



6 Woman in blasphemy row leaves Pakistan



22 Jerusalem's dilemma: Hordes of stray cats



28 Raptors crush Sixers; Nuggets rout Blazers



Ramadan KAREEM

IMSAK	03:22
Fajr	03:32
Dhur	11:44
Asr	15:20
Magrib	18:29
Isha	19:54

Kuwait Information Minister survives no-confidence vote

Amir congratulates Info Minister on renewed confidence

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri yesterday comfortably survived a no-confidence motion filed against him following a marathon grilling last week based on alleged financial and administrative violations. Thirty-four MPs voted against the motion and in support of Jabri, while only 12 lawmakers voted to back the motion and two MPs abstained.

Only elected MPs who are not Cabinet ministers are allowed to vote on no-confidence motions. The voting was taken in a special brief session as per the Kuwaiti constitution which states that voting on no-confidence motions must be carried out eight days after its submission. The minister thanked the government and the National Assembly for renewing confidence in him and vowed to forge ahead with reforms.

During the grilling, the minister had categorically denied the allegations. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani however warned he would file more grillings against the minister if the session was turned into sectarian discussion. Adasani said that the minister has failed to respond to most of the accusations and insisted that financial violations and illegal appointments had increased under the minister especially in the agricultural and sports authorities. MP Saadoun Hammad strongly defended the minister saying that most



KUWAIT: Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri (center) chats with other lawmakers after he survived a no-confidence motion filed against him following a marathon grilling last week. — KUNA

of the alleged violations were committed before Jabri was appointed in the post and that he had taken steps to reform the situation. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh

Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of congratulation to Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Al-Sabah family received Tuesday senior foreign ministry officials, top officers of the army, police, national guard and fire department, as well as diplomats on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. (See Page 4)

Ramadan Kareem

Slice of Ramadan dipped in the bowl of mercy

By Mariam-Joyce DSouza

By way of introduction, the 30 days of this beautiful, glorious and bountiful month called 'Ramadan' are divided into three parts - each comprising of 10 days. The first 10 days are the days of Mercy; the middle 10 days are the days of forgiveness; and the last 10 days are the days of salvation. This article refers to the first 10 days of mercy.

My dear readers, it's the most wonderful time of the year and a great opportunity to make and establish resolutions. This is a special month because it symbolizes the spirit of worship, sacrifice and most challenging of all - God consciousness. All leading to becoming merciful ourselves thus resulting in receiving God's blessings of mercy.

Hence, I take this opportunity to urge you to seek opportunities to be merciful. Show leniency, clemency & compassion. Be graceful, tender-hearted, generous and kind. Practice pity, charity and forgiveness. Exercise humanity, humaneness, forbearance, soft-heartedness & tolerance. Maintain mildness of character, sympathy, empathy and benevolence. So in these ten days (and hopefully always), attach your name to at least one of these traits.

This is a special quote for those readers who house the volumes of hadiths on their bookshelf: Allah created mercy in one hundred parts and sent down to earth only one part. Because of this one part, there is mutual love amongst creation, so much so that an animal will lift up its hoof from its young one, fearing that it might harm it. Allah has reserved the remaining ninety-nine parts of this mercy to favor His believing servants on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as recorded in Bukhari and Muslim, Book #037, Hadith #6631

I would like to share this little story I recently read. And so as most stories begin, once upon a time, in a small rural village, there lived a young orphan boy with his paternal relatives. Due to the scarcity of water in the village, the young boy awoke early every morning, carried his pot and headed for the stream with the aim of fetching water for the family.

Sadly for him, he alone had this task as a routine every morning and evening while his cousins were given other lenient tasks. Yet, the young boy bore no grudge against his family.

Continued on Page 24

Tehran rolls back nuclear pledges

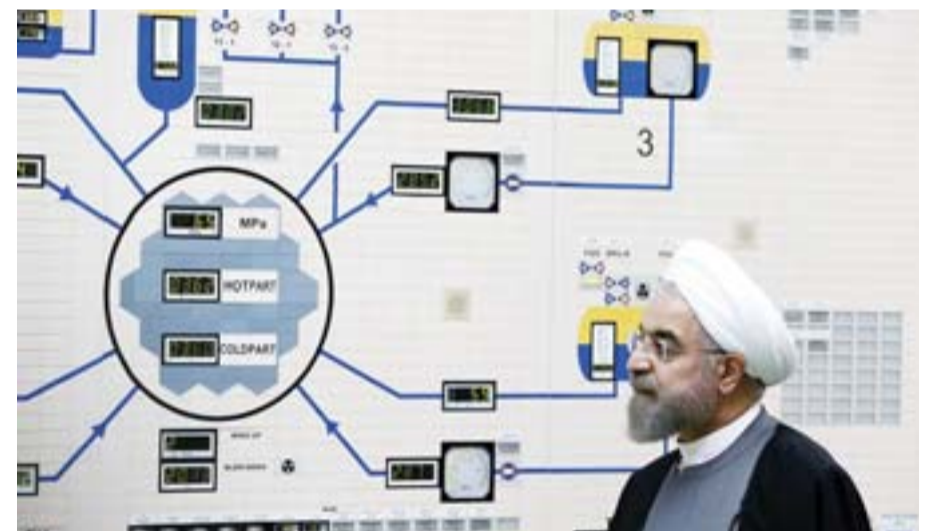
LONDON: Iran announced yesterday it was scaling back curbs to its nuclear program, announcing steps that stop short of violating its 2015 deal with world powers for now, but threatening more action if countries did not shield it from US sanctions. A year to the day after Washington pulled out of the nuclear deal, President Hassan Rouhani announced changes that experts said appeared calibrated to ensure Iran avoids triggering the deal's mechanism to punish it for violations, at least for now. "For now, nothing changes, but this

could be a ticking time bomb," a European diplomat said.

The main new measure that takes effect now would have limited practical impact: a halt to sales of enriched uranium and heavy water to other countries. The deal allows such sales to Iran can keep reducing its stockpiles below maximum thresholds, but Washington already effectively barred the sales with a sanctions move last week. For now, Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium is still well below the deal's cap and heavy water is less sensitive.

Rouhani also threatened that in 60 days Iran would resume enrichment of uranium beyond the low purity - suitable for civilian nuclear power generation - allowed under the deal, unless the five other powers signed up to it found a way to protect Iran's oil and banking

Continued on Page 24



BUSHEHR: In this file photo, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visits the control room of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in the Gulf port city of Bushehr. — AFP

World gets first glimpse of UK's royal baby

LONDON: Britain's Prince Harry and wife Meghan gave the world the first glimpse of their "dream" newborn boy yesterday - but kept people guessing on what his name will be. Harry, 34, and 37-year-old Meghan emerged in front of the cameras inside Windsor Castle to show off their son born on Monday, ahead of introducing him to great-grandmother Queen Elizabeth II.

"He's just been a dream," said a smiling Meghan, in her first public comments since giving birth to the seven-pound, three-ounce baby, who stayed firmly asleep during his public unveiling. "He has the sweetest temperament. He's really calm," added

the Duchess of Sussex, as Prince Harry cradled the newborn, wrapped in a white blanket, by her side.

Royal watchers have been desperate for a glimpse of the new baby, who is seventh in the line to the British throne, ever since the couple announced his birth to their 6.5 million followers on Instagram with the message "It's a BOY!" But they disappointed those keen to know what they will call him, with neither new parent mentioning a name yesterday.

Instead, Harry focused his comments on life as a proud dad. "Parenting is amazing," he said, the day after brother Prince William - two years his senior and with three children of his own - had jokingly welcomed him to the "sleep deprivation society that is parenting." "We're just so thrilled to have our own little bundle of joy," Meghan added. "It's been a special couple of days."

Continued on Page 24



WINDSOR: Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex and his wife Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, pose for a photo with their newborn baby son in St George's Hall at Windsor Castle yesterday. — AFP

US: Iran planning imminent attack

BAGHDAD: Iraq has promised to guarantee the safety of US interests from Iran. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said as he paid a surprise trip to Baghdad where he accused Tehran of planning "imminent" attacks. The top US diplomat's unannounced visit marked an effort to stand up Washington's ties with Baghdad as it pushes ahead with its "maximum pressure" against Tehran - a US arch-rival, but an ally of Iraq. Pompeo abruptly cancelled talks in Germany and made a lengthy detour from a European tour to spend four hours in Iraq, where he met both President Barham

Saleh and Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi. "We talked to them about the importance of Iraq ensuring that it's able to adequately protect Americans in their country," Pompeo told reporters after the meetings. "They both provided assurances that they understood that was their responsibility," he said.

Pompeo said he made the trip because Iranian forces are "escalating their activity" and said the threat of attacks were "very specific." "These were attacks that were imminent," Pompeo said. He declined to go into further detail on the alleged plot, which has been met with skepticism in numerous quarters, with leading Democratic lawmakers fearing that President Donald Trump's administration is seeking to spark a war with Iran.

In the latest US move, the Pentagon said it was send-

ing several massive, nuclear-capable B-52s to the region. The deployment was in response to "recent and clear indications that Iranian and Iranian proxy forces were making preparations to possibly attack US forces," the Pentagon said. On Sunday, Washington announced it was dispatching an aircraft carrier strike group to the Middle East as national security advisor John Bolton warned Iran that Washington would respond with "unrelenting force" to any attack by Tehran, including by its regional allies.

Iraq's majority Shiite population enjoys religious kinship with Iran, which played a significant role in helping Baghdad to fight the Islamic State extremist movement. President Hassan Rouhani paid an official visit to Iraq in March, where he denounced pressure

Continued on Page 24

Local

Kuwait's Amir, Crown Prince receive top state officials

Amir sends condolences to Pakistani President over blast victims



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



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

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to the President of Pakistan Arif-ur-Rehman Alvi over victims of the suicide blast that targeted a police van in Lahore city eastern Punjab province earlier yesterday. In the cable, His Highness the Amir affirmed Kuwait's strong condemnation of such a criminal act that targeted innocent lives and goes against all humane values, His Highness prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the victims and speedy recovery to all the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to president of Pakistan. — KUNA



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



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

Ahli United Bank sponsors AUM career fair 2019

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank has announced its sponsorship of the career fair recently organized by the American University of the Middle East (AUM). This participation comes as part of the bank's ongoing support for fresh graduates, encouraging them to communicate directly with employers and to facilitate their involvement in the labor market, especially in their first practical steps within their professional lives.

Through its pavilion at the Fair, AUB reviewed the job opportunities available at Ahli United Bank and explained its recruitment policy, in addition to introducing the students and Fair visitors to the excellent work environment provided by the bank, the types and conditions of the available jobs, as well as providing a detailed explanation on the nature of the work of various departments and disciplines.

Commenting on the bank's participation in the Fair, Naqeeb Amin, Human Resources General Manager at AUB stressed on the AUB's keenness to meet students and introduce them to the types of the existing jobs and the bank's policy in recruitment and training. The bank is proud to be one



of the leading financial institutions in Kuwait, which attaches great importance to this area and adheres to implement the policies and plans of national human resources development.

Amin added that the bank's keenness on participating in Career Fairs is a continua-

tion of its community activities aimed at supporting the various categories of society, especially youth, believing in the need to play an effective role in opening the horizons of work for youth and helping them to develop and enhance their knowledge and practical experience.

Kuwait's Finance Minister meets IMG, WB chiefs



PARIS: Kuwait's Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf (second from left) participates in the Paris Forum. — KUNA

PARIS: Kuwait's Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf held talks in Paris Tuesday with International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Director General Christine Lagarde and World Bank Group's President David Malpass, on a host of economic issues of mutual interest. Speaking after the meetings, Hajraf said he and Lagarde discussed IMF's contributions to address economic conditions around the world. He said the meeting with Malpass touched upon Kuwait's program at the World Bank and how to develop it. The meetings took place on

sidelines of the Paris Forum.

Hajraf said meanwhile that the global economy was influenced by a series of challenges. He termed Kuwait's participation in the forum as important because participants were discussing sustainable development issues. The Paris Forum is organized by Paris Club, which consists of 22 countries. The forum brought more than 30 finance ministries and central banks' governors to discuss how to make global development sustainable and effective. — KUNA



Burgan Bank sponsors American United School's 'Carnivale de Arte'

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, one of the leading supporters of healthy learning experiences and initiatives, recently sponsored the American United School's 6th Annual Art's Night themed 'Carnivale de Arte'. The latest sponsorship reinforces the bank's belief in the tradition of fostering creative and individualistic expression to facilitate personal growth in the community. The Art Night, an annual activity that demonstrates Burgan Bank's commitment to kids' development through innovative platforms.

Burgan Bank supports impactful causes that instills positive values in future generations. Through such dedicated

events, the kids are empowered through self-discovery of their talents and skills. Such community initiatives advance children's imaginative power, emotional and mental wellbeing to nurture a healthy and promising culture.

The event was inspired by the vivid colors of the European Carnivale, which was reflected through the art of Pre-K - 12th Grade students in different areas of the campus. The showcase included a variety of galleries, a parade, music and band performances by students in addition to a variety of international food vendors. The original New York Imagination Playgrounds was on campus for students to build and create art using a variety of three dimensional shapes. The parents were able to engage as well through an interactive art station that involved students applying techniques learned during their art classes.

Burgan Bank's support of this initiative falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational,



cultural and health driven initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading

Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.

Local

Kuwait asserts states' right to use nuclear technology for peaceful means

Kuwait renews its support for UN Secretary-General's reform plans

NEW YORK: Kuwait reiterated the right of all countries who signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to develop, research, obtain, and use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. This came in a speech delivered by First Secretary at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations Mona Behbehani at the Third Preparatory Committee of NPT Review Conference, due in 2020. The review is on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and improving the effectiveness of the Treaty.

Behbehani added Kuwait maintains that such right must be fully consistent with the legal obligations of countries and agreements concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this regard, she praised IAEA's role, noting on the importance of the Agency's technical cooperation programs, which contribute to building national capacities of developing countries and guarantee the transfer of nuclear technology with peaceful uses to achieve their development goals.

Kuwait has long paid special attention to technical cooperation activities and has contributed to the Agency's activities, the renewal of its laboratories and its peaceful uses initiative, Behbehani said, stressing on the importance of providing resources for the continuity of technical cooperation programs. Behbehani noted that Kuwait has contributed \$10 million to the efforts made by the newly opened low-enriched uranium bank in Kazakhstan out of its belief in the inherent right of states to peaceful use of atomic energy and access to the resources that enable it.

Behbehani also stressed that no agreements should be used to restrict the right of States to the peaceful use of atomic energy. However, Behbehani underlined the importance of subjecting all nuclear facilities in the Middle East



NEW YORK: First Secretary at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the United Nations Mona Behbehani delivers a speech at the Third Preparatory Committee of NPT Review Conference. — KUNA photos



Kuwaiti deputy Charge d'affaires to the United Nations, Counselor Bader Al-Munikh, speaks during a Security Council session.

to the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system. The diplomat also stressed the need for Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to place all its nuclear facilities and installations under the Agency's comprehensive safeguards system in order to strengthen international efforts to make the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

'Action for Peace'

Separately, Kuwait renewed its support for the Secretary-General's reform of the Peace and Security pillar, including the 'Action for Peace' initiative and its support for the Declaration of Joint Commitments adopted by the Council members with a strong expression of will to develop and build the capacity of peacekeepers. This came in a speech delivered by Kuwaiti deputy Charge d'affaires to the United Nations, Counselor Bader Al-Munikh, at the Security Council session on capacity

building to improve the safety and performance of UN peacekeepers.

Munikh hailed Indonesia's convening, among several countries, of the first tripartite partnership meeting, which is an important and necessary step towards

enhancing consultation and coordination, stressing the priority of political solutions to peace operations, which requires qualified operations capable of supporting political tracks. "The majority of peacekeepers operate in a difficult environment and sometimes contribute to averting war crimes according to the mandate of each mission and are at the forefront of civilian protection in some areas of conflict as well as facilitating and protecting humanitarian convoys," he said.



Kuwait wins two memberships in UN's ECOSOC

He called for the involvement of troop-contributing countries as much as possible in the formulation of mandates that the forces of those countries will implement and defend to ensure greater coordination and consolidation of efforts. "Therefore, we

are required to formulate mandates that take into account the needs of host countries and their populations, the political processes to be supported, and the training, linguistic and logistical capabilities required of peacekeepers," he said.

Two memberships

In other news, Kuwait won two sub-committees membership on Tuesday, both under the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The state of Kuwait

was elected after a vote during a coordination and management meeting of the council, one for the statistical committee and the other seat on the executive board committee. Kuwait was elected to the Statistical committee for the period 2020-23, where it competed in the elections of the commission with the Republic of Korea and the Islamic Republic of Iran, both representing the Group of Asian and Pacific States.

The result of the vote resulted in Kuwait winning 41 votes and Korea 41 votes while Iran got 22 votes. The Statistical committee is the highest body in the world statistical system. Its members include senior statisticians from Member States from all over the world. The State of Kuwait was also won a seat at the Executive Board Committee of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as well as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) for the period 2020-22. — KUNA



KUWAIT: People jog as a pre-iftar exercise at a public park in Kuwait. — KUNA

Pre-iftar exercise opportunity to improve physical fitness

KUWAIT: With the start of the holy month of Ramadan, many people try to seize this opportunity to practice various types of sports before iftar to maintain their physical fitness and reduce their weight. The pre-iftar period is the best time for light exercise and taking advantage of the condition of the body at the time of fasting, which is in a state of readiness to burn more fat while devoting the post-iftar period to worship, performing prayer and exchanging family and social visits during this blessed month. The spacious, state-of-the-art, air-conditioned retail complexes are seen these days filled with people of both sexes and families wishing to take advantage of the pre-iftar period to improve their health.

Sports clubs and some places for walking in residential areas and on the beaches are also crowded with men, women and young people who walk to keep fit. A number of citizens expressed their keenness to exercise, especially walking before iftar, to

make the most of body fat burning during fasting. Saad Al-Khimaili said that he exercises twice a day in Ramadan: one before iftar and the other after breaking fast, in addition to practicing other types of heavy sports in the post-iftar period. He added walking more than an hour a day during the fasting period can cause unwanted side effects for some people. Meanwhile, Fahd Al-Fahd and Abdulrahman Al-Saleh said they would prefer fast walking during the pre-iftar period in one of the air-conditioned commercial complexes to avoid the hot weather outside and because of the period during which the fat burning rate increases in the body of the fasting person.

As for the doctors' opinion on the issue of exercise during the pre-iftar period, head of the Kuwaiti Obesity Association Dr Yousef Bouabas said that walking is one of the best sports in Ramadan, especially during the pre-iftar time for healthy people in general and type 2 diabetes patients. The practice of walking during the pre-iftar period is good for increased fat burning more than any other time, he added. At the same time, he warned against walking in broad daylight and be exposed to hot sun, which could cause complications and difficulties due to fatigue. He advised diabetics and patients with kidney problems or those who feel very tired to do their sport activities before iftar to exercise after iftar to avoid complications that may lead to health problems. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Firefighters battled a blaze reported at a house in Sabah Al-Salem on Tuesday. Firemen evacuated the building before fighting the flames which had started in the maid's room on the third floor. No injuries were reported. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun



EXPERIENCE THE GOODNESS OF RAMADAN
WITH NISSAN AFTERSALES OFFERS





FREE
13 Points Check-Up



30% Discount
on NISSAN Genuine Parts



15% Discount
on Labour

Offer applicable on nissan cars sold before may 2016
Offer valid from may 5th till june 3rd, 2019



1 804 888
Customer Care Center

شركة عبد المحسن عبد العزيز الباطين ذم
Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co. WLL





Kuwait's Amir, Crown Prince, Al-Sabah family receives Ramadan well-wishers



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets Chief of Kuwait National Guard His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah at the reception. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khedr.

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 Tuesday senior foreign ministry officials, top officers of army, police, national guard and fire department, as well as diplomats on occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. The reception reflected unity of the Kuwaiti people during these occasions. Meanwhile, the Amiri Diwan expressed gratitude yesterday to senior state officials and high-ranking officers in Kuwait Army, Police, National Guard, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate and diplomatic sector who congratulated 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 on the holy month of Ramadan. On this occasion, the Amiri Diwan also extended its congratulations to citizens and residents, wishing them well-being during the blessed month. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lieutenant General Essam Al-Nahham.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Kuwait National Guard Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hashem Al-Refale.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mikrad.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives greetings from Ambassador of the Vatican to Kuwait Rev Francisco Montecillo Padilla.



His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah receives greetings from Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad receives greetings from Oman's Ambassador to Kuwait Adnan bin Ahmad Al-Ansari.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah receives greetings from US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman.



Ooredoo introduces special program celebrating Ramadan



KUWAIT: In continuation of its yearly tradition of leading charitable and humanitarian initiatives, Ooredoo Kuwait announced its readiness to launch its rich program of activities throughout the holy month of Ramadan. The program also witnesses the launch of the 5th edition of the award-winning Ooredoo Volunteers Program, which witnessed the participation of hundreds of youth since its inception. Ooredoo has invested heavily in the award-winning annual volunteer program OVP Ooredoo Volunteers Program for youth, a program that continues to attract hundreds of participants, preparing them with the right set of skills and tools before matching them with volunteering opportunities. The program was established in 2015 and grows every year and has reached more than 350 volunteers today who are taking interest and participating in every CSR related activity at Ooredoo.

Ooredoo launched its activities with distributing iftar meals to hundreds of people from its iftar tent, with its prime location on Soor Street opposite its head office. The iftar tent drive is fully operated by Ooredoo's volunteer program members, after the great success of the program in the last years. The upper management at Ooredoo regularly participate in the activities, in addition to staff from the company's different departments and divisions.

Other activities that will take place will also include Ooredoo's collaboration with Re:Food, which is a non-profit Kuwaiti youth initiative which focuses on distributing food to those who are in need, as well as raising awareness towards food waste and the importance of volunteer work in the community. It is a pure social responsibility and humanitarian mission. A women's football tournament will also take place, which comes in tandem with Ooredoo's strategy in empowering women, as well as encouraging them to follow a healthy lifestyle and practice their favorite sports in a positive environment. The Steps charity initiative will be held in Al-Hamra Mall during the holy month, where the initiative aims to encourage fasters to stay active while contributing in charitable action for every lap made inside the mall.

Investing Internally

Welcoming the holy month of Ramadan, Ooredoo held a special celebration marking 'Graish', the traditional Kuwaiti tradi-

tion of feasting before the month of Ramadan. The annual tradition allows Ooredoo to welcome the holy month with its employees and to revive the old Kuwaiti customs and heritage. All employees gather on this occasion to have one last meal before Ramadan together, greet each other and exchange best wishes in a festive atmosphere. Adding a fun competitive flair, a judging panel of the upper management will attend the event and announce a winner from the company's different departments.

Annual Ghabga

Embodying the core value of connecting, Ooredoo will hold its annual ghabga during the holy month of Ramadan, fostering the one-family spirit and enjoying traditional festivities in a friendly set-up between the upper management and staff across the entire company. The event aims to provide an opportunity to interact and celebrate the Ramadan spirit, away from the bustle of office life.

In addition to this, Ooredoo's volunteers and staff will lead a number of charity drives and Ramadan celebrations in collaboration with different entities such as the Ministry of State for Social Affairs' orphanage and the elderly care center. Ooredoo will also mark the children's beloved girgira tradition with celebrations in children's hospital wards and centers for children with disabilities and special needs. Ooredoo will also be joining Al-Najat Charity in 360 Mall for an initiative that helps in providing and supporting families in need.

Commenting on this, Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub lauded the volunteers for their commitment to the spirit of giving throughout the Holy Month, noting that this is an important value that the company aims to instill in youth throughout its volunteer program. "We are proud to be a supporter for youth who aspire to volunteer their time serving others. This campaign is aligned with our core values of caring, connecting, and challenging, and the ongoing interest of youth in our program is what keeps us going," he said.

The company also announced that it will release tailor-made plans and offers that better suit consumption trends during the holy month, to continue its pledge towards enriching the lives and experience of its customers.



Jumeirah
MESSILAH BEACH
HOTEL & SPA
KUWAIT

Indulge in our various activities this holy month. From iftar to Ghabka, experience Layali Al Messilah and Badriah ballroom with live oriental music for entertainment. Designed in exquisite perfection for families, friends and corporate. Cherish these illuminating moments with us.

DIAMOND SPONSOR

لينيكون الغانم

MEDIA PARTNERS

الاراي | اللقبس | الجريدة | المناسبات

+965 22269666 | jumeirah.com
@jumeirahmessilahbeach | /JumeirahMessilahBeach | @JumeirahMB





Bolsonaro eases rules for gun enthusiasts

Bittersweet revival of Rohingya culture in exile in Bangladesh



LAHORE: In this file photo taken on Feb 1, 2019 Pakistani Islamists hold a poster displaying an image of Asia Bibi, a Christian Pakistani woman accused of blasphemy, with a noose and a knife, during a protest against the Supreme Court decision on Bibi's case. — AFP

Woman in blasphemy row leaves Pakistan

Asia Bibi 'safely reunited' with family, likely in Canada

ISLAMABAD: Asia Bibi, the Christian woman at the center of a decade-long blasphemy row, is "free" and has been reunited with her family, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said yesterday, months after her death sentence was overturned. Pompeo issued a statement after a government source in Pakistan told AFP earlier yesterday that Bibi had left the country "of her own free will" - the latest chapter in a saga that has sparked violent demonstrations and high-profile assassinations while spotlighting religious extremism.

"The United States welcomes the news that Asia Bibi has safely reunited with her family," Pompeo said in a statement. "Asia Bibi is now free, and we wish her and her family all the best following their reunification." It was not clear when Bibi may have left or where she may have gone, though British Prime Minister Theresa May appeared to confirm that Canada was her destination while speaking on the floor of the House of Commons yesterday. "Canada made this offer and we thought it was right and appropriate that we sup-

ported the offer that Canada had made," May said. Canada's foreign ministry said it had no comment on the matter. The Pakistani government source spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity and did not confirm Bibi's destination, and there was no official announcement from Islamabad. Blasphemy carries a maximum death penalty under Pakistan's penal code. It is an incendiary issue in the Muslim-majority country, and mere allegations of insulting Islam have sparked lynchings and vigilante violence in the past.

Violent protests

"It is a great relief that this shameful ordeal has finally come to an end and Asia Bibi and her family are safe," said Omar Waraich, deputy South Asia director at Amnesty International. "She should never have been imprisoned in the first place, let alone endure the constant threats to her life. This case horrifyingly illustrates the dangers of Pakistan's blasphemy laws and the urgent need to repeal them." Bibi - a laborer from central Punjab province - was

first convicted of blasphemy in 2010 and was on death row until her acquittal last year. Her case swiftly became the most infamous in Pakistan, drawing worldwide attention to extremism in the country. She has technically been free to leave Pakistan since January when the Supreme Court dismissed a legal challenge to her acquittal in October. Since then, Bibi has been widely believed to have been held in protective custody by authorities as she awaited an asylum deal in a third country.

In November Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Ottawa was holding talks with Pakistan about bringing her to Canada, which he said is "a welcoming country". Bibi's lawyer Saif ul Mulook and multiple security sources in Pakistan also told AFP on condition of anonymity that Bibi had gone to Canada. Many blasphemy cases in Pakistan see Muslims accusing Muslims, but rights activists have warned that religious minorities - particularly Christians - are often caught in the crossfire, with such accusations used to settle personal scores.

Two politicians have been assassinated in connection with Bibi's case, and she spent much of her time in prison in solitary confinement because of fears she could be attacked by a guard or another prisoner. Islamist groups have regularly called for her to be executed, and activists have warned that she would not be safe in Pakistan. Following Bibi's acquittal in October the country was gripped for days by violent protests led by the hardline group Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP), which also called for mutiny in the armed forces and assassination of the country's top judges for acquitting her.

In the wake of the nationwide protests, TLP's leaders - who paralyzed the capital Islamabad for weeks in 2017 with an anti-blasphemy sit-in - were rounded up in a government crackdown months ago and remain in detention. Christians - who make up around two percent of the population - occupy one of the lowest rungs in class-obsessed Pakistani society, largely living in slums and working menial jobs as street sweepers, cleaners and cooks. —AFP

Motive unclear in deadly shooting at Denver school

HIGHLANDS RANCH, Colorado: Colorado police yesterday were still trying to determine why two students walked into their school and allegedly opened fire with handguns, killing one person and wounding eight others, just a few miles from one of the nation's deadliest school massacres. Two surviving victims of the Tuesday attack at the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) School in Highlands Ranch remained in serious condition, medical officials said. Another was stable and five had been discharged from the hospital. "We're still working toward the motive," Douglas County Sheriff Tony Spurlock said.

