



3 Kuwait Airways worker killed in freak accident



24 Bahrain ditches subsidy reform plan; political tensions simmer



28 Trump awards Presidential Medal of Freedom to Woods



Ramadan KAREEM

IMSAK	03:23
Fajr	03:33
Dhur	11:44
Asr	15:20
Magrib	18:28
Isha	19:54

MP presses for an urgent debate on remittance tax

Assembly votes on no-confidence motion today



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Chief of Kuwait National Guard His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah at a reception held on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. Al-Sabah family received senior state officials on Monday evening at Bayan Palace. (See Page 5)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Khalil Al-Saleh said yesterday he has started collecting signatures of other members to make the National Assembly debate a draft law stipulating a 5 percent tax on expatriate remittances. Saleh, who has been taking anti-expat stances recently, said he wants the draft law to be debated and approved by the Assembly during the May 14 session, giving the debate a status of urgency.

The draft law was approved by the Assembly Financial and Economic Affairs Committee even after the legal and legislative panel rejected the bill saying it is against the constitution because it involves discrimination against foreigners which is banned by the constitution. But the financial committee adamantly approved the draft law, denying it was discriminatory. The panel, in which leading anti-expat MP Safa Al-Hashem is a member, said imposing the tax will have important economic benefits to the country.

The Central Bank and the Finance Ministry have both warned against the bill saying it would lead to an exodus of expatriate funds from the country and will also lead to a black market for money transfers. MP Saleh, who heads an Assembly panel working to replace expatriate employees with Kuwaitis, said he wants the early debate of the bill because expatriate remittances last year increased to KD 4.2 billion, according to the central bank of Kuwait. The lawmaker said the figure indicates to serious consequences on the Kuwaiti economy and denied that imposing the law will have any negative impact.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly will meet today to take the vote on a no-confidence motion against Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri which was submitted following a lengthy grilling on alleged financial and administrative violations. The minister appears to be headed to win the Assembly confidence as only a few members have said they will support the motion. To pass, the motion requires the support of 25 MPs and would mean an automatic dismissal of the minister.

The three MPs who grilled the minister, Riyadh Al-Adasani, Adel Al-Damkhi and Mohammad Al-Dallal claimed the minister was responsible for many violations at the ministry, the agricultural authority and the sports authority which come under his authority. The minister denied the charges as the council of ministers on Monday announced its backing for Jabri and said it was satisfied with his replies.

But MP Dallal insisted that the minister had deliberately skipped any response to several accusations especially those at the agricultural authority. MP Adasani had warned to file a second grilling against the minister if the no-confidence debate turns into tribal or sectarian.

Opposition MP Mohammad Al-Mutair meanwhile said he has submitted a demand by MPs that the Assembly holds a special session on May 12 to debate a draft law stipulating general amnesty for those who were jailed for political offenses. The bill specifically targets several former opposition MPs and activists who were handed heavy jail terms for storming the National Assembly building during an anti-corruption demonstration in November 2011.

Ramadan Kareem

Three parts of Ramadan

By Hassan T Wambale

By Dr Teresa Leshner

Ramadan is said to be split into three thirds: the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has said, "It (Ramadan) is the month whose beginning is mercy, middle, forgiveness and its end emancipation from the fire" (Bihar Al-Anwar, Vol 93). Salman Al-Farisi (RA) reported that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "...The first third of the month of Ramadan is the time for mercy, the second third is for forgiveness, the third is for release from Hellfire..." (IbnKhuzaymah). We hope to make the most of each third so that we can receive the blessing related to each.

For the first third of mercy, the following hadith comes to mind: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "While fasting remember the hunger and thirst on the Day of Judgment. Give alms to the poor and needy. Pay respect to your elders, have sympathy for your youngsters and be kind towards your relatives and kinsmen. Guard your tongue against unworthy words, and your eyes from scenes that are not worth seeing and your ears from sounds that should not be heard. Be kind to orphans so that if your children may become orphans they will also be treated with kindness."

The second third of Ramadan is characterized as a time when Allah (SWT)'s forgives. The Quran says, "And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden the extensiveness of which is the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who guard against evil." - Quran 3:132. Will they not turn to Allah and seek His forgiveness, and Allah is oft-forgiving, Merciful? (Quran 5:74).

A prophetic tradition reported by Abu Huraira (RA) says, "Whoever observes fasts during the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping to attain Allah's rewards, then all his past sins will be forgiven." - Bukhari 2: 37. The third portion of Ramadan is considered to be a time for seeking release from the hellfire.

Abu Said Al Khudri (RA) said, "Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said Allah frees some people from hellfire every day and night - meaning of Ramadan - and every Muslim has an answered supplication every day and night [of Ramadan]. (Reported by Al Bazar and authenticated by Sheikh Albaani in SaheehTargheeb No 1002).

This is also the part of the month that Lailat-ul-Qadr falls in. The Quran describes this special night: "Verily! We have sent it (this Quran) down in the night of Al-Qadr. And what will make you know what the night of Al-Qadr is? The night of Al-Qadr" Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: Family and friends receive the two Kuwaitis Adnan Al-Kharafi and Fahd Al-Alyan at the Amiri Airport.

Kuwaitis return after Iran ordeal

KUWAIT: Kuwaitis Adnan Al-Kharafi and Fahd Al-Alyan, who were arrested in Iran for illegally sailing into Iranian national waters while fishing, arrived to Kuwait yesterday onboard a Kuwait Airways flight that landed at the Amiri Airport. Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait

Mohammed Irani said the release was the result of serious efforts the embassy had exerted in contacting the Iranian Foreign Ministry and other authorities to ensure the detainees' safe and speedy return to Kuwait.

Irani added that the release was delayed due to some unexpected administrative problems, as the two were supposed to leave Iran through Bushehr, but instead they went to Tehran (where they remained at the Kuwaiti Embassy premises), which prolonged the period the embassy needed to finalize their return documents.

Myanmar frees two Reuters journalists after global outrage

YANGON: Two Reuters journalists jailed for their reporting on the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar walked out of prison yesterday, freed in a presidential amnesty after a vigorous global campaign - and backroom diplomacy - for their release. Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were mobbed by media as they stepped out of Yangon's notorious Insein prison after more than 16 months in detention. Their December 2017 arrests made them an international cause celebre and a sign of Myanmar's deteriorating press freedoms under Nobel laureate and civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Wa Lone, 33, thanked people from "around the world" for advocating for their release and vowed he would return to work. "I can't wait to go to my news-room," he said. "I am a journalist and I am going to



YANGON: Reuters journalists Wa Lone (left) and Kyaw Soe Oo gesture as they walk to Insein prison gate after being freed in a presidential amnesty yesterday. — AFP

continue." Reuters editor-in-chief Stephen Adler said: "We are enormously pleased that Myanmar has released our courageous reporters". "Since their arrests 511 days ago, they have become symbols of the importance of press freedom around the world. We welcome their return."

Continued on Page 24

Scientists develop device to detect bacteria in mins

WASHINGTON: The era of doctors prescribing patients powerful antibiotics while they wait for lab reports could soon be numbered, with a new device returning results within minutes instead of days. It was

invented by a team at Penn State University and described in a paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences on Monday.

Co-developed by Pak Kin Wong, a professor of biomedical engineering and mechanical engineering, the device uses microtechnology to trap single bacteria cells that can then be viewed under an electron microscope. The approach allows clinicians to determine in as little as 30 minutes whether bacteria is present and its susceptibility to drug treatment - as opposed to the three-to-five days such lab work currently takes.

Continued on Page 24

News in brief

UAE to lift travel ban

BEIRUT: The United Arab Emirates will soon lift a ban on its citizens travelling to Lebanon, Lebanese state media cited the UAE's ambassador to Lebanon as saying yesterday. "The lifting of the ban on Emiratis travelling to Lebanon will come soon," Lebanon's NNA quoted Hamad Saeed Al-Shamsi as telling journalists after meeting Lebanese Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil. The UAE's close ally Saudi Arabia said in February it was lifting its own advice to citizens not to travel to Lebanon, where Gulf tourism was once a mainstay of the now struggling economy. The UAE and Saudi Arabia have both voiced frequent concern over the political situation in Lebanon, located next to war-torn Syria and home to the heavily armed, Iran-backed Hezbollah group. — Reuters

Qatar to help Palestinians

DOHA: Qatar said yesterday it had allocated \$480 million in aid to the cash-strapped Palestinian Authority to support education and health services and provide urgent humanitarian relief. The authority led by president Mahmud Abbas has been hit by the cutting of two of its leading sources of revenues. Washington has ended all bilateral US aid in response to the Palestinians' severing of contacts after it recognized the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017. A row with Israel has meanwhile led to a halt to transfers of customs duties it levies on goods destined for Palestinian markets. Both Abbas and the leader of Hamas, the rival Palestinian faction which controls the Gaza Strip, welcomed the Qatari announcement. — AFP

UN probes Libya air strikes

UNITED NATIONS: United Nations experts are investigating missile strikes near Libya's capital that were fired likely using Chinese-made drones and point to possible involvement by the United Arab Emirates, a confidential report shows. The April 19-20 missile attack on the southern suburbs of Tripoli was carried out as forces loyal to commander Khalifa Haftar battled to seize the capital from the UN-recognized government. A UN panel of experts said in the report to the Security Council, a copy of which was seen by AFP, that it had examined photographs of missile debris and had identified the weapon as a Blue Arrow air-to-surface missile, which has not been used in Libya before. The Chinese-made missile is only in use in three countries - China, Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates - and is paired with the Chinese-made Wing Loong drone. — AFP

Local

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharaz and President of Kuwaiti Humanitarian Friendship Society Ahmad Al-Sarraf, as well as the society's members. "Our visit aims to introduce ourselves and the Kuwaiti Humanitarian Friendship Society to His Highness the Amir," Sarraf said in a press statement. He said that the humanitarian work of the society aims to provide assistance to those who deserve it inside the country, pointing out that the Kuwaiti Humanitarian Friendship Society is a charitable and non-profit society that cares about humanitarian projects.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received at Bayan Palace His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad at Bayan Palace. Furthermore, His Highness the Crown Prince received Sheikh Mona Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. During the meeting, Shaikha Mona presented a collection of paintings of Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which reflect past life in Kuwait, which he drew out of his photographic memory and documented them with historical information over 10 years. His

Highness the Crown Prince praised the efforts exerted in preparing this documentary folder, which is an important reference for researchers in the history of Kuwait.

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Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received a phone call Monday from Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Saudi Space Commission. During the phone call, the two exchanged greetings on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan and both wished good health and prosperity to the two nations. In turn, Sheikh Nawaf thanked Prince Sultan bin Salman for his kind words and expressed best wishes and prosperity to the kingdom, under the wise leadership of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. — KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Sheikh Mona Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Alghanim Industries launches education fund



(From left) Nayef Al-Mutairi, Kutayba Alghanim, Hilal Al-Sayer and Maha Al-Barjas.



Hilal Al-Sayer, Kutayba Alghanim and Nayef Al-Mutairi at the signing ceremony.

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately-owned companies in the region, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and Arab Open University (AOU) to provide underprivileged youth access to higher education, enabling them to expand their career opportunities in the future. The Education Fund is currently supporting 25 students pursuing higher education at the Arab Open University. The students were nominated and awarded through a competitive selection process led by the Kuwait Red Crescent Society.

The three entities announced the launch of the fund during a joint signing ceremony at the Arab Open University campus in Ardiya, Kuwait on Monday, 29 April 2019. It was attended by Chairman of Alghanim Industries Kutayba Y Alghanim, Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the Arab Open University, Professor Naif Al Mutairi.

Commenting on the launch of this fund, Kutayba Y Alghanim, Chairman of Alghanim Industries said: "We are honored to collaborate with our partners in the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the Arab Open University, with whom we share our commitment to give back to our community." He added: "Education is an essential human right that can have a truly transformative effect - it can unlock new career paths and create new opportunities. We are certain that providing access to higher education will help our youth find rewarding professional opportunities, positively impacting both their lives and that of their families."

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Dr Hilal Al-Sayer lauded Alghanim Industries' commitment to supporting the various humanitarian activities of the KRCS, especially in this unique initiative that enables and empowers underserved youth in Kuwait and the region.

He also noted that this initiative reiterates the vital role higher education plays in building a better future for stu-

dents and their communities, urging both private and public sector entities to continue their efforts towards helping those in need.

A non-profit higher education institute with branches across the Arab world, the Arab Open University has provided affordable education to thousands of students in Kuwait to date. It offers flexible programs that meet the demands of both current professionals in the labor force as well as low-income individuals. The university offers bachelor's degrees in three faculties: business, computer studies, and language studies. Vice President for Academic Affairs at the Arab Open University, Professor Naif Al-Mutairi noted: "We at the Arab Open University are thankful to the generosity and support of the Kuwaiti government to the university, in addition to the ongoing support that we receive from the private sector and from generous donors such like Kutayba Yusuf Alghanim, one of our most generous donors whose contributions continue to impact lives."

Zain launches charitable campaign for third year

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of its charitable campaign 'Ya Baghi Al-Khair Aqbil' for the third year as part of its CSSR Campaign during the holy month of Ramadan and in collaboration with Direct Aid. The company will donate 500 Fils to a charitable organization for every paid bill during Ramadan.

The launch of this campaign for the third year comes in line with Zain's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy that seeks to contribute to the welfare of the society in several ways under the company's comprehensive social campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Zain prides itself on its long track of records and contributions it has put in philanthropic areas by collaborating with various non-profit organizations such as Direct Aid. The company strongly believes that such initiatives help infuse a sense of responsibility into members of the society, to help support those who are in need of help.

As part of this campaign, Zain will donate 500 Fils (half a KD) each time a customer pays their bill anytime during the Holy Month of Ramadan through one of Zain's electronic or direct channels, including Zain's website, Zain's smartphone app, any of Zain's Quickpay machines, and the company's main branches available throughout the country. The collected donations will be used to support Direct Aid's Medical Sciences College project at Kenya, where 6 classrooms will be built for the Environmental Health section in the college after the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Donations collected from previous editions of 'Ya Baghi Al-Khair Aqbil' campaign were utilized to build a number of water wells at distant locations in Somalia and Kyrgyzstan with the aim of providing clean and safe drinking water to underprivileged families in collaboration with Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity Association.

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Zain stressed that it has always been keen to launch a number of social and humanitarian initiatives during Ramadan to support the various sectors of the Kuwaiti society, and the company is keen on reflecting the religious as well as traditional humanitarian values and principles to enrich the art of giving and to increase bonding between individuals.

The company further affirmed its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility campaign during the holy month of Ramadan, which includes an extensive array of programs that cover different areas. The initiatives and programs include humanitarian, voluntary, cultural, religious, sports, and recreational activities to cater to the different segments of society.

Management visits NBK call center, airport branches on 1st day of Ramadan

KUWAIT: In recognition of employees' efforts, hard work and dedication in providing customers with the best banking experience, a team from NBK executive management visited NBK locations that provide their services around the clock throughout the holy month of Ramadan. The site visits covered NBK Call Centre and NBK Branches at Kuwait International Airport, Terminals 1 and 4.

The visit took place on the first day of Ramadan, as NBK executive management is always keen to express the utmost appreciation to NBK employees for all their outstanding efforts in providing the best banking services and to demonstrate their ongoing support, in addition to the management desire to check the workflow at various locations. Several NBK senior executives participated in the site visit including Chief Executive Officer - Kuwait, Salah Al-Fulaij, Deputy CEO - Kuwait, Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, General Manager - Consumer Banking Group, Mohammed Al-Othman and General Manager - Group Human Resources, and Imad Al-Ablani.

During the visit, the executive management team commended employees and praised their outstanding efforts and contributions towards enriching NBK customers' banking experience. NBK customers have access to full services 24/7 during the holy month of Ramadan through various locations, in addition to NBK Call Centre, which offers immediate assistance and robust support to all customers' needs.

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Alghanim Industries launches education fund



(From left) Nayef Al-Mutairi, Kutayba Alghanim, Hilal Al-Sayer and Maha Al-Barjas.



Hilal Al-Sayer, Kutayba Alghanim and Nayef Al-Mutairi at the signing ceremony.

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The three entities announced the launch of the fund during a joint signing ceremony at the Arab Open University campus in Ardiya, Kuwait on Monday, 29 April 2019. It was attended by Chairman of Alghanim Industries Kutayba Y Alghanim, Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the Arab Open University, Professor Naif Al Mutairi.

Commenting on the launch of this fund, Kutayba Y Alghanim, Chairman of Alghanim Industries said: "We are honored to collaborate with our partners in the Kuwait Red Crescent Society and the Arab Open University, with whom we share our commitment to give back to our community." He added: "Education is an essential human right that can have a truly transformative effect - it can unlock new career paths and create new opportunities. We are certain that providing access to higher education will help our youth find rewarding professional opportunities, positively impacting both their lives and that of their families."

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Dr Hilal Al-Sayer lauded Alghanim Industries' commitment to supporting the various humanitarian activities of the KRCS, especially in this unique initiative that enables and empowers underserved youth in Kuwait and the region.

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dents and their communities, urging both private and public sector entities to continue their efforts towards helping those in need.

A non-profit higher education institute with branches across the Arab world, the Arab Open University has provided affordable education to thousands of students in Kuwait to date. It offers flexible programs that meet the demands of both current professionals in the labor force as well as low-income individuals. The university offers bachelor's degrees in three faculties: business, computer studies, and language studies. Vice President for Academic Affairs at the Arab Open University, Professor Naif Al-Mutairi noted: "We at the Arab Open University are thankful to the generosity and support of the Kuwaiti government to the university, in addition to the ongoing support that we receive from the private sector and from generous donors such like Kutayba Yusuf Alghanim, one of our most generous donors whose contributions continue to impact lives."

Zain launches charitable campaign for third year

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The launch of this campaign for the third year comes in line with Zain's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy that seeks to contribute to the welfare of the society in several ways under the company's comprehensive social campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan. Zain prides itself on its long track of records and contributions it has put in philanthropic areas by collaborating with various non-profit organizations such as Direct Aid. The company strongly believes that such initiatives help infuse a sense of responsibility into members of the society, to help support those who are in need of help.

As part of this campaign, Zain will donate 500 Fils (half a KD) each time a customer pays their bill anytime during the Holy Month of Ramadan through one of Zain's electronic or direct channels, including Zain's website, Zain's smartphone app, any of Zain's Quickpay machines, and the company's main branches available throughout the country. The collected donations will be used to support Direct Aid's Medical Sciences College project at Kenya, where 6 classrooms will be built for the Environmental Health section in the college after the Holy Month of Ramadan.

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Management visits NBK call center, airport branches on 1st day of Ramadan

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Local

Domestic helper offices refunded KD 123,573 to employers since April

Manpower authority sheltered 50 female workers at its expat labor shelter

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

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KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower managed to make some domestic helper recruitment offices refund KD 123,573 to employers since the beginning of April, deputy director for labor protection affairs Abdullah Al-Motoutah said. The authority also helped in sheltering 50 female workers at its expat labor shelter, legalizing the statuses of some of them and filing 81 citations against domestic helper offices for violating article 24 of law number

77 percent
Civil Service Commission (CSC) statistics for the first quarter of 2019 showed that the total number of citizens working in government bodies until the beginning of April was 275,000 (77 percent of the total manpower), while the total number of government employees belonging to other nationalities was 78,000 (21.8 percent of the total manpower). Statistic also showed that 1.2 percent of the manpower belonged to GCC

states, with a majority of around 4,000 from Saudi Arabia, 232 from Qatar, 108 from Oman, 106 from Bahrain and only 17 from the UAE.

Reducing prices

The Ministry of Commerce's consumer protection department manager Faisal Al-Ansari said agreements had been made to reduce the prices of 15,734 items during Ramadan with the aim of providing the best offers for consumers, adding that 54 co-ops and department stores had received

approvals to organize special offers during Ramadan.

Entrepreneurs' products

Kuwait Municipality's deputy director for projects affairs Nadia Al-Shereeda called for allocating the old Riqqa vegetable market to display the products of entrepreneurs, including youth and families. Shereeda added that she had accordingly contacted the municipality's organizational sector and that the project will also include a youth market for crafts, multipurpose

booths, multipurpose halls, special stores for traditional goods, a shaded walkway, restaurants, cafes, toilets, parks, mosques, fountains and administrative offices.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Municipality's Acting Director Abdullah Emadi said it is hard to connect Wafr highway with the Seventh Ring Road. Responding to a proposal made by municipal councilmember Ali Ben Sayer to do so, Emadi explained that the route is interrupted by the Burgan oilfield, adding that Kuwait Oil Company had been accordingly contacted.



KUWAIT: Emergency personnel and Kuwait Airways staff are seen at the site of the accident.



The victim's body covered at the site of the accident.

Kuwait Airways worker killed in freak accident

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: A Kuwait Airways ground technician died in an accident reported at Kuwait International Airport on Monday, the airline announced. The incident happened while the worker was towing a Boeing 777-300ER aircraft at Terminal 4, Kuwait Airways posted on its Twitter account. It did not explain how the accident happened. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the accident, the carrier noted.

Fatal crash

A Kuwaiti man succumbed to his wounds when his vehicle flipped over on Salmi Road. Forensics and the

coroner arrived at the scene and recovered the body. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the crash, Al-Rai reported.

Ramadan violations

Director of NGOs and Foundations Huda Al-Rashid said five citations were issued for violating rules of donation collection on the first night of the holy month of Ramadan by inspection teams formed to monitor the 16th project to collect donations. The team is formed by the social affairs, commerce, awqaf, interior and municipality ministries, reported Al-Rai.

Firemen greeted

Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad visited the Abdullah Port, Um Al-Haiman, Nuwaiseeb, Wafr and Kout fire stations south of the country to greet firemen on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

Fishermen deported

Deputy Director of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources Marzouq Al-

Azmi said the interior ministry agreed with the authority to deport 12 Egyptian fishermen for fleeing from its patrols in Kuwait Bay since the start of 2019.

Pedestrian mugged

Four persons beat up and mugged a Bangladeshi man in Mahboula, as they took his mobile phone and KD 120 before escaping. A police source said the victim went to the police station with bruises visible on his body.

Drug possession

Hawally police arrested two Kuwaitis - one sentenced two years in jail - and both had drugs on them. A police patrol noticed the two seemed confused while driving, so their car was pulled over. When their IDs were checked, the passenger was found to be wanted to serve a two-year jail sentence on drugs charges. Drugs were found in the car. Separately, a Kuwaiti man was taken to the Drugs Control General Department after he collided with trees and traffic signs, and was found under the influence of drugs. Police found drugs and drug paraphernalia in the car.

ABK sponsors Al-Raja special education school event

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), recently sponsored Al-Raja School for boys' graduation and appreciation ceremony held at the school premises in Hawally recently. Al-Raja School provides enhanced learning experiences for students with impaired mobility. The event honored 53 students for their remarkable performance through the year and celebrated the graduation of 28 students who will now be entering the next phase of their

academic career. The ceremony, which took place in the midst of elated parents and families was attended by representatives from ABK who congratulated the students on their outstanding achievements through the course of the academic year. ABK is committed to creating equal opportunities for individuals with special needs and building a lasting positive impact through social integration within the community.



Doctor's scribbles, a puzzle only understood by pharmacists

KUWAIT: Have you ever wondered how a small paper that is written in an incomprehensible language can have meaning and may make a patient happy or in misery? The doctor's scribbles written on the prescription is similar to the scribble or code used during wars and only can be understood by doctors and pharmacists. Perhaps the development of modern drugs makes the issue of dispensing medicines more important for the pharmacist, who must be vigilant when reading the prescription and examine every one very carefully so as not to fall in error caused by the unclarity of the doctor's handwriting, therefore, the pharmacist should not prepare nor dispense the medicines before comprehending and knowing for sure what the doctor has written accurately.

The prescription is a written document from the doctor to the pharmacist to prepare and dispense a specific medicine with reference to the method of use, a document that only the doctor has the right to write, which is a great responsibility shouldered upon the pharmacist. It is assumed that the doctor is serious and alert when writing the prescription because indifference or wrong writing can lead to difficulties and delay in the preparation and disposal of the medicines and in certain cases can lead to unfortunate incidents. Those

with experience in this field believe that this small paper can be a cause for joy of three people: the patient, the pharmacist and the doctor, and it may be a cause of tragedy if read incorrectly.

Lack of time

In this regard, Dr Ihab Abdul Ghani, preventive health doctor at the Ministry of Health, said that dispensing of prescriptions is done electronically in the Ministry's centers, except in the case of a breakdown of the computer system, then, the prescription is written manually. He said that the reason behind the lack of clarity of the content of the prescription is attributed to lack of sufficient time for the physician and the large number of patients, a matter that requires speed in writing, stressing that it is an understandable language for the pharmacist. He explained that the current electronic prescriptions may increase this problem when having to write the prescription manually, and may cause the handwriting to be even worse due to the lack of use of pen in writing and keep relying on the computer. He said that sometimes the doctor writes a prescription which may be incomprehensible for a colleague but understood by the pharmacist because of the large number of prescriptions being dealt with daily and because of the pharmacist's professionalism in this field.

Decoding the code

On the other hand, Head of the specialist pharmacists Essam Al-Sultan said in a similar statement that pharmacists, based on their experience, know the names of drugs and doses and duration of treatment and connect drugs to each other according to the diagnosis, in addition to the patient-pharmacist conversation which all together give the pharmacist a clear evidence of the type of drug needed, thus, 'decoding the code.' Sultan added that writing the prescription is

hardly a universal language, but the difference here is how it is written.

Asked how to act if the pharmacist did not understand the doctor's prescription, Sultan replied that the pharmacist should return the prescription to the doctor for modification or clarification or contact the doctor directly. Asked about the margin of possible error in reading the prescription, he stressed that the margin of error dwindles with the more years the pharmacist has of experience, pointing out that careful reading of the prescription, caution and following the rules of medicines disposal can reduce the margin of error. He added that the electronic prescriptions have made it easy for the pharmacists to read and comprehend what's written on them, thus making the process very easy and efficient.

Dr Fatima Al-Saffar, a pharmacist, said that each doctor in the private sector has his own stamp showing his specialty and the quality of the drugs that can be prescribed to the patient, and with dealing for a long time with these prescriptions, the pharmacist becomes acquainted with the doctor's handwriting and can detect the name of the medicine from the first letter written by the doctor. She added that when the doctor's handwriting is never clear, the pharmacist should contact the doctor to know for sure the name of the drug, recollecting some doctors who took care of their handwriting when writing the medical prescription in a nice line to make it easy for the pharmacist to read.

Large number of prescriptions

A recent study published on the Lifestyle website in the United States on why doctors write this way, some analysts attributed this to the large number of prescriptions doctors write per day, as a statistic indicates that the doctor signs within 8 hours of work 50-100 prescriptions, in addition to having to document all reports of cases and patients who supervise them. Other ana-

Legalese

Ending an employment agreement

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Summer is coming, which means for schools, cultural centers and other educational businesses, it is the end of the "season". For many employees, it's time to consider ending a work relationship and looking for a new space or to renew an agreement for the season. Many expat families are also moving out of Kuwait and heading on to new endeavors. This article is to help you understand your obligations of ending an agreement.

Three-month notice

Question: I am a teacher and my employment agreement is ending. It ends in June even though we started in September - am I not entitled to three months of notice? Or paid salary for the summer until next September? I am the one terminating the contract.

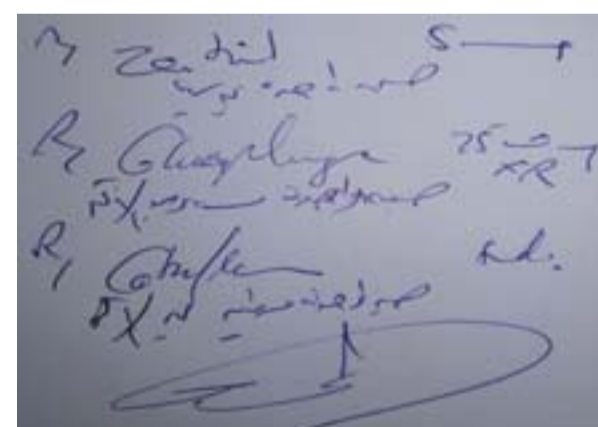
Fajer: When you terminate a contract, you can ask for a three-month notice, but this does not mean that the school may agree to it. Usually school agreements are done differently to specifically state that the agreement ends in June. To answer this question, I would have to read your contract.

End of service benefits

Question: I am leaving Kuwait and I want to know what can I do in order to obtain my end of service benefits? I know end of service benefits are only for Kuwaitis.

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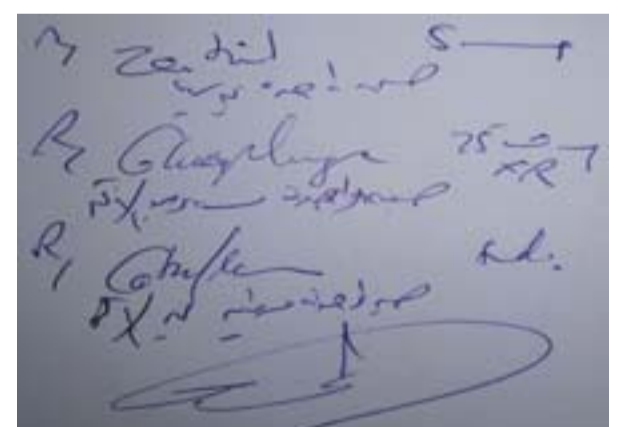
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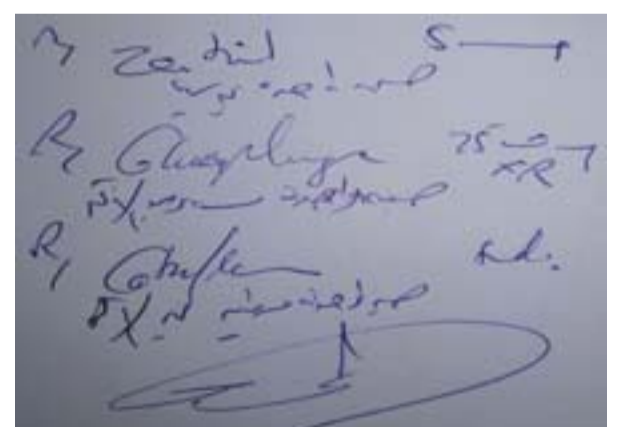
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Doctor's scribbles, a puzzle only understood by pharmacists

KUWAIT: Have you ever wondered how a small paper that is written in an incomprehensible language can have meaning and may make a patient happy or in misery? The doctor's scribbles written on the prescription is similar to the scribble or code used during wars and only can be understood by doctors and pharmacists. Perhaps the development of modern drugs makes the issue of dispensing medicines more important for the pharmacist, who must be vigilant when reading the prescription and examine every one very carefully so as not to fall in error caused by the unclarity of the doctor's handwriting, therefore, the pharmacist should not prepare nor dispense the medicines before comprehending and knowing for sure what the doctor has written accurately.

