



3 Kuwaiti teacher busted with forged certificate



22 Iraq religious rap meets a chorus of controversy



28 Nuggets, Raptors level playoff series; Murray, Leonard shine



Ramadan KAREEM

IMSAK	03:24
Fajr	03:34
Dhur	11:45
Asr	15:20
Magrib	18:28
Isha	19:52

United States deploys naval strike group to Middle East

A 'clear and unmistakable' message to Iran



HONG KONG: In this file photo, a small boat sails by the USS Abraham Lincoln moored in Hong Kong. The United States is sending an aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Middle East in a 'clear and unmistakable' message to Iran. — AFP

WASHINGTON: The United States is sending an aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Middle East in a "clear and unmistakable" message to Iran, National Security Advisor John Bolton said yesterday. "In response to a number of troubling and escalatory indications and warnings, the United States is deploying the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and a bomber task force to the US Central Command region," Bolton said in a statement.

The deployment is aimed at sending "a clear and unmistakable message to the Iranian regime that any attack on United States interests or on those of our allies will be met with unrelenting force," Bolton said. "The United States is not seeking war with the Iranian regime, but we are fully prepared to respond to any attack, whether by proxy, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or regular Iranian forces."

The USS Abraham Lincoln has previously been deployed to the Gulf, including during the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq. The statement did not specifically state why the deployment is taking place now, but Secretary of State Mike Pompeo later said it was not related to Gaza, where Palestinian militants and Israel have traded a barrage of rocket fire and air strikes in recent days.

"It is absolutely the case that we have seen escalatory actions from the Iranians and it is equally the case that we will hold the Iranians accountable for attacks on American interests," Pompeo said. "If these actions take place, if they do by some third-party proxy, a mili-

tia group, Hezbollah, we will hold the Iranian leadership directly accountable for that," the chief US diplomat said before leaving on a trip to Finland.

Pompeo did not elaborate on what Iranian "escalatory actions" he was referring to. The deployment comes amid heightened tensions between Washington and Tehran over the latter's nuclear program, with the US taking aim at Iranian enriched uranium exports with sanctions. The US unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal with world powers a year ago and instead vowed "maximum pressure" aimed at curbing the regional role of Iran, an arch-rival of US allies Saudi Arabia and Israel. In April, the US also declared Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards a "foreign terrorist organization."

Meanwhile, Iran may announce retaliatory moves against the United States on the one-year anniversary of the US pullout from the nuclear deal tomorrow, the semi-official news agency ISNA reported. The US unilaterally withdrew on May 8, 2018 from the 2015 multilateral deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) under which Iran agreed to halt its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of biting sanctions.

Quoting what it called informed sources, ISNA said yesterday that President Hassan Rouhani was likely to announce "step-by-step plans" for "reciprocal measures" on the anniversary of the US pullout. The rest of the ISNA report was not attributed to any source.

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Ramadan Kareem

Self-evaluation in Holy month

By Hassan T Bwambale

Dear readers, it is common to see people rejoicing and celebrating at the end of every year without knowing that something has decreased from their life-span. Al-Hasan Al-Basry, a scholar and pious man, rightly said, "Son of Adam, you are but a number of days; whenever each day passes, part of you is gone." The simile of this adage is that of a string of beads - whenever a day elapses, a bead is taken off until all of them are gone."

In as much as almost all successful companies evaluate and audit their processes, goals, procedures - among other things - at the end of the year, individuals ought to do the same albeit in terms of what acts of worship have they performed and how many sins have they committed so that they hasten to repent to Allah (to Whom belongs all might and majesty) and reform themselves categorically.

Shaddad bin Aws (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said what can be translated as: "A wise man is the one who takes account of himself and strives for what is after death. And a failure is the person who surrenders to his whims and desires, and then indulges in wishful thinking about Allah's forgiveness." (Majority of the experts of prophetic narrations say that its meaning is correct being corroborated by other narrations, see Al-Fataawa Al-Hadeethiyya 1/56)

Imam Ibnul-Qayyim said that self-evaluation is compulsory due to the following verse, which can be translated as: "O you who believe, be ever God-fearing, and let every soul consider carefully what it has prepared for its meeting with Allah tomorrow. Thus, be ever God-fearing, indeed, God is all-aware of all that you do." (Al-Hashr 59: 18 - 20)

Scholars of Islamic Jurisprudence asserted that self-evaluation can be done in two ways, they are: To consider carefully what you intend to do; will it benefit you, or is it better to avoid it or do something else? Holding yourself accountable and evaluating the acts that you performed by asking yourself the following questions: Did you perform them perfectly? Did you seek God's pleasure by performing them? Was it necessary doing them? and What difference will doing them make?

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was keen on enjoining his companions to evaluate themselves before being held accountable by God. Abu Ayyoub Al-Ansarey (RA) narrated thus: A man approached Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and said, "O Messenger Allah, teach me briefly." The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) advised him thus: "When you stand up to pray, consider it your last prayer, and pray as if you are seeing Allah (to Whom belongs all might and majesty)."

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Duchess of Sussex gives birth to a boy

LONDON: Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, has given birth to a boy, her husband Prince Harry announced in a statement to television cameras yesterday, adding that mother and baby were "doing incredibly well". "I am very excited to announce that Meghan and myself had a little boy early this morning - a very healthy boy," a beaming Harry told reporters in Windsor.

"Mother and baby are doing incredi-

bly well. It's been the most amazing experience I can ever possibly imagine." Buckingham Palace said the boy, seventh in line to the throne, was born at 0526 local time, weighing seven pounds and three ounces. "The Duchess's mother, Doria Ragland, who is overjoyed by the arrival of her first grandchild, is with Their Royal Highnesses at Frogmore Cottage," it added.

It added that Prince Harry was present for the birth. "How any woman can do what they do is beyond comprehension," Prince Harry said in his brief comments. "We're both absolutely thrilled and so grateful for all the love and support from everybody out there." Prince Harry and Meghan revealed they were

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Scientists warn 'a million species at risk of extinction'

PARIS: Relentless pursuit of economic growth, twinned with the impact of climate change, has put an "unprecedented" one million species at risk of extinction, scientists said yesterday in a landmark report on the damage done by modern civilization to the natural world. Only a wide-ranging transformation of the global economic and financial system could pull ecosystems that are vital to the future of human communities worldwide back from the brink of collapse, concluded the report, which was endorsed by 130 countries, including the United States, Russia and China.

"The essential, interconnected web of life on Earth is getting smaller and increasingly frayed," said Professor Josef Settele, who co-chaired the study, launched in Paris

yesterday by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

"This loss is a direct result of human activity and constitutes a direct threat to human well-being in all regions of the world." Compiled by 145 expert authors from 50 countries, the study is a cornerstone of an emerging body of research that suggests the world may need to embrace a new "post-growth" form of economics if it is to avert the existential risks posed by the mutually-reinforcing consequences of pollution, habitat destruction and carbon emissions.

Known as the Global Assessment, the report found that up to one million of Earth's estimated eight million plant, insect and animal species is at risk of extinction, many within decades. The authors identified industrial farming and fishing as major drivers - with the current rate of species extinction tens to hundreds of times higher than the average over the last 10 million years. Climate change caused by burning the coal, oil and gas produced by the fossil fuel industry is exacerbating the losses, the report found.

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Israel-Gaza border falls quiet

GAZA: A ceasefire to end a surge of deadly violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel took hold yesterday after hundreds of Palestinian rocket attacks and Israeli air strikes. The latest round of hostilities erupted three days ago, peaking on Sunday when rockets and missiles from Hamas Islamist-run Gaza killed four civilians in Israel, local health officials said. Israeli strikes killed 21 Palestinians, over half of them civilians, at the weekend. Gaza health authorities said.

Israel does not acknowledge ceasefire deals with Gaza militant groups, which it considers terrorist organizations. But officials in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government spoke of a reciprocal return to quiet. One of the Israeli officials suggested that Israel's arch-enemy Iran - a major financier of

the Islamic Jihad movement - had been behind the Gaza escalation.

Suffering under renewed US sanctions and Israeli strikes against its military assets in Syria, Iran may have seen stoking Palestinian violence as a way of telling Israel, "we will get back at you through (Islamic) Jihad and Gaza", Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz told the Israeli radio station 90 FM. Israel's military said that more than 600 rockets and other projectiles - over 150 of them intercepted - had been fired at southern Israeli cities and villages since Friday. It said it shelled or carried out air strikes on some 320 militant sites.

The violence abated before dawn, after Palestinian officials said Egypt, Qatar and the United Nations had

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LONDON: A combination of pictures shows the congratulatory banner message circling the BT Tower reading 'Congratulations Harry and Meghan It's a Baby Boy!' in London yesterday, following the announcement that Britain's Meghan, Duchess of Sussex has given birth to a son. — AFP

Qatar military vessel released

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates said it released yesterday a Qatari military ship that had violated UAE territorial waters last week. "The UAE released a Qatari naval vessel with four people on board," the foreign ministry said in a statement. It said the Qatari-flagged ship entered UAE waters on April 30 and was carrying four military men-two Qataris, one Palestinian and an Indian. It gave no further details. The UAE, along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt, cut all diplomatic and transport ties with Qatar in June 2017, accusing it of backing radical Islamist groups and seeking closer ties with regional arch-rival Iran. Doha has repeatedly denied the charges and accused its former allies of seeking regime change. — AFP



GAZA: The body of Saba Abu Arar, a Palestinian baby, lies at the morgue of Al-Shifa hospita in Gaza City. The baby was killed by an Israeli strike in the Gaza Strip. — AFP

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City skyscrapers seen from Al-Shaheed Park. — Photo by Ayman Atallah (KUNA)

News in brief

Amir congratulates Thailand's new King

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory cable to the newly crowned King of Thailand Maha Vajiralongkorn yesterday. In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished Thailand more development and hoped that bilateral ties would be boosted on all levels. 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 also sent similar cables to King Maha Vajiralongkorn. —KUNA

Amir offers condolence to Saudi King

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of condolences to Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud over the death of Princess Hessa Bint Saud Bin Abdullah Al Saud. 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. —KUNA

Speaker offers condolences to Russian lawmakers

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem expressed in a cable of condolences his sorrow to Chairman of the State Duma of the Russian Federation Vyacheslav Volodin and Chairman of the Federation Council Valentina Matviyenko, over a Russian passenger aircraft incident on Sunday. Scores of people have died as a Russian passenger aircraft made an emergency landing at a Moscow airport after having caught fire mid-air, Russian federal investigators. — KUNA

Premier receives Ramadan greetings

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received a phone call from his Bahraini counterpart Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa on the occasion of the start of the holy month of Ramadan. Prince Khalifa expressed Ramadan greetings and his best wishes for His Highness the Prime Minister and Kuwait as well as the Arab and Muslim nations on the eve of the month of fasting. His Highness Sheikh Jaber thanked Prince Khalifa for his brotherly feelings and voiced best wishes for the people and government of the Kingdom of Bahrain under the wise leadership of King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa. — KUNA

KAFO: A Kuwaiti platform helping achievers excel

This year's forum to focus on 'New Kuwait 2035' vision

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Achievers for Future Opportunities (KAFO) is the first national platform showcasing achievers to ease the process of searching, connecting and collaborating among each other, and is outcome of the national youth project 'Kuwait Listens.' The Amiri Diwan, acting upon directions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, joined hands with Ministry of State for Youth, Ministry of Information, Public Authority for Youth and the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development for the implementation of the project.

KAFO began its initial phase in 2016, and the first forum was held in the following year and the second in 2018. This year's forum is focusing on 'New Kuwait 2035' vision. KAFO "aims at promoting cooperation and exchange of expertise in all domains, as well as creating an electronic platform of a database that will benefit individuals," Dr Fatma Al-Moussawi, the platform Executive Director, said in a statement. KAFO targets age group between 18 and 34 years old, but registration is open when a person is 13 years old, and avail-

able for all nationalities with civil IDs, she said.

Moussawi said 3,000 people have so far registered in KAFO, with sessions and workshops organized to know their needs. Organizers are constantly updating the database which includes different professions in order to enhance communication and interaction among members in nine communities: humanitarian, media, health, culture, art, science, technology, sport and environment, added Moussawi.

Dr Ahmad Nabil, an inventor and a KAFO member, said that the platform enabled Kuwaiti youth to initiate cooperation among themselves in either government or private sectors, and NGOs. He said he was a member in the Health Community, which helped him get to know many physicians. Salma Al-Mutairi, an achiever, said KAFO introduced her to different achievers who helped her develop her skills. "What is amazing about KAFO is its database which is full of skilled people who can be approached and asked for help from," she said. The acronym KAFO also translates in Arabic as 'competent.' — KUNA



Social Minister honor Special Olympics team

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharaz lauded on Sunday athletes of mental disabilities for securing 22 various medal in the 15th World Special Olympics Games 2019, held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, in March. In a speech made on the sidelines of the honoring Kuwait Special Olympics team, Kharaz said that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has been always eager to support all the disabled athletes and meeting their needs as full society members. He added that the Public Authority for Disabled Affairs always willing to develop and update their services to benefit people with special needs. Meanwhile, Kuwait National mental Paralympics Team's Manager Rihab Bouresli voiced content for honoring the athletes for their achievements, which shows the country's eagerness in giving them all needed support. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharaz attends the honoring ceremony of the Kuwait Special Olympics team. — KUNA

Assembly study predicts unemployment rate to exceed 25% in 2022: Lawmaker

Ministry of Electricity and Water laid off 82 employees, including 67 citizens

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli stressed that a study prepared by the Assembly predicts unemployment rates to exceed an unprecedented rate of 25 percent in 2022. "We managed to eliminate unemployment between the 1990s and 2008, but now things have changed," he said, adding that 250 Kuwaiti engineers had so far failed to find any job in either the public or the private sector. Further, Fadhli accused the government of failing to implement its 10-year plan set 10 years ago to reduce the number of expats working for the government. "Instead of these numbers falling from 70,000 then to one or two thousand, the number jumped to 95,000 in 2017," he said.

Meanwhile, statistics issued by the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) showed that the ministry laid off 82 employees - 67 citizens and 15 expats - including 20 holding university degrees, 10 holding diplomas, 26 holding school leaving certificates, 17

with intermediate school certificates and nine with primary education or lower.

780 teachers

Well-informed educational sources said only 87 of the teachers locally applying to work in Ministry of Education (MoE) schools met the conditions set by the Civil Service Commission (CSC), though MoE actually needs 780 teachers to fill vacancies in nine subjects for the next academic year (2019-2020). The sources explained that many of the applicants failed to meet the conditions set by CSC, adding the majority of applicants had worked for private schools for over 10 years and now work as translators. "This made MoE contact CSC to exempt these applicants from the job title condition," the sources said.

2020 census

Well-informed sources at Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau said the bureau has not yet started preparing to conduct the 2020 census

nor signed the maintenance contracts for the bureau's infrastructure. The sources added that the census will need huge data inputs and a strong infrastructure using modern automation. "This delay might cause Kuwait to fall behind other GCC states doing the 2020 census at the same time," the sources underlined, noting that e-system maintenance contracts had not been renewed for months and that this made the bureau stop issuing its annual and quarterly statistical reports.

Resolutions rejected

While endorsing the Municipal Council's meeting number 5/2019 held on April 1, 2019, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Sholah rejected three resolutions the council made on approving a proposal by member Hassan Kamal requesting immediate paving of inner streets in some areas, adding a clause in contracts signed with cleaning companies conditioning that cleaners should be well trained and English-literate and on having a municipality office at the headquarter

of the justice ministry.

Delayed tenders

The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) contacted the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) concerning article 85 of the tenders law on depriving some contractors from any further tenders and the projects delayed as a result. In this regard, informed sources said MPW has made a ban list of these companies and contractors and the percentages they had achieved in the projects assigned to them. "Twenty-eight tenders with a total value of KD 206 million are delayed," the sources said.

Al-Shaheed Park's third phase

The State Audit Bureau rejected two requests by the Amiri Diwan with regards to the tender of design development, construction and maintaining Al-Shaheed Park's third phase project of an estimated cost of KD 85.5 million. The bureau also rejected another request by the Diwan to complete and operate



MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli

the area surrounding Kuwait Motor Town in the south of the country for KD 50 million, Al-Qabas reported recently. The bureau said that the prices mentioned in the two projects were 'very high', and noted some irregularities in the presented bids.



KUWAIT: Municipality inspectors are seen during a recent inspection tour around Farwaniya governorate.



Efforts to shut down polluting landfills in Jahra

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Municipal Council member Humoud Oqlah Al-Enezi said that the Jahra municipality committee had discussed the Jahra waste collection point, and environmen-

tal concerns arising from the fact that this point is very close to residential areas. Enezi added that the environment law had given a five-year grace period to shut down all landfill sites and use alternative environment-friendly methods.

In other news, Farwaniya municipality teams recently inspected around 90 stores in various areas within the governorate, said the Farwaniya municipality follow up manager Nasser Marzouq Al-Rasheedi, noting that inspectors filed 35 citations during the tour.

Teacher busted with forged PhD

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti teacher working in an education ministry school reportedly presented a forged PhD equivalency degree with the name and logo of a prestigious Arab university recognized in Kuwait to receive educational qualifications. Sources said the forgery suspicions are revolving around equivalencies in the government, and suspicions are growing that a gang engaged in this criminal activity that was busted last year for forging post-graduate degrees from an Arab country and entering them in the higher education ministry computer was not completely uprooted.

The recent case was described as a disaster for two reasons - the first is that it has the seal and signature of the former director of the degree equivalency department who left his job around three years ago, which means that there may be similar degrees issued during that time. The second reason is in its issuance date is Dec 16, 2018, which means there are forgers who are still active despite strict procedures and deterrent punishments.

Bullet wound

An Indian man was rushed to Adan Hospital for treatment for a bullet wound after he was shot during a fishing trip to Kubbar Island. A source said the man was with two persons on a fishing trip when they were surprised by an Iranian boat ordering them to stop, but they did not. The suspects then fired at them, with the bullets penetrating the cabin wall and hitting the victim. The suspects stole some belongings before escaping, the source said.

Verbal assault

A traffic first lieutenant noticed a car in violation of the law, so he pulled it over to issue a citation. However, a dispute took place between the two after the driver, who turned out to be a policeman, reportedly verbally insulted the traffic policeman. The first lieutenant lodged a complaint at the police station - the violating cop was apprehended and his vehicle impounded.

'Hashish cutter' confiscated

Airport customs officers confiscated a 'hashish cutter' from a citizen but later released him because they could not press any charges against him. The officers who were inspecting the passenger's luggage after he arrived from Europe noticed a gadget used for grinding hashish to make it easier to roll. The citizen said the item was a 'piece of art' and there is no law that allows its confiscation. —Translated from Al-Qabas and Al-Rai

Kuwait Deputy FM meets Palestinian ambassador



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub. During the meeting, they discussed bilateral ties between

both countries as well as regional and international developments. Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar attended the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Head of the UNHCR in Kuwait Samar Hadadian honors Secretary General of the Arab Media Forum Madhi Al-Khamis. — KUNA

UNHCR in Kuwait honors Arab Media Forum chief

KUWAIT: The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait honored Sunday Secretary General of the Arab Media Forum Madhi Al-Khamis in recognition of his efforts to support refugees worldwide. Speaking at the honoring ceremony, head of the UNHCR in Kuwait Samar Hadadian lauded the role of the Arab Media Forum in highlighting the cause of refugees and garnering global

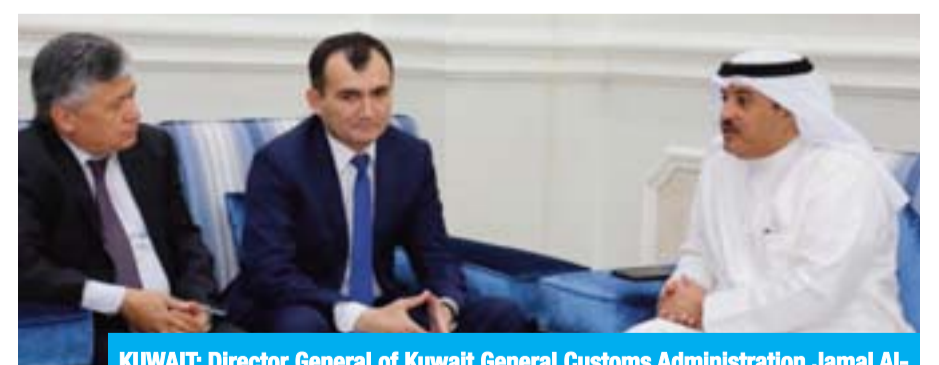
support for them. He also underlined the importance of the partnership between the UNHCR and the Arab Media Forum to serve a variety of humanitarian causes across the world. Meanwhile, Khamis expressed gratitude to the UNHCR for this decoration. He stressed the Arab Media Forum's eagerness to serve and shed light on humanitarian issues in the Arab region and beyond. — KUNA

China Red Cross Society hails Kuwait's humanitarian efforts

KUWAIT: President of the Red Cross Society of China Chen Zhu hailed Kuwait's humanitarian role around the world yesterday. The remarks were made to KUNA after Zhu's meeting with Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Hilal Al-Sayer. Zhu, who is also vice president of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), said he had closely monitored Kuwait's humanitarian efforts to ease the suffering of those affected by natural disasters and conflicts. He added that they discussed developing rescue efforts, empowering women and boosting ties between Kuwait and China. Meanwhile, Sayer noted the importance of building joint partnerships with the international community and the IFRC to face the growing humanitarian challenges. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Hilal Al-Sayer meets with President of the Red Cross Society of China Chen Zhu. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait General Customs Administration Jamal Al-Jalawi meets with his Uzbek counterpart Murotjon Azimov. — KUNA

Uzbek customs chief hails Kuwait's support

KUWAIT: Uzbekistan's visiting State Customs Committee chief Murotjon Azimov on Sunday praised commercial and customs facilitations Kuwait provides to his country expressing keenness for further bilateral trade. Talks held with his Kuwaiti counterpart, Jamal Al-Jalawi,

focused on initiating a joint customs coordinative meeting, read a Kuwait General Customs Administration statement. The encounter comes ahead of the first Kuwaiti-Uzbek government committee set of talks, scheduled to take place in Tashkent. — KUNA



Local



History of Kuwait



KUWAIT: The grocery store in the past was characterized by simplicity in everything. This picture which dates back to the late 1960s shows a shopkeeper sitting inside his shop while holding a Nargileh (hookah) and talking to a customer, as goods are put on the shelves in the background. The traditional handmade Kuwaiti-style roof made of wood imported from India can also be seen. (Source: The KOC archive. Researched by Mahmoud Zakaria, Researcher in Heritage, the Ministry of Information)

Zain launches 'Zain Al-Khair' online donation portal

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of 'Zain Al-Khair', an online donation portal that allows customers to easily donate to a number of official and licensed charitable organizations in Kuwait through their monthly phone bill or prepaid balance.

Zain launched this online portal as part of its annual social campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan, as well as in line with its continuous efforts to offer its customers the latest innovative solutions in the world of Value Added Services, especially in regards to utilizing innovative tech solutions in serving humanitarian causes. The company is always keen on offering the best and most advanced services to its customer base, considered the largest family of subscribers in Kuwait.

The 'Zain Al-Khair' online donation portal (khair.kw.zain.com) allows Zain customers - both prepaid and postpaid - to donate to any of the listed charitable organizations with any amount ranging from 1 - 80 KD. Customers can simply select the preferred organization, pick one of the available projects to donate to, then

specify the donation amount. The donated amount will then be automatically added to the customer's monthly phone bill or prepaid balance with ease.

All the charitable organizations listed in the portal are certified and licensed by the official authorities in Kuwait, and each one features a number of different charity projects to choose from. The current list includes: Al-Najat Charity, Al-Manaber Al-Quraniya Society, Social Reform Society - Rahma International, Social Reform Society - Namaa, Kuwait Food Bank, International Islamic Charitable Organization, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society, Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, and the Kuwaiti Charity Society for Serving the Holy Quran and its Sciences. More organizations will be added to the portal during the upcoming period.

Zain's comprehensive Ramadan social campaign, part of the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility Strategy, closely focuses on supporting humanitarian causes. The company strongly believes that such initiatives help infuse a sense of responsibility into members of the society, and help support those who are in need of help.

Zain strives to offer customers the latest services and solutions in the world of Value Added Services, all with the aim of surpassing customers' expectations. The company will continue leading the Kuwaiti telecommunications industry by launching unprecedented services, products, and solutions in addition to value added services geared at maintaining its leading position in



the Kuwaiti market. Zain is committed to enrich the culture of giving and social contribution through launching such services, as well as by supporting initiatives adopted by leading non-profit organizations inside and outside of Kuwait. Zain prides itself on its long track of records and contributions it has put in philanthropic areas over the years, being one of the leading companies in the private sector.

AUB organized 'Ramadan' seminar for employees

KUWAIT: As its annual event, Ahli United Bank (AUB) organized a seminar for its employees at its headquarters under the title of 'Ready for it', in which Shaikh Anas Al-Mulla talked about the virtues of the holy month of Ramadan and how to prepare for it spiritually as part of a series of educational and awareness programs, which Ahli United Bank used to organize for its staff in Ramadan program which is full of diverse and goal-oriented activities.

The seminar, which attracted the attention of the attendees from executive management and employees of the bank, focused on how to celebrate the Holy Month of Ramadan by observing the acts of worship that renew relationship with The Almighty Allah, like fasting, prayer, night prayers, Kinship ties, giving charity, almsgiving and good deeds to the poor, and other acts of worship and duties that bring tranquility, security and comfort to the souls and



hearts, to enjoy lasting happiness.

After the seminar, the audience was invited to Guraish gathering in preparation for receiving the Holy Month of Ramadan, and souvenirs were distributed to the employees in an atmosphere full of familiarity and joy. Ahli United Bank said in a press release: "This seminar is part of Ahli United Bank's belief in the importance of such cultural and religious events in creating a

work environment saturated with spiritual and fideism features of Ramadan.

This seminar is part of the annual social program for Ramadan activities, which includes many charitable, cultural, religious and social welfare activities. The bank's management is keen to develop this program year after year to ensure the best activities that are appropriate to the nature of the holy month.



ABK celebrates Ramadan with series of activities

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has announced an exciting program of activities lined up throughout the month to mark the holy month of Ramadan. In collaboration with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society to support underprivileged families, ABK distributed charity boxes containing essential food items for needy families prior to the start of Ramadan. The bank is also working with Zakat committees and local mosques to distribute food packages in certain residential areas. In collaboration with Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH), ABK staff will distribute girgian packages to children in hospitals, along with some fun-filled entertainment to brighten their day.

To encourage a healthy lifestyle during the holy month, the bank is hosting a Ramadan Tournament at the Kuwait Blind Association. Visually impaired participants will compete in different events, including table tennis, domino, and target ball, with a ceremony held to honor the winners. ABK is also sponsoring the Kuwait Youth Basketball Tournament, to further encourage athletic activity during the month. To share the joys of Ramadan with staff, the Bank will hold its annual ghabga for all employees. The much anticipated event will be filled with entertainment and exciting prizes.

On this occasion, ABK would like to extend its warmest wishes during this holy month to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti government and all residents in Kuwait.



KUWAIT: Safir Fintas Hotel recently hosted a 'Guraish' event for the media on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



What do you love about Ramadan?

By Nawara Fattahova

Ramadan is a joyful time of year in the Muslim world as fasters gather at sundown to break their fast with family and friends. In Kuwait, there are many traditions and activities that take place every year. To commemorate Ramadan and the experiences of our readers, this year the Kuwait Times is asking readers what they love about Ramadan. What is your favorite food, activity, memory, event, or thing that you absolutely adore and look forward to each year? We want to know. Email local@kuwaittimes with your answer and it might end up in the newspaper.