He declined to identify the person killed in the shooting, though he said the victim was an 18-year-old male three days away from graduation. He identified one of the two suspected shooters as Devon Erickson, also 18. The other suspect was a juvenile, Spurlock told a morning news conference, who was later identified as a female. The Denver ABC television affiliate reported on Tuesday the other suspect had wanted to transition to male from female. Spurlock declined to identify any of the victims.

Erickson was expected in Douglas County District Court in nearby Castle Rock at 1:30 p.m. MDT (1830 GMT). The second suspect will also appear in court on Wednesday, said District Attorney George Brauchler. The two suspects opened fire in two separate classrooms and were arrested within minutes at the public charter school about 40 km south of Denver, Spurlock said. A combination of factors, including revenge and anger, spurred the attack, the Denver TV ABC affiliate reported, citing law enforcement sources. One of the suspects had been bullied over gender identity, the station reported, citing police sources.

"A student's life was taken too soon by this act of violence," Colorado Governor Jared Polis told the news conference. "I share the heartbreak, the frustration, the



HIGHLANDS RANCH, Colorado: Students are reunited with their parents after being evacuated to the Recreation Center at Northridge during a shooting at STEM School Highlands Ranch on Tuesday. — AFP

sickness." Some of the worst mass shootings in the United States have occurred in Colorado. The attack occurred less than a month after the 20th anniversary of the Columbine High School massacre in nearby Littleton, about 8 km from the Highlands Ranch school. Also, a man opened fire at a movie theater in Aurora, another Denver suburb, in 2012, killing 12 people and wounding scores more.

What happened inside the STEM school remains unclear. Spurlock said there was a "struggle" as officers entered the building and some students said one victim was shot in the chest as he tried to tackle a shooter. A man who identified himself as Fernando Montoya said his 17-year-old son, a junior at STEM, was shot three times when a shooter walked into his classroom and opened fire. "He said a guy pulled a pistol out of a guitar case and started to shoot," Montoya told the Denver TV station.

The bloodshed shocked the affluent suburb of Highlands Ranch. Parents and students had considered the school a safe place for its 1,850 pupils ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade. The attack came a week after a gunman opened fire on the Charlotte campus of the University of North Carolina, killing two people and wounding four others. — Reuters

Suicide blast at Pakistani shrine kills at least 10

LAHORE: A suicide blast at one of Pakistan's oldest and most popular Sufi shrines killed at least 10 people and wounded 24 in the eastern city of Lahore yesterday, police said, in an attack claimed by the Pakistani Taliban. The blast - which a faction of the militant group claimed by email - occurred near the entrance gate for female visitors to the 11th-century Data Darbar shrine, one of the largest Sufi shrines in South Asia, as the country marks the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

Wreckage of vehicles littered the pavement near the shrine as first responders rushed to the scene and armed security forces fanned out in the area. "As we crossed the road a blast took place in front of us," witness Ritat Shahid told AFP. She described seeing pieces of flesh fall in front of her, and added that the blast "sounded so big that we felt like our ears will burst".

The emergency room at the Mayo Hospital in Lahore was crowded with the wounded, and people searching for loved ones, an AFP reporter saw. Among them was Azra Bibi, whose son Muhammad Shahid cares for visitors' shoes - which must be removed before entering. He has been missing since the blast, she said. "They are not Muslims," she told AFP, referring to the attackers. "They even targeted worshippers."

The shrine has long been home to colorful Sufi festivals and a prime destination for the country's myriad Muslim sects, making it a soft target for militant attacks. It has been targeted previously, in a 2010 suicide attack which killed more than 40 people. Since then the area has been increasingly hemmed in by heavy security, with visitors forced to pass through several layers of screening before they can enter the complex.

Sufi worshippers, who follow a mystical strain of Islam, have frequently been the target of bloody attacks in Pakistan by Islamist militants - including the Islamic State group - who consider their beliefs, and rituals at the graves of



LAHORE: Pakistani security officials examine the site of a bomb blast outside a Sufi shrine yesterday. —AFP

Muslim saints, as heresy. Senior police official Muhammad Ashfaq told a press conference that the security personnel at the shrine were targeted. Three police officials, two security guards and five civilians including a child were among the dead, Punjab province chief minister Usman Buzdar said.

Pakistan's push against extremism was stepped up after the country's deadliest-ever attack, an assault on a school in Peshawar in 2014 that left more than 150 people dead - mostly children. Since then, security has dramatically improved, but militants retain the ability to carry out major attacks. Major urban centers such as Lahore, Pakistan's second largest city and the provincial capital of its wealthiest province, Punjab, are not immune.

An attack in the city in March last year left nine people dead, while a major blast targeting Christians celebrating Easter in a park in 2016 killed more than 70 people. Critics have long argued the military and government crackdown has not addressed the root causes of extremism in Pakistan, where hardline Muslim groups often target religious minorities. The Data Darbar complex contains the shrine of Saint Syed Ali bin Osman Al-Hajveri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh. Originally from Afghanistan, he was one of the most popular Sufi preachers on the subcontinent. Tens of thousands of pilgrims visit the shrine each spring to mark his death anniversary, while it is also crowded weekly with worshippers listening to qawwali, a traditional form of Islamic devotional music. — AFP

International

Sudan protesters threaten civil disobedience after army delays

Alliance concerned military dragging the process out

KHARTOUM: Sudanese protest leaders yesterday threatened to launch a nationwide campaign of civil disobedience after accusing the country's military rulers of delaying the transfer of power to a civilian administration. Thousands of people remain camped outside the military headquarters in Khartoum nearly four weeks after the armed forces toppled autocratic president Omar Al-Bashir as demanded by a months-long protest movement. The two sides are grappling over whether an overall ruling council that would replace the existing army council - made up solely of generals - should have a civilian or military majority.

Last week the Alliance for Freedom and Change protest group handed over its proposals for a civilian structure, including executive and legislative bodies, that it eventually wants to rule Sudan after replacing the generals. The 10-member military council late on Tuesday said it agreed to the overall proposals, but had "many reservations". The protest leaders said yesterday that the military council was delaying the entire transfer of power.

"The military council's response to the proposals of the Alliance for Freedom and Change was disappointing and risked putting the country in jeopardy," protest leader Khalid Omar Yousef told reporters. Responding to a journalist's question on what steps demonstrators would take after the

army expressed reservations, Yousef threatened "escalatory measures". "The measures of escalation for us are defined - they are continuing with the sit-in, and we are now preparing for a civil disobedience" campaign across the country, he said.

The alliance also expressed concerns about the military dragging the process out. "The military council's response... is moving in the direction of extending the negotiations and not in the direction of a transition" of power, it said in a statement.

'Kidnap the revolution'

On Tuesday the military council said the alliance had remained silent in its proposals on ensuring that Islamic sharia remains the bedrock of Sudanese legislation. The protest leaders said the generals "raised irrelevant issues including the language and sources of legislation in a tedious repetition of the biddings of the former regime". "We call on the military council to reach an agreement to transfer power," they said in the statement.

The Alliance for Freedom and Change is made up of several political groups, leaders and activists, many of them of the view of building a new secular Sudan. Sudanese media and websites have often reported that for the protest leaders the issue of legislation and Islamic law is something that can be discussed later, but they first want a civilian body

established in order to govern the country. The protest movement said the military council is acting in a way that seems to "kidnap the revolution and control its outcome". "The only choice for our people is comprehensive peaceful resistance until the revolution's demands are achieved."

Thousands of protesters have been encamped outside the sprawling military headquarters in central Khartoum since April 6. Initially they gathered there to seek the army's support in ousting Bashir. But now they continue to hold their sit-in against the army council, demanding that it step down and transfer power to a civilian authority. The military council and protest leaders have differed on several issues and not just the composition of an overall ruling council.

'Full civilian authority'

The military council wanted a two-year transition period as opposed to four years proposed by protest leaders. The council was also of the opinion that declarations of emergencies be in the hands of a "sovereign" authority rather than the cabinet as sought by protest leaders. Protest leaders have often called the military rulers the "remnants of the regime" of Bashir.

The council also revealed on Tuesday that Sudan's former head of the feared National Intelligence and Security Service, Salah



KHARTOUM: Khalid Omar Yousef, a Sudanese protest leader, speaks to the press yesterday. — AFP

Ghosh, had been put under house arrest. It was Ghosh who oversaw security agents' sweeping crackdown on protesters before the fall of Bashir. Protest leaders however insist their key demand remains the same - a full

transfer of power to civilians. "The solution and success of the revolution lies on transfer of power to a full civilian authority," protest leader Mohamed Naji Al-Assam said on Tuesday. — AFP

Protesters slam Sudan state media for blackout

KHARTOUM: Grasping an empty plastic bottle that stands in for a microphone, young Sudanese protester Abu Bakr Marghani pretends to be a journalist interviewing demonstrators at Khartoum's sit-in outside the army complex. The would-be correspondent is cheered by his small crew each time he thrusts the device in front of a peer and asks a question. "We mean to poke fun at Sudanese state media who did not take our side during the protests," said Marghani, 18.

"They did not cover it at all - only foreign media did," he said, as one of his buddies holds a wooden stick with a plastic cup dangling from one end, in a creative attempt to mimic an adjustable boom mic. Another friend carries a cardboard box on his shoulder as if it's a video camera, complete with the scribbled name of a foreign TV network. Since Dec 19, Sudan has been rocked by protests that finally led last month to the ouster of president Omar Al-Bashir, who was in power for three decades.

Protesters remain encamped outside the military complex, demanding that the generals who toppled Bashir on April 11 be

replaced by a civilian administration. State media's complete blackout of the months of demonstrations prior to his ouster - including a failure to report the deaths of dozens at the hands of security forces - left protesters fuming.

'Cooking shows'

Instead, state-run Sudan TV broadcast Bashir's rallies, government business and light viewing. "People were dying for four full months and all the Sudanese media broadcast was cooking shows," blasted Marghani. The pro-regime newspapers stuck to reporting day-to-day government activities. "They only started siding with us after Bashir was toppled." Sudan TV said it had to comply with government directives. "The news broadcast was within the limits allowed by the government at the time," Sudan TV news director Mozamel Suleiman told AFP. "We are owned by the state and our narrative had to conform to the state's general policy."

Angry protesters have since on several occasions forced state media journalists out of the sit-in when they come to report on it. Marghani stopped a protester to ask his view of the ruling army generals. The quick response was "fall or no fall, we are staying" - a rallying cry of the protest movement. During Bashir's long tenure, the press was severely curtailed, according to media activists. The country's feared National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISS) cracked down regularly on journalists who questioned Bashir's policies.

"News related to his regime, prominent



KHARTOUM: In this file photo taken on April 27, 2019 a Sudanese boy uses a false camera made of cardboard and acts like he is filming during a sit-in outside the army headquarters. — AFP

opposition figures or conflict-torn areas in Sudan were problematic" for those who reported them, said leading Sudanese journalist Faisal Saleh. NISS agents regularly confiscated entire print-runs of newspapers for publishing articles deemed critical of Bashir's policies. "Officers (of NISS) used to go to newspapers' headquarters to check and cross out whatever they didn't want published," said Saleh. "From sports news to political affairs, anything was subject to scrutiny." The confiscation of entire

print-runs was a tactic to inflict maximum losses on publishers, said Osman Mirghani, editor-in-chief of independent newspaper Al Tayyar. "It cost us a lot of money," said Mirghani, whose editions were confiscated some 80 times under Bashir's rule. The editor was detained for more than a month during the peak of the protests against Bashir. Media watchdog Reporters Without Borders recorded at least 100 cases of journalists being arrested during the protests. — AFP

News in brief

500 IS members convicted in Iraq

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi judiciary has tried and sentenced more than 500 foreigners since the start of 2018 for joining the Islamic State group, the country's Supreme Court announced yesterday. It said "514 verdicts were issued, for both men and women, while another 202 accused are still being interrogated and 44 are still being tried". Another 11 were acquitted and released, it said. The statement referred to "different nationalities" but did not list any specific countries. It said interrogations were taking about six months for those simply accused of IS membership, but anyone accused of actively taking part in the group's operations could be questioned for up to a year. — AFP

Qatar accuses UAE at world court

THE HAGUE: Qatar accused the United Arab Emirates yesterday of a "campaign of violence and hatred" against its citizens, urging the International Court of Justice to quash a case brought by Abu Dhabi. The Gulf states are locked in a battle at the UN's top court, where the UAE on Tuesday asked judges to stop Qatar "severely aggravating" a two-year-old crisis between Doha and other countries in the oil-rich region. Qatar's lawyers however hit back, saying in fact it was Abu Dhabi who continued with "discriminatory policies that severely impacted Qatari citizens". "It is the Qatari people who are the true victims in the racial discrimination case, not the government of the UAE," Qatar's representative Mohammed Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi said. — AFP

AKP veterans criticize Istanbul election re-run

ANKARA: Two former heavyweights of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling party have criticized a decision to re-run the Istanbul mayoral election, expressing concern the decision would damage the state's reputation. They have added their voices to a chorus of criticism from abroad. Former prime minister Ahmet Davutoglu on Tuesday said the decision to annul the results of the March 31 election, which was won by the main opposition, "caused damage to one of our fundamental values". "The biggest loss for political movements is not losing elections but the loss of moral superiority and social conscience," he wrote on Twitter.

The top election body on Monday ordered a replay of the Istanbul mayoral election. The shock victory of the main opposition in the election was a blow to the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Abdullah Gul, former president and co-founder of the AKP, also criticized the ruling, saying it showed the party had not "made any headway" since past constitutional spats. Both men have fallen out with Erdogan since their time in office and there have been persistent rumors over the years that they may set up their own parties.

Gul, who has lately kept his distance from daily politics, compared the situation to a 2007 ruling by the country's top court that prevented him from becoming president without a two-thirds majority in parliament. "What I felt in 2007... that is what I felt yesterday when another high court, the Supreme Electoral Council, took its decision. It is a pity that we have not made any headway," he tweeted.

Before last year's presidential and general elections there was speculation that Gul would run against Erdogan, but he never did. As well as protests from the country's opposition, a number of countries have expressed concern at the court's decision. Germany Foreign Minister on Tuesday described the decision as "incomprehensible", and the European Union has asked for an explanation. The replay of the Istanbul mayoral election is due to be held on June 23. — AFP



ATME, Syria: An aerial view shows displaced Syrians gathering in a field near a camp for displaced people in this village in Idlib province yesterday. — AFP

Syrians destitute under olive trees after bombings

ATME, Syria: For nine days, Syrian matriarch Fatima Al-Masri has slept under olive trees near the Turkish border, after fleeing air strikes by the regime and its allies on her hometown. "We ran from the bombardment and the barrel bombs," said the 66-year-old, sitting cross-legged on a woven plastic mat surrounded by her grandchildren, just hundreds of meters from the frontier. "The planes were firing down so nothing would remain alive - not a tree, person or sheep," she told AFP, wearing a long purple faux velvet robe and a black scarf tied around her wrinkled face.

Her family is one of dozens to have set up camp in the fields of Atme, after escaping devastating bombing by the regime and its Russian ally in recent days on the jihadist-held region of Idlib in northwestern Syria. A September ceasefire deal between Russia and rebel backed Turkey was supposed to prevent a mass regime offensive on the region of some three million people.

But the militants of Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham, dominated by members of a former Al-Qaeda affiliate, taking over the area in January has led to a spike in deadly air strikes and shelling. The United Nations says more than 150,000 people have fled their homes in just a week, escaping strikes and shelling

that the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says has killed 84 civilians in the region. In the olive grove in Atme, Masri and dozens of other families have spent the night on thin mattresses or blankets laid out over rugs on the red earth. At the base of the trees they have chosen for shelter, they have stored the bare minimum for a life outdoors: bedding, a water cooler, a saucepan, or a cooking gas canister. They have hung up sheets between the trees for a little privacy, and one family has even brought a solar panel.

'No aid, nothing'

The families say most camps for the displaced in the area were full when they arrived, and the only one with enough space enforced gender segregation. Choosing to keep their families together, they set up camp between the olive trees instead. But Masri said they desperately need better shelter. "We're 35 families here. People want tents," said the matriarch from the town of Kafir Nabouda, an area in the north of Hama province that was overrun by regime forces on Wednesday, according to the Britain-based Observatory.

Nearby, Issam Derwish said he fled with his family to the Turkish border from the same town, hoping for safety but also help from aid organizations in the area. "We gathered our children and fled, coming here to Atme" four days ago, said the 35-year-old with a short black beard, dressed in a long brown tunic and trousers. But "there's no aid, nothing," said Derwish, who arrived at the frontier with his two wives, mother, sister-in-law and children. "We're just sitting here under the trees in the rain and cold." — AFP

Activist says Norway warned him of threat

OSLO: A prominent Arab pro-democracy campaigner living in political asylum in Norway said he had been temporarily moved to a secure location by Norwegian police last month after a tip-off about a possible threat against him from Saudi Arabia. Iyad El-Baghdadi is a Palestinian human rights campaigner and writer who won prominence during the 2011 Arab uprisings and has written critically of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He has lived in Oslo since 2015.

On April 25, Norwegian security services moved him for a period of time to a secure location because of a threat against his person, Baghdadi told Norwegian public broadcaster NRK. "They asked me to go with them. They said they have a secure location prepared. They have received information from a partner intelligence agency indicating that I am the target of a threat," Baghdadi told NRK late on Tuesday. "It is very clear to me that it is a Saudi threat ... We kind of brainstormed 6-7 reasons that put me on their crosshairs," he said, without elaborating.

The Norwegian security police service declined to comment. The Saudi embassy in Oslo was not immediately available for comment. Saudi Arabia's government communications office did not respond to a request for comment. The NRK and Britain's Guardian newspaper said that the US Central Intelligence Agency had alerted Norway to the possible threat against Baghdadi. The CIA declined to comment when contacted by Reuters. The Norwegian justice ministry, which is in charge of the security services, and the foreign ministry also declined to comment.

Baghdadi did not respond to requests for comment. Shortly after the NRK broadcast, he tweeted: "It is not clear at this time what the nature of the threat was, and there's no indication that it had translated into a specific plot." Saudi Arabia has come under increasing global scrutiny over its human rights record since the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi last year inside the kingdom's Istanbul consulate and the detention of around a dozen women's rights activists.

In a subsequent interview with Al Jazeera, Baghdadi said a large amount of his work over the past two years had focused on the rights situation in Saudi Arabia, particularly after Khashoggi's killing. He said the Norwegian authorities had told him they would provide him with police protection in Oslo but had asked him not to travel. — Reuters

International

Tears, insults as media's role in Aussie election questioned

Shorten first leader in decades not to seek Murdoch's endorsement

SYDNEY: The man tipped to become Australia's next prime minister pilloried the country's right-wing media yesterday after an attack about his late mother that has turbocharged an already heated debate about press partisanship. Decrying a "new low" in Australia's bare-knuckle politics, the usually phlegmatic Labor leader Bill Shorten became emotional as he lashed out at "bloody lazy" journalism and "gotcha sh*t" ahead of the closely fought May 18 election.

Like Britain and the United States - Australia's stridently rightwing media plays a prominent role in political life. But some experts, like Tony Walker, a communications professor at La Trobe University, have accused titles owned by mogul Rupert Murdoch of taking a "battering-ram approach" during this febrile campaign season. They "have stepped up the war against the Labor Party since the election was called", he wrote in a recent commentary.

The group's front pages and TV commentaries have echoed and amplified ruling Liberal party campaign messaging that targets Shorten - a former union leader whose party is a few percentage points ahead in the polls. The confrontation reached a peak yesterday when Sydney tabloid "The Daily Telegraph" accused Shorten of misleading voters about his deceased mother's life, in a front-page splash that carried the block-caps headline "MOTHER OF INVENTION".

Shorten had told the story of how his mother had been forced to defer her dreams of being a lawyer to help her family, which the Daily Telegraph suggested was misleading because she did eventually attend the bar in her 50s. "Who do some people in News Corp - and it's not all the journalists I make that very clear - who do some of these lazy people think they are?" Shorten railed after being asked about the piece, his voice cracking with emotion. "They play gotcha sh*t about your life story, and more importantly my mum's."

The tabloid is a News Corp Australia publication, a branch of Rupert Murdoch's global media empire which also includes America's influential "Fox News" and Britain's "The Sun". Daily Telegraph writer Anna Caldwell defended the story, telling Murdoch's Sky News it "in no way, shape, or form was an attack on Bill Shorten's mother".

Changing times?

It is not the first spat between Australia's left-leaning leaders and Murdoch's notoriously combative press, but it may prove to be one of the most consequential. The mogul has occasionally backed leaders from the center-left - most notably Tony Blair - but only when the political writing was on the wall for conservative contenders. Even his highbrow titles have become more overtly political over the years, according to Margot Saville, a journalist who joined "The Australian" as a cadet in

1987. "It was still very much the paper of record," she said, noting a shift toward more opinion. "It changed a lot."

Similarly, Australia's leftist leaders have usually held their tongue about Murdoch until long after the end of their political life. Former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd sought and received his support when running for office, but last year described him as "the greatest cancer on the Australian democracy". "Murdoch is not just a news organization. Murdoch operates as a political party, acting in pursuit of clearly defined commercial interests, in addition to his far-right ideological world view," Rudd claimed.

Few would doubt that Shorten's tears were real, but there is also little doubt he seized a political moment. His response is symbolic of a growing sense among some on Australia's left that Murdoch's once-feared machine has lost touch with mainstream voters and is vulnerable - even as President Donald Trump and Brexit backers reap the rewards of his support. Shorten is the first leader in decades not to seek Murdoch's endorsement. Throughout his career, the 51-year-old has often been accused of being bland and uninspiring, but not after his furious attack on News Corp. "This is certainly not the first time a Labor leader has had a bash at the Murdoch media in a recent campaign," said Michelle Grattan of the University of Canberra. "But it was probably one of the more effective." — AFP



CANBERRA: Australia's Labor leader Bill Shorten (left) and Liberal Leader and Prime Minister Scott Morrison shake hands at the start of "The Leaders' Debate" at the National Press Club of Australia yesterday. — AFP

News in brief

France confirms arms shipment to Saudi

PARIS: The French government confirmed yesterday that a new shipment of weapons will head for Saudi Arabia, despite claims Riyadh is using the arms in the Yemen war. Defense Minister Florence Parly told BFM television the weapons would be loaded onto a Saudi cargo ship scheduled to arrive Wednesday in the French port of Le Havre. She refused to identify the types of arms, but reiterated France's stance that they have been used only for defensive purposes by Saudi Arabia since it began its Yemen offensive in 2015. "As far as the French government is aware, we have no proof that the victims in Yemen are the result of the use of French weapons," Parly said. "France has strategic interests in this part of the world," Parly said, adding that the latest shipments were part of "long-term partnerships with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates." — AFP

German train crashes into lorry

BERLIN: A passenger train slammed into a lorry that became stranded on a rail line in northern Germany yesterday, injuring twelve people, two of them seriously, police said. The crash at around 4:30 am (02:30 GMT) at a level crossing in Alt Duvenstedt, near Flensburg, derailed the regional train, which was carrying 22 passengers. "All of those injured were taken to hospital," a police spokesman told AFP, adding one victim of the crash was flown by helicopter to hospital in the port city of Kiel. The accident happened when the cab of the articulated lorry, towing 70 tonnes of heavy equipment, became stranded at the level crossing. The driver jumped clear before the crash, police told news agency DPA. The impact badly damaged the front of the train, which was lifted off the tracks. — AFP



BERLIN: Firefighters stand next to a demolished articulated lorry in Alt Duvenstedt yesterday. — AFP

13 dead in Mexico luxury jet crash

MONTERREY, Mexico: Mexican authorities found Tuesday human remains that confirm the death of the 13 people on board a luxury jet that crashed over the weekend in the north of the country. The private plane took off Sunday from Las Vegas and was traveling to the Mexican city of Monterrey but crashed in a mountainous area difficult to access, where forensic experts had to arrive by helicopter. Aboard the plane were two executives of the Mexican oil services company Typhoon Offshore, along with eight relatives, according to a company statement. The group had come to Las Vegas to attend a fight in which Mexican boxer Saul "El Canelo" Alvarez defeated Daniel Jacobs of the United States. On Twitter, the athlete expressed sorrow over the incident, saying "my prayers are with their relatives." The other three people who died were the crew of the plane, a twin-engine Bombardier Challenger 600 series. — AFP

Bolsonaro eases rules for gun enthusiasts

BRASILIA: Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro signed a decree Tuesday making it easier for gun enthusiasts to own, carry and import weapons in one of the world's deadliest countries. Beaming members of Congress and industry lobbyists clapped and made pistol signs with their hands as the ex-army captain relaxed rules that critics fear could pave the way for the carrying of weapons in the streets. "I always said public security starts at home," Bolsonaro told a gathering in the capital Brasilia.

A summary of the decree released to reporters said sports shooters, hunters and collectors would be allowed to travel with a weapon, while all licensed gun owners would be permitted to buy up to 5,000 rounds of ammunition a year, depending on the type of weapon. It also promises the "debureaucratization" for the importation of arms and ammunition - long demanded by global manufacturers and fans of foreign brands - which was aimed at "stimulating competition, rewarding quality and safety."

Limits on the "amount and quality" purchased by public security institu-



BRASILIA: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro is surrounded by parliamentarians during the signing ceremony of the decree that facilitates to own, carry and import weapons, at the Planalto Palace on Tuesday. — AFP

tions would also be scrapped, the document said without specifying if it was referring to guns or ammunition or both. "We went to the limit of the law, we did not go over the law," Bolsonaro said. Brazil had 64,000 murders in 2017 - a rate of almost 31 per 100,000 inhabitants, or three times higher than the level the United Nations classifies as endemic violence.

The decree has created a "breach" that makes it easier for anyone to own a weapon, said Caio Pizetta Torres, a security specialist at Control Risks. Bolsonaro controversially passed a law relaxing gun ownership rules soon after assuming power in January,

delivering on a campaign promise. He has also spoken out in favor of allowing people to carry weapons on the streets, but that will require the support of Congress to change the law.

Bolsonaro reiterated Tuesday that his latest decree stemmed from a 2005 referendum organized by the left in which nearly 64 percent of Brazilians rejected a law that included, among other things, a total ban on the sale of arms. Foreign and domestic arms makers have been hoping that Bolsonaro's rise to power would translate into looser laws and greater government spending in the sector. — AFP

S Africans vote in health check for ruling ANC

JOHANNESBURG: South Africans voted yesterday in nationwide polls all but certain to return the ruling ANC despite anger over corruption scandals, sluggish growth, and record unemployment. The election is the first measure of whether President Cyril Ramaphosa can reinvigorate support for a party whose backing rests largely on its liberation credentials, but now faces the prospect of a reduced majority. "The ANC has been in power for the past 25 years and I don't see any change," lamented unemployed father-of-two Jacob Marethwa, 30, who lives in a shack in Coligny in the North West province.

Ramaphosa, 66, took over last year after the ANC, which first swept to power in 1994, forced then-President Jacob Zuma to resign after a nine-year term dominated by corruption allegations and a struggling economy. Zuma oversaw the party's most significant drop in support in the democratic era. "This is a vote that reminds us of 1994... heralding a new period," Ramaphosa said after casting his ballot at a school in Chiawelo, Soweto, and described himself as "excitedly confident" of the outcome. "I am truly humbled by the turnout... it's a vote for the democratic system we have been building for 25 years," he said. "This is like a rocket booster for democracy."

The 1994 vote saw Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress take power in the country's first multi-racial polls, marking the end of apartheid. Support for the ANC has fallen in every election since 2004 with the party taking 54 percent in 2016 municipal elections, compared with 62 percent in 2014's national vote. Most opinion surveys suggest the ANC will secure nearly 60 percent of the Wednesday's vote, thanks to Ramaphosa's appeal and a fractured opposition. "It reflects the weakness of the opposition, more than it does reflect the achievements of the ANC," said political scientist Collette Schulz-Herzenberg from Stellenbosch University.

Not happy with the ANC

The ANC has been confronted by deepening public anger over its failure to tackle poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. "It's not easy to make the



SOWETO, South Africa: Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa and the African National Congress, casts his vote at Hitekani Primary School voting station yesterday. — AFP

right choice," said Soweto-based first-time voter Nokuthula Shongwe, 18, who stated her priorities are unemployment and crime. "I'm nervous." The economy grew just 0.8 percent in 2018 and unemployment hovers around 27 percent-soaring to over 50 percent among young people.

Of the 47 opposition parties in the race, only the main opposition centrist Democratic Alliance (DA) and the radical-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) are major players. The DA is hoping to shed its image as a white, middle-class party. Its first black leader, Mmusi Maimane, is contesting his maiden general election since taking the helm in 2015, and is expected to make modest gains on the DA's 2014 vote share of 22 percent. "Vote for the future of this country and the South Africans who are unemployed," Maimane said after voting in Soweto, insisting the poll was not "a beauty pageant but a contract" between voters and their representatives.

