



3 Kuwaitis spent KD 4.03 billion on travel in 2018, up by 17.6%



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26 Thiem ends Federer's return to clay court



Ramadan KAREEM

IMSAK	03:17
Fajr	03:27
Dhur	11:44
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US warns commercial ships of possible Iranian attacks

Iran Guards reject US talks • Cleric threatens US Navy • US carrier heads to Gulf



MOREHEAD CITY: San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24) getting underway from Morehead City. The Pentagon announced yesterday that it is deploying the amphibious assault ship and a Patriot missile battery to the Middle East to bolster an aircraft carrier force sent to counter alleged threats from Iran. — AFP

DUBAI: Iran could target US commercial ships including oil tankers, the US Maritime Administration said, as a senior Iranian cleric said a US Navy fleet could be "destroyed with one missile."

In the latest tense exchange between Tehran and Washington, Iran's hardline Revolutionary Guards separately said Iran would not negotiate with the United States, a stance that seemed partly aimed at discouraging Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his moderate allies from taking up a US offer of talks.

US President Donald Trump on Thursday urged Iran's leaders talk with him about giving up their nuclear program and said he could not rule out a military confrontation. Trump made the offer as he increased economic and military pressure on Iran, moving to cut off all Iranian oil exports this month while beefing up the US Navy and Air Force presence in the Gulf.

Acting US Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan approved a new deployment of Patriot missiles to the Middle East, a US official said. The US aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln, deployed as a warning to Iran, passed through Egypt's Suez Canal on Thursday and American B-52 bombers have also arrived at a US base in Qatar, US Central Command said.

Iran has dismissed both moves - which the United States said it took after US intelligence signaled possible preparations by Tehran to attack US forces or interests - as "psychological warfare" designed to intimidate it. In an advisory posted on Thursday, the US Maritime Administration (MARAD) said that since early May there

had been an increased possibility of Iran or its regional proxies taking action against US and partner interests.

These included, MARAD said, oil production infrastructure, after Tehran threatened to close the vital Strait of Hormuz chokepoint through which about a fifth of oil consumed globally passes. "Iran or its proxies could respond by targeting commercial vessels, including oil tankers, or US military vessels in the Red Sea, Bab-El-Mandeb Strait, or the Arabian Gulf," MARAD said. "Reporting indicates heightened Iranian readiness to conduct offensive operations against US forces and interests."

Millions of barrels of oil pass daily through the various bottlenecks from Middle East oil producers to global markets. US-Iranian tensions have risen since Trump withdrew a year ago from a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and major powers and began ratcheting up sanctions to throttle Tehran's economy. Vice Admiral Jim Malloy, commander of the US Navy's Bahrain-based Fifth Fleet, told Reuters on Thursday its forces were on a heightened state of readiness, although the US military was not seeking or preparing for war with Iran.

MARAD said US-flagged ships were encouraged to contact the Fifth Fleet at least two days before sailing through the Strait of Hormuz. The fleet's job is to protect commercial shipping in the area. Washington further tightened sanctions on Iran this month - eliminating waivers that had allowed some countries to buy its oil - with a goal of reducing Tehran's crude exports to zero. Iran responded by relaxing some curbs on its nuclear program concerning

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Ramadan Kareem

Ramadan: Month of the Holy Quran

By Dr Teresa Leshar

One of the distinguishing features of Islam is its Holy Book, the first verses of which were revealed in the month of Ramadan, 1453 lunar years ago (610 AD). During the course of 23 years, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) received Quranic verses as spoken addresses from the Creator - the Quran is considered the speech of God in the Arabic language.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) then recited the verses so that they could be memorized verbatim, and they were also recorded in writing. Before he died, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) specified the order of verses and the division of chapters, according to divine instruction. The original Quran is still preserved until today with precise pronunciation, with the Arabic language developing to represent it phonetically.

It is the only revelation or divine book that contains the pure words of God without being rephrased by His messengers or any other human being. The Quran is addressed to all mankind. Sometimes Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is specifically addressed with instructions such as "They ask you about... Say [to them]..." Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is also encouraged and sometimes gently reproached in the Quran.

Believers are addressed with specific instructions on how to achieve both temporal and eternal success. And mankind in general is addressed with invitations to believe in God and mold life around that belief, and they are informed of the consequences of accepting or rejecting God's invitation. The Quran's purpose is to inform people of a reality beyond their five senses and their perceptions of space and time, and to teach moral lessons and develop spirituality.

With the additional perspective it offers, the Quran also invites people to adopt a lifestyle that ensures ultimate happiness and success. Finally, through stories and instruction, it describes the beliefs and practices that are essential to achieve that state. The verses of the Quran were revealed to address particular situations, to relate historical information and to codify Islamic law.

Common subjects are descriptions of God, stories of prophets, descriptions of believers and disbelievers, promises of God's rewards, especially Paradise, warnings about consequences for rebellion toward God, including Hellfire, instructions for personal conduct, guidelines for familial and social relations, and a framework for international relations.

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Rumors spread as Kuwait tackles locust infestation

By Nawara Fattahwa

KUWAIT: The unusually heavy rains last winter in Kuwait and the region led to a large amount of vegetation sprouting. As a result, more insects of all kinds have emerged. About two months back, a large number of butterflies were seen all over Kuwait. Then videos of millions of cockroaches in Saudi Arabia spread all over the media, and a few days later, it was locusts.

Although the swarms weren't expected to reach Kuwait, the locusts were seen in Wafra farms last week. The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) took quick action from the day the locusts reached Kuwait on April 24. "We are dealing

with the locust infestation since the first ones crossed the Saudi borders. Their numbers were huge and they reached the farms area. We are still dealing with them, but I assure people that it will not get worse, and our team will combat the locusts before they reach other areas," Fahd Al-Saafak, Head of the Prevention and Guidance Department at PAAAFR, told Kuwait Times.

"Our team is working really hard to eliminate these insects. In the beginning, they were crawling, and within two days, they have grown and started flying. We need planes to spray insecticide on these locusts. We are also providing help to farmers if they seek help, as many of them have the tools but don't have the materials, so we provided it to them free of charge," he added.

Some videos spread on social media warning people against eating salads or other dishes with fresh vegetables and avoid buying local vegetables or wash them properly before eating. Saafak assured that this warning is exaggerated and there is no need to worry or stop eating local vegetables. "All pesticides used in combating locusts are safe and approved by the Ministry of Health. We use two-day safety insecticides,

which means that farmers should wait two days before transporting the products to the market," he explained.

Farmer Yousef Al-Kreibani owns four farms in Wafra, and he noted that the locusts didn't reach any of his farms. "My farms in Wafra were not affected. I guess most of the attacks were on abandoned farms. PAAAFR is fumigating the affected areas and I think they have the situation under control. Also, the locusts can't bear the heat once the weather gets hotter," he pointed out.

Regarding the safety of the insecticides, he affirmed that the materials used are high quality insecticides from Germany and the United States. "The people spreading rumors on social media about local vegetables are not experts or specialists. These insecticides have been used for many years. Also, these insecticides are not absorbed by the plants and vegetables and dissipate in the air. Whoever spreads such rumors should provide evidence, otherwise they should be sued for spreading rumors," said Kreibani. According to him, the next few days will show if PAAAFR will succeed in eliminating the locusts or if they will reproduce and spread to other areas.

IS claims 'province' in India

NEW DELHI: Islamic State (IS) claimed for the first time that it has established a "province" in India, after a clash between militants and security forces in the contested Kashmir region killed a militant with alleged ties to the group. IS's Amaq News Agency late on Friday announced the new province, that it called "Wilayah of Hind", in a statement that also claimed IS inflicted casualties on Indian army soldiers in the town of Amshipora in the Shopian district of Kashmir.

The IS statement corresponds with an Indian police statement on Friday that a militant called Ishaq Ahmad Sofi was

killed in an encounter in Shopian. IS's statement establishing the new province appears to be designed to bolster its standing after the group was driven from its self-styled "caliphate" in Iraq and Syria in April, where at one point it controlled thousands of miles of territory.

IS has stepped up hit-and-run raids and suicide attacks, including taking responsibility for the Easter Sunday bombing in Sri Lanka that killed at least 253 people. "The establishment of a 'province' in a region where it has nothing resembling actual governance is absurd, but it should not be written off," said Rita Katz, director of the SITE Intel Group that tracks Islamic extremists.

"The world may roll its eyes at these developments, but to jihadists in these vulnerable regions, these are significant gestures to help lay the groundwork in rebuilding the map of the IS 'caliphate'."

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KASHMIR: Kashmiri protesters clash with Indian police after prayers during Ramadan near the Jamia Masjid mosque in Srinagar. — AFP

60 migrants drown off Tunisia

TUNIS: Around 60 migrants most of them from Bangladesh have died after their boat capsized in the Mediterranean Sea after it left Libya for Italy, the Tunisian Red Crescent said yesterday. Survivors told the Red Crescent the tragedy unfolded after some 75 people who had left Zuwara on the northwestern Libyan coast late Thursday on a large boat were transferred to a smaller one that sank off Tunisia.

"The migrants were transferred into a smaller inflatable boat which was overloaded, and 10 minutes later it sank," Mongi Slim, a Red Crescent official in the south-

ern Tunisian town of Zarzis said. Tunisian fishermen rescued 16 people and brought them to shore in Zarzis. The survivors said they spent eight hours trapped in the cold sea before they were spotted by the fishermen who alerted the Tunisian coastguard, Slim said. The bodies of three people were plucked out of the waters on Friday, the Tunisian defense ministry said.