For Rabab, an Egyptian who has lived in Kuwait for more than 10 years, her favorite thing about the holy month of Ramadan is family gatherings. "During Ramadan, all members of my family who live here in Kuwait gather every day for iftar. This makes me feel happy and not lonely or

homesick. The second thing I like in Ramadan is ghabqas, as I meet my friends at these gatherings. I like the suhour gathering as well," she told Kuwait Times.

"I love the style of Ramadan tents and lanterns, in addition to the special decorations for the holy month at hotels, malls, restaurants and other places," she added. "I have lovely memories of Ramadan. Last year during Ramadan, I travelled for a few days to Egypt, and there I met new people who became close to me. This is a pleasant memory for me that will always remind me of Ramadan," concluded Rabab.



NBK welcomes Moody's credit program trainees

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) welcomed the sixth batch of trainees in the 'Moody's Credit Curriculum Program,' which was designed and organized in partnership with the international credit rating agency, Moody's Analytics.

Over a period of three months, the Moody's Credit Curriculum program will cover an array of topics including banking services, financial analysis, risk management, structure risk, credit challenges, financing, problem credits and solutions in financial and banking institutions. Eighteen

trainees will take part of the program, coming from Corporate Banking Group, Consumer Banking Group, Risk Management, branches and other divisions.

The program support NBK's strategy to invest in its employees' skillset and capitalize on their potential in order to reach the highest levels of professionalism in the industry. It also translates the Bank's endeavors in establishing a growing path in the career of its employees by providing them with training programs organized in partnership with leading universities and international institutions, in addition to training them to bring solutions to challenges in the banking sector.

NBK celebrated at the beginning of the year the graduation of 63 trainees from the Moody's Credit Curriculum Program which last a period of a year and a half. Moody's is one of the best and oldest financial corporations specializing in economic research, financial analysis and evaluation of private and government institutions in terms of strength, financial position and creditworthiness.

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Trump's former lawyer heads to 'kosher' prison

Guns outnumber guests at bombed Sri Lanka hotel

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NEGOMBO, Sri Lanka: Sri Lankan security personnel stand guard after clashes erupted between Christian and Muslim communities yesterday. —AFP

Christian-Muslim clashes rock Lanka town

PM offers compensation • Cardinal urges liquor ban • Schools reopen to poor attendance

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Roman Catholic Church appealed for calm and an alcohol ban yesterday after clashes between Christians and Muslims in a town scarred by the Easter suicide attacks. Hundreds of security forces entered Negombo to impose a curfew after dozens of Muslim-owned shops, homes and vehicles were attacked. St. Sebastian's church in the town 40 km north of capital Colombo was one of three churches and three hotels hit by jihadist suicide bombers on April 21 killing 257 people.

"I appeal to all Catholic and Christian brothers and sisters not to hurt even a single Muslim person because they are our brothers, because they are part of our religious culture," said Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, archbishop of Colombo. "Therefore please avoid hurting them and try to create a better spirit of understanding and good relations between all the communities of Sri Lanka," he said in a video message to the country.

Liquor ban sought

The cardinal visited Negombo, held talks with clerics at a mosque and appealed to the government to shut bars in the Catholic-dominated town known as "Little Rome", said his spokesman Father Edmund Tilakaratne. "As a temporary measure, the cardinal asked the government to order the ban on liquor sales in Negombo area," Tilakaratne told AFP. In another televised appeal, Ranjith appealed to Christians, Buddhists and Muslims to show restraint.

Negombo suffered the highest death toll in the Easter Sunday attacks that were claimed by the Islamic State group. The bomb at St. Sebastian's killed more than 100 worshippers. A top police officer said two arrests were made after the latest clashes and more suspects had been identified through CCTV footage. The officer said all will be prosecuted under emergency laws approved after the Easter attacks. "At least three people were injured in the clashes," the officer told AFP. "Although we have arrested

only two suspects at the moment, many more have been identified and we will go after them." The officer said an alcohol-fuelled dispute between two groups degenerated into the clashes. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said in a statement the government will compensate those who lost property in the night-time clashes. Unverified video circulating on social media showed mobs throwing stones at Muslim businesses, destroyed furniture inside homes, shattered windows and overturned vehicles. AFP was unable to immediately verify the footage.

A few hundred extra troops and police were deployed late Sunday as authorities imposed a night-time curfew in the town. The government blocked access to WhatsApp, Facebook and other social media platforms for several hours to prevent what it called the spread of rumours and videos aimed at instigating unrest. The curfew was lifted yesterday morning and social media was working again by noon Monday. Sri Lanka's main international airport is

located in the area, but police said there was no disruption. Muslims make up around 10 percent of Buddhist-majority Sri Lanka's 21 million population and Christians about 7.6 percent.

Security for schools

Meanwhile, public schools reopened yesterday for the first time since the Easter attacks, with heavily armed police and troops guarding schools. "The attendance was poor today, but we maintain a high level of security," the top police officer said. "Most parents are adopting a wait-and-see approach and we hope attendance will be back to normal very soon." The country has been under a state of emergency since the Easter bombings. Security forces and police have been given sweeping powers to arrest and detain suspects. The government has blamed the Easter bombings on a local jihadist organization which had pledged allegiance to Islamic State. —AFP

Security high in Kashmir as India votes again

NEW DELHI: India held the next stage of its marathon election yesterday, with 90 million people eligible to vote in key seats for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party and security heavy in restive Kashmir. The world's biggest poll has been plagued by violence, with militants throwing a grenade at a voting booth Monday and shooting dead a local politician in south Kashmir over the weekend. Last week 15 paramilitaries and their driver were killed in an attack by Maoist rebels in Maharashtra state.

India's mammoth electorate of 900 million vote on seven days between April 11 and May 19 - yesterday marking the fifth day - with results due on May 23. At the 2014 election, Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 39 of the 51 constituencies up for grabs on Monday, as he swept to power and the opposition Congress party suffered its worst ever result. These include 14 seats in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state with 220 million inhabitants, part of the backbone of Modi's support.

But late last year Congress won state elections in three other states in the region, boosting its hopes of unseating the BJP. In recent days rivals Modi and Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader, have engaged in acrimonious exchanges - with the prime minister taking a pop at Gandhi's assassinated father, former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. "Your father was termed 'Mr Clean' by his courtiers, but his life ended as corrupt number 1," Modi told a rally, linking Rajiv to a major defense purchase scandal during his tenure.

"Your karma awaits you. Projecting your inner beliefs about yourself onto my father won't protect you. All my love and a huge hug," Gandhi tweeted in response. During the campaign Gandhi has called Modi a "thief" over alleged irregularities in a multi-billion dollar deal to purchase 36 Rafale fighter jets from France's Dassault Aviation.



DAUSA, India: Indian women sit inside an auto-rickshaw as they show their ink-marked finger after casting their vote during the fifth phase of India's general election in Alwar in the northern Indian state of Rajasthan yesterday. —AFP

Violence

Also voting were parts of the unsettled region of Indian-administered Kashmir, with tens of thousands of extra security forces on duty in India's only Muslim-majority state. Militants yesterday threw a grenade that exploded near a voting booth, although no one was injured. On Saturday night Gul Mohammad Mir, who belonged to a local unit of Modi's BJP, was shot dead at his house in south Kashmir.

Protestors in the Pulwama area of Kashmir threw stones at election staff Sunday as they were brought under heavy security to the polling stations. Police fired at the crowds injuring at least two people, and polling staff were later transported in helicopters for their safety. Voter turnout in Indian Kashmir - where thousands have died in clashes in recent decades, most of them civilians - has barely crossed 10 percent.

Also voting yesterday was Amethi, home to some 1.5 million people and the seat of Congress leader Gandhi, long considered an

electoral stronghold for India's Gandhi-Nehru political dynasty that has given the country three prime ministers since independence in 1947. Smriti Irani, a former actress turned politician, was the main challenger for Gandhi's seat. Amethi is one of the two constituencies where Rahul is contesting, something that is allowed under Indian election rules - the other is Wayanad, in the southern state of Kerala, and an easier bet.

Rahul's mother Sonia Gandhi, 72, the Italian-born former head of Congress, was contesting from Rae Bareilly near Amethi, which is also voting yesterday. Modi has made national security and fighting terrorism his main campaign theme to blunt opposition attacks on his economic record. He is seen as favourite to win - albeit with a reduced majority, meaning Modi may have to seek alliances with other parties. "I'm not happy with the current government," said voter Mohammed Anees in Leh in the Ladakh region, high in the Himalayas in India's far north. "We want a change." —AFP

Protesters dream of a new Sudan

KHARTOUM: They brave the sweltering summer heat and the accompanying dust to pursue their dream: building a new Sudan. While some protesters at a weeks-long sit-in outside Khartoum's army headquarters dare to hope for democracy, others say they will be content just to secure a prosperous future. But they agree on one goal: A Sudan that is free of Islamists, who one protester said "destroyed the country".

Thirty years after coming to power in a 1989 Islamist coup that toppled a democratic government, President Omar Al-Bashir was deposed on April 11. Despite his departure, protesters have continued to camp outside the vast Khartoum military base to insist that the military council which replaced him hand power to civilians. Hundreds walk each morning along the major boulevard that runs alongside the compound, the epicenter of the demonstrations that led to Bashir's downfall.

The smell of coffee and fowl, a staple Sudanese dish of beans, mixes with the stench from makeshift toilets used by thousands of protesters who have spent weeks camping there. But whether young or old, the protesters retain their enthusiasm and endure the privations with good humor. "We want a country that recognizes our skills, a country led by civilians and not by Islamists," said Mohamed Adel Hai, 22, a student who has never experienced life under a president other than Bashir. "We want a country with civilian and democratic rule."

Experts say the shape of a post-Bashir Sudan will depend on the outcome of power-sharing negotiations between the ruling military council and protest leaders. In particular, they cite the need for a compromise acceptable to both sides, as well as a majority of citizens. "There is now a mixture of euphoria and caution about the future," Chatham House said in a recent report.

Modest hopes

For Abu Al-Kamel, who was 18 when Bashir came to power, "the people of Sudan, above all, want to satisfy their basic needs of education and health... along with social justice". "(The Islamists) literally destroyed the country by hosting Osama bin Laden and Carlos (the Jackal), which led to international sanctions," said the Khartoum-based university worker. French secret service agents seized the Venezuelan-born leftist militant in Khartoum in 1994 and flew him to France where he was jailed over a string of deadly attacks.

Ex-Al-Qaeda supremo Bin Laden lived in Sudan between 1992 to 1996, which led Washington to slap the African country on its list of state sponsors of terrorism. In Oct 2017, Washington lifted a 20-year-old trade embargo on Sudan, but Sudan remains on the "terrorism blacklist" along with Iran, Syria and North Korea. Protests erupted against Bashir in December last year as people blamed him for economic mismanagement, which saw food prices soar, foreign currency reserves plummet and fuel stocks dwindle.

Sudanese have seen their purchasing power dwindle dramatically in the last few years of Bashir's rule. Protester Aisha, who gave only her first name, is modest in her hopes. "All we want is to eat our fowl and watch our country be rebuilt," she said. But Sudanese people are known for their passion for politics and public debates, something that was curbed under Bashir's iron-fisted three decade rule.

Their enduring joviality and slogans feed into a carnival-like atmosphere at the Khartoum sit-in, which has turned into a marketplace for vendors selling lemonade, soft drinks and national flags. Women hawking tea make brisk business, sitting under the shade of trees in the summer heat. Protester Intissar Rabia Mohamed hopes that demonstrators' efforts will not go to waste. Asked what she hopes for, she said: "a prosperous, developed and dynamic Sudan". —AFP

International

Under new leader, ANC faces frustrated South African voters

Result will reveal whether Ramaphosa can reverse growing resentment

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's election tomorrow is set to test whether the ruling ANC party has staunchly a decline in popularity caused by corruption scandals, lackluster growth and record unemployment. The party is still expected to win the vote, but the result will reveal whether its new leader, President Cyril Ramaphosa, can reverse growing resentment among South African voters. The election comes 25 years since Nelson Mandela led the African National Congress (ANC) to power in the country's first multi-racial ballot, which marked the globally-celebrated end of apartheid rule.

Support for the ANC has fallen in every election since 2004 with the party winning just 54 percent in 2016 local elections, compared with 62 percent in the last national vote in 2014. Ramaphosa, 66, took office last year when Jacob Zuma was forced to resign as president by the ANC after a nine-year reign dominated by corruption allegations and economic woes. Most opinion surveys suggest the ANC will secure nearly 60 percent of the vote tomorrow, though one poll suggested its share could slide below 50 percent.

Ramaphosa, seen as a pro-business moderate, is a former anti-apartheid activist and trade union leader who was Mandela's apparent favorite to succeed him as president. After being outmaneuvered in that race, Ramaphosa instead became a wealthy entrepreneur before serving as Zuma's vice president.

ANC look to win big

"Ramaphosa gives hope to the electorate that things can go better," Susan Booysen, a political analyst at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, told AFP. "If the ANC had gone into an election under Zuma, it would not have won with an outright majority." The London-based Eurasia risk consultancy said that an ANC victory with 55 percent or less of the vote would damage Ramaphosa and strengthen aggrieved

supporters of Zuma within the party.

"This will be the first time that Ramaphosa's popularity will be measured by voters," it said in a briefing paper. "He is not aligned with Zuma and is driving an anticorruption campaign and reform agenda aimed at reversing the damage inflicted during Zuma's tenure."

The ANC has been confronted by deepening public anger over its failure to tackle poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. The economy grew just 0.8 percent in 2018 and unemployment hit a record high of nearly 28 percent in 2017. State-owned companies were at the center of corruption scandals under Zuma, with power-supplier Eskom now laden with huge debts and forced to ration electricity to many homes, shop and offices.

Tomorrow's election will have 48 parties on a ballot paper, though only the main opposition centrist Democratic Alliance (DA) and the radical-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) are also major political players. The DA hopes to shed its image as a white, middle-class party as its first black leader, Mmusi Maimane, fights in his first general election since he took the helm in 2015. According to Intellidex Capital research, the party is forecast to make only marginal gains from the 22 percent it won in 2014 after struggling to make ground against Ramaphosa - a more widely popular figure than Zuma.

Leftist radicals on the up?

But the radical leftist EFF, founded just six years ago by a former ANC youth leader Julius Malema, is predicted to make major inroads, growing from 6.3 percent to a forecast 11 percent. The party, which appeals mainly to young voters and the poor, has centered its election campaign on its flagship policy of seizing land from largely white owners to give to poor blacks. Enforced land redistribution has also been adopted as a policy by Ramaphosa's government - alarming some investors.



JOHANNESBURG: South African ruling party African National Congress President and South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa waves at thousands of supporters after delivering his speech at the Ellis Park stadium on Sunday. —AFP

Tomorrow's provincial elections will also measure ANC fortunes, with the party in a close fight with the DA for control of Gauteng, which includes the capital Pretoria and the economic hub Johannesburg. Ahead of the vote, tens of thousands of supporters attended rallies at the weekend hosted by the major three parties. "We are humble enough to admit our mistakes," Ramaphosa told the ANC gathering. "We have taken

decisive steps to fight corruption...The era of immunity is over, we are now entering a period of accountability." Some 26.8 million voters are registered to cast ballots at 22,925 polling stations. Early results will emerge on Thursday with an official winner declared on Saturday. The party that wins most seats in parliament selects the president, who will be sworn in on May 25. —AFP

France challenged over refusal to allow militant's kids home

PARIS: The grandparents of two children stranded with their French jihadist mother at a camp in Kurdish-held Syria were to file a lawsuit yesterday at Europe's top rights court over France's refusal to allow them home, lawyers said. It is the latest challenge to the French government's opposition to returning the children of suspected jihadists in Syria or Iraq. The four-year-old girl and three-year-old boy are among the estimated 500 children of French citizens who joined the Islamic State's so-called "caliphate" before the jihadist's last Syrian redoubt was overrun in March.

France has said it will consider requests for their return on a case-by-case basis only, infuriating many rights advocates and NGOs. Since March it has repatriated just five orphans and a three-year-old girl whose mother was sentenced to life in prison in Iraq. Critics say the policy exposes innocent victims of the war, many of whom have suffered serious trauma during the fighting and coalition bombardments, to inhumane living conditions and long-term psychological risks.

The grandparents of the two children, whose mother had joined jihadists in Syria, will file a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg, eastern France, their lawyers told AFP. "By refusing to repatriate this mother and these two sick children who are wounded and in a state of extreme weakness, France is consciously and deliberately exposing them to inhumane and degrading treatment," they said in a statement. —AFP

For pensioners, Brexit is a health concern

LAUZUN, France: For John Shaw, a 73-year-old Briton who lives in the heart of wine country in southwest France, the problem raised by Britain's impending exit from the EU is simple: "It's a matter of life or death!" "We've been living in limbo for two-and-a-half years," Shaw says in a back room at the Floc'n Tea cafe in the small town of Lauzun, which has become a rallying point for Britain's diaspora of pensioners in this picturesque corner of France.

Until now, under EU reciprocity agreements, Britons living elsewhere in the European bloc have been covered by national healthcare systems. But it's a deal that UK pensioners may no longer be able to take for granted. If healthcare isn't covered by a citizens' rights deal when the new Brexit deadline expires on October 31, their out-of-pocket costs could soar. That could prove too much for Shaw and hundreds of other older Britons who have moved to live among the sunny rolling hills and medieval towns of southwest France, often with cost of living concerns in mind.

Although healthcare may not have been a priority when they left Britain, many have since discovered the benefits of France's generous coverage. Shaw, for example, is battling an aggressive case of prostate cancer and takes an anti-hormone drug whose price tag is twice that of his UK pension - and which isn't available in Britain. "Our whole attitude towards life has changed because of uncertainty," he says. —AFP

Refugees are 'cross for humanity', says Pope in Bulgaria

SOFIA: Pope Francis told Syrian and Iraqi refugees at a camp in Bulgaria that their experiences were "a cross for humanity" as he continued his visit to the Balkans yesterday. Arriving in Bulgaria on Sunday, Francis began his three-day tour by urging his hosts to open their hearts to refugees, in a country where public opinion has generally been negative towards migrants. Yesterday, he visited the Vrazhdebna refugee camp on the outskirts of the capital Sofia, which has a capacity of more than 300 but currently hosts around 50 asylum seekers.

"Today the world of migrants and refugees is a little like a cross for humanity, a cross suffered by so many people," Pope Francis said. He spoke of the "horrors" they had suffered in "leaving their own country and seeking to

integrate themselves in another". In April 2018, the Council of Europe rights group voiced concern about Bulgarian efforts to integrate Middle Eastern refugees, with most relying on help from volunteers and NGOs.

A small but energetic choir of refugee children welcomed Francis with two songs in Bulgarian before presenting him with brightly-colored drawings, after which he greeted the other refugees at the camp individually. Iraqi refugee Soad, who has seven children and whose husband is sick, said her life was all the more difficult due to a lack of a defined immigration status and that relations with Iraqi Kurdish refugees were sometimes tense. "The pope can do everything and change everything, because he helps everyone and especially refugees," she said. "We will stay in Bulgaria, the children think it's their country now," she added.

While President Rumen Radev assured the pope on Sunday that "Bulgarian society does not tolerate racism", the idea of accepting refugees from Muslim-majority countries in the

Pilot says lightning caused deadly Russia jet crash landing

MOSCOW: The pilot of a Russian passenger plane that erupted in a ball of fire on the runway of Moscow's busiest airport, killing 41 people, said lightning led to the emergency landing. Investigators were yesterday working to understand the causes of the blaze after the Sukhoi Superjet-100 had to return to Sheremetyevo airport shortly after take-off Sunday evening. But pilot Denis Yevdokimov told Russian media the craft lost communication and needed to switch to emergency control mode "because of lightning" on the Aeroflot flight to the Arctic city of Murmansk. He did not specify if the plane was struck directly.

"We managed to restore communication through the emergency frequency on our radio connection. But the link was only for a short time and kept cutting out... it was possible to say only a few words," he told the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper. Videos on social media showed the plane

crash-landing and then speeding along the runway with flames pouring from its fuselage. Passengers could be seen leaping onto an inflatable slide at the front and running from the blazing plane as columns of black smoke billowed into the sky.

Another video shot inside the cabin showed roaring flames outside the window and passengers crying out in panic. Yevdokimov said he believed the plane burst into flames on landing, most likely because of full fuel tanks. At least two children were among the 41 dead and nine more people were in hospital, three of them seriously injured, authorities said. The aircraft's black boxes have been found and handed over to investigators, a source in the Russian emergency services told news agencies.

Several of the 78 people on board said they believed lightning was the cause of the tragedy, which came at the end of several days of public holidays following Workers' Day on May 1. "I saw a flash of white light," Dmitry Khelebuskin told the state RIA news agency. Pyotr Egorov, also on board, told media: "We had just taken off when the plane was hit by lightning... the landing was very hard, we almost passed out from fear. The plane bounced on the tarmac like a grasshopper and burst into flames on the ground."

Trump's former lawyer heads to 'kosher' prison

NEW YORK: With a menu that includes matzo ball soup and gefilte fish, as well as a full-time rabbi and a chance at the occasional visit home, the US prison where Donald Trump's former personal lawyer will spend the next three years is unique in the federal system. Michael Cohen is due to report to the Federal Correctional Institute in Otisville, New York, about 110 km northwest of New York City, yesterday.

The 52-year-old Cohen will be housed in dorm-like accommodations at the facility's minimum-secu-

rity camp, which prison consultants say has become a destination for Jewish inmates due to its proximity to New York City's Jewish and upstate New York's Orthodox Jewish enclaves. "He's going to what I like to refer to as 'Jewish heaven,'" said Larry Levine, founder of Wall Street Prison Consultants, who served a 10-year prison sentence that ended in 2007 for racketeering and other crimes.

Cohen, who once said he would "take a bullet" for Trump, was sentenced in December for orchestrating payments to pornographic film star Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal shortly before the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Cohen said Trump directed the payments. Trump, who has denied the affairs, said he never directed Cohen to do anything illegal. Cohen received a three-year prison term for the payments and unrelated financial crimes. —Reuters



SOFIA: Pope Francis poses for a selfie with young refugees during a visit to the Vrazhdebna refugee camp yesterday. —AFP

Middle East is rejected on both the right and left of Bulgaria's political spectrum. The country's Orthodox Church has also called such migration a "threat to the

stability of the state" and to "ethnic balance" and the entire 274-km Bulgarian-Turkish border is blocked by a barbed-wire fence. —AFP



MOSCOW: This handout picture released yesterday shows investigators at a site of a fire in a Russian-made Superjet-100 at Sheremetyevo airport. —AFP

The jet - carrying 73 passengers and five crew members - left Sheremetyevo at 6:02pm (1502 GMT), and the crew issued a distress signal shortly afterwards, officials said. Russia's national carrier Aeroflot was once notorious for its poor safety record but in recent years its image has improved and it has not had a fatal accident in more than a decade. The Russian Sukhoi Superjet-100 however has been dogged with problems since its launch in 2011.

In 2012, a Superjet performing at an Indonesian air show slammed into a volcano, killing all 45 people on board. Indonesia blamed the crash on pilot error. Technical problems with the plane have been reported in recent years and Russia has struggled to convince foreign carriers to purchase it. The government offered subsidies to encourage Russian airlines to buy the Superjet and Aeroflot has become its main operator. —AFP



OTISVILLE, New York: In this photo taken on May 3, 2019, the entrance to the Federal Correctional Institution is seen. —AFP

International

Thailand king praises 'unity' in speech on final coronation day

Junta chief pledges loyalty to Vajiralongkorn and Chakri dynasty

BANGKOK: Thailand's newly-crowned King Maha Vajiralongkorn praised a show of "unity" at his first public address on the final day of an elaborate coronation yesterday, speaking to a sea of supporters and witnessed by the head of the junta that has led the divided country since a 2014 coup. Walking onto a wooden balcony to the roar of the crowd, Vajiralongkorn said he was "truly happy" with the display. "I want the unity shown here with this goodwill to be an encouraging sign for everybody, all sides to perform their duties for the prosperity of our country," he said.

Thousands waiting below shouted "Long live the king!", waved Thailand's national flag and wore yellow hats - the color representing the king's birthday. Before the remarks, junta chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha addressed the king from the ground, pledging "loyalty to his majesty and the great Chakri dynasty with our lives". Vajiralongkorn was accompanied by Thailand's new Queen Suthida, whom he married in a formal ceremony days before the coronation.

The 66-year-old is the 10th king in the Chakri dynasty and ascended the throne in late 2016 after the death of his beloved father Bhumibol Adulyadej. Not as well known, Vajiralongkorn spends a great deal of time in Germany and has been divorced three times. The monarchy is shielded by some of the world's harshest lese majeste laws, making any critical discussion about the king all but impossible. But wall-to-wall coverage and social media posts of the ceremony provided rare glimpses into the private lives of the ultra-guarded royal family.

After yesterday's address, the king's fashion designer daughter Princess Sirivannavari was seen capturing the moment on a smartphone and waving to the crowd. Over the weekend she took to Facebook to post personal shots of her and her family members, garnering more than 120,000 shares. The king's eldest sister Princess Ubolratana has long used Instagram as a way to communicate with fans. She drew headlines in February when she tried to stand for prime minister with an anti-junta party. The king thwarted the bid with a royal command and the party was later dissolved.

Though she was seen hugging the king at the ceremony, she was asked in the comments section of a photo she posted Saturday why she did not receive a royal title during the event. "Because my work is in this style," she said. "It's more convenient and effective this way." The three-day coronation - the first one in 69 years - cemented Vajiralongkorn's position at the top of one of the world's richest monarchies. He was crowned with the 7.3-kg Great Crown of Victory Saturday after sacred purification rites.

On Sunday, the king was carried through Bangkok's historic old quarter on a gilded palanquin flanked by royal guards in a colourful seven-hour procession. The royal ceremonies were wedged between a disputed election in March and the expected announcement of poll results later this week. The arch-royalist junta that seized power in 2014 in a coup has claimed the popular vote, but a coalition of "pro-democracy" parties say they have a lower house majority. —AFP



BANGKOK: This framegrab handout released yesterday shows Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn and Queen Suthida appearing on the balcony of Suddhaisavarya Prasad Hall of the Grand Palace as they grant a public audience on the final day of his royal coronation. —AFP

News in brief

Chinese student alleges police abuse

BEIJING: A missing student labor activist has accused Chinese police of abusing him over several days, including by forcing him to listen to a three-hour speech by President Xi Jinping, amid a crackdown on campus activism. In a video and written testimony published after he disappeared last week, Peking University student Qiu Zhanxuan said local police "tormented" him over a five-day period late February. Intimidation tactics included a forced strip search and listening to Xi's marathon speech from the Communist Party's five-yearly congress in 2017 on high volume. "Dear comrades, friends, by the time you read this article, I am already behind bars and have lost my freedom," Qiu said. —AFP

Modi flies over cyclone-ravaged east

BHUBANESWAR: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi saw for himself the damage wreaked by a powerful cyclone yesterday, pledging an extra 10 billion rupees (\$144.19 million) to the hardest-hit state of Odisha where hundreds of thousands returned home from shelters. Cyclone Fani killed at least 34 people in India, destroying houses, ripping off roofs and knocking down electricity poles. Early warnings from meteorologists helped authorities evacuate more than a million people from low-lying towns, minimizing the death toll from the strongest storm in 43 years to pummel India's east coast. In a letter addressed to Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, pledged 1 million rupees (\$14,400) to Odisha. —AFP

Beijing slams US warship sail-by

BEIJING: China said two US warships sailed near disputed islands in the South China Sea without permission yesterday in the latest US challenge to Beijing's territorial claims in the region. The Chinese navy asked the US vessels to leave after they entered waters adjacent to Gaven and Chigua reefs in the Spratly Islands, which Beijing calls Nansha, the foreign ministry said. The move comes on top of trade tensions as President Donald Trump said Sunday he would raise tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods on Friday because talks were moving "too slowly". "The relevant actions of the US warships violated China's sovereignty and undermined peace, security and good order in the relevant sea areas," ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a press briefing. "The Chinese side expresses strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition" to the operation, Geng added, noting that the ships had entered "without permission". —AFP

Myanmar village in army lockdown 'running out of food'

YANGON: Villagers in Myanmar's conflict-hit Rakhine state said yesterday they are facing food shortages after being hemmed in for nearly a week by the military, which killed six people and continues to detain scores more in a crackdown against suspected rebels. Thousands of troops have been redeployed to Rakhine state where they are using heavy artillery against the Arakan Army (AA). The insurgents are fighting for more autonomy for ethnic Rakhine Buddhists in violence that has forced more than 30,000 people from their homes since December.