The prescription is a written document from the doctor to the pharmacist to prepare and dispense a specific medicine with reference to the method of use, a document that only the doctor has the right to write, which is a great responsibility shouldered upon the pharmacist. It is assumed that the doctor is serious and alert when writing the prescription because indifference or wrong writing can lead to difficulties and delay in the preparation and disposal of the medicines and in certain cases can lead to unfortunate incidents. Those

with experience in this field believe that this small paper can be a cause for joy of three people: the patient, the pharmacist and the doctor, and it may be a cause of tragedy if read incorrectly.

Lack of time

In this regard, Dr Ihab Abdul Ghani, preventive health doctor at the Ministry of Health, said that dispensing of prescriptions is done electronically in the Ministry's centers, except in the case of a breakdown of the computer system, then, the prescription is written manually. He said that the reason behind the lack of clarity of the content of the prescription is attributed to lack of sufficient time for the physician and the large number of patients, a matter that requires speed in writing, stressing that it is an understandable language for the pharmacist. He explained that the current electronic prescriptions may increase this problem when having to write the prescription manually, and may cause the handwriting to be even worse due to the lack of use of pen in writing and keep relying on the computer. He said that sometimes the doctor writes a prescription which may be incomprehensible for a colleague but understood by the pharmacist because of the large number of prescriptions being dealt with daily and because of the pharmacist's professionalism in this field.

Decoding the code

On the other hand, Head of the specialist pharmacists Essam Al-Sultan said in a similar statement that pharmacists, based on their experience, know the names of drugs and doses and duration of treatment and connect drugs to each other according to the diagnosis, in addition to the patient-pharmacist conversation which all together give the pharmacist a clear evidence of the type of drug needed, thus, 'decoding the code.' Sultan added that writing the prescription is

hardly a universal language, but the difference here is how it is written.

Asked how to act if the pharmacist did not understand the doctor's prescription, Sultan replied that the pharmacist should return the prescription to the doctor for modification or clarification or contact the doctor directly. Asked about the margin of possible error in reading the prescription, he stressed that the margin of error dwindles with the more years the pharmacist has of experience, pointing out that careful reading of the prescription, caution and following the rules of medicines disposal can reduce the margin of error. He added that the electronic prescriptions have made it easy for the pharmacists to read and comprehend what's written on them, thus making the process very easy and efficient.

Dr Fatima Al-Saffar, a pharmacist, said that each doctor in the private sector has his own stamp showing his specialty and the quality of the drugs that can be prescribed to the patient, and with dealing for a long time with these prescriptions, the pharmacist becomes acquainted with the doctor's handwriting and can detect the name of the medicine from the first letter written by the doctor. She added that when the doctor's handwriting is never clear, the pharmacist should contact the doctor to know for sure the name of the drug, recollecting some doctors who took care of their handwriting when writing the medical prescription in a nice line to make it easy for the pharmacist to read.

Large number of prescriptions

A recent study published on the Lifestyle website in the United States on why doctors write this way, some analysts attributed this to the large number of prescriptions doctors write per day, as a statistic indicates that the doctor signs within 8 hours of work 50-100 prescriptions, in addition to having to document all reports of cases and patients who supervise them. Other ana-

Legalese

Ending an employment agreement

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Summer is coming, which means for schools, cultural centers and other educational businesses, it is the end of the "season". For many employees, it's time to consider ending a work relationship and looking for a new space or to renew an agreement for the season. Many expat families are also moving out of Kuwait and heading on to new endeavors. This article is to help you understand your obligations of ending an agreement.

Three-month notice

Question: I am a teacher and my employment agreement is ending. It ends in June even though we started in September - am I not entitled to three months of notice? Or paid salary for the summer until next September? I am the one terminating the contract.

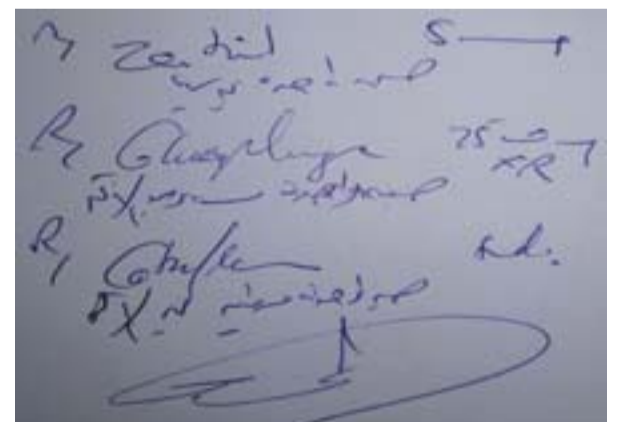
Fajer: When you terminate a contract, you can ask for a three-month notice, but this does not mean that the school may agree to it. Usually school agreements are done differently to specifically state that the agreement ends in June. To answer this question, I would have to read your contract.

End of service benefits

Question: I am leaving Kuwait and I want to know what can I do in order to obtain my end of service benefits? I know end of service benefits are only for Kuwaitis.

Fajer: This answer is for both Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis alike. I always advise my clients to first try and negotiate with their employer. If the employer does not want to negotiate, then ask your lawyer to negotiate on your behalf. If not, then your lawyer can go to court. Before your lawyer takes the issue to court, your lawyer will have to go through the ministry of social affairs and labor, which is also a safe place for both parties to negotiate. You can also go to the Public Authority for Manpower yourself and file a complaint. It may be overwhelming for non-lawyers to do so, but if you find someone who is willing to help, the process can be done. If you are leaving Kuwait, I highly suggest you give a power of attorney to a lawyer or any other person you trust in Kuwait who can file a complaint and negotiate on your behalf.

For questions or queries, please email us at info@fl-legal.com.



lysts say that physicians' writing is not directed at the public to read, and only doctors like them understand what their colleagues write and the symbols and abbreviations they use. Furthermore, tension, excessive work and thinking often make the doctor uninterested in what he writes because his vision of things changes through study and discovery of the human body, and there are things much more important than his handwriting.

The study also revealed several reasons, including the narrowness and size of the paper besides the huge number of patients a matter that forces the doctor to quickly scribble on the prescription knowing that his handwriting is for sure understood by the pharmacist. Another reason was attributed to the doctors' understanding that their handwriting will be stored in files and will not be viewed again. A report issued by the Medical Institute in Washington revealed that the doctors' bad handwriting cause the deaths of nearly 7,000 patients around the world every year. After all, the fate of a patient is subject to how well the pharmacist comprehends the doctor's prescription. — KUNA

Local



History of Kuwait



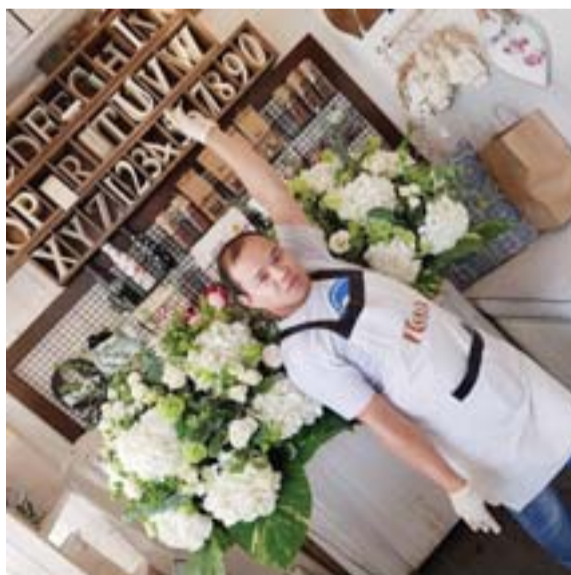
KUWAIT: A scene from an old market full of traffic and activity as passersby, sellers and buyers can be seen. The buildings, shops and people's clothes paint a clear picture of the ancestors' heritage Kuwaitis grew to love. The picture dates back to 1924. (Source: The KOC archive. Researched by Mahmoud Zakaria, Researcher in Heritage, the Ministry of Information)



Business is booming in Ramadan

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.

"What I like most in Ramadan is the increase in orders of flowers from our shop," said Indones Rocios Placibe, a florist. "We are very busy, especially during the first week of Ramadan, as I get too many orders from individuals and companies. Business is great! In the second week of Ramadan, we have lots of orders from schools and people celebrating girgian. Also, work timings have been shortened - this means more time for myself and other extracurricular activities that I can do legally."



Ooredoo makes Internet better place in Ramadan

DOHA: In a provocative, thoughtful campaign, telco leader Ooredoo Group launched its much-awaited annual Ramadan campaign with a short film focusing on the power of the Internet and its potential impact on people's lives.

The new short film depicts negative versus positive behaviors through scenes that push viewers to re-think their actions online and choose between trolling, bullying, sharing hate and anger, or making new friends, showing others they care, sharing love and doing things that matter.

The campaign's message highlights the phenomenal potential that the Internet has to affect people's lives, and encourages users to think twice before making an online contribution, in an attempt make cyberspace a more positive, welcoming online community for all.

Talking of the new campaign, Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al Thani, Group Chief Executive Officer, Ooredoo, said: "The internet has a great power to help us connect, develop and expand relationships, but with this potential comes the responsibility to use it ethically and sensibly. The Holy Month of Ramadan is a time for introspection, thoughtfulness and reflection, the ideal time of year to highlight the impact online interactions can have on us all and a great opportunity to start changing behaviours. Through this campaign, we're hoping to reinforce the responsibility we share to ensure the Internet remains a positive and safe place and push users to become more kind to one another."



After all, life is about the choices we make, and so is the Internet."

Ooredoo recognizes today's consumers are more digitally savvy than ever before, and use the internet for many of their interactions throughout the day. Chatting, gaming, sharing their lives via social media. Likes, shares, comments: all have the potential to have an impact, whether positive or negative. The new campaign, #UpToUs, aims to sensitize Internet users on the impact online interactions can have on everyone and remind them of the power they have to make the Internet a better place for all.

"As we continue to heavily invest in our networks across our global footprint, we want to make sure that our customers around the world can access the internet and really appreciate the spirit of togetherness that people now enjoy as part of their daily digital lifestyles," added Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al Thani. The new short film can be seen on all Ooredoo social media channels from the first day of Ramadan.

KIB launches its annual Mashla initiative

KUWAIT: As a part of its annual Ramadan tradition, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) launched again its annual Mashla initiative, which aims at providing essential food supplies to needy families in Kuwait throughout the holy month of Ramadan.

KIB's 'Mashla' initiative food packages are composed of a variety of nutritional food items and essential food products that are needed throughout the holy month. Accordingly, the food packages will be distributed amongst a large number of needy people and families, with the participation of a group of volunteers and

humanitarians, as well as a team of dedicated volunteers from KIB and volunteers from Hassad Group who helped prepare food packages at the Kuwait Food Bank.

On this occasion, Senior Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: "As part of our social impact social responsibility pillar, we are committed to organizing a number of community-based and humanitarian initiatives that aim at creating a positive impact on the community. Not only does this initiative support needy families during the holy month, it also strengthens values of social solidarity and embraces long-held values of the local community, particularly during the month of giving."

KIB continuously strives to reaffirm its positive impact on the local community, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan. Accordingly, the bank strengthens its social role by organizing a number of initiatives and activities that serve diverse segments of the local community; thereby nurturing love and compassion amongst everyone.



Local



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry's President Ali Al-Ghanem and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.—Amiri Diwan photos



KUWAIT: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry's President Ali Al-Ghanem and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem greet His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chief of Kuwait National Guard His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Alli Al-Sabah.

Amir, Crown Prince receive Ramadan well-wishers

KUWAIT: 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 and Al-Sabah family received senior state officials on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan on Monday evening at Al-Sabah family Diwan at Bayan Palace. The reception has "embodied the one-family spirit of the Kuwaiti society," the Amiri Diwan said in statement. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Chief Justice Yousef Al-Mutawa.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah, and former interior minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Minister of Public Works Dr Jenan Boushehr.



KUWAIT: Senior members of Al-Sabah family in attendance.



KUWAIT: Dr Rasha Al-Sabah greets His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from a senior citizen.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from MP Riyadh Al-Adasani.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Minister of Justice Fahd Al-Afasi and Minister of Education Hamed Al-Azmi.

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International

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2019



Backers 'failed to follow through' in uprising: Guaido

China's social media troll 'army' wages war on Uighurs

Page 9

Page 8



ANKARA: This handout picture taken yesterday shows Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan gesturing in front of members of ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) at their group meeting at the parliament. — AFP

Erdogan welcomes re-run of Istanbul vote

Imamoglu addresses supporters, vows to emerge even stronger

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday welcomed an order to re-run the recent Istanbul election, a move the opposition has branded an attack on democracy. His ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) lost the mayorship of Turkey's biggest city by a narrow margin and has refused to accept defeat. "We sincerely believe there was organized corruption and irregularities," Erdogan told party members in parliament yesterday, saying the re-run was the "best step" for the country.

On Monday, Turkey's top election body annulled the results of the March 31 mayoral vote, which was won by Ekrem Imamoglu of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP). The party's leader described the seven members of the election board as "gang members" under Erdogan's control. "Those who take their power from the palace will be brought to account before history one day. We take our power from the people," CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu said in a televised speech. The loss of Istanbul, the country's eco-

omic hub, was a shocking defeat for Erdogan's ruling party. The Islamic-conservative AKP and its predecessors have ruled the city for 25 years, and it was especially sensitive for Erdogan who grew up in the metropolis and rose to power after himself serving as mayor. Imamoglu, a softly-spoken former district mayor, gave a rousing speech to thousands of supporters in Istanbul late Monday, vowing they would emerge even stronger after the re-run on June 23.

"Maybe you are upset but never lose your hope," he said, while thousands more took to the streets of the chic Kadikoy district to protest against the election board. "This is the collapse of the declining democracy in Turkey. The coming process is condemned to be even worse," said 60-year-old shopkeeper Ali Yamac.

'Incomprehensible'

The international community has voiced concern. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said yesterday the decision to annul the election was "not transparent,

and incomprehensible to us". The European Union called for the election body to produce its reasons "without delay". "Ensuring a free, fair and transparent election process is essential to any democracy and is at the heart of the European Union's relations with Turkey," EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini said.

Paris also urged the Turkish authorities to justify the move and ensure "respect for democratic principles, pluralism, fairness, transparency and, in particular, the presence of foreign observers" in the new poll. The loss of the mayorship in Istanbul, and a more resounding defeat in the capital Ankara, was a rare setback for Erdogan and his party, reflecting widespread concerns over the deteriorating economy. Analysts say the re-run risks further eroding Turkey's international reputation, but that Istanbul's wealth makes it worth the gamble for Erdogan and his allies.

"The municipality controls very large financial resources, which are channelled to AKP supporters. The loss of Istanbul would weaken the party machine,"

Emre Erdogan, professor of political science at Istanbul's Bilgi University, told AFP. Erdogan's party still won the most seats nationwide, but has been hurt by the first recession in a decade, as well as record-high inflation and a currency that has lost more than 12 percent of its value against the dollar this year alone. His critics say he has eroded rights by cracking down on dissent at home but for his supporters maintains the image of a strong leader who speaks up for Turkey in the international arena.

The defeated mayoral candidate, former prime minister Binali Yildirim, a close Erdogan ally, said he hoped the re-run would "be beneficial for our city". The US-based think tank the Soufan Center said the YSK decision brought "serious concerns" for the future of democracy in Turkey. "Given restrictions on freedom of speech and Turkey's increasingly less independent judiciary, the recent election meddling is a clear signal to the Turkish people, and the world, that Erdogan is willing to pursue absolute power at any cost." — AFP

Journos symbol of Suu Kyi's tarnished image

YANGON: The case of two Reuters journalists - freed in Myanmar yesterday - played a key part in shredding Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's reputation as a rights champion after she failed to come to their defense or speak up for the persecuted Rohingya minority. Suu Kyi was once a staunch advocate for the press and a darling of the foreign media, but her silence over the persecuted Rohingya minority has drawn widespread condemnation. During her long years of house arrest under the former junta - which choked the media inside Myanmar - it was foreign correspondents who beamed her message of peaceful defiance to the outside world.

Glowing profiles burnished her image, with comparisons made to the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King. Suu Kyi remains adored inside Myanmar. Supporters of her democracy battle say she has limited control over the military, which embarked on reforms in 2010 after almost 50 years in power. Yet former friends and supporters have looked on aghast at her lack

of criticism over the military's campaign against the Rohingya, which UN investigators have said amounted to genocide. Yesterday's release of Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo after 511 days behind bars brought joy and relief for Myanmar's embattled press community, but further highlighted Suu Kyi's crippled legacy.

'Part of the problem'

Rights groups have slammed the civilian leader for not using her influence to stop the Reuters case from proceeding. Phil Robertson, deputy director for Human Rights Watch in Asia, said Suu Kyi was continuously unhelpful and evasive over the plight of Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, and her "increasingly hostile attitude toward independent media in Myanmar was a big issue". He said Suu Kyi could have requested a presidential pardon long ago and that she has now become "part of the problem" since the start of the Rohingya crisis in August 2017, playing a role in a "national cover-up of the atrocities".

Since sweeping to power after historic elections in 2015, Suu Kyi has had an increasingly fraught relationship with the press. Prosecutions of journalists and media intimidation more redolent of the junta years have been common. Around 20 journalists were prosecuted in 2017, many under a controversial online defamation law. At the same time Suu Kyi has been accused of backing misleading information about the Rakhine

crisis. State media published by the Suu Kyi-controlled Ministry of Information has continuously echoed the military line, rejecting many of the allegations of atrocities against the Rohingya as deliberate fake news. That has put her at odds with a mountain of evidence and an international community calling for justice. Political analyst Maung Maung Soe said it was this "huge international pressure" which eventually brought about the release of the two journalists, which was unlikely to have any significant impact on Suu Kyi's reputation. Robertson said Suu Kyi will likely ignore the journalists' release and "act like justice was served".

Praise for generals

Suu Kyi's defenders say her hands are tied by an army that still controls security matters as well as 25 percent of parliamentary seats. The stateless Rohingya are also deeply unpopular among the Buddhist-majority public in Myanmar, where Islamophobia has surged in recent years. That reality gives Suu Kyi little political incentive to defend the Muslim minority - or reporters who write about their plight. But some analysts note a transformation in recent months, from Suu Kyi trying to avoid talking about the issue to supporting the military's kickback against "terrorists". And at a speech in Singapore in Aug 2018 she referred to generals in her cabinet as "rather sweet". — AFP

Sri Lanka says threat persists despite arrests

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan authorities have arrested or killed all the militants responsible for Easter suicide bombings, but the island still faces the threat of "global terrorism," the prime minister said yesterday. Ranil Wickremesinghe told parliament that his Buddhist-majority nation was a victim of Islamist extremists and needed international support to deal with the persisting threat. "The danger is not over, we are now a victim of global terrorism," Wickremesinghe said. "Even if we have arrested or killed every terrorist responsible for the Easter Sunday attacks, extremists abroad can still cause trouble for us. We need intelligence sharing with foreign partners to deal with this challenge."

His comments came as police chief Chandana Wickramaratne said they have accounted for every individual involved in the April 21 attacks that killed 257 people at three churches and three luxury hotels. "All those who organised and carried out the suicide bomb attack have

died or is in our custody," Wickramaratne said. "The two bomb experts of the group have been killed. We have seized the explosives they had stored for future attacks." Wickramaratne, who was named acting police chief last week after President Maithripala Sirisena suspended his predecessor over his failure to act on warnings about the attacks, said public life was slowly returning to normal.

The St Anthony's church also partially opened yesterday for prayers amid tight security even as the military and police guarded the historic place of worship dating back to 1740. Police set up steel barricades outside and frisked people entering to pray before a statue of Saint Anthony. Church authorities said they will allow devotees for a 12-hour period until the church was fully restored. Sri Lanka's navy is leading efforts to rebuild the church which is venerated not only by Catholics but also by many people of other faiths who believe in the miraculous powers of Saint Anthony. — AFP

International

Escalation in Syria's Idlib rattles months-old ceasefire

Macron expresses 'extreme concern' over the heightened violence

KAFR NABL, Syria: Air strikes and shelling killed 13 civilians in northwestern Syria yesterday, a monitor said, in the latest escalation to rattle a months-old truce and spark displacement. At least 53 fighters have also been killed since Monday, in one of the deadliest flare-ups since a demilitarized zone around the Idlib region was agreed in September last year, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Several deadly skirmishes have occurred since the deal was reached between regime ally Russia and rebel backer Turkey, but the last few weeks have seen an uptick in violence inside the planned buffer zone.

The region of some three million people is under the control of a former Al-Qaeda affiliate, in one of the last parts of Syria which President Bashar Al-Assad has yet to take back. The September deal aimed to avoid an all-out government offensive on the enclave. But a surge in attacks since April 20 has raised new fears a government offensive is imminent, prompting thousands of civilians to flee their homes towards quieter areas deeper inside Idlib province.

"This is the third time we have been displaced but this time is the scariest," said Abu Ahmad, a 40-year-old from southern Idlib who was fleeing yesterday with his family towards areas near the border with Turkey. "Overflights by warplanes and shelling have been relentless," said the father of three, his blue pick-up truck stacked with mattresses, bed sheets and household appliances.

'Urgent de-escalation'

Battles between militants and pro-government forces raged overnight around a hilltop in the northern countryside of Hama province, following an advance by Assad's forces. Twenty-four pro-government fighters were killed in fierce fighting, the Observatory said, along with 29 militants. The latter were members of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a group dominated by fighters from a former Al-Qaeda affiliate, and of the Turkistan Islamic Party, a Uighur-dominated militant group.

US sending carrier, bombers to Mideast 'psychological war'

DUBAI: Iran's top security body dismissed as "psychological warfare" a US announcement that a carrier strike group and bombers are being sent to the Middle East as a message to Tehran, the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported yesterday. US National Security Adviser John Bolton said on Sunday the United States was deploying the Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Middle East.

"Bolton's statement is a clumsy use of a burnt-out happening for psychological warfare," Tasnim quoted Keyvan Khosravi,

spokesman for the Supreme National Security Council, as saying. Khosravi said the carrier had arrived in the Mediterranean weeks ago. US acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan said on Monday he had approved dispatching the carrier strike group and bombers due to indications of a "credible threat by Iranian regime forces". He provided no details of the underlying intelligence. Iran's state-run Press TV earlier said: "The deployment seems to be a 'regularly scheduled' one by the US Navy, and Bolton has just tried to talk it up."

Separately, a military adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the United States was "neither willing nor capable" with respect to an attack on Iran, the semi-official news agency ISNA reported. Brigadier General Hossein Dehghan said Washington would have a

hard time convincing world opinion and regional countries to accept an all-out war against Iran, and to mobilize resources for such a conflict.

Iranian newspapers and commentators have widely dismissed Washington's announcement as a "bluff" and "empty rhetoric". Iran said last month it was prepared for a US decision to end waivers granted to buyers of Iranian oil, as the elite Revolutionary Guards repeated their threat to close the strategic Strait of Hormuz in the Gulf if Tehran was barred from using it. Around 30 percent of the world's seaborne oil exports get shipped through the strait.

While neither Shanahan nor Bolton elaborated on the gist of US intelligence, other US officials told Reuters there were "multiple, credible threats" against US forces on land, including in Iraq, by Iran and proxy forces and at sea. Last week,

Fighting subsided early yesterday after pro-government forces thwarted several counter-attacks and consolidated new positions, Observatory chief Rami Abdul Rahman told AFP. But the air and artillery bombardment continued for an eighth straight day, killing the 13 civilians, the war monitor said. At least nine civilians were killed in shelling and air strikes on Monday. State news agency SANA said Syrian troops launched rocket attacks on armed groups in northwestern Hama province on Tuesday, killing several fighters, but it did not provide any toll.

French President Emmanuel Macron expressed his "extreme concern" over the heightened violence. "The humanitarian situation in Syria is critical and no military option is acceptable," he said on Twitter yesterday. "We demand a halt to the violence and support the UN in backing a necessary political solution." UN chief Antonio Guterres has called "for an urgent de-escalation of the situation as the holy month of Ramadan begins" and urged "the parties to recommit fully to the ceasefire arrangements of the memorandum signed on 17 September 2018."

A UN statement said Guterres was alarmed by "reports of aerial attacks on population centres and civilian infrastructure". At least seven health facilities have been hit since April 28, it said. Nine schools have also been struck since April 30, and many more have closed their doors indefinitely, it added.

'Limited offensive'

It remains unclear whether the Syrian government and its Russian ally are planning to launch a full-scale assault. Aron Lund, from the US think tank The Century Foundation, said "a limited offensive into Idlib, peeling off a few areas, should be easily within their capabilities". He said the recapture of two key highways running through Idlib - the M4 and the M5 - could be among the "many goals" behind such an operation.

Under the September deal, hardliners were sup-



IDLIB, Syria: Residents flee with their belongings from regime shelling in the southern countryside of this province yesterday. —AFP

posed to withdraw from the planned buffer zone, allowing traffic to once again flow along the two strategic highways, which connect government-held areas with the Turkish border. Turkey has failed, however, to secure the militants' withdrawal, prompting government forces to take matters into their own hands, Syria specialist Fabrice Balanche said.

Taking the two highways would help Assad boost the recovery of Syria's nearby second city Aleppo,

which remains cut off from most of its countryside and poorly connected to the rest of the country, he told AFP. "Restoring traffic on these two axes will reduce transport costs to Aleppo," he said. Retaking the road between the regime's coastal stronghold of Latakia and Aleppo in particular would cut the rebel-held region in two, making it easier for government forces to recapture its southern part and isolate the militants in the north, Balanche added. —AFP

Militants frustrate aid effort in Syria

BEIRUT: Threats, interference and aid deliveries in jeopardy - relief workers say militants are adding to the huge challenges they face in violence-plagued north-west Syria where a fragile ceasefire is at risk. The Idlib region, controlled by a former Al-Qaeda affiliate, is one of the last areas of the country that President Bashar Al-Assad has yet to recapture. Around 2.7 million of its roughly three million residents need humanitarian assistance according to the United Nations. Most rely heavily on food, medicine and other aid brought across from Turkey by the UN and charity groups.

But efforts by the "de-facto authorities" in Idlib "to tamper with, impede or frustrate the delivery of humanitarian assistance including by undermining the safety of humanitarian workers, has been an unfortunate reality", said Rachel Sider of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) militant group and its civil wing - the so-called "Salvation Government" - cemented control over Idlib in the beginning of the year. "The interference has increased since January," said a humanitarian worker in Idlib, who wanted to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation.

"There is not a single aid organization that has been spared threats, arrests, or closure for very silly reasons," he said, even as Idlib has come under increased bombardment by the regime and its ally Russia over the past month. In April militants threatened to detain him because he refused to provide them with food baskets his team was distributing at a camp for the displaced in southern Idlib, he added. "They told me I should give them aid because they are mujahideen," said the 27-year-old.

He said HTS also detained him for four days seven months ago in Idlib city for photographing aid deliver-



SARAQIB, Syria: Men walk among the rubble of a building that was destroyed during airstrikes by the Syrian regime and its allies near this in the province of Idlib yesterday. —AFP

ies without their authorization. Militants beat him, confiscated his laptop, and broke his camera, he said. "They told me I should thank God I was being released alive."

'Interference'

Paul Donohoe of the International Rescue Committee said "aid groups face interference from armed groups in Idlib, such as the restricting of access to vulnerable populations or attempting to influence beneficiary selection and the location of aid delivery". He declined to provide more detail but a second humanitarian worker in Idlib, who also asked to remain

anonymous, said several projects by international aid agencies have been dropped in recent months because of such meddling.

A plan to provide bakeries in Idlib with free flour was scrapped because the Salvation Government insisted on limiting beneficiaries to bakeries it is affiliated with, the 29-year-old said. "Our activities as an organisation have become very modest since this happened to us," he added. The governing body is also trying to ensure its affiliates are among those who secure tenders with aid agencies, which attempt to avoid this through screening, he said. "They want a cut of any project implemented in the area," he said. —AFP

The Georgia sisters are the third group of young Saudi women this year to attract global attention for seeking refuge outside their homeland. A teenage girl won asylum in Canada when she hopped up in a Thai airport hotel in January to escape her family.

Two other Saudi sisters who hid in Hong Kong for six months were granted visas in March to travel to a third country. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has introduced reforms, such as lifting the driving ban for women, and indicated last year that he favored ending the guardianship system. But he has stopped short of backing its annulment. —Reuters

Runaway sisters leave Georgia to start new life

TBILISI: Two runaway Saudi sisters who won global attention for fleeing to Georgia and pleading online for protection said yesterday they were preparing to start new lives in a new country where their family could not find them. Maha, 28, and Wafa Al-Subaie, 25, started an online campaign to

find a safe haven in April, after arriving in Georgia to escape relatives they said abused them, in the latest case to highlight Saudi Arabia's strict social control over women.