"This vote is about competence... so we can clean up this country," added Maimane, wearing a suit in the DA's signature blue and posed for selfies with voters. But the EFF, founded six years ago by former ANC youth leader Julius Malema, is predicted to make major gains, growing from 6.3 percent to a forecast 11 percent. "A lot of people died for us to vote - we are here to honor their memories," said Malema as he cast his ballot in Seshego in eastern Limpopo province. "If you need change, EFF is the way to go," added Malema, sporting his signature red and a green baseball cap with a red star. — AFP

Italy avoids crisis by sacking far-right minister

ROME: Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte yesterday sacked a graft-tainted junior minister close to far-right leader Matteo Salvini, averting a government crisis weeks ahead of European elections. Infrastructure and transport undersecretary Armando Siri, a member of coalition partner the League, is alleged to have accepted a Â30,000 (\$33,000) bribe - or the promise of it - from a businessman for promoting the interests of renewable energy companies. Prosecutors also suspect the businessman of being in league with a Sicilian who has links to a Mafia boss.

Salvini, who is head of the anti-immigrant League party and deputy prime minister, had repeatedly insisted his ally Siri has done nothing wrong and should stay in his job. "Today the cabinet decided, as proposed by the prime minister, to start the procedure to revoke secretary of state Armando Siri," co-deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio said after the cabinet meeting. "Not because he's guilty but simply because for us, if a corruption and Mafia investigation is mentioned, (then) the political world must react before the judges do," said Di Maio, who heads the Five Star Movement (M5S).

The M5S, which made "honesty" a keyword of its political campaign before being elected last year, had demanded Siri resign. Premier Conte had on Thursday said Siri should resign, but the latter had refused, with Salvini's backing. "Today this is a victory for Italians, the honest Italians who represent the vast majority of the population and who demand firmness in a country where corruption is a national emergency," said Di Maio. — AFP

US 'sex slave' guru on trial in New York

NEW YORK: Sex slaves, branding, actresses, heiresses, extortion and fraud - a jury in New York began hearing evidence Tuesday about all of that and more. An American "self-help" guru who allegedly ran a cult-like society of women sex slaves has gone on trial in Brooklyn, and some of his former female supporters were the first to take the stand. Six people had been due to appear in the dock, but 58-year-old Keith Ranieri will now be the only one to stand trial. He faces a host of federal charges, including sex trafficking, extortion and conspiracy.

The other five - all women who held management positions in various organizations headed by Ranieri, including actress Allison Mack - have pleaded guilty one by one and avoided going on trial. Ranieri was the leader of Nxivm, a purported life coaching group that prosecutors say instead extorted money from followers and enabled the accused to sexually exploit female devotees. Over the course of two decades, more than 16,000 people took at least one of Ranieri's "self-help" workshops, which promised to develop a student's "human potential" - to the tune of \$5,000 for a five-day course.

Many who signed up quickly became indebted and ended up having to work for Nxivm (pronounced Nexium) to pay for their courses. "He was a mentor, but he was a predator," federal prosecutor Tanya Hajjar said in her opening statement. "He was a leader of a criminal organization." Ranieri once sported sleek long hair, beard and circular glasses - in almost Christ-like fashion - but on Tuesday, he appeared in court with his head shaved. The defendant was visibly relaxed - even smiling - and taking copious notes during the proceedings. From the beginning, Ranieri - who asked followers to call him "Vanguard" - is believed to have had a circle of 15 to 20 women under his influence, with whom he had sex at will. One may have been only 15 years old when she joined the group's inner sanctum. Based in Albany, the state capital of New York, the organization had centers in several cities across the United States, Canada, Mexico and other Central American countries. It has now been disbanded. As with many cult-like groups, everything rested on the powerful psychological influence of Ranieri, who allegedly used a mixture of pseudo-philosophical teachings, attention to his female subjects and humiliation to assert control. — AFP

International

Bittersweet revival of Rohingya culture in exile in Bangladesh

Senior Myanmar government official insults Rohingya as 'kalar'

KUTUPALONG REFUGEE CAMP, Bangladesh: Chain-smoking singer Gudar Mia, who recently turned 80 in a refugee camp in Bangladesh, lit another cigarette, closed his eyes, and crooned the opening words of a Rohingya folk song. "Sorry, my throat is not good," he said, taking a puff as he sat cross-legged in the home of his lifelong friend, Amir Ali, a violinist in his mid-seventies. As young men, back in Myanmar, they had played together in a wedding band, touring their native Rakhine state on the western border performing on moonlit nights beside the rice fields.

"We were hired every day, sometimes we couldn't go home for 20 days," said Amir Ali, a bone-thin man with hollowed cheeks and a faraway look. Now their venue is a bamboo shelter in a Bangladeshi camp on the edge of a trash-filled swamp, their audience a curious crowd of fellow refugees. But for the first time in decades they are free to play music. In recent years Myanmar imposed debilitating restrictions on the Rohingya, a Muslim minority demonised as immigrants from Bangladesh. They were prevented from travelling, gathering in groups, and expressing their ethnicity. Getting permission to perform was nearly impossible, refugees said.

"Back in Myanmar, we couldn't gather more than 10 people, so how could we sing?" said Amir Ali, idly strumming the violin and cradling his baby nephew. It had been a long time since the band's last wedding when, in August 2017, soldiers arrived in their quiet village in northern Rakhine State and burned it to the ground. The sweeping crackdown, which the United Nations has said was executed with genocidal intent, drove 730,000 Rohingya into Bangladesh.

Now home to close to a million people, including those who fled previous waves of violence, the camps comprise the world's largest refugee settlement. There, Rohingya society is re-forming. While life in the camp is bleak and monotonous, refugees say Bangladesh offers relative freedom compared with the apartheid-like conditions they endured in northern Rakhine.

'Play an old song'

On a recent morning, several hundred Rohingya, including the wedding band, crowded into the office of a local community organization for a 'Rohingya Traditional Affairs Day'. Someone rigged up a large speaker normally used for the call to prayer to amplify a harmonium, an accordion-like instrument, and an ensemble of musicians including Amir Ali the violinist, now deafeningly loud, struck up with a high-tempo jam. "This is a traditional affairs event!" one of the organizers cried out, gesturing at the players to stop. "Play an old song," he said.

Known as hawla, the old songs are slow and normally played at weddings, love stories that revolve around the towns of northern Rakhine, traditions like flying kites, and the rhythms of rice farming. They involve frustrated love affairs and travel by boat and motorcycle between the villages. Unlike newer songs, they are not about recent suffering, but rather a peaceful time before. Amir Ali and Gudar Mia grew up in the same village, Hlaing Thi, in Maungdaw township, close to the Bangladeshi border. Amir Ali, from a wealthier family, learned to play violin from a relative who owned one.

He forged an imitation instrument out of bamboo before

later buying one in Bangladesh. "The whole day he was playing the violin," recalled Gudar Mia, who lived across the river and memorized old songs from his relatives as a child. "Mostly we sang in the farmland while we harvested our crops, and sometimes in the moonlit nights we sang and danced," he said. "At that time there were no restrictions."

After 1978, when the administration led by General Ne Win led a crackdown on the Rohingya that drove tens of thousands into Bangladesh, restrictions on the village tightened, with most villagers unable to travel. Gudar Mia never ventured further than a few miles from Hlaing Thi. "Only rich people could get the permission to hold (wedding) ceremonies," said Amir Ali. "We could not earn money, like earlier. I was very disappointed."

'Not an ethnic group'

In Myanmar, where ethnicity is linked to citizenship, the authorities and much of the public do not recognize the Rohingya as an ethnic group, and expressions of culture are restricted. In 2015, five men who published a calendar featuring the phrase "Rohingya is an ethnic group" were jailed for causing "fear or alarm to the public". At the traditional affairs event, after the music, the crowd gathered for traditional food, including a sweet dish known as modu baator or "honey rice" usually eaten during the hottest time of the year to cool down and luri feera, rice-flour flatbreads made during festivals to be eaten with beef or goat curry. "When we talk about (our culture), it becomes fresh in our memories," said Mohammed Eleyas. "We are an ethnic group with our own strength that we can develop."

Speaking to Reuters by phone, Min Thein, a senior

Myanmar government official at the Ministry of Social Welfare, which is tasked with repatriating the Rohingya, referred to them as "kalar", a slur reserved for foreigners of South Asian origin. "Their culture was not restricted, they were able to build a lot of mosques in Rakhine," he said. "There is a transportation problem for the area not only for kalar but also other ethnics such as Rakhine, Dagnet, etc.," he said, referring to Buddhist minorities. "In Myanmar, Rohingya is not considered as an ethnic (race) according to our history books," he said, adding that another Muslim ethnicity, Kaman, was the only one recognized. Rohingya refugees, he said, "can go through the verification process to apply for citizenship when they come back".

'Each of us has trauma'

But the Rohingya are facing what is likely to be a long exile. Efforts to start repatriation to Rakhine failed last year, after refugees protested and the United Nations said conditions in Rakhine state were not right for returns. In the camps, youth leaders see cultural activities as a form of therapy for the young generation, restless, frustrated and with few opportunities for formal education.

Before he fled Rakhine, a young NGO worker named Mayyu Ali secretly mailed verses to local literary magazines under a pseudonym. In Bangladesh, he has hosted poetry training for students and since appealing for submissions for poems to post on a Facebook page called Art Garden has been inundated with more verses than he can publish. "What I feel is I don't want to see them with a gun and knife in their hand ... I want to see them hold a pen," he said. — Reuters

Taliban storm US-backed aid group compound

KABUL: Taliban militants stormed a US-funded aid group's central Kabul compound in an ongoing attack Tuesday, having targeted the organization for promoting Western culture and the "inter-mixing" of men and women. At least nine people were wounded in the latest attack to rock the Afghan capital, which came even as US and Taliban officials were meeting in Qatar for talks aimed at bringing an end to Afghanistan's war. The assault began around midday (0730 GMT) when a massive blast tore across Kabul. Interior ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said attackers then entered the compound of Counterpart International, a non-profit group funded at least in part by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

"The police have surrounded the area and a clearing operation is ongoing," Rahimi said, later adding that in the hours following the initial blast, 169 people were rescued from the site. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid quickly claimed responsibility for the attack, saying Counterpart International was targeted because it promoted the "inter-mixing" of men and women. The aid group mentored "Kabul admin workers in various aspects of brutality, oppression, terror, anti-Islamic ideology & promotion of western culture," Mujahid said on Twitter.

Counterpart was not immediately available to comment, but the group's website says it runs a USAID-funded Afghan civic engagement program supporting women and other marginalized groups across Afghanistan. Emergency, an Italian-run trauma center in Kabul, said it had received 15 patients so far. Wahidullah Mayar, the spokesman for the ministry of public health, said at least nine people had been wounded. The huge explosion shook nearby buildings and shattered windows.

"We started running out of the building and while running outside, I heard small gunfire and the sound of grenades going off nearby," said Akbar Khan Sahadat, a prosecutor in the Attorney General's office which was close to the scene of the blast. John Bass, the US ambassador to Afghanistan, said he strongly condemned the attack against the US non-governmental organization. "The targeted organization helps local communities, trains journalists and supports the Afghan people," he said on Twitter. "For this, it is the target of senseless violence," he added, thanking local security forces for their rapid response. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan said the attack was "particularly deplorable, hitting civilians helping Afghans & taking place during Ramadan".

Difficult peace talks

The Taliban are notorious for their treatment of women during their reign from 1996-2001, when the extremists kept women locked up in houses, barred them from getting an education and sometimes stoned them to death on allegations of adultery. Suhail Shaheen, the Taliban's political spokesman, told AFP earlier this week that the latest round of peace talks, currently taking place in Doha, had become



KABUL: A wounded Afghan man is brought on a stretcher to an Italian aid organization hospital as Afghan security forces battle an ongoing attack by Taliban militants on a compound housing an international aid organization yesterday. — AFP

bogged down over the issue of when foreign forces might withdraw in return for the Taliban security guarantees. The two foes are hammering out a deal that could see foreign forces leave Afghanistan in return for a ceasefire, talks between the government and the Taliban, and a guarantee the country will not be used as a safe haven for terror groups. The talks follow a massive peace summit in Kabul last week where President Ashraf Ghani offered the Taliban a ceasefire to begin on the first day of Ramadan - but the insurgents refused.

The insurgents have rebuffed repeated calls to halt fighting over the last year as they seek to gain leverage at the negotiating table by pressing the fight on the bat-

tlefield. Last year the Taliban announced a three-day ceasefire at the end of Ramadan after Ghani declared a unilateral truce for eight days earlier in the month, in the first formal nationwide ceasefire since the US-led invasion of 2001.

Since then the insurgents have steadfastly refused to talk to Ghani, who they view as a US puppet, and talks thus far have cut out his government. According to Counterpart International's website, the organization was founded in 1965 by Australian actress Betty Bryant Silverstein and a priest called Father Stan Hosie. Officials earlier wrongly identified the target of yesterday's attack as the nearby CARE International. — AFP

2 kids dead as car ploughs into nursery outing

TOKYO: A car ploughed into a group of kindergarten children in western Japan's Shiga region yesterday, killing two toddlers and injuring others, with one still in critical condition, police said. Police said the car veered onto the pavement after making "contact" with another larger vehicle that was turning at a junction in Otsu City. The accident killed a girl and a boy, both two years old, a police spokesman told AFP.

"The (smaller) car rammed into a group of 13 nursery school children and three teachers who were walking on

the pavement," the police said in a statement. A police spokesman said others in the group suffered injuries but declined to give further details. One remained in critical condition, a police spokesman told AFP. There were no immediate details on the teachers. The children and their teachers were on the pavement near a crossing when the small vehicle crashed into them. Japanese nursery schools regularly take children to the local park for playtime or out on short excursions during the day.

"We're very shocked and terribly saddened by this ghastly accident," the company operating the nursery said in a statement on their Facebook page. "We are truly sorry, thinking of the future of the children who passed away." Footage on local media in the aftermath of the accident showed one car had veered off the road and onto the pavement. A second car that appeared to have been damaged in a crash could be seen still on the road. Police said they had arrested the drivers of both cars - two women aged 52 and 62. — AFP



OTSU, Japan: Police remove vehicles from the scene after a car ploughed into a group of kindergarten children at a crossing yesterday. — AFP

Storm continues over #MeToo claims against India judge

NEW DELHI: Several dozen employees of India's highest court gathered yesterday to express support for the chief justice, days after an in-house inquiry cleared him of sexually assaulting a former staffer. On Monday a three-judge panel - one of whom was a woman - concluded that accusations against 64-year-old Ranjan Gogoi had "no substance", according to a press statement from the supreme court, prompting protests in Delhi and Bangalore.

Gogoi became the highest-profile figure to be caught up in India's #MeToo backlash after being accused by a former staffer of twice making unwanted advances towards her. The woman, 35, wrote a letter to the inquiry panel Tuesday saying she was "shocked" by the findings of the report, which will not be made public - although it was submitted to a senior judge and to Gogoi. "I find it rather strange that the complainant in a case of sexual harassment is not to be provided with a copy of the report which finds her complaint to be without substance", she said.

Several women's rights activists were detained Tuesday during a demonstration outside the Supreme Court, one of India's most respected institutions. Yesterday small protest was in support of Gogoi. Last week, the woman said she was withdrawing from the inquiry as she was "not likely to get justice" from the panel. In a letter, she said she found the "atmosphere of the committee very frightening" and that she felt "very nervous" as she was not allowed to be accompanied by her lawyer.

Gogoi, who is due to retire in November after a year in the job, has called the allegations "unbelievable" and an attempt to malign his reputation. The case comes after a string of #MeToo sexual harassment allegations were publicly made against Bollywood directors, actors and media figures last year. A junior foreign minister was forced to resign after several women accused him of harassment. He has since sued one of the women for alleged defamation. — AFP

Sharif returns to jail after medical treatment

LAHORE: Pakistani former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif returned to prison yesterday to complete a sentence for corruption after being released on bail for six weeks to receive medical treatment, officials said. Sharif, who is serving a seven-year sentence imposed last year for failing to disclose the source of income that allowed him to acquire the Al-Azizia Steel Mills in Saudi Arabia, was released on bail in March.

He returned to the District Jail in Lahore in the early hours, accompanied by thousands of cheering supporters, several hours after he was due back. Shahbaz Gill, spokesman for the Punjab chief magistrate, said Nawaz arrived at the jail after its gates had closed for the night but was allowed in to avoid inflaming tensions.

Thousands of supporters of Sharif's PML-N party joined their leader from his house and stopped his car at several points along the route, showering his car with flowers and chanting in support. Three-time premier Sharif, who was disqualified from holding political office for life, has been suffering from a heart condition and kidney problems. — Reuters



LAHORE: Former Pakistani Prime minister Nawaz Sharif (center left) sits in a car as he heads back to Kot Lakpat Jail yesterday. — AFP

American succumbs to Sri Lanka Easter bombing injuries

COLOMBO: A US official wounded in Sri Lanka's Easter Sunday suicide bombings has died in hospital, raising to 258 the total number killed, including 45 foreigners, officials said yesterday. Alaina Teplitz, the US ambassador to Sri Lanka, paid tribute to Chelsea Decaminada who was seriously wounded when two bombers hit the luxury Shangri-La hotel in Colombo on April 21. "We pay tribute to Chelsea - and all those lost and injured - by partnering with Sri Lanka and nations worldwide to bring unity in the face of terrorism," Teplitz said.

Decaminada, a graduate of Duke University, worked for the US Commerce Department and was on assignment in Sri Lanka when she was caught in the bombings, claimed by the Islamic State group and attributed to a local radical cell called National Thowtheeth Jama'ath. The bombers targeted three luxury hotels and three Christian churches. Nearly 500 people were wounded in the attacks, the worst single-day bombing against civilians in the Indian Ocean island.

Officials said Decaminada was airlifted to Singapore for treatment, but she succumbed to her injuries over the weekend. "As we mourn her loss, we must continue to fight terrorism around the world," US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross department said in a statement. The Sri Lankan foreign ministry had previously said 44 foreign nationals died in the attacks, while another 10 are still unaccounted for. Sri Lankan authorities say they have arrested or killed all the jihadists responsible for the April 21 suicide bombings, but the island still faces the threat of "global terrorism," the prime minister said yesterday. — AFP

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Blood and treasure or fantasy: What is the UK-US 'special relationship'?

Britain's so-called 'special relationship' with the United States was one of the most enduring alliances of the 20th century, though Brexit and the election of US President Donald Trump have raised questions about its future. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is visiting Britain yesterday, where he will meet Prime Minister Theresa May and give a speech on the relationship. What is the special relationship, and how do the United States and Britain compare on key measures?

Economy

The United States is the world's biggest economy, worth about \$21.3 trillion or 24.4 percent of global GDP, while Britain is the fifth largest, worth about \$2.8 trillion or 3.2 percent of global GDP. While the European Union accounts for about half of Britain's external trade, the United States is by far the biggest single trading partner, followed by Germany, the Netherlands, France and China. Britain, for its part, is the United States' seventh largest trade partner, after China, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Germany and South Korea. Each reports a surplus in goods trade with the other, indicating they are not comparing like with like. For decades, both Washington and London shared a desire to open up world markets to free trade.

Military

The United States, which spends more on its military than the next seven highest-spending countries combined, is proposing to spend \$686 billion on defense this year. It has the second largest number of nuclear weapons after Russia. The US Navy operates a fleet of 14 Ohio-class nuclear submarines, each of which can carry 20 Trident II D5 missiles with multiple, independently-targeted warheads. Britain, which has the biggest defense budget in the EU, spends about 40 billion pounds (\$53 billion) a year. France and Russia are the only other nuclear powers in Europe.

Britain has a fleet of four Vanguard-class submarines, which can each carry 16 Trident II D5 missiles. These are leased from a pool of such missiles that it shares with the US Navy. The two militaries have fought side-by-side in Europe, Korea, Kuwait, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. Britain views the US-led NATO alliance as the foundation of its defense. Trump has demanded that Western allies put more into NATO. US forces operate out of several military bases in Britain including the Lakenheath, Croughton and Menwith Hill air bases.

Intelligence

Intelligence cooperation between the United States and Britain is extremely close and one of the main areas where the alliance works in practice. During World War Two, the two countries forged a close intelligence sharing deal that was later extended to include Canada, Australia and New Zealand and became known as the "Five Eyes".

It brings the United States' modern, computer-powered technological spying together with Britain's more traditional human intelligence operations, which are strong in the former Soviet Union, Europe and the Middle East. Cooperation between the main domestic and foreign spy agencies is close. Because their geographical strengths are complementary, data collected by Britain's GCHQ eavesdropping agency is of particular use to the US National Security Agency (NSA). The US intelligence budget excluding military intelligence is \$60 billion while the UK intelligence budget is 2.3 billion pounds (\$3.0 billion).

Finance

London and New York are the world's two biggest financial centers. While London is by far the biggest centre for foreign exchange trading and international lending, New York is king for bonds and stocks. New York overtook London as the globe's most attractive financial centre last year, according to the Z/Yen global financial centers index, which ranks 100 centers on factors such as infrastructure and access to quality staff. London dominates the \$5.1 trillion-a-day global foreign currency markets: Far more currency is exchanged in London than the United States and the rest of the EU put together.

Wall Street's S&P 500, an index grouping the stocks of about 500 of the largest US corporations, is worth about \$25.7 trillion, according to Refinitiv data. By comparison, the FTSE all-share index, which groups more than 600 shares traded on the London Stock Exchange, is worth about 2.5 trillion pounds (\$3.3 trillion). The US bond market, including government and corporate debt, is worth over \$40.7 trillion, according to the Bank for International Settlements, while Britain's bond market is worth \$5.8 trillion. — Reuters

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



Photo shows satellite images the Natanz uranium enrichment site, 160 kilometers south of Tehran, Iran. — AFP

How UN scrutinizes Iran nuclear program

Iran's announcement yesterday that it would no longer respect limits on nuclear activities under a landmark 2015 deal have raised fresh fears over whether the painstakingly negotiated accord can survive. Tehran's move comes a year to the day since US President Donald Trump dramatically withdrew from the agreement and proceeded to re-introduce sanctions which have hit the Iranian economy hard. The UN's Vienna-based nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has had the delicate task of verifying the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), through regular inspections of Iranian facilities.

Will move affect inspections?

Iran did not announce any measures yesterday which would appear to impede the IAEA's inspection regime. "If it's just a matter of now they are starting to accumulate a quantity (of heavy water or uranium) larger than agreed upon, the IAEA will know that within a week," said Robert Kelley, a former director of nuclear inspections at the IAEA.

"As long as everything is under IAEA safeguards and inspected daily, everyone will know exactly what is going on," Kelley added. The IAEA insists the inspection regime put in place by the JCPOA is the world's toughest, and in

each of its quarterly reports on Iran it has confirmed that Tehran is abiding by the deal. Under the "Additional Protocol" agreed with Iran, inspectors may "conduct complementary access to any location in Iran".

The agency says that its inspection work has doubled since 2013. IAEA Secretary General Yukiya Amano says the agency's inspectors spend a total of 3,000 calendar days per year on the ground in Iran. He has also highlighted some 2,000 tamper-proof seals attached to nuclear material and equipment and the "hundreds of thousands of images captured daily by our sophisticated surveillance cameras", the number of which has almost doubled since 2013.

Why the IAEA?

Set up in 1957, the IAEA promotes peaceful uses of atomic energy while at the same time overseeing efforts to detect and prevent possible nuclear weapons proliferation. Because of previous international concern over its nuclear program, Iran agreed in 2003 to allow snap IAEA inspections of its nuclear facilities.

However, cooperation broke down in 2006. The IAEA referred Iran to the UN Security Council, which went on to impose sanctions, and Iran halted enhanced IAEA inspections. A renewed diplomatic push eventually led to the JCPOA in 2015, under which the agency is charged with

regular inspections of declared facilities in Iran such as uranium mines and centrifuge workshops for up to 25 years. The aim is to ensure that Iran is not holding undeclared stocks of nuclear material and is not enriching uranium past a certain level.

Political pressures

In addition to the US withdrawing from the deal, Israel - Iran's regional arch-foe - has also been highly critical of the JCPOA. In August 2017, Washington's envoy to the UN Nikki Haley urged the IAEA to widen its inspections, including to military sites. A year later in an address to the UN General Assembly, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed Iran had a "secret atomic warehouse" as part of a clandestine nuclear program and called on the IAEA to inspect the site immediately.

In January, Amano rejected pressure on the agency, saying: "If our credibility is thrown into question, and, in particular, if attempts are made to micro-manage or put pressure on the Agency in nuclear verification, that is counter-productive and extremely harmful." In its most recent reports on the JCPOA, the agency has also taken to reminding Iran that "timely and proactive co-operation" in providing access to locations it wishes to inspect would "enhance confidence". — AFP



Technicians wash the reactor of the Bushehr nuclear power plant at the Iranian port town of Bushehr, 1200 Kms south of Tehran. — AFP

The nuke deal: From US exit to Iran ultimatum

Washington unilaterally withdrew one year ago from a deal between major powers and Tehran under which Iran agreed to curb its nuclear activities in exchange for relief from international sanctions. The administration of President Donald Trump accused Tehran of "destabilizing activities" across the region and vowed to exert "maximum pressure" through renewed sanctions to bring them to an end. Here are key developments in the bitter standoff.

US quits

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

Support for Iran

Washington warns on May 21 that Tehran will be hit with the "strongest sanctions in history" unless it concedes to further demands over its missile program and ends its "destabilizing activities". A top US official says on July 2 that Washington is determined to force Iran to change its policies by slashing its oil export revenues. On July 6, Tehran's five remaining partners in the accord vow to back "the continuation of Iran's exports of oil and gas".

War of words

On July 22, Rouhani warns the US that any conflict

with Iran would be the "mother of all wars". Trump tweets that he should stop making threats "OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES".

Sanctions, again

On August 7, Washington reimposes a first set of sanctions that target Iran's access to US banknotes and key industries, including cars and carpets. Within hours, German carmaker Daimler says it is halting its activities in Iran. French energy giant Total and other major firms follow suit. On November 5, the United States reimposes a second package of sanctions aimed at significantly reducing Iran's oil exports and cutting it off from international finance. At the end of January 2019, Britain, France and Germany launch a trade mechanism known as INSTEX in a bid to allow Tehran to keep trading with EU companies bypassing US sanctions.

'Terrorism'

On March 7, Washington calls for international measures against Iran over three launches it says are related to its missile program. On April 2, London, Paris and Berlin call for a UN report on Iran's missile activity. On April 8, the United States designates Iran's parallel military, the Revolutionary Guard, a "foreign terrorist organization". Tehran immediately declares Washington a "state sponsor of terrorism" and blacklists its forces in the region as "terrorist groups".

US military deployment

On May 5, US national security adviser John Bolton says Washington is sending an aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to the Middle East in a "clear and unmistakable" message to Iran. Two days later, the Pentagon deploys B-52 bombers to the Gulf.

Iran ripostes

On May 8, Iran says it has decided to suspend commitments it made under the deal, some immediately and some after 60 days if no progress is made on sanctions relief. They include restrictions on the level to which Iran can enrich uranium and modifications to Iran's Arak heavy water reactor that were designed to prevent the production of plutonium as a byproduct. — AFP

Parties in South Africa elections

A potpourri of 48 political parties contested South Africa's general election yesterday—a record number. Here are snapshots of some of the front-runners:

African National Congress

The African National Congress rose from a liberation movement to govern Africa's most industrialized country, but its once-glorious image has been tainted by its record in office. It was founded in Bloemfontein in 1912 to fight against the white minority government's restrictions on free movement and land ownership by blacks. During the anti-apartheid struggle, the ANC espoused socialist values and had many communist members, but in power, it has adopted a more liberal economic program. It has easily won all post-apartheid elections and has a stranglehold on parliament, where it has held over 60 percent of the 400 seats since the dawn of democracy. It goes into the elections under Cyril Ramaphosa who took over less than 18 months ago from Jacob Zuma, whose rule was defined by corruption among party and government officials, and weak economic growth.

Democratic Alliance

The Democratic Alliance was established in 2000 as a merger of three "white" parties. One among these was the former Democratic Party, which had opposed the then-ruling National Party in parliament, and another the New National Party—which had tried, unsuccessfully, to distance itself from its predecessor's racist past. The DA has been the largest opposition party for nearly two decades, with 89 seats in the outgoing parliament. Long viewed as the party for middle-class whites, the DA heads into elections under its first black leader Mmusi Maimane, who took the reins in 2015.

