to Test cricket, taking on India in Bangalore, but were thrashed inside two days.

Khan, the Indian Premier League (IPL) sensation who is second in the ICC one-day international rankings, played a key role in the Ireland game, taking five wickets on Sunday as Ireland were dismissed for 288.

Khan returned career-best figures of five for 82 with his leg-spin to stall Ireland's resurgence after Andy Balbirnie and Kevin O'Brien had hit gritty half-centuries



DEHRADUN: Afghanistan's team members pose with the trophy after winning the Test cricket match between Afghanistan and Ireland at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in the northern Indian city of Dehradun yesterday. — AFP

in their second innings. Balbirnie made 82 and O'Brien 56 before a 10th-wicket 58-run partnership between James Cameron-Dow and Tim Murtagh set up the potentially tricky chase for the Afghans. It was Ireland's second Test too. They played their debut Test against Pakistan in Dublin last year, losing by five wickets.

For Ireland, Tim Murtagh stood out with scores of 54

not out and 27 batting at number 11. "It's been a long tour, but the lads have been very good. You are never tired to play Test cricket, it's always a special feeling," said Ireland captain William Porterfield.

Ireland lost the two Twenty20 matches at the start of the series between the two minnows and then levelled the one-day internationals at 2-2. — AFP

No complacency on World Cup security, says cricket chief

KARACHI: The deadly New Zealand shootings which Bangladesh cricketers narrowly avoided means security will remain an "absolute priority" going into the World Cup, the head of cricket's governing body said Sunday.

Fifty people died in attacks on two mosques in Christchurch on Friday, in what is believed to be the worst assault on Muslims in a Western country. Bangladesh's Test cricketers were just a few minutes from being caught up in the massacre, arriving in a bus at one of the mosques as shooting began.

The third Test between Bangladesh and New Zealand which was due to start in Wellington on Saturday was cancelled and the team returned home.

Speaking on the sidelines of Pakistan Super League (PSL) final in Karachi, the International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive David Richardson said security had to remain "an absolute priority".

"I don't think security is anything new, obviously something happening in New Zealand probably took a lot of people by surprise and it emphasised the need not to be complacent, especially going into the World Cup," Richardson said.

The England and Wales Cricket Board will host the World Cup from May 30 to July 14. "I know the work has already been done by the security director together with all the security agencies in the UK and they are leaving no stone unturned," he added.

Richardson said Pakistan had taken "a great step forward" in safely hosting the PSL matches, a decade on from an attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore which has seen foreign teams refuse to play in the country over security fears.

Pakistan has gradually tried to revive international cricket at home, having hosted the finals of Pakistan Super League for the last two years and played matches against a World XI, Sri Lanka and the West Indies.

This year eight PSL matches were hosted in Karachi without incident and Richardson, a former South African player, said it was helping to change the image of Pakistan. "The perception outside of Pakistan was that it was quite a dangerous place to visit in the past and that perception slowly but surely has been changed," he said.

He said a recent tour by 43 foreign players, including former Australia all-rounder Shane Watson and current New Zealand opener Colin Munro, reflected the changes Pakistan has made.

Trust over security has "increased tremendously," he added. However, last month Cricket Australia acted on their government's advice not to tour Pakistan, where no Australian senior team has played since 1998. — AFP

Flyers use flair for dramatic to top Pens

PITTSBURGH: Sean Couturier scored with 3.4 seconds left in overtime Sunday to give the visiting Philadelphia Flyers a critical 2-1 win over the Pittsburgh Penguins. Couturier's 29th goal came when he blasted the puck from the right circle to the far side past goaltender Matt Murray, who also gave up James van Riemsdyk's tying goal with 18.8 seconds left in regulation. Flyers goalie Carter Hart, in just his second start in 11 games, made 41 saves. The game was played 16,000 days after Philadelphia (35-29-8, 78 points) last won the Stanley Cup in 1975, and the two points helped keep the Flyers' playoff hopes alive. They are six points out of an Eastern Conference wild-card spot with 10 games to play.