"We are thrilled to announce that we are leaving Georgia," the young women wrote on Tuesday from their Twitter account @Georgiasisters2, posting a short video of them holding Georgian passports at the airport in the capital Tbilisi. The sisters applied for asylum in Georgia in April, but said they wanted to move elsewhere because they feared their family could come to the former Soviet republic, as visas are not required, and force them back to

News in brief

Pompeo cancels Germany visit

BERLIN: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo abruptly cancelled a visit to Germany yesterday hours before he was due to arrive in Berlin, with his spokeswoman citing "pressing issues". "We look forward to rescheduling this important set of meetings," State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortogus said. "The Secretary looks forward to being in Berlin soon." She gave no further details or explanation for the sudden change of plans. Pompeo had been due to meet German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas later yesterday. Merkel's office referred all queries about the reasons for the cancellation to the US embassy in Berlin, which could not immediately be reached for comment. —AFP

Aussie PM egged on campaign trail

SYDNEY: Australia's election became a little more raucous yesterday when a protestor tried - but failed - to crack an egg on Prime Minister Scott Morrison's head. The attacker's egg, thrown from close range, appeared to bounce off the politician at a Country Women's Association event in New South Wales, where Morrison was campaigning ahead of May 18 general elections. The woman was wrestled away by Morrison's close protection security detail and could later be seen leaving the venue holding an egg carton. New South Wales police said they had taken a "25-year-old woman into custody following an incident involving the Prime Minister in Albury". In the fracas, an older woman was bundled over, and Morrison - who is trailing in the polls ahead of the May 18 vote - had to help her up. —AFP

Anderson visits Assange in jail

LONDON: Former "Baywatch" star and now animal rights campaigner Pamela Anderson spoke emotionally after meeting WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange in a London prison yesterday, warning that his life was in danger. "It's been very difficult to see Julian here and to make our way through the prison to get to him was quite shocking," said Anderson, who visited Assange several times when he lived as a fugitive inside Ecuador's embassy. "He's a good man, he's an incredible person. I love him. I can't imagine what he has been going through," the US actress and former Playboy model said outside Belmarsh prison, wearing a large cape with slogans calling for the defense of free speech. "We need to save his life. That's how serious it is," she said, adding: "We just have to keep fighting because it's unfair. He's sacrificed so much to bring the truth out". —AFP

Trump's approval highest ever

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is enjoying the strongest polling of his presidency following the release of special counsel Robert Mueller's report and positive economic news, according to public opinion poll agency Gallup. Trump's job approval rating crept up one point to 46 percent for the two-week period ending April 30, a substantial rise from the 39 percent approval he recorded in early March. "In addition to the initial interpretation of the Mueller report, which Trump claimed vindicated him from charges that he had colluded with Russia, the economy has offered several reasons for Americans to look more favorably on Trump," Gallup said late Friday. Trump remained underwater in Gallup polling, however, with disapproval of his performance at 50 percent, although down from 57 percent on March 10. —AFP

International

Backers 'failed to follow through' in abortive uprising, says Guaido

Opposition leader rejects suggestions movement flatlining

CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido said Monday that backers who had pledged support for his abortive uprising last week had "failed to follow through" to dislodge President Nicolas Maduro. But that "doesn't mean that they won't do it soon," Guaido told AFP in an interview in Caracas. Guaido, recognized as interim president by more than 50 countries, said it was "obvious today, there is widespread discontent from which the armed forces aren't immune". "There have been discussions... with civil and military officials who are ready to take the side of our constitution," he said. "I'm very optimistic given that we are very close to achieving change in Venezuela."

The 35-year-old National Assembly chief has branded Maduro a usurper over his controversial re-election last year, and in January declared himself acting president, plunging Venezuela into a political crisis that deepened its already grave economic woes. But Maduro has held firm, bolstered by the continued support of the powerful armed forces. Guaido, however, expressed the hope that the army would eventually come on board. "We are waiting for many more to

join in expressing their discontent and to participate in 'Operation Freedom,'" he said.

Of those that did, 25 soldiers sought refuge in the Brazilian embassy later in the day. "Today all that needs to happen is for the armed forces and certain (public sector) employees to overcome their fear," said Guaido. Maduro was getting "weaker and weaker" after years of protests against his regime, Guaido said, painting a picture of a leader surrounded by the last vestige of support in his Miraflores presidential palace.

"They say that Maduro is in Miraflores, but they also say that he's in a bunker with a main security ring composed of Cubans and a second ring made up of soldiers from the Casa Militar," Guaido said, referring to Venezuela's elite presidential protection corps. "He no longer trusts even in his high command, he doesn't even have any trust in his environment."

Protest 'fulfilled'

The attempted uprising set off two days of violent clashes between security forces and protesters that left five people dead, dozens injured and more than 233 arrested. Authorities have also issued 18 arrest war-

rants against "civilians and military plotters," according to Attorney General Tarek William Saab. Guaido has tried to keep up the pressure with massive street protests, but his latest call for demonstrations on Saturday drew only several hundred people. He rejected suggestions that his opposition movement was flatlining, however. "On Saturday, I think the protest was fulfilled. A key goal for us was to redirect it toward non-violence," he said.

Maduro, meanwhile, appeared at a military exercise on Saturday with Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino, who top US officials had said was in on the attempted uprising but backed out. "I told the generals and admirals yesterday: loyalty, I want an active loyalty," Maduro said in a speech to some 5,000 troops that was broadcast nationally on radio and television. Tensions in Venezuela have soared since Guaido invoked the constitution to declare himself acting president.

As major world powers have been drawn in, the US has thrown its support behind Guaido, while China and Russia have backed Maduro. Washington has repeatedly stated that "all options are on the table," including



CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition leader and self-declared president Juan Guaido offers an interview to AFP on Monday. —AFP

military intervention in Venezuela to help Guaido oust Maduro. Without using such antagonistic language, Guaido said there could be a case to seek "foreign co-opera-

tion to overcome the unprecedented crisis Venezuela is going through." Asked about military intervention, he said only that it was a "controversial option". —AFP

Aussie gangsters eye freedom amid informant scandal

MELBOURNE: Some of Australia's most dangerous criminals could have their convictions overturned after revelations their defense lawyer was secretly feeding information to police. For a decade before the turn of the millennium, Melbourne's gangland wars gripped Australia, with police seemingly unable to penetrate the city's shadowy underworld as the death toll soared. The series of up to 40 bloody retributive murders came as rival gangs battled over Melbourne's lucrative drug trade and only eased when key mob figures were put behind bars.

But a legal scandal now threatens dozens - if not hundreds - of their convictions, with the shocking revelation that criminal defense lawyer Nicola Gobbo was also acting as a police informant at the time. The former barrister represented some of Australia's most dangerous criminals on charges ranging from drug trafficking to murder, while also feeding information about her clients to police. Prosecutors last year informed 22 people that they could have grounds to appeal.

But Gobbo - also referred to as Lawyer X and Informer 3838 - claims that at least 386 people were arrested and charged based on the information she provided, according to a June 2015 letter that was made public in December. A Royal Commission inquiry is currently underway to determine how many cases have been impacted by Gobbo's double life, with hearings set to resume today. "Any conviction in any case where Gobbo played anything but a very minimal role in providing legal services is almost certainly going to be overturned," Melbourne University law professor Jeremy Gans told AFP. —AFP

Cyprus police in first apology over killings

NICOSIA: Cyprus's new police chief issued the force's first apology yesterday for its handling of the killings of seven foreign women and girls, acknowledging officers had failed to protect them. The murders - dubbed the Mediterranean island's first serial killings - have sparked anger against the police over its failure to act on missing person reports that allowed the killer to carry on undetected for nearly three years. New chief Kypros Michaelides issued the apology as he was sworn in to replace Zacharias Chrysostomou.

Chrysostomou was sacked by President Nicos Anastasiades on Friday over what he called police "negligence and incompetence", a day after Justice Minister Ionas Nicolaou resigned. "The recent painful developments and the loss of defenseless innocent women and children who had come to our country in search of a better future have greatly damaged the prestige, honor and reputation of the Cyprus police, highlighting weaknesses, gaps and omissions," Michaelides said. "That is why, as representative of the police force, I want... to convey a big apology because we did not manage to protect these innocent and defenseless souls who died in a tragic and disgraceful way."

In his dismissal letter to Michaelides' predecessor, the president decried "the apparent negligence and dereliction of duty of the police in investigating reports of missing persons". "Some of the horrific crimes that shocked Cyprus could have been prevented," he wrote. There has been a series of angry protests outside the presidential palace in Nicosia, with demonstrators accusing police officers of routinely disregarding missing persons reports involving foreigners.

The killings came to light in mid-April when unusually heavy rains brought the body of 38-year-old Filipina Mary Rose Tiburcio to the surface of the disused mine shaft where it had been hidden. That triggered a murder investigation which led to the arrest of Greek Cypriot National Guard captain Nicos Metaxas on April 18. Metaxas, 35, who has not yet been formally charged over the murders, appeared in court on Sunday and was remanded in custody for a further eight days. —AFP

Albanians unearth dark past searching for communism victims

TIRANA: After years of scouring documents, tapes and then the slopes of a mountain above Tirana, Jovan Plaku found the remains of 13 people in a forest where he believes his father was executed by Albania's former communist regime. A decade later, the 45-year-old is hoping to finally get answers about whether his father is among those found after Albania launched a landmark effort to identify the victims. The dead found on Dajti mountain are among more than 5,000 executed during the communist era. The fate and final whereabouts of many remain unknown, nearly three decades after the fall of communism in 1991.

The victims of the killings were political opponents, religious believers or regular citizens reported for "treason", "espionage" or "sabotage" against the paranoid regime of dictator Enver Hoxha. In the period since communism's collapse, Albania has been reluctant to open up this dark chapter of history. So the search for the missing has been left to the tireless efforts of ordinary people like Plaku. His father Koco Plaku, an engineer, was sentenced to death in a closed-door trial two years after he was arrested in 1975. The son was nine months old at the time and his mother was forced to divorce to avoid deportation.

Determined to piece the story together, Plaku later managed to find photos of his father's trial, sketches scribbled during the proceedings and a 72-hour interrogation tape. It was then he learned that his father had been convicted of "sabotage" and "espionage" over fishing hooks given to him by a Russian friend - a gift

that aroused suspicion after Tirana cut ties with Moscow. He interviewed dozens of people, even coming face-to-face with his father's executioner. The "small and stocky man" had become a judo coach, said Plaku. He said he did not remember anything.

Long wait

Eventually, Plaku pinpointed Dajti mountain as the likely site of his father's killing. Together with another man looking for a missing father, he spent months digging on the mountainside before finding human remains, some of which were buried only 60 cm deep. The bones have been sitting in a morgue for 10 years, waiting to be identified. Now the process is finally under way after the launch in November of a project with the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP). Plaku, alongside around 30 others, provided DNA samples to see if there was any match with his father. He is hoping to finally "close this chapter" of his life with a quiet moment, a cigarette and the chance to lay flowers on the site where his father would have been shot with a bullet to the back of the neck on June 28, 1977. "I still tremble when I remember the moment" of uncovering the human remains, he says.

'Returning dignity'

The ICMP project comes several years after files from the regime's despised secret police, the Sigurimi, were first opened to the public. The director of the archives Gentiana Sula, who herself has a disappeared grandparent, said she knows well how the past can turn into an obsession for relatives who want to undo the stigma heaped on loved ones by an odious regime. "They want to clarify their fate," she explained. Luigj Ndou, from ICMP, also warned how the past can haunt a country which tries to ignore it. "This is not about the dead, this is about the living," he said. "This is about returning the dignity of all of those who were killed

In Macedonia, Pope urges Balkans to embrace diversity

SKOPJE: Pope Francis urged the Balkans to embrace its patchwork of faiths and ethnicities during a visit to North Macedonia yesterday, where he held an open-air mass in the capital Skopje, the proud birthplace of Mother Teresa. The pontiff was welcomed with yellow billboards and buses bearing his smiling face after he touched down in the mainly Orthodox Christian country. Catholics make up a small sliver - less than one percent - of the 2.1 million population, which also includes a large Muslim minority that is ethnic Albanian.

In an address before the country's political leaders, Francis praised the "crucible of cultures and ethnic and religious identities" in "your land, a bridge between East and West". North Macedonia's diversity, which reflects the mix of communities in wider Balkan region, forms a "mosaic in which every piece is essential for the uniqueness and beauty of the whole", he added. Mutual respect between groups was "highly significant for increased integration with the nations of Europe," he told leaders of a government trying to open accession talks with the European Union.

"It is my hope that this integration will develop in a

Democrats launch contempt action against US AG

WASHINGTON: US House Democrats have scheduled a vote today on whether to hold the nation's top law enforcement official in contempt for failing to produce a full, unredacted special counsel's report on Russian election interference. Monday's rare and dramatic move against Attorney General Bill Barr intensifies the showdown between President Donald Trump and the Democrats who control the House of Representatives and are seeking to hold him to account for what they say was improper conduct.

way that is beneficial for the entire region of the Western Balkans, with unfailing respect for diversity", Francis added. All of the Western Balkan countries are trying to join the EU, a dream that, if realized, would soften the hard borders drawn between them during Yugoslavia's bloody collapse into inter-ethnic war in the 1990s.

'Great woman'

Yesterday, people of all faiths filled Skopje's main square for the mass led by the pope, who is wrapping up a three-day tour that began in Bulgaria. Believers from neighboring countries, such as mainly Catholic Croatia, were also among the thousands-strong crowd, waving their country's flags under sunny skies. "For me this is a historic visit, not only for Catholics but also for us Orthodox, Muslims and all others living in North Macedonia," said 18-year-old Filip Etmisovski, who arrived early for a spot in the square. Dragi Bojadziski, a 46-year-old Catholic from the south, also made the pilgrimage for the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. "It means a lot to us, the Catholic faithful here," he told AFP.

Bishop Kiro Stojanov of Skopje thanked the Pope for coming to meet "the small Catholic community that lives in the diaspora." In his homily, the Pope drew on the inspiration of Mother Teresa, who was born in Skopje in 1910 when it was part of the Ottoman empire. Earlier, Francis blessed the poor and delivered a prayer at a memorial dedicated to the nun, who he canonized as a saint in 2016. "She became the prayerful cry of the

"The attorney general's failure to comply with our subpoena, after extensive accommodation efforts, leaves us no choice but to initiate contempt proceedings in order to enforce the subpoena and access the full, unredacted report," House Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler said in a statement, after a missed 9:00 am (1300 GMT) deadline.

The Justice Department said in a letter it remained willing to accommodate the "legitimate needs" of Congress, within the scope of the law. "The department's letter invites committee staff to come to the department on Wednesday to discuss a mutually acceptable accommodation," Justice spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said in a statement. The invitation was for today afternoon, hours after lawmakers begin their debate.

Barr declared Trump cleared of conspiracy with Russia and obstruction of justice shortly after special counsel Robert Mueller presented his 448-page report



TIRANA: Jovan Plaku, 45, walks on April 22, 2019 on a former military base in the Dajti mountain, where he believes his father was buried after he was killed by the communist regime on June 1977. —AFP

only because they thought differently." With A400,000 (\$450,000) given by international donors, the ICMP project remains small in scope, focusing first on two locations. But it is an important first step, Ndou says, adding that the political will to continue is essential.

'The Party knows'

"Why was it so easy to kill someone and yet it is so difficult to find his body?" asks 63-year-old Elena Sallaku, sitting in a small apartment she shares with her twin sister and widowed mother. The family has spent a decade looking for answers about their father, Xhavit. The twins also gave DNA samples to the Dajti search team although they doubt their father was among those exhumed. An engineer trained in the Soviet Union, Xhavit was executed in the summer of 1977 at age 46. When his wife Irina, now 86, asked why he was taken, police said only: "The Party knows why." —AFP



SKOPJE: Pope Francis prays in front of a memorial dedicated to Mother Teresa, Skopje's most famous Catholic native, yesterday. —AFP

poor and of all those who hunger and thirst for justice," he said before an audience of leaders from Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish and Methodist faiths.

Mother Teresa was born to an Albanian family in Skopje. Though she spent most of her life devoted to the poorest of the poor in Calcutta, her legacy is visible in her birthplace in the form of statues, memorials and a highway in her name. "You are rightly proud of this great woman," Francis said in an earlier speech to political leaders. —AFP

to the Justice Department. But Democrats have protested that Barr has sought to protect the president by refusing to present the full report or underlying evidence to Congress. The political skirmish played out on multiple fronts Monday, with the White House formally rejecting a request by Democrats to turn over Trump's tax returns, setting up what will likely be a prolonged legal battle.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin wrote to the House Ways and Means Committee that its request lacked a "legitimate legislative purpose". —AFP



William Barr

International

China's social media troll 'army' wages war on Uighurs

Diba remains secretive group despite widespread presence

BEIJING: The Chinese troll army suddenly struck one evening, bombarding the Facebook pages of two pro-Uighur groups with an array of verbal grenades and offensive images. The social media onslaught was the handiwork of the self-styled Diba Central Army, a Chinese patriotic group that has targeted other pages in the past to defend Beijing. With China increasingly concerned about its global image over issues ranging from Taiwan - which Beijing sees as part of its territory - to draconian security in restive Xinjiang, Diba has served as a powerful online ally with its propaganda efforts.

While the group's link to the state are unknown, its members have been lauded in state media as "patriotic grassroots voices". On April 10, several posts on the Talk to East Turkestan and Uyghur World Congress Facebook pages were strafed with a battery of images showing postcard-perfect pictures of happy people in Xinjiang with captions to the same effect. The images were stamped with the Diba Central Army logo.

Other comments and images were either racially offensive or threatening, many referring to the pages as "terrorist groups". "A terrorist page, no different from ISIS," read one comment on the Talk to East Turkestan (TET) page. Another comment contained a Soviet era-style poster featuring a hand crushing brown and black people. Arslan Hidayat, one of the editors of the TET Facebook page, told AFP he realized something was out of the ordinary after he received more than 1,400 comments on a post within mere hours.

"We're happy that this is happening because it means that the things we are sharing is angering the CCP (Chinese Communist Party)," Arslan said. "The Chinese are trying to downplay our efforts," he said. Beijing has attracted widespread criticism for placing an estimated one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim Turkic-speaking minority groups in internment camps, which it describes as vocational education centres aimed at preventing religious extremism. Diba counters that the camps are lies being spread by foreign powers.

'Fifty-cent army'

The Diba "army" spawned out of a fanpage using the nickname for a popular Chinese ex-footballer - who is not associated with the group - and now boasts more than 20 million users across various social media platforms, each representing a "platoon". It even gives mainland Chinese instructions on how to use software to circumvent China's Great Firewall, which blocks sites such as Facebook. The group is known colloquially as a "fifty-cent army" - people paid to post patriotic comments on social media. Diba rejects the label.

But observers say its tactics are right out of the playbook of the United Front Work Department - an umbrella department governing issues ranging from minority rights, religion and overseas Chinese communities. While the department did not respond to AFP questions, state media has given Diba their seal of approval, lauding the group as "patriotic" for their "crusades" against falsehoods about China. The April 10 memes were created to mock "biased and fabricated reports about Xinjiang", organizer Yin Yuancheng told the state-run tabloid Global Times.

World Uyghur Congress program coordinator Peter Irwin told AFP the attack shows the "growing anxiety" from the Chinese Communist Party "rushing to defend what many now consider crimes against humanity". Groups like Diba use similar modus operandi by exploiting Facebook's comment-ranking algorithm so the public sees the spam comments first, said Raymond Serrato, a social media analyst with Avaaz, an international civic rights group.

"It's a rather perverse attempt to manipulate public perceptions about people, groups, or incidents which are dangerous to state actors," Serrato said. "The question is always how to attribute these kinds of campaigns and to what extent they are in fact non-state actors engaged in 'pro-social' activity or actually somehow related to government authorities."



KASHGAR, China: This file photo taken on June 26, 2017 shows police patrolling as Muslims leave the Id Kah Mosque after the morning prayer on Eid Al-Fitr in the old town of Kashgar in China's Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. —AFP

Next target

Diba remains a secretive group despite its widespread social media presence. To join its Facebook group, new users have to answer a series of questions on China's Anti-Secession Law, whether a lack of democracy is acceptable, and a promise to abide by group rules. Diba divides

itself into platoons and conducts each operation with military discipline, attacking the page of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen in the past. An AFP check showed that most accounts that commented on the Uighur pages had been set up for this specific purpose, with generic profile pictures and few friends.—AFP

News in brief

Indonesia thwarts bomb plots

JAKARTA: Indonesia has thwarted a bid by Islamic State-linked militants to stage a series of bombings when it announces official election results this month, authorities said. Police in the Southeast Asian nation said Monday that they had arrested eight suspects at several locations over the past week, including in Sumatra and near the capital Jakarta. Authorities said the arrested militants were members of Jemaah Anshurat Daulah (JAD), a local extremist group that has pledged allegiance to IS and was blamed for last year's church bombings. The group planned to set off bombs at various locations when the world's biggest Muslim majority nation releases election results on May 22. —AFP

Singapore outlaws 'revenge porn'

SINGAPORE: Singapore has outlawed "revenge porn" and "cyber-flashing" - sending unsolicited images of one's private parts. "Revenge porn", when ex-partners share intimate photos or videos without permission, has become a problem globally because of improvements in technology and the popularity of social media, with many governments legislating against it. Singapore's parliament passed a bill Monday that made distributing or threatening to distribute intimate images a crime, punishable by up to five years in jail, in addition to a fine and caning. "Cyber-flashing" will be punishable by up to a year in prison or a fine. If the recipient is younger than 14, it is punishable by up to two years in jail, a fine or caning. Other new measures include outlawing marital rape, banning child sex dolls, and decriminalizing suicide. — AFP

Pak arrests Chinese for trafficking girls

LAHORE: Pakistan arrested at least eight Chinese nationals for allegedly luring young Pakistani girls into fake marriages then forcing them into prostitution in China, authorities confirmed to AFP yesterday. The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) said four Pakistanis who helped to facilitate the fake marriages were also arrested. Human Rights Watch raised the alarm over "bride" trafficking from Pakistan to China in a report last month, where it said Islamabad should be "alarmed" at the reports. Last month a Pakistani news channel spotlighted growing concerns about the issue in Pakistan, claiming it had gained entry to a matchmaking center in Lahore where poor families would marry their daughters off to Chinese nationals in exchange for money and a visa. —AFP

Judge cleared of sexual harassment

NEW DELHI: Dozens of protesters gathered outside India's Supreme Court yesterday, a day after a panel of judges dismissed a sexual harassment complaint against the chief justice, carrying placards demanding a new and impartial investigation. A former court assistant accused chief justice Ranjan Gogoi of having made unwanted sexual advances last year, the most high-profile case in a wave of sexual harassment accusations. Gogoi has denied the charges and an internal panel of judges cleared him of wrongdoing, a court statement said on Monday. But protesters gathered on a street in the Indian capital said they were not satisfied with the decision. Police quickly dispersed the crowd and most protesters were taken away in police vans soon after they gathered. —AFP

Pakistani charity dishes out ostrich as Ramadan treat

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani charity in the teeming coastal metropolis of Karachi is serving up a rare treat for the city's Muslims ahead of their fast for the holy month of Ramadan - ostrich meat. Expensive and seldom eaten in Pakistan, ostrich is deemed exotic in the mainly Muslim nation of 208 million people. Volunteers stewed the red meat in cauldrons and served it in a chickpea curry to more than 500 residents before dawn broke yesterday, when Pakistani Muslims began their month-long Ramadan fast.

"Keeping in view of this deprivation, (wealthy) people supported us and like the previous year, we offered those dishes which even a middle class person cannot afford, let alone the poor," said Zafar Abbas, the general secretary of the Jafaria Disaster Management Cell Welfare Foundation. Abbas said the plan is to offer deer and other expensive cuisine in coming days during Ramadan, when practising Muslims abstain from eating, drinking and smoking during daylight hours. The move is likely to be welcomed by those who stuffed themselves with ostrich meat. "It felt very nice. I had never eaten (ostrich)," said van driver Mohammad Hussain. "It was so wholesome that I feel no need to eat for the next two days." —Reuters



KARACHI: Pakistani Muslims slaughter an ostrich on the first day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan yesterday. —AFP

What missile? US, Korea play down DPRK weapons test

SEOUL: At least one of the weapons North Korea fired at the weekend had many of the hallmarks of a missile, but that was the one word conspicuously missing from descriptions of the tests by Washington, Seoul, and even Pyongyang. North Korea wanted to express to the United States its frustration over the breakdown of the Hanoi summit, when the two sides clashed over sanctions and the extent of Pyongyang's nuclear concessions, analysts say. South Korea had brokered the now-dead-

locked nuclear talks between the US and North Korea, and the White House had described the absence of a missile test for more than a year as a major foreign policy success.

So Seoul, Washington and Pyongyang all have an incentive to play down the nature of the weekend drills. "President Trump's biggest North Korea policy achievement has been the suspension of Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests since late 2017," Hong Min, a senior researcher at the state-run Korea Institute for National Unification, told AFP. "But if we declare the drill involved ballistic missiles at this point, it would all but shatter his self-touted success." North Korea's official KCNA news agency said the Saturday drills involved "long-range multiple rocket launchers" - which are not targeted by UN sanctions resolutions - and unspecified "tactical guided weapons". But unlike rockets, missiles have guidance systems, and analysts said the images released by state media showed a device similar to Russia's sin-

gle-stage Iskander missile. It appeared to be one displayed at a North Korean military parade last year, just as the diplomatic rapprochement on the peninsula began.

South Korea's military initially said the North had fired "short-range missiles" but within an hour was describing them as "projectiles". They had a range of around 70 to 240 km and fell into the sea, it said, but further analysis was required on whether they were short-range ballistic missiles. Similarly, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo avoided calling them missiles, describing them as "short range" in TV interviews, and telling ABC it "didn't present a threat" to the United States, South Korea or Japan. "We hope that we can get back to the table," he added.

'Ratcheting up tension'

Pyongyang had not launched any missile since Nov 2017, and last year leader Kim Jong Un declared the development of the North

Korean atomic arsenal complete, announcing an end to nuclear and ICBM tests. While a short-range test would not violate that, any ballistic missile firing could inflict "tremendous damage" on the North-US talks process, said Hong. And the respected 38 North website said in a commentary that Saturday's drills did not amount to a policy reversal by Pyongyang, which would "require a major and wrenching strategic line change". "That could still be done but is unlikely to be undertaken only two months after the Hanoi Summit," it added.

But many South Korean conservatives - who take a more hawkish stance on the North than the liberal Moon Jae-in government - say Pyongyang did fire ballistic missiles and Seoul's reaction was putting national security at risk. "The North's missiles pose a threat to lives and safety of South Koreans," said MP Na Kyung-won of the conservative opposition Liberty Korea party. —AFP

Sinabung shoots column of smoke and ash into sky

JAKARTA: An Indonesian volcano erupted yesterday, sending a massive column of ash and smoke 2,000 m into the air, coating local villages in debris. Mount Sinabung on Sumatra island - which has been rumbling since 2010 and saw a deadly eruption in 2016 - spewed the thick plume after activity picked up recent days. Disaster agency officials said the eruption has the "potential" to affect flights, but it had not issued a formal notice for planes to avoid the area. Local residents living along rivers near the crater were advised to be on alert for possible lava flows.

There were no reports of injuries or deaths after the latest eruption and the disaster agency did not issue an evacuation order. No one lives inside a previously announced no-go zone around the volcano. Sinabung roared back to life in 2010 for the first time in 400 years. After another period of inactivity it erupted once more in 2013, and has remained highly active since. In 2016, seven people died in one of Sinabung's eruptions, while a 2014 eruption killed 16.

Last year, a volcano in the strait between Java and Sumatra islands erupted, causing an underwater landslide that unleashed a tsunami which killed over 400 people. Indonesia is home to around 130 active volcanoes due to its position on the "Ring of Fire", a belt of tectonic plate boundaries circling the Pacific Ocean where frequent seismic activity occurs. —AFP



KARO, Indonesia: This handout picture shows Mount Sinabung volcano spewing thick volcanic ash yesterday. —AFP

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

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Images show construction on China's aircraft carrier

Construction of China's first full-sized aircraft carrier is well under way, according to satellite images obtained and analyzed by a US think tank. The images from April, provided to Reuters by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, reveal considerable recent activity during the last six months on a large vessel at the Jiangnan shipyard outside Shanghai.

China has not formally confirmed it is building a third carrier, despite recent hints in state media, and the timing and extent of its carrier program remain state secrets. The Pentagon said last week that work had begun, but no images have emerged until now. Both Asian and Western militaries, and regional security analysts, are seeking information on the carrier, which is expected to be China's first large, modern platform capable of leading a full range of strike group operations.

The effort to build a large, locally designed carrier is seen as a core part of China's extensive military modernization drive. A series of recent Reuters Special Reports showed how that effort is challenging decades of US strategic superiority in East Asia. The CSIS images show a bow section that appears to end with a flat 30-metre front and a separate hull section 41 meters wide, with gantry cranes looming overhead.

That suggests a vessel, which China has dubbed Type 002, somewhat smaller than 100,000-tonne US carriers but larger than France's 42,500-tonne Charles de Gaulle, analysts say. Fabrication halls the size of several soccer pitches have been built nearby, and work appears to be continuing on a floodable basin, possibly to float the finished hull into the nearby Yangtze River estuary.

"While details regarding the Type 002 are limited, what is observable at Jiangnan is consistent with what is expected for the People's Liberation Army Navy's third aircraft carrier," said the CSIS' ChinaPower analysis, published on its website yesterday. CSIS analyst Matthew Funaiole told Reuters that images taken late last year were inconclusive, but that now the work under way is clear.

"From what we can see there has been a lot of activity in the last six months or so," he said. "It would appear that it is the third carrier, and if it is not, it's hard to envisage what other large vessel it would be." The Pentagon's annual report on China's military modernization, issued last Friday, noted that the third carrier would probably be larger than the first two and fitted with a catapult launch system to accelerate aircraft during takeoff.

"This design will enable it to support additional fighter aircraft, fixed-wing early-warning aircraft, and more rapid flight operations," the report said. Funaiole and other analysts said it was unclear what kind of catapult - traditional steam-powered or a more cutting-edge electromagnetic system - would be used. It also remains unclear whether the Type 002 would be nuclear-powered. China has 10 nuclear-powered submarines, but so far no surface ships with nuclear propulsion; some analysts think China is not ready to make that step.

Singapore-based regional security analyst Ian Storey said a full-sized carrier would make some of China's neighbors nervous and highlight the importance of their strategic relationship with the United States. "Once completed, it will outclass any warship from any Asian country, including India and Japan," said Storey, of the ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute. "It is yet another indication that China has emerged as Asia's paramount naval power."

China's first two carriers are relatively small, with only up to 25 aircraft, less than half the number aboard US carriers, and have jump ramps built into their bows. That configuration limits not just the types of aircraft that can fly off them, but how much weaponry and fuel they can carry. Its first carrier, the Liaoning, was a Soviet-era Ukrainian ship bought secondhand in 1998 and re-fitted in China. A still-unnamed second carrier based on that design, launched in 2017, was built locally.