Economic Freedom Fighters

The EFF was created in 2013 by the firebrand ex-ANC youth leader Julius Malema, shortly after he was expelled from the ruling party. His new party took 25 seats in parliament in 2014 and polls suggest it could nearly double that yesterday by tapping into the anger of millions of poor, unemployed black South Africans. The EFF describes itself as a "radical and militant economic emancipation movement" and its flagship policy is to seize land from white owners without compensation to give to poor blacks. The anti-capitalist party also advocates for the nationalization of mines and banks.

Inkatha Freedom Party

Founded in 1975 as a political and cultural movement, it transformed into a political party 15 years later and has had only one leader: Mangosuthu Buthelezi, 90. It is motivated by Black Consciousness political ideology and derives most of its support from the Zulu ethnic group in the southeastern KwaZulu-Natal province. In the first non-racial elections in 1994, the IFP won 43 seats—but its showing dwindled to just 10 seats in the last vote in 2014.

United Democratic Movement

Formed in 1998, its leader is Bantu Holomisa, former leader of the apartheid-era Transkei "independent" homeland-areas where blacks were moved to separate them from whites. Holomisa is another former ANC member. The UDM's biggest support base is in the Eastern Cape province. Contesting its first election in 1999, the party garnered 3.5 percent of the vote and secured 14 seats in the national assembly. Its support has slipped to just four lawmakers in the outgoing parliament.

Good

The Good party was formed just six months ago by Patricia De Lille, a former DA mayor in the city of Cape Town who had split from the DA in an acrimonious row. It could take some of the DA support base in the Western Cape, but its political potential is as yet untested. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019

12 Oil prices reach 6-month highs; US pushes OPEC to pump more**13** Al Mulla Motors aftersales team bags 'Best Customer Satisfaction Award'**14** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait wins 'Bank of the Year' award, 'Special CSR Award'

SHANGHAI: People walk past the front of an Apple store in central Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

US to hike tariffs on \$200bn worth of China goods

Chinese vice premier to arrive in Washington for talks today

WASHINGTON: The United States will raise tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports to 25 percent from 10 percent effective tomorrow, according to a notice posted to the Federal Register yesterday.

The US Trade Representative's office will establish a process to seek exclusions for certain products from additional tariffs, the Federal Register notice said. US President Donald Trump said in a tweet that he would be "very happy with over \$100 billion a year in tariffs filling US coffers."

His comments followed a Reuters report that quoted US government and private-sector sources as saying China had backtracked on almost all aspects of a draft trade agreement with the United States.

Global equities tumbled toward five-week lows as the escalating trade fight fed worries about the world economy and investors sought the safety of bonds and the Japanese yen, which hit a six-week high against the US dollar.

"The reason for the China pullback & attempted renegotiation of the Trade Deal is the sincere HOPE that they will be able to 'negotiate' with Joe Biden or one of the very weak Democrats," Trump tweeted.

"Guess what, that's not going to happen! China has just informed us that they (Vice-Premier) are now coming to the US to make a deal. We'll see, but I am very happy with over \$100 billion a year in Tariffs filling US coffers," he added.

Sources with knowledge of the talks told Reuters that China has sought to alter previously agreed provisions speci-

fying changes to Chinese laws affecting nearly every chapter of a nearly 150-page proposed trade deal between Washington and Beijing.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic cable from Beijing arrived in Washington late on Friday night, with systematic edits to a nearly 150-page draft trade agreement that would blow up months of negotiations between the world's two largest economies, according to three US government sources and three private sector sources briefed on the talks.

The document was riddled with reversals by China that undermined core US demands, the sources told Reuters.

In each of the seven chapters of the draft trade deal, China had deleted its commitments to change laws to resolve core complaints that caused the United States to launch a trade war: Theft of US intellectual property and trade secrets; forced technology transfers; competition policy; access to financial services; and currency manipulation.

The stripping of binding legal language from the draft struck directly at the highest priority of US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer - who views changes to Chinese laws as essential to verifying compliance after years of what US officials have called empty reform promises.

Lighthizer has pushed hard for an enforcement regime more like those used for punitive economic sanctions - such as those imposed on North Korea or Iran - than a typical trade deal. "This undermines the core architecture of the deal," said a Washington-based source with knowledge of the talks.

'Process of negotiation'

Spokespeople for the White House, the US Trade Representative and the US Treasury Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a briefing yesterday that working out disagreements over trade was a "process of negotiation" and that China was not "avoiding problems".

Geng referred specific questions on the trade talks to the Commerce Ministry, which did not respond immediately to faxed questions from Reuters. Lighthizer and US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin were taken aback at the extent of the changes in the draft. The two cabinet officials on Monday told reporters that Chinese backtracking had prompted Trump's tariff order but did not provide details on the depth and breadth of the revisions.

Further talks this week

The rapid deterioration of negotiations rattled global stock markets, bonds and commodities this week. Until Sunday, markets had priced in the expectation that officials from the two countries were close to striking a deal. Investors and analysts questioned whether Trump's tweet was a negotiating ploy to wring more concessions from China. The sources told Reuters the extent of the setbacks in the revised text were serious and that Trump's response was not merely a negotiating strategy.

Yesterday morning, US stock market indexes were mostly

weaker again, pointing to a third straight day of losses on Wall Street. The S&P 500 has fallen more than 2 percent so far this week. Yields on benchmark US Treasury securities fell to the lowest in more than a month.

Chinese negotiators said they couldn't touch the laws, said one of the government sources, calling the changes "major." Changing any law in China requires a unique set of processes that can't be navigated quickly, said a Chinese official familiar with the talks. The official disputed the assertion that China was backtracking on its promises, adding that US demands were becoming more "harsh" and the path to a deal more "narrow" as the negotiations drag on.

Vice Premier Liu He is set to arrive in Washington today for two days of talks that just last week were widely seen as pivotal - a possible last round before a historic trade deal. Now, US officials have little hope that Liu will come bearing any offer that can get talks back on track, said two of the sources.

To avert escalation, some of the sources said, Liu would have to scrap China's proposed text changes and agree to make new laws. China would also have to move further towards the US position on other sticking points, such as demands for curbs on Chinese industrial subsidies and a streamlined approval process for genetically engineered US crops.

The US administration said the latest tariff escalation would take effect at 12:01 am tomorrow (0401 GMT), hiking levies on Chinese products such as internet modems and routers, printed circuit boards, vacuum cleaners and furniture. —Agencies

Google bucks soaring smartphone prices with new Pixel

MOUNTAIN VIEW: Google bucked the soaring smartphone price trend yesterday, unveiling a high-performance Pixel handset aimed at the middle of the market as part of a wide-ranging pitch to developers of its new hardware, software and privacy efforts.

The Pixel 3a phone, which includes many of the artificial intelligence features of its flagship devices, is priced from \$399, executives said as Google opened its annual I/O developers conference near its headquarters in the Silicon Valley city of Mountain View.

"There has been a troubling trend of high-end phones getting more expensive," Google head of hardware Rick Osterloh said.

"So, we challenged ourselves to deliver a high-end

experience in a new Pixel 3a starting at \$399." The new Pixel was available at Google's online shop. Osterloh contended that the price is about half that of latest generation premium smartphones but is built with camera, digital assistant and other features found in top-end handsets. "They just redefined what a mid-priced phone can do," Forrester Research principal analyst Frank Gillett said at the event. "But they didn't tell us what compromises they made on the hardware." Google's expertise is software, so getting features like artificial intelligence to work on less costly smartphones plays to the internet giant's strength, according to Gillett.

Enabling artificial intelligence to handle sophisticated features on smartphone means less user data needs to be shared with online data centers to handle tasks, Google chief executive Sundar Pichai said while discussing steps being taken to strengthen privacy and security of users. "We always want to do more for users, but do it with less data over time," Pichai said.

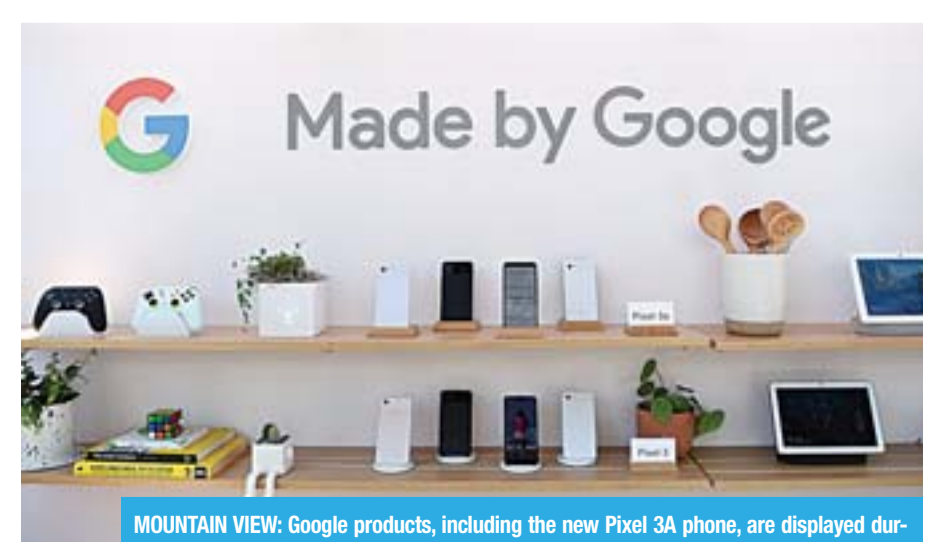
"We strongly believe that privacy and security are for everyone."

Budget appeal

The Pixel 3a makes its debut in a tightening smartphone market, particularly when it comes to premium models, with Google having failed to garner significant market share. Over the past quarter, South Korea's Samsung led all manufacturers with a 23 percent share in a global market that fell 6.6 percent, according to research firm IDC. China's Huawei, US-based Apple and three other Chinese firms rounded out the top five, according to IDC. Google stepped up its hardware ambitions last year with the acquisition of the smartphone division of Taiwan-based HTC.

The new Pixel 3a device is being introduced as Apple and Samsung have boosted prices of their newest handsets to over \$1,000, and with Google's flagship Pixel 3 selling from around \$800.

Pixel 3a has features "extremely attractive to users on a budget," and comes as a threat to the leading Android-powered smartphone maker Samsung, according to Creative Strategies analyst Carolina Milanese. —AFP



MOUNTAIN VIEW: Google products, including the new Pixel 3A phone, are displayed during the Google I/O conference at Shoreline Amphitheatre in Mountain View, California on Tuesday. —AFP

Business

Al Mulla Motors aftersales team bags 'Best Customer Satisfaction Performance Award'

Maseelah Trading Co honored during Mitsubishi Aftersales conference

KUWAIT: Maseelah Trading Company SPC (MTC), the authorized distributor for Mitsubishi vehicles in the State of Kuwait is proud to announce the achievement of Best Customer Satisfaction (CS) Performance Award. They were honored with the Best CS award during recent Annual Mitsubishi Aftersales conference held in Dubai for their commitment and hard work towards delivering premium Aftersales care to customers and demonstrating highest standards of Customer Excellence to guarantee exceptional service rendered throughout the year to their valued customers.

The award was aimed at Highest Quality of service activities, which improved in the Customer satisfaction and Increased Retention rate of customers during FY18.

The award was presented by Takahashi Masahiko, who is the President of Mitsubishi Motors Middle East Africa with presence of other senior managers from Mitsubishi Motors Company Japan. MTC lives by its dynamic motto - which is to ensure the best experience possible through passion and innovation in everything they do. Each year, the home grown brand supports evolving market needs and demands by empowering its employees with modern, international best practices and up-to-date training exercises to maintain overall Customer satisfaction.



New trade tensions as US imposes tariffs on Mexican tomatoes

MEXICO CITY: The United States imposed tariffs on Mexican tomatoes on Tuesday, adding to tensions between the two neighbors just as debate deepens over their new-but not yet ratified-trade deal with Canada. The 17.5-percent tariffs came into effect after the countries failed to renew an agreement that suspended a US anti-dumping investigation first opened 23 years ago. The US Commerce Department said Tuesday that negotiations to revise the agreement would continue. "We remain optimistic that there will be a negotiated solution," US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a statement.

The tariffs could ultimately be blocked should an independent body, the US International Trade Commission, find that no US industry has been harmed by Mexico's alleged dumping of tomatoes on the US market. Mexico, which supplies half the fresh tomatoes consumed in the United States, estimated the tariffs would cost its exporters more than \$350 million a year.

"We expect many small and medium-sized exporters will find it impossible to cope with this heavy cost," the economy ministry said in a statement, expressing its "disappointment and concern."

The Mexican tomato growers' association denied dumping. Its vice president, Manuel Antonio Cazares, told AFP the industry would take a "heavy hit" from the tariffs, and predicted US consumers would also pay a price. The United States opened an anti-dumping investigation against Mexico over tomatoes in 1996, but had repeatedly suspended it-and the tariffs that come with it-under a series of deals.

President Donald Trump's administration said in March the two sides had failed to renew the deal and that the tariffs would come into force.

Mexico exported around \$2 billion of tomatoes to the United States last year-its third-largest agricultural export to the United States, after beer and avocados.

Trade tension is rising again between the two countries as their legislatures prepare to open debate on ratifying the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the updated version of the 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Trump, who regularly criticized NAFTA as the worst deal ever signed by the United States, faces a battle with opposition Democrats in the House, who have criticized the deal for not doing enough to protect US jobs



Tomatoes are Mexico's third biggest agricultural export to the US after beer and avocados. —AFP

by improving labor conditions and wages in Mexico. Mexico, which sends more than 80 percent of its exports to the United States, is for its part unhappy with Trump's tariffs on its steel and aluminum exports, and his threat to impose 25-percent tariffs on its auto exports over what he sees as a "crisis" of illegal immigrants and drugs crossing the border. —AFP

Turkey's economic rebound will be 'gradual': EBRD

LONDON: Turkey's troubled economy will contract one percent this year before a "gradual" rebound, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development forecast yesterday.

"Turkey's recovery from an expected 1.0 percent economic contraction in 2019 is likely to be gradual," the London-based EBRD said in a report at the opening of its annual conference in Sarajevo.

"The lira's depreciation and (Turkey's) high interest rates will continue to dampen consumption and investment, although net exports should make a positive contribution to growth," said the bank founded in 1991 to help former Soviet bloc countries switch to free-market economies.

"Growth of around 2.5 percent is expected in 2020" for Turkey, added the EBRD, which now invests also in countries including Turkey, Jordan and Morocco. The

EBRD added that economic growth across all of its regions "of investment is broadly expected to track the global economy lower in 2019, before a likely upturn in 2020, when Turkey should return to positive territory".

The bank's latest economic outlook revised down predictions for 2019 — the EBRD now expecting average growth of 2.3 percent from a November forecast of 2.6-percent expansion.

The "downward revision to overall growth forecasts primarily reflects the expected slowdown in Turkey" it said, adding that overall growth across EBRD regions of investment should recover to 2.6 percent in 2020. Turkey slipped into recession for the first time in a decade last year following a sharp currency crisis that sent inflation soaring into double digits and hit Turkish households hard.

Its currency, the lira, is being hit once more by political upheaval in the country.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday 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. —AFP

China's exports fall ahead of crucial trade talks

BEIJING: China's exports fell more than expected in April while imports rose, official data showed yesterday ahead of high-stakes talks aimed at resolving a trade war with the United States.

The world's two leading economies face a possible make-or-break moment when top negotiators meet in Washington this week following months of fraught talks. US President Donald Trump has upped the ante with plans to more than double tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods on Friday, the last day of a two-day visit by President Xi Jinping's point man Vice Premier Liu He.

The trade war has battered shipments between the economic giants. In April China's exports across the Pacific fell 13.2 percent from a year earlier, while imports from the US fell 25.7 percent, according to the data from China's customs administration. The politically sensitive trade surplus with the US remained large, widening to \$21 billion last month from \$20.5 billion in March. Last year it hit a record \$323.3 billion.

Global markets have taken a beating this week as investors grow increasingly concerned that the China-US trade deal, which last week appeared all but ready to sign, could fall through.

US negotiators accused Beijing of reneging on commitments made during months of talks focusing on clamping down on theft of US technology and reducing China's massive subsidies.

"If Trump's threat becomes reality, it will be a game changer for the global economy," said Steve Cochrane, chief APAC economist at Moody's Analytics, adding the worst-case scenario would result in a US recession and a rapid reduction of growth in China. Tepid global demand for China's goods have heightened the risk for Beijing, which posted 6.4 percent economic growth in the first quarter, having decelerated every quarter last year.

'Downbeat prospects'

China's exports to the world sank 2.7 percent on-year last month while imports rose 4.0 percent, producing a trade surplus of \$13.8 billion. Economists polled by Bloomberg had expected a 3.0 percent rise in exports with imports projected to fall 2.1 percent.

"Today's exports data support our view that there is real risk of double dip in growth, and Beijing cannot afford to stop easing yet," said Lu Ting, an economist at Nomura bank.

"With the rapid escalation of the trade conflict with the US, we believe Beijing will likely step up easing measures again," he wrote in a note. Beijing has moved to jumpstart its cooling economy this year with massive tax cuts and



SHANGHAI: This general view shows the interior of a shopping mall in central Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

fee reductions, and a targeted reduction in the amount of cash that small and medium-sized banks must hold in reserve announced on Monday.

But the central bank has yet to cut interest rates. In March China's exports unexpectedly jumped 14.2 percent, and analysts caution it is difficult to compare trends at the start of the year owing to the Chinese New Year holiday, which fell in February. Over the first four months of the year China's exports rose only 0.2 percent on-year while imports dropped

2.5 percent, both down from the final quarter of last year.

"Even if a last-minute deal is struck this week to avoid further tariffs, the downbeat prospects for global growth will probably mean that export growth remains subdued," said Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics.

Data last week showed China's factory activity softened in April, with the new export orders sub-index rising from March, but remaining in contraction territory. —AFP

How US-China talks differ from any other trade deal

WASHINGTON: Chinese Vice Premier Liu He goes to Washington for trade talks today and tomorrow, setting up a last-ditch bid for progress toward a deal that would avoid a sharp increase in tariffs on Chinese goods ordered by US President Donald Trump.

US officials have accused China of reneging in the past week on substantial commitments made during months of negotiations to end their trade war, prompting Trump to set a new deadline to raise tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods to 25 percent, from 10 percent.

The higher tariffs will take effect at 12:01 a.m. EDT (0401 GMT) on Friday, a spokesman for the US Trade Representative's office said. That comes right in the middle of Liu's visit. Differences over the enforcement mechanism for a trade deal and a timeline for tariff removal have been sticking points.

Here is a breakdown of the issues unique to the two-way talks:
Will a deal end the threat of tariffs on Chinese goods?

Not likely. The United States has not made public any offers to lift tariffs, though Washington let slide a scheduled March 2 tariff increase on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods. But after accusations of China back-pedaling on commitments, Trump on Sunday made his threat to raise tariffs again this Friday.

US officials see the continuing threat of tariffs as the "teeth" in any agreement. The United States says Chinese companies have coerced their US partners into improperly transferring proprietary technology - an accusation Beijing strongly denies.

A demand for frequent compliance reviews reflects frustration among US officials who have complained that China has failed to follow through on past commitments to implement free-market reforms.

How does that differ from a normal trade negotiation?

Traditional free trade agreements aim to lower trade barriers between the countries signing them. These trade deals are built on the assumption that the parties will adhere to the terms of the agreement, with the benefit being increased trade and export opportunities within the free trade zone.

The Trump administration imposed new tariffs on Chinese goods to try to force changes in China's trade, subsidy and intellectual property practices - similar to financial sanctions that the United States has imposed on foreign entities to increase pressure on their governments for changes in behavior or policies.

Such sanctions are typically lifted only after the desired changes are verified by the US Treasury Department.

How are traditional trade agreements enforced?

Many free trade deals have built-in dispute settlement mechanisms for state-to-state disagreements over rule compliance, disputes between private investors and governments, or allegations of unfair anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties. Arbitration panels often hear arguments from both sides, operating like a court.

Canada, for example, has brought challenges to US anti-subsidy duties on softwood lumber before panels set up under NAFTA's Chapter 19, a mechanism that would be continued if the new US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is ratified. If Mexico fails to implement effective labor reforms, the United States and Canada could seek redress through arbitration. But critics, including many Democrats in Congress, argue that this enforcement mechanism is weak and largely untested.

Can't countries seek relief at the world trade organization?

The WTO's 164 members can challenge each other over unwarranted trade restrictions, illegal subsidies and other unfair practices and seek resolution through dispute settlement panels. But this process is seen as slow, and its decisions too easy for countries to ignore.

The United States has argued that the WTO has failed to rein in China's unfair practices, so it has acted on its own to force change in China.

The WTO's appellate body also could grind to a halt this year as Washington is currently blocking the appointment of judges. Because three judges are needed to rule on appeals, the system could break down when two judges' terms expire in December 2019.

Can countries just quit trade deals they don't like?

Yes, most trade pacts have provisions for termination, but this has never been tested by the United States. President Trump frequently threatened to quit NAFTA during negotiations last year, and his administration has considered issuing a six-month withdrawal notice as a tactic to pressure Congress into approving the trade deal that would replace it.

But some US lawmakers and legal experts argue that Trump may not have authority to quit the agreement without Congress' approval because the US Constitution grants Congress explicit power to regulate commerce with foreign nations. Any move to quit NAFTA is likely to draw a court challenge. —Reuters

Business

Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait wins 'Bank of the Year' award, 'Special CSR Award'

Arabian Business Awards 2019 for fourth consecutive year

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced yesterday that it won the 'Bank of the Year' award from Arabian Business magazine for the fourth consecutive year, while its continuing commitment to social responsibility was recognized with a 'Special CSR Award of the Year.'

Mr. Abdullah Al Sumait, ABK's Deputy Chief General Manager, collected the 'Bank of the Year' award on ABK's behalf of the Bank, and Mr. Fawzy Al Thunayan, ABK General Manager of Board Affairs, and Ms. Sahar Al Therban, Senior Manager - Corporate Communications at ABK, collected the CSR award.

ABK achieved strong financial results in 2018, with operating profit passing the KD 100 million mark for the first time in the Bank's history. ABK-Egypt also successfully expanded its technological infrastructure and geographical presence in the region through its branch network.

ABK extended its reach as one of the first Kuwaiti banks to operate in UAE by opening a

branch in Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), and shortly after opening, signed a landmark agreement with Dubai Aerospace Enterprise (DAE) for a revolving credit facility worth US\$ 800 Million.

Under its 'Simpler Banking' strategy, ABK continues to invest in innovation and enhancing customer service, introducing a number of new digital products. Some of these were first to the Kuwaiti market, including its 'Global View' service, which enables customers to manage multiple ABK accounts through a single login point and accessing statements from the day of inception.

ABK also contributed to a number of social causes throughout the year, with the main focus aligned to the Bank's CSR strategy of Healthy Living.

ABK was also listed in the Global Finance top 10 Safest Banks in the Middle East list for 2018 for the second consecutive year.



KIB acts as mandated lead arranger and structuring advisor for NMC Healthcare

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) acted as a Mandated Lead Arranger and Structuring Advisor in the \$80 million one-year revolving syndicated Murabaha facility for NMC Healthcare (NMC), one of the largest healthcare providers in the region. This Murabaha facility, arranged along with another local bank, will be utilized for CAPEX and working capital requirements.



Mohamed Khadiri

Mohamed Khadiri, Deputy General Manager Wholesale Banking and Head of International at KIB commented: "KIB's participation in this syndicated facility is in line with the Bank's strategic vision to provide innovative Islamic financing solutions to key customers operating in strategic sectors across the region."

Khadiri concluded by saying: "This deal adds to KIB's outstanding achievements and strong track record in providing leading Sharia compliant financing and financial advisory solutions to the corporate sector. We will continue our efforts to pursue KIB's strategic objectives in order to strengthen and confirm our position as a leading banking platform among local and regional banks to fulfill the needs and requirements of our customers."

Siemens on track for 2019 ahead of power and gas spinoff

BERLIN: German industrial conglomerate Siemens said yesterday it was sticking to its targets for 2018-19 after a steady second quarter, having announced the spinoff of its historic power and gas unit a day before. Net profits at the group fell five percent year-on-year, to 1.9 billion euros (\$2.1 billion) between January and March.

Meanwhile revenues were up two percent adjusting for currency effects, at 20.9 billion euros.

In 2019, "we enter into a new era to become an even stronger and more focused Siemens," chief executive officer Joe Kaeser said in a statement.

Like other once-sprawling German conglomerates like Thyssenkrupp, Bayer or Continental, Siemens is slimming down via successive spinoffs and flotations of units that no longer fit into its bosses' vision.

By September 2020, the power and gas unit with its oil and gas, gas turbines, power transmission and related services businesses is planned to be listed separately on the stock market.

Siemens plans to remain a "strong anchor shareholder" with a blocking minority holding in the new company. While the fossil fuels business is disliked by shareholders and has struggled with profitability in recent years, it lifted its operating margin to 5.6 percent in the second quarter, on adjusted revenues down six percent at 2.8 billion euros.

Outstanding orders at the unit were steady at 3.2 billion. By contrast rail, another flagship division, saw large contracts for trains including in the US and Germany help swell the order book 42 percent to 3.5 billion euros. But there was no clue from Siemens about a future strategy for its mobility activities, after its planned merger with France's Alstom was blocked by the European Commission. —AFP

Growing together: KAICO celebrates 70th anniversary with Michelin

KUWAIT: 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of successful relationship between KAICO (Kuwait Automotive Imports Company) and Michelin in Kuwait. The celebration of this milestone at KAICO's Kuwait office was attended by Yousef Al-Shaya, KAICO CEO and Marc Pasquet-President Michelin Africa, India and Middle East (AIM) Region along with Naser Shashaa, Regional Director, Michelin Middle East and other delegates from both the companies.

Yousef Al-Shaya said: "KAICO has played an integral part in Kuwait's growth for 70 years. Our history dates back to 1949 when we started marketing MICHELIN tires. We are glad that our relationship with Michelin enabled us to continue

our commitment and create a positive impact to the economy of Kuwait. Today KAICO is one of the leading tire marketers in the region"

Reflecting on this long and successful partnership, Marc Pasquet said: "On behalf of Michelin, I am delighted to celebrate our relationship with KAICO. We are proud of this historic partnership with KAICO and look forward for a future full of success, serving the Kuwaiti people. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for KAICO's management and the team for their relentless efforts to grow MICHELIN brand in the State of Kuwait. We look forward to continue our relation with KAICO for decades to come."

Ashish Tandon KAICO General Manager added "I am optimistic about our relation with Michelin in Kuwait. We have succeeded throughout our history to overcome all challenges, and our continuous collaboration with Michelin paves the way for further growth within the Kuwaiti market."

From his side, Sadiq Ali KAICO Division Manager noted: "Today, we cele-



brate the success of a strongly founded distributorship with Michelin. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all

KAICO and Michelin teams for their commitments and hard work to achieve such remarkable milestone."



Port Muziris, the first Tribute Portfolio Hotel, opens in Kerala

KOCHI: Marriott International opened Port Muziris, the first-ever Tribute Portfolio hotel in South Asia, in Kochi, Kerala. The hotel marks the fifth Marriott International property in Kochi and is located just 300 meters away from the Cochin International Airport. Tribute Portfolio unites a family of over 30 independent hotels across the globe. Each hotel celebrates the sense of character and passion for captivating design, vibrant social scenes and for experiences that feel like the 'real deal'.

The name of the hotel, Port Muziris, is rooted in the history of the region. A very long time ago, the Greeks, Romans, Jews, Arabs, and the Chinese knew Kochi's neighbor, the port of Muziris, as a trading hub dealing in spices such as black pepper and cardamom. History's true significance lies in the fact that Muziris - India's most important trading port from 300BC - assumes a larger-than-life significance and summons an unrivaled romanticism.

Commenting on the launch, the Area Vice President, South Asia- Marriott International, Neeraj Govil, said: "The

addition of the Tribute Portfolio in Marriott International's brand footprint for South Asia reinforces our continued focus on providing a diverse collection of prime, distinctive properties across high potential markets in the region. Port Muziris, a Tribute Portfolio hotel is set to exemplify the brand's vision, offering travelers a unique blend of old-world charm and contemporary amenities, topped off with signature Indian hospitality. The hotel presents guests with the opportunity to spark connections and experience the taste of surrounding communities in the state of Kerala."