ISLANDERS 3, WILD 2 (OT)

Brock Nelson scored at 1:04 of overtime as New York defeated host Minnesota, which had twice erased one-goal deficits. Jordan Eberle and Anders Lee also scored, and goaltender Thomas Greiss made 32 saves as the Islanders won for the fifth time in their past seven games and bounced back from a disappointing 2-1 loss to the Red Wings on Saturday in Detroit. Zach Parise and Jared Spurgeon scored for Minnesota, which lost for the fourth time in its past five games. Goalie Alex Stalock, making just his second start in the past 14 games, stopped 17 of 20 shots.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 6, OILERS 3

Jonathan Marchessault scored two goals, including what proved to be the game-winner early in the third, and Malcolm Subban had 16 saves to lead Vegas over visiting Edmonton. Mark Stone, Cody Eakin, Brayden McNabb and Alex Tuch also scored goals, and William Karlsson and Reilly Smith each had two assists for the Knights (40-27-5, 85 points), who won for the eighth time in nine games. Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Leon Draisaitl and Kris Russell scored goals, and Connor McDavid had two assists for Edmonton (32-33-7, 71 points), which remained seven points out of the second wild card in the Western Conference. It was the eighth straight multi-point game for McDavid, who now has 105 points this season.

SABRES 4, BLUES 3 (SO)

Sam Reinhart scored in the third round of the shootout as host Buffalo snapped a seven-game skid with a victory over St. Louis. Reinhart nearly won the contest in the waning moments of overtime, but his shot caromed off the left



LAS VEGAS: Connor McDavid #97 of the Edmonton Oilers steals the puck from William Karlsson #71 of the Vegas Golden Knights in the second period of their game at T-Mobile Arena on Sunday in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Golden Knights defeated the Oilers 6-3. — AFP

post. Buffalo captain Jack Eichel and St. Louis forward Tyler Bozak each scored in the first round of the shootout. Reinhart's bid banked off Jake Allen's glove and into the net to set the stage for former Sabres forward Ryan O'Reilly, whose shot deflected off the crossbar to end the game.

AVALANCHE 3, DEVILS 0

Tyson Barrie scored two goals, Philipp Grubauer had 22 saves and Colorado kept its postseason hopes alive with a win over New Jersey in Denver. Nathan MacKinnon had a goal and an assist to give him 91 points on the season. He joins Hall of Famer Peter Forsberg as the only two Avalanche players to have consecutive 90-point seasons. Colorado trails Arizona by four points in the Western Conference wild-card race. The Avalanche host the Coyotes on March 29. Cory Schneider stopped 31 shots for the Devils, who had their two-game winning streak snapped. New Jersey has not won three straight since late December.

CANUCKS 3, STARS 2 (SO)

Josh Leivo's goal in the fourth round of the shootout lift-

ed visiting Vancouver past Dallas. The Canucks posted their second win in three games, while the Stars took their second straight loss, which prevented Dallas from gaining ground on St. Louis for third place in the Central Division. Tim Schaller led the Canucks with two goals, marking the first two-goal game of his NHL career. Jamie Benn and Taylor Fedun tallied for the Stars.

DUCKS 3, PANTHERS 2

Adam Silfverberg scored with 4:43 to play as Anaheim continued to play spoiler with a victory over visiting Florida. Devin Shore and Adam Henrique also scored goals, and Ryan Getzlaf had a pair of assists as the Ducks (30-35-9, 69 points), won for the sixth time in their past nine games, with all six of those victories coming against teams either currently in a qualifying position for the playoffs or fighting to become eligible. The Panthers (32-28-12, 76 points) were the furthest out from eligibility in that group, but their hopes had been raised with a four-game winning streak that had them believing they could grab the second wild-card spot in the Eastern Conference. — Reuters

PSL success boost hopes of Pakistan's cricket revival

KARACHI: All future Pakistan Super League matches could be played on home soil after the last eight games of the 2019 tournament went off without a hitch in Karachi, boosting hopes of attracting more international teams, said the country's cricket chief at Sunday's final.

Quetta Gladiators beat former champions Peshawar Zalmi by eight wickets on Sunday to lift their maiden PSL title in a pulsating atmosphere created by a capacity crowd of 32,000 fans at the National stadium.