It is the latest unrest in an area riven by complex ethnic and religious divisions in the Buddhist-majority country. The same northern part of the state also witnessed the mili-

Brunei won't enforce gay sex death penalty

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN: Brunei's sultan has announced death by stoning for gay sex and adultery will not be enforced after a global backlash, but critics yesterday called for harsh laws to be abandoned entirely. In a speech late Sunday, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah said a moratorium on capital punishment that already applies to Brunei's regular criminal code would also extend to its new sharia code, which includes death by stoning for various crimes.

The code, which also punishes theft with the amputation of hands and feet, fully came into force last month in the small sultanate on Borneo island, making it the only country in East or Southeast Asia with sharia law at the national level. The move sparked anger from governments and rights groups, the United Nations slammed it as a "clear violation" of human rights while celebrities led by

actor George Clooney called for Brunei-owned hotels to be boycotted.

In a televised address, the all-powerful sultan made his first public comments about the furor and took the rare step of addressing criticism, saying there had been "many questions and misperceptions" regarding the sharia laws. "Both the common law and the sharia law aim to ensure peace and harmony of the country," he insisted, according to an official translation of his speech.

Some crimes in Muslim-majority Brunei including murder and drug-trafficking were already punishable with death by hanging under the regular criminal code - which is enforced alongside the sharia code - but no one has been executed for decades. Hassanal said that "we have practiced a de facto moratorium on the execution of death penalty for cases under the common law." "This will also be applied to cases under the (sharia penal code), which provides a wider scope for remission."

'Human rights monstrosity'

But rights groups said the announcement did not go far enough. "It really doesn't change anything," Matthew

Woolfe, founder of rights group The Brunei Project, told AFP. "This announcement does nothing to address the many other human rights concerns about the (sharia code)." The maximum punishment for gay sex between men under the sharia code is death by stoning, but perpetrators can also be sentenced to lengthy jail terms or caning.

Women convicted of having sexual relations with other women face up to 40 strokes of the cane or a maximum 10-year jail term. Whipping and jail terms, as well as severing of limbs for theft, under the new code were not affected by the sultan's announcement. It was not clear how far other sharia punishments would be enforced. The sultan also vowed in his speech that Brunei would ratify the United Nations convention against torture which it signed several years ago.

LGBT stigma still strong

While gay Bruneians were relieved the death penalty for homosexual sex would not be enforced, they said the law still encourages discrimination against LGBT people in the former British protectorate of about 400,000 people.

Guns outnumber guests at bombed Sri Lanka hotel

COLOMBO: At the Cinnamon Grand Colombo, one of six Sri Lankan targets hit by suicide bombers on Easter Sunday, the silence that reigns is not just the usual hush of a plush hotel. Recently reopened, barely 10 of its 500 luxury rooms are occupied - down from the 300 usual at this time of year - as fears rise over the impact of the bombings on the island nation's burgeoning tourism industry. On April 21, the Cinnamon was one of three hotels hit by jihadi bombers along with three churches in attacks claimed by the Islamic State group that left 257 people dead.

Around 9:10 am that day, Sri Lankan Inshaf Ibrahim, who had checked into the Cinnamon the day before, went to the breakfast buffet in the hotel's Taprobane restaurant. Then he set off the bomb in his backpack, killing twenty people. The bomber's brother Ilham Ibrahim died while attacking the Shangri-La hotel, also in Colombo. Now, to get into the marble-floored lobby of the Cinnamon, visitors must pass through two security

checks as a new X-ray machine scans bags. Armed soldiers outnumber guests.

At a bar inside that before was a popular drinking hole for Colombo's movers and shakers, Chaminda Perera, head of an agro-chemicals firm, is sipping red wine after returning for the first time. "It feels lonely when coming inside. We know that Cinnamon Grand is one of the best hotels in Colombo," he told AFP, the other seats and armchairs around him and his companion empty. "Usually in daytime it is very difficult to get a chair."

Bart van Dijk, a Dutchman working for an e-commerce company and who lives nearby, said that before the attacks the Cinnamon was so much more than a hotel. "In other countries, a hotel is just a place where people sleep for business or as a tourist," the 29-year-old told AFP. "Here you have 14 restaurants, you have a laundry service, a fitness service. It's almost an entire ecosystem that you walk into."

King's Cross

Posters inside the hotel exhort visitors to let the world know the Cinnamon is turning the page, including by using the #BackatCG hashtag on social media. "It was always so busy. The lobby was buzzing with people of all races, nationalities, people visiting for all purposes," recalled Rohan Karr, the Cinnamon's



COLOMBO: In this picture taken on May 1, 2019, Sri Lankan soldiers walk through the Cinnamon Grand Hotel lobby. —AFP

general manager. "It could be a wedding, dining, or it could be just to be seen and have a cup of coffee" he told AFP. "It was the King's Cross Station of Sri Lanka. Now it is..." he added, trying to find the right words, "but we'll get back, we'll get back to glory soon."

Many countries have advised their nationals to avoid Sri Lanka since the attacks shattered its image as a safe hol-

iday destination, 10 years after the end of a brutal civil war. The government expects visitor numbers to dive 30 percent this year and for Sri Lanka to need up to two years for the tourism sector to recover. The Cinnamon may take a while too. Four of its restaurants are open again, but the Taprobane, instead of breakfasting families, contains investigators from Interpol and the FBI. —AFP

Pakistan Ahmadis face growing discrimination

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ahmadi community faces growing institutional discrimination fanned by last year's election campaign by Prime Minister Imran Khan, the minority movement said in a report issued yesterday. Ahmadis, a group that originated in British-controlled India in the 19th century who see themselves as an Islamic movement, are regarded as heretical by orthodox Muslims and forbidden from calling themselves Muslims or using Islamic symbols in their religious practices.

They face discrimination and violence over accusations their faith insults Islam and community leaders say legislative moves in 2018 and anti-Ahmadi rhetoric during the elections have entrenched legalised hate. "Ahmadis have no religious freedoms in Pakistan and recent actions taken by the authori-

ties mean that the situation is going to deteriorate even further and make it impossible for Ahmadis to carry on with their everyday lives," spokesman Saleem ud Din said in a statement. Religious discrimination has long been a problem in Pakistan, a mainly Sunni Muslim state of more than 200 million people, with attacks against Shiites, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs in recent years. Ahmadis have faced particular pressure since a 1974 constitutional amendment which declared them non-Muslim and a ruling a decade later by military ruler General Zia ul Haq explicitly forbidding them from calling themselves Muslim. Two major events underlined in the report are a High Court verdict requiring citizens to declare their religion when applying for identity documents, which rights activists said specifically targeted the Ahmadi community.

The other was electioneering by Pakistan's main parties, including the prime minister's party, in which they have supported religious laws and anti-Ahmadi groups to curry favor with the religious right. The Ahmadi community, in a statement on the report, accused Khan of fanning "the flames of religious hatred against Ahmadis". Khan's office did not respond to request for comment. —Reuters

Analysis

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From Kobani to Kirkuk: Kurdish struggle for their rights and land

A century after their hopes of statehood were thwarted, Kurds in the Middle East are still hampered by regional hostility. Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran have large Kurdish minorities seeking varying degrees of autonomy from central governments after decades of repression. This is an overview of their status.

History

The Kurdish ethnic minority, mainly Sunni Muslims, speaks a language related to Farsi and lives mostly in a mountainous region straddling the borders of Armenia, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. Kurdish nationalism stirred in the 1890s when the Ottoman Empire was on its last legs. The 1920 Treaty of Sevres, which imposed a settlement and colonial carve-up of Turkey after World War One, promised them independence. Three years later, Turkish leader Kemal Ataturk tore up that accord. The Treaty of Lausanne, ratified in 1924, divided the Kurds among the new nations of the Middle East.

Syria

Before Syria's popular uprising erupted in 2011, Kurds formed 8-10 percent of the population. The Baathist state, championing Arab nationalism, had deprived thousands of Kurds of citizenship rights, banned their language and clamped down on Kurdish political activity. During the war, President Bashar al-Assad focused on crushing mainly Sunni Arab rebels with the help of Russia and Iran, turning a blind eye as Kurdish fighters carved out self-rule across the north and east. Kurdish forces have emerged among the biggest winners, controlling about a quarter of the country—territory rich in oil, water and farmland. It is the biggest chunk of Syria not in state hands, now with its own forces and bureaucracy.

Assad has said he will recover the northeast but the two sides have kept some channels open. The Kurdish YPG militia's power grew after joining forces with US troops to seize territory from Islamic State. While the US deployment provided a security umbrella that helped Kurdish influence expand, Washington opposes the autonomy plans. Their fate will rely heavily on how long the US ally stays. Syrian Kurdish leaders say they do not seek partition but rather regional autonomy as part of Syria. They also fear an offensive from Turkey which deems the YPG a threat along its border.

Turkey

Kurds form about 20 percent of the population. The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) took up arms against the state in 1984 waging an insurgency for autonomy in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast. Since then, more than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict. PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured in 1999, tried and sentenced to death. That was later reduced to life in prison after Turkey abolished the death penalty.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has removed restrictions on using the Kurdish language. The government held talks with Ocalan, who is in jail on an island near Istanbul, in 2012, though the conflict has sputtered on. The United States, the European Union and Turkey classify the PKK as a terrorist organization. Turkey's military has often struck targets in Iraq's Kurdish region near the PKK's stronghold in the Qandil mountains. Erdogan has said he will crush Syria's YPG, which Ankara sees as a branch of the PKK, and has sent troops into northern Syria to mount offensives rolling back the Kurdish fighters.

Iraq

Kurds form 15-20 percent of the population, mainly inhabiting the three northern provinces of Iraqi Kurdistan. Late President Saddam Hussein's rule targeted Iraqi Kurds in the late 1980s when chemical gas was used, villages were razed and thousands of Kurds were forced into camps. Their region has been semi-autonomous since 1991, has its own regional government and armed forces, but still relies on the Baghdad central government for its budget.

When Islamic State militants swept through much of northern Iraq in 2014, Kurdish fighters exploited the collapse of central authority to take control of Kirkuk, the oil city they regard as their ancient regional capital, as well as other territory disputed by Baghdad and the Kurdish north.

Iraqi government forces and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, with US backing, defeated Islamic State which had overrun swathes of northern Iraq. Iraq's Kurds held a referendum on independence in September 2017, which backfired and triggered a regional crisis in the face of opposition from Baghdad and regional powers. The vote prompted military and economic retaliation from Baghdad, which retook the territory seized by Kurdish forces since 2014. Ties have since improved, but tensions remain over oil exports and revenue-sharing. —Reuters

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Supporters of the opposition party Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) hold a mock coffin bearing the face of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) President Cyril Ramaphosa during EFF final election rally at Orlando Stadium in Soweto, ahead of general elections. —AFP

S Africa: Struggling 25 years after apartheid

Twenty-five years after the end of white-minority rule, South Africa remains one of the most unequal countries in the world and is held back by corruption and crime. Ahead of May 8 elections in which the African National Congress (ANC) is seeking to retain power, here is some background:

Decades of apartheid

The radical race-based system of apartheid that favored the white minority over the black majority became official government policy in 1948. It governed all aspects of life, restricting non-whites to unskilled jobs and inferior education, services and living conditions. Whites controlled politics, the economy and the land. The system was dismantled nearly five decades later, after a long and bitter struggle, its demise sealed by the April 1994 elections in which blacks were able to vote for the first time.

Mandela

Then ANC leader Nelson Mandela, who was jailed for 27 years for his efforts to overthrow apartheid, became South Africa's first black president in 1994. His release in 1990 heralded the transition to democracy for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize with the last white president, FW de Klerk. Mandela committed to only one term, stepping

down in 1999. Internationally respected as an icon of reconciliation, his death in 2013 was met with an outpouring of emotion worldwide. Later, in-fighting and graft scandals within the ANC peaked in 2018 when Jacob Zuma was forced to step down as president.

'Rainbow Nation' tarnished

The optimism of the post-apartheid "Rainbow Nation" has waned amid widespread complaints of weak governance, poor delivery of public services, corruption and crime. The number of regular houses, as opposed to makeshift shacks, increased by a quarter since 1996, as did access to electricity (61 percent), according to a Centre for Risk Analysis survey in 2019. But some 20 percent of black households are classed as living in extreme poverty compared to 2.9 percent of white households, the Institute of Race Relations says. With a population of 56.7 million (2017), the country still has "one of the highest inequality rates in the world," the World Bank says. Most of South Africa's arable land, meanwhile, remains in the hands of white farmers.

Economic woes

The second-strongest economy in Africa behind Nigeria, South Africa is the world's top producer of plat-

inum and a leading supplier of gold, diamonds and other minerals. However, mining has shed about 300,000 jobs, now only making up about seven percent of gross domestic product from a peak of about 20 percent in the 1980s. Having seen sharp gains from 1994 to 2006 with annual growth above five percent, the economy crashed in 2008 at the height of the global financial crisis. Growth was just 0.8 percent in 2018 and is projected to be 1.3 percent for 2019, the World Bank says. Official unemployment is at 27.1 percent, reaching 53 percent for people aged under 35 - among the highest in the world.

Sunny SA

With unspoiled beaches, vineyards and animal reserves, the country was the continent's leading tourist destination behind Morocco in 2017, according to the UN's tourism authority. There were more than 10 million visitors in 2017, and the sector contributed 10 percent to the economy. The country hosted Africa's first World Cup in 2006 and is also the sole nation on the continent to allow gay marriage. But crime remains persistently high, the murder rate rising in 2017 to about 57 a day. South Africa also has the biggest HIV/AIDS epidemic in the world, with 7.1 million people living with HIV, the UN says. —AFP

Dogs well positioned in US presidential race

It's impossible to say who will take on Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election, but if he is defeated by a Democrat, it's likely that a dog will return to the White House after a multi-year absence. Whether named Maple, Bailey, Champ or Skye, a dog appears to be a must-have accessory for Democratic candidates seeking to take on Trump, who stands out from his predecessors for, among other reasons, not having a pet.

From the third minute of the speech launching his campaign on April 14, Democratic phenomenon Pete Buttigieg, the mayor of the city of South Bend in the state of Indiana, brought his two dogs to the fore. "I grew up in South Bend, in the same neighborhood where Chasten (his husband) and I live today, with our two dogs, Buddy and Truman," Buttigieg said. The couple's two dogs have their own Twitter account with nearly 70,000 followers.

Canine photo line

Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts also placed her golden retriever front and center in her bid for America's highest office, putting the dog on the same footing as her husband. "Today, I thought I'd bring the two guys in my life: Bruce and Bailey. If anyone wants to stay around and take a picture, I'll be here and we can do that, and Bailey will be out there with his own separate photo line," she said to delighted cheers from supporters.

Photos and videos show her bathing Bailey or taking selfies with the pooch. Another Democratic hopeful, Beto O'Rourke, has two dogs, Artemis and Rosie, who are the stars of many family photos. Among others vying for the presidency, Representative Tim Ryan of Ohio is accompanied by Bear and Buckeye, dogs he has referred to as "two of the best friends our family could have asked for." Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York bombarded her supporters with images of Maple, her goldendoodle, a cross between a golden retriever and a poodle.

National Dogs in Politics Day

Former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper has a dog named Skye, which he featured in a video on Instagram in which he spoke with his arm around the pooch. "Hi, I'm John Hickenlooper. This is my faithful dog Skye and I'm running for president," he said. In a country where people celebrate "National Dogs in Politics Day," man's best friend sometimes plays a decisive role.

Accused of receiving illegal campaign contributions, California senator Richard Nixon defended himself in a television and radio address before 60 million Americans on September 23, 1952. He assured them that he had accepted only a single gift—a dog for his children named Checkers. Thus managing to strike an emotional chord with the country, Nixon saved his candidacy, and the "Checkers Speech" went down in history. On the other hand, any failure can be expensive in the politico-canine era. During elections in 2008 and 2012, Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney was reproached for a dark episode dating from 1983.

In June of that year, the Romney family traveled over 600 miles (1,000 kilometers) from



In this file photo, Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), husband Bruce Mann and their dog Bailey take the stage before Warren addresses an "Organizing Event" as part of her exploratory presidential committee at Manchester Community College in Manchester, NH. —AFP

Massachusetts to Canada, with their Irish setter strapped onto the roof rack. Despite the installation of a windshield aimed at protecting Seamus, the dog suffered diarrhea. Returning to the 2020 race, of all the dogs in the running, Major and Champ are in the lead, with their master former vice president Joe Biden the current Democratic frontrunner.

The Biden couple's dogs could then potentially succeed Bo and Sunny—the Obama family's

Portuguese water dogs—in the White House. Before Barack Obama, presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton all had dogs. Both generations of Bush presidential families also had dogs: Barney and Miss Beazley, George W Bush's Scottish terriers, even had a website, Barney.gov. Sully, George HW Bush's Labrador service dog, accompanied the former president's casket to Washington, where his funeral was held in December. —AFP

South Africa's Ramaphosa faces obstacles to reform

Even with a decisive election victory for South Africa's ruling party this week, the country's President Cyril Ramaphosa could still struggle to push through the tough reforms needed to galvanize Africa's most developed economy, say analysts and some party insiders. The former union leader turned business tycoon has promised to introduce major economic reforms and extend a crackdown on corruption if his African National Congress (ANC) party is returned to power in Wednesday's national election.

Ramaphosa's allies say a result close to 60 percent in this week's parliamentary vote, which some opinion polls suggest could be possible, would strengthen his hand to deliver on those pledges. But some analysts and ANC party insiders are sceptical that Ramaphosa would make much progress with

reforms, even with a clear election victory. They cite his tenuous grip over the party's decision-making bodies, where former comrades in the struggle against the brutal apartheid regime are at each other's throats in a high-stakes battle for power and wealth.

"Ramaphosa needs a united ANC to achieve his agenda, but he doesn't have that," said a veteran ANC politician who did not wish to be identified discussing internal rivalries. "His enemies are going nowhere," Ralph Mathekgga, a political analyst and author of a book on Ramaphosa, echoed the view. "There's a herd mentality that if Ramaphosa gets a strong majority for the ANC, it will somehow strengthen him. That's not the case," he said.

Ramaphosa disputes that his hands will be tied if he is returned to power. At a campaign event last week in Johannesburg he said there would be a "step-change" in the pace of reform and that the economy was ready for lift off. "Our government is now going to open up the valves of our economy and give our people an opportunity," he said. Ramaphosa became leader of the ANC in December 2017 after narrowly defeating a faction allied with his scandal-plagued predecessor Jacob Zuma. This will be Ramaphosa's first national election since taking over as head of state in February 2018, after roughly four years as Zuma's deputy.

The president is under pressure to address gaping racial disparities in income and wealth that persist 25 years after the end of white minority rule. He also wants to reverse a slide in support for the ANC, which has governed South Africa since 1994 but in recent years has lost support in major cities like the financial and political capitals of Johannesburg and Pretoria.

In the 15 months since he took office, Ramaphosa has been forced into uneasy compromises in key policy areas like land reform and fixing struggling state power firm Eskom, opposition politicians say. Ramaphosa has vowed to accelerate the redistribution of land to the black majority, endorsing an opposition bill to amend the constitution to make expropriation without compensation easier.

But he also has offered assurances that investments and food security would not be threatened. In doing so, he satisfied neither radical left-wing nor business-friendly factions within his governing alliance and the opposition. On Eskom, the president has promised trade unions that there will be no layoffs as part of a turnaround plan, even though company management and energy experts say the utility's bloated workforce is one of its biggest problems.

Getting land reform right and repairing Eskom will be critical to restoring investor

confidence in an economy where growth has slowed to a trickle due to a toxic mix of corruption scandals and regulatory upheaval during Zuma's tenure. "If you see progress in the clean-up of state-owned enterprises like Eskom that would mean that big headache that investors have would fade away," said Tilmann Kolb, analyst at the financial services firm UBS Global Wealth Management.

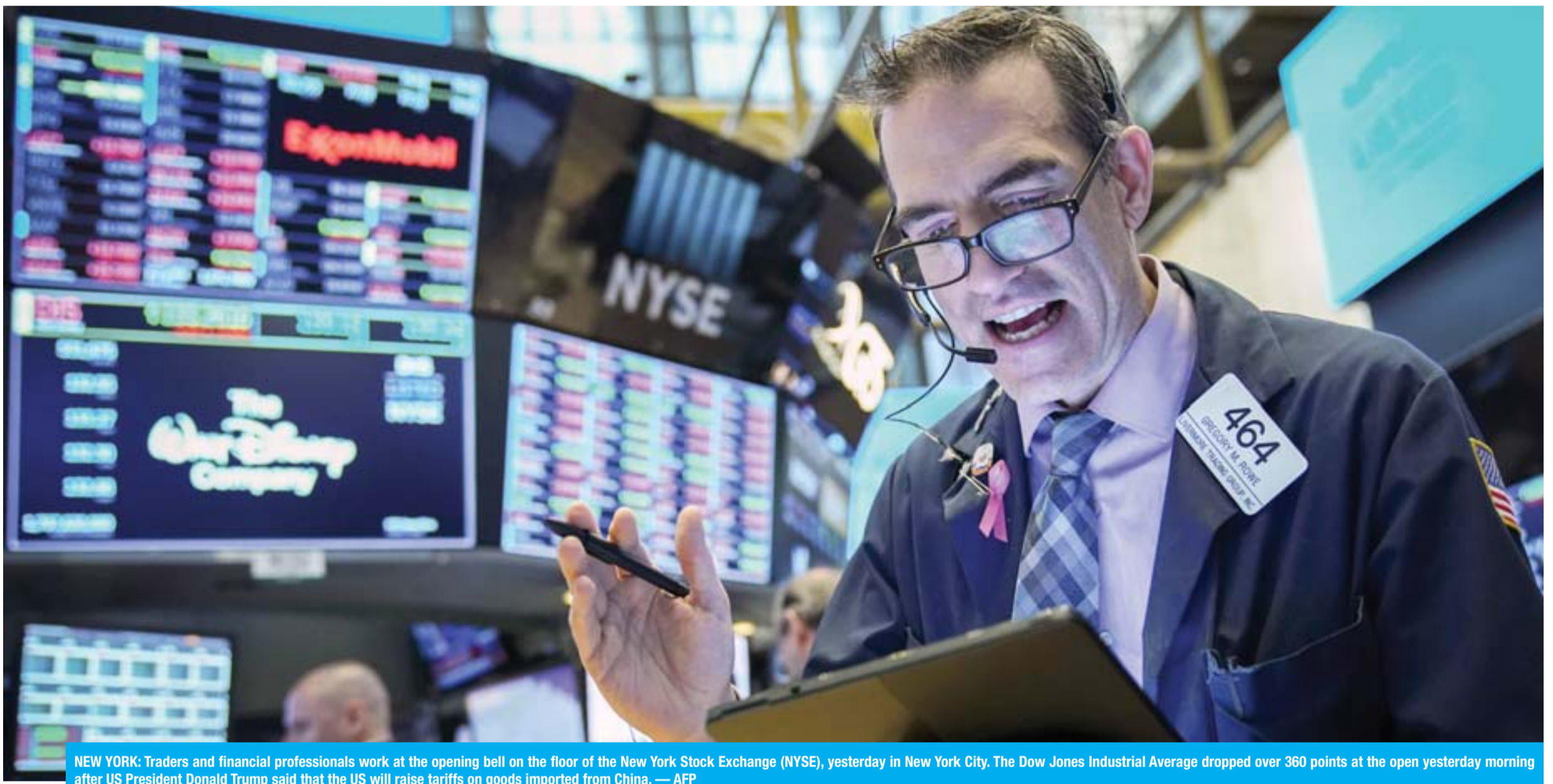
ANC opponents

A key challenge for the president is the opposition he faces within his own party, sources in the ANC say. A close Zuma ally, Ace Magashule, is in charge of the day-to-day running of the party. And, while some senior party figures previously aligned with Zuma have shifted their support to Ramaphosa, he still has to spend time managing opponents within the ANC, sources say.

The ANC's list of parliamentary candidates contains many hardliners who are opposed to Ramaphosa's reformist agenda and could frustrate his initiatives in parliament. Ramaphosa has to choose all but two members of his next cabinet from his party's parliamentary caucus. While analysts expect him to appoint close confidants to key posts like finance minister and foreign minister, he may have to hand lesser posts to opponents he wishes to bring inside. —Reuters

Business

TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2019

12 Strong oil prices help GCC markets post very solid overall performance**13** Lebanese CB workers strike over proposed budget cuts**14** National Aviation Services launches its new Pearl Lounge at Jazeera Terminal

NEW YORK: Traders and financial professionals work at the opening bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), yesterday in New York City. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped over 360 points at the open yesterday morning after US President Donald Trump said that the US will raise tariffs on goods imported from China. — AFP

Trump vows to raise China trade tariffs

Beijing trade delegation plans US visit despite new tension

BEIJING/WASHINGTON: A delegation was still preparing to go to the United States for trade talks, even as US President Donald Trump dramatically increased pressure on Beijing to reach a deal, saying he would hike tariffs on Chinese goods this week, said China yesterday. Trump's comments on Sunday marked a major escalation in tensions between the world's two largest economies, and a shift in tone from the president, who as recently as Friday had cited progress toward a deal. Stock markets sank and oil prices tumbled on his remarks, as negotiations to end the months-long trade war were thrown into doubt.

"We are also in the process of understanding the relevant situation. What I can tell you is that China's team is preparing to go to the United States for the discussions," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a news briefing. But Geng did not say if Vice Premier Liu He, who is China's lead official in the negotiations, will be part of the delegation as originally planned. Negotiations are set to start on May 8 in Washington. "What is of vital importance is that we still hope the United States can work hard with China to meet each other half way, and strive to reach a mutually beneficial, win-win agreement on the basis of mutual respect," Geng said.

The Wall Street Journal reported earlier that China was considering cancelling this week's meetings in Washington in light of Trump's comments, which took Chinese officials by surprise. Trump appeared to

defend his decision in a tweet early yesterday, slamming the US-China trade deficit and vowing not to lose out to Beijing. A less-than-rosy update from US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, including details that China was pulling back from some previous commitments, prompted Trump's weekend decision.

"The Trade Deal with China continues, but too slowly, as they attempt to renegotiate. No!" Trump said in a tweet. Trump said tariffs on \$200 billion of goods would increase on Friday to 25 percent from 10 percent, reversing a decision he made in February to keep them at 10 percent due to progress between the two sides. The president also said he would target a further \$325 billion of Chinese goods with 25 percent tariffs "shortly," essentially covering all products imported to the United States from China.

Atmosphere has changed

US officials did not weigh in on whether they expected talks to go ahead this week. The White House and the US Trade Representative's Office declined to comment. China's commerce ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. "The atmosphere of the negotiations has changed," said a Chinese official with knowledge of the situation. Whether and how the talks proceed are being re-evaluated, the official told Reuters on condition of anonymity. "All that depends on the attitude of the United States," the official said.