For his part, Adeb Ahmed, the managing director of Twenty14 Holdings, the hospitality investment arm of the multinational LuLu Group International which owns the property, said: "Port Muziris is going to add to the efforts to make Kerala a world-class tourism destination. I believe that it is where Kerala starts. The property's uniqueness is visible through the soulful art spread across the property, the homely local food and the untypical rooms that bring out the vibrancy, vigor, and life of Kerala. At Twenty14 Holdings, we strive to keep our peerless hospitality growing by ensuring that each of our hotels is unique in its identity, intent, and immersion," said

Port Muziris features 54 artistically designed rooms, including three Executive Suites. The hotel design evokes grandeur and is reminiscent of the heritage residences found in Kerala.



The hotel offers an exciting range of dining and leisure options, each with its own unique flavors and identity.

An alluring feature of the property is the art that is on display at the hotel lobby, rooms, restaurants, banquet venues and exterior. Artists with roots in the geography of Muziris and the larger Malabar Coast, living across the world in the present day, were handpicked to render the art compositions at Port Muziris. The high standard of decor reflects the re-imagination of Kerala.

Rendering interesting and lesser-known facts about the region, the cultures, and the people into complex image narrative images.

"Port Muziris has a rich history to share and is a vibrant growing community. We are confident that this new Tribute Portfolio hotel will provide a truly unique and dynamic experience to guests who are curious to discover and dig into the community," said the General Manager of Port Muziris, Harish Gopalakrishnan.

What's On



LAPA celebrates EU day at Shaheed Park

In collaboration with the Shaheed Park, LOYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) recently celebrated EU Day to commemorate 'The Schuman Declaration' made on May 9th, 1950, which paved the way for European integration. The ceremony was attended by EU's plenipotentiary minister, Alar Olljum, dignitaries and diplomats designated in Kuwait. The celebration was marked by an outstanding performance by Dario Pinelli Trio Jazz band which played the Blues, LA Vie En Rose, In Cerca Di Te, Sing Sing Intro, Quando, Caravan, Blue Moon, I'm in the mood for Ike, Lullaby of Birdland, Funcioculi, Anouman and many other pieces of classical music.

In a speech to open the event Alar Olljum said "It gives me great pleasure, and it is a true honor, for me to stand before you today, here in beautiful

Shaheed Park, to celebrate Europe Day - a little bit early, to be sure, in respect of the Holy Month of Ramadan, but in any case a great opportunity to celebrate the 69th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration of May 9th 1950, a visionary document that laid the foundations for what would become the European Union, something that has been called the "greatest peace project in history". In today's world, the European Union is more indispensable than ever. This year, more than ever, Europe Day is not just a celebration, it is a commitment. A commitment that the EU will continue to be the reliable, cooperative and indispensable partner the world needs and demands - for all those who want to work in a cooperative way to strengthen multilateralism, peace, sustainable development, a free and fair trading system, human rights and democracy."



Al Sayer Holding medical awareness campaigns

In association with Kuwait Heart Foundation, Al Sayer Holding Corporate Excellence conducted awareness campaigns at various locations of the group Main Head office in Free Trade Zone, Lexus Center, Spare Parts in Sabhan, Toyota Ardiya Delivery Center, Bahrah Trading Company & Rent A Car in Ardiya to provide convenience for the employees to attend. Nehad Al Haj Ali, DGM Corporate Excellence said "a healthy heart is a long life. A healthy heart of Al Sayer Employees is a critical factor not only to our organization but for the family of our employees. Simple life style changes like balanced diets, brisk walking, and healthy habits drastically reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases". The campaigns covered checking of the key parameters like sugar level, cholesterol and blood pressure and were given advice and recommendations on how to improve heart health. Educational brochures were also distributed highlighting the importance of periodic checkups.



ICSK KHAITAN STUDENTS MAKE FIELD TRIP TO DESALINATION & POWER PLANT



Science students of Class XII and XI of the Indian Community School Kuwait-Khaitan, were set off to the desalination plant in Doha as annual educational field trips on Monday and Tuesday, 29th and 30th of April 2019, respectively. The trip to the plant was organized under the guidance of Engineer Syed Haneef from MEW.

On the first day 31 Students along with the Principal Mr. K. Gangadhar Shirsath and the class teacher Mrs. Vasanthi Suresh reached the plant. The group started their inquisitive visit around 9 am under the guidance of the safety engineers. On the second day, class XI visited with Mrs Sumitha Mr. Vinish. The groups were taken to each of the procedure sites one by one including the sea water collection

chamber, chlorine evaporation chambers, water purification chambers, the boiler plants and finally the turbines that turn to produce electricity. According to the senior officials at the plant, the desalinated water that is used to produce electricity is later used as drinking water after further purification in a nearby plant. This experiential learning trip ended at the place where the turbines were situated and the students set back to school by 12:00 noon. On behalf of the entire ICSK Khaitan, the school management appreciated the activity and thanked Eng. Haneef & the safety employees for having organized such informative trip that would definitely motivate students to pursue study in the field of science.



A special assembly on Eid Ul Fitr was conducted in ICSK Junior



Eid ul fitr is an important festival that marks the end of Ramadan. The essence of Ramadan is the spirit of charity, brother hood, love and generosity. It is the day on which the fasting ends and feasting takes place.

A special assembly on Eid ul fitr was conducted in ICSK Junior. Prayers, thought for the day, melodious songs symbolic to a beautiful rendition of a Qawwali song were performed by the students.

A speech was rendered to convey the importance of love, peace, faith and hope in our

lives, marvellous dance drama which covered all these aspects of Ramadan as well as Eid ul fitr were also delivered with great enthusiasm. An impressive placard presentation and a heart-warming dance which portray the spirit of Eid was highlight of the day.

Principal, Mrs. Sherly Dennis in her address appreciated the efforts taken by the children and teachers. She shared her viewpoints regarding Ramadan and Eid ul fitr. She advised the students to follow the rules of fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. She also stressed the importance of prayer.



Health & Science

A song of air and fire: Turning CO2 into rock for cleaner air

ON THE HENGILL VOLCANO: In the heart of Iceland's volcano country, 21st-century alchemists are transforming carbon dioxide into rock for eternity, cleaning the air of harmful emissions that cause global warming. The technology mimics, in an accelerated format which is a natural process that can take thousands of years, injecting CO2 into porous basalt rock where it mineralizes, capturing it forever.

"With this method we have actually changed the time scale dramatically," says geologist Sandra Osk Snaebjornsdottir. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas emitted in large quantities by Iceland's transport sector, industries and volcanoes. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is promoting various carbon capture and storage (CCS) methods in a bid to limit the rise in average temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Snaebjornsdottir is working on Iceland's CarbFix project with researchers and engineers from utility company Reykjavik Energy, the University of Iceland, France's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and Columbia University in the United States.

Petrified in two years

In Iceland, a country of geysers, glaciers

and volcanoes, at least half of the energy produced comes from geothermal sources. That's a bonanza for CarbFix researchers, who've turned the Hellisheiði geothermal power plant — one of the world's biggest — into their own laboratory. The plant, located on the Hengill volcano in southwestern Iceland, sits on a layer of basalt rock formed from cooled lava, and has access to virtually unlimited amounts of water.

The plant pumps up the water underneath the volcano to run six turbines providing electricity and heat to the capital, Reykjavik, about 30 kilometers away. The CO2 from the plant is meanwhile captured from the steam, liquefied into condensate, then dissolved in large amounts of water. "So basically we are just making soda water out of the CO2," says project director Edda Sif Aradottir. The fizzy water is piped several kilometers to an area where grey, igloo-shaped domes dot a lunar-like landscape. Here the fizzy water is injected under high pressure into the rock 1,000 meters under the ground.

The solution fills the rock's cavities and begins the solidification process — a chemical reaction that occurs when the gas comes in contact with the calcium, magnesium and iron in

the basalt. "Almost all of the injected CO2 was mineralized within two years in our pilot injection," Snaebjornsdottir says. Once the CO2 is turned to rock, it's pretty much captured there for good. "If you have a volcanic eruption... and you heat up the rock to very high temperatures, then some of the mineral will break down and maybe dissolve in water," says University of Iceland geochemist Sigurdur Gislason. But, he noted, "this is the safest and most stable form of storing carbon". The last volcanic eruption here was a thousand years ago.

Thirsty method

The CarbFix project reduces the plant's carbon dioxide emissions by a third, which amounts to 12,000 tons of CO2 captured and stored at a cost of about \$25 a ton. By comparison, Iceland's volcanoes spew out between one and two million tons of carbon dioxide each year. The main drawback of the method is that it requires large volumes of desalinated water, which, while abundant in Iceland, is rare in many other parts of the planet.

Around 25 tons of water is needed for each ton of carbon dioxide injected. "That is the Achilles' heel of this method," says Snaebjornsdottir. "I agree that the process



uses a lot of water, but we gain a lot by permanently getting rid of CO2 that otherwise would be floating around the atmosphere," says Aradottir.

Experiments are currently under way to adapt the method to saltwater. Under the Paris climate agreement, Iceland has agreed to slash its greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent by 2030. Yet its emissions rose by 2.2 percent from 2016 to 2017, and have risen by

85 percent since 1990, according to a report by Iceland's Environment Agency. A third of its emissions come from air transport, which is vital to the island for its tourism sector. Its aluminum and silicon plants account for another third. Iceland's Environment and Natural Resources Minister Gudmundur Ingi Gudbrandsson said he has "encouraged" those plants to also develop carbon capture and storage mechanisms. — AFP

CLINIC
PAGE

248 33 199

Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally
Senior Registrar

Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid
Consultant

Dr. Abeer Khattab
Specialist

Cataract Surgery

Glaucoma

Retina

General Ophthalmology

Follow-Up All Treatments

Follow us on social media @haddclinic

Tel: 1801082
Whatsapp Us
+955-6000 2184

Dr Sahar Ghannam

Dermatology consultant, skin treatment and laser

Timing: Saturdays to Wednesdays from 9 am to 1 pm
and from 8 pm to 12 pm
Thursday from 9:30 am until 1 pm

Friday is a holiday.

Address: Fourth Ring Road - Abdallah Fadalah Street, Meidan Hawally, opposite fire station - block 35, building 31.

Clinic Phones: 25610407/ 409/ 314 Fax: 25610465
Mobile: 90974754/ 99166746

WELCOME

Dr Tammam Abou Ali

Consultant ENT, Head Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon

Fellowship of the royal college of surgeons in UK and Ireland.
18 years work experience in Qatar Hospital WJH Doha.

Fellow of ENT department in Forensic Hospital WJH Doha.
10 years work experience in UK and Ireland.

- Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
- Septoplasty and turbinate reduction surgery by laser or RF
- Snoring and OSAP Surgery
- Rhinoplasty with open and closed techniques
- Microscopic Middle Ear Surgery and Tympanoplasty
- Salivary gland and parotid surgery
- Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
- Micro laryngeal surgery

1 888 883

www.qmc-kuwait.com

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or

Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617

or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

Dr. Husain Alenezi

-Board Certified Urologist.
-Endourology Society-Approved Fellowship In Endourology And Robotic Surgery At Western University, Ontario, Canada.

Expert in diagnosing and treating:

- 1- Urinary Stones (Kidney, Ureter & Bladder) By Endoscopy & Laser
- 2- Prostate Cancer And Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- 3- Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms In Males And Females
- 4- Tumors And Malignancies Of The Urinary Tract (Kidney, Adrenals, Ureter, Bladder And Testes)
- 5- Male Factor Infertility And Varicoceles (Microscopic Surgery)
- 6- Erectile Dysfunction

Contact Taiba Hospital: 1808088 94449452 Twitter: @DrHusain_Urol

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family

Book your appointments today!

Dr. Kiran Turak
Ophthalmologist

Dr. Zareena Zahir
Ophthalmologist

Dr. Hasan Khan
Senior Cardiologist

Dr. P. Seshendra Nath
Orthopedic Consultant (AIESTRA)
Specialized in Neck, Shoulder Hip and Knee

50721507

24551555

www.exircenterku.com

EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER

Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

WE ACCEPT ALL MAJOR INSURANCES

Tel : 24568857 / 24568859 info@exircenterku.com www.exircenterku.com

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- ◆ Diagnosis/ Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otolology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

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

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

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

SPECIALIZED IN:

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

SHARQ, Ahmad Alsheer st., Building 14, Floor 13.
Tel: (+965) 22060777
@DrFahamed, @Fahmedb, @fardonabb
Email: drfahamed@beautybeyond.com.kw

To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102
or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617
or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- ◆ Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- ◆ Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

مستشفى دار الشفا Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tel:1802 555

DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

- 1-Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty). Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4-Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

Know your Doctor
Otorhinolaryngology (E.N.T)
Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

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

Specialized in:

- ◆ Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
- ◆ Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC
American Board Certified in General Surgery
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendicectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

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

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

مستشفى دار الشفا Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tel:1802 555

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

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

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368
Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

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

Academic Certificates - Training

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

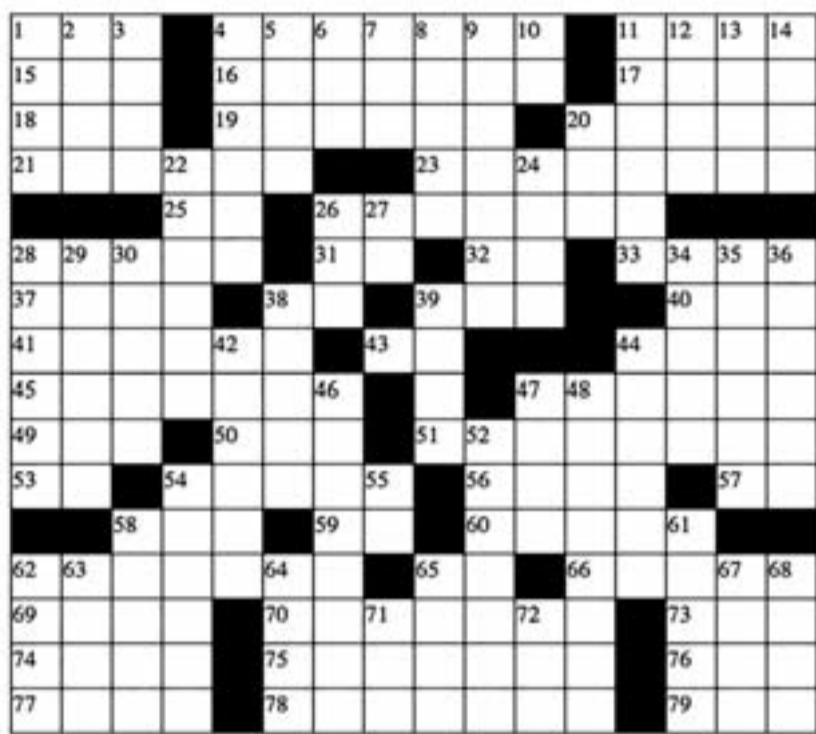
Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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

Stars

CROSSWORD 2203



ACROSS

1. A spring-flowering shrub or small tree of the genus Crataegus.
4. Sayings of Jesus not recorded in the canonical Gospels.
11. Avatar of Vishnu.
15. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
16. (of time) Having passed or slipped by.
17. Lacking sufficient water or rainfall.
18. A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
19. (informal) Very bad.
21. Used to refer to cited works.
23. (of the feet of some animals) Not webbed.
25. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
28. Strike with disgust or revulsion.
31. A state in northwestern North America.
32. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
33. German tennis player who won seven women's singles titles at Wimbledon (born in 1969).
37. An aggressive remark directed at a person like a missile and intended to have a telling effect.
40. A hospital unit staffed and equipped to provide intensive care.
41. The process of taking in and expelling air during breathing.
43. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
45. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
49. A male human offspring.
50. A master's degree in fine arts.
51. Confederate general in the American Civil War.
53. A soft silver-white or yellowish metallic element of the alkali metal group.
56. A small but appreciable amount.
57. A complete metric system of units of measurement for scientists.
59. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
60. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
62. Devoid of brightness or appeal.
66. Bottle that has a narrow neck.
69. Any of several related languages of the Celts in Ireland and Scotland.
70. A republic in southwestern Africa on the south Atlantic coast (formerly called South West Africa).
73. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
74. Being of the age 13 through 19.
75. Ostentatiously lofty in style.
76. A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
77. The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
78. God of wisdom or prophesy.
79. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
2. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
3. Telephone line (Wide Area Telephone Service).

4. In or belonging to the air or operating (for or by means of aircraft or elevated cables) in the air.
5. Take by theft.
6. Any of various long-tailed rodents similar to but larger than a mouse.
7. (usually followed by 'to') Naturally disposed toward.
8. A person who makes deceitful pretenses.
9. Dyed with henna.
10. A public promotion of some product or service.
11. A motley assortment of things.
12. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
13. An actor who communicates entirely by gesture and facial expression.
14. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
20. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
22. A cylindrical drawstring bag used by sailors to hold their clothing and other gear.
24. The capability of conscious choice and decision and intention.
26. A sharp hand gesture (resembling a blow).
27. A monarchy in northwestern Europe occupying most of the British Isles.
29. Reception room in an inn or club where visitors can be received.
30. Clean with one's bill, of birds.
34. Showing or feeling mirth or pleasure or happiness.
35. Plants closely allied to the genera Satureja and Calamintha.
36. A family of languages of the Fula people of west Africa in the sub-Saharan regions from Senegal to Chad.
38. A line that forms the length of an arrow pointer.
39. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
42. Found in warm waters of western Atlantic.
44. Seal again.
46. Any of various long-legged carrion-eating hawks of South and Central America.
47. One of the two main branches of orthodox Islam.
48. The Palestinian uprising (beginning in 1987) against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
52. Providing for many things at once.
54. Cause to feel resentment or indignation.
55. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
58. Realistic Norwegian author who wrote plays on social and political themes (1828-1906).
61. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
63. The chief solid component of mammalian urine.
64. Cuddling and kissing.
65. A wound resulting from biting.
67. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
68. God of love and erotic desire.
71. The second day of the week.
72. Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydracid) used to treat tuberculosis.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have a need for love, not in the conventional sense, but by people you consider family, which could even be friend family. That's a different kind of love. The love of security knowing you're cared for in a special kind of way. You crave that feeling now. Take time with your family so that you can feel the love you have. Also, since you're in this type mode, check out those dreams of grandeur you may have. Look to the practical side. See how you can go about making sure they're here and more is coming. Money makes you feel better. You've got the ability to make it what you desire.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your friends need you today and let you know it. You listen quietly to their problems and proposals. Then you try to assist them in whatever manner they need. You're a good friend. This all happens while you too need help on a personal matter. Perhaps you're not at your best but you still take the time to be a friend. However, you're not sharing your emotional problems with those who seek your assistance. You may find you're going against conventional thoughts today because, frankly, you have an issue with what some consider moral and good. Even at work you seek your own path and it's not level.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a great time to assess your goals and put them into play. Your clear-headedness and intelligent thinking has given you the ability to visualize what you need and make it extraordinary to where you know it will work. Tell the powers that be what your intentions are for this project. Ambition, achievement and organization mean a lot to you now. All these qualities make you look good. Also, you need to create love's roots so that your love grows strong and feels well nurtured. Know that all you desire is coming to you at a big cat chasing prey's pace right now.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You need others to give you what you feel you give them and that is a sense of security you can only get from knowing a person well. This comes from backing a person no matter what. Taking up for them and asking if you were right later, is a golden rule for friendship you take for granted. Having others both at work and at home admire you is something you crave. One is for your mind exclusively and the other is for so much more. Children, family, friends and your lover mean more to you right now than they have in a long time. You're being reminded how much you appreciate them. Go out to dinner and invite those you love.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You need others to give you what you feel you give them and that is a sense of security you can only get from knowing a person well. This comes from backing a person no matter what. Taking up for them and asking if you were right later, is a golden rule for friendship you take for granted. Having others both at work and at home admire you is something you crave. One is for your mind exclusively and the other is for so much more. Children, family, friends and your lover mean more to you right now than they have in a long time. You're being reminded how much you appreciate them. Go out to dinner and invite those you love.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

For the next month you'll be in the mood to do more with your work ethic. Getting everything in order and making schedules needed are your goals now. The job front isn't the only place you're working on revamping. The other goal has to do with your emotional self. Strong emotional changes have you examining yourself. You want roots in your love life but don't seem to understand exactly what it takes without further examination which you're willing to do exhaustively. You've got persistence on your side. Be careful not to argue with others on emotional items. That, you can't win.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You begin the day with lots of energy again and a wish to improve the situation from yesterday. Mental discipline comes easily now because you can look at an idea and remember it from one moment to the next unlike it's been lately. Problems that have been hounding you should find easy alleviating decisions made to stop them today. Thinking about life alone is something you touch on today but may decide you want to decline because you need someone special in your life to give you the nurturing you desire. Also, you have a need to care for others as well. Being alone is not for you.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You tend to examine your life and that of others as well today. You're looking to the past to discover how best to make the greatest life for you and those for which you care. While there going through history, you find more questions even though those enquires may seem to have been answered long ago. Digging up the past has made you aware that things aren't always written in stone. This has given you the chance to look at your life and place more value on what you've done. Keep in mind that you're a great person who's done great things for your family and friends.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Possible hurt feelings and words are had with a coworker or your significant other, possibly both. That's the way your world is turning now. Big decisions should be made later after study. While all this is going on you make up your mind to be better at taking care of self. After all, who but you can do that. Perhaps a trip to the doctor for a checkup and advice is in order. You feel good about work but you may find yourself being a little slower in the uptake today. There's a big need to have your lover close. Though this may not be your best day, it'll lead to accomplishments you desire.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You crave firm foundations, meaning you want a place that you can feel safe both at work and at home. You bring family and friends closer to you now because they're part of those firm foundations as well. Anything that brings security to you is what you need. Having this support system allows you to strike out into a new undertaking that is pretty scary without the help from those you love. You come across as knowing exactly what you're doing and being in charge. That may not be the case but at least you look as if it is. This gives you more chance of making anything you desire work.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

This isn't the time to try to get your ideas across to others. Either they're not listening or you can't communicate as you generally do. Try to keep your chin up with a smile on your face. Another may ask you to do something you don't believe in or worse yet, something you disagree with totally. It could even be on the seeder side of legal. You'll have to make a decision. Taking this into consideration may have you thinking you need to change your occupation. If it does, then quietly go about finding what you really want to do. If you don't agree with your boss you may be looking for work more quickly than you thought.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a great day to take the time to look for a purchase of some of those new home furnishings you desire. You crave emotional security. Your home is a product of that as well as love. Putting your decorative thoughts into your home brings you comfort. An emotional confrontation at home from someone younger may have you trying to decide which steps to take or whether to just give up. Being considerate goes a long way to helping you both out of this situation. You're more sober thinking than some appreciate. They tend to leave you alone now and you can feel it strongly. Keep your cool. That'll change.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Fish 2 - Word Search

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

AMBERJACK
BLUEGILL
BOWFIN
CARBOT
CHAR
COBIA
DOLPHIN

GROUPE
LINGCOD
PERCH
PICKEREL
POLLOCK
PORGY
SNAPPER
SOLE

TARPON
TROUT
WALLEYE
WHITEFISH
YELLOWTAIL

Yesterday's Solution

Fish 1 - Solution

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
BONEFISH
BULLHEAD
CATFISH
COD
CRAPPIE
DOLLY VARDEN
GAR

HALIBUT
MUSKELLUNGE
PARROTFISH
PIKE
REDFISH
SALMON
SAND DAB
SAUGER

SMELT
STURGEON
SWORDFISH
TRIPLETAIL
WARMOUTH

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019



Muslim people pray on the first night of the holy month of Ramadan at the Istiqlal Grand Mosque in Jakarta. Ramadan in Indonesia began on May 6, with devotees fasting from dawn to dusk until Eid celebrations marking the end of the holy month. — AFP

YOUNG AFGHAN AMPUTEE'S JOY AT DANCING ON NEW LEG

With his hands in the air and an infectious grin spreading from ear to ear, a young Afghan boy whirls around a Kabul hospital room on his new prosthetic leg. The boy, five-year-old Ahmad Sayed Rahman, has captured hearts in Afghanistan after a short video of him effortlessly dancing on his new limb was posted this week on Twitter. "He is always dancing and showing how happy he is to have an artificial leg," the boy's mother, Rayeesa, told reporters at the Red Cross orthopaedic center in the Afghan capital on Tuesday. "I'm so happy for him that he's received this artificial leg and that now he can be independent," she added, as Ahmad danced to music blasting from a mobile phone.

Ahmad, whose leg was amputated below the knee when he was only eight months old, is a long-time patient, his physiotherapist Semeen Sarwari said. Because he's growing fast, he has needed a new leg every year or so. This new one is his fourth. "He's a child and wants to play, he wants to have a leg so is adapting quickly," Sarwari said. "He doesn't want to sit around inside." Ahmad and his parents, who are farmworkers, come from Logar province south of Kabul, where fight-



Ahmad Sayed Rahman, a five-year-old Afghan boy who lost his right leg when he was hit by a bullet in the crossfire of a battle, dances with his prosthetic leg at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital for war victims and the disabled, in Kabul. — AFP photos

ing between the Taliban and the US-backed Afghan army is frequent.

His mother said Ahmad and his sister were caught in the crossfire of a battle, and both children were seriously wounded. Ahmad received his first prosthetic at age one, and soon learned to dance, his delight clear for all to see. More than 500,000 people had watched the video clip on Twitter within a day of it being posted on Monday. By Tuesday, he was showing off his skills to reporters in Kabul and was the top story on evening news programs. The video has attracted hundreds of admiring comments, with some people even offering to help. "This is the smile of victory over all odds of life ...god bless you dude" one Twitter user wrote. "Extremely amazed by the paradox of happiness & grief in this video!" wrote another.

Deadliest year

In 2018 alone, 3,804 civilians—including more than 900 children—were killed in Afghanistan, and another 7,000 more were wounded, according to the United Nations. It



Ahmad Sayed Rahman lies on the floor with his prosthetic leg.



Ahmad Sayed Rahman sits on a bench next to his mother, 42-year-old Bibi Saera Raisa, as she holds his prosthetic leg at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital.

was the deadliest year yet for civilians in Afghanistan's conflict. Tadamichi Yamamoto, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, said a "shocking number" of civilians are still being killed or maimed and called on all parties to do more to safeguard them. Peace talks are ongoing between the US and the Taliban but are moving slowly, adding to the anguish of everyday Afghans who have no idea what the future might hold for their country.

Ahmad's video was shot by Mulkara Rahimi, another physiotherapist at the Red Cross center. In her 10 years of professional activity, she's seen many patients like him. "Because he was so happy about the new prosthesis, I just wanted to save a record of the happiness," Rahimi says. "That's why I posted that video," she added, noting such moments were her reward for her difficult work. "I love my job," she said. The original video of Ahmad dancing can be seen at: <http://u.afp.com/JYuD>—AFP



Ahmad Sayed Rahman gestures as he dances with his prosthetic leg.

Migrant death ship to be shown at Venice art fair

The remains of the worst known Mediterranean migrant shipwreck, in which up to 900 people died, will be exhibited at the prestigious Venice Biennale art fair this week. The blue and red fishing boat was carrying almost 1,000 migrants when it struck a Portuguese cargo ship that was coming to its aid off the coast of Libya during the night of April 18-19, 2015. The boat sank quickly as the cargo ship's horrified crew raced to save 28 people. Swiss artist Christoph Buchel obtained permission from Italian authorities and a group that represents the victims to transport the hull to Venice as part of a project called "Barca Nostra" (Our Boat).



The fishing vessel 'Barca Nostra' (Our Ship) that sank on April 18, 2015 trapping hundreds of migrants in its hull, is being installed in Venice's former shipyards as part of the centerpiece of a new art project by Swiss-Icelandic artist Christoph Buchel. — AFP

It will be shown in a shipyard by itself, without any explanation. "It is a quiet site, sheltered from noise, an invitation to silence and meditation," said Paolo Baratta, the head of the Venice Biennale which opens on Saturday. Italy spent around 10 million euros (\$12 million) to raise the wreck from a depth of 370 meters (1,200 feet) and transport it to Sicily so the victims could be identified and given a proper burial. A large rectangular opening was cut in the hull to allow workers to recover hundreds of bodies, with dozens of medical examiners called in to examine the remains of 800-900 people.

Travel documents from Bangladesh, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan, were found, along with small packets of earth from some migrants' homelands and a school report that a teenager had sewn into their clothes. "It seems we are looking at the worst massacre ever seen in the Mediterranean," UNHCR spokeswoman Carlotta Sami said at the time. The disaster provoked an emergency EU summit as Europe tried to control a migrant crisis that has presented the union with one of its biggest challenges ever. The victims now lie in various Sicilian cemeteries, and it was decided to not destroy the boat but integrate it into a Sicilian "memory garden". — AFP



Ahmad Sayed Rahman sits on a bench without his prosthetic leg at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital for war victims and the disabled.