"Today is a historic day," said Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ehsan Mani at the closing ceremony on Sunday. "Around 230,000 people have watched matches in Karachi which indicates that Pakistan is a safe country and we are gradually returning to normal as far as hosting cricket is concerned."

Sri Lanka are in discussions about play-

ing two Tests in Pakistan in October and talks are also taking place with Bangladesh about a tour in early 2020. "I thank all the foreign players who came here and I hope to see them here for all the PSL matches next year," said Mani.

Peshawar were restricted to 138 for eight in their 20 overs. Umar Amin top scored with 38, while rookie 18-year-old quick bowler Mohammad Husnain finished with three for 30. Quetta raced to victory with eight wickets and 13 balls to spare as former Pakistan opener Ahmed Shehzad (57) and Rilee (38) put on an unbroken 73-run stand to see the Gladiators home at 139 for two.

The first 26 round-robin matches were held in the United Arab Emirates, which has been Pakistan's neutral venue since a deadly attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore 10 years ago. Pakistan hosted Zimbabwe for five limited-over matches in 2015 which was followed by the PSL final, three Twenty20 internationals against a World XI and a single Twenty20 international all in Lahore in 2017.

Last year Pakistan hosted three PSL matches and the West Indies for a Twenty20 series. This year 43 foreign players, including former Australia all-rounder Shane Watson and current New Zealand opener Colin Munro, took part in the PSL latter stages in Karachi. —AFP

Sarri's stubbornness threatens Chelsea's top-four hopes

LONDON: Chelsea's latest Premier League away-day collapse at Everton leaves Maurizio Sarri's side facing an uphill task to finish in the top four and secure much-needed Champions League qualification.

Languishing in sixth, the Blues trail fourth-placed Arsenal by just three points but face a much tougher run-in than the Gunners in the remaining eight games of the Premier League season. A run of four defeats in their past five league games away from Stamford Bridge also gives little reason for hope ahead of upcoming visits to title-chasing Liverpool and Manchester United, who also lead Chelsea by a point in fifth.

A kind Europa League draw, with Slavia Prague to come in the quarter-finals before a potential last-four clash with Eintracht Frankfurt or Benfica, may now provide the easiest route to next season's Champions League, with a place in the group stage on offer for the winners of that competition.

But to emerge victorious in Baku on

May 29 or stand a chance of a top-four revival, Sarri must iron out a number of repeated failings from his first season in charge. Sarri was given the striker he desired in January with the arrival of Gonzalo Higuain.

However, the Argentine has scored just three times in 10 appearances, against lowly opposition in Huddersfield and Fulham, with even Sarri admitting Higuain has to do more. "He needs to improve his physical condition and mental condition," said Sarri after defeat at Goodison Park.

But the pressure is on for him to finally relent and hand Olivier Giroud league starts. The French World Cup winner is the Europa League's top scorer with nine goals, but has made just six Premier League starts all season with Eden Hazard, the departed Alvaro Morata and Higuain all handed more time as the focal point to Chelsea's attack. Chelsea's striker struggles have been exacerbated by a lack of goals and creativity from midfield. Sarri's side have now failed to score in eight of 30 Premier League games. —AFP

Sports

Fantastic Messi hat-trick blows away Real Betis

Victory leaves Barcelona with one hand on the La Liga trophy

MADRID: Even the Real Betis fans were applauding by the end as Lionel Messi scored another spectacular hat-trick to fire Barcelona to a 4-1 victory on Sunday and leave them with one hand on the La Liga trophy.

Messi's treble, his second in a month in Seville, fourth of the season and 51st of his career, moves Barca 10 points clear of Atletico Madrid with 10 games left to play, a gap surely too big to close. "We had a great opportunity to increase the gap on Atletico," Messi said. "We had to take it tonight."

Luis Suarez, whose superb flick set up Messi's second, scored his own brilliant goal after a scintillating solo run but it was ultimately reduced to a footnote, in what became another night all about his Argentinian partner.

The only blot was the sight of Suarez limping off late on, with what coach Ernesto Valverde suspected was a "bad sprain" to his ankle. Messi now has 29 league goals this season, 39 in all competitions, and together with Suarez's 18 their joint-total of 47 is more than all but two of the other teams in the division.