Survivors said the boat was heading to Italy and had on board only men, 51 from Bangladesh, as well as three Egyptians, several Moroccans, Chadians and other Africans. Fourteen Bangladeshi nationals, including a minor, were among the survivors, said the Red Crescent. "If the Tunisian fishermen hadn't seen them (migrants), there wouldn't have been any survivors and we would have never known about this" boat sinking, said Slim.

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ZARZIS: A survivor of a boat carrying migrants that sunk in the Mediterranean rests at a shelter in the Tunisian coastal city of Zarzis yesterday. — AFP

Amir receives visiting Bahraini Prime Minister Prince Khalifa

Visit a yearly habit that reflects appreciation to the 'Humanitarian Leader'



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the CP Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receive Bahraini PM Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa. — Amiri Diwan photo

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the visiting Bahraini Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and his accompanying delegation at Dasman Palace on

Thursday, in presence of His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Bahraini premier congratulated His Highness the Amir on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. During

the meeting, they exchanged friendly talks and good sentiments in an atmosphere that reflected brotherly firm and deep relations between both countries' leaders and peoples, as well as efforts to promote and develop bilateral cooperation in all fields. The encounter was attended by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and several senior state officials. Later, His Highness the Amir hosted an iftar banquet in honor of the visiting Bahraini Prime Minister and his accompanying delegation.

Upon his arrival in Kuwait on a short brotherly visit, Prince Khalifa was received at the airport by His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah as well as a number of Sheikhs, ministers, advisors, senior officials of the Prime Minister's Diwan and the two countries' ambassadors.

Prince Khalifa expressed his pleasure to visit Kuwait to meet with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to congratulate him on the holy month of Ramadan. He added that the visit is part of a yearly habit that reflects the official and personal appreciation to His Highness the Amir who was

honored by the world as a 'Humanitarian Leader'. Prince Khalifa said that he seized the opportunity, during the visit, to appreciate Kuwait's honorable stances, under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, which support Bahrain's development efforts.

The Bahraini Premier said he conveyed greetings of Bahraini King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa and Bahraini people to His Highness the Amir, the Kuwaiti government and people who are highly appreciated by the Bahraini nation. He said the visit is a chance to reaffirm the well-established and deep-rooted bilateral relations, and to discuss some topics aiming to develop cooperation and ties to serve the interests of the two countries and their people. The visit also gives a chance to meet His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Bahraini Premier said. He wished everlasting progress, stability, growth, prosperity in different fields to Kuwait under the leadership of His Highness the Amir.

At the conclusion of his visit, Prince Khalifa was seen off at Kuwait International Airport by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and a number of Sheikhs, ministers, advisors, senior officials of the Prime Minister's Diwan and the two countries' ambassadors. — KUNA

News in brief

CP receives Ramadan greetings

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a phone call of congratulations from Omani Deputy Premier for Cabinet Affairs Fahad Bin Mahmoud Al-Saeed, greeting him on the holy month of Ramadan. During the call, the Omani senior official expressed best wishes for the Kuwaiti people and good health for His Highness the Crown Prince under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In turn, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf greeted Al-Saeed back, expressing appreciation for the kind gesture. — KUNA

Kuwait supports ISESCO

JEDDAH: Kuwait's Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi said on Friday that Kuwait supported all efforts of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) to promote education, culture and science. Addressing a special session of the ISESCO's General Conference in Jeddah, Azmi said that Kuwait was keen on actively participating in all Islamic and Arab efforts to promote education, culture and science. "This is part of the wide policy of State of Kuwait spearheaded by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and guided by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah for the further promotion of Kuwait's leading role," said Azmi. The minister congratulated Dr Salem Al-Malek, of Saudi Arabia, who would succeed ISESCO's Director General Dr Abdulaziz Al-Tuwaijri. — KUNA

Iraqi FM arrives in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday his Iraqi counterpart Dr Mohammad Al-Hakim. Hakim is heading his country's delegation to the 7th session of the joint Kuwaiti-Iraqi supreme committee. At the reception of Hakim and his accompanying delegation were Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Minister and Director of the Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Minister for Ceremonial Affairs Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran and Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq Salem Al-Zamanan, as well as a host of senior diplomats. — KUNA

Kuwait Airways on-time record 'improved'

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways underlined that its flight schedule compliance record has "improved considerably" for the total flights operated in the first quarter of this year. In a statement, Kuwait's national carrier added that its growth rate has risen 24 percent, from 59 percent in 2018 to 83 percent during the 2019 first quarter. Responding to a report placing the airline in the 10 least on-time global airlines list, it rejected the findings, saying "this information is inaccurate and does not reflect the reality." The study, widely circulated on social media, was conducted by Airhelp, a passenger advocacy firm, and was published by Bloomberg. The airline said it has made improvements on this matter, achieving top spots in global airline performance indicators, contrary to the report. "These improvements were thanks to the tiresome efforts of Kuwait Airways' executives and employees, working in Kuwait and abroad, in implementation of the Board of Directors' adopted strategy," the company said. Established in 1953 as the private-owned Kuwait National Airways, the Kuwaiti government took full ownership of the company in 1962. The airline flies to 46 destinations in 26 countries around the world. — KUNA



Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) workers hand out food aid to Hadhramaut Governorate of the Republic of Yemen.

Kuwait continues humanitarian aid during Ramadan

KUWAIT: Kuwait continued its humanitarian aid for the people in need in different parts of the world, and most specifically during Muslims' holy month of Ramadan. Last Saturday, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) handed out food aid to Hadhramaut Governorate of the Republic of Yemen, which included Seiyun, Tarim, Al-Qal, As Sawm and Sah districts to ease the suffering on families, and marking the advent of Ramadan. Director-General of the KRCS Abdulrahman Al-Oun said that this project targets 1,033 families with a total of 7,231 displaced and needy beneficiaries from the Yemeni people in cooperation with the Humanitarian Response

Network (HRN). Oun expressed gratitude to all donors and Kuwaiti efforts that contributed to alleviating the suffer of Yemeni people, praising the efforts of HRN in delivering the aid with the cooperation of KRCS volunteers. He pointed out the importance of activating all relief, institutional and individual efforts to help Yemeni people and shed light on the humanitarian situation by providing the necessary humanitarian needs.

Kuwait's Ambassador to Malaysia Saad Al-Asousi launched the Ramadan iftar campaign for the Muslims in the Asian country. Asousi said the campaign, funded by Kuwaiti philanthropists, provided more than 11,000 meals throughout Ramadan. He said Kuwait Embassy was distributing meals to Islamic Centers, senior citizens' care houses, mosques, universities, Quran centers and Orphanages. KRCS was also providing aid locally, ranging from health care to iftar meals. Maryam Al-Adsani, Director of Local Aid Department, said KRCS was offering eye tests and dental care for families in need, as well as distributing 2,670 meals on 5,000 families.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Ambassador to Ghana

Mohammad Al-Failakawi handed over Thursday \$117,103 cheque to the organization of education and development in the African country. Kuwait Consulate in Irbil, Iraq, launched yesterday a campaign to provide iftar meals for around 6,000 people for 10 days. Kuwait Consul Dr Omar Al-Kandari said the campaign was in compliance with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's instructions to help the Iraqi people. The campaign, he added, has been implemented in Irbil in collaboration with local partners. Ismail Abdulaziz, director of aid at Barzani humanitarian institute, said the campaign would provide meals for people in need, workers and university students. Kuwait's Consulate supervised distribution of food presented by Kuwait-based International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) to 17,300 people in camps for the Internally Displaced persons (IDPs). Kandari said the food supplies were distributed in camps of Hassan Sham and Kharez West of Irbil. IICO President Dr Abdullah Al-Maqtouq visited the camps recently to get acquainted first-hand of needs of IDPs. — KUNA



A campaign organized by Kuwait's Consulate in Irbil, Iraq, to provide iftar meals.



CBK launches 4th 'Suhoor on US' campaign

KUWAIT: As part of its Ramadan activities and for the fourth year in a row, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently launched its 'Suhoor On US' campaign by distributing suhoor meals amongst cleaning and construction workers at their working sites. The campaign runs through the end of Ramadan.

In this regard, assistant general manager for corporate communication Amani Al-Wer'a said that CBK has been always keen on launching outstanding social, charity and humane programs during Ramadan, adding that 'Green Hands Environmental Team' volunteers helped CBK employees in distributing the meals.



Diabetes institute holds 'Corporate Wellness Week'

KUWAIT: Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences held recently its first ever 'Corporate Wellness Week.' The program was developed and arranged by Osama Alowais, an Exercise Physiologist at the Institute, as part of DDI's initiative to assure staff wellness in the workplace. The week was comprised of talks and interactive sessions promoting wellness at work. The speakers on the first day included Professor Harri Vainio, Dean of the Faculty of Public Health at Kuwait University, Dr Janvier Gasana, acting Head of the Department

of Environmental and Occupational Health. On the second day, Diversified Integrated Sports Clinic gave a talk regarding optimal office ergonomics as well as posture and alignment checks. On the final day, Dr Dana Al-Tarrah, Assistant Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Faculty of Public Health at Kuwait University gave a talk regarding proper nutrition at work and gave her recommendations for healthy eating during the holy month of Ramadan. Following this wellness week, DDI expects to host similar projects and assure its staff wellness.