(From left) US actress Alexandra Ficken, Norwegian actress Alisha Boe, US actress Patti French, US actress Diane Keaton, Australian actress Jacki Weaver, US actress Pam Grier, US actress Celia Weston, US actress Rhea Perlman, US actress Carol Sutton and US actress Ginny MacColl attend the premiere of STX Entertainment's 'Poms' in Los Angeles. — AFP photos

Screen legend *Keaton* opens up about age, marriage and Hollywood

Diane Keaton claims to be one of the fortunate ones: as the screen legend reflects on age, marriage, and nearly half a century of working in Hollywood, she says that she's never felt sexually harassed. "Never. Maybe I just wasn't harassment material," said Keaton, who has 68 screen credits since her 1970 debut in the comedy "Lovers and Other Strangers." The 72-year-old's big screen appearances include "The Godfather" (1972) and its sequels, two "Father of the Bride" movies in the 1990s with Steve Martin and "Something's Gotta Give" with Jack Nicholson (2003), for which she won a Golden Globe.

But the actress truly made her mark co-starring in eight Woody Allen movies, from "Play in Again Sam" (1972) to "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (1993). She won her best actress Oscar for starring in "Annie Hall" (1977) with Allen and was nominated a further three times. Keaton and Allen were lovers for a time, and when they broke up they remained friends and work partners. As the Hollywood sexual harassment scandals detonated in late 2017, cascading from producer Harvey Weinstein to heavyweight actors like Kevin Spacey, old accusations of child sex abuse against Allen by his adoptive daughter Dylan resurfaced. "Woody Allen is my friend and I continue to believe him," Keaton tweeted in January 2018. For all her confidence and bravado, Keaton preferred simply not to talk about the controversial actor and director and did not answer a question about whether she'd work with him again.

Age and love

Keaton's last two movies are about aging women: "Book Club" (2018), with its message that love has no age, and now "Poms," set to open on Friday in the United States and Canada. "Poms" is the story of Martha, a terminally ill woman who moves to a retirement community to die, but winds up forming a cheerleading squad made up of female senior citizens. As for aging, Keaton says that life actually gets easier. "I think so, because what have you got to lose? It's like it's the truth. That's what it is. You face it, we talk about it," she said. Keaton is less certain about spending her final years in a retirement home, but she definitely wouldn't be a cheerleader like Martha in "Poms."



Diane Keaton attends the premiere of STX's 'Poms' at Regal LA Live.

"I was never a dancer... and cheerleading is really basically dancing," she said. She auditioned for a school cheerleading squad when she was 14 but didn't make the cut. "Really my heart was in performing on stage," she said. Keaton is familiar with the environment, having volunteered in her 30s at a Jewish retirement home, and she has a brother-the subject of a book she has just finished-at an assisted living facility. "So I know about them, I've been around," she said.

'I'm not unhappy'

Keaton, who enjoys photography when she isn't acting, in no rush to retire. "I don't think of it," she said. If the Hollywood work offers dry up, "I have a lot of hobbies that are very time-consuming that I love. I'll address those and those will be my work. I have no intention of stopping any kind of work whatsoever," she said. Keaton, who had long romances with screen legends like Al Pacino, Beatty and Allen, has two adopted children but never married.

"I wonder if I'm the only single woman of my age who's been in film who hasn't gotten married, so I might be a freak," she said. "Most people in the movies get married at some point and then they divorce. But I've never even got married. I am failure," she joked. Does she regret it? "I don't think about it a lot but I'm aware of the fact that I'm unusual in that regard, and maybe I did miss out on something-but then, nobody can have everything, right?" "I'm not unhappy," she said. — AFP

Disney sets dates for next three 'Star Wars' films from 2022

Following its merger with Fox, Disney on Tuesday sketched out its future plans for two of its most towering franchises—the "Star Wars" saga and "Avatar." Three new as-yet untitled "Star Wars" films will hit the big screen every other year just before Christmas starting in 2022, the mega-studio announced. That means that there could be a three-year wait between the December release of "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker," the final film in the original series begun in 1977, and the next big-screen "Star Wars" flick.

Several "Star Wars" projects are in the works, including a trilogy by David Benioff and D.B. Weiss, the creators of HBO's "Game of Thrones," and a separate trilogy by "Last Jedi" director Rian Johnson. A spokeswoman for Disney, contacted by AFP, did not offer additional details about the upcoming scheduled films, which will expand upon the cinematic universe created by George Lucas. Disney paid \$4 billion for Lucasfilm in 2012.

In September last year, Disney CEO Bob Iger admitted after the lackluster performance of "Solo: A Star Wars Story," a one-off film in the franchise, that the "Star Wars" release schedule was too frenetic. After six films in 38 years, from 1977 to 2005, the rhythm had picked up considerably. A total of four films came in rapid succession, from the release of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" in 2015 to "Solo" in May 2018. "I made the timing decision, and as I look back, I think the mistake that I made—I take the blame—was a little too much, too fast," Iger told The Hollywood Reporter last year.

Meanwhile, the studio pushed back its plans for the next films in director James Cameron's uber-successful "Avatar" franchise—one of the biggest prizes for Disney in the Fox merger. "Avatar 2" will come a year later than expected in December 2021, followed by "Avatar 3" in 2023, "Avatar 4" in 2025 and "Avatar 5" in 2027. "Avatar" remains the top-grossing film of all time, with \$2.79 billion in worldwide box office sales, but superhero extravaganza "Avengers: Endgame" is hot on its heels at \$2.24 billion and rapidly climbing. — AFP



Grande bonds with BTS' Jungkook after show

Ariana Grande has thanked BTS member Jungkook after he attended her show in Los Angeles on Monday. The 25-year-old "7 Rings" hitmaker took to Instagram on Tuesday to post a picture of herself with the K-pop star after she was left "screaming" in excitement when he attended her concert. She wrote alongside the image of the pair: "screaming, thank u soooooo much for coming to my show, Jungkook, it meant so much, love u sm (sic)" Ariana's sweet message comes after Jungkook, 21, also shared his joy at being able to attend the concert, after he posted a picture of himself holding merchandise from the show. He wrote in English alongside the picture: "I felt and learned a lot after seeing her stage. I am really challenged by her stage and will try harder! #ArianaGrande (sic)" And fans have already begun to speculate that the new friendship between the pair could open up doors for a possible collaboration in the future, as BTS - comprised of Jungkook alongside RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, and V - have already enjoyed successful collaborative efforts with the likes of Halsey, Ed Sheeran, Steve Aoki, and Nicki Minaj. Most recently, the group teamed up with Halsey for their chart-topping single "Boy With Luv", and with Ed Sheeran on "Make It Right", both of which appeared on their album "Map of the Soul: Persona", which was released last month. RM, the group's leader, recently said they "knew" they wanted to work with Halsey ever since first meeting her at the Billboard Music Awards in 2017. He said: "We met two years ago at the BBMA's backstage. She told us that she became a fan after she watched music videos. We knew Halsey from 'Closer' [with The Chainsmokers], biggest song of that year. So we met backstage and she came to Korea last year, and we met again. We talked about, like, 'We should collaborate. We should work on something.' We got this track for this album and thought that Halsey would be the best voice for this track. It happened. Boom. Here we are."

Stormzy to return to Ibiza Rocks

Stormzy is set to bring #MERRYK Festival back to Ibiza Rocks 2019. The grime star will headline the pool party venue at the famous Ibiza Rocks Hotel for the third year running, and alongside artists Dave and Fredo, is set to bring the party with his world-exclusive #MERRYK Festival, which is a real-time representation of one of the most exciting times in music in the world right now. This year, Ibiza Rocks has more than doubled its pool party program, and the newly upgraded venue is set to play host to the festival's biggest and most impressive line up in its near 15-year history. Alongside Stormzy, acts including Craig David, Jax Jones, DJ EZ, Rudimental, and MK will also be performing exclusive sets throughout the summer, while the likes of Anne Marie, Mabel, Stefflon Don, Kelis, James Arthur, Artwork, Toddla T, 2manydjs, Disciples, Derrick Carter,

Hannah Wants, Wilkinson, and lots more will also take to the stage. Jordan Hallpike, Director of Talent & Programming, Ibiza Rocks Group said: "Last summer was the first year we dedicated our program exclusively to daytime pool parties, which resulted in our best performing year to date. We have fine-tuned every element of the experience, defined the best time slots, curated the line-ups and the customer experience to make Ibiza Rocks a fully functioning day club. Now, in 2019 with fantastic new venue refurbishments and our biggest line-up ever we are ready to establish the Ibiza Rocks venue as the best day club experience in the world!" Stormzy's two-day festival will take place in the same week he's due to headline the Pyramid stage at Glastonbury music festival, where he is set to play a hit-filled headline set.



Mel C takes the lead with Spice Girls' musical direction for tour

Mel C is taking the lead when it comes to the Spice Girls' musical direction for their upcoming tour. The 45-year-old singer - who is known as Sporty Spice in the group - has made it her "priority" to ensure that she and her bandmates Geri Horner, Mel B and Emma Bunton's vocals are in top shape for the shows by using the same musical director she worked alongside on her solo music. A source told the Daily Mirror newspaper: "The tour is going to have amazing costumes and epic staging, but Mel is passionate about the music and is adamant that the vocals are as much of a priority. 'The girls each have a House of Spice theme complete with groups of dancers branded as Baby, Scary, Ginger and Sporty, which will certainly entertain.' But Mel insisted she brought in a musical director she has worked closely with on her solo material to boost the vocal performances and make sure the music hits the right note." The extensive stadium run - which won't feature Victoria Beckham - kicks off in Dublin on May 24 and it was recently reported that Geri, aka Ginger Spice, has hired her own singing coach. The

band, who have been working hard in rehearsals, haven't performed on stage properly together since the 2012 London Olympic Games Closing Ceremony, and the 'Bag It Up' hitmaker is determined to make sure their fans get their money's worth. An insider said: "Geri is anxious to make sure she is up to standard when the girls get back together ... so she has hired a singing instructor. 'She doesn't want to be the one people point the finger at if it isn't note perfect.' Geri's recruitment of a vocal instructor came after reports that Sporty ordered her bandmates to take singing lessons. The Northerner was worried as the group have not sang together in years and she believes it is 'crucial they take the performance side of the money-spinning return very seriously'. Geri also insisted that they never came close to asking fashion designer Victoria, 45, to join them on the road, even though Mel B claimed she was poised to sign up. She said: 'No, there was never a point it was all five of us. Mel thought she could make it happen if she just kept on saying it. She's clever, you've got to hand it to her.'



Led Zeppelin documentary in the works

A documentary on Led Zeppelin is in the works. The as-yet-untitled project is now in post-production, and traces the journeys of the four members - Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and the late John Bonham - through the music scene of the 1960s, their meeting in the summer of 1968 for a rehearsal that will change the future of rock, and culminates in 1970 when their second album knocks The Beatles off the top of the charts. The documentary has been directed by Bernard MacMahon - who helmed the 2017 music documentary 'American Epic' - and celebrates the 'Stairway to Heaven' hitmakers on their 50th anniversary. Speaking in a press release about the movie, Jimmy Page said: "When I saw everything Bernard had done both visually and sonically on the remarkable achievement that is 'American Epic', I knew he would be qualified to tell our sto-

ry." Whilst Robert Plant added: "Seeing Will Shade, and so many other important early American musicians, brought to life on the big screen in 'American Epic' inspired me to contribute to a very interesting and exciting story." And John Paul Jones said: "The time was right for us to tell our own story for the first time in our own words, and I think that this film will really bring that story to life." The documentary features brand new interviews of Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones, as well as rare archival interviews with the late John Bonham, and never before seen archive film and photographs. The film will be the first Led Zeppelin story told through the words of the members themselves, and is the first and only time the band have participated in a documentary in their 50 year career. As of the time of writing, the film is yet to have a firm release date.



Youngsters and dogs are seen next to a street mural in Valparaiso, Chile, on April 09, 2019. — AFP photos



View of a street mural in Valparaiso, Chile.



Chilean artist Cynthia Aguilera poses with her son next to a mural made by her in Valparaiso, Chile.

CHILE'S VALPARAISO, AN OPEN AIR GRAFFITI AND MURAL ART GALLERY



A woman walks past a street mural in Valparaiso.

Creating colorful pictures of surreal human faces, marine animals or even huge owls, hundreds of graffiti artists have turned the Chilean port of Valparaiso into a gigantic open-air art gallery. Elias Street is typical of Valparaiso with its narrow side-walks winding up and down Cerro Alegre hill, itself a tourist attraction. There are many little streets like this that surround the 42 hills overlooking the Pacific Ocean that are a striking feature of the Valparaiso skyline. Over the last few years, the walls of houses in Elias Street have been transformed into giant canvases where graffiti artists show off their skills.

It was brought about by "young people's need to go out and express themselves in the street," Sammy Espinoza, a graffiti artist and graphics designer, told AFP. Hundreds of stairways, labyrinthine streets between the hills, cobbled alleyways and seemingly abandoned plots have converted Valparaiso, which lies 120 kilometers (75 miles) to the northwest of the capital Santiago, into "the perfect city" for creativity, added Espinoza.

That's why he and his partner Cynthia Aguilera, a civil engineer, left Santiago a decade ago to move to Valparaiso and dedicate themselves to graffiti. They go by the name "Un Kolor Distinto" (a different color) and have created huge works of art such as "Solsticio de verano" (summer solstice), a mural spanning all 22 floors of the Centenario building, one of the tallest in the city, with a surreal yellow face mixed with green and purple fruits and vegetables.

It has now become one of the hottest spots on the tourist trail. The couple have also painted murals on three more buildings in their distinctive colorful style that often contains written messages. While spray cans are their primary tools, they also use paint, oil and crayons to create the vivid colors that bring life to an imaginary world. "This mixing graffiti with mural art-making street art has already started to evolve and arrive at what (Valparaiso) is today, an open air gallery," said Aguilera.

'Everything mixes well'

In 2003, UNESCO declared Valparaiso's historic center a World Heritage Site, recognizing what was one of the most important South American ports in the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as an improvised architecture that had to adapt to the city's hills. Today, it is one of Chile's most visited tourist sites, alongside the Atacama Desert in the north and Patagonia in the south. There are almost 1,400 murals and graffiti artworks in the city and for the last five years they've found a place on the city's tourism circuit, alongside views of the bay, colorful homes that hang from its steep hills, and its old funiculars and trams.

"There are those very beautiful wall drawings, everything mixes well, it's very beautiful," 31-year-old Italian tourist Alessandro Ferrisini said as he took a tour of the city's graffiti circuit. Every month, around a thousand tourists take that tour. Some 300 graffiti artists, both Chileans and foreigners, have displayed their artwork on Valparaiso's walls during the last five years, according to 34-year-old Alvaro Ramirez, a graffiti artist and businessman. "At first, most people looked at it as a scar on the city. 'How are you going to show the city's stains to the tourists?' they asked me," said Ramirez.



View of a mural on a building in Valparaiso.

But now, "the people who come to Valparaiso, come for the colored houses, they see it as an artistic destination," added Ramirez, who started his graffiti in New York aged just seven, before returning to Chile at 21. The locals have changed their minds about the graffiti artists they used to view as criminals. Now they open their doors and allow the artists to decorate the walls of their homes. Local authorities have also designated spaces for them, yet some artists claim they are still chased by police. — AFP



A man walks past a street mural in Valparaiso.



Tourists walk up and down a staircase decorated as a street mural in Valparaiso.



View of Valparaiso, Chile.



View of street murals in Valparaiso.



Men walk past a street mural in Valparaiso.



A woman walks past a street mural in Valparaiso.

Jerusalem's dilemma over hordes of stray cats

Dozen cats wake up in cages stacked on top of one another, a pungent odor in the air, while in a room next door two vets work diligently. Captured in the streets of Jerusalem by city workers or brought in by residents, at least 15 cats a day are sterilized at the municipal veterinary center. But experts say that is far too few to stabilize the city's burgeoning street cat population and allay fears about the impact on its environment and ecosystem from the felines. The concentration of stray cats in the Holy City is among the highest in the Middle East or even the world, experts say.

With nearly 2,000 cats per square kilometer (mile), it has a total of some 240,000, in a city of more than 900,000 residents, the Israeli official in charge of its veterinarian services, Asaf Brill, said. Only a large-scale, rapid program to sterilize some 80 percent of the cats within a six-month period would be capable of bringing the population under control, he said. "To achieve that result, 25 clinics like mine would be needed to sterilize 500 cats per day," he said, at the veterinary services center, a collection of fading buildings on the edge of Jerusalem.

Going underground

Reducing the cats' access to their main source of food is another option for bringing the stray population under control. The hordes of cats find most of their food in rubbish bins that sometimes overflow, especially in mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem, which Israel occupied in the Six-Day War of 1967 and later annexed. Israel considers the entire city its capital, though public services in parts of east Jerusalem are noticeably poorer than in the mainly Jewish western sector.

The city council recently launched a plan to modernize rubbish collection, moving some bins underground and therefore depriving the cats of

the food source. "Ultimately, underground rubbish bins that reduce the availability of food for cats are the only solution to control the size of the population," Amir Balaban, of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, said. But not everyone backs the idea of food deprivation.

Jerusalem's newly elected mayor, Moshe Lion, announced in January the creation of feeding stations around the city, with the food in granule form notably, and budgeted 100,000 shekels (\$28,000, 24,000 euros) a year for the scheme. The decision aims to provide a transition that is clean and more controlled between the current, free-for-all access to the bins and their eventual removal.

'Political decision needed'

For Inbal Keidar, a lawyer specializing in animal welfare issues, it is merely a cosmetic measure and fails to adequately address the problem. "What is needed is a real political decision to solve the problem with a massive sterilization campaign for cats while mobilizing associations and public authorities," she said. But she acknowledged that sterilization was not acceptable to everyone. In 2015, Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel refused to use \$4.5 million (four million euros) in government funding made available for the sterilization of stray cats, Keidar noted.

As an Orthodox Jew, the minister had said that castrating cats was contrary to Jewish religious law and had proposed sending stray cats and dogs to other countries instead. Associations and volunteers have sought to fill the void for what they complain is a lack of political will and public funding. Teacher Ilana Ben Joya feeds dozens of cats twice a day in a working-class area of Jerusalem.

"It's my second job," said the mother of two, aged in her 50s. "I can't handle knowing that



there are so many outside hungry. What worries me is knowing that in a few weeks the females will have babies and we will again hear the meows of kittens." She, too, believes that there should be a large-scale sterilization program.

A threat to some species

Balaban said that fixed feeding areas can also prove problematic since the food attracts other animals, including jackals which have been spotted in some Jerusalem neighborhoods. Some of the wild animals carry diseases that can be transmitted to humans, such as rabies and leishmaniasis. He said the challenge was striking the right

balance between protecting the cats and the environment.

"Wild cats are active in the nighttime. They eat rodents," he said. "Domestic cats, like gutter cats, depend on people, are active in the daytime and hunt small animals—lizards, reptiles and small birds," he added. When there are too many cats, "as is the case currently in Jerusalem and in a number of large Israeli cities, they threaten those species", he said. — AFP

Jerusalem municipal veterinary center employee Ahmed Abu Sineh attempts to lure stray cats into a cage with food so that they can be sterilized. — AFP Photos



A trapped cat about to be transported for sterilization at the Jerusalem municipal veterinary center.



A veterinarian prepares a stray cat for sterilization surgery at the Jerusalem municipal veterinary center.



Jerusalem municipal veterinary center employee Ahmed Abu Sineh shows a trapped cat who will be transported for sterilization.

Tissot Gentleman permanent elegance

As innovator by tradition, Tissot is dedicating its new Gentleman to the elegant man of today. Sophisticated yet understated, made of steel and solid 18 ct pink gold, it is available in four versions. This 40 mm-diameter model shows Tissot's devotion to fine workmanship in its watchmaking, with carefully-wrought details.

Versatility

The Tissot Gentleman is a multi-purpose watch, both ergonomic and elegant in any circumstance. It is equally suitable for wearing in a business environment, where conventional dress codes apply, as at the weekend, when it adapts easily to leisure activities. As part of the life of a modern, active man, the Tissot Gentleman becomes the perfect companion for every day, every occasion and every style.



High-quality materials

The steel of which its case is made is embellished by a bezel made entirely of 18 ct pink gold. This precious metal catches the eye and adds warmth to the Gentleman's colouring, especially since it also appears on the dial. Measuring 40 mm in diameter by 10.64 in thickness, the case is extended by horns with a pronounced curvature, enabling it to hug the lines of the wrist more closely. These design features make the Tissot Gentleman a watch that is comfortable and easy to wear, gliding under the sleeve of a shirt finely woven from the best cotton.

Colours

Two straps adorn the Tissot Gentleman. They add the defining touch to two types of model. The first is a steel bracelet, consisting of three wide links. The one positioned in the centre is burnished while the ones surrounding it have a satin finish. The solid attachment is more sporty and is the natural extension of a silver dial. The second option consists of a selection of smooth calfskin straps, in colours that match the dials: black, camel and chocolate.

Details

All the dials, whatever their colour, sport four noteworthy features. Firstly, a central marking in the shape of a circular sighting-line makes the dial easy to read and gives it a contemporary appearance. Secondly, the ring of applique hour markers, bevelled and buffed to a satin finish, and accentuated by faceted dauphine hands with white luminescent material and a date aperture at 3 o'clock, reveal the subtle elegance of the dial. The pink gold colour of this magnificent dial has precisely the same warmth as the 18 ct pink gold bezel. A very slender second hand enables the time to be read with great precision, to the second. Lastly, the "Powermatic 80 Silicon" indication is a reminder that the Gentleman has an exceptional calibre.

The heart

In fact, Tissot uses the ETA C07.811, better known under the name of Powermatic 80, in the version with a silicon balance-spring. This spring provides greater longevity, more precise running and greater resistance to magnetic fields. The self-winding movement has a very convenient power reserve of 80 hours, hence its name. With over three days of running time when not being worn, the Tissot Gentleman allows its owner to get through the weekend without having to rewind his watch or reset the time.

The Gentleman's watch

The Tissot Gentleman can thus be worn for both work and leisure, formal and informal occasions, sporty or smart events. And it always looks elegant with its bezel in solid 18 ct pink gold and its finely-wrought dials. It's the very watch for a gentleman. Always at ease, without ever overdoing things, no matter what the situation.

Features

- Steel case, burnished details
- Solid 18 ct pink gold bezel
- Diameter 40 mm, thickness 10.64 mm
- Sapphire glass and mineral glass on plate
- Water-resistant 50 m (5 ATM)
- Steel crown with embossed T
- Mechanical self-winding movement
- Powermatic 80 (ETA C07.811) calibre with silicon spring
- Hours, minutes, seconds, date
- Engraved rotor and "Waves of Time" decoration
- Power reserve of 80 hours
- Dial in black, cream opaline, chocolate or silver
- Pink gold applique hour markers, bevelled, buffed to a satin finish with white Super-LumiNova applique
- Pink gold hands, faceted and filled with white Super-LumiNova
- Day-of-the-month window, pink gold applique
- Steel strap with 3 links, buffed to a satin finish or in black, camel or chocolate calfskin with contrasting topstitching
- Foldover steel clasp with safety push-buttons

Spain's Prado museum unveils restored Fra Angelico masterpiece

Spain's Prado unveiled yesterday the restoration of "The Annunciation", a 15th-century altarpiece by Renaissance painter Fra Angelico ahead of the museum's bicentenary celebrations. Experts worked for nearly a year at the Madrid museum to enhance the colors of the altarpiece, one of the best known works by the Italian painter and Dominican friar.

The central panel of the altarpiece depicts the moment in the New Testament when the Archangel Gabriel tells the Virgin Mary she will give birth to Christ with the left



Picture shows tools and materials used during the restoration process of "The Annunciation" retablo (background) by Italian painter Fra Angelico, at the Spanish 'Museo del Prado' in Madrid yesterday. — AFP Photos

side showing Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise. "We have recovered the intense white light that envelops the entire composition, the bright and transparent colors of Fra Angelico," the chief restorer of the work, Almudena Sanchez, told AFP. The cost of the restoration — 150,000 euros (\$169,000) — was covered by donations from two patronage associations.

"The Annunciation" will be the centerpiece of an exhibition dedicated to works from the Early Renaissance which the Prado museum will hold from May 28 to September 15. Spain's flagship art museum, which received 2.9 million visitors last year, is holding a series of special events and exhibitions to celebrate its 200th anniversary this year. Its walls are lined with masterpieces from the Spanish, Italian and Flemish schools, including Velazquez's "Las Meninas" and Goya's "Third of May". — AFP



Almudena Sanchez, restorer of Spanish 'Museo del Prado', poses next to "The Annunciation" retablo by Italian painter Fra Angelico in Madrid yesterday. — AFP Photos



Picture shows hardcopy graphics used during the restoration process of "The Annunciation" retablo by Italian painter Fra Angelico.

Classifieds

Thursday, May 9, 2019

Kuwait Times
Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Partly cloudy with light to moderate variable wind to easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

BY NIGHT: Fair and Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 08/05/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	40 °C	29 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	40 °C	24 °C			
ABDALY	41 °C	24 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	41 °C	26 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	37 °C	24 °C			
SALMIYAH	36 °C	27 °C			
AHMADI	33 °C	29 °C			
NU/WAISIB	37 °C	25 °C			
WAFRA	40 °C	22 °C			
SALMY	39 °C	23 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	05/09	Hot and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	39 °C	26 °C	VRB-SE	10 - 42 km/h
Friday	05/10	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	40 °C	27 °C	SE-N	10 - 40 km/h
Saturday	05/11	Hot and Clouds will decrease gradually	40 °C	24 °C	NE-NW	15 - 38 km/h
Sunday	05/12	Hot and Partly cloudy	39 °C	23 °C	NW	12 - 38 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:32
Sunrise	05:02
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:28
Isha	19:53

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	40 °C
MIN. Temp.	22 °C
MAX. RH	39 %
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

Rasheeda Surname: Abdul Kareem (C 5527) 9-5-2019

I, SHANTI MOL XAVIER daughter of Pulickal Xavier, holder of Indian Passport No. K4659425, issued at Kuwait on 26/04/2012, permanent resident of Pulickal House, Kerala, India and presently residing Bldg 15, Block 10, Salmiya, Kuwait do hereby change my name from SHANTI MOL XAVIER to SHANTIMOL as Given name and XAVIER as Surname with immediate effect. (C 5528)

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, Latchaiahgaripalli, 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, Rasheeda Abdul Kareem, Thannickel House, Pattoth, Koodaranhi P.O. Kozhikode, Kerala. Holder of Indian Passport No. 2311556 residing in Kuwait at present hereby declare the name changes as Given Name:

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



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 9/5/2019				Departure Flights on Thursday 9/5/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MSR	611	Cairo	13:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	IRA	600	Tehran	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	FDB	5060	Dubai	15:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
PGT	828	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:35	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	JZR	1233	Taif	16:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	KAC	151	Istanbul	17:35
MSR	0516	Cairo	04:25	KAC	503	Beirut	17:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:30	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:30	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	FEG	242	Alexandria	17:45
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	JZR	253	Amman	18:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	362	Colombo	06:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
BAW	157	London	06:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
QTR	8511	Doha	07:05	KAC	691	Muscat	19:35
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	07:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	357	Kochi	20:05
KAC	352	Kochi	08:05	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	NIA	162	Cairo	20:30
JZR	702	Asyut	08:25	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	FDB	058	Dubai	20:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	333	Trivandrum	21:05
KAC	384	Delhi	09:45	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	RBG	214	Sohag	21:10
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
JZR	1220	Jeddah	10:55	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
JZR	410	Delhi	11:50	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
IRA	667	Esfahan	13:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	RBG	556	Alexandria	23:10
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis shop at a market in Kuwait City during the second day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Guards charged with assaulting Bahrain inmates

DUBAI: Twelve prison guards in Bahrain have been charged with physically assaulting inmates, the authorities said yesterday, a rare move in the kingdom which has witnessed sporadic unrest since 2011. The Special Investigation Unit, a public prosecution commission tasked with investigating government officials and employees, said it received on April 11 complaints of

“assault” in Jaw prison south of the capital Manama. “Twelve security (personnel), including two officers, were charged (with assault) and transferred to court,” the commission said after investigating the allegations. It said the court will hold its first hearing on May 20. In a separate incident, a security guard this year was sentenced to six months in jail after being charged with

assault, the commission said, without disclosing the date of his arrest.

It said it had received 29 complaints of “torture, mistreatment, and use of excessive force” in the first four months of this year, adding that 67 security personnel were questioned. Bahrain, home to the US Navy’s Fifth Fleet, has been gripped by bouts of unrest

since 2011, when authorities cracked down on Shiite-led protests demanding political reform. Since then, hundreds of protesters have been jailed and those convicted of terrorism offences have been stripped of their nationality. Bahrain accuses Iran of inciting protests among its Shiite citizens. Tehran denies the accusation. — AFP

US: Iran planning imminent attack...