A simple finish from Suarez's exquisite assist came between a free-kick perfectly planted into the top corner and a bending lob that grazed the crossbar and dropped in. The Betis fans left at the Benito Villamarin, and most of them were, felt compelled to stand and applaud.

"I don't remember the opposition cheering me for a goal. I am very grateful," Messi said. This was supposed to be one of the more awkward tests in Barcelona's run-in, which includes Atletico Madrid at home and fifth-placed Alaves away. All the rest of their opponents currently sit 10th or lower. But regardless of the fixtures, Barca seem to be saving their best for the home straight, which bodes badly for Manchester United, whom they face in the Champions League quarter-finals next month.

Already in the final of the Copa del Rey, where Barca will return to this stadium to face Valencia in May, a treble is certainly not beyond the realms of possibility.

There was barely a moment to pause for breath in the first half, both teams throwing players forward without restraint or, seemingly, regard for the spaces they left at the back. Betis were happy to open up and almost took the lead when Joaquin volleyed first-time to the stretching Sergio Canales, but he was unable to connect.

Barca were perhaps fortunate to earn the free-kick for Messi's opener as Canales obstructed Arthur Melo just outside the area, to the right of centre.

But there was no luck in Messi's shot, which flew like a dart over the ducking head of Gerard Pique, past the hand of Pau Lopez, and into the top left-hand corner.

Betis came again, Arthur twice scrambling the ball away from Canales in the box, before Suarez missed a sitter after being teed up by Messi. He made amends just before half-time. Messi fired into the feet of the Uruguayan, who took the ball one way and flicked it the other, behind his leg and into the path of Messi, who did the rest.

Betis could have been four down by the hour as Suarez missed two more, but the chances kept coming, and he finally hit the mark. There were four defenders ahead when he began his run from the halfway line but Suarez sped past one and between two more, each of them colliding into the other before being left sprawled on the ground.

Aissa Mandi made one final lunge but Suarez skipped through to finish. Loren Moron curled in a consolation for Betis but Messi had the final say. Ivan Rakitic rolled the ball back and he clipped a sumptuous chip over Lopez, off the crossbar and in. Suarez limped off injured in the final minutes and Messi could have added a fifth, only for the post to rescue Betis. Four was enough. — AFP



SEVILLE: Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (R) shoots to score a goal during the Spanish league football match between Real Betis and FC Barcelona at the Benito Villamarin stadium in Seville on Sunday. — AFP

Sadio Mane stars, Salah struggles

PARIS: Sadio Mane starred and Mohamed Salah struggled for Liverpool at the weekend as the contrasting fortunes of the highest profile African stars in Europe continued. Senegalese Mane scored the first goal and a foul on him led to the penalty that gave the Reds a 2-1 win at Fulham and first place, two points ahead of Manchester City. Reigning African Footballer of the Year Salah is battling to replicate his amazing scoring form of last season with the Egyptian managing just one goal in his last 10 matches.

ENGLAND

SADIO MANE/MOHAMED SALAH (Liverpool)

Mane was Liverpool's saviour once more in a vital 2-1 win at Fulham to go back top of the Premier League. The Senegalese forward scored his 11th goal in as many games to open the scoring and was then fouled for a late penalty converted by James Milner for the winner. Salah, by contrast, was off-colour once more.

SPAIN

KARL TOKO EKAMBI (Villarreal)

Cameroonian Toko Ekambi scored twice in two minutes as Villarreal came from behind to defeat Rayo Vallecano 3-1 at home in a clash of relegation-threatened La Liga clubs. He netted after 50 and 52 minutes before Gerard sealed victory with a late goal.

ITALY

SEKO FOFANA (Udinese)

Ivorian midfielder Fofana scored after 36 minutes to pull Udinese level after falling two goals down to Napoli, but his side still slipped to a 4-2 defeat, and are just one point above the danger zone.