Chinese news outlets have been told not to independently report on Trump's tweets, and instead adhere to any report from the official Xinhua news agency, said a source with direct knowledge of the matter. Global financial markets, which had been expecting news of a trade deal soon, went into a tailspin. U.S. equity futures fell more than 2 percent and stocks across trade-reliant Asia tumbled. China's main indexes slid 5 percent. "There is still a question of whether this is one of the famous Trump negotiation tactics, or are we really going to see some drastic increase in tariffs," said Nick Twidale, Sydney-based analyst at Rakuten Securities Australia. "If it's the latter, we'll see massive downside pressure across all markets."

Mindful of his 2020 re-election bid, Trump had also suggested the duties were not leading to price increases for US consumers. "The Tariffs paid to the USA have had little impact on product cost, mostly borne by China," he tweeted. Tariffs on Chinese goods are actually paid to the United States by companies that import the goods, and most of those companies are US-based. American businesses, while supportive of Trump's crackdown on China's trade practices, are eager for the tariffs to be removed, not expanded. "Raising tariffs means raising taxes on millions of American families and inviting further retaliation on American farmers," said Christin Fernandez, a spokeswoman for the Retail Industry Leaders Association.

Nevertheless, the president's aggressive strategy drew rare bipartisan support from US Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, who urged Trump to "hang tough" in a tweet: "Don't back down. Strength is the only way to win with China." One Chinese trade expert said recent signs of resilience in both economies were breeding over-confidence. "The urgency is gone. So, it's likely to see a longer trade war," the expert said, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the topic. The trade war resulted in billions of dollars in losses for both sides in 2018, hitting autos, technology and above all, agriculture, while inflicting collateral damage on export-reliant economies and companies from Japan to Germany.

On Friday, Trump said talks with China were going well. Last week, industry sources said they believed the talks were in the end game, but a Trump administration official said aides had told the president that significant hurdles remained. The increase in US tariffs on Friday would be the first since Trump imposed 10 percent tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods in September, coming on top of 25 percent tariffs on \$50 billion of goods enacted earlier last year. Negotiations about tariffs have been one of the remaining sticking points between the two sides. China wants the tariffs to be removed, while Trump wants to keep some, if not all, as part of any final deal to ensure China lives up to its commitments, a White House official said on Sunday.—Reuters

VIVA acquires Qualitynet for KD 28.3 million

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced that it has acquired 100 percent of the share capital of the Internet Service Provider Quality Net General Trading and Contracting Company (Qualitynet) in Kuwait for a total value of KD 28.3 million.

On this occasion, Dr Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman, Chairman of VIVA, said: "I am pleased to welcome Qualitynet team joining VIVA family, and I believe it's an important moment for both organizations to expand the

strength of our practice and share expertise. The acquisition allows VIVA to capture the growth potential in the business market and enable the great talented people of VIVA and Qualitynet for the journey towards fully integrated products and services and innovative solutions. As well, we will delight both customers and enterprises and are committed to exceed their expectations. VIVA acquired the entire share capital of Qualitynet for a total value of KD 28.3 million, 90 percent from Batelco Group and 10 percent from National Bank of Kuwait, and conclude the acquisition process, which started mid of 2018." He added: "I would like to take the opportunity to recognize the vital role of The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) in Kuwait for its continued support towards the telecom sector, enabling Kuwait to make its mark as one of the most developed and

advanced countries in the telecom industry, and aiming to support the vision of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for Kuwait 2035, in positioning Kuwait as a major financial and commercial hub in the region."

On his part, Eng Maziad Nasser Al-Harbi, CEO of VIVA said: "This is a major milestone for VIVA showing strong commitment to enhance our customers' lives. This acquisition will be reflected positively and significantly on both customers and they will benefit from this outstanding transaction, as VIVA and Qualitynet are planning to enhance their service offerings and bring future-ready products and services at exceptional quality to the Kuwaiti market". He added: "We will strive to provide the best cutting-edge customer experience across both companies and boost both VIVA's and Qualitynet's growth profiles. The acquisition of Qualitynet is a



Dr Mahmoud Ahmed Abdulrahman



Maziad Al-Harbi

corner stone for us to successfully implement our strategy to grow in the enterprise segment. It will enable us to offer unique products and services to the Kuwaiti corporate customers bringing it to the equal of interna-

tional standards. At the same time, individual customers will benefit with diversified and enhanced service offerings tailored to solve their ever changing communication needs - at home and on the go."

Business

Lebanese CB workers strike over proposed budget cuts

Beirut Stock Exchange suspends trading until further notice

BEIRUT: Lebanese central bank employees went on strike yesterday over state budget proposals that would cut their benefits but said they may be ready to take a decision to "relieve" pressures caused by the move. The strike led the Beirut Stock Exchange to suspend trading until further notice because the clearance and settlement process for transactions could not be done on time, it said in a statement.

Saddled with one of the heaviest public debt burdens in the world, the Lebanese government is debating a draft budget for 2019 that the prime minister has said may be the most austere in the country's history. Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri warned in a statement earlier of "legal consequences" for strikers who jeopardized work at state institutions.

A decision on the central bank workers' next step would be taken at their general assembly meeting today, Abbas Awada, head of their syndicate, said in an interview with the broadcaster al-Jadeed.

He said there had been negative effects from the move and pressure "on the market, on the governor of the central bank, and on all Lebanese". "A positive decision" may be taken to "facilitate matters", he said, but added that if the government approved the budget without addressing their concerns "we will proceed in an open strike". Central

bank governor Riad Salameh convened a meeting with central bank employees where it was agreed to open Lebanese pound pricing operations against foreign currencies and to reopen financial transfers, the state-run National News Agency reported. The pound is pegged against the US dollar.

Salameh opposed the strike action and had asked for it to be lifted, Awada said. Marwan Mikhael, chief economist of Lebanese investment bank Blominvest, said banks retain access to liquidity through the interbank market, but cheque clearing operations had stopped.

"It will have an impact eventually, but I think for the short term it will be fine," he said.

Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil has said the draft budget involves "wide reductions" in spending based on the need for "exceptional austerity measures". The draft budget proposals include annulling performance-linked bonuses paid in some state-run institutions, including the Central Bank. In some cases, these have amounted to several months extra salary a year.

Government officials from Lebanon's rival political parties have all stressed the need to enact immediate reforms to prevent an economic crisis. Lebanon's public debt burden is one of the highest in the world, equivalent to about 150 percent of gross domestic product. — Reuters



BEIRUT: In this file photo, a man heads to the Lebanese central bank, in Beirut.

China gives modest boost to economy with RRR cut amid renewed tensions

BEIJING: China's central bank said yesterday it will cut reserve requirement ratios (RRRs) to release about 280 billion yuan (\$41 billion) for some small and medium-sized banks, in a targeted move to help companies struggling amid an economic slowdown. The cut in the amount of cash that banks must hold as reserves would be the smallest since January 2018, when the People's Bank of China (PBOC) started its latest round of policy easing to support the world's second-largest economy. The cut, while widely expected at some point, was announced right before China's stock market

opened, and just hours after US President Donald Trump sharply escalated trade tensions between the world's two largest economies.

The PBOC said in a statement that the reduction will come into effect on May 15. The funds will be used for loans to small and private companies. The central bank said it will cut the RRR for about 1,000 rural commercial banks operating in counties to 8 percent, equal to the RRR for smaller rural credit cooperatives. The move will help lower funding costs for small and micro firms, the PBOC said. Small and medium-sized banks currently have RRRs ranging from 10 percent to 11.5 percent. The PBOC has already delivered five RRR cuts since early 2018, lowering the ratio to 13.5 percent for big banks and 11.5 percent for small-to medium-sized lenders.

The central bank pumped out 3.35 trillion yuan in net liquidity through the five reserve cuts, according to Reuters' calculations based on PBOC data and analyst estimates. Analysts believe PBOC has less room to ease policy after it cut RRRs and interest rates aggres-

sively during the global financial crisis, and delivered more cuts in 2012 and 2015 - a year marked by a stock market crash and a slide in the yuan. The government, which is relying more on increased infrastructure spending and tax cuts to support economic growth this year, has repeated said it will not resort to "flood-like" stimulus.

Intriguing timing

Previous policy announcements usually fell on non-trading times after the market closed, analysts from Citic Securities noted, making the timing of this announcement intriguing. Just hours earlier, Trump issued a series of tweets in which he complained that trade talks with China were proceeding "too slowly", and that he would raise tariffs on \$200 billion of goods to 25 percent on Friday from 10 percent. His comments upended markets that had been enjoying a period of calm thanks to signs of robust growth in China and the United States, and from previous comments from Trump and other senior US officials that trade

talks were going well. Some analysts believed the PBOC was seeking to reassure investors unnerved by Trump's latest comments. "I think it is a move to calm the market, to offset the impact from the trade talks, telling you that 'I can give some stimulus during the most difficult times, but I will not give too much'," said Zhou Hao, analyst at Commerzbank in Singapore, adding that the PBOC's targeted cut showed Beijing's resolve to keep its debt level in check. Despite the policy boost, China's major stock indexes still extended heavy losses. The blue-chip CSI300 index and the Shanghai Composite Index both tumbled more than 5 percent, posting their steepest single-day drop since February 2016. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index slumped more than 3 percent.

China's currency, the yuan, dropped to as low as 6.7994 per dollar, its weakest level in 3-1/2 months, while the offshore yuan fell as much as 1.3 percent. "Beijing has been sounding less dovish over the past two weeks. We believe a worsening of the trade conflict between the US and China will evoke another

dovish turn by Beijing, especially on its monetary easing stance," Ting Lu, chief China economist at Nomura in Hong Kong, wrote in a note. Economists had expected further targeted cuts on the RRR this year as Beijing seeks to underpin growth. The State Council, or cabinet, said on April 17 that a policy framework would be set up to implement relatively low RRRs for small- and medium-sized banks.

The PBOC is likely to cut RRRs for small banks to encourage more lending to small and private firms - which are vital for economic growth and job creation - policy insiders told Reuters previously, who penciled in at least one such "targeted" RRR cut this year. China's Vice Premier Liu He, who was scheduled to meet US officials in Washington for further trade talks this week, is "very unlikely" to go after Trump's tariff "threat", editor-in-chief of China's Global Times newspaper said yesterday. China's foreign ministry said yesterday a Chinese delegation is preparing to go to the United States for trade talks, although it did not say if Vice Premier Liu would be part of the delegation. — Reuters



Burgan Bank Group wishes you a blessed Ramadan. May this holy month bring you good health, happiness and prosperity.

Burgan Bank branch timings during Ramadan:

All branches: 10:00am - 1:30pm

The airport branch will be serving our customers 24 hours, seven days a week with a break time from 2:30 pm till 9:30 pm.

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Business

National Aviation Services launches its new Pearl Lounge at Jazeera Terminal

Pearl Lounge welcomes Jazeera Airways business class passengers

KUWAIT: National Aviation Services (NAS), the fastest growing aviation services provider in the emerging markets, yesterday launched its new Pearl Lounge at the Jazeera Terminal (T5). The 110 square meter departure lounge currently caters to all business class passengers flying Jazeera Airways. Based on NAS's award winning lounge concept, the new T5 Pearl Lounge offers departing passengers a relaxed environment to unwind before their flight. The lounge provides hot and cold menu options, a smoking room and hospitality facilities to ensure their ultimate comfort. Free Wi-Fi live streaming TV channels and a selection of reading material ensures a wide array of entertainment options. Business counter facilities also help passengers to catch up on any last-minute work.

Mansour Al-Khezim, General Manager of NAS Kuwait said "NAS has been working with Jazeera Airways for the last 14 years and we are extremely pleased to offer the airline our best in class lounge services at T5. As a Kuwait based company, it is our top most priority to ensure that we offer world-class facilities and services to the airports in the country. This includes investments in infrastructure, resources and training as well as providing operational expertise, state of the art technology solutions and industry benchmarked services. The new Pearl Lounge is a part of our continued efforts and we would like to thank Jazeera Airways and the Kuwait Directorate General of

Civil Aviation for their ongoing support and cooperation." The Pearl Lounge in T5 is one of five lounges operated by NAS Kuwait, under the supervision of the Kuwait Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). NAS also offers Pearl Assist, Meet and Assist services (Hala Kuwait) at T5.

The company has a presence in 17 countries across the Middle East, Asia and Africa; operating 40 airport lounges, and providing ground handling services to seven out of the world's top ten airlines.

NAS is the fastest growing aviation services provider in the emerging markets. Established in 2003, NAS quickly transformed from a Kuwait based ground handling company into an emerging markets leader in the industry. NAS is present in over 30 airports across the Middle East, Africa and Asia, handling seven of the world's top 10 airlines and managing more than 40 airport lounges.

With an employee base of over 8,000 capable and experienced employees at the core of its worldwide network, NAS is committed to providing aviation services that benchmark to the best in the world.

The NAS portfolio of services includes ramp and passenger services, cargo management, engineering and line maintenance, airport technologies, fixed base operations, terminal management, aviation training, travel solutions, lounge management and meet-and-assist packages.



KUWAIT: Mansour Al-Khezim (NAS) and Rohit Ramachandran (Jazeera) open the new Pearl Lounge at T5

Al Mulla Automobiles delivers first batch Mercedes-Benz trucks Arab Contractors Company

KUWAIT: Al Mulla Automobiles, the authorized Mercedes-Benz distributor in Kuwait, has announced the delivery of the first batch of Mercedes-Benz heavy-duty trucks ACTROS to the Arab Contractors Company, one of the leading construction companies in the Middle East and Africa.

During the first batch of Mercedes-Benz trucks handing over ceremony, Ralph Geyer, General Manager, Commercial Vehicles Division at Al Mulla Automobiles stated: "We are very pleased to cooperate with the Arab Contractors Company, we have worked closely with them to identify their vehicle needs and best suitable design specifications to deliver the first batch of trucks on time and accordingly we have provided a range of vehicles that fully meet the company's needs."

He further added: "We hope that the Mercedes-Benz ACTROS will contribute to the implementation of the company's plans and achieve its strategic objectives and we wish the Company further success and growth in Kuwait and the region." He also com-



mented that the ACTROS trucks exceed the expectations of corporate customers as the innovative design gives the truck the ability to transport large quantities of building and contracting materials, thus enhancing the fleet's efficiency and increase profitability.

It is worth noting, that the Powershift, which has a strong performance and longevity, offers tremendous power to operate in different operating conditions. Form his side Eng. Essam Jahin, equipment manager at Arab Contractors Company stated: "The new Mercedes-Benz trucks will add value to the company and we look for-

ward to continue working with the Commercial Vehicles department at Mulla Automobiles.

He also added: "We are confident that these trucks are in line with the company's mission, which is committed to provide a high level of services and products according to quality standards, in accordance with our goal to satisfy our customers and in line with our objectives to be the leading company in the region in the contracting sector, in addition to being one of the largest construction companies in the Middle East and Africa in the field of building and construction."



Mazda's 1,000,000 offer during Ramadan

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Company, Kaico Al Shaya & Al Sagar, the authorized distributors of Mazda vehicles in Kuwait, has launched its largest and most recent offer for 2019, in the occasion of Ramadan with competitive packages and gifts for clients choosing to purchase any of the new 2019 models during the offer period.

The offer is rewarded to customers and fans of Mazda cars to grant the opportunity of owning any of the 100 percent Japanese brand. Beside the competitive prices, Mazda customers will receive a gift of up to 1,000,000 Japanese yen based on the model of the car they have purchased.

To achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction, Mazda owners will choose a service package, third party insurance and free car registration, based on the model of the car, to ensure the best service levels provided to them.

The decision to buy a Mazda car with this offer is certainly the best, as it includes the 7-seater family SUV, the CX9 which sets a new level of luxury amongst its class. Not to mention that it is considered one of the best-selling SUVs. In this occasion Ashish Tandon, general manager of Kaico, stated, "This year we are celebrating 50 years of partnership with Mazda, we shared their success and development alongside the years which resulted in the opening of the first Mazda boutique in the GCC region. And as an authorized distributor, we will continue to present clients with the best sales and after sales packages."

As well Nader Salmeh, senior divisional manager-vehicles, added, "we believe that every family should own a Mazda CX9 for the comfort, safety and technology it pro-

vides. And here at Kaico, we make it easily possible with the 1,000,000 offer we present throughout the holy month of Ramadan."

Kaico, Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar offers numerous after sales service in their fully equipped service centers with all the modern equipment and systems for maintenance, with a highly qualified and trained technical team. The company also provides roadside assistance service throughout the week.

CX9 2019...The advanced level of luxury

The CX9 turbo-charged engine incorporates the exclusive SKYACTIV technology for Mazda cars, which gives you a relaxed feeling yet powerful torque of a 4.0 liter V-8, as well as a best-in-class fuel economy. The six-speed automatic transmission combines the smooth operation of a conventional automatic with the fast shifting of a twin-clutch gearbox.

Innovation in structure, construction and materials make CX9 lighter, safer and more rigid. To deliver satisfying Jinba-ittai driving, CX9 features MacPherson struts at the front and a multi-link layout at the rear specially turned to the requirements of an SUV of this size. The CX9 excels in an integrated connection between you and the car and real-time communication with the world when you are on the road. All with the help of the advanced HMI interface from Mazda and the MZD CONNECT internet connectivity when on the road.

CX9 is the first Mazda with a full-color head-up display projected on the windscreen. This Active Driving Display shows key driving and navigation system information just above the instrument cluster to keep you fully informed without the need to take your eyes off the road. The purity and simplicity of Japanese aesthetics come to breathtaking life in this premium expression of the KODO design language. Proportions are highlighted by the sleek cabin, a strong and stable lower body featuring large 20-inch wheels, and a confident well-panted stance. While LED headlights and taillights are graced with an intricate design to give a chic, premium look.

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 28th April 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 21st April until 25th April 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:

Jawad Jassim Mohammad Ali
Mansour Redha Hajji Hussain
Yasin Mohammad Hassan Alhawaj
Khalifa Mohammad Ibrahim Albaloushi

Hussain Farhan Qatami Farhan

Gulf Bank's second Al-Danah quarterly draw for the prize of KD 250,000 will be held on 26 June 2019, and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 will be held on 25 September 2019. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event.

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

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws



through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2019 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.

The Al-Danah draws are all approved by and held in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce. Furthermore, Gulf Bank has partnered with Ernst and Young Kuwait (EY) with reference to "Al-Danah Prize Draw" system in order to assist in assessing processes, technical controls considering relevant parameters and provide recommendations in-line with industry leading practices. The study was conducted in line with industry standards and control requirements relevant to similar prize draw schemes wherein, a detailed review of prize draw management system along with draw scheme parameters, data extraction for draw, filtration of customers as per defined business criteria and necessary system interactions was conducted to advise on any potential areas of improvements.

prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Abdulrazzaq Abdullah Mohammad Maarafi
2. Sadeeqah Mohammad Hasan Alansari
3. Fadel Abbas Ali Mohammed
4. Mohammad Hasan Ali Alshawaf
5. Salem Ahmad Ali Alibrahim

In addition to the daily draw, Borgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw

Celebrate special Ramadan offers from Nissan Al-Babtain

KUWAIT: In celebrations of the holy month of Ramadan, Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Nissan in the State of Kuwait, is pleased to announce its latest offers on its models. The much-awaited Ramadan campaign, presents a limited-time opportunity to enjoy incredible package deals on its vehicles this blessed season.

Experience the dynamic features of Nissan's top models along with benefits that grant customers a standard window tinting and paint protection along with third party insurance and cost-free traffic registration in addition to the customers' choice of package ranging from Cashback or Service Packages or gift vouchers up to KD 1200, depending on which type of vehicle they have opted for.

The line-up of Nissan models range from All-new Nissan Altima - creating a new benchmark in design, driving enjoyment and technology. The sixth generation of Nissan's best-selling sedan features: Advanced Nissan Intelligent Mobility safety, two new engines, including the company's world's first production-ready Variable Compression Turbo that comes with an expressive design with wider and more athletic proportions and a new open, airy premium uplifting interior design.

Nissan Pathfinder comes with a 3.5-liter V6 engine adds direct injection system, horsepower increases to 271, with towing capacity of 1,500 KG and is offered with enhanced user friendliness features ranging from Motion-Activated liftgate to a new touch screen monitor; and 20 inches alloy wheels.

The 4-Door Sports car, Nissan Maxima thrills fans with a 300 HP engine, 3.5L V6 cylinder, and 18" aluminium-alloy wheels. The front presents the signature boomerang-shaped headlights that feature a captivating LED signature line that stays illuminated at all times.

Nissan KICKS has class-leading fuel efficiency thanks to its advanced 1.6-liter engine and light-weight platform while the Nissan X-TRAIL, a customer favorite gives young families and adventure-seekers more premium style options such as the choice between the five or seven-seat version as well as five new vibrant exterior vehicle shades, unrivalled space and comfort.

Those opting for the Nissan Patrol will be rewarded with the highest trade-in values. The most powerful in its class, Nissan Patrol V8 is backed by a power of 400 hp, and torque of 560 Nm comes with the direct fuel injection system and the variable valve shift control technology. Patrol will give you maximum power with the lowest percentage of emissions while the new V6 has a 275 horsepower and 394 Nm of torque. The Patrol V6 offers 12% more torque while driving than competing cars. Strength, luxury, and flexibility await any customer to embark on any adventure.

Nissan Patrol customers receive free registration and third party insurance followed by complementary window tinting and paint protection in addition to the customer's choice of service package of up to 7 years or Trade-in Value up to KD 1200 or gift vouchers up to KD 1200.

Nissan Al-Babtain wishes its customers a joyous Ramadan and invites customers to seize the opportunity to enjoy the best deals and great performance vehicles this season.

requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Borgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

What's On



30 Kuwaiti female engineers graduate Limak's Kuwait's Engineer Girls program

Limak Insaat Kuwait SPC, a fully-owned subsidiary of Limak Group of Companies established in Kuwait through the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), celebrated the graduation of the second generation of its university-level training program for aspiring female engineers, the 'Kuwait's Engineer Girls' program during a commencement ceremony held on May 4. The internship and training program was successfully completed by 30 Kuwaiti female students currently enrolled in Kuwait University's undergraduate and graduate engineering programs.

During the commencement ceremony held at the Chairman's Club, Kipco Tower, the graduates were awarded a Business Technology Education Council (BTEC) Management and Leadership certification recognized in over 100 countries, a Certificate from Bogazici Lifelong Learning Center (BULLC), and a Certificate of Field Training from Kuwait University.

Launched in May 2017, the 'Kuwait's Engineer Girls' is a program of Limak Insaat

Kuwait SPC implemented through a partnership with Kuwait University and Turkey's Bogazici University. The project-based learning program consists of 200 training hours divided into seven modules with an aim to empower students' leadership and management skills and help them envision their future careers in engineering. Program activities undertaken include workshops, seminars, field training and site visits to Limak's projects in Kuwait and Turkey including the Kuwait International Airport Terminal 2 (T2) and ?GA - Istanbul Airport. The first generation of graduates consisted of 30 young female engineers, 12 of which have accepted job offers at Limak since completing the program and receiving their certifications in March 2018.

More than 90 guests including parents attended the ceremony in honor of the graduates including the Limak Insaat Kuwait SPC General Manager Kayihan Bagdatli, the Active Dean of the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University Dr Raed Buresli, and the Head of Engineering and



Training Alumni Center at Kuwait University Dr Bader Al Busairi, who all spoke at the ceremony to commemorate the graduates' achievements and the program's success.

Speaking at the ceremony, Limak Insaat Kuwait SPC Country Manager Kayihan Bagdatli said: "It is my pleasure to announce that the second generation of the program is now complete with 30 more hard-working,

Kuwaiti young women engineers who are prepared to contribute to and take an active role in their country's future. Through programs like the Kuwait's Engineer Girls, our objective is to help the youth reach their professional career goals and transform them into capable and qualified individuals prepared to create a positive long-lasting impact in the world. As a result, we build our activities based on the principle of nurturing future generations that are education-focused, empowered, responsible, respectful to the universal values of a reputable society, and who will contribute to solving the social and economic problems that the world is facing today. I would like to congratulate these young women on their success and wish them the best of luck in their future careers, whether they choose to join us at Limak or contribute to the private and public sector in Kuwait."

During his speech, the Active Dean of the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University Dr Raed Buresli said: "I would like to congratulate our students

who become our colleagues today for completing the second generation of the Kuwait's Engineer Girls' program, which is a joint project implemented through a partnership between the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University, Turkey's Bogazici University in Istanbul and Limak Insaat Kuwait SPC with an ongoing effort to train female engineering students and graduates."

Currently constructing Kuwait's new airport terminal and other landmark projects in Kuwait and around the world, Limak is a strong and long-term advocate of the advancement of women in the engineering field in the countries it operates. Limak's support for female engineers in Kuwait is part of the company's greater regional efforts to add permanent value to Kuwait's society by supporting education and learning opportunities in the fields of construction, engineering, architecture, and project management. The Kuwait program is modeled after a successful program launched by Limak Insaat in Turkey in 2015 called 'Turkey's Engineer Girls'.

BSK celebrates Festival of Achievement and Graduation 2019

The British School of Kuwait celebrated its annual Festival of Achievement and Graduation when parents and dignitaries gathered in the magnificent splendor of the Futouh Ballroom at The Regency Hotel to recognize the many wonderful achievements which the past academic year has brought. BSK was privileged to welcome Guest of Honor, Dr Abdulmohsen Al Huwailah, Assistant Undersecretary for Private and Qualitative Education at the Ministry of Private Education and Her Majesty's Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Michael Davenport, to this most glittering occasion in the school calendar.

Both guests delivered highly engaging speeches which offered advice to the graduates as they moved from school to university and urged them to make the most of the wonderful start in their education afforded to them by BSK. The VIP guests officiated at the Year 11, 12 and 13 Graduation, presented BSK Academic Excellence Awards and those for the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) to students for academic excellence and achievement in extra-curricular activities. The prestigious COBIS Awards went to Farah Badr, Assistant Senior Prefect, Rekha Ravikumar and Senior Prefect, Alexandru Moraru. New for 2019 was an award made by the Harvard Club of Kuwait: the Harvard Book, presented by the American Ambassador, HE Laurence Silverman to Year 12 student Ali Alobaidan.

The much coveted Founder's Medal of Honor was presented by BSK Founder and Director Madam Vera Al-Mutawa MBE to Deputy Head Girl Saja Awida. Sadiq Al-Mutawa, BSK Chairman and Ambassadors of the United Kingdom, Germany, Palestine,



Serbia, Brazil, Australia and Canada presented an array of awards and language prizes. BSK Principal, Paul Shropshire, delivered his annual address, where he elaborated on the many successes and achievements of BSK students during the past year.

In her address Madam Vera Al-Mutawa reflected on the academic journey all of our graduates of 2019 had made: making friends along the way, facing the same challenges and aiming for the same goals. Her closing words were to thank the students, parents and teachers for their combined efforts which have contributed so much to the making of BSK.

Guests were treated to a series of musical

performances from the BSK Concert Orchestra including Aces High by Ron Goodwin and Old Colleagues by Carl Teike, while the ensemble group La Camerata, winners of the Young Musician of the Gulf competition in Bahrain, delighted with a specially adapted piece: Al-Aghani Al-Kuwaitiya by the local composer Magdi Talaat. Head students Rian Mohamed and Mohammed Rabbani brought the evening to a close with a tribute on behalf of the student body, and the Festival of Achievement and Graduation Ceremony 2019 came to a rousing finale with a salute to the parents and staff of Kuwait's premier school, The British School of Kuwait.



Sons of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah announced they will be receiving visitors wishing to congratulate them on the advent of the Holy month of Ramadan after Esha prayers on Thursday, May 9 (4th day of Ramadan) at the White Palace. They also announced they will receive their diwaniya visitors after Esha prayer on Tuesdays, except during the last ten days of Ramadan.

Experience authentic Ramadan ambience at the Sheraton Kuwait

Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection hotel and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait welcomes the Holy month of Ramadan 2019 with a wide range of Iftar, Ghabqa, and Suhour offerings for all families and friends from all around the world to share their meals in an authentic Ramadan atmosphere.