Continued from Page 1

from the “aggressor” United States, which deposed Iran’s arch-enemy Saddam Hussein in a 2003 invasion. Pompeo, whose trip to Iraq is his second this year, said he spoke at length about Iran’s influence with Shiite militias.

“We’ve urged the Iraqi government for its own security to get all of those forces under Iraqi central control,” Pompeo said. “In each of those meetings, those two leaders promised that that was their objective, too, they were moving towards that goal,” he said. In Iraq, a debate has been raging in recent months over the fate of some 5,200 US troops stationed across the country. Their presence angers the Hashed al-Shaabi, a paramilitary force that is dominated by pro-Iran factions which played a key role alongside government forces in the fight against IS.

In a press conference a few hours before Pompeo’s arrival, Abdel Mahdi said Iraq would not accept any attack on foreign troops on its land. “Iraq really is taking the responsibility to avoid any attack on any of our friends here, coalition forces or any of our friends here,” he told reporters. “This is an obligation that Iraq would honor, (and) not accept any attack on anyone—whether Iraqi, foreigner, whether it’s

an embassy or a company or a military mission,” he said.

The Trump administration has imposed sweeping sanctions on Iran, including trying to stop all exports of its oil, although it has issued a waiver for energy-starved Iraq to keep buying power from its neighbor. Iranian media have said that Rouhani will announce retaliatory measures on Wednesday to mark the anniversary of Trump’s pullout from a 2015 nuclear accord under which Tehran drastically scaled back its sensitive work.

With the imposition of US sanctions, Iran has grown increasingly frustrated that it has not seen the fruits of the agreement, with which UN inspectors say it is complying. Pompeo had been travelling from Finland, where he had attended a meeting of the Arctic Council, to Germany, where he was due to meet both Chancellor Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas later Tuesday. Germany has wide disagreements with the Trump administration and along with other European nations still supports the 2015 nuclear deal negotiated under former US president Barack Obama.

German parliamentary foreign affairs committee chair Norbert Roettgen said that “even if the reasons for the rejection are unavoidable, it unfortunately fits in with the current climate in the relationship between the two governments”. But Pompeo said that Maas was “most gracious” in a telephone call in which he told him he would scrap the visit. Pompeo, who returns to Europe for talks Wednesday in London, said he would try to reschedule his trip “as soon as we possibly could”. — AFP

Slice of Ramadan dipped in the...

Continued from Page 1

He continued to love them and carried out his task, diligently. However, on his way back from the stream, with a pot filled to the brim with water, he usually encountered some individuals who invariably were thirsty.

Despite knowing that his aunt would berate him (often get a beating too) for fetching half-filled pots, this boy would stop and offer water to these individuals. One day, he couldn’t bear the scolding from his aunt, so he swore never to give anyone water. But on one particular day on his way back, he met a strange looking man who begged him for water. The strange man lay by the road side with an injury.

The young boy remembered his vow - never to give anyone water - but contemplated for a moment. His heart filled with mercy for the stranger and so he gave the man some water. When he got home, his aunt noticed the half-filled pot, and again poured on him - this time with even more cruelty than ever before. As she was beating this young lad, there was a knock on the door.

It was the strange wounded man - a mailman who would have died of thirst on the way if not for the boy’s mercy. Apparently, he came from town with an envelope for this very same young boy. It contained a scholarship with an additional gift of cash for the boy! You can only imagine the boy’s feelings of profound joy, deep happiness and intense gratitude which was reflected in his profession.

The boy grew up to be a famous orator and he always opened his lectures talking about his childhood experi-

ence because he realized that it was God who had put him in the “mailman’s way” and it was God who had placed mercy in his heart for others. With mercy comes a heart filled with compassion & love for the giver and the beneficiary. It is rightly said that where there is mercy, there is life. Your everyday good deeds, however small, are never in vain for they shall return to you when least expected.

Some questions as food for thought - will I become less of a person if I smile at and pray for the less fortunate, the needy and those whose paychecks are not as heavy as mine? Will I be termed a weak person if I forgive those who have hurt me - be it strangers or loved ones? Will I lose my wealth if I practice some charity and give alms? Will I lose my health if I practice forbearance and tolerance with everyone around me - at home and at work? Practice does make perfect! Make it your resolution to subscribe to just one of these adjectives and you will reap benefits galore.

My experience has taught me that mercy begins by opening oneself to those with whom one might strongly disagree. Mercy doesn’t end there, of course. It may begin with small acts of understanding, but can lead to life-changing experiences of love, peace & tolerance. And this ode is for those sisters and brothers who have Shakespeare on their bookshelf: The quality of mercy is not strain’d. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven: Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes. Shakespeare’s ‘The Merchant of Venice’

Courtesy of the TIES Center: the TIES Center aims at empower Kuwait’s expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and inter-faith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, you can contact TIES at Tel: 25231015/6; Hotline: 94079777; e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.

democratic practices while grilling the minister.

In the meantime, Assembly Speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem said yesterday that he has received a motion signed by a number of MPs calling to convene a special session on Sunday to debate a general amnesty draft law. Ghanem said he will call for the session and inform the government to attend. The government’s attendance is essential to hold the session in addition to the required quorum. Sources expected that the government will not attend the meeting and therefore is unlikely to take place.

World gets first glimpse of UK’s...

Continued from Page 1

The couple revealed Queen Elizabeth’s husband Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, had got a sneak preview in a chance encounter in the corridors of Windsor Castle. “We just bumped into the Duke as we were walking by, which was so nice,” said Meghan. “It’ll be a nice moment to introduce the baby to more family.” Prince Charles, on a visit to Germany on Tuesday, said he was “obviously delighted” and “impatient” to see his fourth grandchild.

The heir to the British throne, speaking in German, said he would see the baby “in the coming days when things are calmer”. Crowds have gathered outside Windsor Castle, west of London, all week to wish them well. It was a rare piece of good news for a nation consumed by the protracted Brexit drama. And it has given people a chance to celebrate royal traditions — this time with a young American twist.

Former US TV star Meghan has created a fresh buzz around the century-old House of Windsor. Some fans have also been intrigued by her heritage. “I want to see how he’ll look. As Meghan is mixed race, I’m curious”, said Zahra Kibue, 34, who lived in Kenya before moving to England a few years ago. Meghan

has also made waves with her modernizing ways. She raised eyebrows by closing her own car door - a task usually performed by aides - and has ignored tradition by keeping the birth private and well away from the prying media’s eyes.

Most UK media assumed that Meghan had opted for a home birth, but The Daily Mail reported that those plans were “dashed as she was secretly whisked to a London hospital on Sunday by Harry and his Scotland Yard security team”. The Sun, a competing tabloid, said Meghan ended up being secretly rushed to a £15,000-a-night (\$20,000, 17,500-euro) London hospital before giving birth “at exactly sunrise”.

British bookmakers will be pleased that the suspense remains around what the new arrival will be called, after a busy few months of betting on the name. “It’s been crazy,” Amy Jones, a spokeswoman for Paddy Power bookmakers said. “Now that the baby has arrived, everyone is backing the name Alexander.” UK royal names are normally chosen from a relatively restricted pool of those used by past kings and queens.

But Meghan and Harry are anything but normal royals. “Meghan Markle and Prince Harry to choose UNUSUAL name for baby that UNIFIES the US and UK.” The Daily Express wrote, sparking a wild guessing game on Twitter filled with puns and jokes. Perhaps only half in jest, bookies were offering 250-1 odds on the boy being named Donald, in honour of US President Trump. Although the couple received congratulations from former US first lady Michelle Obama, the White House remained silent. — AFP

Tehran rolls back nuclear...

Continued from Page 1

industries from US sanctions. “If the five countries came to the negotiating table and we reached an agreement, and if they could protect our interests in the oil and banking sectors, we will go back to square one,” Rouhani said in a televised address.

“The Iranian people and the world should know that today is not the end of the JCPOA,” he said, using the acronym for the nuclear deal. “These are actions in line with the JCPOA.” The 2015 accord was signed between Iran, Russia, China, Britain, France, Germany and the United States, before President Donald Trump took office. Iran agreed to limits on its nuclear program in return for the lifting of sanctions. Washington’s European allies opposed Trump’s decision to pull out and have tried, so far in vain, to find ways to blunt the economic impact of new US sanctions.

France and Germany both said they wanted to keep the deal alive, and warned Iran not to violate it. The Kremlin accused Washington of provoking Iran’s move. Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said President Vladimir Putin had predicted consequences from the “unthought-out steps” of US withdrawal. “Now we are seeing those consequences.” China said the agreement should continue to be implemented and called on all sides to avoid an escalation of tensions.

Nuclear arms control experts said Iran’s steps announced yesterday appeared tailored to avoid triggering renewed sanctions under a “snapback” mechanism in the 2015 accord. Mark Fitzpatrick, an associate fellow of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said Iran was not yet close to exceeding its allowed stockpile limit of low-enriched uranium, and its heavy water stockpile was a comparatively minor issue.

“Enriching (uranium) to 20 percent would surely spark sanctions, so I expect in 60 days there will be various ‘technical’ reasons why it can’t be done right away,” he said of Rouhani’s threat to exceed the enrichment purity limit to levels farther along the road toward

high-enriched, bomb-grade uranium. The weeks leading up to the anniversary of Trump’s withdrawal from the agreement have seen a sharp tightening of US sanctions and an increase in tensions on other fronts.

From this month, Washington has effectively ordered countries worldwide to stop buying Iranian oil or face sanctions of their own. The Trump administration has revoked waivers that had allowed some countries to continue buying Iranian oil and it aims to reduce Iranian crude exports to zero. Washington has also blacklisted Iran’s Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist group. Iran responded with threats to close the Gulf’s Strait of Hormuz - the conduit for about a third of the world’s seaborne oil exports - if its ships were blocked there.

Washington announced the deployment of an aircraft carrier to the Gulf to counter what it says are Iranian threats. Tehran says the USS Abraham Lincoln is merely replacing another carrier under a scheduled rotation, and calls the announcement old news. The looming total ban on oil sales is likely to sharply increase the economic hardship for Iran’s 80 million people. Finding a response is the biggest test yet for Rouhani, a pragmatist who has faced strong opposition from hardliners.

The nuclear deal was his flagship policy to end Iran’s isolation and open up its economy to the world. Ultimate authority in Iran lies with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, a cleric in power since 1989, who signed off on the nuclear deal but remains close to the hardline faction challenging Rouhani. Washington’s European allies say Trump’s repudiation of the deal weakens the pragmatic wing of Iran’s leadership and plays into the hands of hardliners. It means ordinary Iranians see no economic benefits from Rouhani’s efforts to open the country.

The Trump administration argues that the deal, negotiated by his predecessor Barack Obama, was flawed because it is not permanent, does not address Iran’s missile program and does not punish Iran for meddling in the affairs of other countries. Trump’s hard line is backed by Israel and Washington’s Gulf Arab allies, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which see Iran as a foe and which gain leverage over global oil prices by keeping Iranian crude off the market. — Reuters

Kuwait Information Minister survives...

Continued from Page 1

Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri. His Highness the Amir hailed the minister’s distinguished performance in response to the recent interpellation at parliament. His Highness also lauded MPs’ respected and sophisticated

Sports

India among favourites to win World Cup: Kapil Dev

Yuvraj backs Pandya to give India a World Cup edge

NEW DELHI: Former captain Kapil Dev yesterday pegged India as one of the top three favourites to win the World Cup, which starts later this month, saying their pace bowling would come good in seaming English conditions.

India open their campaign against South Africa on June 5 in Southampton with an eye on clinching their third title in the 50-over showpiece event.

"Winning team looks like India, England and Australia and surprise package can be New Zealand," the Indian World Cup-winning skipper told reporters at a promotional event in New Delhi.

"India has the combination of youth and experience. They have the right balance in four fast bowlers, three spinners and two big names in Virat Kohli and (M.S.) Dhoni," he said.

India's pace battery is led by Jasprit Bumrah, the world's top bowler in the one-day format, and includes Mohammed Shami, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Hardik Pandya.

Bumrah has been hailed for his ability to bowl yorkers at the death, while Shami and Kumar have also impressed. "They are fantastic, very good. English conditions will help them. They can swing the ball," said Dev, known as "Haryana Hurricane" during his playing days for his pace.

"They have Bumrah and Shami who can bowl 145 (kmph) plus. So we have swing, we have pace. That's a very good combination to have."

Dev, who led India to their maiden World Cup in 1983 when his side beat two-time champions West Indies to take the trophy at Lord's, said it was the "belief" which separated winners from the rest.

Dev slammed comparisons between him and star all-rounder Pandya who has impressed with his power hitting in the team's middle order and skills as a medium-pace bowler.

The 25-year-old Pandya, who is set to play his first 50-over World Cup, has earned his place in the Indian XI with 731 runs and 44 wickets in 45 ODIs since making his debut in 2016.

"He is an upcoming player... Please do not pressure him. He is a young talent, let him play his cricket with his own free mind," said Dev.

When quizzed about the on-field chemistry

between former captain Dhoni and Kohli, Dev said both the players were crucial to India's World Cup hopes.

"Both the cricketers have done so well for India, unmatchable. First, all of them should understand that they are not playing for themselves but playing for the country."

All-rounders will play a key role at the upcoming 50-overs World Cup in England and Wales and India could have one of the best in Hardik Pandya, 2011 player-of-the-tournament Yuvraj Singh has told Reuters.

Yuvraj scored 362 runs and 15 wickets as India won the World Cup for the second time in 2011 and the 37-year-old believes the rules of this year's edition will make those players who can contribute with both bat and ball even more valuable.

A maximum of four fielders will be allowed outside the 30-yard circle between overs 10 to 40, making it difficult for captains to stack their teams with frontline batsmen and rely on part-timers to pitch in with the bowling. "It's a five-felder rule and part-timers don't get away with that kind of bowling, it's going to be tough to bowl the sixth bowler," Yuvraj told Reuters in an interview.

"But if you go with five (frontline) bowlers, then you know somebody has to bowl four to five overs maximum. If somebody is not bowling well, then someone has to chip in."

Yuvraj was confident seam-bowling all-rounder Pandya can execute the role he played eight years ago to perfection when the 12th World Cup kicks off on May 30.

"I was actually having this conversation with him," the left-handed batsman said of his Mumbai Indians team mate Pandya.

"I told him that 'you have a great chance of performing really well with the ball and bat', the kind of form he is in at the moment. Definitely, the way he is batting at the moment, it is phenomenal and I hope he carries that form."

"He has been bowling well in patches but as I said it is all about how you handle the pressure... I just hope that Hardik is having an awesome tournament."

After going through the most difficult period of his fledgling career in the past few months, during which



Kapil Dev



Yuvraj Singh

he had to deal with injury problems and controversy off the field, Pandya has been back to his best in the Indian Premier League.

The 25-year-old has been a vital cog in Mumbai's march to the final of the Twenty20 tournament, scoring runs at a breathtaking strike rate of almost 200 and also picking up 14 wickets with his medium pace bowling.

In his heyday, Yuvraj was one of the cleanest strikers of the ball in the game-as England's Stuart Broad found out when he was bludgeoned for six sixes in one over during the 2007 World Twenty20.

A veteran of three World Cups, Yuvraj is certain the wickets in England and Wales will allow a continuation of the trend towards high scoring at World Cups.

India's wristspin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav have had lot of success in the recent past and Yuvraj implored the Virat Kohli-led side to include two spinners in their side during the quadrennial tournament.

"I feel we need to go with our strength," Yuvraj added at an event to launch MoneyGram's microsite

through which fans would be able to send wishes to their teams for the World Cup.

"Our strength is that our spinners have been successful against South Africa, Australia and England and we should go with that. I would say go with our four best bowlers and fifth is Hardik."

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

Recalling India's exit from the 2007 World Cup in West Indies when the side departed at the group stage having lost two out of three matches, Yuvraj felt the new format would allow teams a shot at redemption.

"Playing everybody and nine games will definitely be tougher (but) it's actually going to work in both ways," he said.

"It's tougher, yes, but you also have an opportunity to bounce back. We lost the 2007 World Cup and suddenly we felt that we needed more games. Those times there was no opportunity to bounce back." — Agencies

Cricket showcases plight of globe's street children

CAMBRIDGE: Bangladeshi youngsters singing "We want our rights" was the backdrop to the inaugural Street Child Cricket World Cup, bringing together teams from across the world to raise awareness of the plight of marginalised children.

Eight mixed-sex teams competed in the university city of Cambridge over the weekend, with the action moving to the home of cricket at Lord's for finals day on Tuesday, where India South were crowned champions.

But it was difficult even getting the players to Britain for the event, with teams representing countries as far-flung as England, Mauritius and Nepal. Bangladesh's team leader Forhad Hossain had to go to court to be recognised as the legal guardian of the children so they could obtain passports.

Both Zimbabwe and Democratic Republic of Congo were no-shows due to the lengthy visa process. The tournament is the brainchild of John Wroe, the CEO and co-founder of Street Child United, a British charity that uses sport to change the negative perceptions and treatment of "street-connected" children.

It is the first to be hosted in Britain-there have been three football versions in South Africa, Brazil and Russia. Nizam, 15, was wrapped in a Bangladeshi flag and sported a bandana with his country's colours on it, showing his patriotism despite a life on the margins.

It still pains him that he ended up on the streets col-



LONDON: The winner's trophy is held aloft as Team India South celebrate winning the Street Child Cricket World Cup Final against England at Lords Cricket Ground in London on May 7, 2019. Bangladeshi youngsters singing "We want our rights" was the backdrop to the inaugural Street Child Cricket World Cup. —AFP

lecting garbage aged seven after a disagreement with his mother-his father had remarried-and he told AFP he has no contact with either her or his three older surviving siblings.

However, now he is on the right path and is attending school thanks to the efforts of Hossain and the organisation he founded-LEEDO (Local Education and Economic Development Organisation). "I have 54 brothers and sisters," said Nizam, referring to the other children who live in the LEEDO Peace Home.

"I spend my free time now going round the bus, ferry and train stations talking to the homeless children who congregate there and trying to motivate them to

be part of the Schools Under the Sky project."

Hossain said he and his fellow LEEDO workers have rescued around 2,000 children over the past four years.

Nizam, who hopes to become an art student, is keen to use the platform gained from performing at the World Cup to lobby politicians when he returns home.

"The politicians don't talk with the children, they only have time for politics and not social causes," he said. "When I go back I will try and communicate with policymakers and ministers and influence them to try to make a law for children of the paths," added Nizam, who prefers the term to street children. —AFP

Australia paceman Jhye Richardson out of World Cup

SYDNEY: Australian fast bowler Jhye Richardson was ruled out of the World Cup yesterday after failing to recover from a dislocated shoulder, with namesake Kane Richardson replacing him. He picked up the injury during Australia's series against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates in March, but was included in the squad for the World Cup in England starting later this month.

But recent tests showed he would not be ready in time. "This is obviously very disappointing news for the team and for Jhye, who has been exceptional throughout his rehabilitation process," said team physiotherapist David Beakley.

"After his most recent assessment and attempting to bowl in the nets, it was clear that Jhye was not progressing as fast as required. "Therefore, in consultation with selectors, we made the decision to withdraw him from the squad."

Kane Richardson was called up to replace him, with long-time pace spearhead Josh Hazlewood, who has been out of action since January with a back injury, overlooked. When the squad was announced last month, chief selector Trevor Hohns said the focus was on having Hazlewood ready for the Ashes Test series in England which begins in August.

He was instead named in Australia's one-day A squad, which will play games in England while the World Cup is on. —AFP

Afghanistan eye World Cup semis with Naib at helm

NEW DELHI: Senior Afghanistan players have accepted the leadership change ahead of the World Cup as they target a semi-final spot in the 50-over showpiece event, chief selector Dawlat Khan Ahmadzai said Tuesday.

Gulbadin Naib replaced Asghar Afghan as Afghanistan's one-day skipper after the Ahmadzai-led selection panel named different captains for each formal last month. Star players Rashid Khan, who was named Twenty20 captain, and Mohammed Nabi soon took to social media to criticise the move that comes just ahead of the World Cup starting May 30.

But Ahmadzai insisted the team stands united after having understood the need for the captaincy overhaul. "The team members, including Rashid and Nabi, are now happy for Gulbadin," Ahmadzai told reporters in New Delhi.

"He is not a new man. He has been playing for 17 years and has captaincy experience at the first-class and U-19 level. "Gulbadin has said he'll make use of Asghar's experience (at the World Cup). They are a united front now. Changes do happen, like Sri Lanka did with their captaincy," the former fast bowler added.

The 28-year-old Naib, a medium-pace bowler who bats in the middle order, has played 52 ODIs and 38 T20 internationals since making his debut in 2011 for the war-torn nation. Since beating the odds to compete at the 2010 World Twenty20 in England, Afghanistan have qualified for all major international tournaments and recorded their first Test victory against Ireland last month.

The minnows are perceived as a dangerous team, having beaten former champions Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup last year as well as forcing a tie with giants India. Ahmadzai believes the young cricket nation, which played their first 50-over World Cup in Australia four years ago, can make the last four in the 10-team event.

"There was no Rashid or Mujeeb (ur Rahman) in 2015 so this time we are aiming for a semi-final berth. With the team composition we have, we can definitely surprise a few teams," said Ahmadzai. "We have identified teams we can beat but obviously I can't tell you which teams."

Fit-again Hamid Hassan has returned to bolster the team's pace attack and Ahmadzai said the team would benefit from the veteran's presence. "Hamid Hasan is back into the fast bowling attack and that is a big boost. He has been a great fast bowler for Afghanistan and will lead the pace attack alongside Dawlat Zadran," said Ahmadzai. Afghanistan begin their World Cup campaign against defending champions Australia in Bristol on June 1. —AFP

Flintoff backs Stokes to 'steal the show' for England

LONDON: Andrew Flintoff believes Ben Stokes can "steal the show" for England in a home season featuring both the World Cup and the Ashes. For the first time since the inaugural men's World Cup in 1975, England are staging arguably the two biggest events in their calendar-the one-day showpiece and a Test series against arch-rivals Australia in the same season.

For a multi-format cricketer such as Stokes, a dynamic pace-bowling all-rounder of a similar kind to the now-retired Flintoff, it could be a career-defining summer. Stokes, however, has yet to hit the heights he showed before being acquitted of affray by an English court last year following an incident outside a Bristol nightclub in the early hours of the morning.

Flintoff believes Stokes' bowling confidence may have been set back by being hit for four successive sixes by the West Indies' Carlos Brathwaite in the last over of a 2016 World Twenty20 final in Kolkata that England had been poised to win.

But Flintoff said that was partly a consequence of Stokes' willingness to take responsibility at key stages. "With Ben he's just different," Flintoff told reporters in London on Tuesday. "As a batter he can bat three, he can bat four-his bowling's getting better all the time."

"The World T20 probably knocked his confidence a little bit. That can happen, bowling at the death," added Flintoff at an event to publicise the official song of the World Cup, "Stand By" by Loryn and Rudimental.

"He's always in the big moments of a game. He seems to be that lad who lifts the team." Former England captain Flintoff's career also featured its fair share of off-field controversy, with the 41-year-old saying this could take a toll on a player's form.

"I think since what happened the year before last, it's always hard sometimes," he said. "You've just got to find your feet again. You're playing for the team but you're also playing a little bit for acceptance as well-for the crowd, for the people coming to watch you."

"I think he has come through the other side and I think we're about to see the best of Ben Stokes. Or I hope so, because I genuinely love watching him." Flintoff, a central figure with both bat and ball when England regained the Ashes on home soil in 2005, said the season ahead would be the ideal stage for Stokes to shine.

"World Cup, Ashes-it's all to play for," he insisted. "As a character and player like Ben, you wouldn't be surprised if he just steals the show. "We can (then) all forget about 2005 and move on with ourselves!" — AFP

Sports

Athletics' Fiers no-hits Reds as Royals hit 2 slams to crush Astros

Mets edge Padres on Cano's milestone night

OAKLAND: Oakland Athletics right-hander Mike Fiers threw the major leagues' first no-hitter of the year Tuesday night, blanking the visiting Cincinnati Reds 2-0 in the opener of a three-game interleague series.

In recording the second no-hitter of his career, the A's ace threw 131 pitches and faced just two batters over the minimum, allowing two walks. A third Cincinnati batter also reached base on an error, but one of the Reds' baserunners was erased on a double play. Fiers became the 35th pitcher to record multiple no-hitters, counting the regular season and postseason. It was the 300th no-hitter in major league history, counting the postseason. Fiers' previous no-hitter was recorded on Aug. 21, 2015, for the Houston Astros in a 3-0 interleague victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers. Told by manager Bob Melvin after the seventh inning that he would be replaced if he allowed another baserunner, Fiers retired the side in order in the eighth and ninth innings, striking out Eugenio Suarez on a 2-2 curveball in the dirt to finish it off.

ROYALS 12, ASTROS 2

Ryan O'Hearn and Whit Merrifield belted their first career grand slams, and Kansas City bashed host Houston. The Royals squared the three-game set with Houston by recording eight extra-base hits, six against Astros right-hander Collin McHugh (3-4) in three-plus innings. O'Hearn capped a five-run third inning with his blast, lining a first-pitch cutter from McHugh 373 feet and into the seats in right field. Merrifield smacked his grand slam off Astros left-hander Framber Valdez with two outs in the seventh and finished 4-for-5 with three runs and five RBIs.

DODGERS 9, BRAVES 0

Justin Turner had a career-high three home runs and six RBIs, and Hyun-Jin Ryu threw his first complete game since his rookie year to lift Los Angeles to a win against visiting Atlanta. Ryu (4-1) threw a four-hitter, striking out six and walking none. His last complete game covered eight innings in a 2-1 loss to the Arizona Diamondbacks in September 2013. In May of that season, he pitched a nine-inning, 2-0 shutout over the visiting Los Angeles Angels. Turner finished with four hits, and Cody Bellinger, Alex Verdugo and Max Muncy added two each for the Dodgers, who have not lost a series to the Braves since July 2015.

METS 7, PADRES 6

Rookie Pete Alonso snapped a ninth-inning tie with a two-run homer, and New York hung on for a victory at San Diego. With the score 5-5, New York's Robinson Cano singled to open the ninth against Adam Warren (2-1) for his fourth hit of the game. Alonso, who had gone 0-for-4 Monday night with three strikeouts, then hit a drive 449 feet to left field. Alonso, who earlier had two run-scoring singles, wound up with four RBIs for the game. Cano's first hit of the night was the

2,500th of his career-making him the 101st player in major league history and sixth player from the Dominican Republic to reach the milestone.

CUBS 5, MARLINS 2

Kris Bryant blasted a three-run, walk-off homer in the ninth inning to lead Chicago past visiting Miami. Bryant homered in a third consecutive game for the first time in his career. He has six homers this season. The blast to left-center came on a 98 mph fastball from Adam Conley (1-4).

Former Marlins reliever Steve Cishek (1-1) earned the win, pitching one scoreless inning.

YANKEES 5, MARINERS 4

Gio Urshela hit the game-tying, two-run homer with one out in the ninth, and DJ LeMahieu hit a walk-off single later in the inning as the New York Yankees withstood a lengthy rain delay and rallied for a 5-4 victory over the visiting Seattle Mariners on Tuesday night. The Yankees won for the 15th time in 20 games since April 16 and pulled off the comeback following a 72-minute rain delay in the top of the seventh. New York tied the game when Urshela lifted an 0-2 fastball from Anthony Swarzak (2-2) over the center field fence. Cameron Maybin followed with a single, stole second and scored when LeMahieu slapped a single to right against Roenis Elias.

PHILLIES 11, CARDINALS 1

Bryce Harper hit a grand slam in a six-run second inning as Philadelphia cruised to a win at St. Louis. Struggling through a 6-for-48 slump, Harper slugged his seventh home run and first grand slam with the Phillies off Dakota Hudson (2-3) in the big inning, which featured six unearned runs, two throwing errors, two walks and a passed ball by the Cardinals.

Philadelphia starter Aaron Nola (3-0) tossed six innings of one-run ball and made his third straight strong start by giving up just three hits and fanning seven.

RAYS 6, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Brandon Lowe hit a first-pitch home run and drove in two runs, and Tampa Bay rode a three-run seventh inning to victory over Arizona in St. Petersburg, Fla. Arizona's Taylor Clarke (0-1), a 25-year-old rookie making his second appearance and first start, pitched six strong innings after Lowe drove his first pitch of the game—a 92-mph fastball down the middle—over the center field fence. Lowe went 2-for-5 to extend his hitting streak to 11 games.