JEREMIE BOGA, ALFRED DUNCAN, KHOUMA BABACAR (Sassuolo)

Africans scored all Sassuolo's goals in a 5-3 home loss to Sampdoria. Ivorian Boga pulled the Modena side back into the game when they were two goals down with a 38th-minute strike, his first for the club. Ghanaian Duncan got the second after 63 minutes with Senegalese Babacar adding the third two minutes into injury time.

MOHAMED FARES (SPAL)

France-born Algerian international midfielder Fares threw SPAL a lifeline, nodding in the opening goal after 22 minutes in a shock 2-1 win over Roma that moved his side two points above the relegation zone. It was his third goal this season in all competitions.

FRANCK KESSIE (AC Milan)

Kessie made headlines off the pitch after a sideline bust-up with teammate Lucas Biglia after the Ivorian was substituted. "It was the adrenaline of the match situation, I was frustrated coming off and wanted to do more. I took it out on Lucas and it was a mistake, I apologised afterwards," said Kessie.

GERMANY

SALOMON KALOU (Hertha Berlin)

The Ivory Coast veteran showed his experience with two goals for Hertha Berlin in a 3-2 home defeat by title-chasing Borussia Dortmund. The 33-year-old pounced on a mistake by goalkeeper Roman Buerki for the opening goal after just four minutes, then converted a first-half penalty after a Julian Weigl handball. Hertha finished with nine men in a bad-tempered game.

NABIL BENTALEB (Schalke 04)

The Algeria international has fallen foul of new Schalke coach Huub Stevens and been banished to the club's under-23 team for unspecified "disciplinary reasons" after being dropped for a 1-0 home loss to RB Leipzig, the Royal Blues' sixth league defeat in seven outings. Stevens, the caretaker coach after predecessor Domenico Tedesco was sacked last Thursday, has set no time limit on when Bentaleb may return. — AFP

City's Bernardo Silva eyeing football history

SWANSEA: Bernardo Silva has said he wants to "make history" at Manchester City after helping the Premier League leaders move a step closer to an unprecedented quadruple. Silva played a key role in keeping City's four-pronged pursuit of honours on track by sparking a thrilling fightback as Pep Guardiola's side overcome a two-goal deficit to beat Swansea City 3-2 in their FA Cup quarter-final on Saturday.

Not only did Silva score City's first goal at Swansea's Liberty Stadium but he also set up Sergio Aguero's late winner in south Wales to keep alive hopes of adding the FA Cup, Premier League and Champions League titles this season to the League Cup that is already in their trophy cabinet. "All the players feel that

this season can be special," said Silva.

"Last season was special in the way we won the Premier League; this season can be special because we've already won one competition, we're still playing for three," the 24-year-old added.

"We can win three or lose all of them as well, so it will be very tough, so yeah, we know that the last month-and-a-half will be very tough.

"It will be crucial, to make something special and to try to write an important page in the history of this club, and that's what we'll try to do."

In the meantime, the Portuguese midfielder was buoyed by the manner of City's victory over Swansea.

"It's very important to win these kinds of games as well, not only the games you win four or five-nil, but these games where you have to show character," explained Silva.

"We could have been out after arriving at half-time losing 2-0, so we have to keep our focus, knowing our opponents are very strong. "There are no perfect teams, so we try to improve, we know that in some moments of the game we're not as good as some teams, and we try to improve that.—Agence



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe (C) vies with Marseille's Croatian defender Duje Caleta Car (L) and Marseille's French forward Florian Thauvin during the French L1 football match Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) vs Olympique de Marseille (OM), on Sunday at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. — AFP

PSG shrug off fan protest to beat rivals Marseille

PARIS: Angel Di Maria scored twice as Paris Saint-Germain eased to a 3-1 victory over Marseille on Sunday to extend their long unbeaten run against their arch rivals and move 20 points clear at the Ligue 1 summit.

A group of PSG ultras were boycotting the opening stages of the game over the team's shock Champions League defeat by Manchester United, but when they arrived they were given a 16th win in 19 meetings with Marseille, alongside three draws, to cheer.

Banners reading "We don't forget", "respect the establishment" and "banknotes in place of a heart" were hung in a section behind the goal to make clear supporters' unhappiness at PSG's 3-1 home loss to United on March 6.