Local

Kuwaitis spent KD 4.03 billion on travel in 2018, up by 17.6 percent

Kuwaitis spend 11% of annual income on tourism

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: According to official statistics, Kuwaitis' total spending on travel increased by 17.6 percent in 2018, where they spent KD 4.03 billion (\$13.9 billion), compared to only KD 3.43 billion (\$11.31 billion) in 2017. The statistics also showed revenues from tourism have retreated by 10.6 percent as the tourism sector only made KD 378 million compared to KD 423 million in 2017. A World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) study had pointed out Kuwaitis annually spend 11 percent of their income on tourism, travelling and recreation - the highest in GCC states - followed by Saudis, who spend 7 percent of their income on tourism, Qataris 5.7 percent, Omanis 3.3 percent and Bahrainis 2.1 percent.

Price control

Minister of Social Affairs Saad Al-Kharraz stressed that the ministry is closely monitoring consumer goods prices in various co-ops during Ramadan to prevent any unjustified price hikes accompanying the high demand during the holy month. Speaking on the sidelines of an iftar with residents of social care homes, Kharraz said special teams had been formed in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies and the Public Authority for Manpower to tour and inspect various co-ops and fine violators.

High school graduates

Kuwait University is scheduled to hold a meeting

within a few days with various educational facilities including private universities and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) to discuss the admission of high school graduates for the next academic year (2019-2020), said informed sources. The sources added that this meeting is held on an annual basis to set the arrangements to open local and overseas scholarships according to budgets, capacities and labor market needs.

Fake degrees

The Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) recently asked the Ministry of Education to provide it with information concerning the academic sequence and the validity of degrees obtained by around 40 of its employees, as it launched an investigation into suspicions that some of them could have fake degrees.

South Khaitan project

Head of the South Khaitan housing project's committee Bader Al-Mutairi predicted that if everything goes according to schedule without any obstacles, construction orders will be distributed to beneficiaries by the end of 2020. Mutairi added committee members recently met the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation's deputy director Soha Ashkanani, who told them that receiving bids for the tender of building the project's infrastructure will be completed on May 26, then the offers will be studied.

and then include all stages. This project was applied to these schools as a first step in cooperation with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health, the Kuwait's Public Authority for Food and Nutrition and the Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company to provide various and safe food items for school students. The project seeks to develop the school canteen to provide a variety of nutritious food at affordable prices for school students in order to improve their health and to reduce the risk factors leading to no communicable diseases.

In this context, Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company CEO Mutlaq Al-Zayed said that the canteen project is aimed to introduce the company's products in canteens with the approved specifications of Kuwait's Public Authority for Food and Nutrition in order to preserve the health of school students. Zayed added that the company and its partners represented by the Ministry of Education and the Food and Nutrition Authority have developed an objective plan for the project consisting of three phases aimed at preserving the health of the students in terms of



Cleaning tenders

Well-informed source at Kuwait Municipality said the municipality's executive body is fully committed to studying cleaning bids within a month after receiving them from the Central Agency for Public Tenders. "We received the offers on March 11 and sent our reply on April 11, which means there is no delay on our side," the source stressed. The source added that the municipality suggested conditioning that contractors only take one project each in order to create competitiveness amongst them and help reduce costs, which has already happened as new contracts cost 55.65 percent less than the previous ones.

national responsibility. He explained that the first phase included the adoption of samples of the company's varieties by the Food and Nutrition Authority after conducting several questionnaires for students to know their favorite products.

As for the second phase, it began supplying samples to eight schools from different stages and governorates to test the products and undergo a trial period of 3 weeks, he said. He added that during this period, questionnaires would be conducted for students after the experiment, noting that the third phase will be the actual supply starting from the next school year for all primary schools. He said that the number of products offered by the company in the canteens amounted to about 31 products of different flavors ranging from 100 fils to 250 fils Kuwaiti (\$0.32 to \$0.81). He added that the mechanism of work in the project is now through the delivery of the company's products to the school's canteens, which are responsible for the purchase, pointing out that there is a trend in the future to use vending machines in schools to sell products of the company. — KUNA

School canteens project to change students' bad health habits

KUWAIT: The national project for the development of the healthy school canteen is one of the important methods and tools recently adopted by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education to strengthen the nutritional status of school students in cooperation with Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakery Company. This initiative encourages students to change the wrong habits and adopt positive behavior by providing food to reduce the incidence of nutritional-related diseases.

In March, the Ministry of Education began implementing the project initially on eight schools for experimentation. Health products were presented by Flour Mills Company in preparation for the expansion of the project next year to include primary schools

Israel's settlement policy major obstacle before peace: Kuwait

NEW YORK: Kuwait late on Thursday reiterated its condemnation of Israeli settlement policy, branding it a "major obstacle" before achieving peace in the Middle East. This came in a speech by Kuwait's acting permanent Representative to the UN Counselor Bader Al-Munayikh during a Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting on (Israeli-Settlements and Settlers: Core of the occupation, protection crisis and obstruction of peace). The meeting jointly convened by Kuwait, Indonesia, and South Africa.

During the meeting, chaired by Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi. Counselor Munayikh pointed out that since 1967 and until the end of 2017, some 220 settlements were built throughout the West Bank, housing around 620,000 settlers; 210,000 of whom in the occupied East Jerusalem. He stressed dire fallouts of this policy on achieving a two-state solution based on the 1967 border, attributing such consequences to the "unprecedented" expansion of settlements, going parallel with the increasing rate of violence by settlers against Palestinian civilians.

Moreover, the settlements' expansion policy have become a "regrettable vicious cycle" of violence and displacement; a grim reality lived by Palestinians on ground, Munayikh noted. The Foreign Minister of the Observer State of Palestine, Riyad Malki also attended



NEW YORK: Kuwait's acting permanent Representative to the UN Counselor Bader Al-Munayikh (left) speaks during a Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting. — KUNA

the meeting, which aims to discuss international responsibilities to uphold the law and internationally agreed norms and principles, including in regards to the prohibitions on the acquisition of territory by force; the right of peoples to self-determination and the protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict; and will examine measures of accountability in a case of continued violations.

The meeting's concept note argues that the two-state solution is being jeopardized by Israel's illegal construction of settlements and transfer of its settlers to Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967, including East Jerusalem. The note maintains that this is part of Israel's effort to change "the demographic composition, character and status" of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It also describes what the organizers of the

meeting argue are unlawful policies that stem from the establishment of settlements, such as forced displacement of Palestinians and the demolition of homes and properties, among others.

The note calls for Israel to be held accountable for all breaches of international law stemming from settlement activities and condemns what it sees as impunity for settlers' actions. Also with regard to accountability, it calls on the international community and specifically the Security Council to use its tools to hold Israel accountable for its "illegal behavior" and to impose consequences if Israel does not act in line with its legal obligations. The meeting comes on the backdrop of the recent violence flare-up on the ground last week, as protests erupted over Israel's continuing blockade of Gaza. — KUNA

Security Council briefed on latest in northwestern Syria

NEW YORK: Belgium, Cote d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom, and the United States were briefed on Friday by UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) regarding developments in the de-escalation area of northwestern Syria. "We received a briefing by OCHA on the situation in and around northwestern Syria," a statement by the Security Council members said. "We follow with great concern the intensifying hostilities in northwestern Syria," the statement said.

"We condemn the loss of innocent civilian lives, and are alarmed by the displacement of over 150,000 persons as well as the targeting of population centers and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools," the statement added. "We express our deep concern of a potential humanitarian catastrophe in the event of a full-scale military operation in Idlib zone," the statement said. "We urge all parties to uphold international humanitarian law and protect civilians," the statement noted. "We urge the concerned parties to recommit and comply fully with the



NEW YORK: A press conference from the UN Security Council members' briefing on latest in northwestern Syria. — KUNA

ceasefire arrangements of the memorandum signed on 17 September 2018," the statement added. "We reaffirm our

commitment to UN efforts and to the UN-led political process," the statement added. — KUNA

local spotlight

US vs Iran



By Muna Al-Fuzal

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Washington has tightened its economic sanctions on Iran, but the question people are wondering about is whether US sanctions on Iran is an escalation towards a destructive war in the region or just a political maneuver and strategy of maximum pressure. And what is the future of the Gulf region under this tension?

I think the situation does not allow anyone to make an accurate prediction of what will happen in the coming days. Many analysts do not seem to be able to predict a specific scenario for the future, except for a lot of warnings on the seriousness of the situation to Iran and the region.

Some countries expressed concern over US sanctions on Iranian oil exports, saying they would ignore the sanctions, including India and China. The US administration reinstated and expanded US sanctions and ordered countries around the world to stop buying Iranian oil. But not all countries accepted the call. The Chinese foreign ministry condemned the tightening of US sanctions on Iran. China for example, is the main buyer of Iranian oil, followed by India, South Korea and Turkey.

But, it is clear to the observer that the Europeans feel helpless towards the US administration's current policy because they have no influence on President Donald Trump and their inability to compensate Iran's economy for possible damage to US sanctions.

Tehran has indicated its intention to resume uranium enrichment activities if its European partners fail to find a solution to allow it to overcome the economic consequences of sanctions imposed by Washington.