The Liaoning had been seen as more of a training platform for teaching personnel the tricky art of carrier operations. But last month, Chinese state media said the ship "is starting to play a combat role following recent modifications and intensive training exercises." The second carrier has been undergoing sea trials from its base in northern Dalian and is not expected to enter service until 2020. China's state media have quoted experts as saying China needs at least six carriers. The United States operates 11 carriers. China's Ministry of Defense did not respond to a request for comment. —Reuters

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Supporters of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu shout anti-government slogans as they take part in a protest against the re-run of Istanbul mayoral election in Istanbul. —AFP

Is Erdogan taking a risk with vote re-run?

Following weeks of speculation, Turkey's top election body has ordered a re-run of Istanbul's mayoral election, after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan alleged widespread fraud in the conduct of the vote. The main opposition party's candidate, the softly spoken yet passionate Ekrem Imamoglu, had defeated Erdogan loyalist Binali Yildirim by a narrow margin in the original March 31 vote. But Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) refused to accept the result and a new vote will now be held on June 23. Analysts say Erdogan's move is risky, with the opposition galvanized and voters still hurting from a prolonged economic downturn.

Why Erdogan want re-run

Erdogan once said winning Istanbul - Turkey's economic powerhouse with 15 million residents - was like winning the entire country. For Erdogan and his allies, say analysts, the city's wealth makes it worth risking Turkey's reputation overseas to hold on to the city, which they and their predecessors have ruled for 25 years. "The municipality controls very large financial resources, which are channeled to AKP supporters," Emre Erdogan, professor of political science at Istanbul Bilgi University, told AFP. The loss of Istanbul could weaken the party machine, he added.

The president claims there was widespread corrup-

tion at the ballot box, and Istanbul prosecutors have launched multiple probes into how the vote was handled. Some election officials were accused of links to the group blamed for an attempted coup in 2016. "We saw that 15,000 AKP voters had their will taken away," Erdogan said yesterday. The election board's decision was the "best step" for the country, he added.

Will the AKP win this time?

Imamoglu defeated Yildirim, a former prime minister and close Erdogan ally, by only around 13,000 votes. He has the support of opposition and Kurdish parties, but the AKP has a formidable machine for bringing out the vote, particularly in more conservative and religious neighborhoods. Nonetheless, the AKP still lost the March 31 election, despite relentless televised speeches by Erdogan, including 14 rallies in 48 hours across Istanbul in the final days before the vote.

Professor Erdogan (no relation to the president) said the two sides were currently neck-and-neck, but that the replay could damage the ruling party's legitimacy. "Half the citizens of Istanbul believe that Imamoglu is the elected mayor and there was no electoral fraud," he said. The AKP's decision to force a re-run was an act of desperation, added Berk Esen, assistant professor of international relations at Ankara

Bilkent University. Even if Yildirim wins, it will be "a pyrrhic victory, since Imamoglu has already become a household name and emerged as the opposition's unifying candidate," he said.

Some of the president's allies have recognized the danger. "With our own hands, we have given Ekrem Imamoglu the popularity that he did not even obtain by his own efforts," said former parliament speaker Bulent Arinc this week. Meanwhile, the economy remains just as troubled as it was in March. High unemployment, inflation at nearly 20 percent, and the first recession in a decade have eroded the perception of Erdogan and his party's capacity for strong economic management.

How it affects Turkey

This is the first time since the AKP came to power in 2002 that it has called for a vote to be re-run. But it is not dissimilar to the situation in the June 2015 general election, when the party lost its overall majority in parliament and was unable to form a coalition. On that occasion, Erdogan ordered fresh elections for just a few months later - a gamble that paid off, with the party regaining its majority. But this time, Esen said, by annulling a result that many considered legitimate, Erdogan has "removed the last vestiges of legitimacy of the Turkish electoral system". —AFP

Timeline in case against Reuters journalists

Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were released from prison yesterday after spending more than 16 months behind bars for investigating atrocities against Rohingya Muslims by Myanmar's army. Their conviction for breaching the Official Secrets Act was condemned around the world as an assault on media freedom and shattered the image of Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi's as a rights defender. Here is a timeline of key events in the case.

The arrest

Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo meet police for dinner at a Yangon restaurant on December 12 2017, and are handed a roll of documents. They are arrested straight afterwards and held under the Official Secrets Act for possessing documents regarding a military crackdown in Rakhine state against Rohingya Muslims. Their whereabouts are unknown for two weeks and they later tell the court they were hooded, deprived of sleep and interrogated.

The case

The pair are charged with possessing documents linked to security operations against Rohingya militants in Rakhine state, and of breaking a state secrets law. Myanmar's military says it found 10 bodies in a grave at Inn

Din in northern Rakhine state, epicenter of the crackdown against stateless Rohingya. Reuters had been investigating in the area. In January 2018, Myanmar's army says security forces killed 10 Rohingya men at Inn Din, admitting for the first time extra-judicial killings by its forces against the Rohingya during the 2017 crackdown. Seven soldiers are later charged and convicted for the massacre. But the Reuters pair remain in custody. In February, Reuters publishes its report into the Inn Din massacre and says the journalists were arrested for probing it.

The trial

The trial begins in July 2018, with prominent rights attorney Amal Clooney on the legal team representing the journalists. Wa Lone, the first to testify, tells the court that he had followed standard reporting procedures and not broken any laws. During the trial, Myanmar policeman Moe Yan Naing claims a superior ordered a sting to "get" Wa Lone by handing him papers. The prosecution tries to declare him a hostile witness, but the judge later says his testimony can stand. In September, Myanmar court sentences both journalists to seven years jail each for violating the state secrets act. An appeal by the pair is dismissed by a Yangon High Court judge in January 2019, and a further appeal by the Supreme Court is rejected in April.

Global outrage

The sentence and detention of the two journalists prompts global outrage, including from the United Nations. The pair are later awarded the UN's annual press freedom prize.

What are the accusations?

The men were detained Sunday on accusations of "undermining the authority of the army" and "conspiring against the authority of the state". They had held meetings aimed at saving the presidential clan and sidelined army chief Ahmed Gaid Salah - a key powerbroker since breaking with Bouteflika - according to an Algerian expert on his country's security apparatus. It could equally have been "a simple and everyday power struggle between clans", according to the expert who asked not to be named for security reasons.

Who ordered the arrests?

Many Algerians believe the arrests were ordered by Gaid Salah, who had strained relations with Said Bouteflika and helped the president remove Toufik from his post. Paris-based Algerian researcher Adlene Mohammedi was critical, writing on Facebook that the arrests were nothing more than a "simple and rude maneuver" on the part of the army chief. "We offer to protesters... men in cage already ousted from power in order to allow those who are still there to keep themselves quietly," Mohammedi wrote in an English post.

Gaid Salah in control?

According to the Algerian expert, the arrests were "a demonstration of force on the part of Gaid Salah to show that he is in control of the situation... and capable of changing things". With interim president Abdelkader Bensalah lacking political legitimacy, Gaid Salah appears to be in sole command. But he is not the



Reuters journalist Wa Lone (3rd right) poses with his wife Pan Ei Mon (2nd right) and daughter along with his colleague Kyaw Soe Oo (left) carrying his daughter and his wife Chit Su Win after being freed from prison in a presidential amnesty in Yangon yesterday. —AFP

Freedom

Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo are released from prison in a presidential amnesty in May 2019. The two are mobbed by media as they step out of the entrance to Yangon's notorious prison after spending more than 500 days inside. Wa Lone thanks everyone from "around the world" for advocating for their release. "I can't wait to go to my newsroom," he says. "I am a journalist and I am going to continue." —AFP



Algerian students chant slogans yesterday as they continue their weekly protests in the capital Algiers to demand the overthrow of the 'system'. —AFP

only representative of the Algerian army, which functions largely under a collegial system. The arrests of Said Bouteflika and the two ex-spy bosses were the latest to target the ousted president's inner circle, in effect decapitating Algeria's ruling elite. Numerous powerful and wealthy businessmen, including the country's richest man Issad Rebrab, have also been detained over suspected corruption. More than a month after the departure of Bouteflika, protesters remain on the streets to demand an overhaul of the entire ruling system - including the removal of Gaid Salah. —AFP

Business

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2019

12 Lebanese central bank workers
lift strike, but threat remains**13** US warns India against retaliatory
duties over scrapping trade privileges**14** Turkish Airlines records impressive
Q1 passenger growth in Middle East

PARIS: IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde (front, 4R), French Economy and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire (third right) and other participants pose for a group photo during the Paris Forum at the Economy Ministry in Paris yesterday. —AFP

US-China rift 'threat' to economy: IMF

China's top trade negotiator to visit US despite tariffs

PARIS/BEIJING: The head of the International Monetary Fund said yesterday that fresh trade tensions between the United States and China were the main threat to the world economy.

"Clearly the tensions between the United States and China are the threat for the world economy," Christine Lagarde told journalists at a conference in Paris, adding that recent "rumors and tweets" made an agreement between the countries less likely. President Donald Trump jolted global markets on Monday by threatening on Twitter that tariffs already imposed on \$200 billion in Chinese exports to US would more than double to 25 percent on Friday from their current level of 10 percent.

Also speaking at the Paris Forum event, French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire warned about the impact of a trade war between the world's two biggest economies.

"We are looking very carefully at the current negotiations between China and the US. We want these negotiations to stick with principles of transparency and multilateralism," he said, speaking in English.

He called on the two sides to "avoid decisions that would threaten and jeopardise world growth in the coming months." "Raising tariffs is always a deadlock and a negative decision for everybody—for the US, for China, for the eurozone, for Europe and for growth all over the world," he said.

Chinese delegation

Le Maire cautioned that during a period of slowdown in world growth there should not be "negative

decisions that could accelerate that slowdown."

China said yesterday its top trade negotiator will visit the United States for talks with his American counterparts this week. The countries have been locked in talks to resolve tensions that have seen both of them impose tariffs on goods worth \$360 billion.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has described the negotiations as 90 percent complete but told reporters that in recent days the talks went "substantially backward", which he blamed on China reneging on previous commitments.

Meanwhile, China said yesterday its top trade negotiator will visit the United States for talks with American counterparts this week even as Washington stepped up pressure with plans to hike tariffs and complaints that Beijing was backtracking on its commitments. The commerce ministry confirmed in a brief statement that Vice Premier Liu He, President Xi Jinping's trade pointman, would visit the US on Thursday and Friday.

The trip is taking place a day later than expected after President Donald Trump jolted global markets by announcing that tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese merchandise will more than double to 25 percent on Friday. "China always believes that mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit are the premise and the basis for reaching an agreement. Adding tariffs will not solve any problem," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said at a regular press briefing. Confirmation of Liu's travel plans lifted Asian stock markets as his presence could raise hopes that a deal is still possible. The tariffs announcement tanked stock

and other officials told Reuters. Almost four weeks after Bashir's departure, military leaders are locked in talks with opposition factions and protests groups on how to lead the country into its new dawn.

As they talk, banks say they are still short of foreign exchange to pay off looming commitments, and farmers are searching for supplies for the summer growing season, due to start in a matter of weeks. Without swift economic and political progress, "public confidence will collapse, the crisis of the banking system will continue and the economic collapse might even worsen", said Ibrahim Elbadawi, a Sudanese economist and former World Bank employee based in Cairo.

A pledge of \$3 billion in aid last month by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will provide only a short breathing space, he and other economists added. The Saudi and UAE support included a \$500 million deposit in Sudan's central bank, with the rest going towards fuel, wheat and medicine.

markets worldwide on Monday and worried US farmers and businesses who have been banking on a resolution to the year-long conflict that has engulfed \$360 billion in two-way trade.

US officials had said the world's two largest economies were close to an agreement but Beijing reversed course in recent days. "Over the course of the last week or so, we've seen an erosion in commitments by China, I would say retreating from commitments that have already been made in our judgement," US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer was quoted as saying in media reports on Monday. He said the tariffs would increase at 12:01 am (0401 GMT) on Friday.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin described the negotiations as 90 percent complete but told reporters that in recent days the talks went "substantially backward", according to the media reports.

Complaining that talks were moving too slowly because China was trying to "renegotiate" the terms, Trump vowed Sunday to ratchet up existing tariffs this week and extend the 25 percent punitive duties to the remaining \$350 billion in Chinese goods imported into the country each year.

Comments from officials in recent weeks indicated the sides were making progress towards an agreement aimed at addressing longstanding concerns about the forced transfer or outright theft of American technology, as well as reducing the US trade deficit with China.

"It is normal for the two sides to have divergences. China does not evade problems and is sincere in continuing consultations," Geng said. But William Reinsch, trade policy expert at the Center for Strategic and

International Studies, said China will never meet all the US demands.

"At some point, the president is going to figure out that they're not going to give him everything he wants," he said. That will put Trump in "a precarious political position", whether "to accept an agreement that will be criticized as weak, or not to have an agreement and be criticized for failing".

"And I can imagine that he is unhappy about that," Freya Beamish of Pantheon Macroeconomics warned that Trump's aggressive tactics could backfire.

"It is much harder for China's leaders to do that if it looks like they have signed with a gun to their heads."

Restrained growth

US manufacturers and farmers were becoming more optimistic amid signs of progress and comments from officials that the talks were entering their final phase, reinforced by reports Beijing was sending 100 officials to this week's negotiations. Trump credits the tariffs with the strong first quarter growth but economists and businesses have complained that the trade conflict is in fact hurting the bottom line and the uncertainty is causing them to delay investment.

Jake Colvin of the National Foreign Trade Council, a pro-trade US business group, said the tariffs "come at the expense of American businesses and farmers and consumers as well". And escalating the tariffs to the remaining Chinese goods, which would be expected to spark further retaliation from Beijing, would cut 0.3 percentage points off US growth, according to Oxford Economics. —AFP

exchange. The economy is also still haunted by Bashir's legacy - the penalties imposed first for his support of militant groups, later for the offensive he launched to crush rebels in the western region of Darfur.

Because Sudan is still listed by the United States as a state sponsor of terrorism and has \$1.3 billion of IMF arrears, it is unable to tap the IMF and World Bank for support. Sudanese banks have struggled to re-establish correspondent relationships with foreign banks.

They now need to make efforts to honor the payments, the banker in Khartoum said. "If they lose trust, or contacts with existing correspondents, it's going to be tougher and tougher going forward."

The US has said it will not remove Sudan from the terrorism list while the military holds power. Sudan's main agricultural season for domestic and export crops starts within weeks, and supplies will be needed, said Mohamed Haroon, a social science professor at the University of Khartoum. —Reuters

Gulf pledges offer scant reprieve for Sudan economy

CAIRO: As wrangling over Sudan's political future drags on, its economy risks sinking further into disarray, with pledges of assistance from the Gulf expected to provide only short-term relief, say economists.

The mass protests that led the army to topple president Omar Al-Bashir last month reduced business activity at a time when Sudan needs immediate resources to pay for wheat, fuel and medicines, bankers

Business

Lebanese central bank workers lift strike, but threat remains

Lebanon saddled with one of world's heaviest debt burdens

BEIRUT: Lebanese central bank workers suspended a strike yesterday but left open the possibility of resuming the walkout on Friday if the government presses ahead with draft budget proposals that would cut their pay. The central bank strike, protests and other public sector walkouts point to the political difficulties facing Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri's unity government as it debates an austerity budget to rein in a gaping deficit.

With Lebanon suffering from years of low economic growth, long-stalled reforms are seen as more pressing than ever. Hariri said late on Monday failure to pass a "realistic" budget would amount to "a suicide operation" against an economy saddled with one of the world's heaviest public debt burdens.

The wide-ranging austerity proposals encompass all parts of the state including the military, stirring objections in the army which together with the central bank has been seen as a pillar of Lebanon's stability since its 1975-90 civil war.

Hariri, in a late night news conference on Monday, said false information had been circulated about the budget and criticized "preemptive" strikes over it.

He spoke after a meeting with the president and parliament speaker which a senior official said aimed to provide extra political support for the government.

Abbas Awada, head of the central bank workers' union, said they would meet on Friday to decide whether to resume or call off their strike. The strike could be cancelled before then if articles in the draft budget that concern the workers were annulled or an exemption given to the central bank, he said. The central bank strike led to a suspension of trade on

the Beirut Stock Exchange for a second day on Tuesday because the transaction clearance and settlement process could not be completed on time.

The stock market said trading would resume today. Amid the friction, Lebanon's dollar-denominated bonds fell across the curve yesterday. Retired soldiers have been among the most vocal opponents of the draft budget, blocking roads with burning tyres last month to protest against any cuts to their pensions and benefits.

"Drastic measures needed"

The draft budget aims to reduce the deficit to below 9 percent of GDP from 11.2 percent in 2018. It is seen as a critical test of the government's determination to carry out reforms and will help Lebanon unlock some \$11 billion in international infrastructure financing from donors who first want to see reform.

The public sector wage bill is the government's biggest expense followed by debt servicing costs and the big subsidies paid annually to the state-owned power producer. "Any reform effort in any country inevitably faces resistance from various sides to preserve their benefits," said Nassib Ghobrial, chief economist at Lebanon's Byblos Bank.

"But today the council of ministers ... needs to take drastic cost-cutting measures to provide a budget that is credible, that will create a positive shock in the market."

Markets want to see \$2 billion shaved off state spending and a \$1 billion boost in revenues that should come through fighting tax evasion and improved collection and not new taxes, he said.

The finance minister said on Monday he insisted



BEIRUT: Employees of the Central Bank in the capital Beirut sitting on their desks during a strike. —AFP

on raising the tax on interest income to 10 percent from 7 percent despite objections from the Lebanese banking association. The chairman of the banking association said last week the proposed

hike in the tax on interest income would affect capital flows to Lebanon, weaken banks' ability to play their financing role in the economy, and obstruct growth. —Reuters

Zimbabwe CB sees official, black market exchange rates converging

HARARE: Zimbabwe's central bank governor said yesterday he expected the official exchange rate of a new currency to converge with that on the black market within three months, a move that could help increase the flow of dollars into the banking sector. The country in February ditched its discredited 1:1 official peg to the US dollar, and merged bond notes and electronic dollars into a transitional currency called the RTGS dollar.

The value of that currency was yesterday trading at 3.3 against the US dollar and at 5 to the dollar on the black market. The mismatch has seen companies and individuals holding dollars selling their money on the black market for higher premiums. Bankers and economists accuse the central bank of manipulating the official exchange rate, charges that central bank chief John Mangudya denied. "I think within three months we will have a convergence of these rates of parallel market and interbank market rate," Mangudya said during the launch of an economic report by a private sector company in Harare. Zimbabwe's economy has been crippled by a cash crunch that has caused shortages of fuel, food and medicine.

Mangudya, who was last week given another five-year term at the helm of the central bank, said the central bank would soon stop drip-feeding the market with some dollars to allow "willing seller, willing buyer" transactions. The dollar shortages have seen some businesses charging prices in US dollars while prices in RTGS dollars have soared, pushing up year-on-year inflation to a 10-year high of 66.8 percent in March.

The central bank chief, however, said he expected inflation pressures to ease from the last quarter of this year through 2020, citing a slowdown in month-on-month inflation. But economists say inflation levels will remain elevated due to a devastating drought that hit crops this year and pressure on the exchange rate due to expected food imports. —Reuters

AUB launches online account opening service for new customers

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank has announced the launch of an online account opening service for new customers wishing to open Al-Hassad Islamic Account and Afaq Account and join Ahli United Bank. This service is in line with the Bank's strategy of digital transformation to meet customers' needs for access to banking services through easy and flexible new channels.

By launching this service, new AUB customers can apply to open accounts through the Bank's website or by clicking the link in a wide array of AUB digital advertisements and choose the appropriate time and branch to complete the account opening process and instantly issue the ATM card without additional waiting time.

Indonesia misses economic growth forecasts in Q1

JAKARTA: Indonesia's economy grew slower than expected in the first quarter, official data showed Monday, as exports contracted for the first time since 2016 owing to softer demand for key commodities. Southeast Asia's biggest economy expanded 5.07 percent in January-March, nearly flat from a year earlier and missing market estimates of 5.18 percent.

An uptick in government and household spending buoyed growth, but imports and exports fell from a year ago while gross domestic product declined from the last quarter of 2018, the statistics agency said. The commodities-driven economy has been faced with widening trade deficits and

rocky global demand for export drivers like palm oil and coal.

"Exports are likely to remain weak," research house Capital Economics said in a report after the figures were published. "We expect global growth to soften a bit further over the coming quarters and for the prices of Indonesia's main commodities exports, coal and palm oil, to remain subdued," it added.

The data come several weeks after Indonesia held polls that saw President Joko Widodo elected to a second term, according to unofficial results. Official figures are due this month.

Widodo leaned heavily on a multi-billion-dollar infrastructure push, including Jakarta's first mass-rapid-transit system, in the campaign. However, his administration has seen annual growth hover around five percent a year, well short of earlier pledges to hit seven percent despite the huge infrastructure building blitz and stimulus packages. —AFP

On this occasion, Huda Al-Madani, General Manager of Digital Transformation and Alternative Channels at Ahli United Bank stated that "This positive step will be followed by several digital banking services as part of the Bank's strategy to adopt the latest technological innovations in this field, in line with the rapid changes to achieve the highest levels of satisfaction and happiness for our customers by making banking services more intuitive and easy; also it will reflect positively on the enrichment and diversification of services and promoting them in an unprecedented manner to maintain Ahli United Bank leading position in Kuwait market based on quality, novelty and technical innovation".

Ranjan Sen, General Manager of Retail Banking at Ahli United Bank went on to say: "We continue to strive to make a qualitative leap forward in the financial services offered at the banking sector by offering many benefits to customers and saving time and effort. The new development allow customers to perform the process of opening a new account in an easy steps and within few minutes, whilst maintain the highest levels of safety and security. Customers will fill their own details in the electronic form and schedule an appropriate time for them and the nearest branch of their whereabouts, and the bank - through its specialized staff - will meet



Huda Al-Madani and Ranjan Sen

them to complete the process, this will grant the customers a whole new unparalleled banking experience."

It is worth mentioning that the new service is an extension of a number of solutions and services provided by the Bank recently within the framework of its digital transformation plan, and follows in the aftermath of the huge success achieved by mobile service application that was highly acclaimed by the bank's customers."

Lufthansa eyes Thomas Cook's Condor with buyout offer

FRANKFURT: European airline giant Lufthansa said yesterday it had offered to buy carrier Condor from British parent company Thomas Cook, opening a new chapter in its fast-paced growth through buyouts. "We have made a non-binding offer for Condor, with the option of extending it to all Thomas Cook airlines," a spokesperson told AFP.

Yesterday was the deadline set by Thomas Cook for possible buyers to declare their interest in Germany-based Condor and Thomas Cook

Airlines, which flies from the UK and Scandinavian countries.

The group announced a possible sale in whole or in part in February as part of a "strategic review".

Struggling with financial woes, the tourism group hopes to use income from a selloff to fund new investments in its hotels and in digitization. The carriers boast 103 planes and carried 20 million passengers in 2018, delivering an operating profit of 129 million pounds (\$169 million, 151 million euros) even as the Thomas Cook group as a whole made a loss.

Condor's fleet could be especially appealing to Lufthansa chiefs as they look to build up long-haul routes at no-frills subsidiary Eurowings. But within Europe, Lufthansa has already faced competition concerns from the European Commission over its acquisition-driven growth. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	305.000
Euro	345.110
Sterling Pound	398.480
Canadian dollar	229.240
Turkish lira	52.630
Swiss Franc	303.630
US Dollar Buying	303.800
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.729
Indian Rupees	4.379
Pakistani Rupees	2.187
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.743
Nepali Rupees	2.737
Singapore Dollar	225.760
Hongkong Dollar	38.875
Bangladesh Taka	3.603
Philippine Peso	5.893
Thai Baht	9.616
Malaysian ringgit	78.005
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.388
Qatari Riyal	83.826
Omani Riyal	792.723
Bahraini Dinar	810.420
UAE Dirham	83.095
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.850
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.726

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.225
Tunisian Dinar	105.170
Jordanian Dinar	430.670
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.033
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.344
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.440
Canadian Dollar	227.320
Sterling Pound	402.510
Euro	342.100
Swiss Frank	311.145
Bahrain Dinar	809.620
UAE Dirhams	83.290
Qatari Riyals	84.530
Saudi Riyals	82.080
Jordanian Dinar	430.680
Egyptian Pound	17.748
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.720
Indian Rupees	4.401
Pakistani Rupees	2.154
Bangladesh Taka	3.606
Philippines Peso	5.871
Cyprus pound	18.110
Japanese Yen	3.739
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.753
Malaysian Ringgit	74.440
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.680
Thai Bhat	10.540

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.392622	0.406522
Czech Korune	0.005261	0.014561
Danish Krone	0.041653	0.046663
Euro	0.333966	0.347666
Georgian Lari	0.111683	0.111683
Hungarian O.000963	0.001153	
Norwegian Krone	0.030924	0.036124
Romanian Leu	0.054775	0.071625
Russian Ruble	0.004662	0.004662
Slovakia	0.009113	0.019113
Swedish Krona	0.027836	0.032836
Swiss Franc	0.292992	0.303992
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.205825	0.217925
New Zealand Dollar	0.195172	0.204672
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.221443	0.230443
US Dollars	0.300600	0.305900
US Dollars Mint	0.301100	0.306590
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003011	0.003812

Chinese Yuan	0.043604	0.047104
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036738	0.039488
Indian Rupee	0.003808	0.004580
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002665	0.002845
Korean Won	0.000251	0.000266
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069986	0.075966
Nepalese Rupee	0.002681	0.003021
Pakistan Rupee	0.001524	0.002294
Philippine Peso	0.005781	0.006081
Singapore Dollar	0.218398	0.228398
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001377	0.001957
Taiwan	0.009738	0.009918
Thai Baht	0.009214	0.009764
Vietnamese Dong	0.000113	0.000103
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.793652	0.810152
Egyptian Pound	0.017744	0.020344
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.424856	0.438856
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021224	0.045224
Omani Riyal	0.785110	0.790790
Qatar Riyal	0.079404	0.084344
Saudi Riyal	0.080167	0.081457
Syrian Pound	0.001292	0.001512
Tunisian Dinar	0.097530	0.105530
Turkish Lira	0.044265	0.055765
UAE Dirhams	0.081534	0.083234
Yemeni Riyal	0.000991	0.001071

Business

US warns India against retaliatory duties over quashing trade privileges

India plans higher import duties on US in response to move on GSP

NEW DELHI: Any retaliatory tariff by India in response to the United States' planned withdrawal of some trade privileges will not be "appropriate" under WTO rules, US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross warned yesterday. The comments, made to broadcaster CNBC-TV18 during a trip to India's capital, come as trade ties between the United States and China worsen. The United States is India's second-biggest trade partner after China.

Indian officials have raised the prospect of higher import duties on more than 20 US goods if President Donald Trump presses ahead with a plan announced in March to end the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) for India. India is the biggest beneficiary of the GSP, which allows preferential duty-free imports of up to \$5.6 billion from the South Asian nation.

"Any time a government makes a decision adverse to another one, you will have to anticipate there could be consequences," Ross said. "We don't believe under the WTO rules that retaliation by India would be appropriate." He added that India's new rules on e-commerce, which bar companies from selling products via firms in which they have an equity interest, and data localization have been discriminatory for US firms such as Walmart Inc and Mastercard Inc.

"So the American companies are showing very good will and a very cooperative attitude towards 'Make in India' and the other programs," he said, referring to a

manufacturing push by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "But there's a limit to how far the discriminatory behavior can go. And our job is to try to get a level, more level playing field."

Earlier, Ross told a business conference that localization rules and price caps on medical devices imported from the United States were barriers to trade but that New Delhi was committed to tackling them after general elections. "We applaud India's commitment to addressing some of these barriers once the government is re-formed, probably starting in the month of June," Ross said. "Our role is to eliminate barriers to US companies operating here, including data localization restrictions that actually weaken data security and increase the cost of doing business."

India's 39-day general election ends on May 19, and votes will be counted four days later. Ross met his Indian counterpart Suresh Prabhu on Monday, after which New Delhi said the two countries would engage regularly to resolve outstanding trade issues. Last year, global payments companies such as Mastercard, Visa and American Express unsuccessfully lobbied India to relax central bank rules requiring all payment data on domestic transactions to be stored locally.

"As President Trump has said, trade relationships should be based, and must be based, on fairness and reciprocity," Ross added. "But currently, US businesses face significant market access barriers in India." —Reuters



MUMBAI: India's Jet Airways employees hold placards during a silent protest in Mumbai. —AFP

How a Chinese venture in Venezuela made millions while locals grew hungry

TUCUPITA, Venezuela: The project was meant to feed millions. In Delta Amacuro, a remote Venezuelan state on the Caribbean Sea, a Chinese construction giant struck a bold agreement with the late President Hugo Chavez. The state-run firm would build new bridges and roads, a food laboratory, and the largest rice-processing plant in Latin America.

The 2010 pact, with China CAMC Engineering Co Ltd., would develop rice paddies twice the size of Manhattan and create jobs for the area's 110,000 residents, according to a copy of the contract seen by Reuters. The underdeveloped state was an ideal locale to demonstrate the Socialist Venezuelan government's commitment to empower the poor. And the deal would show how Chavez and his eventual hand-picked successor, President Nicolas Maduro, could work with China and other allies to develop areas beyond Venezuela's bounteous oil beds.

"Rice Power! Agricultural power!" Chavez tweeted at the time.

Nine years later, locals are hungry.

Few jobs have materialized and the plant is only half-built, running at less than one percent its projected output. It hasn't yielded a single grain of locally grown rice, according to a dozen people involved in or familiar with the development.

Yet CAMC and a select few Venezuelan partners prospered.

Venezuela paid CAMC at least \$100 million for the stalled development, according to project contracts and sealed court documents from an investigation by prosecutors in Europe.

The thousands of pages of court papers, reviewed by Reuters, were filed in Andorra, the European principality where prosecutors allege Venezuelans involved in the project sought to launder kickbacks paid to them for helping secure the contract. The material on the China deal, reported here for the first time, includes confidential testimony, wiretap transcripts, bank records and other documents.

Last September, an Andorran high court judge alleged in an indictment that CAMC paid over \$100 million in bribes to various Venezuelan intermediaries to secure the rice project and at least four other agricultural contracts. The indictment charged 12 Venezuelans with crimes including money laundering and conspiracy to launder money. Among those indicted was Diego Salazar, a cousin of a former oil minister



A boy in Caracas, Venezuela, eats soup donated by a restaurant. The dire scarcities and dysfunctional projects, the opposition alleges, illustrate how corruption and crony capitalism helped impoverish the once-prosperous country and many of its 30 million people.

who, investigators say, enabled the contracts. Also indicted was the top representative in China at the time of state-run oil company Petroleos de Venezuela SA, or PDVSA.