"There are some things we can't change, we have to accept that we had a very, very sad defeat—very, very bad for us. But we started again at Dijon (last week) and even today the guys showed their character," said PSG coach Thomas Tuchel. "I'm glad we could show that today, because it's important for our supporters and for us."

Kylian Mbappe put PSG in front on the stroke of half-time with his 26th league goal of the season, but Valere Germain equalised in the first minute of the second period.

Argentine Di Maria restored the home team's advantage, though, and Marseille keeper Steve Mandanda was sent off for a clear handball 30 yards from goal. Di Maria's wonderful free-kick added further gloss to the scoreline, although Mbappe saw a late penalty saved by visiting substitute Yohann Pele.

The capital giants have not lost to Marseille since a 3-0 defeat at the Stade Velodrome in November 2011. With the Ligue 1 title effectively secured, the only competition left for PSG to play for this season is the French Cup, in which they face Nantes in the semi-finals next month.

Mario Balotelli had the first shot in anger, shrugging off the PSG defence before seeing his long-range drive well held by home goalkeeper Alphonse Areola. The missing ultras did not miss much goalmouth action early on, but many rushed to their seats when they thought Di Maria had put the hosts in front, only to see the effort ruled out for offside by VAR.

Marseille did well to keep their rivals at arm's length for the opening 45 minutes, although injuries which forced the substitutions of PSG full-backs Thomas Meunier and Dani Alves contributed to the game's scrappy nature.

But PSG forged ahead in the second minute of first-half injury time, as they broke at pace from a Marseille corner and Di Maria played in Mbappe to sweep the ball past Mandanda. — AFP

Rodriguez bags hat-trick as Bayern exorcise Liverpool frustrations

BERLIN: Bayern Munich took out their Champions League frustrations on Mainz as James Rodriguez claimed his first Bundesliga hat-trick on Sunday in a 6-0 romp to fire the Bavarians back to the top of the table.

After Wednesday's Champions League exit, following a 3-1 home defeat by Liverpool in the last 16, Mainz bore the brunt of the backlash at Munich's Allianz Arena. "We showed the disappointment of the Liverpool defeat is behind us, it was important to react," said Bayern coach Niko Kovac.

Rodriguez, on loan until the end of the season from Real Madrid, came off to a standing ovation with 20 minutes left after arguably his best display in the famous red shirt. "I am pleased for him, he deserved the applause," added Kovac, who declined to comment on whether Rodriguez's loan deal will be extended.

Canadian wunderkind Alphonso Davies, 18, scored his first Bayern goal on only his fifth appearance after coming off the bench. The thumping win saw Bayern reclaim top spot in the Bundesliga from Borussia Dortmund, who briefly usurped them with a nervy 3-2 win at Hertha Berlin on Saturday, with eight games left. "We had planned a lot because of what happened on Wednesday, our focus is now on the league," said Thomas Mueller. Dortmund and Bayern are level on 60 points, but the Bavarians hold a superior goal difference of seven.

"We wanted to fight back after Dortmund's victory. The last three games are a marker," Mueller added, with Bayern having smashed in 17 goals in winning their last three league games. Poland striker Robert Lewandowski, the Bundesliga's top scorer, claimed his 18th league goal this season, tapping in a David Alaba cross on three minutes.

Leon Goretzka laid on the second goal, chesting down into Rodriguez's path and the Colombian opened his account on 33 minutes. French winger Kingsley Coman gave Mainz goalkeeper Florian Mueller no chance with his shot six minutes before the break to make it 3-0 at half-time.

Rodriguez wrapped up his hat-trick with two goals in four breathtaking minutes, hitting the top corner past Mueller's reach on 51 minutes, then chipping the despairing Mainz goalkeeper moments later. Just 11 minutes after coming on, Davies claimed his first Bundesliga goal, netting the rebound from a saved Lewandowski shot. Bayern have now won 13 of their last 14 league matches.

Earlier, fifth-placed Eintracht Frankfurt, the only Bundesliga club left in European football, maintained their challenge for a Champions League spot with a 1-0 win at home to bottom side Nuremberg.