US threats to prevent Iran from exporting its oil, followed by the movement of a number of naval vessels in the direction of the Gulf to respond to Iran's announcement to retreat from the implementation of some of its obligations in the nuclear agreement in 2015 led many to wonder what are the risks that threaten the countries of the region here as a result of this escalation?

I do not think that the impact of the US sanctions will be on Iran alone, but on other countries too, especially in the Middle East.

Many Gulf States, including Kuwait, a strategic ally of the United States, have strong and old economic and political ties with Iran, but how can they be affected by the current escalating crisis between Tehran and Washington? I think maintaining balanced relations with the two sides is not going to be easy for Gulf states.

Because of the intention of the United States to lower Iranian oil exports to zero, Tehran has threatened to close the strategic Strait of Hormuz, saying that if it cannot export its oil abroad, none of the countries of the region will export oil through the Hormuz.

The American military moving a number of its naval vessels to the Gulf will not be frightening for a country like Iran, because it will not give in to these pressures and will not be the only one to be affected by the complexity of the landscape in the region.

Iran is producing 1.3 million barrels of oil per day according to its commitments to OPEC. I wonder if the Gulf countries will be able to compensate for this shortage. Also, I do not think the Gulf states have a desire to enter into a new challenge in the region. Right now, the region is in a difficult condition with the continuation of the war in Yemen and its repercussions.

I expect a major crisis in the oil market that threatens oil supply, which is a high price to pay, so the situation needs a quick solution to stop the tension in the region between the two countries, because both scenarios - whether Iran closing the Strait of Hormuz or America succeeding in "zero" exports of Iranian oil - will not benefit anyone.

I think that the positions of the surrounding countries will vary between those who will try to create a balanced attitude to maintain relations with US and Iran and those who see Iran as a dangerous enemy to their interests and welcome US pressure.

I expect that this will be hard for countries with economic or political interests with Iran, such as Turkey and Iraq, with a lower percentage of risk for a country such as Qatar, which recently headed towards Iran after the Gulf crisis. Kuwait, as usual, will maintain its diplomatic policy and will try to maintain a balanced relationship to avoid possible damage if it takes a clear hostile stand against any party. Let's not forget that the United States and Iran are Iraq's main political and economic partners.

On the other hand, Iran still has power in the region and is ready to defend its oil-based economic interests. Because nearly a year after the United States pulled out of the nuclear deal, the sanctions do not seem to have changed the Iranian influence in the region. Iran may ease dependence on oil and promote self-sufficiency to create an economic model that can continue even under external pressures.

Yet, consumers around the world may be more likely to see a change in oil prices in the coming months.

Until now, most experts see the possibility of a war as not possible and consider the situation as a temporary tension that can be calmed, because closing the Strait of Hormuz will allow the United States to take the matter as a pretext for war, and this will harm everyone. So I see that what the United States is doing is a policy of maximum pressure.

Now there is an urgent need to remedy the tense situation to avoid further escalation in the region, because keeping up with US sanctions is difficult for the countries in the region and European intervention is required to calm the tension, because the potential damages will be at the expense of Washington's allies and interests in the world.

Kuwait Times

Established 1961

Ramadan, Kareem

History of Kuwait



KUWAIT: This photo shows how a typical gas station in Kuwait looked like back in the 1960s. The old classic cars appear in their beautiful form, while there was no traffic congestions as we know them now. (Source: The KOC archive. Researched by Mahmoud Zakaria, Researcher in Heritage, the Ministry of Information)

KFH 'Feed the Fasting' campaign kicked off in 6 locations



KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched 'Feed the Fasting' campaign as part of its Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 5,' and its leadership in achieving social responsibility. KFH voluntary team distributed iftar meals at 6 locations. The locations are: Nayef Palace, Alshamlan Mosque, Souk Al-Mubarakiya and Hawalli Park and Ramadan Aman Traffic intersections. The voluntary team prepares and distributes around 1,000 iftar meals daily in Ramadan.

KFH's efforts in Ramadan underline the bank's pioneering role in the social responsibility, while contributing in strengthening the social ties. KFH's Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 5' includes various visits and voluntary work, social and humanitarian events and activities stemming from the bank's endeavors to solidify its commitment towards the society, while supporting all social and humanitarian initiatives.



Local



KUWAIT: His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah hosted a reception over the weekend on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. Top state officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the reception. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: One of Zain's iftar halls.



Zain's team in front of an iftar hall.

Zain offers nearly 35,000 iftar meals throughout Ramadan

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, launched its annual 'Iftar Al-Saem' initiative to

provide fasting individuals with iftar meals as part of its extensive social campaign during the holy month of Ramadan. The company will be distributing nearly 35,000 iftar meals throughout the holy month.

This annual initiative, which comes for the fourteenth consecutive time this year, is considered a main pillar of Zain's comprehensive Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility (CSSR) campaign during the holy month of Ramadan. The iftar meal banquets are supervised by Zain's volunteers team in two main halls at Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Jahra.

Zain started the preparations for this initiative before the arrival of Ramadan, where the company was keen to cover the most populated areas of Kuwait, especially in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Jahra in order to meet the needs of the maximum amount of underprivileged individuals and families who are in most need of an iftar meal after a hard day of work.

This initiative is part of a series of programs the company is organizing throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan with the aim of having a deep positive impact on the community's various segments, especially the most vulnerable

ones. Zain affirmed that its social and CSSR campaign during the Holy Month of Ramadan includes an extensive array of initiatives and programs that focus on helping less fortunate people to enjoy Ramadan happily, as well as celebrating the true spirit the Holy month brings.

Zain's solid Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy primarily focuses on the wellbeing of the entire nation. For this reason, the company has maintained its support of numerous initiatives that spread awareness and help make a difference to people's everyday lives.



Ramadan a reminder to do good deeds

By Faten Omar

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

Ayoub Al-Salem, 23, physical therapist/general secretary of Ma'an for Volunteers, told Kuwait Times that the best part of Ramadan is family gatherings and the fact that you expect many guests every day. "The vibes in Ramadan are different - everyone stays outside till midnight. The best part is planning where to have suhour. You can feel the presence of forgiveness and mercy everywhere," he said.

Salem expressed his happiness to welcome Ramadan, as this month is like a reminder for him to do

good deeds and help others. "We started our volunteering group to help others and to invest in volunteers to find their passion by experiencing many aspects of life, especially charity work. Ramadan is the best opportunity for volunteers to be exposed to charity work, because it encourages everyone to do the right thing in order to get the blessings of Ramadan. By doing this, the community will rise and will be full of good people who care about others. I recommend everyone to volunteer and help others to feel the blessings of Ramadan."



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SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2019



Farrakhan denies hating Jews after Facebook ban

Social networks under intense surveillance in Pakistan

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HODEIDA, Yemen: This file picture taken on Jan 1, 2019 shows fishing boats moored to a dock in this embattled Yemeni Red Sea port city. — AFP

Houthis begin withdrawal from Hodeida ports

Govt accuses rebels of faking pullout

HODEIDA: Yemen's Houthi movement yesterday started withdrawing forces from Saleef port in Hodeidah under a UN-sponsored deal that had been stalled for months, a Reuters witness said, reviving hopes for peace efforts to end the four-year war. The move, which has yet to be verified by the UN and accepted by the Saudi-led coalition, is the first major step in implementing the pact reached last year by the Saudi-backed government and the Iran-aligned Houthis for a truce and troop withdrawal in Hodeida, a lifeline for millions of Yemenis.

UN teams were overseeing the Houthi redeployment in Saleef, used for grain, as other teams headed to the second port of Ras Isa, used for oil, to start implementing the Houthi withdrawal from there, according to the witness. A dozen trucks carrying Houthi fighters, armed with rocket-propelled grenade launchers and machine guns, departed from Saleef. Two ships were docked at the port and operations were running normally, said the witness who was at the facility. "The coast guards have taken over in Saleef," he said. "They and UN officials have started checking equipment at the port."

The UN's Redeployment Coordination Committee (RCC) has said that the Houthis would make an "initial unilateral redeployment" between May 11 and May 14 from Saleef, Ras Isa and Yemen's main port of Hodeida. It said the redeployment would enable the United Nations to take a leading role in supporting Red Sea Ports Corporation in managing the ports and enhance UN

checks on cargoes. It would also allow reopening humanitarian corridors.

But a senior pro-government official accused the Houthi rebels of faking an announced pullout from three Red Sea ports in the flashpoint province of Hodeida yesterday. "The Houthis are staging a new ploy by handing over the ports of Hodeida, Saleef and Ras Issa to themselves without any monitoring by the United Nations and the government side," provincial governor Al-Hasan Taher told AFP.

Taher's accusation came after the Houthi rebels, who have been in control of the ports since 2014, said they had carried out their obligations. "We have implemented all obligations of the first phase of redeployment. The UN must commit the other side to implement its obligations," Brigadier Mohammed Al-Qaderi, the Houthi representative in a joint coordination team, said on Twitter.

Sources close to the Iran-aligned Houthis told AFP that the ports were handed over to coast guard personnel who were in charge before the rebels took over almost five years ago. There was no independent confirmation of a rebel withdrawal, and a UN observer mission in the city of Hodeida remained cautious in its initial assessment. "The UN has started monitoring this unilateral step," a source told AFP. "The UN hopes soon to be in a position to report to the Security Council on actual movements on the ground."