Sixteen people of other nationalities were also charged and at least four other Venezuelans, one of whom was formerly ambassador in Beijing and is now the country's top diplomat in London, are under investigation, according to

the documents. The indictment, the names of those charged, and their association with Chinese companies were reported last year by El Pais, the Spanish newspaper. A Reuters review of the case files, which are still under seal in Andorra, gleams how CAMC and other Chinese companies forged ties with many of those charged and paid to win projects the companies often didn't complete. —Reuters

Trump, Xi and trade: A high-stakes game of chicken

SHANGHAI, CHINA: What happens when the planet's two biggest economies play a high-stakes game of chicken? The world may be about to find out, with President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping both holding favorable enough economic hands to make it hard to predict who blinks first, analysts said. Hope for an imminent resolution of the China-US trade dispute dimmed after Trump vowed to further raise import tariffs this week to punish China for what he framed as bad-faith negotiating, rocking world markets. Here are some of the key questions regarding the impasse.

Why has Trump turned the screws now?

That remains unclear but the president has been known to tout strong US economic data or Wall Street gains as evidence that he is "winning" the trade war and as leverage against China. Recent developments will have given him ample reason to up the ante. April data indicated vigorous American job growth, a fresh sign of US economic strength that has helped propel the S&P 500 and

Nasdaq stock indices to record highs this month. Last month figures showed the world's top economy grew at a faster pace than expected in the first quarter.

How will China react?

Beijing's shrewd communist leaders have been negotiating favorable economic arrangements with the world for decades, and few observers would bet on them suddenly capitulating. Whatever Xi does, he also has reason to hold firm. The world's second-largest economy is decelerating from its era of hyper-growth, but it expanded by a better-than-forecast 6.4 percent in January-March, a sign of stability despite the trade turbulence.

And Chinese stock markets—among the world's worst in 2018 — are up significantly this year after Beijing pulled an array of policy and monetary levers to keep the economy chugging. "Both sides have reason to be confident and ask for more," said Bao Ting, strategist with Great Wall Securities. "It's not surprising for negotiations to go back and forth in the final stages" as the two sides drill down on nitty-gritty details, she added.

So whose hand is stronger?

Probably Trump's, analysts say, because Xi faces a challenge maintaining the economic growth on which the government stakes its ruling legitimacy, while also implementing tricky reform of inefficient state industries. Of particular concern is a fresh spike in debt this year as Chinese authorities



NEW YORK: People walk past the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in the Financial District on Monday morning in New York City. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped over 360 points at the open on Monday morning after US President Donald Trump said that the US will raise tariffs on goods imported from China. —AFP

have relied heavily on eased credit restrictions to juice the economy while they battle Trump's trade pressure.

The International Monetary Fund has previously called China's debt addiction "dangerous". "This massive credit stimulus has stabilized China's economy for now but the impact is unlikely to be long-lasting or without complication," said Brock Silvers, managing director of Kaiyuan Capital in Shanghai. "China could soon regret a missed

chance to end to what looks to be a worsening and increasingly risky trade war."

But China has for years used a flood of credit and targeted pump-priming to keep its economic miracle going, and today stands taller than ever. "That gives China a lot of strength. They have many different ways of keeping things churning," said Christopher Balding, an expert on China's economy at Fulbright University in Ho Chi Minh City. —AFP

Malaysia cuts interest rate for first time since 2016

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's central bank yesterday cut its key interest rate for the first time in almost three years as it looks to boost slowing growth as China-US trade tensions weigh on the economy. The move comes as central banks around the world adopt a more dovish stance in the face of a weak global outlook. Bank

Negara Malaysia cut the rate from by 25 basis points to 3.00 percent, the first reduction since July 2016. The last change was in January 2018 when borrowing costs were increased to 3.25 percent.

The bank said "considerable downside risks to global growth remain, stemming from unresolved trade tensions and prolonged country-specific weaknesses in the major economies". "Heightened policy uncertainties could lead to sharp financial market adjustments," it added. Malaysia is showing signs of being affected by the long-running trade dispute between Beijing and Washington, while the global economy at the same time shows signs of softness. The cut comes as central banks from Japan to Europe to the United States look to provide monetary support or ease up on tightening measures.

Malaysia's exports declined 0.5 in March from a

year earlier due to fewer shipments of electronics and commodities. The dispute between the world's two biggest economies has seen them impose tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars worth of goods. Hopes of a resolution to the row in the near future were dented by President Donald Trump's threat on Sunday to more than double levies already imposed on Chinese exports to the US.

On the domestic front, Malaysia's central bank said that while "monetary and financial conditions remain supportive of economic growth, there are some signs of tightening of financial conditions". Full-year 2018 growth slipped to 4.7 percent, from 5.9 percent the previous year, and Malaysia's stock market has been one of the world's worst performing this year. Shares in Kuala Lumpur rose 0.5 percent yesterday while the ringgit was slightly lower. —AFP

Stock markets diverge awaiting next trade deal moves

LONDON: Eurozone stock markets extended losses yesterday and Asia traded mixed as investors await the latest twists and turns over US-China trade talks.

London's stock market slid 1.0 percent, with the benchmark FTSE 100 index playing catch up after a long holiday weekend in Britain. Tokyo slumped 1.5 percent as dealers there returned after being off for six working days, while Seoul dropped 0.9 percent following a long weekend.

"The US-China one-step-forward-two-step-back hurt US markets late Monday and extended into Asian and European trading," noted Fiona Cincotta, senior market analyst at City Index traders.

"The (Frankfurt) DAX initially held up helped by data showing that German manufacturing orders picked up in March but it eventually crumbled because German exporters are highly sensitive to the stability of the Chinese market, one of their top export destinations."

Indices had slumped Monday, with Shanghai suffering its heaviest loss in three years, after US President Donald Trump threatened to hike tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods amid apparent setbacks in trade talks between the economic superpowers. Trump's remarks shocked markets, coming just days after officials on both sides had sounded positive on the talks, with markets broadly expecting an agreement to be announced soon.

While some observers pointed out that such high-stakes moves are characteristic of Trump's negotiating style and that they expect a deal to be agreed anyway, OANDA senior market analyst Jeffrey Halley remained cautious. "Say what you want about the US president... but predictability and subtlety were never part of his election pledges," he said in a note.

"China has most certainly found this out the hard way and likely explains why they are still sending their full delegation to this week's round of trade talks."

Shanghai's main stocks index recovered slightly Tuesday after closing down 5.6 percent the previous session. The International Monetary Fund meanwhile on Tuesday warned tensions between the economic superpowers were a "threat" to the world economy.

On currency markets, the yuan stabilized after being hammered Monday, though most other higher-yielding, riskier units managed to claw back some of their losses. The Australian dollar rallied 0.7 percent after the country's central bank held interest rates at a record low 1.5 percent, brushing off calls for a cut as it said the economy was still in "reasonable" shape despite weak inflation and wage growth.

But the Reserve Bank of Australia signalled it could cut at upcoming meetings if the labour market does not improve. Elsewhere, Turkey's lira "has come back onto investors' radars with a three percent plunge... triggered by election shenanigans in the country", said Cincotta.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday welcomed an order to re-run the recent Istanbul election, a move the opposition has branded an attack on democracy.

His ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) lost the mayorship of Turkey's biggest city by a narrow margin and has refused to accept defeat. —Reuters

Business

Turkish Airlines records impressive Q1 passenger growth in Middle East

Airline introduces 13 new routes including Sharjah and Marrakech

KUWAIT: Turkish Airlines, one of the world's most prominent airline companies, is concluding another quarter of significant achievements across its fleet and network. This includes Q1 year-on-year passenger growth in the Middle East, the recent inauguration of two new routes, and the announcement of 10 other international destinations to be launched in 2019, reaffirming its position as a market leader.

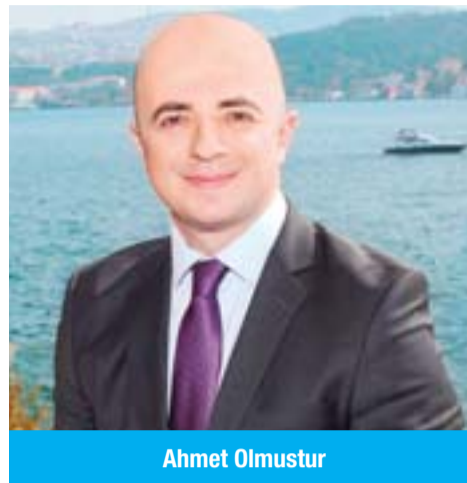
At the 2019 Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai, Turkey's national carrier announced that it carried more than 1.58 million passengers from the Middle East in the first quarter of this year - a 2.5 percent rise over the same period in 2018. Globally, Turkish Airlines welcomed almost 16.8 million passengers in the first quarter of 2019. Today, the airline is on an upward trajectory to continue to set new standards, recording an average load factor of 80.1 percent globally in Q1.

Since January 2019, Turkish Airlines has also recorded a 2.6 percent rise in seat capacity - the number of seats available across the fleet - among its Middle Eastern flights, as demand for the carrier continues to rise in the region. During the event, Turkish Airlines announced how it plans to

meet demand across its global footprint - with a host of new international routes joining its network. Already operating flights to 49 domestic and 259 international destinations across 124 countries, 2019 will see the airline fly into, Bali/Denpasar, Mexico City, Cancun, Rovaniemi, Port Harcourt, Luksor, Pointe-Noire, and Strazburg. Domestically, the airline will also add Usak, Siirt and Canakkale. These new routes follow the launch of Sharjah and Marrakech flights, which started in Q1.

"In the first quarter of 2019, we have flown more passengers in this region than during the same period in 2018 - but that's just the start of our success this year," commented Ahmet Olmudur, Chief Marketing Officer of Turkish Airlines. "With a new hub joining the wide-ranging new destinations we are set to add to our network, along with new additions to our fleet in 2019, we're well on our way towards our vision of being the world's leading airline. Our positive Q1 2019 figures maintain the momentum we built in 2018 where we welcomed a total of 75.2 million passengers on board globally - approximately 6.7 million of which were passengers in the Middle East".

Operating a total of 335 aircrafts, com-



Ahmet Olmudur

prising of 215 narrow body, 92 wide body and 18 cargo aircraft, Turkish Airlines boasts one of the youngest and most modern fleets in the world. During ATM, the global carrier put an emphasize that these numbers are set to grow steadily over the next four years, with the addition of 25 firm and 5 optional A350-900, and 25 firm and 5 optional orders for the 787-9 Dreamliner that all to be gradually added to its ever-expanding fleet by 2023.



Turkish Cargo also noted a 15.6 percent increase globally from the same period in 2018, reaching 363,297 tons. Within the MENA region, Turkish Airlines cargo showed a 5.8 percent rise in number, growing to 41,698 tons in carried mail this quarter.

Already the airline that flies to more international destinations and countries than any other in the world, Turkish Airlines

continues to expand globally by increasing both its destination and fleet numbers, while providing passengers with unparalleled customer service in-flight and on the ground. With the global aviation industry set to grow to 5.3 billion passengers by 2023, Turkish Airlines' passenger figure is also predicted to rise steadily, reaching an estimated 120 million travellers by 2023.

How to take your social media photos and videos to the next level?

KUWAIT: We spend a considerable amount of time on social media channels uploading loads of pictures and videos and sharing stories. We don't want to miss out on anything so we take a picture of our lunch which has just been delivered to show how yummy it looks. We love to display what we are wearing on a special night out or a new pair of shoes (#OOTD anyone?). There are also times we may come across a scene and feel like snapping a picture or shooting a video of it.

At the same time our photos and videos have always to look good, or social-media worthy as some would call it, before posting them. To make sure this is done, a smartphone with a camera loaded with a pool of photography and videography capabilities is what you need and Huawei P30 Pro is the perfect choice, thanks to its Super Camera and impressive performance. Let us explore what this phone has to offer!

Quad Leica cameras that ensure everything is captured

The Huawei P30 Pro comes with a revolutionary Quad Leica Camera setup that houses a 40MP main camera with the SuperSpectrum sensor, a 20MP Ultra-Wide lens, an 8MP telephoto lens with SuperZoom and the HUAWEI Time of Flight (ToF) camera for those perfect bokeh shots. Additionally, you also get a 32MP front camera (selfie time!)

Day or night! Your photos and videos look awesome

No matter what time of day it is, you



always want your pictures to look pretty. A birthday party you're throwing out tonight is such a great occasion that you would want to put on your newly-bought night dress and look your best. Huawei P30 Pro's 40MP main camera and its new SuperSpectrum sensor lets in more light to the sensor, so your pictures and videos look awesome, clear and with vivid colors.

You are in the back row? Not to worry as you've got the SuperZoom

You had been invited into a fashion show in town but your seat is in the back row? Pop out your Huawei P30 Pro and see even the nitty gritty details of every outfit on stage. Use 5x

optical zoom, 10x hybrid zoom as well as 50x digital zoom and get clear pictures no matter what level of magnification you are testing.

Dual video, double the fun

It is your best friend's wedding and you do not want to let her down. You want to capture that special moment when she puts on her wedding ring and still show her happy facial expression. Huawei P30 Pro lets you achieve this with the dual-view video mode so you can see two video recordings on your phone screen side by side - A full wide view of the wedding setting as well as a close up on the bride face if you wish to. Feature will be enabled via HOTA update at a later date.

Uber clings to hard-knuckled tactics in pursuit of growth

SAN FRANCISCO/ CAPE TOWN: Uber co-founder and former CEO Travis Kalanick used to tell investors he liked to keep his company teetering between order and chaos.

By the time he left, it was chaos. The company was battered by a slew of scandals, including revelations it had used illicit tactics to handicap competitors and dodge regulators. Almost two years later, under new leadership and set to debut Friday on Wall Street in the largest U.S. public stock offering since 2014, Uber Technologies Inc is still testing the rule of law.

With growth slowing, the company continues to spar with local officials around the world looking to limit Uber cars on their streets. In Cape Town, South Africa, for example, Uber dominates the market with an estimated 7,000 drivers, most of whom are operating illegally, according to city officials. Uber blames Cape Town's "broken" system for approving ride-hailing licenses.

In the United States, Uber has used the courts to try to block what it sees as unreasonable restrictions on its business. And it has successfully lobbied state legislatures to pass laws preempting local ride-hailing regula-



tions, much to the frustration of officials in some cities where it operates.

Uber insiders say CEO Dara Khosrowshahi has made strides in cleaning up a frat-house culture that spawned allegations of sexual harassment and embarrassing leaks of executives behaving badly.

But Uber's sharp-elbowed business tactics, detailed by lawmakers, city staff and regulators across the globe, as well as drivers and former employees, continue to drive the company.

"It's in the DNA," a former Uber manager said. "Old habits die hard." Whether it's playbook delivers the growth and profitability public market investors will be seeking remains to be seen. Revenue growth slowed to 2.3 percent in the fourth quarter over the

previous quarter, a worrisome sign for a business that lost more than \$3 billion last year.

Uber's economics "are not immediately or obviously attractive for sustainable, long-term investment," Mark Hargraves, Head of Framlington Global Equities at AXA Investment Managers, said in a recent note to clients. An Uber spokesman declined to comment. In its IPO filing, the company said it is "using a proactive and collaborative approach with regulators" and "rebuilding and strengthening" its relationships with cities. Where ride-hailing is banned, Uber is instead offering e-bike services or partnering with traditional taxi companies. Still the company acknowledged "legal and regulatory obstacles" around the world that could impede its revenue and growth. —Reuters

Burgan Bank announces winner of Al-Thuraya draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, announced yesterday Uttam Kumar Alfred as the lucky winner of the Al-Thuraya Salary Account monthly draw.

The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank by offering them a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month. With every KD 10 available in the account, the customer receives one chance to enter the draw.

The Al-Thuraya account holders have the option to hold money in Kuwaiti dinar and other major currencies and

can access account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards, and benefit from the discounts and offers throughout the year.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks which include Gulf Bank Algeria - AGB (Algeria), Bank of Baghdad - BOB (Iraq & Lebanon), Tunis International Bank - TIB (Tunisia), and fully owned Burgan Bank - Turkey, (collectively known as the "Burgan Bank Group"). Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a present in the UAE through its corporate office ("Burgan Financial Services Limited) which had helped the bank to participate in multiple financing opportunities in the UAE.



Italy's debt set to climb as economy stalls

BRUSSELS: Italy's huge debt is expected to grow further this year and next as the country's growth remains sluggish, the European Commission said yesterday in quarterly economic forecasts that could reignite a dispute over Rome's budget. Brussels cut its already gloomy outlook of Italy's economy, which it now says is set to grow by 0.1 percent this year instead of the 0.2 percent it predicted in February. The country grew by 0.9 percent last year.

The downward revision confirms the general worsening trend for the wider euro zone economy, which is expected to slow more than previously estimated. But Italy remains the country with the lowest growth in the bloc, far below the euro zone's 1.2 percent expansion forecast for this year. The Commission said Italy's sluggish growth will weigh on the country's public finances, with both debt and deficit expected to climb far beyond what is allowed by EU fiscal rules.

Although no EU decision over possible disciplinary moves is expected before European elections on May 23-26, the new estimates could increase market pressure on the Italian government, which is already plagued by infighting. With no policy changes by the eurosceptic Italian administration, Italy's debt would grow to 133.7 percent of gross domestic product

(GDP) this year, and peak at 135.2 percent in 2020, the EU executive estimated.

Euro zone countries with a debt above 60 percent of GDP are required to gradually reduce it, but Italy's debt has been growing since last year. With a debt ratio second only to bailed-out Greece, Rome has already the highest interest expenditure in the bloc with 3.7 percent of its output paid to service debt last year.

As yields dropped slightly after a deal with Brussels over the Italian budget in December, interest expenditure is forecast to drop to 3.6 percent of GDP this year, before rising again in 2020.

With no changes in the government's spending policies, the country's deficit is also set to grow to 2.5 percent of output this year and to climb to 3.5 percent in 2020, beyond the 3.0 percent ceiling set by EU fiscal rules. The structural deficit, which excludes one-off items and the effects of the business cycle, is also expected to significantly worsen. This indicator is crucial in the EU assessment over countries' compliance with fiscal rules.

Despite worsening public finances, caused by lower growth and higher welfare spending, employment is expected to fall, the Commission predicted, in a blow to the Italian administration's flagship policies aimed at reducing joblessness. Employment is set to drop by 0.1 percent this year, while the unemployment rate will climb to 10.9 percent this year and to 11.0 percent in 2020, as government jobless subsidies are "likely to induce more people to officially register as unemployed," the Commission said. — Reuters

What's On



LOYAC AC Milan football academy celebrates its tenth anniversary



LOYAC's AC Milan football academy recently celebrated its tenth anniversary at the Shaheed Park with LOYAC's chairperson, Fare'a Al-Saqaf, the Italian embassy representative, Andrea Quartieri, Haya Al-mane'

from ZAIN, Saad Al-Belais from Kout Foodstuff company, Sonndos Saad from Kuwait Financial Center and Dr Musaed Al-Keraibani from the public authority for youth. Speaking at the occasion, AC Milan academy manager, Faisal Al-

Haroun said that the academy had trained over 5000 since its establishment. "We have trained over 600 players in 2019 and their training program included four excursions including three to Italy", Al-Haroun said.



Three celebrity chefs join the iconic Burj Al Arab Jumeirah

Further to Jumeirah Group's recent announcements to pursue its position as a leading international luxury hospitality brand, the group is further securing its prominence in the art of elevated dining experiences. With a focus on delivering culinary sensations like no other, The Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, a well-known global icon, is proud to announce three new chefs to the group's current collection of ten celebrity restaurants: Francky Semblat, Kim Joinie-Maurin and Kasper Kurdahl, celebrating a combined total of 7 Michelin stars at their most recent culinary appointments. The news follows the recent milestone recruitment of Michael Ellis as Chief Culinary Officer, the former Managing Director of the Michelin Guide.

Whilst Francky Semblat and Kim Joinie-Maurin are both proteges of the famed Joel Robuchon's school of excellence, Kasper Kurdahl worked alongside culinary legends like Roger Souvereyns. All three chefs add a unique touch to the dining scene at Burj Al Arab. The hotel's Al Muntaha restaurant welcomes Chef Francky and Sky View restaurant Chef Kim, whilst Chef Kasper joins Al Mahara restaurant. Anthony Costa, Regional Vice President of Jumeirah Group and Managing Director of Burj Al Arab, who appointed the three celebrity Chefs said: "I am thrilled to be welcoming Chefs Kasper, Francky and Kim to Burj Al Arab. Their experience at some of the world's best restaurants coupled with their diverse backgrounds and entrepreneurial adventures will pave the path to a wonderful gastronomic journey."

The Burj Al Arab Jumeirah aims to create elevated dining experiences for its guests, in line with Jumeirah Group's continued focus on raising the bar in the experience economy. Jose Silva, Jumeirah Group's CEO added: "We are very proud to announce the arrival of three new culinary experts at our flagship hotel in Dubai. This appointment reveals the start of a more diversified and innovative culinary offering, in addition to our continued focus on the guest experiences, which is a core element of the luxury industry. Dubai's diverse culinary scene will be a delight for Expo2020 visitors next year, and with over 60 restaurants in Dubai, we are ready to welcome its epicurean guests. This is the start of several other exciting culinary and customer experiences we plan to announce in the near future."

Breast Cancer Awareness Workshop - ICSK JUNIOR



ICSK Junior celebrated womanhood as part of the Diamond Jubilee Celebration and decided to go pink on 4th May 2019 by taking up a social cause – to support the fighters, admire the survivors and spread awareness among others about 'Breast Cancer'. A workshop was conducted for mothers and staff of ICSK Junior by Dr.Susovana Sujit Nair, Oncologist, KCCC, who is passionate about eradicating the fear which the word 'cancer' instills in every mind because she believes that there is hope for a cure and nothing can dim the light from within. The workshop aimed at creating

an awareness about the risk factors involved and how an early detection can help one fight out better. The questioning-answer session that followed allowed the attendees to raise their doubts and Dr. Susovana patiently heard them and answered their questions. Principal, Mrs. Sherly Dennis, Vice Principal, Mrs. Sheeja and the ICSK Junior family expressed their serene gratitude to Dr. Susovana for taking time out of her busy schedule to conduct the awareness programme.

Each time a woman stands up for herself, she stands up for all!



EDUCATION IS NOT A PREPARATION FOR LIFE..... EDUCATION IS LIFE ITSELF.

All students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way. Education is our passport to the future.

The Indian Community School, Senior demesne, rolled out the red carpet to its own scions of class 11 for a distinctive orientation programme, just one day before their real challenges started. The orientation was arranged on 13th March 2019 by the Principal of ICSK Senior, Dr. V. Binumon. It was conducted in two separate sessions- Science followed by the Commerce and Humanities.

Before the commencement of the programme, as a mark of humaneness and empathy, a moment of silence was observed to convey the deepest condolences to the bereaved family of T.G.K Noyel Angelo a student of NIOS in the ICSK Senior school. The Principal Dr. V Binumon framed the orientation for the parents and students of class 11 with an intention to uplift and bolster the morale of the students widely. The programme was unfolded with the prayer song by the senior school choir group, Swaranjali, to invoke the blessings of the God as we know that prayer is the most important conversation of one's day. The gathering was greeted wholeheartedly by the Vice Principal of ICSK Senior, Dr. Sam T. Kuruvilla and the crowd was brimming with energy and new hopes as they heard him speak.

Perfection is not attainable, but if it is chased one can catch excellence. This idea was brought forward by the Academic Supervisor of ICSK Senior, Mrs. Niva Elna Varghese who was introduced to the gathering. The children were familiarized with their respective class teachers, subject



teachers, Head of the departments which proved to be quite beneficial to them. The prime catch of the programme was the presentation that was evinced by the Principal, Dr. V. Binumon to build a network of resources that would help the students and their parents to start their journey in an apt way on the right path. He educated the students about the subject combinations that are provided in the school as per the CBSE bylaw. He also threw light on the accomplishments that the school has achieved.

The parents were briefed about the norms and conditions of the school and were also suggested about the different measures to nurture a child with love and care to build a strong foundation for a glorious future. He guided the students to free them from limiting their beliefs. One needs to be streamlined. He counseled the students that the prayers of their parents are the invisible hand that saves the day. A humungous total of 365 students have been enrolled in class 11 in the ICSK Senior School. The orientation was an effort to guide the parents about their wards in a proper manner. Dr. V Binumon stressed on communication and team work. The orientation reached its culmination with the Vote of Thanks that was delivered by the Deputy Vice Principal, Mrs. Susan Rajesh.

US climate skeptics send shivers through the Arctic cooperation

ROVANIEMI: For the first time in over two decades, member states of the Arctic Council failed to agree on a final declaration at their bi-annual ministerial meeting yesterday, due to a US refusal to mention climate change. At the start of the 11th gathering of Arctic foreign ministers, in the Lapland town of Rovaniemi, Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini announced a change to the planned agenda, saying the final joint declaration would be replaced by ministerial statements.

Several sources said it was because member states were unable to reach an agreement, with the United States alone refusing to mention climate change in the final text. "I don't name and blame anybody," Soini, who chaired the meeting, told reporters. "But of course it is clear that climate issues are different from the different viewpoints and the different capitals," he said. In place of the traditional declaration, the council released a shorter "ministerial statement", which set out future goals for the organization but conspicuously made no mention of climate change.

But Soini also took the unusual step of releasing much of the rejected declaration — complete with climate goals — as a "chair's statement". "The hang up here right now is America making it hard to make a final agreement," Sally Swetzof of the Aleut International Association, one of six organizations representing indigenous peoples, told AFP. The Arctic Council groups Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States, and their cooperation is usually frictionless.

'Doing our part'
US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo assured his Arctic counterparts that "the Trump administration shares your deep commitment to environmental stewardship." He insisted America was "doing our part" in protecting the climate, and said the US has reduced emissions of black carbon more than any other Arctic Council member state. The US has repeatedly pointed to Russia's failure to submit information about its own emissions as a reason why environmental targets do not work.

"Collective goals, even when well intentioned, are not always the answer," Pompeo told the meeting. "They are rendered meaningless, even counterproductive, as soon as one nation fails to comply," he said. In a speech on the eve of the meeting, Pompeo instead pledged to strengthen the US's Arctic presence to keep in check the "aggressive attitude" of China and Russia in the resource-rich region.

Yesterday China's foreign ministry hit back at Pompeo's remarks, calling them "a misrepresentation of the facts that has ulterior motives". The Secretary of State's speech also drew strong criticism from some pressure groups. "America's Arctic ambivalence is a far greater threat than the ambitions of Russia and China combined," Victoria Herrmann of the Arctic Institute said in a statement.

"With no strong fleet of icebreakers, no Arctic ambassador, and no climate change policy, America is arguably the weakest circumpolar nation, and shows no signs of correcting course," she said. — AFP

Canada lists 3 whale species as threatened

OTTAWA: Canadian scientists on Monday listed three types of whale that swim its waters, including two of the world's largest species, as threatened. Sei whales were classified as endangered while Fin and Sowerby's Beaked whales were found to be "of special concern" by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

In a statement, the independent panel, whose reports form the basis of Canada's conservation efforts, blamed human activity for the

predicament of the marine giants. The cetaceans, it said, get tangled in fishing gear or are killed in collisions with an "ever increasing" number of large ships navigating Canadian waters. Because they evolved in quieter seas, noise from ships, naval exercises and seismic exploration also "impedes their communication and survival," the panel said.

COSEWIC noted that Sowerby's Beaked whales are particularly susceptible to noise pollution as the species uses sound to navigate and hunt. Sightings have recently increased in a marine protected area off Nova Scotia's Atlantic coast that offers whales a respite from the clamor. The panel urged the creation of more refuges, including in international waters, to reverse the whales' decline. — AFP

CLINIC

PAGE





248 33 199

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PAGE





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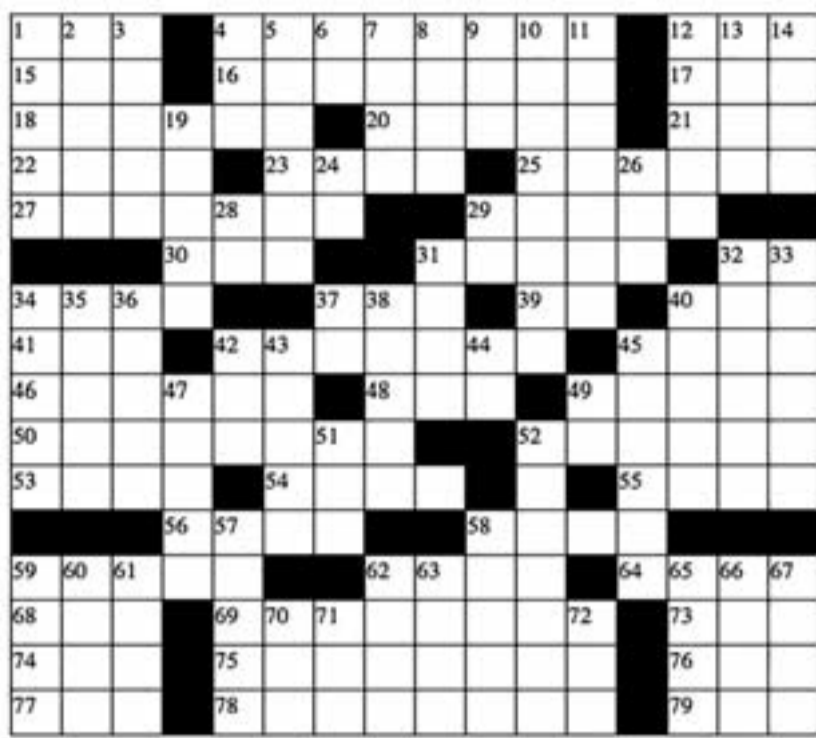
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2202



ACROSS

1. An associate degree in applied science.
4. A woman sahib.
12. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
15. (often followed by 'of') A large number or amount or extent.
16. A horse of light tan or golden color with cream or white mane and tail.
17. Common black-and-gray Eurasian bird noted for thievery.
18. German dramatist and poet who developed a style of epic theater (1898-1956).
20. Applying to ordinary citizens.
21. How long something has existed.
22. A state in the western United States.
23. A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
25. Long-tailed black-and-white bird that utters a chattering call.
27. Tropical American aroid having edible tubers that are cooked and eaten like yams or potatoes.
30. Water frozen in the solid state.
34. Make editorial changes (in a text).
39. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
46. An implement used to erase something.
48. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
50. Medium-sized larch of Canada and northern United States including Alaska having a broad conic crown and rust-brown scaly bark.
53. The act of scanning.
54. A hardy cabbage with coarse curly leaves that do not form a head.
55. The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
56. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
59. Obvious and dull.
64. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
68. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
69. Coelenterate genus of order Madreporaria, including staghorn corals.
73. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
74. The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.
75. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
76. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
77. The syllable naming the sixth (submedian) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
78. A mountain peak in south central Sri Lanka (7,360 feet high).
79. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.