BREWERS 6, NATIONALS 0

Lorenzo Cain hit a three-run double off Stephen Strasburg in the seventh inning to snap a scoreless tie, and host Milwaukee beat struggling Washington. The Brewers, who scored all six of their runs in the seventh, have won nine of their last 12 games, while the Nationals have dropped 13 of 18. It was the first career hit for Cain against Strasburg in nine at-bats. Milwaukee

resent ASICS as a brand ambassador." Last year ASICS renewed its contract with Rugby Australia for a further six years. Folau's case has proved complex and divisive, pitting his right to free speech against the offence he has caused others and damage to rugby's reputation.

It has split opinion with several Pacific Island-origin players supporting him, while others, including within the Wallabies camp, have been critical.

Jones, who coached the Wallabies during a golden era in the late 1980s, has been a frequent critic of Rugby Australia and one of the staunchest defenders of Folau's right to free speech. Now an influential and outspoken radio broadcaster, known for his conservative views, he relayed a message Tuesday he said he received from the player. "I've just had a note from Israel, he won't mind if I'm sharing it with you because I said to him, 'Hold your head up,'" Jones said on his morning programme.

"He said, 'Alan, I'm at peace, mate. My head is held high.'" Jones has previously railed against free speech being "completely corrupted" in Australia and he let rip again Tuesday. "Nothing wrong with Israel, it's the society and those who prosecute him who are sick," he said. Jones added that he was "ashamed" of the sport he loves and that "the battle has just begun".

"Israel Folau, with my support and the support of millions of Australians, will take this fight every inch of the way," he said. "Rugby union preaches diversity—they really mean uniformity. They preach inclusion but they exclude Israel."

The code of conduct panel could decide to fire Folau, or issue fines or suspensions. No timescale was given for its decision, with legal experts warning that whatever happens an appeal is likely, potentially followed by a drawn-out court battle. — AFP



OAKLAND: Stephen Piscotty #25 of the Oakland Athletics slides into home plate to score a run ahead of a tag from Tucker Barnhart #16 of the Cincinnati Reds during the second inning at the Oakland Coliseum in Oakland, California. The Oakland Athletics defeated the Cincinnati Reds 2-0. — AFP

pitcher Freddy Peralta (2-1), who came on in the third, threw five scoreless innings while allowing three hits and two walks with five strikeouts. Strasburg (3-2) was tagged for four runs and six hits in 6 2/3 innings with 11 strikeouts and two walks.

RED SOX 8, ORIOLES 5

Mitch Moreland hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the fifth inning to lead visiting Boston past Baltimore. The home run, Moreland's 10th of the season, handed the Red Sox a lead they never relinquished. The Red Sox ended up with homers from Moreland, Xander Bogaerts and J.D. Martinez, while Moreland and Martinez drove in three runs apiece. Martinez hit the 200th home run of his career. Marcus Walden improved to 5-0 in 13 relief appearances as he got the win thanks to giving up one run in three innings. Matt Barnes came on in the eighth and got the final four outs for his third save.

ANGELS 5, TIGERS 2

Rookie Griffin Canning tossed 5 1/3 solid innings to earn his first major league win as Los Angeles won at Detroit to snap a two-game losing streak. The Tigers have alternated losses with wins in each of the past seven games. Canning (1-0) surrendered two runs on four hits and one walk while striking out seven in his second career start. Luke Bard retired all five batters he faced before Ty Buttrey tossed a perfect eighth. Hansel Robles earned his third save with a one-hit ninth.

Reigning American League Rookie of the Year Shohei Ohtani batted third for the Angels and went 0-for-4 with an RBI groundout in his season debut. Ohtani, who split his time between the mound and the field last season but underwent Tommy John surgery Oct. 1, will be limited to designated hitter duties for the rest of 2019.

PIRATES 5, RANGERS 4

Gregory Polanco hit a two-run homer and Melky Cabrera added a pinch-hit two-run double as Pittsburgh took a three-run lead then held on to beat visiting Texas. Starling Marte was 2-for-3 with an RBI single for the Pirates, who swept a two-game series at Texas last week and have won three straight and five of six overall. Hunter Pence went 3-for-3 and drove in all four Texas runs with a two-run homer and a two-run double. The Rangers have lost four of six.

WHITE SOX 2, INDIANS 0

Lucas Giolito scattered three hits over a season-high 7 1/3 innings, and Yoan Moncada continued to torment Cleveland as visiting Chicago posted a victory. Moncada had an RBI single in the third inning to give him six hits—including two homers—to go along with eight RBIs and five runs in four games against the Indians this season. James McCann added an RBI single in the sixth inning to cap his two-hit performance for the White Sox, who have won seven of their past 11 games. Francisco Lindor recorded three singles and Jason

Kipnis had a pair of doubles, but the rest of the Indians' lineup went 0-for-22 with nine strikeouts. Cleveland has been outscored 21-1 during a three-game losing skid.

TWINS 3, BLUE JAYS 0

Jose Berrios allowed four hits while pitching seven shutout innings to win his fifth consecutive start, and Mitch Garver had three hits—including a two-run homer—to lead visiting Minnesota over Toronto.

Berrios (6-1) pitched around leadoff singles in the third, fourth and sixth innings and didn't allow a batter to reach second base until Billy McKinney's two-out ground-rule double in the seventh. Berrios, who didn't walk a batter and struck out five, then got Brandon Drury to ground out to end the threat. Taylor Rogers overcame two singles in the ninth to pick up his fourth save.

GIANTS 14, ROCKIES 4

Mac Williamson homered and drove in four runs in his 2019 debut, and San Francisco routed Colorado in Denver. Williamson, who hit three home runs Monday night for Triple-A Sacramento, was called up Tuesday and paid immediate dividends when his three-run homer off Antonio Senzatele broke a 1-1 tie in the fourth. Evan Longoria and Kevin Pillar also homered for San Francisco. Joe Panik had three hits, and Brandon Belt had two doubles. Charlie Blackmon and Chris Iannetta went deep for Colorado, which got three hits from Raimel Tapia. — Reuters

Wallabies sponsor dumps Folau as ex-Australia coach slams verdict

SYDNEY: Sportswear company ASICS dumped Israel Folau as a brand ambassador yesterday over homophobic comments, as former Wallabies coach Alan Jones slammed those punishing him as "sick". The devoutly Christian player on Tuesday was found guilty of a "high-level" breach of the sport's code of conduct after posting an anti-gay statement on social media, leaving his career hanging in the balance.

He faces his lucrative four-year Rugby Australia contract being terminated, with the three-person code of conduct panel taking written submissions from his legal team and the governing body before deciding on his punishment. Rugby Australia moved to sack him after he posted a banner on Instagram last month that read: "Drunks, homosexuals, adulterers, liars, fornicators, thieves, atheists and idolaters—Hell awaits you." It followed a similar tirade last year.

ASICS, which is also a leading Wallabies sponsor, severed ties with Folau, saying "we believe sport is for everyone and we champion inclusivity and diversity". "While Israel Folau is entitled to his personal views, some of those expressed in recent social media posts are not aligned with those of ASICS," it added in a Facebook statement.

"As such, our partnership with Israel has become untenable and he will no longer rep-

Hamilton favourite for Spain in big test for Ferrari

LONDON: Lewis Hamilton is favourite to win the Spanish Grand Prix for a fourth time, and third in a row, on Sunday and retake the Formula One world championship lead from Mercedes team mate Valtteri Bottas.

Needless to say, Ferrari have another script in mind for a race seen as something of a litmus test for their title prospects.

Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc dominated pre-season testing at Barcelona's Circuit de Catalunya amid excited talk of Ferrari ending Mercedes' five-year stranglehold on the sport.

They return reeling from four successive Mercedes one-two finishes, an unprecedented start to the season by any team, and hoping an engine upgrade-brought forward by two races-will swing things their way.

If Mercedes are again quicker at such a benchmark circuit, where the champions have won four times in the last five years, the writing will be on the wall for Ferrari. They need to step up a gear and start turning things around.

Both teams have been talking up the other's chances.

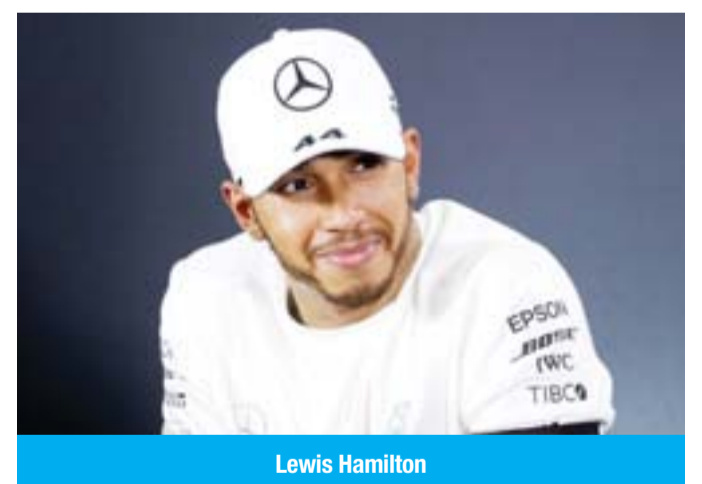
"The last four races, on average, we were not quite there so I think we are not the favourites going to Barcelona," said Vettel, winner with Red Bull in 2011, after finishing third in Azerbaijan.

Team principal Mattia Binotto agreed: "Obviously Mercedes are very strong at the moment. I'm pretty sure they will be very strong as well in Barcelona."

"Many teams will bring aero package or car developments, so that will be again a different balance compared to what we've seen so far in the season," he added.

FLATTERING

Mercedes principal Toto Wolff dismissed Vettel's portrayal of Ferrari as underdogs for the first race of the European season. "The results seem to paint a relatively clear picture, but the truth is that they're too flattering. The performance has



Lewis Hamilton

fluctuated in the first four races," said the Austrian.

"Our opponents were blisteringly quick in winter testing, so the Spanish Grand Prix will be anything but easy."

Bottas leads five times world champion Hamilton by a single point, with both men on two wins, by virtue of the Finn's fastest lap in the Australian season opener.

British bookmakers William Hill have Hamilton as race favourite at 6-4, with Bottas on 9-4 and Vettel and Leclerc priced at 9-2.

Barcelona has also been a happy hunting ground for Red Bull, with Max Verstappen becoming the sport's youngest winner there in 2016.

"It is always a special one for me," said the 21-year-old of a track whose future remains uncertain, with talk of Verstappen's home Dutch circuit Zandvoort taking the slot next year.

"The temperatures will be a bit different (to testing in March) and everyone is bringing new parts to their cars, so it will be interesting to see how competitive we can be."

Former Red Bull team mate Daniel Ricciardo, now at Renault, has a three-place grid drop as punishment for a bizarre collision with Toro Rosso's Daniil Kvyat in Baku.

A Brazilian-Austrian flag will be displayed on the podium in tribute to the late triple champion Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger who died at Imola in May 25 years ago. Sunday's race is the first since the anniversary. — Reuters

Sports

Liverpool's never-say-die spirit leaves Klopp's men on brink of glory

Liverpool 'giants' stun Barca to make Champions League final

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's incredible Champions League triumph against Barcelona gives Jurgen Klopp's men the chance to end a season to savour as kings of Europe for a sixth time.

Even fortress Anfield has arguably never seen a night like it. The Spanish champions were thrashed 4-0 on Tuesday despite holding a 3-0 lead after the first leg of the semi-final, and the absence of two of Liverpool's biggest weapons in Mohamed Salah and Roberto Firmino through injury.

Salah, ruled out by concussion suffered in a bruising 3-2 win at Newcastle on Saturday that kept Liverpool in the Premier League title race, set the tone for an unforgettable night by arriving at Anfield wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the slogan "Never Give Up".

That message sums up a sensational season for the Reds, who are on course to post the third-highest points tally in Premier League history but look like losing out to relentless defending champions Manchester City.

"I said to the boys before the game: 'I don't think it is possible but because of you I think it is possible' because they are really mentality giants," said Klopp. Redemption for Liverpool and Salah now awaits in Madrid on June 1 against Ajax or Tottenham a year on from losing the final in Kiev to Real Madrid after an early shoulder injury forced the Egyptian off.

"When we were in Kiev it was not brilliant and then the plan was to go to Madrid and get it in there finally, and now we go there in three weeks' time," added Klopp. "Last year we felt we have to go back, we cannot let it stand like this. Now we get another chance and we will go for it. I am not sure it will happen again, it is so special."

Heroic European comebacks form part of Liverpool's DNA. The last time they lifted the

Champions League in 2005, AC Milan thought the trophy was won with a 3-0 half-time lead.

ANFIELD POWER

Now Lionel Messi can be added to the list of those to have felt the power of Anfield. Messi's double towards the end of the first leg appeared to have turned the tie decisively in Barca's favour. However, he was well marshalled in the return leg, while Liverpool had their revenge on Luis Suarez and Philippe Coutinho, who both left Merseyside for sunnier climes in Catalonia.

Instead, it was the unlikely duo of Divock Origi and Georginio Wijnaldum, who had scored just one Champions League goal between them in their careers before Tuesday, who both scored twice.

"It presents an opportunity for some of the other lads to come in, make a name for themselves and make themselves heroes," said Trent Alexander-Arnold on the eve of the game, when it was confirmed Salah and Firmino would be absent.

"If we do overturn the deficit tomorrow then whoever scores, their name will always be remembered because I am sure it will be one of those really special nights." Origi and Wijnaldum wrote their names in Anfield folklore while Alexander-Arnold himself, Liverpool born and bred, ensured at just 20 he too will always be remembered.

His quick-thinking caught a team of experienced Champions League winners completely cold 11 minutes from time with a corner that picked out Origi unmarked to fire into the top corner.

"A genius moment," said a proud Klopp. "I saw the ball flying in the net and I had no clue who took the corner or who scored-it was too quick for me. Now I saw it back, (it is) incredibly smart how two players



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Dutch midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum (L) heads the ball to score their third goal during the UEFA Champions League semi-final second leg football match between Liverpool and Barcelona at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England. — AFP

connected in the moment."

Players and fans connected for the full 95 minutes, much as they have all season. "This club is a big heart and tonight the heart was pounding like crazy,

you could hear it and feel it all over the world," added Klopp. Now 10 months of hard work requires just one final big effort to be rewarded with a sixth European Cup. — AFP

Sarri buys time with unexpected top-four finish

LONDON: After a turbulent first season at Chelsea, Maurizio Sarri goes into today's Europa League semi-final against Eintracht Frankfurt savouring some much-needed breathing space. Sarri has spent most of the campaign engaged in a struggle to win over his sceptical players and fans.

At one stage, it appeared the Chelsea manager was fighting a losing battle as a miserable run of results sparked reports he was on the verge of the sack. Amid reports that Chelsea's stars were sick of Sarri's inflexible game-plan, monotonous training sessions and habit of criticising them through the media, the nadir came in February when Blues goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga refused to be substituted during the League Cup final defeat against Manchester City.

Sarri has side-stepped one crisis after another just deftly enough that he has emerged from a bleak winter with his prospects of avoiding the axe looking brighter after Chelsea secured a top four finish in the Premier League last weekend.

With a place in next season's Champions League sealed with a game to spare, Chelsea can turn their attention to winning the first trophy of Sarri's reign. A 1-1 draw in the semi-final first leg away to Eintracht has put Chelsea in a good position for the return leg at Stamford Bridge.

Winning the final, against Arsenal or Valencia in Baku, would strengthen the Italian's hopes of convincing the Chelsea hierarchy he deserves more time to impose his philosophy on a squad that has so far been unable, or unwilling, to adapt to 'Sarri-ball'.

There remain doubts in some quarters about Sarri's ability to make his tactics work in the Premier League after the former Napoli manager's troubled year. Chelsea supporters are still underwhelmed by Sarri, despite their team's qualification for the Champions League,



LONDON: Chelsea's Brazilian defender David Luiz (3L), Chelsea's English defender Gary Cahill (C) and Chelsea's Argentinian striker Gonzalo Higuain (R) attend a training session at Chelsea's Cobham training facility in Stoke D'Abemon, southwest of London yesterday, on the eve of their UEFA Europa League second leg semi-final football match against Eintracht Frankfurt. — AFP

which is worth at least an estimated £35 million. At half time of Sunday's game against Watford they responded to a turgid display with jeers-the discordant soundtrack to Sarri's woes.

Chelsea roused themselves to secure a 3-0 win that proved enough to seal their top four berth after surprise draws for Arsenal and Manchester United. Despite winning only once in four league games, Chelsea stumbled over the finish line in fittingly chaotic fashion. Even Sarri conceded they were "lucky" to beat Watford after such a disjointed opening.

It has often been that way for the 60-year-old this term. The biggest issue with Sarri's system has been his conviction that his handpicked pre-season signing Jorginho must play as the lynchpin in front of his

defence. Jorginho's tepid displays would have been bad enough without the perception that Sarri was playing favourites with his former Napoli player. Sarri moved N'Golo Kante from the defensive midfield role to make room for Jorginho. Chelsea appeared far more fragile as a result.

At club where grievances are aired, including Gary Cahill's accusation that Sarri doesn't treat his players with respect, it would have been no surprise if Kante had seized the opportunity to voice his disdain for the coach after picking up a hamstring injury against Watford. Sarri admitted he shouldn't have risked Kante because he knew the France midfielder was tired and in danger of being injured. Yet Kante was happy to play peace maker. — AFP

Arsenal lean on Lacazette, Aubameyang to save their season

LONDON: Arsenal's collapse at the business end of the Premier League season means the success or failure of Unai Emery's first campaign now solely depends on lifting the Europa League and as a result sealing Champions League football.

The Gunners travel to Emery's old club Valencia today defending a 3-1 semi-final, first leg lead given to them by star strikers Alexandre Lacazette and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang at the Emirates last week.

Arsenal's awful record on the road this season will give the Spanish side plenty of encouragement that they can overturn a two-goal deficit.

Emery's men conceded three times in losing at Wolves and Leicester in their last two away league games and were also defeated at BATE Borisov and Rennes before turning Europa League ties around at the Emirates.

Attack may therefore be the visitors' best form of defence in the cauldron of the Mestalla and Arsenal are at least getting what they paid for from Lacazette and Aubameyang. "We played against two strikers that are very good which is why they cost the millions that they did," said Valencia coach Marcelino Garcia Toral.

"With the slightest error they punish you." Arsenal have taken one point from their last four Premier League games to realistically end their chances of a top-four finish and the first leg against Valencia could easily have gone the same way as Marcelino's men scored an early away goal and led the Gunners to a merry dance for the first 20 minutes.

However, one moment of magic turned the tie as Lacazette played in Aubameyang, who paused, left Neto, Ezequiel Garay and Facundo Roncaglia on the floor before squaring for his strike partner to roll into an empty net.

Lacazette added his second eight minutes later and Aubameyang's late strike gave Arsenal the two-goal cushion they may well need.

The Londoners' first season without Arsene Wenger for 22 years has been dogged by many of the same defensive problems suffered by the Frenchman towards the end of his reign. But Wenger's final two big signings have come good as club record fees were paid for Lacazette in the summer of 2017 and Aubameyang in January 2018.

After a difficult first six months in England, many thought Aubameyang's arrival was ominous for Lacazette's longevity at the club, but the two have formed a fine partnership on and off the field. Only Liverpool's Mohamed Salah has scored more Premier League goals than Aubameyang's 20, but it is Lacazette who won the club's player of the year prize for his all round contribution with 18 goals and 12 assists.

Those figures are all the more impressive as they have often had to battle for just one starting spot. Both players have voiced their displeasure at Emery's reluctance throughout the campaign to play with two strikers.

"You know that I like to play with two strikers but I don't want to say it," admitted Aubameyang, while Lacazette conceded to French television station RMC he "could be even happier" if he started more regularly. — AFP

England Women's squad given royal launch

LONDON: Prince William announced yesterday that Steph Houghton will lead England at the Women's World Cup as "celebrity fans" announced Phil Neville's team player-by-player on social media.

Manchester City captain Houghton was the first player of the squad of 23 to be announced, by the Football Association president.

"The countdown is on to a momentous summer of football as our Lionesses head to France to take on the world's best at the Women's World Cup," William said in a video posted on his official Twitter account.

"It gives me great pleasure to be able to announce that England's defensive rock and captain, Steph Houghton, will be on the plane to France. Steph, congratulations. I know you and the team will do the nation proud. Good luck."

Ex-England men's captain David Beckham, a former Manchester United teammate of Neville's, announced the inclusion of Nikita Parris, who will wear the number seven shirt, on Instagram.

"It's a shirt that I wore for many years with pride," he said. "It's a shirt that I captained my country in so I know that Nikita will do exactly the same, wear this shirt with pride."

"Also a message to Phil and all the Lionesses for the World Cup this summer-good luck, we'll be watching." The tournament starts in Paris on June 7, with England's campaign beginning against Scotland in Nice on 9 June. — AFP

Nigeria FA chiefs charged with graft

ABUJA: Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) president Amaju Pinnick and four other top-ranking officials have been charged with corruption, including embezzlement of millions of dollars from world body FIFA, court sources said yesterday.

The Special Presidential Investigation Panel for the Recovery of Public Property (SPIP) brought the charges against Pinnick, NFF vice presidents Seyi Akinwunmi and Shehu Dikko, general secretary Sanusi Mohammed and committee member Ahmed Yusuf.

The charges range from failure to declare their assets to conflict of interest and alleged embezzlement of \$8.4 million paid by world football governing body FIFA to Nigeria for participation in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

They are to appear at the federal high court in the nation's capital Abuja at a date to be announced later. The football officials were investigated last year by SPIP, which initially granted them administrative bail.

The NFF chiefs took legal action to stop the investigation, and secured a court injunction to set aside their arrest warrant. The NFF

has dismissed the charges.

"We wish to state categorically that the charges filed by SPIP are frivolous and totally baseless," said a statement by the NFF. "They are aimed only at scandalising the NFF and its leadership and nothing more."

"Our legal team is fully engaged with this matter in order to defeat this baseless and politically motivated attack on the NFF and its leadership," it added.

Another set of NFF officials are facing trial for the alleged misappropriation of a \$9.5 million FIFA grant to Nigeria. The case has been adjourned to May 30. — AFP

Matches on TV (Local Timings)	
UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE	
Valencia C.F v Arsenal FC	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Chelsea FC v Eintracht Frankfurt	22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2	

25 Cricket showcases plight of globe's street children



26 Hamilton favourite for Spain in big test for Ferrari



27 Liverpool's never-say-die spirit leaves Klopp's men on brink of glory



TORONTO: Pascal Siakam #43 of the Toronto Raptors shoots the ball against the Philadelphia 76ers during Game Five of the Eastern Conference Semifinals at the Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. —AFP

Raptors crush Philadelphia 76ers

Nuggets rout Blazers to gain NBA series edge

LOS ANGELES: The Toronto Raptors dismantled the Philadelphia 76ers and the Denver Nuggets dominated Portland Tuesday to take commanding leads in their NBA playoff series.

The Raptors overpowered the 76ers 125-89 to take a 3-2 lead in their best-of-seven Eastern Conference second-round series. With 76ers star center Joel Embiid ailing, Toronto took full advantage on their home floor and can book a place in the Eastern Conference finals with a victory in game six in Philadelphia today.

The Nuggets, led by Nikola Jokic's 25 points and 19 rebounds, defeated the Trail Blazers 124-98 for a 3-2 series lead and will also try to wrap up their Western Conference clash on the road today. Six Nuggets players scored in double figures and four scored at least 16 points.

Paul Millsap scored 12 of his 24 in the first quarter as Denver bolted to a 31-25 lead. Jamal Murray scored 11 of his 18 in the second quarter, helping Denver

break open the game with a burst of three straight baskets that pushed the Nuggets' lead to 61-43 and Denver, who never trailed, were away.

"In this series he's been phenomenal," Denver coach Mike Malone said of Murray. "He's impacted the game in so many ways: scoring, playmaking and rebounding, and I think he's playing some pretty good defense as well."

Damian Lillard scored 22 points for the Trail Blazers, who face an elimination game for the first time in this post-season. Rodney Hood and Zach Collins scored 14 points each off the bench, but CJ McCollum was the only other Portland starter in double figures with 12 points.

Portland missed 12 straight shots in the third, connecting on just seven of 28 from the floor in the period to head into the fourth quarter trailing 93-65. They couldn't get the deficit below 20 points in the final frame.

In a hard-fought series between closely matched

teams, Malone said, it was a notable achievement. "For us to come out here tonight and build a 30-point lead and play the defense that we did for three and a half quarters was remarkable," he said.

In Toronto's big win, forward Pascal Siakam scored 25 points to lead six Raptors players in double figures. Star forward Kawhi Leonard scored 21 points and grabbed 13 rebounds and was able to rest the majority of the fourth quarter as the Raptors dominated every phase of the contest.

The outcome was enough to make Philadelphia's center Embiid feel even worse than the upper respiratory infection that appeared to hinder him. Embiid scored 13 points with six rebounds and also coughed up a game-high eight turnovers. With their star struggling, none of his teammates could fill the void.

Toronto led 64-43 by halftime—thanks to a 37-17 second quarter. The 76ers showed signs of life when they opened the second half on a 10-2 scoring run, but the challenge proved short-lived.

Leonard, who punctuated the second quarter with a massive dunk, delivered another big jam to close out the third and send the Raptors into the final frame up 92-70. Toronto would stretch the lead to 40 points — 123-83 — on Norman Powell's dunk with 2:24 to play.

"I was certainly not expecting that kind of game tonight," said Raptors coach Nick Nurse. "Obviously we're certainly happy with the result. We did a lot of good things."

Kyle Lowry scored 19 points, Danny Green had 17 and Spanish big man Marc Gasol contributed 11 for the Raptors, who can clinch the series on Thursday in Philadelphia. Serge Ibaka scored 10 points for Toronto, despite needing stitches after taking an inadvertent elbow to the forehead from Leonard in the first quarter.

Jimmy Butler scored 22 points and handed out seven assists for the 76ers. Sixers guard Ben Simmons connected on three-of-five shots from the field to finish with seven points and five turnovers. —AFP

Russian athlete Savina gets 12-year ban

MOSCOW: Russian middle distance runner Kseniya Savina has been suspended for 12 years after she was found to have taken a banned substance and then provided false medical documents to avoid sanctions, the Athletics Integrity Unit said yesterday.

The 29-year-old Savina, whose ban essentially ends her career, tested positive in an out-of-competition test for the banned blood-boosting hormone EPO last year and was provisionally suspended.

She claimed at the time it was her

coach and husband Alexei Savin who had needed the medication to treat what she said was chronic renal failure, and that it must have been mixed up with her own back pain medication, the AIU said.

After Savina provided medical documents to support the claim that her husband had chronic renal failure, further investigation by the Russian anti-doping agency (RUSADA) for the AIU showed the documents had been forged.

"The Athlete failed to respond as required by the specified deadline of 17 April 2019 and she is therefore deemed... to have admitted the first and second anti-doping rule violations and to have acceded to the consequences specified in the notice of charge," the AIU said in a statement.

Savina's suspension period is 12 years and all her results since May 2018 are void, the AIU said. Such lengthy bans are uncommon but the athlete's

attempts to shift blame and avoid sanctions by providing false documentation added another anti-doping rule violation in her case.

Savin, her coach, received a four-year ban for violating anti-doping regulations, the AIU said in a separate statement. Russia has been rocked by several sporting bans in recent years after international investigations found evidence of widespread, state-sponsored doping in athletics and a string of other sports.

Russian anti-doping agency RUSADA and Russia's athletics federation were suspended after a 2015 report commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) found evidence of state-sponsored doping in Russian athletics.

RUSADA was reinstated last year, while Russia's athletics federation remains suspended by the global athletics governing body IAAF. — Reuters

FIFA upholds Chelsea transfer ban

ZURICH: The ban on Chelsea signing players over the next two transfer windows remained largely in place after FIFA issued their ruling on the London club's appeal yesterday.

In February, the Blues were banned from signing players for their men's teams for the next two transfer windows after being found guilty by FIFA's disciplinary committee of breaching regulations relating to the recruitment of minors.

Chelsea denied any wrongdoing and

appealed. Yesterday, the governing body of world soccer announced that its appeal committee had "decided to partially uphold the appeal".

The committee lifted part of the ban, but only for players under 16 who are not "international transfers and first registrations of foreign minor players".

That means Chelsea will still not be able to sign male players over the age of 16 when the summer transfer window opens.

Chelsea had been eager to have the ban lifted, or suspended pending the appeal, so they could be in a position to sign a replacement for Belgium Eden Hazard, who is being touted as a possible £100 million (116 million euros, \$131 million) transfer target for Real Madrid. The appeal committee also confirmed the fine of 600,000 Swiss francs (526,000 euros, \$590,000). —AFP