The council is due to hear a briefing on Hodeida on

Wednesday. The Hodeida governor said the unilateral step of the Houthis contradicted the terms of the ceasefire deal and accused the UN envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, of collaborating with the rebels. "Martin Griffiths wants to achieve victory even if the Houthis hand over (the ports) to themselves," the government-appointed official said. "This is totally rejected by us, and the agreement must be implemented in full, especially with regards to the identity of the troops that will take over from the Houthis," Taher said. Hodeidah became the focus of the war last year when the coalition twice tried to seize its port to cut off the main supply line of the Houthis, who they accuse of smuggling Iranian weapons, including missiles that have targeted Saudi cities. The group and Tehran deny the accusations. The peace deal had stalled since January amid deep mistrust among the parties in a conflict that has killed tens of thousands and pushed the poorest Arabian Peninsula nation to the brink of famine. It calls for coalition forces to leave positions around the outskirts of Hodeida in the initial redeployment.

UN assessment next week

It was not clear if Griffiths had secured agreement between the two sides over the main sticking point regarding which local authorities would control the ports and city under UN supervision after both sides withdraw. The coalition had disputed an earlier unilateral withdrawal by the Houthis from Hodeida port in December, saying

they had handed it over to coast guard members loyal to the group.

A UN source told Reuters yesterday that the RCC would announce its assessment of the Houthi redeployment next week. Under the first phase, the Houthis would pull back five km from the three ports over the next four days. Coalition forces, currently massed four km from Hodeida port on the edges of the city, would retreat one km from "Kilo 8" and Saleh districts. In the second phase, both sides would pull troops 18 km outside the city and heavy weapons 30 km away.

The United Nations secured the Hodeida deal at peace talks in Sweden, the first in two years, to avert a full-scale assault on the port that risked so disrupting supply lines that it could trigger mass famine. The pact is also a trust-building step to pave the way for wider political negotiations to end the conflict, widely seen in the region as a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Western allies, which supply arms and intelligence to the coalition, have pushed for an end to the war.

The alliance led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates intervened in Yemen in 2015 after the Houthis ousted the internationally recognized government of Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi from power in the capital Sanaa in late 2014. The Houthis, who say their revolution is against corruption, control the biggest urban centers while Hadi's government holds the southern port of Aden and a string of coastal towns. — Agencies

Kidnapped French tourists were in Benin 'red zone'

PARIS: The two French tourists rescued from their kidnappers in Burkina Faso this week were seized in an area of Benin that France has long advised travellers to avoid. Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said yesterday. "The zone where our two citizens were has for some time now been considered a red zone, which means it's a zone where you shouldn't go, where you're taking significant risks if you do go," Le Drian told Europe 1 radio.

The foreign ministry's travel advisory website lists the areas of northern Benin near the border with Burkina Faso as "Formally Discouraged," including Pendjari National Park. It warns of "the presence of armed terrorist groups and the risk of kidnapping." The French tourists, Patrick Picque, 51, and Laurent Lassimouillas, 46, disappeared during a tour of Pendjari on May 1. The disfigured body of their guide was found shortly after they were reported missing, along with their abandoned Toyota truck.

Intelligence agencies tracked their captors across the semi-desert terrain of eastern Burkina Faso, where it appeared they would soon cross the border into Mali. Officials feared the hostages would be handed over to the Macina Liberation Front (FLM), a jihadist group formed in 2015 that is aligned with Al-Qaeda in the region. French President



OUAGADOUGOU: Burkina Faso President Roch Marc Christian Kabore receives former French hostages Laurent Lassimouillas and Patrick Picque and a South Korean hostage who has not yet been identified for a meeting at Kosyam Presidential Palace yesterday. — AFP

Emmanuel Macron gave the order for the nighttime raid Thursday on the militants' camp, in which Picque and Lassimouillas were freed, along with an American woman and a South Korean woman.

The French commandos were unaware of the presence of the two other hostages, officials said. Four of the six kidnappers were killed, but two French soldiers also died in the raid. Picque and Lassimouillas, along with the South Korean hostage who has not yet been identified, arrived in Ouagadougou on Saturday, where they were to meet with Burkina's President Roch Marc Christian Kabore, according to an AFP reporter at the presidential palace.

"Our thoughts go out to the families of the soldiers, and to the soldiers who lost their

lives in freeing us from this hell," Lassimouillas said in a brief statement. He and Picque were to return to Paris later yesterday, where Macron and Le Drian are to meet them at the Villacoublay military airport southwest of the capital.

Although Benin has long been spared the unrest seen in Mali and Burkina Faso, French officials have warned that jihadist insurgents could extend their operations into the sparsely populated desert regions further south. "The threat is evolving and has become much more mobile, and now countries to the south of Mali have become targets," Le Drian said yesterday. "The greatest precautions must be taken in these regions to avoid these types of kidnappings, and avoid the sacrifices required by our soldiers," he said.—AFP

N Korea's missile tests not 'breach of trust': Trump

WASHINGTON: North Korean missile launches over the past week have not affected Donald Trump's relationship with Kim Jong Un, the US president said Friday, in a change of course after initially expressing his dissatisfaction. Pyongyang fired two short-range missiles Thursday following an earlier drill the previous Saturday - the first in 18 months. The North had not launched any missiles since Nov 2017, shortly before once reclusive Kim embarked on diplomatic overtures.

"I don't consider that a breach of trust at all. And, you know, at some point I may. But at this point no," Trump said in an interview with Politico. "These were short-range missiles and very standard stuff. Very standard." Twenty-four hours earlier, however, Trump showed his irritation and impatience on an issue where he hopes to succeed while all his predecessors - Republicans and Democrats - have failed. "Nobody's happy about it," he told reporters, in reaction to the launches.

"We'll see what happens," Trump added. "I know they want to negotiate, they're talking about negotiating. But I don't think they are ready to negotiate." Will the US president at some point lose faith in Kim? He has met twice with the North Korean leader and claimed that the two have a special friendship and even "love". "I mean it's possible that at some point I will, but right now not at all," he told Politico.

The first face-to-face historic meeting between the two men in June 2018 in Singapore produced only a vague statement about denuclearization, allowing both sides to make very different interpretations of it. February's second summit, in Hanoi, broke up without a deal after they failed to agree on what Pyongyang would be willing to give up in exchange for sanctions relief. Since then, Kim has accused Washington of acting in "bad faith" and given it until the end of the year to change its approach.

North Korea's Rodong Sinmun newspaper, the mouthpiece of the ruling party, devoted its entire front page and half of page two to the launch on Friday, with 16 pictures, the main one of Kim watching the launch from a camouflaged shelter. Despite recent threats by the North to seek a new path, the nature and presentation of the two recent launches demonstrate that Pyongyang does not intend to walk away from talks any time soon, analysts say.

On Friday at the United Nations, 70 countries urged North Korea to scrap its nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and related programs, decrying the "undiminished threat" posed to world peace. Signatories included the United States and South Korea, as well as nations in Asia, Latin America, Africa and Europe. Russia and China, supporters of Pyongyang, did not sign the document drafted by France. —AFP

International

Month after Bashir ouster, Sudan far from civilian rule

Military dragging heels on civilian authority to oversee transition

KHARTOUM: Sudan's army rulers and protesters are to resume talks over handing power to a civilian administration, protest leaders said yesterday, a month after veteran president Omar al-Bashir was deposed. The Alliance for Freedom and Change - an umbrella for the protest movement - said the generals had invited it for a new round of talks after several days of deadlock.

The apparent invitation to fresh talks came as thousands of protesters remain camped outside army headquarters in central Khartoum, vowing to force the ruling military council to cede power - just as they forced Bashir from office exactly a month ago. "We received a call from the military council to resume negotiations," the Alliance for Freedom and Change said in a statement.

Late last month, the alliance, which brings together protest organizers, opposition parties and rebel groups, handed the generals its proposals for a civilian-led transitional government. But the generals have pointed to what they call "many reservations" over the alliance's roadmap. They have singled out its silence on the constitutional position of Islamic sharia law, which was the guiding principle of all legislation under Bashir's rule but is anathema to secular groups like the Sudanese Communist Party and some rebel factions in the alliance.

"We want to hold the talks quickly and sort out all these points in 72 hours," the alliance

said without specifying when the negotiations would resume. Protesters remain determined to achieve their goal. "We want civilian rule or we will stay here forever," said Iman Hussein, a regular at the sit-in outside the army complex which protesters have kept up since April 6.

Winner 'will be us'

Protesters initially gathered at the army complex to seek the generals' help in ending Bashir's three decades of iron-fisted rule. On April 11, the army toppled Bashir in a palace coup replacing him with a military council formed entirely of generals that has so far stymied protesters' dreams of a civilian-led transition to democracy. A deepening economic crisis that fuelled the four months of nationwide protests which led to Bashir's ouster shows no sign of abating.

Huge queues form daily at ATM machines. Basic goods have become ever more costly, due to the sliding value of the Sudanese pound. The generals insist they will not use force to disperse the sit-in, which protesters have kept up even during daytime fasts for the holy month of Ramadan. The generals have offered several concessions to placate the protesters, including detaining Bashir in Khartoum's Kober prison, arresting several of his lieutenants and promising to prosecute officers who killed protesters during the last days of the former president's rule. But when

it comes to the protesters' key demand for a civilian authority to oversee a four-year transition, the military has simply dragged its heels. "They are pressuring us with time, but we are pressuring them with our presence here," said protester Hussein. "One of us has to win in the end, and it will be us."