DOWN

1. One or more recordings issued together.
2. The large trunk artery that carries blood from the left ventricle of the heart to branch arteries.
3. An advantageous purchase.
4. The ratio of the distance traveled (in miles) to the time spent traveling (in hours).
5. Animal food for browsing or grazing.
6. A metric unit of volume equal to one thousandth of a liter.
7. Hosiery consisting of a cloth covering for the foot.
8. Type genus of the Amniidae.
9. The virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).
10. Not friendly.
11. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria and closely related to Hausa.
12. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
13. Medium-sized tree having glossy lanceolate leaves.
14. Affectedly dainty or refined.
19. The first Hindu calendar month (corresponding to March or April in the Gregorian calendar).
24. Unknown god.
26. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
28. A state in southeastern United States.
29. A state in the eastern United States.
31. An informal term for a father.
32. Belonging to or on or near the back or upper surface of an animal or organ or part.
33. A waste pipe that carries away sewage or surface water.
35. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
36. Tropical American tree grown in southern United States having a whitish pink-tinged fruit.
37. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
38. A Dravidian language spoken in south central India.
40. Australian operatic soprano (1861-1931).
42. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
43. Of or relating to Iraq or its people or culture.
44. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
45. An embroidered rug made from a coarse Indian felt.
47. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
49. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
51. Someone who is morally reprehensible.
52. Slender stemlike structure by which some twining plants attach themselves to an object for support.
57. People having the same social or economic status.
58. All the plant life in a particular region.
60. A city in northern India.
61. United States writer noted for his droll epigrams (1902-1971).
62. (Greek mythology) Daughter of Zeus and Demeter.
63. Affording unobstructed entrance and exit.
65. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
66. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
67. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
70. An accountant certified by the state.
71. The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
72. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Stay away from arguments today. You nor anyone involved in the fuss really ever win. Neither of you feel satisfaction because both are trying to get their point across. If it happens at work, then you have more to contend with in the form of your boss's disapproval. That can have a lasting effect. You're already seen as a little hot-tempered which you know. This could be a good time to make money. That makes you look good in more than one way. Higher ups are proud of you but with the blight of the argument, they may not see this kudo very well. Take a friend out to dinner tonight and blow off steam there.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Expressing sympathy to someone with whom you care is on the agenda today. You're not in the mood for any nonsense but for this you can be a little more attentive. You'd rather be in the woods, a nice park or just driving more than going through the mundane events today has to offer. Work leaves no joy. Being at home away from the world would be much better but you're also acquainted with the fact that you have to work to eat. Get through this day, so that you can do as you like later. Be watchful of any severe changes you make today. You may have to modify them tomorrow.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Idealism and dreams you have at this time may cost you in the long run with the loss of something you want very badly now. Ambition may be lost and set backs occur that you can't turn around at this point. Visualize what you want, see it coming to fruition and decide if that decision needs to be reversed. All items you create in life can be changed at any point along the way. If they cost you, you can always start over again. You're putting limitations upon yourself because you're frightened of the change you bringing about at this time. Think your process over and see if it's what you need. Take time for yourself and think about those you love.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A little romance makes everything better. Beverages taste sweeter, food is heartier and life is better all around. Make sure that you get this great stress reliever and attitude adjuster before going to work today if you can. Be sure to get out and walk at lunch today for another de-stressor. Work doesn't mean as much to you today as it generally does. This is a time for seeing the beauty in the world and with your cohorts too. You may tend to the side of dreaminess. Be quiet about it because others don't appreciate this behavior as much as you are now. Enjoy your day and carry it in to tonight as well.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Ambition is a powerful motivator and can lead you where you need in order to prosper as long as you don't let it push you into doing something that can get you into trouble. You could have an issue which becomes verbal with a boss. That won't do for you today. You've had a good run of getting things done the way you like but now you have to settle down and think before you act. This is a challenge to your career if you're not careful. This may cause undue pressure on your stress center today. Go home to your partner and talk it out with them rather than your boss.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have a strong desire to unify and simply your life. Your usual need to keep everything in order comes into play now. A temporary obstacle may have you finding a way in which to go around it but it's not that important in the scheme of things. Others look at you wistfully and wish they had the abilities you have in a practical, see how to do it, sense. Taking care of yourself is at the forefront now. Diet, exercise, learning and any type of item that makes you feel better is uppermost on your mind. Love is one of those matters of extreme importance.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Emotional considerations may pop up to impede progress on a work project now. That is something you can't tolerate. You have a lot of energy and drive to get things done, especially this work proposal now but something is giving you pause. This may not be the best time to make a decision on an emotional scale. Otherwise you may find yourself giving an ultimatum. Those are never good from anyone's view. Try to keep your thoughts to yourself and think of ways to overcome this issue first before you address it. Tomorrow will be better, you hope.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may appear too rigid in your thoughts for someone you meet today. That could cause you to become a little more insecure. This isn't the best thing for you now. You may have to redo a choice you made a couple of days ago at work and hope to have better results. That further puts you behind the eight ball in your mind. Take heart. It'll get better. You have a need to be seen as an intelligent, hard working individual. Not only that you need the kudos that goes along with making things right. Nurturing is a need, both giving and receiving even from a group of your friends or coworkers.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Though people search you out to give them good advice, you don't feel like fooling with them, at all. If you take the time to listen and help you may be privy to some really astounding issues on their plate. Of course, you'll have to keep it to yourself but you're good at that. Though people need you they're not willing to give you what you need. That may be why you're not in the mood for those around you now. At work, you may be caught in the middle when someone disagrees with your tactics. Look at that person for whom they are. Let it go and live to fight another day.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Yesterday's day has made it into today's day. This isn't easy as you already know from experience. You're trying to fight the good fight when there's no way to win. It's a hard place you're in now. Try to be patient and let this day blow over. Having others care for you is what you need at this time. Thankfully, you have that. Also, you can give your care and it's accepted gratefully. That should give you a glimmer of sunshine in this already clouded day. The good thing about this day is that you have the extraordinary ability to communicate well to get your point across when it counts. There's something good.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

At work, you know all the right moves. Where new ventures are concerned, you're three steps ahead of the competition. Your friends and family use this time of thoughtful consideration by you to get their sensitive problems analyzed. They appreciate your insightful thoughts on their predicaments, your ability to not judge and to keep your mouth shut too. Another understands that you have issues too, gives you the backing you need along with the ability to talk and make sense of those issues. Gratefulness is part of your agenda now. Take some time to love your dog or cat.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Acting on instinct is part of your life now. It can work for you in very good ways but you have to be patient too. Instinctive patience doesn't seem to mesh and seems to be an oxymoron. That's the way it is for you now with great results coming. Look for good things to happen though. Travel and contact with people who've become friends from some of those far-away travel places are part of the good things suggested. You may be making plans to visit those friends. Philosophical ideas, along with people you're involved with in this area, may help you get the material things you seek. Enjoy.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Fish 1 - Word Search

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

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|
| BARRACUDA | HALIBUT | SMELT |
| BONEFISH | MUSKELLUNGE | STURGEON |
| BULLHEAD | PARROTFISH | SWORDFISH |
| CATFISH | PIKE | TRIPLETAIL |
| COD | REDFISH | WARMOUTH |
| CRAPPIE | SALMON | |
| DOLLY VARDEN | SAND DAB | |
| GAR | SAUGER | |

Yesterday's Solution

Farm 2 - Solution

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

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2019



US actor Jared Leto arrives for the 2019 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on May 6, 2019, in New York. The Gala raises money for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. The Gala's 2019 theme is "Camp: Notes on Fashion" inspired by Susan Sontag's 1964 essay "Notes on Camp". — AFP

Modern sculpture meets ancient Greece in unique island exhibition

A stone's throw from the Greek island of Mykonos lies Delos, an uninhabited islet a world away from its neighbor's glamorous nightlife. It is there, on an island best known for its archaeological treasures, that British contemporary artist Antony Gormley is showing 29 of his sculptures. Gormley is perhaps best known for his gigantic Angel of the North, a 20-metre high steel work that since 1998 has been an unmistakable landmark in its home at Gateshead, northern England. But this new exhibition—including five works specially created for the

event—sets his contemporary work among the remains of ancient Greece. "It's an extraordinary responsibility," Gormley told AFP at the opening. "It's an amazing privilege to occupy a site that hasn't been occupied by a living artist (for) over two thousand years—that's a bit of a challenge isn't it?"

The archaeological finds on Delos date back as far as the 3rd millennium BC up to the Hellenic era of classical Greece. Its UNESCO World Heritage listing describes it as an "exceptionally extensive and rich" site, reflecting its

past as a cosmopolitan port. The exhibition is intended as a dialogue between contemporary civilization and the past, says Elina Kountouri, who heads up NEON, the non-profit that organized the show along with London's Whitechapel Gallery. A mark of the respect accorded to the site is that none of Gormley's sculptures have been placed inside the ruins of the ancient sanctuaries of the Greek gods Apollo and Artemis. According to Greek myth, Delos is where the two gods—brother and sister—were born.

'A conversation about time'

Gormley's silhouettes in steel have been installed on different parts of the island, which covers only 3.5 square kilometers (1.4 square miles). Some can be seen as you approach the island by boat from Mykonos, such as the figure of a man standing at the northern extremity of Delos. Another stands in the water at the entry to the island's port, a third at the entrance to an ancient site. For Gormley, Delos is "an extraordinary place to think about the human project..."

And of his exhibition, he says: "For me this is a conversation about time. I think sculpture deals with time in an era (when) nobody has time. "For me, Delos as an island has this light and atmosphere and feeling that it timeless—outside the industrial time we are living." But even if ancient gods are gone, we worship at other altars today, he adds. "I don't live in a world that is commanded or guided by gods..." he says. "I live in a world that seems to be ruled by money and I'm trying both to resist that and recognize it. "It's been for me a real learning curve: how to listen to the marks that are already here—how to respond to the geology." Gormley's exhibition, "Sight", runs on the island until October 30. — AFP



A view of the UNESCO World Heritage archaeological site of the island of Delos.



Tourists look at the steel statue called "Rule" created by renowned British artist Antony Gormley, during his exhibition "Sight", as they walk past the museum at the archeological site of the island of Delos, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



A visitor sits next the statue "Water" by renowned British artist Antony Gormley, part of his exhibition "Sight" at the archeological site of the island of Delos.



The statue "Reflect" by renowned British artist Antony Gormley, part of his exhibition "Sight" stands. — AFP photos

Marching band: Elephants celebrate Thailand's new King

Marching in lockstep outside the royal palace in Bangkok's historic old quarter, 11 elephants bowed and trumpeted in homage to Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn yesterday, a day after the monarch's three-day coronation ceremony. The ritual-laden event ended on Monday with the newly crowned 66-year-old monarch granting Thais a public audience from a balcony of the Grand Palace, where thousands gazed up at him and waved Thailand's national flag. But elephant trainers, known as mahouts, brought well-wishers of a different species to celebrate there yesterday, although the king himself did not appear.



Elephants under the command of their mahouts bow with well-wishers during a procession near the Grand Palace to pay their respects to Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP

Dressed in yellow silk shawls and wearing saffron flower garlands, the white-powdered elephants—Thailand's national animal—performed a 10-step jig to symbolize the 10th reign of the Chakri dynasty ushered in by the formal crowning of Vajiralongkorn, or Rama X. "The elephants... knelt down to bow and roared, as if to say 'long live the King' in the elephant language," said mahout Reangthongbaht Meepon of Ayutthaya Elephant Palace, a tourist center where the animals are the main attraction for visitors. The elephants deemed worthy had received special "royal training" for Tuesday's performance, he said.

"We got the training methods from the royal palace to train elephants according to ancient traditions," Reangthongbaht said. Elephant tourism is a lucrative industry in the kingdom that has come under increased scrutiny from animal rights groups in recent years. The three-day coronation ceremony, rich with pageantry and ritual, was the first in Thailand in 69 years, coming after the death of Vajiralongkorn's beloved father in 2016. The tradition began by anointing the king with sacred waters before he donned a tiered golden headpiece weighing more than seven kilograms (16 pounds). The second day of ceremonies saw the king carried on a gilded palanquin for several hours under a searing sun, before capping the coronation on day three with his public address. — AFP



Singer/actress Lady Gaga arrives for the 2019 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. — AFP photos



Cardi B

Lady Gaga takes on 'Camp' at Met Gala in gowns, underwear



Singer/actress Lady Gaga

Pop superstar Lady Gaga made a grand entrance at New York's annual Met Gala on Monday, wearing a voluminous bright pink dress that she shed on the red carpet to reveal three other outfits layered underneath, including a bra and underwear, her interpretation of the evening's theme, "Camp: Notes on Fashion." The invitation-only event, famed for its A-list celebrities and haute couture gowns, is a benefit for New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and also marks the opening of the Costume Institute's annual fashion exhibit.

Gaga shed her blazing pink Brandon Maxwell gown on the red carpet to reveal a strapless black gown by the designer. Next came a figure-hugging hot pink gown. Her final reveal before a makeup touch-up on the carpet was a black bra, panties and sky-high platform boots. "Roar" singer Katy Perry came dressed as a chandelier, even wearing one on her head. "I like to be of the light and obviously be the light, she said about her 40-pound costume by Moschino.

Anna Wintour, the American Vogue editor-in-chief who hosts fashion's biggest night each year, was one of the first up the red-carpet-turned-pink for the evening wearing a shimmering Chanel gown topped by a cape of pink feathers that was tipped in black, a nod to the night's mascot, a flamingo. Camp, a theme that embraces humor, exaggeration and liberal interpretation, was inspired by writer Susan Sontag's 1964 essay "Notes on 'Camp.'" Trends on the pink carpet included gold lame and sequins, feathers, neon, and oversized sleeves, skirts and trains. Performer Billy Porter, dressed in head-to-toe gold, summoned ancient Egypt when he was carried into the gala on a litter by six shirtless men.

The night's fashion also referenced camp icons including a glittery high-collared cape by designer Christian Siriano intended to pay tribute to the late Vegas showman Liberace. Singer Celine Dion wore a feathered headpiece and full-length fringe by Oscar de la Renta that was reminiscent of a Cher costume. Kris Jenner, mother and manager of reality stars Kim and Khloe Kardashian, told reporters on the red carpet she was

channeling singer David Bowie in a coat with wings made of tulle over a blue Tommy Hilfiger jumpsuit. The front-man of British brand "One Direction" and gala co-host Harry Styles arrived wearing a black Gucci ensemble with mesh detail on the top and painted black fingernails. Tennis star Serena Williams stayed true to her brand, pairing Nike sneakers with a custom neon yellow dress from Italian fashion house Versace.



Tennis player Serena Williams

Others with the sought-after invitation to dinner for 550 included NFL star quarterback Tom Brady and his supermodel wife Gisele Bündchen, singer and actress Jennifer Lopez and comedian Chris Rock, and the billionaire CEO of Amazon.com Jeff Bezos. — Reuters



Katy Perry



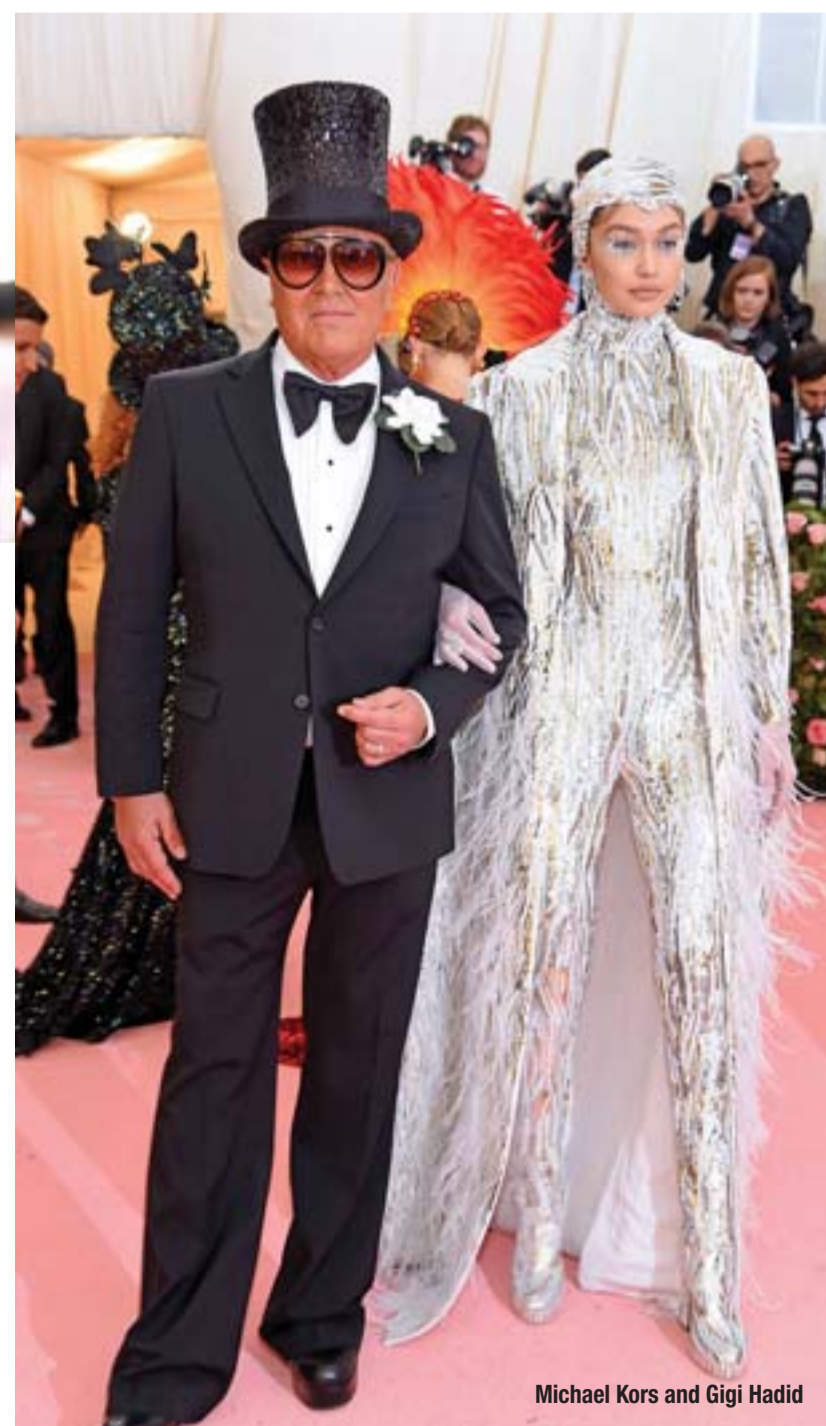
Celine Dion



US singer Ciara



Michael Urie



Michael Kors and Gigi Hadid



Zendaya and Law Roach



Gwen Stefani, Jeremy Scott, Bella Hadid, Stella Maxwell, Maluma, Sarah Paulson, Tracee Ellis Ross, Denek K, and Violet Chachki.



Lifestyle | Features

Starbucks in Westeros? Coffee cup cameos in 'GoT' set blunder

With two episodes of HBO's wildly popular medieval fantasy saga "Game of Thrones" to go, puzzled fans took to social media on Monday after heroine Daenerys Targaryen was joined at a wooden banquet table by a rogue to-go coffee cup. Jokes, spoofs and critiques quickly followed the anachronistic appearance of the beverage—taken to be a Starbucks coffee by many who noticed—in the fourth episode of the eighth and final season. "Seriously, they have Starbucks in Winterfell," one commenter wrote on Twitter, while others lamented the slip-up after waiting two years for the eighth season to air.

Yet another tweeted a redrawn logo of the American coffee chain with the title changed to "Winterfell coffee" and the wolf's head sigil of the Starks, one of the noble

families at the center of the series. HBO spoke up as the blunder went viral, tweeting that "the latte that appeared in the episode was a mistake" and playfully adding that Daenerys—played by British actress Emilia Clarke—had ordered an herbal tea.

Meanwhile, executive producer Bernie Caulfield told WNYC radio she couldn't believe the error, saying that "our on-set prop people and decorators are so on it 1,000 percent." "We're sorry!" she said. "If that's the worst thing that they're finding, we're in good shape." HBO called it a "craft services coffee cup" but Caulfield echoed a theme spread widely on Twitter, speculating that Westeros—the fictional continent where the action takes place—was the first place to actually have Starbucks.

Though he hadn't personally watched Sunday's episode, entitled "The Last of the Starks," art director Hauke Richter told Variety magazine: "Things can get forgotten on set." Starbucks seized the opportunity to capitalize on the faux pas, evoking its popular dragon fruit-based thirst-quencher in a statement that read: "We're surprised she didn't order a Dragon Drink." It was not immediately clear if Daenerys, known in the show as the Mother of Dragons for her mastery over the winged creatures of legend, has ever tried coffee. Season eight began airing on April 14, nearly 20 months after the seventh season's conclusion. The last ever episode will be shown on May 19. — AFP



Mexican-American singer-songwriter Lila Downs plays her jarana jarocha during an interview at the Sony building in New York. — AFP photos



Mexican-American singer-songwriter Lila Downs enjoys the weather, on the roof of the Sony building, during an interview in New York.

Mexican-American singer Lila Downs confronts immigration debate in new album

Long an advocate for rural communities in her native Mexico, singer Lila Downs is now adding inflections of cumbia and electro to her signature brand of folk-and taking on the hot-button issue of immigration. The Grammy-winning Mexican-American's just-released ninth studio album offers a defiant celebration of diversity while challenging US President Donald Trump's headline stance on immigration, something Downs calls a "responsibility." After performing with the likes of folk legend Joan Baez on the US-Mexico border to raise funds for migrant refugees, Downs decided to cover the iconic song "Clandestino," an immigrant anthem originally by indie darling Manu Chao.

"If we don't fight for children, what will become of us?" the 50-year-old says in her cover of the hit, referring to the White House's immigrant detention policies that saw children separated from their parents. "Immigration must always be looked at from a human point of view," she told AFP while in New York to promote "Al Chile," her album that dropped Friday. "We must pay tribute to these people, make them songs," she said, shaking her colorful traditional shawl as the breeze sent her long dark hair into ripples, the Empire State Building towering over the skyline.

Half and half

Downs—who is embarking on a tour that will take her to San Jose, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and later Spain, Peru and Colombia—now lives in Mexico's southern city Oaxaca but grew up between Mexico and the United States. The daughter of an American filmmaker and biologist whose mother is Mixtec, an indigenous group in southern Mexico, Downs says it's her job to speak up on behalf of migrants as a performer of mixed descent. "It's a responsibility as a Mexican-American to talk about these issues," she said. "My whole career has been like that, partly because I am half and half and I wanted to unite the two worlds."

Trump's discourse, she said, is precisely "the opposite of what I've tried to do my entire life." But despite its sometimes weighty content, the album that includes a collaboration with US singer Norah Jones—who sings in English and Spanish—also celebrates life and is perfect for a party, Downs said. "It has a lot of heart on some subjects, but it's mostly for enjoyment"—something for "the waist down," she laughed.

Spicy but tasty

In "Al Chile"—a reference to the spicy fruit as well as a

now there are barely 20 people on the street. The tapas bar hasn't bothered hiring the usual band.

Hopeful Harpo

Every Friday and Saturday night Harpo Gooneratne, a larger-than-life bar and restaurant owner, does the rounds of the places he runs in his chauffeur-driven car. "Colombo's nightlife, for the last couple of years, has been picking up because the tourists arrivals are getting bigger and bigger," Gooneratne told AFP. "There were more bars, more restaurants opening, Colombo's nightlife was taking a huge turnaround. Colombo's nightlife was on the up," he said. And he's hopeful that things will bounce back. "It has taken a dip but we are positive that it is going to kick back and it is going to happen. The locals are going to be coming out as soon as possible," he predicted.

At the entrance to Park Street Mews, security guards check visitors' bags for explosives, and concrete blocks have been installed to prevent any attacks with vehicles. A French restaurant in the street, the Cafe Francais, used to refuse reservations after 10 pm, and some clientele used to send their drivers to bag one of the coveted tables. Now sales are down by half and its manager Jean-Charles Toussaint, originally from the southern French city of Montpellier, expects things to remain dire for a while.

"The situation isn't great. But it's understandable, less than two weeks since the attacks. Things will have to get going again slowly," Toussaint told AFP. Natalie Jayasuria, owner of the Flamingo House building, where there is a bar, restaurant and a club, agrees. "Sri Lanka is a resilient nation. We fought 30 years of war, we survived that. I believe we can survive anything," she said. — AFP

SRI LANKA'S POST ATTACKS NIGHTLIFE LOSES FIZZ

Before jihadi bombers targeted Sri Lanka in deadly Easter attacks, Rangana Wijesuriya used to party until the small hours in the pulsating restaurants, bars and clubs of downtown Colombo. Now, after the April 21 attacks that killed 257 people, the buzz is gone. The DJs are performing to empty dance floors and the bar staff are bored. "It is usually really crowded and really noisy here. We were shocked to see that it is really empty," Wijesuriya, 26, told AFP on a recent Friday night. "Usually when we come we stay until morning and drink and go," she said, the international auditing firm employee and her friend the only diners at a restaurant.

Sri Lanka remains on high alert after bombers targeted three hotels and churches in attacks claimed by the Islamic State group. In fact, even though it's only just gone 8:00 pm, the street is such a shadow of its former self that Wijesuriya was thinking of calling it a night. The pedestrianized Park Street Mews used to be heaving, its many bars and chic restaurants the place to be seen for Sri Lanka's party set, plus a few tourists. With the island nation still in shock from being the target of such an audacious and horrific attack people are afraid to go out. While before partygoers would have to elbow through 700 or 800 people on a Friday night,



The Park Street Mews area, full of restaurants and bars, is seen empty in downtown Colombo.



A decorated bar is seen empty of customers at Park Street Mews in downtown Colombo.



Mexican-American singer-songwriter Lila Downs is shown on the big screen TV in the Sony building.

Mexican expression that loosely translates to "keeping it real"—Downs worked with the acclaimed musician and DJ Camilo Lara, founder of the Mexican Institute of Sound, to create a work that's simultaneously modern and classic, urban and rural. The sounds in part owes its uniqueness to "sonideros," a trend originally from Mexico City that sees a DJ and entertainer manipulate audio, lights and messages to the public during street dances. The album also explores the relationship between Mexicans and the chili, a food that brings them joy as well as suffering.

She laughs that she herself is a bit "like a green chili, spicy but tasty," lyrics she sings in a rendition of "La llorona." Downs' sings her version of the Mexican folk song on this album—which some 180 artists contributed to in the language Zapotec, accompanied by an orchestra of indigenous children from the town Juchitan de Zaragoza, which was devastated by a 2017 earthquake. In the pump-up song "El son de chile frito"—"The sound of the fried

chili"—Downs' voice rises above the wind instruments and percussion to run through all the types of chilis she wants to eat, testing how much suffering one can endure before pleasure dances on the tongue. "Yes, it stings the chiltepin, but without chili I don't know how to live," she sings, referring to a potent red pepper similar to cayenne.

"The chili has to do with our personality, and the mystery of who we are as Mexicans," Downs said. She also sings of local specialties including chocolate, mole sauce, tequila and mezcal. Food is "something very important to me" that is linked to "the senses" and "intuition," says Downs, after singing a verse evoking her desire to eat "chili tacos with beer, salt and onions grilled over a fire"—just like grandmothers do. — AFP

Alaska's thaw threatens prehistoric sites once frozen in time

The first artifact—a wooden mask—was discovered in 2007 by a child who stumbled upon it while playing on the beach near his home in Quinhagak, a village in western Alaska that sits by the Bering Sea. Over the following months, hundreds of similar objects—baskets, finely carved harpoon shafts, lip plugs, wooden dolls, ivory tattoo needles—emerged from the earth as melting permafrost and erosion driven by climate change revealed a Yupik Eskimo settlement dating back to the 1600s. Today, more than a decade after the first find, an extraordinary collection of some 100,000 prehistoric Yupik artifacts—the largest such collection in the world—sits in a small newly opened museum in Quinhagak, home to an indigenous community of about 700 people.

"This is by far the highlight of everything I've ever excavated in my 40-year-career—and I've worked on some pretty spectacular sites," said Rick Knecht, an archaeologist with the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. For the past 10 years Knecht has led a team racing to save as many items as possible at the excavation site about three miles (4.8 kilometers) from Quinhagak and dubbed Nunalleq, which means Old Village in the Yupik language. "Almost everything we know about Yupik prehistory comes from this site," said Knecht, an affable man with a grizzled beard, as he surveyed the area recently with an AFP team. "If we'd lost it, the people here would have lost their past and a tangible link to that past, which would have been an unbelievable tragedy."

Race against the elements

But while Knecht marvels at the trove of artifacts discovered at Nunalleq and the clues these objects have provided to traditional Yupik culture, he is also horrified that similar sites across Alaska are probably disappearing as the frozen ground that has preserved them for centuries thaws and erosion sweeps them away. "As the permafrost melts, you can see that the soil liquefies. It's like a box of ice cream," Knecht said, pointing to the goey mud along the fast-eroding shoreline in Quinhagak and large clumps of earth ready to topple into the sea.

"We've only saved this one site but tens of thousands like it are being lost right now while we're talking because of climate change," he said. "In some places in the Arctic, the coastline has gone back more than a mile. And since I've been here in Quinhagak, it's gone back 10 to 20 meters in merely 10 years." Knecht became involved with the excavation project in 2009 after Warren Jones, a village leader, contacted him, desperate to salvage what remains of his people's past. Based on carbon dating of organic

material at Nunalleq, experts believe the site dates back to a time historians call the Bow and Arrow Wars, when Yupik communities were engaged in fierce warfare and before Russian explorers discovered Alaska in the early 1800s.