A first-half goal by Austrian defender Martin Hinteregger leaves Frankfurt unbeaten in their last 13 games, including nine in the Bundesliga. Frankfurt face Benfica over two legs in the Europa League quarter-finals after beating Inter Milan 1-0 last Thursday, and a superb pass from in-form striker Luka Jovic, on loan from the Portuguese side, led to Hinteregger's winner.

Earlier, Werder Bremen forwards Max Kruse and Milot Rashica combined in a shock 3-1 win at Bayer Leverkusen. Between them, centre-forward Kruse and winger Rashica have netted six goals and provided three assists in four league games and the duo did the damage against Leverkusen.

Kruse gave his mid-table side the lead on 13 minutes and helped double the lead at the BayArena when he set up Rashica, who grabbed his third goal in two games after a brace in last week's 4-2 rout of Schalke. — AFP

25 Thiem topples 'legend' Federer to win Indian Wells championship



26 Afghanistan beat Ireland for 'historic' first Test victory



27 Fantastic Messi hat-trick blows away Real Betis



Sixers down Bucks despite Giannis' 52

Clippers come back from 19 down, trim Nets at buzzer



MILWAUKEE: Brook Lopez #11 of the Milwaukee Bucks shoots the ball against the Philadelphia 76ers on Sunday at the Fiserv Forum Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. — AFP

MILWAUKEE: Joel Embiid scored 40 points and grabbed 15 rebounds to lead the visiting Philadelphia 76ers past the Milwaukee Bucks 130-125 on Sunday. It was Embiid's 52nd double-double and the 25th time he has scored at least 30 points and swept 10 rebounds in a game. He scored 18 points alone in the fourth quarter. Jimmy Butler had 27 and JJ Redick 19 for the Sixers, who won their fourth in a row and officially clinched a playoff spot. Giannis Antetokounmpo was terrific for the Bucks with a career-high 52 points to go along with 16 rebounds and seven assists. Khris Middleton added 19 points.

ROCKETS 117, TIMBERWOLVES 102

Chris Paul, Clint Capela and James Harden recorded double-doubles, and host Houston turned a blistering third-quarter shooting display into a victory over Minnesota. Paul paired 25 points with 10 assists and matched his single-game high of six 3-pointers, while Capela recorded 20 points and 13 rebounds in grappling with Timberwolves All-Star center Karl-Anthony Towns (22 points, 10 rebounds, six assists). Rookie forward Josh Okogie scored 21 points for the Timberwolves, who have dropped 7 of 10. Taj Gibson chipped in 15 points and 10 rebounds off the bench for Minnesota. Houston improved to 11-2 since the All-Star break.

CLIPPERS 119, NETS 116

Reserve Lou Williams hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer as host Los Angeles pulled out a dramatic win over Brooklyn for its seven win in its last eight games. Williams, whose game winner was the first of his career, scored 11 of his team-high 25 points in a fourth quarter that featured wild runs by both teams. The Clippers (41-30) won for the seventh time in eight games and moved into a virtual tie with Utah for seventh in the West and a half-game behind sixth-place San Antonio. Danilo Gallinari and Montrezl Harrell added 20 points apiece for the Clippers. D'Angelo Russell scored a game-high 32 points, but the Nets (36-36) fell 1 1/2 games behind sixth-place Detroit in the Eastern Conference and lead eighth-place Miami by just 1 1/2 games.

PISTONS 110, RAPTORS 107

Blake Griffin scored 25 points to lead host Detroit past Toronto to sweep their three-game regular-season series. Trailing 110-107 with 2.4 seconds left, Toronto had a glimmer of hope after Griffin missed two free throws. Griffin intentionally fouled Toronto's Kawhi Leonard on the rebound with 1.4 seconds remaining, but Leonard missed the first throw. After Leonard intentionally missed the second, Pistons center Andre Drummond gathered the rebound and the clock ran out. Reggie Jackson scored 20 points for the Pistons, and Drummond added 15 points and

17 rebounds. Leonard put up a game-high 33 points to go with 10 rebounds, while Fred VanVleet scored 17 points and Marc Gasol grabbed 11 rebounds.