'Escalatory measures'

The protest movement says the military appears intent on hijacking the revolution and determining its outcome. Protest leader Khalid Omar Yousef told reporters on Wednesday that the movement was now considering "escalatory measures" like launching a nationwide civil disobedience movement to achieve its demand. The generals are under pressure too, with the United States and the African Union calling on them to ensure a smooth transition of power.

In a telephone call with military council chairman General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, US Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan backed "the Sudanese people's aspirations for a free, democratic and prosperous future". The State Department said Sullivan encouraged Burhan to reach agreement with the Alliance for Freedom and Change and "move expeditiously toward a civilian-led interim government", during a phone call on Wednesday. But the generals have strong support from oil-rich Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which have extended a \$3 bil-



KHARTOUM: A Sudanese protester raises a sign of victory outside the army headquarters on May 9, 2019. — AFP

lion credit line to shore up the Sudanese pound and fund imports of basic goods. Some members of the protest movement are optimistic that the generals will ultimately cede power. "Because they know if ultimately they

settle for a military dictatorship, they will be in the same position as Bashir," opposition leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi, the prime minister Bashir overthrew in an Islamist-backed coup in 1989, told AFP earlier this month. — AFP

ANC in power but scandals cost it votes

PRETORIA: The African National Congress easily won South Africa's general election but its share of the vote fell, reflecting anger at corruption scandals and racial inequalities that remain entrenched a generation after the party took power. The turnout for Wednesday's vote was markedly lower than at the last election in 2014, falling to 66 percent from 73.5 percent, according to the electoral commission, while the main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), also saw its vote share fall.

ANC Deputy Secretary General Jessie Duarte said "confidence is returning and we need to correct our mistakes". Other ANC officials had already acknowledged the decline in support for the party compared with five years ago. Provisional results on Saturday showed the ruling party secured 57.51 percent of the parliamentary vote. The DA picked up 20.76 percent and the leftist Economic Freedom Fighters took 10.79 percent, the Independent Electoral Commission said on its website.

The ANC's victory secures it enough seats in parliament to give President Cyril Ramaphosa another five years in office but may leave him short of ammunition to battle party rivals who oppose his reforms to galvanize the economy and counter graft. It was the worst electoral performance by the late Nelson Mandela's former liberation movement, which has governed South Africa uninterrupted since the country's first free election marked the end of white minority rule in 1994. The ANC had not previously won less than 60 percent of the vote in a national poll.

At the last election in 2014, the ANC won 62 percent of votes, the DA 22 percent and the EFF 6 percent. The provisional results also showed the ANC won a tight provincial race in Gauteng, where South Africa's biggest city and commercial center Johannesburg and the administrative capital Pretoria are located, with 50.19 percent of the vote. Losing control of Gauteng and having to form a coalition there would be a blow to Ramaphosa, who replaced scandal-plagued Jacob Zuma as president in February 2018.

He had sought to re-engage ANC voters whose enthusiasm for the party has been eroded by its faltering efforts to address corruption, high unemployment and persistent racial disparities in housing, services and the distribution of land. Africa's most advanced economy remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, according to the World Bank.

Leadership challenge?

The ANC retained control of eight of the country's nine provinces in separate elections also held on Wednesday, with the DA keeping hold of the Western Cape, home to Cape Town, where parliament resides. Analysts had said a poor showing by the ANC would embolden opponents of Ramaphosa and risk a challenge to his leadership. Fikile Mbalula, a former cabinet minister who was in charge of the party's election campaign, said the ANC's 10 million votes were the result of hard work by its leadership. He hailed union leader turned business tycoon Ramaphosa's role in starting to undo negative public perceptions of the ANC.

"People love him," Mbalula said. "And from where we were, we were battered in terms of our image and he was a game-changer for the ANC." The 66-year-old president was "very safe" from internal challenges, he said, adding: "The ANC is very strong in protecting their leadership. Even if there are remnants trying their thing, they will not succeed."

The ANC achieved its best parliamentary election result in 2004 under former president Thabo Mbeki, when it won 69 percent of the vote. But its support fell under Zuma, and it lost control of big cities like the commercial capital Johannesburg in local government elections in 2016. Election officials said voting had generally progressed smoothly on Wednesday, with isolated disruptions due to bad weather, power outages or community protests.

But 27 smaller parties of 48 that ran in total sent a letter to the electoral commission via a law firm on Friday, alleging irregularities in the vote and threatening legal action. — Reuters



KHAN SHAYKHUN, Syria: Smoke rises above buildings during shelling by Syrian regime forces and their allies on this town in the southern countryside of the rebel-held Idlib province yesterday. — AFP

Aid groups suspend aid to northwest Syria

BEIRUT: UN-linked aid groups have suspended activities in parts of violence-plagued northwest Syria, where stepped up bombardment by the regime and Russia is jeopardizing the safety of humanitarian workers. "As of 8 May, at least 16 humanitarian partners have suspended their operations in areas impacted by conflict," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA said Friday. The World Food Program said it has suspended "deliveries to about 47,000 people in towns and villages... (that) have come under bombardment".

Since late April, government forces have mounted a major bombardment of southern Idlib and neighboring areas with Russian support. The uptick in air strikes and shelling on the region dominated by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate has displaced 180,000 people between 29 April and 9 May, OCHA said. It has also affected 15 health facilities and 16 schools, it added. "Some organizations suspended activities as their premises were damaged, destroyed or rendered unsafe by the violence," OCHA said. "Others have suspended activities in order to keep their staff and beneficiaries safe, or because the beneficiary population has left," it added.

Nuns step up in fight against prostitution

ROME: Girls freed from the clutches of human traffickers worldwide are given shelter by nuns from the Talitha Kum network, which is marking its 10th anniversary with support from Pope Francis. "We have sisters who go into the streets, but also to refugee camps, schools, tea plantations, (and) prisons," the international network's coordinator, Sister Gabriella Bottani told AFP. "We can identify situations, do prevention work, offer help," she said.

Efforts to help those trapped in prostitution are regularly lauded by the 82-year-old pope. The Argentine choose an anti-trafficking Italian nun to write the Way of Cross meditations this Easter, with seasoned campaigner Eugenia Bonetti slamming public "indifference" as the main reason girls are still on the street. On Friday, Francis opened an exhibition at the Vatican

OCHA said five humanitarian workers, including two health professionals, have been reportedly killed due to air strikes and shelling. WFP also said that some of its partners inside Idlib have been "displaced due to the violence, while a few others have sustained injuries". The northwestern part of Syria controlled by jihadists is made up of a large part of Idlib province, as well as adjacent parts of the Aleppo and Hama provinces.

It has been protected from a massive regime offensive by a September deal inked by Damascus ally Russia and rebel backer Turkey. The region of some three million people has come under increasing bombardment since Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, which is dominated by jihadists from Al-Qaeda's former Syrian branch, took full control of it in the beginning of the year. Western powers are concerned that the Russia-backed Syrian government will launch a full-scale assault. On Friday, air strikes and shelling killed 10 civilians, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The civil war in Syria has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it started with the brutal repression of anti-government protests in 2011. — AFP

of photographs by Lisa Kristine of the US, portraying nuns working with victims.

Trafficking in women is "an octopus with many tentacles," said Sister Yvonne Clemence Bambara, who runs a rehabilitation center in Burkina Faso. "We have to work together in many ways to overcome it and mitigate the consequences as much as possible," she added.

'Rise up'

Many convents have been active in fighting prostitution since the 19th century. Their efforts were brought under one umbrella in 2009 with the creation of Talitha Kum - Aramaic words from the bible that mean "Young girl, rise up". The network has hundreds of members in India, where sisters train young people in villages and slums to be vigilant and work together to find children who have been sold to pimps or abducted by traffickers. "If a child goes missing, we send the message out," Sister Prema Chowallur from Assam State in India told AFP by telephone. The nuns have different types of shelters ready for those determined to get off the streets, offering both first response care and help with reintegration into society. — AFP

Battle for Tripoli gives chance to IS

TRIPOLI: The battle for Tripoli between rival Libyan forces both championing the fight against "terrorism" has created a security vacuum, allowing the Islamic State group a chance to re-emerge, analysts warn. Libya expert Emad Badi says the fighting has given IS "the opportunity to reorganize, recruit and strike alliances with other groups (and organize attacks) to show they are still around". Jihadist groups capitalized on Libya's descent into chaos after the 2011 uprising that killed veteran dictator Muammar Gaddafi to establish a presence in the North African country.

IS had its main stronghold in Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte, east of Tripoli, until it was expelled from the Mediterranean coastal city in Dec 2016. The group's demise came at the hands of forces loyal to the Tripoli-based internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), especially fighters from the western city of Misrata. Those fighters are among pro-GNA forces now battling the self-styled Libyan National Army of military strongman Khalifa Haftar who launched an assault on Tripoli on April 4.

Haftar has vowed to "cleanse" Libya of jihadists and presents himself as the country's savior. In 2017, he drove hard-line Islamists out of second city Benghazi after a three-year battle and ousted jihadists from Derna, also in the east. Then in January he launched an operation to "purge the south of terrorist and criminal groups" before setting his sights on Tripoli. But despite being weakened, the militants still pose a threat in oil-rich

Libya, where they were blamed for around 20 attacks last year. And over the past week IS has carried out two deadly assaults targeting Haftar's forces - on a training camp in the southern city of Sebha on May 4 that left nine dead and an attack Thursday in Ghodwa, also in the south, that killed two civilians.