"This was our heritage and we had to preserve it," recalls Jones. "We couldn't let it get lost at sea." But getting village elders who believe ancestral sites should not be disturbed to agree was no easy task. "It took Warren Jones two years to talk the village, person by person, into allowing an archaeological project," Knecht said. "They thought long and hard about it and some of the elders who were reluctant are now our strongest supporters."

'Cultural tragedy'

Many village residents now volunteer every summer to join Knecht and his crew of fellow archaeologists and students as they sift through the earth to save what they can. "You get this terrible feeling of working against time and you realize the full scope of the cultural tragedy that is part of climate change," said Knecht. "It's grim, it really is grim. It's a horror show. For every beautifully preserved mask lifted out of the ground, there are thousands falling to the sea in other still undiscovered sites that no one will ever see." But against the grim backdrop of climate change, one positive side effect has been renewed interest among the Yupik people in the practices and traditions of their ancestors. A number of villagers in Quinhagak are carving replicas of the artifacts found at Nunalleq, students at the local school have set up a traditional dance troupe and many have started to learn the Yupik language. Not to mention the immense pride felt by the locals at having a spectacular collection that would be the envy of world-class museums. "This has had a lot of impact on this small community," Jones said. "And it's important the collection stay in Quinhagak," he added. "These objects belong to the community. But we're willing to share and send them out to museums on loan so that other people learn about us." — AFP



Local Yupik Eskimo children dance beside artifacts from their ancestors found by archaeologist Rick Knecht and his team at the excavation site beside the Bering Sea, near the town of Quinhagak on the Yukon Delta in Alaska.—AFP

Classifieds

Wednesday, May 8, 2019



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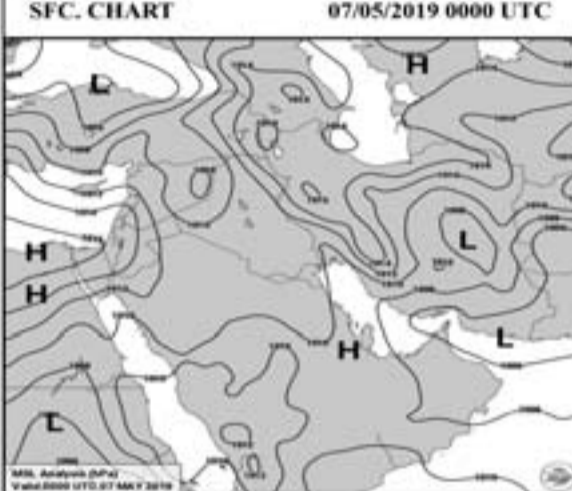
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Fair and Partly cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind to variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 07/05/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	39 °C	28 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	40 °C	22 °C			
ABDALLY	41 °C	23 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	41 °C	25 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	37 °C	23 °C			
SALMIYAH	37 °C	28 °C			
AHMADI	32 °C	28 °C			
NUWAISIB	36 °C	23 °C			
WAFRA	39 °C	24 °C			
SALMY	40 °C	23 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	05/08	Hot and Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	40 °C	25 °C	VRB-NE	08 - 32 km/h
Thursday	05/09	Hot and Cloudy with rising dust with a chance for scattered rain	39 °C	26 °C	VRB-SE	10 - 40 km/h
Friday	05/10	Hot and Clouds will decrease gradually	40 °C	27 °C	SE-VRB	10 - 30 km/h
Saturday	05/11	Hot and Partly cloudy	39 °C	26 °C	NW-N	06 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:35
Sunrise	05:02
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:27
Isha	19:52

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	38 °C
MIN. Temp.	25 °C
MAX. RH	38 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	N 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I 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, Latchaiahgari, 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 Cuncolim 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
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 8/5/2019				Departure Flights on Wednesday 8/5/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	123	Dubai	13:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:10
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	JZR	115	Doha	13:25
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	521	Al Najaf	13:30
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	IAW	158C	Al Najaf	13:55
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	CLX	912	Hanoi	14:20
ETH	3717	LGG	02:00	RBG	218	Asyut	14:35
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:55	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	JZR	125	Dubai	15:50
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	105	London	15:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
JZR	722	Alexandria	03:50	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
PIA	239	Sialkot	04:00	JZR	301	Istanbul	16:10
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	796	Madinah	04:25	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	IGO	052	Dubai	17:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	155	Istanbul	17:35
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:45	KAC	503	Beirut	17:40
JZR	154	Mashhad	05:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
KAC	206	Lahore	06:15	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:10
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
KAC	358	Kochi	07:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	19:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:15	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	351	Kochi	20:45
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
IAW	157B	Al Najaf	10:00	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	DLH	624	Mummat	20:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	OMA	648	Dammam	21:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
JZR	216	Jeddah	10:55	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	RBG	214	Sohag	21:35
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
UAE	2541	Dubai	11:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	KLM	445	Doha	22:10
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
AHY	119	Baku	12:05	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	JZR	407	Ahmedabad	22:40
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
CLX	7912	Luxembourg	12:45	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
IAW	157C	Al Najaf	12:55	KAC	1543	Cairo	23:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				JAV	622	Amman	23:15
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
				SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45



GAZA: A Palestinian man reads the Quran at the Al-Omari mosque in Gaza City, on the second day of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan. —AFP

Bahrain ditches subsidy reform plan; political tensions simmer

DUBAI: Bahrain has scrapped a plan to reform its cumbersome subsidy system, officials said yesterday, as authorities worry it could trigger more unrest in the Gulf island and complicate government efforts to repair public finances. The plan, which has been under discussion between the government and parliament since last year, aimed to overhaul allowances paid to Bahrainis squeezed by years of austerity and rising prices.

Bahrain, which does not possess the bountiful oil reserves of other wealthy Gulf neighbors, has had to introduce austerity measures in recent years such as a value-added tax and higher prices for water and power consumption. But the Sunni Muslim rulers are wary that austerity moves could bolster the majority Shiite-led opposition - whose main parties are not represented in parliament - and stir more of the unrest that has rattled the kingdom since Arab Spring uprisings of 2011.

"That reform is not the priority of both the govern-

ment and parliament anymore," said a Bahraini lawmaker who declined to be named. Another Bahraini official told Reuters that the plan had been "set aside". Bahrain's king ordered his cabinet last year to forge a consensus with parliament on the new subsidy system, which would include bundling meat subsidies and a cost of living allowance into a single package. Officials had said the new system would be simpler than the current one, by consolidating several payments, and direct a bigger proportion of subsidies to the poorest citizens. But the government rejected the lawmakers' proposals in August.

Saudi Arabia, along with Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, came to the rescue of Bahrain's cash-strapped government last year when a prolonged period of lower oil prices inflated its public debt to nearly 93 percent of annual economic output. As part of the \$10 billion bailout deal, Bahrain agreed to introduce a 5

percent value-added tax (VAT), as well as further subsidy cuts and a voluntary retirement plan for state workers. A government spokesperson did not confirm the subsidy reform plan has been scrapped but said Bahrain was committed to achieving fiscal balance as promised to its Gulf allies.

"The fiscal balance program introduced in 2018 aims to balance Bahrain's budget by 2022 without diminishing basic services offered to citizens," the spokesperson said in a statement. The government is fast-tracking substantial infrastructure investment projects worth over \$32 billion, the statement added, including \$7.5 billion from Gulf allies, \$10 billion from government holding companies and \$15 billion from private investors. The fiscal program has so far cut the budget deficit by 35 percent according to preliminary estimates for 2018, it added.

Bahrain's budget deficit fell to 11.7 percent of GDP

last year from 14.2 percent in 2017, partly because of higher oil prices, cuts in utility subsidies and new excise taxes, the IMF has estimated. Western-allied Bahrain has seen political unrest for years, before and after the Arab Spring. Home to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, the small Gulf kingdom has prosecuted and removed the citizenship of hundreds of protesters in mass trials and banned the main opposition groups.

Most of the leading Shiite opposition figures and human rights activists are imprisoned or have fled abroad. In the meantime, Bahrain has been trying to market itself as a financial technology hub for the Middle East and North Africa. The price of Bahrain's 2028 dollar bonds have risen since the Gulf bailout from a record low last June when the country looked in danger of default. But that upward trajectory could go into reverse if Manama does not tackle its spending overruns. — Reuters

'Feels terrible': Iran a year after US sanctions

TEHRAN: Alireza says he used to dream of a better future in Iran and even saw himself getting a new car or house, but those days are now gone after he lost his job to reimposed US sanctions. "My purchasing power has been cut, and my life is under pressure," said Alireza, an Iranian car industry veteran. "I no longer see myself as middle-class. It feels terrible."

It is now one year since the United States withdrew from a landmark nuclear accord that promised Iran relief from sanctions in exchange for the Islamic republic scaling back its nuclear program. In 2015 when Iran struck the deal, hopes had been high it would end years of crippling economic isolation for the country. Hotels

were unable to handle the influx of investors from abroad and according to President Hassan Rouhani, Iran was set to benefit from an injection of \$100 billion from foreign banks and companies.

"When the deal was working, it truly was a boom time. They were hiring left, right and centre and we didn't have time to scratch our heads," said 42-year-old Alireza, who declined to give his last name. But "everything was reversed" on May 8, 2018 when the United States withdrew from the deal, he told AFP. Alireza said he lost his job at French automaker PSA Group, after years of working in different positions, along with hundreds of others, when the first wave of sanctions affecting the car industry were imposed that August.

"I've searched everywhere to find a job since then, but without any success," he said. Calling the nuclear agreement the "worst deal ever", US President Donald Trump reimposed sanctions on Iran's banking system, oil sales and trade in metals. Most international firms that set up shop in Iran after the 2015 deal, including France's Total, PSA Group and Renault and Germany's Siemens, were consequently forced to either leave the

country or minimize their presence.

The loss of jobs from foreign firms, a sharp currency devaluation and rampant inflation have made life "grim" for Alireza and many other middle-class Iranians. After about 20 years as a sales and marketing expert in the auto industry, "I used to think of myself as an upper middle-class Iranian," said Alireza, who also says he has a long record of working with foreign firms in Iran.

In the good days of sanctions relief he could comfortably imagine getting a bigger house and a better car with some savings and a loan. Yet living on unemployment insurance-less than half of what he used to earn-with dim job prospects make upward mobility a rare commodity. "My salary is gone and house prices have soared... and it's just about impossible to buy a car now," said Alireza, who is married with no children.

According to Iran's central bank, the cost of homes in the capital has surged about 104 percent since March 2018 and the price of imported cars has grown beyond the reach of many. Employment opportunities are scarce, too. Big domestic carmakers like Iran Khodro and SAIPA are also suffering

from the US sanctions and dealing with financial problems of their own.

Alireza says he and his wife are still managing to provide for basic needs like food. But although she is still employed their household income is now little more than a third of what it used to be. But for many lower strata Iranians, essential goods like red meat, certain fruits and vegetables are too expensive to buy because of runaway inflation. For many Iranians the 2018 US sanctions were reminiscent of the pre-nuclear deal period, when multilateral sanctions pushed the country into recession.

Alireza had it worse, however, as the same layoff scenario played out for him in 2012, too. "I've been bitten by sanctions twice. I was laid off in just the same way back in 2012 when (PSA) called off its operations and left," he said. "It's like history repeating itself." In 2015, the nuclear deal had given him hope for a steadily improving future with tangible benefits. "But now I don't see the future to be any better than my recent past," he said. "Nothing will happen unless something major changes, like the last time." — AFP

Scientists develop device to detect...

Continued from Page 1

"We currently prescribe antibiotics even when there is no bacteria present," Wong said. "That is over prescription. That is one of things we tried to express. Can we quickly determine the existence of bacterial infection?" The researchers' paper said that in addition to being able to detect whether bacteria is present, the device can begin to classify the type by determining whether the cells are spherical, rod-shaped, or spiral.

"This device determines existence but not what type

of bacteria it is," said Wong. "What we're working on is a complementary molecular approach such that we can ID the species." And after finding bacteria is present, the sample is exposed to antibiotics to determine whether the strain is resistant, in which case antibiotic intervention would prove ineffective. "Urinary tract infections are the most common bacterial infections," said Wong.

"However, over 75 percent of urine specimens sent to a clinical microbiology laboratory are negative. Rapidly ruling out or confirming the presence of bacteria at a clinically relevant concentration will dramatically enhance patient care." He added that the team had applied for a provisional patent and could bring their device, which they hope to scale down in size so that it can be used in hospitals and doctors' offices, to market in three years' time. — AFP

Bukhari and Muslim).

While fasting for a whole month may seem like a lot, it becomes easier when it is divided into three parts, as above, or even into 30 separate days. If we fast one day at a time, or one third at a time until we complete the entire month, it will seem easier. The benefits of each third are so worthwhile, that nobody who is aware of them can purposefully forfeit them. Wishing all our readers the benefits of Ramadan - mercy, forgiveness, and release from Hellfire.

Courtesy of the TIES Center: the TIES Center aims to 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.

Three parts of Ramadan...

Continued from Page 1

is better than a thousand months. Therein descend the angels and the Ruh (Gabriel) by Allah's Permission with all Decrees. Peace! until the appearance of dawn. (Quran 97:1-5)

It is sunnah to spend some time in seclusion (itikaf) for a spiritual retreat in the mosque during the last third of Ramadan. 'Aishah (RA) narrated that "The Prophet (PBUH) used to do a retreat in the mosque during the last ten nights of Ramadan until he died. His wives continued to observe this practice after his death." (Al-

Myanmar frees two Reuters journalists...

Continued from Page 1

They were freed in an amnesty that included more than 6,000 prisoners. A government spokesman told reporters that family members had sent letters to Suu Kyi and the president Win Myint. "Leaders took into consideration the long-term interest of (the) country," Zaw Htay said. Lord Ara Darzi, a British advisor and confidant of Suu Kyi, said it was "fitting" the pair were released a few days after World Press Freedom Day.

"The lesson is simple: dialogue works even in the most difficult of circumstances," he told media in Yangon. US Vice President Mike Pence, who had previously condemned the Reuters journalists' jailing, said the release was "great news". "Freedom of religion & freedom of the press are essential to a strong democracy," he tweeted. The journalists waved and smiled broadly as they walked out of the jail.

The two men were convicted on charges of violating the official secrets act and sentenced to seven years each. At the time of their arrest, they had been reporting on a September 2017 massacre of 10 Rohingya Muslims in conflict-hit Rakhine state, where the Myanmar army forced some 740,000 of the stateless minority to flee over the border to Bangladesh. The case prompted an outcry around the world and crushed what was left of Suu Kyi's legacy as a rights defender.

Reuters has said the two were imprisoned in retaliation for their expose. The army jailed seven soldiers for the massacre in a rare response to allegations of atrocities. Military spokesman Zaw Min Tun said it had no comment on the release except that the case was "undertaken in line with the law". While inside, the duo missed numerous family milestones, including the birth of Wa Lone's daughter.

Their families were overjoyed with the news.

"We are very happy," Chit Su Win, who is married to Kyaw Soe Oo, told AFP. A reunion photo of both couples celebrating, smiling and holding each of their daughters was widely shared on Twitter. During their imprisonment, the journalists were showered with numerous awards and honors in response to their work. Last month, they won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize. Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were also on the cover of TIME magazine as part of its person of the year coverage featuring journalists targeted for their reporting.

The case against them became a byword for the war against press freedom and prompted an international campaign that attracted the support of prominent rights lawyer Amal Clooney, who said yesterday it had been an "honor to represent" her clients. Rights groups and legal experts say the prosecution's case was riddled with irregularities. A whistleblowing police officer testified during their trial that his superior had ordered his team to trap the reporters in a sting - testimony the judge chose to ignore.

The now-former officer Moe Yan Naing told AFP he was "delighted" the families were back together, and expressed interest in meeting the journalists if they wanted to. Media advocates, the UN, and rights organizations praised the release but slammed the original arrest and conviction. "We congratulate Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo on walking free from unjust imprisonment and applaud they have now been reunited with their families," said Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch deputy Asia director, adding they should have never been arrested in the first place.

Suu Kyi led her National League for Democracy party to victory in historic 2015 polls, ending decades of military-backed rule. But the dreams of a new day for Myanmar were short-lived - the army launched a campaign against the Rohingya in Rakhine state, which UN investigators have said amounted to genocide. Myanmar has denied the charges and said it was defending itself against Rohingya militants, who attacked and killed police officers in August 2017. — AFP

Sports

Snell's arm, Pham's bat power Tampa Bay past Diamondbacks

Buehler, Dodgers dump Braves, extend home streak

ST PETERSBURG: Blake Snell retired the first 17 batters. Tommy Pham hit a grand slam, and the Tampa Bay Rays cruised past the Arizona Diamondbacks 12-1 on Monday night in St Petersburg, Fla. Snell (3-3) was perfect through 5 2/3 innings before Ildemaro Vargas hit a sharp single between third base and shortstop. The left-hander hit the next batter, Tim Lincecum, before getting Ketel Marte to ground out to end the inning. Snell struck out nine and walked none in six innings, leaving with a 7-0 lead. The reigning American League Cy Young Award winner had lost his previous two starts, lasting a total of 6 1/3 innings, after coming off the 10-day injured list following his recovery from a broken toe in his right foot. Pham's slam in the second inning staked Snell to a 6-0 lead. Avisail Garcia went 3-for-4 and drove in the final runs with a two-run blast to center in the eighth off Diamondbacks catcher John Ryan Murphy, making his second appearance of the season on the mound.

CARDINALS 6, PHILLIES 0

Yadier Molina went 3-for-4 with a two-run homer, and Miles Mikolas pitched seven shutout innings as host St. Louis halted a four-game skid in blanking Philadelphia. Matt Carpenter and Paul DeJong also slugged homers for St. Louis, which improved to 13-4 at home. Mikolas (4-2) faced just one hitter over the minimum while winning for the third time in his past four starts. He gave up three hits, struck out five and walked none. Philadelphia had just one at-bat all night with a runner in scoring position. Phillies right-hander Vince Velasquez (1-2) served up all three homers and allowed five runs and four hits in four-plus innings. Phillies slugger Bryce Harper went 0-for-4 with two strikeouts to drop his average to .226.

DODGERS 5, BRAVES 3

Walker Buehler matched a season high with eight strikeouts, and Chris Taylor had a pair of RBI hits as Los Angeles beat Atlanta for its eighth consecutive victory at Dodger Stadium. Justin Turner added two hits and Corey Seager scored two runs as the Dodgers improved to 13-4 in their own park, where they have not lost since dropping a 5-0 decision to the Milwaukee Brewers on April 13. Freddie Freeman and Nick Markakis hit home runs for the Braves, who were coming off a three-game sweep at Miami over the weekend.

BREWERS 5, NATIONALS 3

Ben Gamel had three hits and scored twice, and Orlando Arcia added three hits and a run as host Milwaukee beat sleep-deprived and defensive-challenged Washington. The Nationals sat on the airport tarmac for nearly eight hours in Philadelphia after their game Sunday against the Phillies. The team returned to its hotel for a few hours, left Philadelphia about 10 a.m. ET and arrived in Wisconsin about sev-

en hours before the first pitch. Then in the game, the Nationals lost catcher Yan Gomes and left fielder Andrew Stevenson to injuries. On top of that, Washington had just five hits and committed four errors in losing its ninth in 12 games.

ASTROS 6, ROYALS 4

Robinson Chirinos' two-run homer in the sixth inning allowed Houston to retake the lead, and the Astros held on to beat visiting Kansas City in the opener of the three-game series. Carlos Correa had three hits, including a solo home run, and George Springer doubled, homered and drove in two runs for the Astros, who have won three in a row. Houston right-hander Gerrit Cole (3-4), who leads the majors with 74 strikeouts, fanned nine and didn't walk a batter. Hunter Dozier and Adalberto Mondesi hit two-run homers, and Alex Gordon and Dozier each had two hits for the Royals, who have lost four of five. Kansas City right-hander Jakob Junis (3-3) went 5 1/3 innings, allowing five runs and nine hits.

YANKEES 7, MARINERS 3

Luke Voit hit one of three home runs off Felix Hernandez as New York opened a four-game series against Seattle. Brett Gardner went deep and rookie shortstop Thairo Estrada hit his first career homer to help the Yankees improve to 14-5 in their past 19 contests. Seattle, which got home runs from Domingo Santana and Dee Gordon, fell to 6-16 in its past 22 games after opening the season with a 13-2 record. The Mariners lead the majors with 70 homers.

ORIOLES 4, RED SOX 1

Jonathan Villar hit a grand slam, and John Means threw seven solid innings as Baltimore defeated visiting Boston in the opener of a three-game series. The slam was the second of Villar's career and Baltimore's first this season. Means (4-3) gave up one run on three hits in his seven innings. Boston's Josh A. Smith (0-1) went 3 1/3 innings in his first major league start since 2016, and he gave up four runs on five hits. It was just his second game in the majors since 2017.

TWINS 8, BLUE JAYS 0

Jason Castro, Eddie Rosario and Jorge Polanco hit home runs, Martin Perez recorded a career-best nine strikeouts, and Minnesota won at Toronto. Perez (5-0) held the Blue Jays to two hits and two walks in seven innings. Castro had two hits and three RBIs, while Polanco and Nelson Cruz each had three hits in the opener of a three-game series. Castro left the game in the ninth inning due to a bruised right elbow after being hit by a pitch in the eighth. Toronto's Marcus Stroman (1-5) lasted 4 2/3 innings, allowing eight hits, two walks and six runs (five earned) while striking out two. Blue Jays manager Charlie Montoyo was ejected for the first time as



ST PETERSBURG: Nick Ahmed #13 of the Arizona Diamondbacks turns a double play as Tommy Pham #29 of the Tampa Bay Rays slides into second during a game at Tropicana Field in St Petersburg, Florida. —AFP

manager in the bottom of the fifth after Brandon Drury was called out on strikes.

WHITE SOX 9, INDIANS 1

Ivan Nova pitched seven strong innings for his first win of the season, Yoan Moncada homered and drove in four runs, and visiting Chicago beat Cleveland. James McCann added a solo homer for the White Sox, and Leury Garcia had three hits. Nova (1-3) allowed a run on eight hits and a walk. He struck out five. Indians starter Trevor Bauer (4-2), who expressed concern about his walk totals after surrendering 10 in his past two starts combined, issued only one in five innings and hit a batter. However, he gave up a season-high eight runs (seven earned) and a season-high-tying 10 hits.

MARLINS 6, CUBS 5

Rosell Herrera, Miguel Rojas and Martin Prado drove in runs in the top of the ninth inning, and Miami rallied for over host Chicago. Jon Berti homered and Brian Anderson and Starlin Castro knocked in one run apiece for Miami, which snapped a three-game losing streak and won for only the second time in its past nine contests. Anthony Rizzo hit a two-run home run and Kris Bryant clubbed a solo home run to lead Chicago. The defeat snapped a seven-game winning streak for the Cubs, who entered the game with 16 wins in their past 20 contests.

PADRES 4, METS 0

Hunter Renfroe homered leading off the fifth inning night to break up a scoreless duel between San Diego rookie Chris Paddock and New York ace Jacob deGrom, and the host Padres earned a win. Paddock (3-1) went a career-long 7 2/3 innings while throwing a career-high 91 pitches. He gave up four hits and a walk with a career-high 11 strikeouts while lowering his ERA to 1.55. DeGrom (2-4) surrendered two runs on four hits over seven innings. Renfroe, who Sunday afternoon hit the first pinch-hit, walk-off grand slam in Padres history to beat the Dodgers, finished with a homer and a double Monday. Eric Hosmer added a two-run double.

REDS 12, GIANTS 4

Nick Senzel led off the first and second innings with home runs, and Jose Iglesias equaled his career-high with four RBIs, helping host Cincinnati salvage a split of its four-game series against San Francisco. Eugenio Suarez also homered for the Reds, who blasted 15 home runs in the four games and led all four by at least four runs despite only recording two wins. The two-homer day Senzel gave the rookie three home runs in just four big-league games. The Giants, who rallied from 8-0 and 4-0 deficits for wins earlier in the series, got within 7-4 in the sixth on a three-run home run by Pablo Sandoval, his third of the season. Brandon Belt scored twice for San Francisco. —Reuters

Keep It Up with Fahad Al Musallam this Ramadan

KUWAIT: Red Bull Quad athlete, Fahad Al Musallam is no stranger to hard work. As the first Arab to be listed in the FIM Yearbook as Junior Baja World Champion, Fahad is one to persevere. With Ramadan here, he doesn't act out of character for his fitness regime.

Fahad's story began at the age of six when his father purchased him his very first ATV Dirt Bike. Since then his passion has flourished into a full-fledged career. An essential to maintaining his success is upkeeping a healthy and active lifestyle. While this may seem like a challenge to some during the month of Ramadan, Al Musallam recommends performing enjoyable exercises to keep yourself motivated.

Al Musallam's favorite workouts during Ramadan are cardiovascular based exercises. He either exercises before iftar or after, depending on what his schedule allows for the day. During fasting hours, he completes rounds on a jet ski standing up. Jet skiing, in fact, provides several benefits. From developing balance and coordination skills to engaging your core and burning calories, it is a great workout. Following iftar, he participates in group cycling. When you commit to exercising in a group, it pushes you to stick to the workout as well as provides a sense of unity to achieving your goals, he explains.



He recommends, "don't use fasting as an excuse". It is imperative to maintain your year-round results during Ramadan and not allow yourself to fall into a sedentary lifestyle. While it may be tempting, your results could diminish within a month.

In addition to maintaining an active lifestyle, Fahad is a strong believer of healthy food intake. "Don't fall into the trap of consuming fatty foods you crave in the night hours as it can negatively impact your fasting and your ability to workout". He continues to acclaim foods rich in electrolytes and fruits, vegetables, and yogurt that are high in water content and will help you stay hydrated during the fasting hours.

"Keep it up" is Fahad's final piece of advice. He continues that you should never give up, whether it is fitness related, competing related, or career related. To find more about Fahad Al Musallam, follow him on Instagram @fahad22



Kipchoge to skip Doha worlds because of tilt

NAIROBI: In-form marathon great Eliud Kipchoge will skip the world championships in Doha as he prepares for another tilt at breaking the event's mythical two-hour barrier. Geoffrey Kirui instead heads up the Kenyan men's quintet announced yesterday while two-time title holder Edna Kiplagat leads the women's quartet for the Doha worlds, scheduled for September 27-October 6.

However, newly-crowned London marathon women's winner Brigid Kosgei, the youngest-ever to win the coveted title, was among the top names not included in the nine-runner squad announced by Athletics Kenya. Kiplagat returns

for her fifth-consecutive world championships. She has form at the world championships, having led an historic Kenyan clean-sweep in the 2011 worlds in South Korea.

She returned two years later to defend her world title in Moscow, becoming the first woman ever to do so. But Kosgei is a surprise exclusion from the squad. The in-form 25-year-old last month became the youngest London marathon winner in history. Vivian Cheruiyot, a double 5000m and 10000m world champion, was also a surprise omission from the women's line-up.

Men's Olympic champion Kipchoge had asked to be excluded because the Doha meet clashes with a special race in which the Olympic champion will try and break the two-hour marathon barrier. Kipchoge went close to smashing the barrier when he came in 25 seconds off the mark in a staged race around Italy's Monza race circuit in 2017. He will make a second attempt in a special race to be held between late September and early October, likely in London. — AFP

Folau guilty of 'high level' breach of code of conduct

SYDNEY: Wallabies fullback Israel Folau moved a step closer to being sacked by Rugby Australia after he was adjudged yesterday to have committed a high-level breach of the player's code of conduct with a social media post. Folau, a fundamentalist Christian, faced a three-member panel over three days of hearings to decide whether he had breached the code of conduct with a post that said "hell" awaited "drunks, homosexuals, adulterers" and others. "The panel has today provided a judgement that Israel Folau committed a high-level breach of the Professional Players' Code of Conduct with his social media posts on April 10, 2019," Rugby Australia said in a news release.

"The panel will now take further written submissions from the parties to consider the matter of sanction." Folau has a right to appeal the judgment but a high-level breach of the code of conduct would be sufficient for RA and his Super Rugby side, the New South Wales Waratahs, to dismiss the 73-test back. Both bodies said they would do just that after Folau shared the post on Instagram last month, declaring that it had "disrespected" people on the basis of their sexuality. A

local media report at the weekend said Folau and his advisors had last week rejected an offer of A\$1 million (\$702,500) to walk away from the game.

Folau's trial has stretched far beyond the rugby pitch, triggering a wider debate in Australia about freedom of speech and the power of employers to control their employees away from the workplace. A high profile recruit to the sport in 2013, the former rugby league international and Australian Rules player last month became the top try scorer in the history of Super Rugby. His desire to share his religious faith on social media got him into trouble for the first time last year, when he posted a similar message about those he considered "sinners". Despite being hauled before RA and Waratahs' executives for "discussions" about the post, Folau escaped sanction and signed a new deal to take him through to the end of the 2022 season.

The 30-year-old now looks highly unlikely to play for the Waratahs or Australia again and the Wallabies will go to this year's World Cup in Japan without one of their few world class players. Wallabies coach Michael Cheika was among those who gave evidence at the hearing along with Folau, RA chief executive Raelene Castle and her Waratahs equivalent Andrew Hore. Local media reports said Cheika and Castle had offered testimony that Folau had given them personal assurances last year that he would not post such material on his social media accounts. The offending post, which has attracted 54,000 'likes' and 48,000 comments, remains on Folau's Instagram page. —Reuters

Sports

Irate IPL umpire reported for kicking door: Report

Umpires withdrawing a no-ball call is extremely rare

NEW DELHI: An Indian Premier League umpire has been reported to the national body for allegedly kicking a door after an altercation with Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli, a press report said yesterday.

Englishman Nigel Llong's on-pitch argument with Kohli, who is also Indian captain, was just the latest in a string of heated exchanges between players and umpires in this edition of the T20 extravaganza.

Llong, 50, who is due to umpire the IPL final on Sunday, called out Bangalore pacesman Umesh Yadav for a no-ball in a May 4 match against Sunrisers Hyderabad but replays suggested the bowler's back foot was behind the line.

Kohli and Yadav protested the call, made in the final over of the Hyderabad innings, but Llong stood with his decision. Umpires withdrawing a no-ball call is extremely rare. Llong, who is on the International Cricket Council's Elite Panel of umpires, then vented his anger by kicking the door of the umpires' room at Bangalore's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, according to the Times of India newspaper.