KNICKS 124, LAKERS 123

Emmanuel Mudiay highlighted his 28-point performance with a pair of late free throws as NBA-worst New York erased an 11-point deficit late in the fourth quarter to knock off visiting Los Angeles. Damyean Dotson scored 25 points and Kevin Knox chipped in 19 for the Knicks, who benefited from a season-high 41-point first quarter to post their first win since a 108-103 victory against Orlando on Feb. 26. LeBron James scored 33 points after sitting out Friday's 111-97 setback versus Detroit for what the team called "load management" connected to the groin injury that sidelined him for 17 games earlier this season.

MAGIC 101, HAWKS 91

Nikola Vucevic scored 17 of his 27 points in the first quarter, and host Orlando remained in the chase for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference by beating Atlanta. The Magic (33-38) trail Miami (33-36) by one game for the eighth spot in the playoffs. They meet one last time this season in Miami on March 26. Orlando also got 22 points and eight rebounds from Aaron Gordon and 14 points and seven rebounds from reserve Wes Iwundu.

Trae Young led Atlanta with 20 points and five assists.

KINGS 129, BULLS 102

Buddy Hield made his only 3-pointers of the game in a 14-point, second-quarter flurry that allowed host Sacramento to beat Chicago and end a three-game losing streak. The Kings (34-35) retained a slim hope of reaching the Western Conference playoffs this season. Sacramento sits in ninth place in the West, six games behind the Jazz and Clippers, who are tied for seventh. In just his third game back from a knee injury, Marvin Bagley III shot 9 of 14 and led Sacramento with 21 points and nine rebounds in 21 minutes. Zach LaVine (18 points) was the top scorer for the Bulls.

HEAT 93, HORNETS 75

Dwyane Wade and Goran Dragic came off the bench to combine for 22 points in the fourth quarter to boost host Miami to a win over Charlotte. Dragic finished with a team-high 19 points and Wade added 17. Bam Adebayo had 16 points and nine rebounds, and Dion Waiters added 12 points for the Heat, who have won eight of their past 10 against Charlotte. Jeremy Lamb scored a game-best 21, Frank Kaminsky had 13, Nicolas Batum added 12 and Tony Parker chipped in 11, while leading scorer Kemba Walker had just 10 for Charlotte, which is 2-5 in its last seven games. — Reuters

Chelsea to meet City in Women's FA Cup s-finals

LONDON: Champions Chelsea will meet Manchester City in the Women's FA Cup semi-finals following the draw yesterday, while Reading face West Ham United in the other last-four tie.

A double from Georgia Stanway after Janine Beekie's opener ensured City overcame Liverpool in Sunday's quarter-final to remain on course for the domestic treble. City, who are top of the Women's Super League, won the League Cup after beating Arsenal in the final last month. Chelsea clinched a semi-final spot for a sixth consecutive season with a hard-fought 1-0 win over part-time side Durham. Raket Honnuddottir's last-gasp goal helped Reading beat Manchester United 3-2 after extra-time, while West Ham edged past Championship side Aston Villa 1-0. Reading and City will host the semi-final ties on April 14, with the final scheduled for May 4 at Wembley Stadium. — Reuters

Ward-Prowse earns England call as Delph, Ruben, Stones drop out

LONDON: Southampton midfielder James Ward-Prowse was drafted into England's squad for Euro 2020 qualifiers against the Czech Republic and Montenegro as Fabian Delph, Ruben Loftus-Cheek and John Stones drop out due to injury yesterday.

Ward-Prowse has just one senior international cap but is well-known to England boss Gareth Southgate from their time together as manager and captain of England's under-21s. The 24-year-old has led Southampton's battle for Premier League survival with goals in his past three games, including brilliant free-kicks against Manchester

United and Tottenham.

"We love Prowse. I've been accused of being 'father of Prowse' over the years," said Southgate when announcing his squad last week. "This most recent spell is his best spell since we capped him before. He is a world-class deliverer of set-plays."

There was better injury news for Southgate on Jordan Henderson as Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp confirmed the midfielder will join up with the squad this week after suffering an ankle injury in the Reds' 3-1 win over Bayern Munich last week. — AFP