For larger groups searching for a unique Iftar experience, the Ramadan Tent located at the Coral Ballroom is a highly recommended setting for corporate Iftar, Ghabqa, and Suhour in a special and authentic ambience reflecting the Ramadan spirit where guests can enjoy a wide range of International and traditional specialties and beverages, including hot and cold salads, soup and appetizers, oriental dishes including Slow-Roasted Lamb Ouzi with Oriental Rice and a delightful variety of Arabic sweets and desserts. The Ramadan Tent also offers an array of live cooking station and freshly cooked Saj counter, refreshment station, Coffee & Tea station and the sweets station offering a range of oriental sweets and desserts of your choice.

Al Hambra Restaurant will also be open for Iftar and Suhour, offering a range of international dishes from its unique Ramadan set menus; and The English Tea Lounge will be providing you with a pleasant and soothing atmosphere to relax

after your meals and enjoy some fine tea and scones until 1:00am. Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait offers you lavish and appetizing dishes inspired all the way from Italy and pizzas cooked specially on its special wooden-oven exclusively at La Mamma Pizzeria from sunset until 01:00am.

Our restaurants at the Avenues also welcomes you for an authentic Iftar experience with your loved ones to enjoy a wide range of our cuisines that includes Shahrayer -Persian Cuisine, Bukhara - Indian Cuisine, Le Tarbouche- Lebanese Cuisine, Al Hambra- International Cuisine and The English Tea Lounge that offer you flavors from all around the world. We also offer you our Outside Catering Services with our special Ramadan menu options to cater all your Ghabqa's and Ramadan Events during this Holy month.

On this holy occasion, Fahed Abushaar, Complex General Manager of the Sheraton Kuwait hotels and Mounir Amer, General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait and the family of Sheraton and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait wish His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, His Highness The Crown Prince, all the Kuwaiti nationals and all the residents "A blessed month, great health and wellness".

Ahmadi governor meets with CBK deputy director

Ahmadi governor, Sheikh Fawwaz Al-Khaled recently received CBK's deputy director for corporal communication, Amani Al-Wer'a at his office to discuss CBK's support and sponsorship for social, health and sports activities to be organized by the governorate. Speaking on the occasion, Al-Khaled stressed that cooperation with CBK had remarkably developed during the 'My Governorate is More Beautiful' project. On her part, Al-Wer'a said that partnership between CBK and many government and private bodies and NGOs is but a part of the bank's social responsibility activities.



Student Habib Mamdouh wishes to give his utmost appreciation and thanks to his teacher Jyothsna Pitta for helping him receive an 'Outstanding Student' award at his school.

Happy Birthday!

Family and friends wish you a very happy birthday Shereen Nasser. May every wish you make come true and every desire be fulfilled.



Health & Technology

Facebook to 'label' posts by hand, posing crucial privacy questions

Thousands of humans involved in labeling efforts

HYDERABAD/SAN FRANCISCO: Over the past year, a team of as many as 260 contract workers in Hyderabad, India has ploughed through millions of Facebook Inc photos, status updates and other content posted since 2014. The workers categorize items according to five "dimensions," as Facebook calls them.

These include the subject of the post - is it food, for example, or a selfie or an animal? What is the occasion - an everyday activity or major life event? And what is the author's intention - to plan an event, to inspire, to make a joke? The work is aimed at understanding how the types of things users post on its services are changing, Facebook said. That can help the company develop new features, potentially increasing usage and ad revenue.

Details of the effort were provided by multiple employees at outsourcing firm Wipro Ltd over several months. The workers spoke on condition of anonymity due to fear of retaliation by the Indian firm. Facebook later confirmed many details of the project. Wipro declined to comment and referred all questions to Facebook.

The Wipro work is among about 200 content labeling projects that Facebook has at any time, employing thousands of people globally, company officials told Reuters. Many projects are aimed at "training" the software that determines what appears in users' news feeds and powers

the artificial intelligence underlying many other features. The labeling efforts have not previously been reported. "It's a core part of what you need," said Nipun Mathur, the director of product management for AI at Facebook. "I don't see the need going away."

Privacy concerns

The content labeling program could raise new privacy issues for Facebook, according to legal experts consulted by Reuters. The company is facing regulatory investigations worldwide over an unrelated set of alleged privacy abuses involving the sharing of user data with business partners. The Wipro workers said they gain a window into lives as they view a vacation photo or a post memorializing a deceased family member. Facebook acknowledged that some posts, including screenshots and those with comments, may include user names. The company said its legal and privacy teams must sign off on all labeling efforts, adding that it recently introduced an auditing system "to ensure that privacy expectations are being followed and parameters in place are working as expected."

But one former Facebook privacy manager, speaking on condition of anonymity, expressed unease about users' posts being scrutinized without their explicit permission. The European Union's year-old General Data Protection

Regulation (GDPR) has strict rules about how companies gather and use personal data and in many cases requires specific consent.

"One of the key pieces of GDPR is purpose limitation," said John Kennedy, a partner at law firm Wiggin and Dana who has worked on outsourcing, privacy and AI. If the purpose is looking at posts to improve the precision of services, that should be stated explicitly, Kennedy said. Using an outside vendor for the work could also require consent, he said. It remains unclear exactly how GDPR will be interpreted and whether regulators and consumers would see Facebook's internal labeling practices as problematic. Europe's top data privacy official declined to comment on possible concerns. A Facebook spokeswoman said: "We make it clear in our data policy that we use the information people provide to Facebook to improve their experience and that we might work with service providers to help in this process."

US Senator Mark Warner, a Democrat and leading critic of social media, told Reuters in a statement that large platforms increasingly are "taking more and more data from users, for wider and more far-reaching uses, without any corresponding compensation to the user." Warner said he is drafting legislation that would require Facebook to "disclose the value of users' data, and tell

users exactly how their data is being monetized." Human-powered content labeling, also referred to as "data annotation," is a growth industry as companies seek to harness data for AI training and other purposes. Self-driving car companies such as Alphabet Inc's Waymo have labelers identify traffic lights and pedestrians in videos to fortify their AI. Voice assistant developers including Amazon.com Inc have people annotate customer audio to improve AI's ability to decipher speech. Facebook launched the Wipro project in April last year. The Indian firm received a \$4 million contract and formed a team of about 260 labelers, according to the workers. Last year, the work consisted of analyzing posts from the prior five years.

After completing that, the team in December was cut to about 30 and shifted to labeling each month posts from the prior month. Work is expected to last through at least the end of 2019, they said. Facebook confirmed the staffing changes but declined to comment on financial details. The company said its analysis is ongoing so it could not provide any findings from the labeling or resulting product decisions. It has not told labelers the purpose or results of the project, and the workers said all they have inferred from their limited view is that selfies are increasingly popular. — Reuters

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

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General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com **Tel: 1886677**

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- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
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- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
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- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
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Academic Certificates - Training

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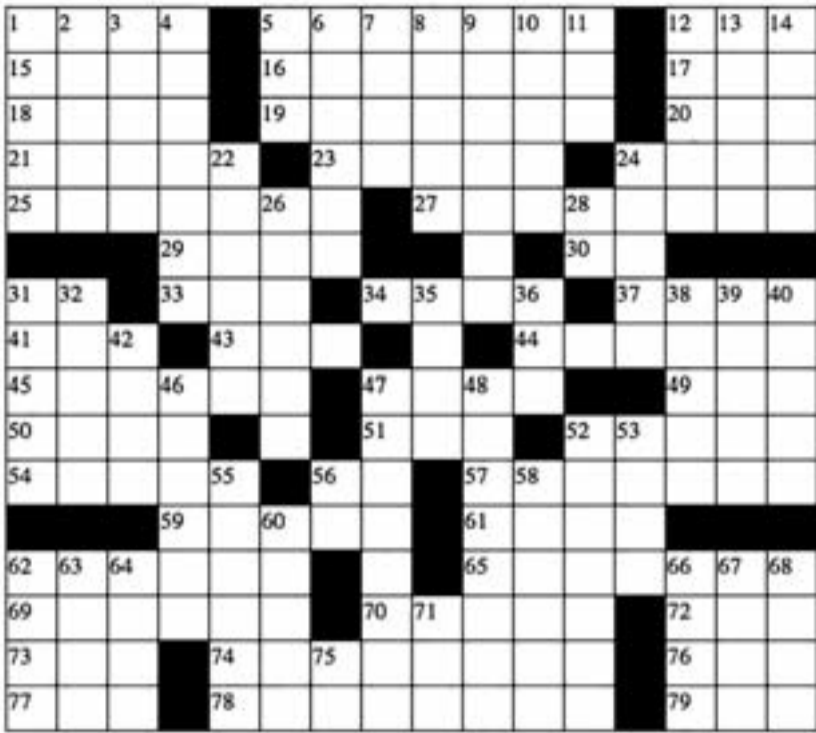
Scope of clinical Practice.

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Stars

CROSSWORD 2201



ACROSS

- 1. A substance that is used as a medicine or narcotic v.l.
5. Large Old World butterflies.
12. Irritate or vex.
15. Type genus of the Ranidae.
16. A sponge cake baked in a ring mold.
17. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
18. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
19. Place before another constituent in the sentence.
20. (informal) Of the highest quality.
21. Open to or abounding in fresh air.
23. Paper with a crinkled texture.
25. A port city in southern Kenya on a coral island in a bay of the Indian Ocean.
27. Type genus of the Rynchopidae.
29. A fit of shivering.
30. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
31. A state in the western United States.
33. A conspicuous disparity or difference as between two figures.
34. (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
37. A hollow muscular organ in the pelvic cavity of females.
41. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
43. A master's degree in education.
44. Either of two masses of lymphatic tissue one on each side of the oral pharynx.
45. A retail merchant who sells foodstuffs (and some household supplies).
49. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
50. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
51. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
54. A choice or delicious dish.
57. French philosopher and theologian.
59. A constitutional monarchy in northern Europe on the western side of the Scandinavian Peninsula.
61. Fail to do something.
62. A mountain in the Himalayas in Nepal (27,790 feet high).
65. (used pejoratively) Out of fashion.
69. Far away from home or one's usual surroundings.
70. A social division of (usually preliterature) people.
72. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
73. Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
74. Denoting or characteristic of the biogeographic region including southern Asia and the Malay Archipelago as far as the Philippines and Borneo and Java.
76. The rate at which energy is drawn from a source that produces a flow of electricity in a circuit.
77. Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
78. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
79. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).

DOWN

- 1. A series of mental images and emotions occurring during sleep.
2. (combining form) Indicating radiation or radioactivity.
3. Take away the weapons from.
4. A canvas or leather bag for carrying game (especially birds) killed by a hunter.
5. Of southern Europe.
6. The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
7. Report or maintain.
8. A convex shape that narrows toward a point.
9. Whip scorpions.
10. (of e.g. celestial bodies) Above the horizon.
11. Used of a single unit or thing.
12. Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
13. A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
14. English biochemist (born in Germany) who discovered the Krebs cycle (1900-1981).
22. Source of a tough elastic wood.
24. United States dancer and choreographer who collaborated with Ruth Saint Denis (1891-1972).
26. Of surpassing excellence.
28. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
32. Italian operatic composer (1813-1901).
35. Type genus of the Amidae.
36. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series.
38. Port city on southern Honshu on Osaka Bay.
39. A runner in a one-mile race.
40. Lacking either stimulating or irritating characteristics.
42. The closing section of a musical composition.
46. Ancient city is southeastern Italy where Hannibal defeated the Romans in 216 BC.
47. Become more extreme.
48. A rude decoration inscribed on rocks or walls.
52. Deciduous shrub widely cultivated for its white or pink or red flowers.
53. A friendly nation.
55. A small measure (usually of food).
56. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
58. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
60. Father of the storm gods Marut.
63. A rounded thickly curled hairdo.
64. Ulcerated chilblain on the heel.
66. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
67. (computer science) A standardized language for the descriptive markup of documents.
68. The handle of a weapon or tool.
71. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
75. A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Secret loves or lost loves are on your mind now. Ghosts are always perfect and you may find yourself reminiscing on those loves now in a romanticized manner.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a great time for clear thinking and processing of ideas, new or old. Concern and responsibility seem to be your keywords for the day.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Material items are at the forefront of your mind right now. You want more and you're willing to work towards it but you're unwilling to let yourself be used or change your values.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Practical, utilitarian ideas at work still work. Change here is not for you. Material things create an urge for more now making you decide to do what brought you to get more financially.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Material things are first and foremost on your mind. The last month or so has money and the things it can buy holding first place on your list of needs, along with love.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Use your psychic ability to make your material wealth grow. This is the time to unite your thoughts with work ideas in order to prosper.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Today is better than this weekend. Be glad of that. At least you can get ideas across easily now at work. That's a big improvement.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your analytical abilities bring you answers you didn't realize you'd find today. Conversations tend to be in-depth. Learning is a high point for you now not only for work but for everything you touch.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Material things come first now. Seeking ways to utilize your brain in order to get more money is constantly on your mind.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a bad time to try to stay calm. Practical ideas are something you are thankful for in the situation you're in now.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You seem to know just what others are feeling and you're right. They tell you so. At the same time, you realize that there is more to life than may be presented to you now.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You're amazing with your love of sharing fun and making others laugh. That gets the attention you need for giving your ideas on work and at home too.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Farm 2 - Word Search



- BALES, BULL, CATTLE, CORN, COW, CROP, DOG, FARMHAND, HARVEST, HENS, HORSE, LAND, LIVESTOCK, PASTURE, PIGS, ROOSTER, SOIL, STABLES, TILL, TROUGH, WHEAT

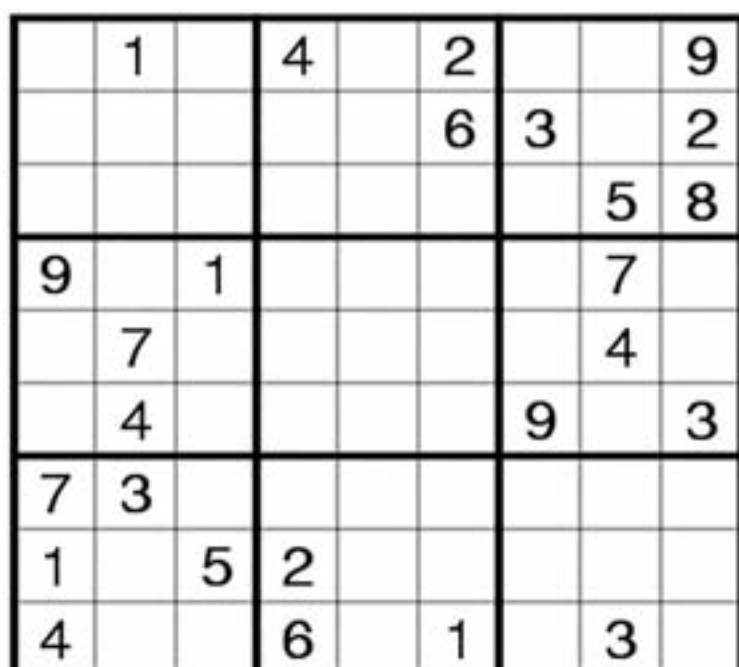
Yesterday's Solution

Farm 1 - Solution

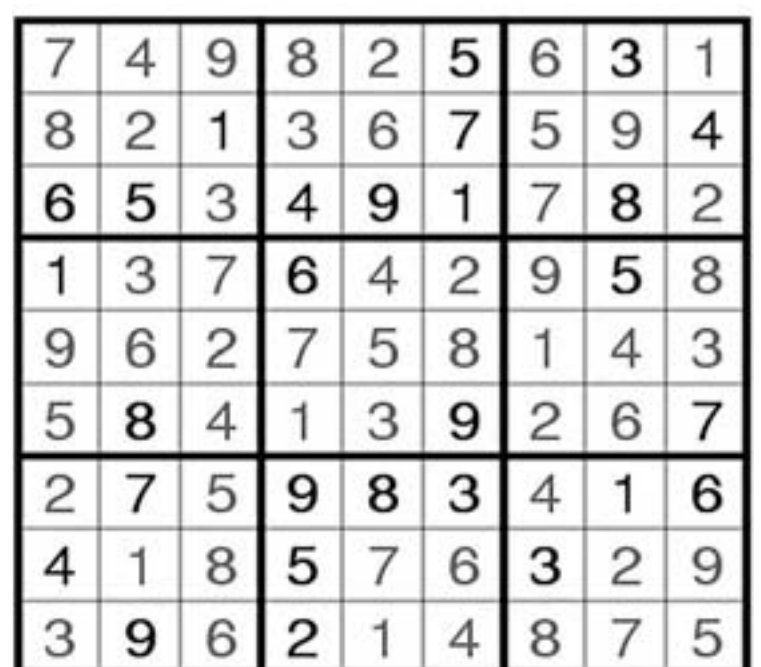


- VALER, BARN, BUTTER, CAT, CHICKENS, CREAM, DAIRY, EGGS, FERTILIZER, GRAIN, HARROW, HAY, HOUSE, MILK, PLOW, PRODUCE, TRACTOR, TURKEYS, WEATHERVANE, WELLS

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2019



Muslim people pray on the first night of the holy month of Ramadan at the Istiqlal Grand Mosque in Jakarta. Ramadan in Indonesia began yesterday, with devotees fasting from dawn to dusk until Eid celebrations marking the end of the holy month. — AFP

The Pakistani popcorn seller who built his own plane

The engine is from a roadcutter, the wings are burlap, the wheels are borrowed from a rickshaw: a popcorn seller has caught the attention of the Pakistan Air Force by building his own plane. The tale of Muhammad Fayyaz has captured the hearts of many in a nation where millions, just like him, have limited access to education and are fighting for opportunities. "I was literally in the air. I couldn't feel anything else," Fayyaz said of his first flight in a machine he learned to build mainly from viewing TV clips and online blueprints.

Pakistan has been thrilled before by stories of scientific prodigies plucked from obscurity before notably, that of the engineer who said in 2012 that he had invented a car that could run on water—a story that was later debunked by scientists. But Fayyaz insists he flew and his claim is being taken seriously by the air force, whose representatives have now visited him multiple times, even issuing a certificate to commend his work, he revealed. There has been a steady stream of visitors wanting to view his creation, which now sits in the empty courtyard of his three-room home in the village of Tabur in central Punjab province.

Dreaming of a jet plane

The 32-year-old said he had dreamed of joining the air force as a child, but his father died while he was in still in school, forcing him to drop out at the eighth grade and do odd jobs to feed his mother

and his five younger siblings. As an adult, his passion for flying remained undiminished, so he took a wild gamble on a new dream and put everything he had into creating his own craft.

By day he worked as a popcorn seller, by night as a security guard, saving every rupee he could. The first thing he had to acquire was information—beginning with watching episodes of the National Geographic Channel's Air Crash Investigation for insight into thrust, air pressure, torque, propulsion. Cheap internet access in a nearby city helped fill the gaps, with Fayyaz claiming he spliced blueprints of planes he found online for his own creation.

He sold a piece of family land, and took out a 50,000 rupee (\$350) loan from a micro-finance NGO, which he is still paying off. He used his meagre funds creatively, buying burlap sacks wholesale and persuading a kind workshop employee who had seen him scouting for materials to build him a propeller. There was trial and error. Some equipment needed to be replaced, designs had to be altered, the wiring had to be reworked. His family worried he was obsessed.

"I kept telling him to stop. I kept telling him to concentrate on his family and work, he was being crazy over nothing. But he didn't listen to a single word," his mother, Mumtaz Bibi, recalled. But Fayyaz kept going. And, at the end of it all produced a plane—tiny, fragile, and painted a bright blue.

'Locked up with criminals'

In February this year, he said, after more than two years of ridicule, he was ready. Fayyaz claims his friends helped him to block a small road which he used as a runway for that first flight attempt in February. The plane reached 120kph before taking off, Ameer Hussain, a witness who claims to have ridden alongside the plane in a motorcycle, told AFP. "It was between two and two and half feet off the ground," he said. "It flew for about two to three kilometers before landing."

AFP has been unable to verify the claim. But the attempt made Fayyaz bold enough to want to try again in front of the rest of his village, many of whom had mocked his efforts. He picked March 23, Pakistan Day, for the unveiling. Police said hundreds of people crowded around his tiny plane, many clutching national flags. But before Fayyaz could even start the engine, the police arrived and arrested him, confiscating his plane. "I felt as though I had committed one of the worst acts in the world, as though I am the worst person in Pakistan," he explained, adding: "I had been locked up with criminals." The court released him with a 3,000 rupees (\$19) fine.

When AFP visited the local police station, officers said they had arrested Fayyaz as his plane was a safety threat. Officer Zafar Iqbal explained: "The plane was returned to him as a goodwill gesture. Should he obtain a flying license or permit, he is free to fly." Fayyaz's misfortune resulted in social



media fame, and he was called a "hero" and an "inspiration" by some netizens. Representatives from the Pakistan Air Force have made two visits to view the plane and the commander of a nearby base issued him a certificate which praises his "passion and dexterity" in building what it described as a "mini basic airplane". — AFP

Pakistani villager Muhammad Fayyaz (right) speaks to visitors as he stands alongside his small plane at his residence in Tabur village in central Punjab province.



Pakistani villager Muhammad Fayyaz poses for photographs as he sits in his small plane at his residence in Tabur village in central Punjab province.



Muhammad Fayyaz stands alongside his small plane.



Muhammad Fayyaz stands alongside his small plane. — AFP photos

Japan fashion tycoon says selling valuable paintings, has no money

Japanese fashion tycoon Yusaku Maezawa said he plans to auction off artworks worth millions of dollars because he has no money. Maezawa, the founder and CEO of online fashion retailer Zozo, said in a Twitter post on Saturday that he plans to sell several items at a Sotheby's auction in New York on May 16. The art-loving billionaire attached screenshots of two artworks to the post — an Ed Ruscha painting with an estimate of \$2 mil-

lion-\$3 million and an Andy Warhol flowers painting with an estimate of \$1.5 million-\$2 million.

In response to a user query if the sale was because he has no money, Maezawa replied in a Twitter post on Sunday, "Yes, I never have any money because I always spend it," ending the post with a laughing face emoji. The publicity-seeking entrepreneur's past spending antics include the \$110 million purchase of a Jean-

Michel Basquiat painting and signing up to be the first private passenger taken around the moon by Elon Musk's SpaceX. Maezawa's ambitions have hit turbulence with the billionaire only recently returning to Twitter after a series of corporate missteps saw Zozo's stock price plunge by more than half and left its cash position weakened. — Reuters

The Cure's next album 'will be the last'

The Cure's first album in over 10 years "will be the last". The 'Boys Don't Cry' group have been working in the studio on their upcoming as-yet-untitled 14th record - their first since 2008's '4:13 Dream' - and keyboardist Roger O'Donnell thinks it will most likely be their final release. He told SiriusXM: "I personally think it will be the last Cure record. I know it's been said a million times before, but at this stage in our lives... As far as I'm concerned, yeah, this is it.. "But I've gone into every album thinking this is it,

and not glibly. I actually think this is it." Roger added that he even told frontman Robert Cure that it was time to say goodbye to the band and make it the "saddest" and "most dramatic" collection possible. He said: "It's epic, I can say that about it. I mean, playing it and sitting there and listening back to it... everybody's jaws were dropping. "I said to Robert a couple of years ago, 'We have to make one more record, and it has to be the saddest record that's ever been made and the most dramatic'. And I think it will be." Meanwhile, with the group - made up of

Roger, Robert and their bandmates Simon, Jason Cooper and Reeves Gabrels - set to headline Glastonbury in June with many other festival dates lined up over summer, and the musician hinted that they could preview some of the new material at the shows. He teased: "We're thinking about playing it live, whenever we get to do that [and] whenever it gets finished."



Richard Ashcroft covers Prince's Purple Rain at London concert

Richard Ashcroft performed a version of Prince's 'Purple Rain' at his concert at the Olympia in London on Saturday night. The 47-year-old singer/songwriter was playing his own track 'This Is How It Feels' - from his 2016 solo album 'These People' - when he included his tribute to the late pop legend changing the lyrics to the famous chorus. Ashcroft is on tour in support of his most recent LP 'Natural Rebel' and the album provided some highlights, including 'Surprised by the Joy' and 'Money Money', as well as other solo songs such as 'They Don't Own Me', 'A Song For The Lovers' and 'Hold On'. But it was undoubtedly the songs by his former band The Verve that prompted the biggest reaction from his adoring fans. 'Sonnet', 'Velvet Morning', 'Space and Time' and 'Lucky Man' all sparked a sea of camera phones to be held into the air to capture the British rock icon playing those beloved tracks from The Verve's seminal 1997 LP 'Urban Hymns'. After briefly leaving the stage, Ashcroft returned for a three-track encore which began with 'C'mon People (We're Making It Now)' - from his 2000 debut solo record 'Alone with Everybody' - and then an emotional rendition of number one single 'The Drugs Don't Work', of which every word was sang back at him. He closed his show with 'Bittersweet Symphony' and before launching into the anthem he thanked all his fans for continuing to support him. He said: "I thank you all, you pay your heard earned money to come and see me and I appreciate it. This is 'Bittersweet Symphony'."



Arthur says Cowell apologized for Syco snub

James Arthur says Simon Cowell apologized for dropping him from Syco. The former 'X Factor' champion was signed to the music mogul's record label in 2012 but he was dropped just two years later after controversy over a song featuring aggressive lyrics, but in 2016 he was welcomed back. Speaking to Sarah-Jane Crawford backstage at Radio Hits Live, James said: "I re-signed to Syco and they asked me to perform on 'The X Factor' on the same day. [Simon] was very humble, he said: 'Thank you very much for accepting us again, we made a mistake before, you've been A-listed on all the radio stations'. It felt like all my dreams have come true." Although the 'Say You Won't Let Go' hitmaker is in a much better place now, he admitted he was worried his career was over when he parted ways with Syco. He added: "I'll never forget the day it was two-and-a-half years ago and I was like: 'I'm done, I'm on the scrapheap'." That was September 2016 and I'm sitting there in my flat about to release this song and no labels in the UK would take it, I was blacklisted as I'd been a naughty boy." Meanwhile, the 30-year-old musician has previously revealed his plans to explore an acting career. Speaking late last year, he said: "I've taken a couple of acting lessons. I've had people reach out and ask me if I want to come to auditions... When people ask me what other goals I've got and what are the ambitions I've got, it's definitely acting." The British star thinks his troubled past, which saw him struggle with suicidal thoughts after being dropped from, and his battle with a drug addiction, will allow him to take on a range of different roles. He said previously: "I want to become a Hollywood film star. I genuinely would love to be in some movies. I am a massive film geek and I love movies. "I have been through, and seen so many dramas and traumas, and been in so many situations that I can probably interpret a few different characters."

LP's next album is 'almost halfway' written

American singer/songwriter LP has "almost half" of her new album already written. The 'Lost On You' singer only released her fifth studio effort 'Heart To Mouth' in December but the tracklist for album number six is well underway and she has loads of ideas for more songs recorded on her smartphone. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, she said: "I have like almost half of it done already, possibly more, but I like to write new stuff always to try and beat whatever I have. The songwriter in me just keeps moving. I collect bits and bobs whilst I'm travelling and then I try and get them right. Sometimes I'm just stewing in a certain mood." LP is touring the UK in May and kicks off her run of shows at historic London venue The Roundhouse on May 17. And the musician admits the trials and tribulations of life on the road influence her writing because touring puts her in a certain headspace. The singer - who recently released her latest single 'Girls Go Wild (James Krausse Mix)', which is taken from 'Heart To Mouth' - mused: "Some fans, at first, expected this past record 'Heart To Mouth' to be all about rainbows and puppy dogs the whole time, because things career-wise have been good. "But the mood that you have sometimes when you're touring can be odd. You feel great on stage, it's probably the best you feel the whole time but there are 22 other hours in the day where you're dealing with a lot of s**t and doing a lot of thinking, but I think that kind of headspace is good for writing. I try to think that it's not affecting me but it most certainly is, I definitely noticed it during my Russian tour because there was a lot of travelling and we were so far away from our loved ones, it's like a 10 or 12 hour time difference the whole



time so you feel pretty isolated at times and that does play havoc on your mind. With your body if you're in and out of planes and in and out of a car all the time and sleeping in different beds it gets weird ... I've had tours where I've flown every day and it's messed up."