The newspaper said that Llong paid 5,500 rupees (\$72) in compensation for the damage but the state association has decided to report the incident to the sport's national body, the BCCI. "It was an unfortunate incident. As a state association we are duty bound to report it and we are writing to the CoA (Committee of Administrators)," a state official was quoted as saying.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India was not immediately available for comment. Llong was also part of a controversial decision during Bangalore's rain-off match against Rajasthan Royals when the bowlers were allowed to bowl only one over in the five-overs-a-side contest when a maximum of two is allowed.

The ugliest incident involving players and umpires this IPL involved Chennai Super Kings skipper and former Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni storming onto the pitch to confront Indian umpire Ulhas Gandhe over a no-ball decision.

Gandhe signalled a no-ball for height, only for his Australian square-leg colleague Bruce Oxenford to overrule. Dhoni, who had been bowled by Ben Stokes the previous delivery, ran out of the dugout to argue with the officials.

Dhoni, 37, due to lead Chennai against Mumbai Indians in the IPL's first effective semi-final - dubbed "El Clasico" of the IPL - was docked 50 percent of his match fee.

This IPL also witnessed controversy on only the third day when Ravichandran Ashwin's "Mankad" run-out of England batsman Jos Buttler triggered a world-wide debate on the spirit of cricket.

Ashwin, captain of Kings XI Punjab, stopped in his delivery stride to whip off the bails while Buttler, for Rajasthan Royals, was backing up at the non-striker's end. While within the rules of cricket it is generally seen as contravening the spirit. — AFP



COLOMBO: File photo taken on July 17, 2017, umpire Nigel Llong (C) speaks with Sri Lankan cricket captain Dinesh Chandimal (R) during the fourth day of a Test match between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe in Colombo. Indian Premier League umpire Nigel Llong has been reported to the national body for allegedly kicking a door after an altercation with Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli, a press report said yesterday. — AFP

Captaincy row past, Afghanistan eyeing semis: Chief selector

NEW DELHI: Afghanistan's leadership overhaul has not created any bad blood in the dressing room and the players are toiling to achieve the goal of reaching the semi-final at this year's World Cup, chief selector Dawlat Khan Ahmadzai said yesterday.

Ahmadzai and his selection panel colleagues effected a leadership revamp last month, naming different captains for different formats, which resulted in Gulbadin Naib replacing Asghar Afghan as their ODI skipper.

Senior players including spinner Rashid Khan, who has been named Afghanistan's Twenty20 captain, took to social media to criticise the overhaul while many others questioned its timing.

Ahmadzai said it was the right time to blood a new captain even though Asghar remains part of their World Cup squad. "At this point, Afghanistan cannot win the World Cup with Asghar or with Gulbadin (as the captain). But it's a great opportunity to promote a young captain... we have to go for the transition phase," he told a news conference in New Delhi.

He said dissenting senior players like Rashid and Mohammed Nabi have since been taken into confidence and it was now a united dressing room. "That was their personal opinion... we handled it very professionally and now they are happy," Ahmadzai said.

"Gulbadin has said he'll make use of Asghar's experience. There is nothing wrong with the team environment. Changes do happen, like Sri Lanka did with their captaincy. "The top management wanted a change in captaincy. There must have been reasons why we took such a decision - keeping the betterment of the team in mind rather than individuals. We are hopeful of good results."

Afghanistan made their World Cup debut in Australia four years ago, beating Scotland but crashing out from the opening round but have scripted a fairytale rise since then. They beat Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at the 2018 Asia Cup and played a thrilling tie with a depleted India and became the 12th test playing nation last year.

"In 2015, there was no Rashid or Mujeeb. So we are expecting a lot this year and looking for semi-finals in the World Cup," he said. "We have identified teams we can beat but obviously I can't tell you which teams."

Ahmadzai said fit-again pacesman Hamid Hassan's return to the squad would significantly improve their pace attack which would complement their world class spin attack spearheaded by Rashid.

"I don't accept that our batting is weak, but we need some order there," Ahmadzai said. "With Dawlat Zadran and Hamid Hassan, we have a good fast bowling attack." Afghanistan begin their World Cup campaign against holders Australia in Bristol on June 1. — Reuters

Gayle named WI vice captain for World Cup

LONDON: The West Indies cricket board has named opening batsman Chris Gayle as the deputy to skipper Jason Holder for the 50-over World Cup, which begins at the end of this month in England and Wales.

Former captain Gayle, 39, will be playing in his fifth World Cup and has amassed over 10,000 runs in 289 one-day internationals for the Caribbean side.

"As a senior player it is my responsibility to support the captain and everyone else in the team," Gayle said in a statement from Cricket West Indies.

"This will probably be the biggest World Cup, so there will be great expectations and I know we'll do very well for the people of the West Indies."

Wicketkeeper batsman Shai Hope, who has played 50 ODIs with five centuries to his name, was named the vice captain for the ongoing tri-series in Ireland, which also features Bangladesh.

West Indies, champions in 1975 and 1979, start their World Cup campaign on May 31 when they take on Pakistan in Nottingham. — Reuters

Marathon season as Australia host NZ, Pakistan, S Lanka

SYDNEY: Australia will play back-to-back pink-ball Tests against Pakistan and New Zealand in a marathon international cricket season spanning almost five months and wrapping up next March, the latest finish since the 1970s.

Brisbane's Gabba hosts the first of two Tests against Pakistan from November 21, followed by a day-nighter at Adelaide Oval, the schedule released yesterday showed.

Australia then face New Zealand at Perth Stadium for the second day-night match before the Boxing Day Test at Melbourne and finally Sydney. With only five Tests, Canberra and Hobart miss out.

The games will be the first on Australian soil that count towards the inaugural ICC Test Championship, where points are awarded to the nine countries taking part.

Ordinarily, one-day internationals are played at home in January, but Australia will instead be in India to fulfil an obligation under the Future Tours Program.

Cricket Australia wanted to find an alternative date for the series, but India reportedly refused to budge, meaning three one-dayers against New Zealand will instead start in March, extending the season to its latest finish in 41 years.

The last time the season ended so late was in 1979 when Australia hosted Pakistan for a Test in Perth.

"Scheduling international cricket is challenging in that nine of the 10 major cricketing countries have seasons

Hales still has England future despite WCup axe

LONDON: England head coach Trevor Bayliss says Alex Hales still has an international future despite being axed from the World Cup squad after he reportedly failed a second positive test for recreational drug use.

The Nottinghamshire player was named in England's preliminary 15-man squad for the tournament beginning later this month only to be withdrawn last week. England's one-day captain Eoin Morgan last week said Hales' actions "have shown complete disregard" for team values.

But Bayliss said the door was open for the hard-hitting 30-year-old batsman, who has played 70 one-day interna-



Chris Gayle

similar to ours," said Cricket Australia's head of operations Peter Roach.

"So working with them to find space in the calendar to fulfil our obligations to the ICC Future Tours Program is a juggling act."

"Cricket Australia took the position that while January was our preference for these ODI matches, there are times we need to honour our commitments to work in the greater context of international cricket scheduling."

The southern-hemisphere summer action opens on October 27 with the first of three Twenty20s against Sri Lanka before three more T20s against Pakistan.

Australia's women host Sri Lanka in a T20 and one-day series, before a tri-series against England and India ahead of the T20 World Cup on home territory in February.

Tests

November 21-25 - Pakistan at Brisbane
November 29-December 3 - Pakistan at Adelaide (day/night)

December 12-16 - New Zealand at Perth (day/night)
December 26-30 - New Zealand at Melbourne
January 3-7 - New Zealand at Sydney

One-day internationals

March 13 - New Zealand at Sydney
March 15 - New Zealand at Sydney
March 20 - New Zealand at Hobart

Twenty20 internationals

October 27 - Sri Lanka at Adelaide
October 30 - Sri Lanka at Brisbane
November 1 - Sri Lanka at Melbourne
November 3 - Pakistan at Sydney
November 5 - Pakistan at Canberra
November 8 - Pakistan at Perth. — AFP

tionals and 60 Twenty20 internationals. "Alex still has an international future," Bayliss told Sky Sports. "I have spoken to him and given him that message."

"It's certainly not the end of him. He's a very important player and there is no reason why he can't come back." He added: "I think we've come to the right decision. Being respected off the field as well as on it is very important."

And the Australian head coach said the England selectors would have to make a "very difficult decision" following the impressive form of newcomer Jofra Archer, who made his debut against Ireland last week.

Speaking about the Barbados-born all-rounder, Bayliss said: "He's fitted into the group extremely well. He's a fairly quiet sort of a guy. He looked very nervous in that first game in Ireland as anyone making their debuts usually are."

"I thought he bowled some good spells, or one or two spells in Ireland without too much luck and I thought he bowled pretty well in the T20 match a couple of days ago. "It's all looking good. It's going to be a very difficult decision for the selectors, whichever way we go." — AFP

Nortje ruled out of WCup

JOHANNESBURG: Fast bowler Anrich Nortje will miss the Cricket World Cup because of a broken right thumb, Cricket South Africa announced yesterday. Nortje will be replaced by fast bowling all-rounder Chris Morris, who has not played in a one-day international since February 2018.

Key fast bowler Kagiso Rabada is another concern for South Africa. Team manager and doctor Mohammed Moosajee said Rabada would need two or three weeks to recover from a back strain which cut short his participation in the Indian Premier League.

This could put Rabada in doubt for South Africa's first World Cup match, against hosts England at The Oval on May 30. South Africa play three games in the first week of the tournament, with matches against Afghanistan and India following the England clash.

There were injury concerns about all four of South Africa's originally-selected fast bowlers ahead of the tournament, with Rabada and Dale Steyn (shoulder) returning early from the IPL, while Nortje and Lungi Ngidi missed the Indian showpiece because of shoulder and side injuries respectively.

Moosajee said Rabada and Steyn were being assessed as they underwent rehabilitation. Ngidi, though, has been building up to full pace in the nets. The South African squad will assemble in Cape Town on Sunday.

Nortje suffered his latest injury while practising in the nets in his home town, Port Elizabeth, on Monday. "He immediately consulted a hand surgeon and underwent surgery to stabilise the joint and will unfortunately be sidelined for up to eight weeks," said Moosajee.

Selection convener Linda Zondi said Morris had always been in South Africa's plans despite only playing in Twenty20 games at international level in the past year. "Chris is our next best option with the ball," said Zondi. "He has the pace and death-bowling skills and also gives us depth as a deadly finisher with the bat. We have had concerns around his injuries and workload capabilities but this is an opportunity for him to make a mark on the biggest stage." — AFP

Sports

Captain Kompany hailed after breathtaking Man City winner

Win lifts treble-chasing City back to the top of EPL

MANCHESTER: Aymeric Laporte hailed the influence of Vincent Kompany after Manchester City's inspirational captain struck a stunning winner in the critical Premier League clash with Leicester.

The long-serving defender once again proved the man for the big occasion as he netted with a ferocious long-range strike 20 minutes from time to settle a tense encounter at the Etihad Stadium on Monday.

The 1-0 win lifted treble-chasing City back to the top of the Premier League, one point ahead of Liverpool, with just one game remaining in a gripping title race.

Kompany's decisive contribution ranked alongside his vital winner against rivals Manchester United during the 2012 title run-in for importance.

Fitness issues may mean the 33-year-old is no longer a regular starter but the influence of the three-time title-winning skipper shows no sign of waning even though he admits his future is uncertain.

"It is amazing, unbelievable," said fellow central defender Laporte. "I never see one goal like that—maybe because I wasn't on the pitch, I don't know—but we are so satisfied with this game."

"He is a guy (who is) very important for us, for the club. I think he gives us a lot of things. He is an example for us."

"We have to improve and keep working with him because he can give a lot and he is a very good guy on and off the pitch."

Kompany's sensational strike came as City piled on the pressure in the second half, knowing any-

thing less than a 13th successive league win would hand the initiative to Liverpool heading into the final fixtures.

They now know victory over Brighton on Sunday will see them become the first back-to-back title winners in a decade, regardless of how Liverpool fare against Wolves.

Laporte said: "We are focused on us. It is the most important. We have to win every single game and if we win the next game, we are the champions."

Kompany, whose contract is up in the summer, shed a few tears as he set out on the end-of-season lap of honour ahead of his teammates, but does not want to retire.

"I do not know at this point," Kompany told Sky Sports when asked about his future after the match.

Asked if he will retire, the Belgian said: "Absolutely not. I am going to play."

Guardiola's regard for Kompany's experience has been clear in recent weeks, with the veteran selected for each of the past three league games, against Manchester United, Burnley and Leicester, with their title hopes on the line.

But the City boss was equally non-committal on Kompany's future.

"At the end of the season we are going to talk to him," said Guardiola on whether Kompany will be handed a new deal.

"He is an incredible human being. He helped me a lot since I've been here. Always we can count on him for his personality." — AFP



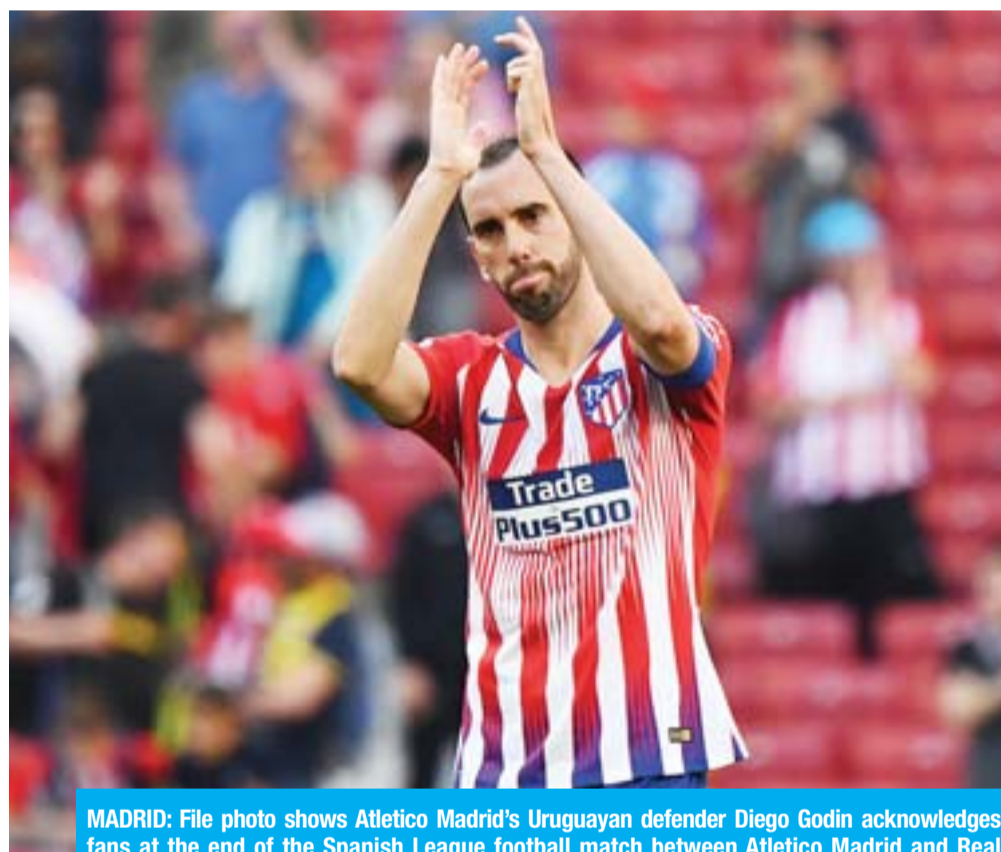
MANCHESTER: Leicester City's English defender Ben Chilwell (L) and Leicester City's English defender Harry Maguire (R) battle with Manchester City's Belgian defender Vincent Kompany (C) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Leicester City at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England. —AFP

Tearful Diego Godin confirms Atletico exit

MADRID: Atletico Madrid captain Diego Godin announced yesterday that he will leave the club at the end of the season. Godin has been one of the best central defenders in the world under Atletico coach Diego Simeone, who attended an emotional press conference at the Wanda Metropolitano, along with several players and president Enrique Cerezo. The 33-year-old would not confirm his next club but indicated regret at not being able to agree a new contract.

"I'm nervous, even more than for a match," said a tearful Godin. "These will be my final days at Atletico Madrid. I want to communicate all the love I have for this club, this shirt. I am Atletico, because this is not a club, it's a family and a way of life. It has been my home and it's very hard to say goodbye. I never imagined this moment would come and I am not prepared." Godin has made 381 appearances for Atletico and remains a key figure in the team, but the Uruguayan has rejected offers to extend his contract, which expires on June 30. He is unlikely to be the last high-profile player to leave Atletico this summer.

After a disappointing season, Lucas Hernandez has already agreed to join Bayern Munich, while uncertainty hangs over the futures of Filipe Luis, Juanfran, Thomas Partey, Saul Niguez and even Antoine Griezmann. "In short, I am captain of the team and have been here many years," said Godin. "We have not reached an agreement to continue so my time here is over. It has been the best of my career and my life." Godin added:



MADRID: File photo shows Atletico Madrid's Uruguayan defender Diego Godin acknowledges fans at the end of the Spanish League football match between Atletico Madrid and Real Valladolid at the Wanda Metropolitano stadium in Madrid on April 27, 2019. — AFP

"I would like to play here until I'm 40 but it's impossible. For me the priority has always been the club, the team, my teammates. "But we could not reach an agreement so I have decided to leave. There's nothing more to it than that."

Since joining Atletico from Villarreal in 2010, Godin has won La Liga, the Copa del Rey and the Europa League twice. He also reached the Champions League final in 2014

and 2016. Atletico lost both to Real Madrid. The timing of the announcement means Atletico's fans can bid Godin farewell at their last home game of the season, against Sevilla on Sunday. "As a kid I dreamed of playing football, playing for Uruguay, playing in Europe and being a big player," Godin said. "But I never thought I'd be at a stadium like this with the fans cheering my name. There is nothing better than that." — AFP

Europe's clubs, leagues set for Champions League revamp debate

MADRID: With radical changes proposed to the Champions League, creating the possibility of a competition largely reserved for Europe's elite, domestic leagues and at least 150 clubs will gather for talks yesterday in Madrid, ahead of a crucial meeting with UEFA 24 hours later.

European Leagues, the association of the continent's professional leagues, has invited some 900 clubs to the Spanish capital to discuss the future of European competitions and the threats posed by mooted reforms.

Today, UEFA's executive committee, chaired by president Aleksander Ceferin, will meet with Europe's football leagues to hold talks over the controversial revamp plans that could take effect from 2024.

Yesterday's assembly should provide an opportunity for representatives from lesser leagues and smaller clubs to find common ground in their fight to stop UEFA instituting sweeping changes. One of the topics of discussion in Madrid is titled "A de facto closed league for elite clubs", a feared outcome, according to reports, should the European Club Association, and its president Andrea Agnelli, succeed in overhauling the current Champions League format.

A new-look competition would reportedly feature four groups of eight teams in the pool phase, with the top six in each group qualifying for the following edition regardless of where they finish in their domestic competition.

The rumours triggered an outcry from smaller clubs, as well as from the organisers of domestic leagues fearing their competitions would be devalued, particularly if matches were to be scheduled at the weekend.

Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane, whose club has been crowned European champions a record 13 times, also criticised the project. "For those smaller clubs it's certainly much more difficult to be able to play in the Champions League," said Zidane.

Pochettino urges Spurs to make history

LONDON: Mauricio Pochettino has challenged Tottenham to seize their unexpected chance to make history as they try to overturn a 1-0 deficit against Ajax in the Champions League semi-final second leg yesterday.

Pochettino is convinced Tottenham can still reach the club's maiden Champions League final despite losing the first leg in north London last week.

Many pundits and fans claim Tottenham have blown their opportunity after Donny van de Beek's strike gave Ajax a priceless lead to defend in Amsterdam.

Tottenham go into their biggest game for decades on a low note after losing 1-0 at Bournemouth on Saturday, a defeat that stopped them wrapping up a place in next season's Champions League via a top-four finish in the Premier League.

It was a third successive loss in all competitions for Tottenham, who finished with nine men after red cards for Son Heung-min and Juan Foyth.

Fortunately for Tottenham, they are still all but certain to finish at least fourth after Arsenal and Manchester United were both held to draws on Sunday.

Tottenham are three points clear of fifth-placed Arsenal heading into their last league game of the season against Everton on Sunday and a draw will be enough to ensure their return to Europe's elite club competition.

But before that Tottenham, trying to reach their first European final since the 1984 UEFA Cup, have to focus on the challenge presented by Ajax's vibrant young side.

Having already eliminated Real Madrid and Juventus this season, Ajax

Ribery set for Bayern return after career

BERLIN: Franck Ribery said yesterday he will return to Bayern Munich once his playing career is over, as he prepares to end 12 years at the club at the end of this season. Ribery, 36, confirmed last weekend that he would not extend his current contract beyond 2019 at Bayern, ending a record-breaking career at the Bundesliga giants.

At an emotional press conference in Munich yesterday, the Frenchman said he would continue playing for another one or two years before returning to Bayern in another capacity after retirement.

"I still don't know what I will do next season, there are a few options," he said. "I will play for one or two more years and then I am 100% sure I will come back to Munich. We have already discussed a job in the club."

"We still have a lot of time, but the important thing is I am always at home here." Ribery said that it would be diffi-

cultured their vast potential against Tottenham in the first leg and should have been further ahead after Van de Beek's opener.

Tottenham improved slightly in the second half, but largely looked toothless without the suspended Son and injured top scorer Harry Kane.

Crucially, Pochettino will have Son back from his ban for the second leg and the South Korea forward should give his team a far more dynamic look.

'MASSIVE WEEK'

Pochettino remained upbeat despite the frustration of losing to Nathan Ake's last-minute goal at Bournemouth, and the Tottenham manager hopes his confident attitude transfers to his players against Ajax.

"We have ahead two 'finals' against Ajax and Everton and it's in our hands to be in a good position at the end of the season," Pochettino said.

Although Tottenham will know they have missed a golden opportunity to reach the final if they don't succeed in the second leg, Pochettino is adamant his players have done more than enough already to make him proud of their efforts this term.

Hamstrung by playing most of their home games at Wembley before finally moving to their new stadium and without a signing for the last two transfer windows due to the cost of that £1 billion arena, Pochettino's work this season deserves praise.

Pochettino isn't satisfied with merely competing with the big guns and has already called on Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy to give him the funds required to turn them from contenders to champions.

But, while the Argentine is yet to win a major trophy in his managerial career, he has steered Tottenham to the brink of major success with his deft handling of a tricky situation. "No-one believed we'd be in this position in the last week of the competition," Pochettino said. — AFP

cult for him to leave Bayern after 12 years of service. "It is not easy, I have experienced and won so much with Bayern. It was a fantastic time for me and my family, and I will never forget it," he said.

Ribery, who has won 22 titles with Bayern and could claim a record ninth Bundesliga title this season, is expected to be given a roaring send-off when Bayern face Eintracht Frankfurt at the Allianz Arena on the last day of the season.

"I am excited to see what the fans do. I always had an unbelievable relationship with them and they always stood by me, even in the most difficult times." Ribery, whose fellow Bayern stalwart Arjen Robben will also leave at the end of this season, said that the highlight of his Bayern career was winning the Champions League in 2013.

"There are so many memories and great games, but the Champions League Final at Wembley was the best. What we did there was crazy, a dream." He also ranked treble-winning boss Jupp Heynckes above Pep Guardiola as the most important coach of his Bayern career.

"There were lots of good coaches, but Jupp was a very important person for my life and my career," he said. — AFP

Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Ajax Amsterdam v Tottenham Hotspur 2:00

beIN SPORTS HD 1

25 Snell's arm, Pham's bat power
Tampa Bay past Diamondbacks

26 Irate IPL umpire reported
for kicking door: Report

27 Tearful Diego Godin
confirms Atletico exit



HOUSTON: Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors drives to the basket defended by Eric Gordon #10 of the Houston Rockets in the third quarter during Game Four of the Second Round of the 2019 NBA Western Conference Playoffs at Toyota Center in Houston, Texas. — AFP

Rockets level series against Warriors

Bucks push Celtics to brink with commanding 3-1 series lead

LOS ANGELES: James Harden scored 38 points and the Houston Rockets held off the Golden State Warriors 112-108 Monday to knot their NBA playoff series at two games apiece. The reigning champion Warriors head home for game five of the best-of-seven Western Conference clash today with a lot of work to do in a series in which each game has been decided by six or fewer points.

It was a different story on Monday in the East, as Milwaukee star Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 17 of his 39 points in the fourth quarter to propel the Bucks to a 113-101 victory over the Celtics in Boston and a commanding 3-1 series lead.

Milwaukee will try to punch their ticket to the Eastern Conference finals when they host game five today. In Houston, reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Harden made sure the Rockets didn't fall into a similar hole.

Harden scored 13 of his 18 first-half points in the second quarter and added another 13 in the third, when the Rockets stretched their lead to as many as 17.

The Warriors responded with an 11-0 scoring run in the third period, and put together a 7-0 run late in the fourth, when they pulled within 108-110 on a Stephen Curry three-pointer with 19.3 seconds left.

Down 111-108 with 11.5 seconds remaining, Golden State saw Kevin Durant and Curry miss three-point attempts. "Our motto was keep fighting," said Harden, who also pulled down 10 rebounds. "We know how tough they are. We've got to keep fighting on both ends of the floor, stay in attack mode, be aggressive."

Eric Gordon added 20 points for the Rockets and PJ Tucker added 17 and 10 rebounds. Durant paced the Warriors with 34 points. Curry added 30 points and Draymond Green posted a double-double of 15 points and 10 rebounds.

But in another bruising encounter between the two teams, Golden State made just eight of 33 three-point attempts. Curry and Klay Thompson combined to shoot just two-of-10 from three-point range.

The Rockets, meanwhile, hit 17 of 50 from beyond the

arc. "I think both teams are doing what they're doing and nothing's really happened yet," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "It's 2-2. Each team has won two home games—that's kind of how the playoffs go ... We've just got to be a little better."

CELTICS FACE ELIMINATION

The Celtics need to be a lot better to avoid elimination against the Bucks. "It's win or go home," said Celtics coach Brad Stevens. "It takes a lot of mental fortitude. It takes a lot of mental toughness. It reveals a lot. I'm looking forward to that challenge."

Once again in their series, the third quarter proved pivotal, with the Bucks outscoring the Celtics 33-23 to turn a 49-47 halftime deficit to an 80-72 lead. The turnaround came with Antetokounmpo on the bench with his fourth foul for the last eight minutes of the quarter.

During that span, the Bucks outscored the Celtics 21-13 and when Antetokounmpo returned in the fourth, the Bucks only pressed the action more. Milwaukee took

their biggest lead of the night 91-79 on a driving Eric Bledsoe's finger-roll finish with 9:05 left to play.

Boston closed within five on Al Horford's driving layup less than two minutes later, but they would get no closer. Antetokounmpo, coming off a 32-point game on Friday, connected on 15 of 22 shots from the field and pulled down 16 rebounds.

Bledsoe and Kris Middleton added 13 points apiece and George Hill added 15 points off the bench. "It's amazing," Antetokounmpo said. "I think the whole group, the whole team played hard. Everybody was ready, everybody stepped up."

"This is what (separates) an average team from a great team," he added. "that if you have the opportunity to be up two games, we're all ready." Kyrie Irving led the Celtics with 23 points and 10 assists, but made just seven of 22 shots from the field.

Overall, the Celtics made just 37.8 percent of their shots and heard boos from the home field as they left the court. — AFP

Trump awards Presidential Medal of Freedom to Tiger Woods

WASHINGTON: Tiger Woods, fresh off his epic comeback victory in the Masters, was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Donald Trump at the White House on Monday. Presenting the golfing great with the nation's highest honor, Trump praised Woods' "relentless will to win, win, win."

"These qualities embody the American spirit of pushing boundaries, defying limits and always striving for greatness," the president said. Trump congratulated Woods on "your amazing comeback and your amazing life and for giving sports fans a lifetime of memories."

"We can't wait to see what's next, Tiger," said Trump, an avid golfer and owner of

several golf courses around the world. Woods, 43, choked up as he thanked his mother, his two children, his girlfriend and his caddy during the ceremony in the White House Rose Garden.

"You have seen the good and the bad, the highs and the lows," said Woods, who battled back from injury to win the Masters last month, his first major title since the 2008 US Open. "My dad is no longer here, but my mom is here," Woods said. "I love you, Mom."

"I have tried to hang in there and I have tried to come back and play the great game of golf again," Woods said. "I have been lucky enough to have had the opportunity to do it again." He said his Masters victory was "probably the highlight of what I have accomplished so far in my life on the golf course." "To have had that type of experience and to be able to come out on top and win," he said. Established by John F. Kennedy in 1963, the Presidential Medal of Freedom is bestowed upon those who have made an "especially meritorious" contribution to US security or national interests, world peace, cultural pursuits or other non-specified endeavors.

It has been awarded to nearly three dozen sports figures including golf legends Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer, honored by president George W. Bush. President Barack Obama gave the medal in 2014 to Charlie Sifford, the first African American golfer to play on the PGA Tour.

During his speech, Woods praised Sifford who he said was "like the grandpa I never had." "I ended up becoming so close with him that I ended up naming my son Charlie after him," he said. "So to have been chosen as the next golfer after Charlie is truly remarkable."

Woods' Masters was his 15th major title, leaving him just three short of the record held by Nicklaus. Woods, a black superstar in a white-dominated sport, has steered clear of commenting on politics during his career.

He has golfed with Democratic presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama and with Republican presidents George H.W. Bush and Trump. He has hit the links with Trump on several occasions, most recently in February at the president's course in Jupiter, Florida.

Woods was asked last year about his rela-



WASHINGTON: Professional golfer Tiger Woods (C) stands with his girlfriend Erica Herman (L), Kultida Woods (2L), Sam Alexis Woods (3L), Charlie Axel Woods (C-bottom), US President Donald Trump (2R), and US first lady Melania Trump (R) after a Presidential Medal of Freedom ceremony in the Rose Garden of the White House, in Washington. — AFP

tionship with Trump, who has been engaged in an ongoing feud with a number of African-American basketball and football stars. "Well,

I've known Donald for a number of years," Woods said. "We've played golf together. We've had dinner together. — AFP