Feeding on divisions

Instability has reigned over Libya since the 2011 uprising, with rival political and military forces vying for power and fighting for the country's oil wealth and cities. Groups such as IS have fed on this chaos to grow, and divisions that persist as reflected by the battle for Tripoli only serve to bolster them, analysts say. "The divisions give terrorists an unexpected opportunity to mobilize and reorganize," said Khaled Al-Montasser, a professor of international studies who lectures at Libyan universities.

After losing Sirte and Derna, IS was weakened but not totally defeated as its fighters withdrew to the country's remote and vast desert in the south or infiltrated coastal communities. The threat militants pose was highlighted in a statement Thursday by the GNA, which also blamed Haftar's offensive for giving groups like IS another chance to regroup. "GNA forces continue to repel the Haftar militias but their attacks... destabilize our country and allow terrorist groups like Daesh to re-emerge," it said using an Arabic acronym for IS.

Karim Bitar, director of research at the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs, draws a parallel with Syria and Iraq, where IS built a "caliphate" after a lightning offensive in 2014. "In Libya, as in Iraq and Syria before it, IS took advantage of a vacuum... and the collapse of the state's structures to anchor itself," he said. "As long as Libya is divided and as long as the state's sovereign authority is not re-established across the country, there is a risk that IS will be able to regain ground," he said. — AFP

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International

Farrakhan denies hating Jews after Facebook ban

Nation of Islam leader slams influence of Jewish scriptural thinking on Catholic Church

CHICAGO: Racist demagogue and dangerous fundamentalist to some, heroic crusader for black rights to others, incendiary religious leader Louis Farrakhan is finding the audience for his message increasingly hard to reach. The head of the Nation of Islam - barred for years from Britain and blocked from mainstream TV - has been declared an undesirable by Facebook for his long record as an unrepentant merchant of anti-Semitism and homophobia.

Farrakhan's black advocacy and mantra of self-reliance has lent him a measure of legitimacy over the years, bolstered by his role a quarter century ago in organizing the Million Man March that drew hundreds of thousands of African Americans to Washington. And while his continuing influence is undeniable, critics of the 86-year-old son of a Massachusetts seamstress point out that he has compared Jews to "termites," called Hitler a "great man" and claimed that the white race was created by an evil wizard.

True to form, one of the most divisive political figures in modern American history reacted to his May 2 ouster from Facebook by casting himself as a victim silenced by powerful forces. "What have I done that you would hate me like that?" Farrakhan asked before an audience of more than 1,000 at Saint Sabina Church in Chicago on Thursday. Cheered on by the rapt congregation - many of whom were members of the Nation of Islam - he denied misogyny, homophobia and racism,

telling the crowd: "I do not hate Jewish people. No one who is with me has ever committed a crime against the Jewish people." Farrakhan's supporters say his words have been twisted. "If they actually heard what he had to say and not listen to a soundbite it would be very helpful," said Enoch Muhammad, 40, a member of the Nation of Islam and founder of the community group Hip Hop Detoxx.

'Most popular anti-Semite'

What hasn't been taken out of context is Farrakhan's claim that Jews played a key role in the slave trade and have systematically oppressed black people in the US. On Thursday night, he once again uttered the kind of statements that have gotten him in trouble, criticizing the influence of Jewish scriptural thinking on the Catholic Church. "It's this that they fear," he said, pointing to his mouth. "I don't have no army. I just know the truth. And I'm here to separate the good Jews from the Satanic Jews."

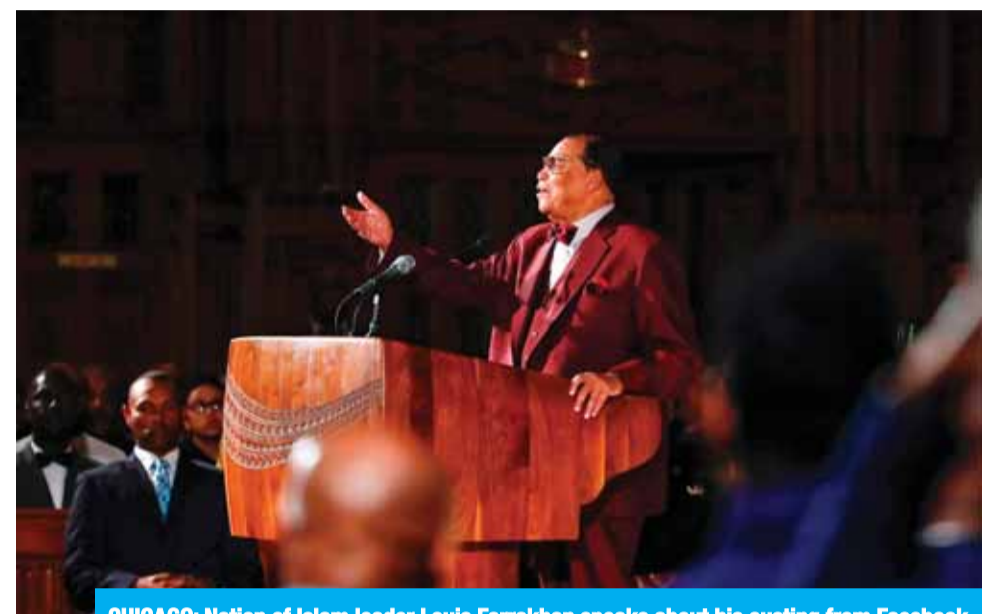
In recent decades, his star has faded, but the current era of increasingly high-profile hate crimes may have finally caught up with Farrakhan. Last month, a teenage gunman who wrote a hate-filled manifesto online opened fire at a synagogue in Poway, California, killing a worshiper. Six months earlier, another man spouting anti-Semitic and white nationalist vitriol shot dead 11 people at a synagogue in Pittsburgh. "Farrakhan may be the most popu-

lar anti-Semite in the United States," said Oren Segal of the Anti-Defamation League, describing his group as Farrakhan's "biggest foil". "He often gets a pass for his vitriol, because of the way he's tried to present his standing within the community," Segal said.

'Bold voice'

Born in 1930s New York as Louis Eugene Walcott, and brought up in Boston's fundamentalist Christian tradition, Farrakhan has been credited for bringing hope to African American communities. His followers have stood guard in neighborhoods against gang violence and ministered to convicts in prison who are disproportionately African American. And while former president Bill Clinton may have been criticized for sitting alongside Farrakhan at the televised funeral of Aretha Franklin last year, many younger Americans have no qualms about being associated with the preacher.

As recently as April, he commanded a crowd while giving a speech in Los Angeles on the spot where popular rapper Nipsey Hussle was shot dead. "The enemy wants to keep this killing of one another going," he told the rapt crowd. "Because as long as we keep killing one another, he can maintain power in what we call the tyranny of white supremacy," he said. Misbahudeen Ahmed-Rufai, a Chicago-based history and African American studies professor at Malcolm X College, said



CHICAGO: Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan speaks about his ousting from Facebook at St Sabina Catholic Church on May 9, 2019. — AFP

Farrakhan's group speaks to "the pain that a lot of African Americans feel". Prominent figures that have come to Farrakhan's defense include hip-hop artist Snoop Dogg, who posted an angry Instagram video following Facebook's action asking his 31 million followers to post clips of Farrakhan's sermons.

"Show what he really be talking about - educating the truth. Can't ban all of us," Snoop Dogg said. Among Farrakhan's other supporters is Father Michael Pfleger - the politically-active Chicago priest who invited Farrakhan to speak at his Saint Sabina church Thursday night. — AFP

News in brief

Peru to limit Machu Picchu access

LIMA: Peru announced on Friday a two-week restriction to three important areas at Machu Picchu to prevent greater degradation to the iconic Inca citadel. From May 15-28, access to the Temple of the Sun, Temple of the Condor and Intihuatana Stone will be strictly controlled at the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the government said. "These measures are necessary to conserve Machu Picchu, given the evidence of deterioration" on stone surfaces caused by visitors to the three areas, the culture ministry said. Almost 6,000 visitors a day are permitted onto the 15th century site in two waves. The new plan will give tourists just three hours to visit the three emblematic areas. Authorities will evaluate the impact of the measures before applying new permanent rules from June 1. — AFP

Pentagon assigns \$1.5bn for wall

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon said Friday it was diverting another \$1.5 billion for new barriers to stop illegal immigrants on the US-Mexico border, following the authorization of \$1 billion in March. Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan has agreed to take charge of the replacement of 125 km of fencing on the southern frontier in Arizona and Texas, the defense department said in a statement. "The funds were drawn from a variety of sources, including cost savings, programmatic changes and revised requirements," spokesman Tom Crosson said. "This transfer of funds will not affect military preparedness, nor impact service member benefits." In March Shanahan authorized \$1 billion to construct 92 km of 5.5-m high barrier, improve roads and install lighting. — AFP

Mueller won't testify next week

WASHINGTON: Robert Mueller, the US special counsel whose report on Russian election interference has shaken a divided Washington, will not testify before Congress next week, a top Democrat said Friday. House Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler had wanted Mueller to testify on May 15, but he said a date for the highly anticipated appearance before lawmakers remained under discussion. "It won't be next week," Nadler told reporters. "But we're negotiating with him, we're talking to him and the Justice Department." Nadler has said that the committee would subpoena Mueller if necessary, but expressed hope that such a step could be avoided. Nadler's comments came two days after his committee voted along party lines to recommend that Attorney General William Barr be held in contempt of Congress for refusing to turn over the unredacted Mueller report and its underlying evidence. — AFP

Colombia Mother's Day marred with blood, violence

BOGOTA: Mother's Day is a cause for celebration, but in Colombia it is infamous for bringing violence and death. Today, families will come together, flowers and alcohol will be bought in vast quantities and restaurants will be packed. But in Colombia, Mother's Day is also one of the most violent days of the year, with women bearing the brunt of it in the home. Historically, domestic and sexual violence in Colombia spikes around and on Mother's Day, as does the murder rate.