Springsteen confirms E Street Band tour plans

Bruce Springsteen has confirmed plans for another E Street Band tour. The 'Dancing In The Dark' rocker admitted while he was struggling to write anything for his iconic group of musicians, he had a sudden spark of creativity which has prompted him to put plans in place for another trip on the road. Speaking to Martin Scorsese at an event at Raleigh Studios in Hollywood Sunday night promoting his 'Springsteen on Broadway' special to Emmy voters, he said: "I've spent about seven years not writing anything for the band. I couldn't write anything for the band. "And then about a month or so ago, I wrote almost an album's worth of material for the band and it came out of just... I mean I know where it came from, but at the same time, it just came out of almost nowhere. "I had almost two weeks of those daily visitations and it was so nice. It makes you so happy. You go, 'Fine.' There'll be another tour." The Boss also opened up on why he feels "darkness" is so appealing to artists, and revealed he still revisits his hometown of Long Branch, New Jersey to reflect. He explained: "If you're an artist, the darkness is always more interesting than the light. It's nice when you let the light in at the end of something, but I was always interested in what were the things that didn't go right. "I had a habit-I would drive back to my hometown and I would do this over and over again and I used to ask myself, 'what am I coming back here for?' And I still do it."



Metallica see 'no end' to their career

Metallica see "no end" to their careers. The 'Enter Sandman' rockers - who formed in 1981 - have no plans to stop recording and performing but drummer Lars Ulrich admitted he hopes someone will tell the band if they no longer have "the physicality" to deliver a successful show. Speaking to MOJO magazine, he said: "I see no end to it. The only question is, 'Does there come a point where the physicality the music needs is still there?' "I hope that somebody around me will go, 'Hey sunshine, maybe it's not there anymore...' "Of course, there's a few people who think it has already happened. That's fine. But when we play the Kansas Cities of the world and you see 19,000 people connecting to the music and us connecting to them, I can tell you it definitely hasn't happened yet." The rockers - Lars, Kirk Hammett, James Hetfield, and Robert Trujillo - acknowledge they are all very different people but they still feel like "brothers". Kirk said: "There are people who want to divide and conquer. We're not gonna be part of that platform." Robert added: "As individuals within the band, we're all different. But we get along. Different upbringings, but we are family, we're brothers." While James dismissed suggestions his relationship with Lars has mellowed over the years, he admitted they realize there is "no use" trying to upset one another and regard each other as enemies. He said: "We know there's a nuclear option and we know where those buttons are but there's no use pressing them. "We are there for our similarities, not our differences. You don't need that enemy there all the time."

Smith doesn't write lyrics first



Jorja Smith "never" writes lyrics first. The 22-year-old singer admitted her tracks don't "make sense" at first but she's found a way of creating new material that works for her. She said: "I never write the lyrics before. I just sing and then write along to the melodies. It won't really make sense at first, but I might repeat certain phrases or words, and keep doing that. "I always record it on voice note on my phone, then go back." Jorja's first single, 'Blue Lights', was released before she had a record deal and though it did "very well" she admitted she didn't realize how successful it had been because she didn't know what was or wasn't "normal". She said: "The first song I put out was 'Blue Lights'. But it seems like forever ago. I wrote that one when I was still in Walsall. "I put it out because somehow it reminded me of home. And it went a bit mad, but I'd never put a song out before, so I didn't know what was normal and what wasn't normal. "It did very well, so I put out another song, and another, then just kept putting out songs and videos... And now we're here." The 'On Your Own' singer - who is dating producer Joel Compass - thinks it's important to use her lyrics to write about what she's experiencing at that time. Asked if she writes about what she's going through, she said: "Yeah, totally. I wrote recently: 'I'm constantly in awe of what you teach me'. Because I get really angry and my boyfriend is really good at being calm. So I said: 'Teach me'. "I want to stop getting so angry because I can shout and scream. I need to chill out, which I find so difficult."

Lifestyle | Gossip

Brolin almost had bigger Guardian of the Galaxy role

Josh Brolin almost had a much bigger role in 'Guardians of the Galaxy'. The actor - who played villain Thanos - made his first appearance in the post-credits sequence for 'The Avengers', before reappearing in 'Guardians of the Galaxy', and it has been revealed plans were in place for him to have a much more significant part to play in the latter. Charlie Wren - former visual development head for Marvel Studios - toldLooper: "Thanos' role would have been significantly larger. "We would have seen some of the relationship [and] tensions play out between him and his kids [...] Ronan's role would have decreased, with

Thanos taking on more." Instead, bosses went with a slow build to 'Infinity War' when Thanos would wipe out half of the world - but he was almost cut completely from 'Guardians'. Wren added: "It was decided to cut Thanos out of 'Guardians' completely in order to have a slower reveal of him. "It wasn't until right before the shoot that I was told that Thanos would have a role in the film, so designing him and his throne was pretty rushed. [...] "I only had a couple days left to design him on his throne. I made some improvements from the first design, in which we saw the side of his face." Wren also opened up about his work designing Thanos as a character, and revealed it

was also "important" to match his iconic look from the comics, he explained: "Because he was going to play such a defining role in the MCU later, it was important to capture the look that fans know of him: an enormous bulky purple frame, bluish fabric, complemented by a golden armor in the shape of a slight crescent moon accentuating his shoulders, leading up to large slits along his chin, and finally capped by a helmet that reflects the shape language of his body armor."



Portman admits Star Wars backlash was tough



Natalie Portman admitted the 'Star Wars' prequel backlash was "a bummer". The 37-year-old actress became a household name after her starring role as Padme Amidala in 'Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace', which has been heavily criticized by fans along with its sequels 'Attack of the Clones' and 'The Revenge of the Sith', and for Portman it was tough to take. Speaking to Empire, the actress - who was a teen when the first of the prequel trilogy movies came out in 1999 - said: "It was hard. It was a bummer because it felt like people were so excited about new ones and then to have people feel disappointed. "Also to be at an age that I didn't really understand that's kind of the nature of the beast. When something has that much anticipation it can almost only disappoint." However, Portman noted that some fans have "re-evaluated" their initial reaction to the films, which were scorned for a perceived overuse of CGI and dislike for comedic alien Jar Jar Binks. She added: "With the perspective of time, it's been re-evaluated by a lot of people who actually really love them now. "There's a very avid group of people who think they're the best ones now! I don't have enough perspective to weigh in." Meanwhile, the 'Star Wars' fanbase was mourning over the weekend as it was revealed actor Peter Mayhew - who was best known for playing Chewbacca in the franchise - tragically passed away on April 30 at the age of 74. 'Star Wars' creator George Lucas said: "Peter was a wonderful man. He was the closest any human being could be to a Wookiee: big heart, gentle nature ... and I learned to always let him win. He was a good friend and I'm saddened by his passing."



Carmichael says Downton film felt 'like holiday'

Laura Carmichael has admitted shooting the 'Downton Abbey' movie felt like a "holiday". The 32-year-old actress reprised her role as Lady Edith Crawley in the big-screen spin-off and admitted it wasn't as intense a project to work on as it was to film the drama series. She said: "It was so much fun, we had such a dreamy time. "It's much quicker doing a film than eight episodes of a series, so it felt like a holiday with mates." And Laura admitted she and her castmates had no hesitation in signing up for the film because it was something they'd always pledged to do if creator Julian Fellowes was involved. She told the Radio Times: "It was nostalgic. All of us always felt that if Julian Fellowes wrote it, we'd do it, we're so fond of our characters and what that job did for all of us. "We really care about it and have a lot of affection for it. "We hope it's not destroying the image we left you with." Laura can next be seen in another period series, 'The Spanish Princess' - which tells the story of Henry VIII's first wife Catherine of Aragon - and she found it helpful to don a corset to play Margaret Pole, even though it wasn't a particularly comfortable costume. She explained: "I love it and I've not done 16th century before. "You can't slouch in this costume or travel very far in it. It puts you in a regal and upright stance, which is helpful for the role. "Filming in incredible sets and ancient abbeys and castles also gave me a feel for that period."

Boyle praises film festivals as TV's influence grows

Danny Boyle says "film festivals are crucial" as TV's influence continues to grow. The 'Yesterday' director - whose new movie focuses on a musician who finds himself in a world where no one else remembers The Beatles - has opened up on the significance of events focusing on the film industry despite the rise of popularity for streaming platforms and big budgets TV series. Speaking after the Tribeca Film Festival closed with the world premiere of his latest project, he told Variety: "Film festivals are crucial, more and more crucial, especially as television grows in importance. "The singular vision that a film says, that is one event, one event in time for you to experience...Tribeca is really crucial to that, to hearing new voices." The 62-year-old filmmaker also heaped praise on the Fab Four - Sir Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr - for the way they impacted the world, and he admitted he couldn't "imagine" where we'd be without the 'Hey Jude' hitmakers. He added: "It's impossible to imagine it actually...They changed the world really. "They were the first really to say, we want to concentrate on love and pleasure and music...we want to celebrate humanity. And they do that in a wonderful way." 'Yesterday' tells the story of singer-songwriter Jack Malik (Himesh Patel), who has an accident and wakes up to realize he is the only person who remembers The Beatles. The movie also stars Lily James as Jack's best friend Ellie, Kate McKinnon as US agent Debra and features the likes of Ed Sheeran and James Corden as themselves.



Robert Downey Jr came up with emotional Avengers: Endgame line

Robert Downey Jr was inspired by his own children for his "I love you 3000" line in 'Avengers: Endgame'. One of the movie's most touching moments saw his character Tony Stark - AKA Iron Man - telling his daughter Morgan Stark (Lexi Rabe) just how much he cares for her, and it turns out it was a line Downey Jr came up with himself. Co-writer Christopher Markus told Fandango: "Well, as much as we'd like to take credit for what is inevitably going to be one of the most memorable lines in MCU history, that is something that Robert and his children actually say to each other. "He brought it from real life onto the set." Meanwhile, the Marvel Cinematic Universe directing duo Anthony and Joe Russo have revealed that

today is the spoiler ban has been lifted. Joe explained: "Part of why we make these movies is for conversation." The brothers had previously asked fans not to spoil any of the movie's major plot points for the highly anticipated movie. They said: "Everyone involved with the film has worked incredibly hard the past two years maintaining the highest level of secrecy. "Only a handful of people know the film's true plot. We're asking that when you see Infinity War, in the coming months, that you maintain the same level of secrecy so that all fans can have an equal experience when they watch it for the first time. "Don't spoil it for others, the same way you wouldn't want it spoiled for you. Good luck and happy viewing. #ThanosDemandsYourSilence (sic)."

Woody Allen's Rainy Day to get Italian release

Woody Allen's 'A Rainy Day In New York' will be released in Italy. The movie, starring Jude Chalamet, Rebecca Hall and Elle Fanning, was filmed in 2017 but Amazon put it on hold indefinitely in the wake of the Hollywood MeToo movement. Allen has been accused of - and has repeatedly denied - claims that he molested his adopted daughter, Dylan Farrow, when she was just seven years old. However, Variety reports that the film will be released in Italy last this year via distributor Lucky Red. The website also reports that other European countries have closed local distribution deals and there is speculation that it could launch in September at the Venice Film Festival. After Amazon ditched the film, the rights to the movie are now being sold by Glen Basner's FilmNation Entertainment. Meanwhile, Jude recently said it is a "a terrible shame" that the movie has been shelved. "It's a terrible shame. I'd love to see it. People worked really hard and put a lot in, obviously himself included." Several actors who have worked with the director donated their salaries to charity or publicly vowed never to work with him again but Jude did not. Explaining his decision, he said: "I didn't really want to get involved, to be honest. I just don't feel like it was my place to comment, and it's too delicate a situation. I feel like enough has been said about it. It's a private affair. [As for working with Allen again.] I don't know. I'd have to consider carefully." In 2017, Gomez made a "significant donation" to the Time's Up Legal

Fund, which was reported to be much more than her salary was for the movie. And co-star Chalamet also donated his fee, splitting the money between the Time's Up movement, The LGBT Center in New York, and anti-sexual assault group Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN). Farrow published an open letter in The New York Times in 2014 alleging that Allen molested her in an attic when she was seven and accusing Hollywood of turning a "blind eye". The director has denied the allegation and previously accused the Farrow family of "cynically using the opportunity afforded by the Time's Up movement to repeat this discredited allegation".



Elizabeth McGovern's Downton family reunion

Elizabeth McGovern says the 'Downton Abbey' movie felt like a "family reunion". The 57-year-old actress has reprised her role as Cora Crawley, Countess of Grantham, for the big screen adaptation of the hit TV show and Elizabeth said there was a party atmosphere on set as the cast got a chance to reunite. She told The Mail On Sunday's Event magazine: "'Downton' changed all our lives. It's not so much a television show as this juggernaut which took all of us by surprise. I didn't expect to see my career take on this new direction at my age. When the series [first shown in 2010] ended in 2015, everyone was very emotional because it was the end of something so special, but everyone was also incredibly busy with other opportunities that came their way thanks to 'Downton'. Coming back felt like a family reunion. Everyone was in a holiday mood because it seemed such an achievement to be turning this show into a movie. We were all walking round with big smiles on our faces. "'Downton' has a reputation for being a good place to work. It's probably the friendliest set I have ever worked on because we are all camped out there for the duration and we all have a huge amount of respect for each other." While Elizabeth was excited to reunite with her co-stars, she also loved the addition of new actors, including Imelda Staunton, who plays the formidable Lady Bagshaw and Simon Jones and Geraldine James in the roles of King George V and Queen Mary. She said: "Imelda has been on set [with her husband Jim Carter who plays butler Carson] so

often she felt like a member of the cast already, and Simon and Geraldine are both excellent actors. Everyone finds it exciting, and obviously we have Dame Maggie [Smith], possibly the most intelligent, inspirational, hilarious woman you could meet, so it just felt very special. "It was lovely to be back with my screen daughters Michelle [Dockery, who plays Lady Mary] and Edith [Laura Carmichael] and of course my screen husband Hugh [Bonneville], who we all adore. We all slot into our old patterns. There's a lot of music played because a few of us play guitar, but this year I played a lot less and Michael Fox [who plays footman Andrew Parker] did a lot of songs with Michelle." — Bang Showbiz



Lifestyle | Features



An Iraqi Shiite cleric guides youngsters as they beat their chests in mourning at their local mosque in the town of Midhatiya.



Iraqis Shiites beat their chests in mourning, at their local mosque in the town of Midhatiya.



Iraqis Shiites beat their chests in mourning, at their local mosque in the town of Midhatiya.



An Iraqi Shiite boy holds up a poster and a banner during a ceremony in the town of Midhatiya.



A young performer in a black robe, chants as Iraqi Shiite youths take part in a mourning ceremony at their local mosque in the town of Midhatiya, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of the capital Baghdad. — AFP photos

In Iraq, religious rap meets a chorus of controversy

As the black-clad rapper spat lyrics into the microphone on stage, the Iraqi boys below beat their chests in mourning. He was, after all, paying homage to slain Shiite figurehead Hussein. The ear-splitting drums reverberated around the hall as Iraqi teenagers shouted back rhymes venerating the Prophet Muhammad's grandson and other honored figures in Islam. In parts of conservative Iraq, a religious movement within the Shiite sect has adapted the traditional "latmiyat"-chanted verses mourning Muslim icons to Western-style rap in an effort to keep youth interested in religion. It appears to be working.

In Midhatiya, a town roughly 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Baghdad, teens in matching red shirts stood shoulder to shoulder in their local place of worship as if preparing for prayer. But when the speakers crackled to life, they blared a staccato drum beat and the voice of a young performer in a black robe, rhyming with a speed befitting New York's fiercest underground rap battles. Even the elderly religious figures along the back wall swayed to the rhythm, including Sheikh Salem Al-Janahi.

He hails from the Mahmoud Al-Sarkhi movement, which has championed "Husseini" rap and is therefore regularly accused of distorting conservative traditions. Straining to make himself heard over the loud music, Janahi told AFP that his more traditional counterparts "had gotten involved in corruption and politics, so young people began running away from religion."

Rhyming for religion

Religion and politics are deeply intertwined in Iraq, where government posts have been allocated according to sect since the US-led invasion in 2003. The country's 40 million people are mostly Shiites, with a burgeoning youth population navigating an increasingly modern, Westernized society. That, said "Husseini" rapper Karrar Al-Bederi, is exactly why this hybrid

style of worship is necessary. "Young people abandoned religion and morality because of backwards, classical clerics," Bederi said. In comments to AFP peppered with Quranic verses, he said that the refusal to meet young Muslims halfway had turned the youth towards "crime, drug use, ignorance and atheism."

To fight this, he and fellow Muslims appropriated rap—usually associated with the "invader" United States—to create a religiously-focused form of worship. "It has become one of the important ways we reach out to youth, to spread a message of peace, moderation, but morals as well," said Bederi. It has also brought social media stardom to some performers, whose modernized "latmiyats" have earned them tens of thousands of online views.

One video published on Facebook showed a rapper in jeans and a cap, standing in a grassy field featuring a tall date palm—Iraq's national tree. "My Lord is unrivalled, he taught me to act with respect. I want to talk about the cause of our imam," he sang. In other footage, men in green appeared to enter a trance, slamming their chests faster and faster to an electronic tune.

'Deviant movements'

But even as they electrify crowds, the raps spark anger among clerics, shocked to see traditional psalms so distorted in Iraq's rural south. Shiite Imam Latif Al-Amidi, for one, is not a fan. "Religious deviant movements that have emerged recently have taken advantage of weak religious knowledge among young people to introduce to Islam things that have nothing to do with religion," Amidi told AFP. "These movements brought singers, dancing and DJs into Islam, using the excuse that they want to attract youth." Aside from "anasheeds," which are hymns performed without instruments, the permissibility of music in Islamic worship is disputed.

Hardline clerics say Islam forbids all music, even in daily life outside the mosque. But other Muslim movements use drums and dance in their worship, including Iraq's Sufis. The "latmiyat" themselves predate Islam, going back around 4,000 years to Iraq's Babylonian history, but have their own icons in modern-day Iraq, including Bassem Al-Karbala.



Iraq's Shiite authorities have yet to issue a religious ruling (fatwa) on whether the rapped "latmiyat" is acceptable according to Shiite dogma. The format has never been performed or used as a style of worship in the country's two main Shiite holy cities, Najaf and Karbala. That has not deterred Bederi however, who told AFP: "We have to address young people with the tools they know." — AFP

'Intimate Audrey': Hepburn exhibition opens in Brussels

From personal pictures and dresses to film props and awards, an exhibition offering an intimate look at the life of late actress Audrey Hepburn has opened in Brussels, marking the 90th anniversary of the Hollywood star's birth in the Belgian city. Put together by her son Sean Hepburn Ferrer, "Intimate Audrey" features hundreds of private and professional photos - originals and reprints - as well as some movie memorabilia, such as the scooter used in the 1953 classic "Roman Holiday" for which

Hepburn won a best actress Oscar.

Hepburn Ferrer, whose father was US actor Mel Ferrer, said he wanted to offer a more personal perspective of the life of the British actress, who dedicated her later years to charity work and became a UNICEF goodwill ambassador. "She lived a humble life, a simple life, and maybe in there lies the key to why she is still so beloved today," he told Reuters. Hepburn was born in 1929 in the Brussels area of Ixelles to a Dutch mother and British father. She later

moved to London to pursue ballet training and eventually turned to acting, taking to the stage in New York in 1951 for Broadway play "Gigi".

She starred in a string of films in the 1950s and 1960s, including "Breakfast at Tiffany's", "Charade" and "My Fair Lady". Hepburn died in 1993 aged 63. On display are also Hepburn's fashion drawings and humanitarian writings. Hepburn Ferrer said one of the key features of the exhibition was a replica cherry blossom tree, a tribute to

the childhood home in Switzerland his parents bought in 1963 and remained Hepburn's residence until her death. "It is an unusual exhibition because it has been completely devoid of the Hollywood aspect of her career so it's the woman who is coming home, naked of the legend, of the icon," he said. "Intimate Audrey" runs Espace Vanderborcht until Aug 25. — Reuters



Producer Sean Hepburn Ferrer poses for the photograph on the eve of the inauguration on the exhibition on his parents British actress Audrey Hepburn and US actor and director Mel Ferrer.



Visitors look at a picture on the eve of the inauguration.



A visitor looks at a scooter on the eve of the inauguration on the exhibition on Audrey Hepburn and his father actor and retailer Mel Ferrer at the Espace Vanderborcht in Brussels. — AFP photos

Classifieds

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Partly cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 06/05/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	39 °C	25 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	39 °C	25 °C		
ABDALY	40 °C	20 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	41 °C	25 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	35 °C	24 °C		
SALMIYAH	34 °C	25 °C		
AHMADI	33 °C	26 °C		
NUWAISIB	34 °C	25 °C		
WAFRA	38 °C	23 °C		
SALMY	37 °C	21 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	05/07	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	41 °C	25 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	05/08	Hot and Partly cloudy	42 °C	27 °C	VRB-NE	08 - 28 km/h
Thursday	05/09	Hot and Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on	40 °C	27 °C	VRB-SE	12 - 40 km/h
Friday	05/10	Hot and Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	37 °C	29 °C	SE-VRB	12 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:36
Sunrise	05:02
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:26
Isha	19:51

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	37 °C
MIN. Temp.	26 °C
MAX. RH	57 %
MIN. RH	19 %
MAX. Wind	N 50 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
Khalidiya	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 Akinduro Ayobami Tolu with Nigerian passport number A06438366 has changed my name to Adegbola Ayobami Tolu. Hereafter, in all my dealings and documents, I will be known as Adegbola Ayobami Tolu. 7-5-2019

I, LATCHAIAH GARI PALANI KUMAR S/o LATCHAIAH GARI NARASA REDDY (Old Name) R/o D.No. 4/36, Latchaiahgarihalli, Naramrajupalli, Akepadu, Rajampet Mandal, Kadapa

District, A.P. Pin 516150 have changed my name as LATCHAIAHGARI PALANI KUMAR REDDY S/o LATCHAIAH GARI NARASA REDDY (New Name). (C 5526) 6-5-2019

I, Zeny Lemniota Azavedo r/o H.No. 186, Mokim Cunconim Goa would like to change my name from Zeny Lemniota Azavedo to Zeny Lemniota Azavedo and my mother's name from Lucy Francisca Josefina Caieiro to Lucy Josefina Francisquinha Caieiro as per the birth certificate. (C 5525) 5-5-2019

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
British Airways	22418064/5/6
Air France	22425635
Emirates	22430224
Air India	22921555
Air India EXPRESS	22456700
Sri Lanka Airlines	22438185/4
Egypt Air	22424444
Swiss Air	22421578
Saudia	22421516
Middle East Airlines	22426306
Lufthansa	22423073
PIA	22422493
Bangladesh Airlines	22421044
Indian Airlines	22452977/8
Oman Air	22456700
Turkish Airlines	22958787
Aeroflot	22453820/1
	22404838/9

Flight Schedule

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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 7/5/2019				Departure Flights on Tuesday 7/5/2019							
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	MSR	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	713	Sohag	00:10	THY	611	Cairo	13:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	MSC	406	Sohag	00:15	AXB	394	Istanbul	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	FBS	119	Sarajevo	14:45
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10	KAC	673	Dubai	14:50
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
RBG	1154	Alexandria	01:10	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50	FDB	5060	Dubai	15:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	RBG	1155	Luxor	02:00	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	417	Muscat	02:00	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:00	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	JZR	701	Asyut	02:00	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:25	JZR	111	Doha	02:10	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:50	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	JZR	707	Luxor	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	JZR	1233	Taif	16:25
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00	FEG	342	Sohag	16:55
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	UAE	858	Dubai	17:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:30	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	JZR	1221	Jeddah	05:40	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	155	Istanbul	17:50
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	RJA	643	Amman	07:00	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	KAC	623	Doha	07:00	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	362	Colombo	06:05	RBG	1552	Alexandria	07:05	JZR	253	Amman	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	167	Paris	07:15	JZR	511	Riyadh	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	BAW	156	London	07:40	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
RBG	1551	Alexandria	06:15	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:45	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
THY	6376	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	165	Rome	08:00	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	KAC	166	Dammam	09:00	JZR	501	Lahore	18:35
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	JZR	211	Jeddah	08:00	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	08:35	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	07:05	IRA	674	Lar	08:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	KAC	501	Beirut	08:50	KAC	331	Trivandrum	19:55
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
IRA	675	Lar	08:00	KAC	561	Amman	08:55	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	117	New York	09:05	KAC	357	Kochi	20:05
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
JZR	702	Asyut	08:25	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	NIA	0162	Cairo	20:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	691	Muscat	09:20	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	731	Cairo	09:45	FDB	058	Dubai	20:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
SAW	703	Damascus	09:30	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	JZR	221	Riyadh	09:55	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
JZR	708	Luxor	09:55	JZR	301	Istanbul	09:55	RBG	214	Sohag	21:10
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	101	London	10:05	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	SAW	704	Damascus	10:30	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	515	Tehran	10:35	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	1222	Jeddah	10:55	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
KAC	624	Doha	10:55	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	617	Doha	10:40	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	SVA	513	Riyadh	10:55	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10								

Prince Harry: From troubled playboy to happy family man

LONDON: Prince Harry, who became the father of a "very healthy boy" yesterday, has transformed himself from an angry young man into one of the British royal family's greatest assets. The younger son of the heir to the throne Prince Charles and the late Diana, princess of Wales, Harry, now 34, struggled with his role and for much of his youth seemed to want nothing more than to escape. But now, for all his wild child ways, he seems ready to enjoy the settled, stable family life he always craved, with his wife Meghan, the new baby and a new home.

"Mother and baby are doing incredibly well. It's been the most amazing experience I can ever possibly imagine," a beaming Harry announced in a statement to television cameras. The Duke of Sussex, who spent 10 years in the British army, serving two tours of duty in Afghanistan, hit the headlines for his partying and his outspoken criticism of the media. The prince rebuilt his reputation through his charity work with veterans, advocacy on mental health and by taking on more duties from his grandmother Queen Elizabeth II.

He appears to have inherited his late mother's ability to connect with people—as well as her sense of mischief—and, with Meghan, his brother

Prince William and sister-in-law Kate, has helped put a fresh face on the monarchy. Harry, now sixth in line to the throne, has said that Diana is always in his thoughts, and has championed many of her charitable causes, including taking an HIV test to raise awareness.

But he revealed that for a long time he struggled to cope with his mother's death in a Paris car crash in 1997, and sought professional help a few years ago. In a remarkably candid interview, the prince once admitted he came "very close to a complete breakdown on numerous occasions". He turned a corner and in July 2016 met Meghan Markle, a US television actress, on a blind date set up by a mutual friend. Their transatlantic romance quickly blossomed.

Prince Henry Charles Albert David of Wales was born on September 15, 1984, the "spare" to his brother William, who is one day set to inherit the throne. Both educated at the elite Eton school, their childhood was dominated by the messy breakdown of their parents' marriage and Diana's tragic death. The young prince walking behind her coffin—Harry only 12, his brother 15—was one of the most enduring images of Diana's funeral.

"Losing my mum at the age of 12, and therefore shutting down all of my emotions for the last 20 years, has had a quite serious effect on not only my personal life but also my work as well," Harry said. At one point, he seemed the archetypal "playboy prince", regularly photographed looking worse for wear and often accompanied by an attractive girl. He caused outrage in 2005 when photographs of him in a Nazi Afrika Korps fancy dress outfit made front-page news.

That was the year he entered the army, a conventional path for royals and one that he later admitted "was the best escape I've ever had" from the constant public attention. In 2008, he had to be pulled out of Afghanistan after a news blackout about his deployment was breached, leading to fears he would be targeted by the Taliban. But he returned in 2012, piloting Apache helicopters during a 20-week tour of duty—only to make headlines again when he said his job was to take insurgents "out of the game".

He left the military in 2015 rather than take an army desk job, and began to focus on royal duties. The meeting with Meghan in July 2016 came out of the blue, but both were quickly lovestruck. — AFP



LONDON: Members of staff set up an official notice on an easel at the gates of Buckingham Palace yesterday announcing the birth of a son to Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex. — AFP

Tanker truck blast kills 55 in Niamey

NIAMEY: Fifty-five people died in Niger's capital Niamey overnight when an overturned tanker truck exploded as crowds tried to collect spilt fuel, authorities and witnesses said yesterday. The blast on the RN1 route near Niamey's international airport left the burnt truck's wreckage, motorbikes and debris scattered over the road. Nearby houses were also damaged by fire.

The toll from the explosion was 55 dead and 36 injured, an interior ministry

spokesman said. "Motorbike riders and people were all around the truck when it exploded all of a sudden," a local trader said. "I saw at least 40 dead." Witnesses said people were trying to collect petrol leaking from the truck, which had overturned on railway tracks, when the explosion happened.

"It just before midnight when I went out and I saw the truck overturned. People came from everywhere to take gas, then I saw fire on its side and everything burst into flames," a college student told AFP. Niger, a poor West African country, has been trying to stamp out fuel smuggling from neighboring Nigeria. Nigeria, a major oil producer, has seen similar deadly accidents and explosions in the past when people try to steal fuel from oil pipelines. — AFP

Duchess of Sussex: LA actress taking on fairytale role

LONDON: Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, once struggled for roles but the former actress took centre-stage on one of the world's biggest shows yesterday, giving birth to a "very healthy boy" who is seventh in line to the British throne. The saga of the British royal family knows no bounds and the birth of the child was eagerly awaited, at home and abroad, with the 37-year-old wife of Prince Harry determined to do things her way.

The couple tied the knot at Windsor Castle last May and since then, Meghan has quickly had to get used to the strictures and criticism that comes with the monarchy. It is a long way

from her former life as a television star. She made her name as savvy paralegal Rachel Zane in the US legal drama series "Suits", but cultivated a high profile for herself outside the show. She became a United Nations advocate for women's empowerment and a global ambassador for the World Vision Canada relief agency.

The Los Angeles-born actress had more than two million followers on her now-closed personal Instagram account and ran a successful lifestyle blog, The Tig. Markle was also revealed as the anonymous blogger behind "The Working Actress", which chronicled the struggles of hustling for parts in Hollywood. "She's very focused and someone who has been very ambitious," said royal writer Andrew Morton, who has penned a biography of Markle. "Her great phrase is 'make the change'," he said.

Rachel Meghan Markle was born on August 4, 1981 to Thomas Markle, a white, Emmy

Award-winning television lighting director who worked on top US shows like "Married With Children", and Doria Ragland, a black social worker and yoga instructor. On her mother's side, her ancestors were slaves who worked on cotton plantations in Georgia. Her mother's surname is taken from a slave owner.

On her father's side, genealogists have traced her ancestry back to king Robert I of Scotland, who reigned from 1306 to 1329. Markle's parents split when she was two and divorced five years later. She is now estranged from her father and his other children, her older half-sister and half-brother. They made their presence felt in the wedding build-up, with Tom Junior scathing about her attitude towards the family and Samantha Grant venting forthrightly in several media outlets.

Meanwhile her father set himself up for staged paparazzi photos which backfired, then suffered chest pains and needed heart surgery, causing him to miss her big day. — AFP

Self-evaluation in Holy month...

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And if you do not see Him, definitely He sees you. Moreover, avoid saying a word to someone for which you will have to apologize, and be determined to eschew coveting what people have." (Al-Albani rated it as Saheeh (authentic) in Saheeh Al-Ja'mei # 3, 776)

Dear readers, self-evaluation does not mean you deny yourself the enjoyments of this life. So long as you enjoy yourself within the parameters of God's com-

mands, there is no problem with that. However, you should make sure you strike a balance between your life enjoyments and worshipping God. God Almighty tells us what can be translated as: "... but seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters." (Al-Qasas 28: 77)

Courtesy of the TIES Center: the TIES Center aims at empower Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and interfaith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, please call hotline 94079777 or 25231015/6 or e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.

towards the end of next year, a focal point for governments and campaigners. The Global Assessment contained a litany of estimates made after a three-year review of some 15,000 scientific papers that showed the profound impact of the rise of a globalised industrial society on the planet over the past half century.

Combining wide-ranging disciplines to measure how the loss of the natural world affects human societies, the report identified a range of risks, from the disappearance of insects vital for pollinating food crops, to the destruction of coral reefs that support fish populations that sustain coastal communities, or the loss of medicinal plants. The report found that the average abundance of native species in most major land-based habitats has fallen by at least 20 percent, mostly since 1900.

The threatened list includes more than 40 percent of amphibian species, almost 33 percent of reef-forming corals, and more than a third of all marine mammals. The picture was less clear for insect species, but a tentative estimate suggests 10 per cent are at risk of extinction. "We have been running from one frontier to another frontier trying to find cheap nature (to exploit) in every corner of the planet," Eduardo Brondizio, a professor of anthropology at Indiana University in the United States who co-chaired the Global Assessment said. "The key message: business as usual has to end." — Reuters

three European parties to the deal, Britain, France and Germany, announced the establishment of a special payments system called INSTEX-Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges—in late January as a means to bypass renewed US sanctions.

The trade mechanism meant to save the deal, however, was dismissed by Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as a "bitter joke" as the difference between EU obligations and their proposals was "as far as the earth is from the sky". In a move escalating tensions, the US National Security Advisor John Bolton said on Sunday that the United States was sending an aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Middle East in a "clear and unmistakable" message to Iran.

The United States was also aiming to put more pressure on the Iranian economy by targeting its petrochemical sales in a new round of sanctions, the Wall Street Journal reported. The White House also ended oil purchase waivers granted to Iran's main customers—including China, India and Turkey—meant to cut Iran's access to its main source of foreign currency revenue as part of its campaign of "maximum pressure" against the Islamic republic. — Agencies

Scientists warn 'a million species at...

Continued from Page 1

Robert Watson, a British environmental scientist who chairs the IPBES, said it would be possible to start conserving, restoring and using nature sustainably only if societies were prepared to confront "vested interests" committed to preserving the status quo. "The report also tells us that it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global," Watson said in a statement.

"By transformative change, we mean a fundamental, system-wide reorganization across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values." The report's blunt language echoed the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which said in October that profound economic and social changes would be needed to curb greenhouse gases quickly enough to avert the most devastating consequences of a warming world.

The findings will also add to pressure for countries to agree bold action to protect wildlife at a major conference on biodiversity due to take place in China

Israel-Gaza border falls quiet...

Continued from Page 1

mediated a truce, and just as Gazans were preparing to begin the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. "Over the last two days we struck Hamas and Islamic Jihad with great force. We hit over 350 targets. We struck at terrorist leaders and operatives and we destroyed terrorist buildings," Netanyahu said in statement.

"The campaign is not over and it demands patience and good judgment. We are preparing to continue. The goal has been, and remains, ensuring quiet and security for the residents of the south." There was little enthusiasm for the ceasefire in Israeli rocket-hit communities near Gaza. Some residents said Israel agreed to the truce because it did not want rocket fire to spoil the Independence Day holiday this week or Eurovision Song Contest finale the begin in Tel Aviv on May 14.

"In a month, in two weeks, in a month and a half, it will all happen again - we achieved nothing. I think Israel needs to strike them very, very hard so that they learn their lesson," said Haim Cohen, 69, a retired electrician from the city of Ashdod. In Gaza, Palestinians attended funerals and excreted bodies from collapsed buildings. "This is a very tough Ramadan. We will not feel festive," said Sumayya Usruf, whose cousin, husband and four-month-old child were killed in an apartment in northern Gaza.

The violence began when a sniper from Islamic Jihad fired across Gaza's fenced border at Israeli troops on routine patrol, wounding two soldiers, according to the Israeli military. Islamic Jihad accused Israel of delaying implementation of previous understandings brokered by Egypt in an effort to end violence and ease the economic hardships of blockaded Gaza. The measures included extending Gaza's fishing zone, allowing international and Arab investment and job creation projects, improving electricity supply and broadening the amount and vari-

ety of goods moved into the enclave through Israel.

An official in one Gaza militant group, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said it had agreed to a truce on condition that those understandings would go into effect. There was no official word from Israel on any bargaining behind the ceasefire. Netanyahu's political opponents have accused him of effectively paying "protection" in recent months to Hamas, by agreeing to allow into Gaza cash aid from Qatar, to keep the border quiet.

Some 2 million Palestinians live in Gaza, the economy of which has suffered years of Israeli and Egyptian blockades as well as recent foreign aid cuts and sanctions by the Palestinian Authority, Hamas' West Bank-based rival. Israel says its blockade is necessary to stop arms reaching Hamas, with which it has fought three wars since the group seized control of Gaza in 2007, two years after Israel withdrew its settlers and troops from the small coastal enclave.

One of Islamic Jihad's leaders in Gaza said on Sunday that the group was trying to counter efforts by the United States to revive peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. US President Donald Trump's Middle East team has said it will unveil its peace plan in June, after Ramadan is over. Peace negotiations have been moribund since 2014.

Israeli military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Jonathan Conricus said that over the past few weeks Islamic Jihad had been trying to perpetrate attacks against Israel in order to destabilize the border. "This isn't some local initiative, it is part of a strategic choice to escalate matters," Conricus said. Israel regards Islamic Jihad's ally, Iran, as its biggest threat, and Tehran's military has built a presence in Syria, backing President Bashar Al-Assad, during an eight-year civil war there.

Israel has vowed to stop Iran entrenching in Syria, repeatedly bombing Iranian targets in the country and those of allied Lebanese Hezbollah militia. Trump's national security adviser John Bolton said on Sunday the administration was deploying a carrier strike group and bombers to the Middle East in response to troubling "indications and warnings" from Iran and to show the United States will retaliate with "unrelenting force" to any attack. — Reuters

United States deploys naval...

Continued from Page 1

According to the agency, the measures would include the "partial and complete reduction of some of Iran's commitments and restarting part of nuclear activities halted in the framework of the JCPOA."

The report said the measures would be in line with two sections of the accord. The two sections - 26 and 36 - open the way for Iran to cease some or all of its commitments under the deal if the United States or other parties fail to adhere to it, including the reimposition of sanctions. "This will be Iran's first step toward reacting to the US withdrawal from the JCPOA and also European countries' failure to live up to their commitments," said ISNA.

European Union officials "who have just made unfulfilled promises during the last year" had been unofficially informed of the decision, the agency added. The

Duchess of Sussex gives...

Continued from Page 1

expecting their first baby in October, at the outset of a 16-day tour of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga. Commentators at the time believed the baby, Queen Elizabeth II's eighth great-grandchild, was due in late April. The 34-year-old prince and Meghan, 37, reportedly opted for a home birth at their new Frogmore Cottage residence, on the grounds of Windsor Castle west of London.

The move breaks with the tradition followed by Prince Harry's brother William and his wife Kate, whose three children were all born in the private wing of St Mary's Hospital in London. Buckingham Palace also said last month Prince Harry and Meghan wanted to keep the arrival of their first child "private". That also contrasted with William and Kate, whose newborns were immediately shown off by the couple in front of the world's media. They have three children:

five-year-old Prince George, Princess Charlotte, 4, and one-year-old Prince Louis.

As April came to an end without news of the birth, Britons have been on tenterhooks with royal-watchers eagerly awaiting the latest addition to the family. Fans have already been seen gathering in Windsor as news that Meghan had gone into labor broke yesterday lunchtime.

There has been fevered speculation in recent weeks over everything from the newborn's gender and name - to whether it will have Harry's ginger hair. The prince said the couple were still thinking about names. "The baby's a little bit overdue so we've had a little bit of time to think about it," he added. "That's the next bit." Some British bookmakers had stopped taking bets last week on when the baby would be born, believing that it had already secretly arrived.

Meghan was a popular US actress before marrying Prince Harry last May at Windsor Castle. She has been hailed as a breath of fresh air in a stuffy institution. Meghan, who grew up in California and is a long-time advocate of holistic treatments, has reportedly raised eyebrows during her pregnancy with some of her new-age ideals and US glitz. How she intends to bring up the baby will only increase the scrutiny. — AFP

Sports

Padres beat Dodgers on pinch hitter, walk-off grand slam

German, Yankees beat Twins in eight innings

SAN DIEGO: Pinch hitter Hunter Renfroe hit a walk-off grand slam off Los Angeles Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen with two out in the bottom of the ninth Sunday afternoon to give the host San Diego Padres an 8-5 victory to avoid being swept in a three-game series at Petco Park. Chris Taylor had put the Dodgers ahead 5-4 with a two-run homer in the top of the eighth off Padres reliever Robbie Erlin. Dodgers pitchers had held the Padres to three hits and retired 14 straight—including seven straight by strikeouts at one point—when Eric Hosmer opened the bottom of the ninth with a single to left off Jansen, who had picked up saves in each of the first two games of the series. Manuel Margot and Wil Myers followed with back-to-back bunt singles to the left side to load the bases with no one out. Two outs later, Renfroe belted his fifth career grand slam—and seventh homer of the season—on a cut fastball. It was the first walk-off win of the season for the Padres, and the first pinch-hit walk-off grand slam in franchise history.

PIRATES 5, A'S 3 (13 INNINGS)

Starling Marte hit a three-run homer in the bottom of the 13th inning to lift Pittsburgh over visiting Oakland. The game was tied 1-1 from the seventh inning until the 13th, when the A's took a 3-1 lead on Kendrys Morales' RBI single and Stephen Piscotty's RBI double. Pittsburgh's Cole Tucker singled with one out in the bottom of the 13th against Fernando Rodney (0-2), and Jung Ho Kang walked. Adam Frazier drove in Tucker with a single to make it 3-2, and Marte followed with a shot into the bullpen in center. The A's were without closer Blake Treinen because of a sore right elbow.

TIGERS 5, ROYALS 2 (10 INNINGS)

Brandon Dixon blasted a walk-off three-run homer in the 10th inning to lift Detroit over visiting Kansas City. Nicholas Castellanos and Niko Goodrum reached on infield singles prior to Dixon's two-out home run off Ian Kennedy (0-1). Dixon entered the game in the eighth inning as a pinch hitter. Buck Farmer (2-2) recorded one out to gain the victory. Castellanos and Miguel Cabrera each had two hits and an RBI. Jeimer Candelario reached base for the 18th consecutive game with two walks.

GIANTS 6, REDS 5

Brandon Crawford's pinch-hit, two-run homer in the ninth inning capped visiting San Francisco's second come-from-behind win over Cincinnati in the last three days. The Giants fought all the way back from a 4-0, first-inning deficit, 48 hours after stunning the Reds with a late surge for a 12-11 win in a game they trailed 8-0 in the third on Friday. Giants closer Will Smith gave up a two-out solo home run to Kyle Farmer, his fifth of the season, before closing out the bottom of the ninth for his ninth save. The rally spoiled a hot start for Cincinnati, which plated its first four batters of the game. That included three homers—by Eugenio Suarez, Jesse Winker and Derek Dietrich—on three consecutive pitches from San Francisco starter Jeff Samardzija, the first time any team has homered on three straight pitches since June 12, 2007.

BRAVES 3, MARLINS 1 (10 INNINGS)

Ender Inciarte slapped an opposite-field, RBI double down the third-base line in the 10th inning to put Atlanta on top for good in a victory at Miami. Atlanta started the 10th-inning rally when pinch-hitter Josh Donaldson led off with a full-count walk. Donaldson, who missed three recent games due to a calf injury, was lifted for a pinch runner — pitcher Max Fried. Inciarte then faked a bunt before producing his decisive double. The Marlins had a chance to get Fried, who was stumbling badly as he approached the plate. But catcher Chad Wallach couldn't handle shortstop Miguel Rojas' one-hop relay throw, and Fried dove for the plate safely.

CUBS 13, CARDINALS 5

Willson Contreras played a key role in three rallies, and Kris Bryant added a grand slam late as Chicago routed visiting St. Louis for its seventh straight win. Contreras went 2-for-3 with two RBIs, two runs scored and one walk. Albert Almora Jr. slugged a pair of doubles, and Anthony Rizzo and David Bote added two RBIs each to help power Chicago's offense. The Cardinals suffered their fourth consecutive loss, as Adam Wainwright (3-3) allowed five hits, two walks and five runs in five innings.

ASTROS 10, ANGELS 4

Alex Bregman hit a grand slam, and Justin Verlander overcame a shaky start to lead Houston over Los Angeles in Monterrey, Mexico, completing a two-game sweep in the Mexico Series. Bregman enjoyed his stay in Monterrey, going 5-for-10 with three home runs and eight RBIs in the two games. Michael Brantley and Carlos Correa also homered for Houston, which scored 24 runs on 27 hits in the two-game series. Verlander gave up three runs in the first two innings, but shut out the Angels until the seventh, when Angels catcher Jonathan Lucroy hit the second of his two home runs. Verlander (5-1) gave up four runs on five hits and one walk with seven strikeouts in 6 1/3 innings.

RED SOX 9, WHITE SOX 2

Xander Bogaerts belted his fifth career grand slam to cap a seven-run eighth inning as Boston won at Chicago. Mitch Moreland drove in his second run with a go-ahead RBI single to start the eighth-inning uprising for the Red Sox, who erupted for nine runs in the third inning of Saturday's 15-2 romp. J.D. Martinez and Eduardo Nunez each had an RBI single and Brandon Workman (2-1) tossed one scoreless inning to pick up the win as Boston recorded its sixth victory in seven games to move within one game of .500.

MARINERS 10, INDIANS 0

Jay Bruce hit a grand slam in the first inning, and Erik Swanson pitched six scoreless innings of one-hit ball for his first major league victory as Seattle won at Cleveland. Mitch Haniger and Edwin Encarnacion also homered for the Mariners, who snapped a six-game losing streak during which they had been outscored 53-12. Swanson (1-3), a right-hander acquired in the offseason from the New York Yankees as part of the trade for left-



SAN DIEGO: Wil Myers #4 of the San Diego Padres scores ahead of the tag of Austin Barnes #15 of the Los Angeles Dodgers during the fourth inning of a baseball game at Petco Park in San Diego, California. —AFP

hander James Paxton, allowed only three baserunners through the first five innings, all via walks. The only hit Swanson allowed was a two-out double in the sixth by Jose Ramirez.

ROCKIES 8, DIAMONDBACKS 7

Raimel Tapia tripled in three runs during a five-run eighth inning, and Colorado rallied to beat Arizona in Denver. Ryan McMahon had an RBI single, and pitcher German Marquez had a two-run single for the Rockies. Scott Oberg (1-0) got the win with an inning of relief, and Wade Davis pitched the ninth for his fifth save. Eduardo Escobar and Blake Swihart homered for the Diamondbacks, who had their six-game road winning streak snapped.

BREWERS 3, METS 2

Christian Yelich hit his major league-leading 15th home run in his return to the lineup to lead Milwaukee to a win over visiting New York, completing a three-game sweep. The outfielder, who missed the last six games with a back injury, clubbed a two-run homer off Mets starter Jason Vargas into Miller Park's upper deck for a 3-0 lead in the third inning. Milwaukee starter Zach Davies (4-0) tossed 7 2/3 innings of two-run ball, allowing six hits while striking out five and walking one. During his MVP season in 2018, Yelich hit his 15th homer in his 91st game. He belted his 15th in just his 31st game this season, breaking a tie with Los Angeles' Cody Bellinger for tops in the league.

YANKEES 4, TWINS 1 (EIGHT INNINGS)

Domingo German pitched 6 2/3 strong innings to become the second six-game winner in the major leagues, and New York recorded a rain-shortened victory over visiting Minnesota. After starting late to avoid a delayed start, the game was halted in the bottom of

the eighth with Gleyber Torres on third and a 3-1 count to Brett Gardner. After a 61-minute delay, the game was called. German (6-1) joined Tampa Bay's Tyler Glasnow as the only six-game winners in the majors by allowing a run on four hits. He struck out seven, walked three and threw 69 of his career-high 108 pitches for strikes.

PHILLIES 7, NATIONALS 1

Zach Eflin had another strong start, and host Philadelphia took advantage of defensive miscues to beat Washington on a rainy day, taking two of three games in the series. Eflin (4-3) allowed just one run on four hits in seven innings with five strikeouts in a 108-pitch outing. Washington starter Anibal Sanchez (0-5) fell to 5-11 in his career against the Phillies despite fanning a season-high nine batters in 4 2/3 innings, while allowing two runs, none earned. The Nationals have won just three series this year—losing five series in a row—and lost for the 11th time in 16 games.

RANGERS 10, BLUE JAYS 2

Asdrubal Cabrera continued his success off Toronto right-hander Clay Buchholz, driving in four runs in the first three innings as Texas won the series finale in Arlington. Cabrera came into the game 9-for-18 in his career off Buchholz with two doubles and two home runs. He doubled in the first run of the game in a three-run second inning, and smashed a three-run homer in the third to make it 6-1. Rougned Odor ended an 0-for-21 skid with a two-run homer in the second inning and finished 2-for-4 with three RBIs for Texas, in the rubber game of the series.

RAYS-ORIOLES PPD

The final game of the series was postponed due to inclement weather in Baltimore. The game will be made up as part of a split doubleheader on July 13. — Reuters

IOC chief calls Semenya case 'complicated'

BRISBANE: International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach yesterday called the controversial gender case of South African runner Caster Semenya "extremely complicated and delicate" and said an expert panel will study its implications. Two-time Olympic champion Semenya last week lost a court challenge against the International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) over plans to force some women to regulate their testosterone levels. The decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport means female athletes with elevated testosterone will have to take suppressive treatment if they wish to compete as women in certain events. The IAAF argued that "hyperandrogenic" athletes—or those

with "differences of sexual development" (DSD) — had an unfair advantage over others. Bach told AFP in Brisbane that the IOC would create a group of "experts from science, from ethics as well as athletes' representatives and from international federations" to examine the ruling. It will include IOC medical director Richard Budgett and an IAAF official who will "study this extremely complicated and delicate problem". "This is a case that should be taken up with the international federations, it's their rules that are involved, their technical regulations," he said, adding that he had "no idea" when the group would reach any conclusions. The World Medical Association has urged doctors not to enforce the controversial new rules for classifying female athletes, warning that attempts to do so would breach ethics codes. The DSD rules—first adopted last year but suspended pending the legal battle—are due to come into effect on May 8. Semenya is mulling an appeal. Bach is in Brisbane to meet



BRISBANE: International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach attends a press conference in Brisbane yesterday. — AFP

Queensland state officials who are considering a bid for the city to host the 2032 Olympics, before heading to the nearby Gold Coast for a summit of sports federations. — AFP

Bach boxing comments undervalue International Federations: AIBA chief

SYDNEY: The executive director of AIBA, the governing body of amateur boxing, has hit out at Olympic chief Thomas Bach for suggesting putting together an alternative organisation to run the sport at next year's Tokyo Games would "not be rocket science". AIBA faces expulsion from the Olympic movement after an inquiry into its finances and governance reports at the end of the month, potentially leaving in limbo the boxing competition at the 2020 Summer Games. International Olympic Committee President Bach said on Saturday that alternative arrangements could be put in place to ensure boxing retained its spot at the Games and made light of concerns about the lack of time available to do so. "I heard Mr Bach's comment and it was very concerning because it certainly minimised what work goes into the preparation for such monumental event," Tom Virgets told Reuters by telephone on Monday. "That wasn't just minimising us, that was minimising every IF (International Federation). I would certainly hope that was just a bad choice of words, I hope he is not that far removed from the work of Olympic programmes that he actually believes that.

"The Olympics needs IFs and we should not forget that." While the IOC organises the Olympic Games as a whole, the federations, who are gathering this week on Australia's Gold Coast for their annual Sportaccord summit, run their own sports competitions within that framework. Expulsion from the IOC when the inquiry reports to the executive board on May 22 would rob AIBA of its main source of funding and be a devastating blow to the body which has organised Olympic boxing for 73 years.

"When you are faced with a significant issue like this, it would be irresponsible if the executive committee was not taking a look at all of its options and making a determination of what was in the best interests of the organisation," Virgets added. "To me, this should not be looked as AIBA being defiant, no! AIBA is practising proper and good governance. Isn't this what we're supposed to do?" Moustahsane took charge in March when Gafur Rahimov suspended himself from the post because of his presence on a U.S. Treasury Department sanctions list 'for providing material support' to a criminal organisation.

The Uzbek strongly denies the allegations. Virgets does not shy away from the fact that AIBA was an 'absolute mess' before a reform process commenced 18 months ago but he believes the IOC inquiry lacks 'due process' and risked producing a 'one-sided, biased report'.

The American believes AIBA have done everything asked of them by the IOC to sort out the problems that bedevilled the organisation and are willing to do more if shortcomings are pointed out to them. AIBA will have a chance to give verbal testimony to the inquiry in addition to the 7,000 pages of documents they have already submitted, but Virgets believes there will not be enough time to sufficiently inform the IOC's decision.

"We will have approximately two hours to address all the concerns of this inquiry committee and then, less than 36 hours later, they give a report," he said. "Considering the monumental decision, shouldn't we be given more time to talk? And shouldn't the executive board have an opportunity to address AIBA to give us an opportunity to rebut? "We just find this inappropriate." — Reuters

LEGAL ACTION

Reports in Europe at the weekend said AIBA interim president Mohamed Moustahsane was proposing a vote of the executive committee on taking legal action



DOHA: South Africa's Caster Semenya is congratulated after winning the women's 800m during the IAAF Diamond League competition in Doha. —AFP

Sports

Transformed England favourites to win World Cup, says Gavaskar

Morgan's men have played a fearless brand of cricket in recent years

MUMBAI: India batting great Sunil Gavaskar believes England are a transformed one-day international side since their shock exit from the 2015 World Cup and rates them as favourites to win their maiden crown on home soil in July.

Eoin Morgan's side, whose quest for a first 50-overs title begins against South Africa at The Oval on May 30, top the world rankings enter the tournament as the one of the most consistent teams in the format.

"England are the favourites. Simply because of the way they are playing cricket, the complete turnaround in their cricketering attitude and approach after their disastrous 2015 World Cup," Gavaskar told Reuters in an interview.

"England have got a very good team, they have got lots of confidence. You have seen them in all the recent matches and they have been playing outstanding cricket."

Morgan's men have played a fearless brand of cricket in the recent years and since the start of 2018 have come out on top in bilateral ODI series against World Cup holders Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and India.

Gavaskar believes having home advantage could also be telling after Australia won as hosts in 2015 and India did the same four years earlier.

"If you go by what has happened in the last couple of World Cups, the host team has won," he added.

"But, of course, in cricket anything can happen. While England start the favourites, there are other teams which are also playing some good cricket."

Gavaskar was speaking after pledging to sponsor 34 paediatric heart surgeries for economically

deprived children at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani International Centre for Child Heart Care at the satellite city of Navi Mumbai.

The semi-rural setting was a far cry from the glamorous environs of Gavaskar's normal workplace as a TV media pundit and rather than former cricketers, he was surrounded by medical professionals who treat children for free.

His study of the game from the commentary box has convinced him that holders Australia, with Steve Smith and David Warner back in the fold after their ball-tampering bans, and a resurgent West Indies are other title contenders.

Virat Kohli's India side will also post a big challenge, the 69-year-old felt.

"I think these are the four teams that can really stand out," added former India captain and opening batsman Gavaskar, who once held the record for most test runs and centuries in the longest format.

Gavaskar said a hot English summer could add to the excitement of the World Cup as the pitches would be drier and make shot-making easier for the batsmen.

The format for the May 30-July 14 tournament has also seen a change from the previous years with all 10 teams playing each other before the top four advance to the semi-finals.

"This should be a very, very interesting tournament and I think the format is the best you can have because you are playing every team unlike in two groups," said Gavaskar, who was part of the Indian team that beat the mighty West Indies to win the 1983 World Cup.



CARDIFF: England's Eoin Morgan hits a six to win the game during the international Twenty20 cricket match between England and Pakistan at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff, south Wales. England won the game by 7 wickets with 4 balls left. —AFP

"You can have a bogey team with whom you lose in bilateral matches but they could be in another group and you might never play them.

"So you can win without having played your bogey team (in the past) while this format, where each team plays each other, I think is the best." — Reuters

Football pioneer Anderson calls for harsh penalties for racist abuse

LONDON: Clubs or countries whose fans racially abuse players should be fined millions, docked points or even expelled from competitions, Viv Anderson, the first black footballer to play for England, told AFP.

The 62-year-old former full-back lambasted UEFA's decision to fine Montenegro's football authorities 20,000 euros (\$22,400) for their fans' racial abuse of England players, including Raheem Sterling and Danny Rose, in a Euro 2020 qualifier in March.

Anderson, an integral part of Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest side that won two European Cups and went on to play for Manchester United and Arsenal, said unless there was a real deterrent racism would not be quelled at football matches.

"If a fine is a million pounds, you dock points and chuck the team out of the competition the associations will soon wake up and go we need to do something about this," said Anderson, speaking at the Sport Resolutions Annual Conference 2019 in London last week.

"By fining Montenegro 20,000 euros that's actually saying 'we accept what they are doing, just get on with it'. There has to be a serious deterrent. If you fine them millions, ban them and dock points, see how quickly it is remedied."

Anderson, who went on to win 30 caps for England, drew a comparison with the punishment for acid attacks in Britain. "When one man got 20 years (in December 2017) for an attack in a club, there have not been many acid crimes since then," said Anderson.

He says it is not enough for players to leave the pitch in protest—administrators should take the lead if their players are racially abused. "You can't have teams and players walk off the pitch. It has to come from the top," he said.

"Whoever runs Tottenham says to Harry Kane if that happens on the field you have the authority to take the team off. Same with the FA and other governing bodies — they say whatever repercussions come from that, we will deal with it."

Anderson, whose 12-year-old son Freddie has caught the football bug and is a member of the Manchester City Academy, admires the manner in which City forward Sterling and Tottenham defender Rose have spoken out about racism.

"Them speaking out can only be good," said Anderson. "My professional mind would be thinking, (if I were) Raheem Sterling, I only want to win the league or if I were Danny Rose to play in the Champions League semi-finals. But fair play to them, they came out and made a point and have done it very well."

'CRYING SHAME'

Anderson—who has not worked in football since 2001 after seven years as assistant manager to Bryan Robson at Middlesbrough—says he hopes players like Sterling and Rose stay in the game after retirement despite threats from Rose, in particular, to quit the game over the issue of racist abuse.

"It would be a crying shame if you have Rose saying they want to get out of the game," he said. "You need people like them as role models to get to the next level. The likes of me, Cyrille Regis and Laurie Cunningham and all the others who came beforehand proved we can do it on the playing field. The next step up is as managers and administrators." Anderson, who runs an app which looks after retired sportsmen and women, experienced racism when he was a raw 17-year-old warming up as a substitute for Forest. — AFP

Warner, Smith help Australia edge NZ

BRISBANE: David Warner hit a quickfire 39 and Steve Smith 22 yesterday in their first appearance for Australia since a major ball-tampering scandal as the home team edged a second-string New Zealand by one wicket in a practice match.

The Australians were set a target of 216 at Allan Border Field in Brisbane as they warm up for their World Cup defence, and scraped home with 10 balls to spare thanks to a tail-end rescue act.

They have now won nine one-dayers in a row, although this was an unofficial game and not counted as a full international.

Skipper Aaron Finch continued his rich vein of form with a measured 52, but fellow opener Usman Khawaja fell cheaply—bringing Warner to the crease, to warm applause from the crowd.

He survived a dropped catch on nought before clicking into gear and turning on the form that saw him average 69.20 in 12 innings in the Indian Premier League.

Warner hammered 39 off 43 balls before falling to leg-spinner Todd Astle attempting a reverse sweep.

That brought out Smith who started nervously before hitting a pair of boundaries. He spent 43 balls in the middle before being caught behind off Matt Henry.

It was the pair's first game in Australian colours since serving year-long bans for their part in the "Sandpaper-gate" ball-tampering scandal in Cape Town that rocked Australian cricket.

After Smith departed, Australia lost five for 42 before an impressive 34 from Nathan Coulter-Nile helped steer them home.

Earlier, Pat Cummins grabbed two wickets in his first over before New Zealand, missing Kane



BRISBANE: Australia's David Warner plays a shot during a one-day cricket practice match between Australia and New Zealand in Brisbane yesterday. —AFP

Williamson, Martin Guptill and Trent Boult, recovered to post respectable 215 off 46.1 overs

Tom Blundell led the fightback and top scored with 77. Cummins ended with 3-36 off eight overs, with Nathan Coulter-Nile and Jason Behrendorff also

grabbing three apiece.

Australia play another two games against New Zealand this week before heading to England where they open their World Cup campaign against Afghanistan on June 1 in Bristol. — AFP

Pandya brothers take Mumbai to top of IPL rankings

NEW DELHI: India's star all-rounder Hardik Pandya is known for his explosive batting but it was his bowling partnership with brother Krunal that took Mumbai Indians to the top of the IPL table at the end of the group stage.

Hardik, who will be a key member of India's World Cup team in England, dismissed Kolkata Knight Riders dangerous Chris Lynn and Shubman Gill in consecutive overs to break up a threatening partnership and earn the man-of-the-match award late Sunday.

Big brother Krunal gave away just 14 runs from his four overs of slow left-arm bowling as Kolkata were restricted to 133-7 off 20 overs. Mumbai made 134-1 in 16.1 overs for a crushing nine wicket victory that set up a playoff game against defending champions Chennai Super Kings today.

While Mumbai captain Rohit Sharma made an unbeaten 55 to lead the run-chase, credit went to the team's bowlers. Delighting in the recognition of his right-arm medium pace, Hardik Pandya predicted the game against old rivals Chennai would be a "cracker".

"To be honest as a batsman, there is nothing better than hitting a ball. People don't expect a lot from my bowling, neither do I, but it feels

nice," the 25-year-old said after picking up his award. "When you can do something people are not expecting with our bowling, I'm happy."

And Pandya said he was ready to strike again as a bowler for Mumbai as they stake a claim to become the first team to win four Indian Premier League titles—as well as India. "I definitely look at myself as a four-over bowler, I am ready to do whatever my team wants me to do, bowl four, 10 or even 15 overs in a Test match," he said.

Sharma praised the whole team for using the Wankhede stadium pitch to vary the attack against Kolkata. Mumbai made a quiet start to the T20 league but won three of their last five games while defending champions Chennai lost three of theirs.

"We always come back well in the second half of this tournament," said Sharma. "In all the three trophies that we've won, the boys have picked themselves up in the business end. IPL is a funny tournament, any team can beat the other on their day."

The winner of Tuesday's game will go straight into the IPL final in Hyderabad on Sunday. The loser will take on the winner of tomorrow's elimination game between Delhi Capitals and Sunrisers Hyderabad for the second place in the final. — AFP

Blues beat Stars to force game seven in NHL playoffs

WASHINGTON: Jaden Schwartz and Sammy Blais scored third-period goals 33 seconds apart Sunday to help spark the St. Louis Blues over host Dallas 4-1 and equalize their National Hockey League playoff series.

The victory leveled the best-of-seven Western Conference second-round series at 3-3, setting up Tuesday's game seven decider in St. Louis. "It was a do-or-die game for us," said Blues standout Colton Parayko. "I was proud of how we played in the third period. Now it's going to be even bigger in game seven."

The winner will face either the Colorado Avalanche or San Jose Sharks in the Western Conference final. St. Louis has never won the Stanley Cup since the team began play in 1967 and the Blues haven't reached the NHL final since 1970.

The Stars won their only Stanley Cup in 1999 and they have not reached the conference finals since 2008. Blues defenseman Alex Pietrangolo opened the scoring 63 seconds into the game, St. Louis producing the contest's first eight shots on goal.

Tyler Seguin answered with an equalizer for Dallas, the Canadian center connecting on a power play goal

with 8:25 remaining in the first period. David Perron's tip-in goal put the Blues back on top with 4:36 remaining in the second period.

A key moment came in the third when Parayko's slapshot struck Dallas goaltender Ben Bishop in the left collarbone area, the puck popping up and away as Bishop fell to the ice in pain. "Just saw a lane so I tried to fire one," Parayko said. "Tried to score and I clipped him a little high I suppose."

Alex Steen of St. Louis got the puck and flipped it to Schwartz, who tipped the puck into the vacant net 7:37 into the third period for his eighth goal of the playoffs.

NHL play is not stopped until the team with the injured player gains possession of the puck. Referees make the decision whether or not to stop play earlier based on their assessment of the severity of the injury.

Barely half a minute later, Blais skated in on a breakaway and fired the puck over Bishop's right shoulder into net for his first playoff goal and to give the Blues a 4-1 lead. Dallas removed Bishop, sending him to the locker room for treatment while reserve Anton Khudobin finished the game. Jordan Binnington made 22 saves for the Blues. — AFP

Sports

Insigne's 98th-minute penalty seals second spot for Napoli in Serie A

Atalanta's Champions League belief growing, Roma held in Genoa

MILAN: Lorenzo Insigne stepped up to slot in a 98th-minute penalty as Napoli came from behind to beat Cagliari 2-1 on Sunday to guarantee they finish second in the Italian league this season behind Juventus.

Carlo Ancelotti's side have a 10-point lead on third-placed Inter Milan with three games left. But they are a massive 16 points behind Juventus who had already won an eighth consecutive Serie A title with five games to spare.

"Keeping up with Juventus was honestly difficult," said Ancelotti. "Of course we lost the strong motivation because the gap was great, but second place satisfies us and the team will certainly be reinforced for next season."

After a drab first half in Naples the hosts fell behind after Leonardo Pavoletti fired the Sardinians ahead after 63 minutes. But Dries Mertens headed Napoli back into the game with just five minutes to go and in a dramatic finale the hosts were awarded a late penalty after consultation with VAR when Artur Ioniță handled a Faouzi Ghoulam cross, and was sent off.

Insigne stepped up with the clock ticking to score and ensure that Napoli will finish runners-up for the second consecutive year. Mertens now has 82 Napoli league goals—one more than club legend Diego Maradona.

Juventus and Napoli are already assured of Champions League football next season but the battle for the final two berths remains tight with six teams in the running.

Atalanta's push for a first-ever berth in Europe's top competition was boosted after a 3-1 comeback win over Lazio as rivals Roma were held 1-1 at Genoa. "We believed in a Champions League place before, but now we believe in it even more," said Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini.

The side from Bergamo are just one point behind Inter Milan who were held to a goalless draw at Udinese. Atalanta, who meet Lazio again in the Coppa Italia final on May 15 in Rome, next play Genoa before travelling to Juventus with their final league match against Sassuolo.

Roma missed the chance to close the gap after a 1-1 draw at Genoa and are now three points behind Atalanta in fifth. Torino are two points behind Roma in sixth after a 1-1 draw against Juventus on Friday.

But AC Milan, in seventh, can move to three points off the final Champions League place with a win at home against Bologna.

RANIERI'S ROMA NOT GIVING UP

Atalanta had gotten off to the worst possible start after Marco Parolo had opened the scoring for Lazio after just three minutes in the Stadio Olimpico. But Duvan Zapata hit back on 22 minutes for his sixth goal in eight league games.

The Colombian has scored one goal more than Juventus star Cristiano Ronaldo, with 22 this season, and is three short of league top scorer Fabio Quagliarella of Sampdoria. Timothy Castagne added a second just before the hour mark with Lazio's Brazilian defender Wallace turning into his own net after 76 minutes.

Lazio's Champions League hopes, however, have faded with Simone Inzaghi's side seven points adrift of top four with the Europa League also at risk. In Genoa, Claudio Ranieri's side thought they had the winner when Stephan El Shaarawy volleyed in after 82 minutes.

But Cristian Romero nodded in on 90 minutes for Genoa, with the hosts missing the chance for a winner on 96 minutes with Roma goalkeeper Antonio Mirante saving Antonio Sanabria's weak penalty effort.



NAPLES: Napoli's Italian forward Lorenzo Insigne (R) scores a penalty during the Italian Serie A football match between Napoli and Cagliari at San Paolo stadium in Naples. —AFP

"We needed three points but we're not giving up," said Ranieri. "We're in the running for it and we'll fight until the very end." In Parma, veteran striker Quagliarella scored a brace for Sampdoria in a 3-3

draw to extend his lead on top of the Serie A scorers to 25 goals. At the bottom of the table, Frosinone join Chievo in Serie B next season after a 2-2 draw at Sassuolo. —AFP

Lille close in on Champions League return after Lyon stalemate

PARIS: Lille moved a crucial step closer to a return to Champions League football on Sunday with a 2-2 draw at Lyon while Saint Etienne inflicted more misery on Monaco to give their hopes of a top three finish a massive shot in the arm.

A point from a thrilling encounter consolidated Lille's hold on second and an automatic ticket into the Champions League group stages with three Ligue 1 games remaining.

Saint Etienne's 3-2 win over 2017 champions Monaco earlier had provisionally moved them above Lyon who reclaimed third spot a point above their arch regional rivals to remain six points behind Lille.

A first appearance in the group stage of Europe's elite club competition since 2012/13 is now looking likely for Lille, while Lyon scrap for third and entry to the qualifying stages with Saint Etienne.

Lyon took the lead via former Lille player Martin Terrier in the first quarter of an hour. Lille drew level five minutes after the restart. Jonathan Ikone crossed into the area, Lyon defender Jason Denayer failed to clear with the ball bouncing off Ferland Mendy to Loic Remy who neatly outmanoeuvred Anthony Lopes to tap home into an empty net.

Nicolas Pepe was instrumental in putting Lille into a 68th minute lead when his freekick to the far post found Boubakary Soumare who flicked the ball over Lopes from a tight angle after another error by Leo Dubois, who shortly after made up for his lapse with the equaliser.

Christophe Galtier's team can wrap up second place next weekend. Earlier, Gelson Martins put Monaco into an early lead with Fode Ballo-Toure's own goal on 59 minutes drawing Saint Etienne back level. Goals from



DECINES-CHARPIEU: Lille's Turkish defender Mehmet Zeki Celik (L) vies with Lyon's forward Houssein Auar (R) during the French L1 football match between Olympique Lyonnais (OL) and Lille (LOSC), at the Parc Olympique Lyonnais stadium in Decines-Charpieu, central-eastern France. —AFP

Remy Cabella and Arnaud Nordin sealed the victory, Carlos Vinicius grabbing an injury time consolation for the hapless hosts.

This is dream time for Saint Etienne who despite being France's most decorated side last appeared in the Champions League in 1981. With fifth-placed Montpellier held by Amiens earlier Les Verts are at the very least all but assured of Europa League action next season.

Monaco's 16th loss of a wretched campaign meanwhile left the 2017 champions precariously placed just three points above the relegation zone. The sight of

their Croatian goalkeeper Danijel Subasic hobbling off injured will only have served to deepen the gloom enveloping Leonardo Jardim's side.

Elsewhere, Rennes failed to replicate the heroics of slaying PSG in last weekend's Cup final, and are in danger of finishing out of the top 10 for the first time since 2014 after a 2-2 draw at Toulouse which extended their winless run in Ligue 1 to eight matches.

On Saturday, PSG's dismal run continued as Edinson Cavani missed a stoppage time penalty for the French champions in a scrappy 1-1 home draw with Nice. —AFP

up in the Europa League." Solskjaer was given the job on a permanent basis less than six weeks ago on the back of winning 14 of his first 17 games in charge.

Yet, the hastiness of the club's executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward and American owners the Glazier family to take the easy decision of appointing the former striker then, rather than waiting until the end of the season, may only extend the wait for United to get back on their feet.

A massive summer clear-out is now required, but years of mismanagement means United are in the unenviable position of trying to find buyers for players quite happy to sit on their highly lucrative contracts at Old Trafford and struggling to hold onto those stars they do want to keep.

David de Gea has just one year left on his contract, while Paul Pogba and Marcus Rashford have so far refused to extend their deals beyond 2020.

"There is a chance you have seen the last of players," said Solskjaer after Huddersfield claimed a first point since February.

Solskjaer insisted on Friday the lure of playing for the 20-time English champions is still enough to attract players, but the lack of Champions League football or a director of football to lead the recruitment will not make that task any easier.

"Nothing about this United team I like at all. They're just awful. They're a despondent group of people," said former United captain Gary Neville on Sky Sports.

"It would be nice if the club got an experienced sporting director and recruit team to help him."

The pain of United's predicament is only intensified

by watching fiercest rivals Liverpool and Manchester City raise the bar to new heights in their tussle for the Premier League title.

Should City beat Leicester on Monday to retake top spot, they will move 29 points ahead of their city rivals with one game of the league campaign still to play.

Both City and Liverpool are reaping the rewards of long-term planning off the field put in place the right structures for the football to flourish.

By contrast, in the six years since Alex Ferguson retired having lifted United's last Premier League title, the club have lurched through a series of quick fixes, appointed four different managers and never found the right solution.

The Red Devils have now missed out on the top four in four of the past six campaigns and the seismic gap between them and the contenders for the title is only getting bigger. —AFP

Guardiola says City title bid ranks alongside greatest achievements

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola has suggested remaining in control of this season's relentless Premier League title race is his most satisfying achievement as a manager. The Manchester City boss says the English top division is the toughest domestic competition he has faced during a 10-season coaching career that has brought him 25 trophies.

City have won 12 Premier League matches in a row, and are on course to finish just two short of matching last season's competition record of 100 points, yet they are being pushed all the way by Liverpool, who have set extraordinary standards of their own. Jurgen Klopp's side have lost just once in the league all season, against City in January, and recorded their eighth successive top-flight victory on Saturday, beating Newcastle 3-2 to return to the top of the table.

City have a game in hand, at home to Leicester, but are likely to have to win both that and their final league match at Brighton next Sunday to retain their title. "Yeah, it's the toughest league I've ever played as a manager, because of the quality of the rivals," said Guardiola, a former manager of both Barcelona and Bayern Munich. "No doubts. That's why being there is incredible. But, of course, only one will take the prize and the other one will be at home sad."

Guardiola is thrilled his City players have maintained their standards following last season's record-breaking points total, with the club three wins away from completing an unprecedented domestic treble of Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup.

"When you get 100 points, everyone thinks we won't do what we have to do (the following season), that we will do less because we won, but it has been completely the opposite," the Catalan manager said. —AFP

Sanchez to lead Qatar to 2022 World Cup

DOHA: Felix Sanchez has extended his contract as head coach of Qatar's national team through to the 2022 World Cup hosted by Qatar, the country's Football Association said yesterday. Spaniard Sanchez led the team to the Asian Cup title in the United Arab Emirates in January having been appointed to replace Jorge Fossati during the final stages of the country's failed attempt to qualify for the 2018 World Cup finals in Russia.

The Asian Cup win, when Qatar defeated Japan in the final in Abu Dhabi, was the country's first major trophy and was achieved with a squad that is expected to form the bulk of the side at the World Cup finals in three years' time. Sanchez, 43, has spent much of his coaching career in Qatar, working at the Aspire Academy before leading the nation to the Asian Under-19 title in 2014 and he has a long-standing relationship with many of the current squad.

He retains the position despite speculation the QFA was on the hunt for a high-profile coach to lead the team into the World Cup finals and Sanchez's next task will be to take Qatar to the Copa America finals in Brazil in June, where they are one of two invited sides. —Reuters

Fallen Man Utd face huge rebuild after CL failure

MANCHESTER: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's Manchester United legend was built on scoring the goal that won the Champions League, but, 20 years on, the Norwegian now concedes the United side he has inherited as manager are not even fit to grace that competition.

The scale of the task now facing Solskjaer was laid bare by Sunday's 1-1 draw at already relegated Huddersfield, statistically one of the worst sides ever to play in the Premier League, that ensured United cannot finish in the top four and must accept the consolation prize of a place in the Europa League.

"We are not in the Champions League but I think that is a true reflection. The table seldom lies at the end," admitted Solskjaer as he came to terms with a run of two wins from 11 games that have sucked the enthusiasm from his first few months as a caretaker manager.

"When United needed their players to stand up and be counted, playing with intensity, taking responsibility individually, concentrating fully, fighting for the right to play in the Champions League, they froze," wrote The Times.

"The meek may inherit the earth but they also end

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PORTLAND: Jamal Murray #27 of the Denver Nuggets drives to the basket on Damian Lillard #0 of the Portland Trail Blazers during the second half of game four of the Western Conference Semifinals at Moda Center in Portland, Oregon. The Nuggets won 116-112. — AFP

Nuggets and Raptors level playoff series

McCollum had 29 points and Lillard added 28 for the Trail Blazers

LOS ANGELES: Jamal Murray scored 34 points, including six clutch free throws down the stretch to lift the Denver Nuggets to a gritty 116-112 NBA playoff win over the Portland Trail Blazers on Sunday. The 22-year-old Canadian Murray combined with Serbian Nikola Jokic to form a dynamic scoring duo as the Nuggets squared their second round Western Conference series at two games each.

It was a quick turnaround from the Trail Blazers' 140-137 quadruple overtime victory in Friday's game three. Game four didn't last nearly as long as that three hour, 35 minute marathon, but it was another back-and-forth battle highlighted by Murray's precision shooting and a fourth playoff triple-double from Jokic.

"The biggest part was mental," said Murray on playing two playoff games just 40 hours apart. "We know what to do physically but that was a draining game and we had to come back with energy and face a great team."

"We were able to get what we wanted on offence and the stops on defense." Jokic had 21 points, 12

rebounds and 11 assists for his second straight triple-double and Murray, who led all scorers, was a perfect 11-for-11 from the free throw line for Denver, who handed Portland their first playoff loss at home this season.

Two free throws by Murray increased the Nuggets' edge to 112-108 with 13 seconds on the clock. After Damian Lillard scored on a layup with 7.7 seconds remaining, Murray hit a pair of free throws to make it 114-110 with 6.7 seconds to play.

CJ McCollum scored on a long two-point shot to cut it to 114-112 with 4.4 seconds to go, but Murray clinched it with another pair at the line with 3.4 seconds left. "I love free throws," said Murray, the son of Jamaican immigrants who moved to Kitchener, Ontario where he was born. "Everybody knows I love free throws. My team trusts me."

Said Nuggets coach Mike Malone, "Jamal has got a tremendous amount of grit. You think about how young we are and going on the road to win a tough game four in a hostile environment. For Jamal to be a centerpiece

of that is phenomenal."

McCollum had 29 points and Lillard added 28 for the Trail Blazers. Game five is today at Denver. Elsewhere, Kawhi Leonard scored 39 points and pulled down 14 rebounds to propel the Toronto Raptors to a 101-96 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers that knotted their Eastern Conference series at two games apiece.

Spanish center Marc Gasol added 16 points and Kyle Lowry contributed 14 for the Raptors, who held ailing Sixers center Joel Embiid to 11 points on two-of-seven shooting from the field.

The Raptors will try to seize a series lead when the action shifts back to Toronto for game five on Tuesday. After losing back-to-back games, Leonard said the Raptors' mindset was to "come in and play hard".

"The whole team concept was coming in and playing harder, being smarter and take your shots," Leonard said. "We needed it. This is a big win, but we've got to come back and get it for game five."

Leonard scored 17 points and grabbed 10

rebounds in a first half that finished with the Raptors holding a narrow 47-45 lead. It was the first time in his career that he notched at least 15 points and 10 rebounds in a half.

After seven lead changes in the third quarter, the increasingly physical encounter was tied 75-75 heading into the fourth.

The Raptors were clinging to a 91-90 lead when Leonard drained a step-back three-pointer over a reaching Embiid with 1:01 left to play and three seconds left on the shot clock.

It put Toronto up 94-90 and the 76ers wouldn't get the gap below four points from there. "I just saw there were about three seconds left on the clock," Leonard said of the clutch basket. "(Embiid's) so long so I just I just tried to fade away and shoot it over the top of him and luckily it went down."

The 76ers made connected on just five of 21 attempts from the field in the fourth quarter, missing nine straight in one span, and the Raptors made seven free throws down the stretch to seal it. — AFP

Battered, bruised Liverpool face balancing act against Barca

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool emerged victorious from a bruising battle against Newcastle to remain in the hunt for the Premier League title, but may have sustained too many wounds to summon a Champions League semi-final comeback against Barcelona today.

A late double from Lionel Messi in the Camp Nou on Wednesday has left Jurgen Klopp's men with a mountain to climb to overturn a 3-0 first leg defeat if they are to reach a second consecutive Champions League final.

Liverpool have overcome such deficits before in the Champions League, most famously in the 2005 final

against AC Milan.

But hopes of another famous European comeback at fortress Anfield were dealt a blow when Mohamed Salah was stretchered off with a head knock as Liverpool edged out Newcastle 3-2 on Saturday to move two points ahead of Manchester City at the top of the Premier League.

Salah watched a thrilling end to the match at St. James' Park in the dressing room as his replacement Divock Origi headed home fellow substitute Xherdan Shaqiri's free-kick four minutes from time.

Origi, who also scored a 96th-minute winner to beat Everton in the Merseyside derby in December, Shaqiri and Daniel Sturridge have made important contributions in a supporting role to a club record points tally for Liverpool this season.

"We are always ready to get on the pitch and make a difference," said Liverpool left-back Andy Robertson.

"The lads who have been left at home and lads who are on the bench and haven't come on, they are buzzing for us."

"There's no egos in this squad and that's why we are

where we are today and long may it continue."

However, with Roberto Firmino already ruled out due to a groin injury, few would give Liverpool any hope of overhauling a three-goal deficit without two of their prolific front three should Salah not start.

Klopp therefore has a difficult balancing act deciding whether it is worth emptying the tank of his injury-hit squad once more on Tuesday or to save their legs for Wolves' visit to Anfield on the final day of the Premier League season.

"We are now qualified for the league final, which is brilliant," said Klopp at taking the title race to the final game of the season.

Despite a sensational season, Liverpool's chances of winning either trophy are fading.

To have any hope of a first league title in 29 years, Klopp's men must hope that Manchester City's relentless run of 12 straight league wins comes to an end either at home to Leicester in their game in hand on Monday, or at Brighton come Sunday.

Barcelona will also not be complacent heading to Anfield a year on from letting a 4-1 first leg lead against

Roma slip away in the quarter-finals.

Messi made it clear from before the season began that the Champions League was his and Barca's primary target in his first campaign as club captain.

Moreover, while Liverpool toiled on Tyneside on Saturday night, Barca coach Ernesto Valverde had the luxury of making 11 changes for an inconsequential 2-0 defeat to Celta Vigo having already wrapped up the Spanish title.

Yet, Origi's winner at Newcastle personified Liverpool's persistence and refusal to give up.

Four times in their last seven league outings Liverpool have won the game in the final 10 minutes.

Now they must harness the same belief if Barca are to be given a fright at Anfield.

"If we do fall short this season we will be back next season and we just need to keep going and keep going, and hopefully get what this club deserves," added Robertson.

"First of all Tuesday, a hell of a task, but if we can get a wee bit of luck then hopefully we will progress." — AFP