The number of people killed in Colombia leading to and on Mother's Day has increased in the past three years. According to the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences, a total of 126 people were murdered last year on Mother's Day weekend - defined as Friday, Saturday and Sunday - up from 121 in 2017 and 114 the previous year. On an average day in Colombia in 2018, 34 people were murdered in a country of about 50 million. "Mother's Day is one of the most violent days of the year against women in Colombia, and figures also show that on this day violence among men also increases," said Ana Guezmes Garcia, head of the United Nation's Women's agency in Colombia. — Reuters

Darling of Australia right goes AWOL amid election battle

BRISBANE: Australia's conservatives control the ruling Liberal Party and occupy key positions in government, but a week out from tight elections their talisman has gone into hiding and the movement is on the back foot. Unsmiling, uncompromising and polarizing, 48-year-old former policeman and Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton was front and center of Australian politics, until now. Amid a closely fought election battle that the opposition Labor Party is on track to win, Dutton - the darling of hard-right Liberals - has all but disappeared from the national view and is fighting to save his seat in parliament.

It is just one sign of how difficult the terrain has become for Australia's mainstream conservatives, stuck between moderates moving to the left and a globally inspired populist movement. For much of the last year, Dutton's faction in the ruling Liberal-National coalition had been in the ascendancy. Buoyed by the success of politicians like Donald Trump they ousted moderate prime minister Malcolm Turnbull in a party coup, tightened their grip on immigration policy and took control of Australia's domestic spy agency.

Dutton had carried himself with a swagger, unflinchingly espousing strident views and defending Australia's policies of sending asylum seekers to remote Pacific camps. He boycotted a national apology to indigenous children taken from their families, joked with climate-hit Pacific Islanders about "water lapping at your door", and told business leaders to "stick to their knitting" when they supported same-sex marriage. All of this made him a hero to conservatives, who narrowly missed out on making him Liberal leader and prime minister.

Former PM and Liberal heavyweight John Howard recently praised Dutton as a genuine and hardworking

Mexicans march for missing kids on Mother's Day

MEXICO CITY: Mexicans with missing children led marches on Friday - when Mother's Day is celebrated here - to protest the government's failure to find their sons and daughters or bring their cases to justice. There are more than 40,000 missing persons in Mexico, which has been hit by a wave of violent crime in recent years linked to powerful drug cartels. Protesters marched in 16 cities - including around 2,000 people in the capital - to voice their outrage and anguish over the thousands of clandestine graves that have been discovered in the country, and the tens of thousands of other missing persons who have never been found.

"I've been crying for the past eight years. I just want to know what happened to him," said Maria Guadalupe Aguilar, 64, a demonstrator at the Mexico City march



MEXICO CITY: Activists and relatives of missing people march to demand the Mexican government answers on the whereabouts of their loved ones, as part of the commemoration of Mothers' Day on Friday. — AFP



BRISBANE: This photo taken on March 26, 2019 shows Get Up volunteers working on their campaign in the seat of Dickson with the hopes of ousting 48-year-old former policeman and Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton (pictured right) from the Liberal Party. — AFP

politician whose "strong values and resolve" as Home Affairs Minister has "kept all Australians safer". Ahead of the 2019 election, Dutton had been expected to lead the charge as the Liberal-Nationals, who are one party in his home state of Queensland, try to win back votes lost to the anti-immigration One Nation party. But with the Liberals also trying to court moderate voters in the more progressive southern state of Victoria amid fears of a landslide loss there, Dutton - a lightning rod for left-wing anger - has taken a back seat, mostly shunning the media spotlight.

Dutton weaponized by left

Polls show Dutton in a close race in his constituency of Dickson, which he and the Liberals have held for almost 20 years. Dickson - on the northern outskirts of Brisbane and

where growing suburbia encroaches on semi-rural properties - has been a bellwether of Queensland, with past results closely reflecting the state's overall result. The seat encompasses a vast mix of socio-economic groups, with further change in recent years as the area draws in younger professionals. Dutton's main challenger on May 18 is Labor's photogenic former journalist and amputee Ali France.

He also faces activists who have vowed to shake up Australian politics. Prominent progressive group GetUp is trying to make the left more organized and targeting key conservatives like Dutton and former Liberal PM Tony Abbott on their own turf. In one of the more affluent parts of Dickson, local GetUp door-knocking volunteers - who have placed Dutton at the top of their hard-right "hit list" - speak passionately about ousting him. — AFP

Biden looking for 'middle ground' climate policy

WASHINGTON: Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden is crafting a climate change policy he hopes will appeal to both environmentalists and the blue-collar voters who elected Donald Trump, according to two sources, carving out a middle ground approach that will likely face heavy resistance from green activists. The backbone of the policy will likely include the United States re-joining the Paris Climate Agreement and preserving US regulations on emissions and vehicle fuel efficiency that Trump has sought to undo, according to one of the sources, Heather Zichal, who is part of a team advising Biden on climate change. She previously advised President Barack Obama.

The second source, a former energy department official advising Biden's campaign who asked not to be named, said the policy could also be supportive of nuclear energy and fossil fuel options like natural gas and carbon capture technology, which limit emissions from coal plants and other industrial facilities. A spokesman for Biden's campaign, TJ Ducklo, declined to comment on Biden's emerging climate policy or his advisers, but said Biden takes climate change seriously. "Joe Biden has called climate change an 'existential threat,' and as Vice President was instrumental in orchestrating the Paris Climate Accord," Ducklo said in an emailed statement.

On Twitter, Biden echoed the statement and said he plans to unveil policies that reflect the urgency of climate change. "I'll have more specifics on how America can lead on climate in the coming weeks," he said. The approach, which has not been previously reported, will set Biden apart from many of his Democratic rivals for the White House who have embraced much tougher climate agendas, like the Green New Deal calling for an end to US fossil fuels use within 10 years. That could make Biden, vice president under Obama, a target of environmental groups and youth activists ahead of next year's primary elections.

"I respect where they (activist groups) are coming from," Zichal said. "What we learned from the Obama administration is unless we find middle ground on these issues, we risk not having any policies." — Reuters

International

Taleban fighters doubling as reporters to wage digital war

Slick media operation emerges as key weapon in information war

KABUL: Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's chief spokesman and editor-in-chief of the insurgent group's daily news bulletin, starts every day by collecting reports of overnight fighting with US and Afghan forces. Mujahid says he gets his team of writers to cross-check facts shared by some of the hardline Islamist groups fighters, who double as reporters in the 34 provinces across the country. The writers prepare press statements in five languages and gather footage and photographs shot on smartphones.

The editor-in-chief then approves final drafts of the reports - highlighting the group's claimed victories in its war aimed at toppling the US-backed Afghan government - before they are published by IT specialists based outside the country. While some Afghan journalists say its accuracy is patchy, and its opponents accuse it of spreading "fake news", the Taliban's slick media operation has emerged as a key weapon in the information war that often leaves the Western-backed government and its US partners struggling to catch up.

Last month, for example the Taliban was swift to deny involvement in a suicide attack on the communications ministry in Kabul later blamed on Islamic State, while information from the government was slower to emerge. Taliban spokesmen say they have also stepped up their outreach as the pace of direct talks between its negotiators and the United States on ending the war in Afghanistan has picked up in recent months. They are often quicker than US officials to give their read-out from the talks - the sixth round of which wrapped up in Qatar on Thursday. "Whatever developments occur during the Doha talks, we share it with journalists," said Mujahid,

adding that the messages were aimed at domestic and international audiences.

Online presence

Mujahid and his colleague Qari Yousaf Ahmadi, two Taliban spokesmen based in Afghanistan, say they are authorized to interact with journalists, issue statements and tweet. They generally respond to text or voice messages from Reuters correspondents based in Kabul within an hour. While their location cannot be verified, they use Afghan phone numbers to access WhatsApp. The names they use are pseudonyms assigned to them by the Taliban leadership. "We are not authorized to reveal our real names, the two pen names are used to retain uniformity," Mujahid, who has more than 42,000 Twitter followers, told Reuters in a telephone interview.

In 2011, the Taliban leadership started posting regularly on Twitter, a surprise move by the radical Islamist movement that once banned most forms of modern entertainment. They now communicate on messaging apps WhatsApp, Viber and Telegram in English, Pashto, Dari, Arabic and Urdu. "We understand the importance of spreading information about our jihad and our determination to re-establish the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan," said Mujahid, who says he draws a monthly salary of 14,000 Afghani (\$180), plus \$128 for Internet and mobile expenses.

"Now many diplomats from various countries seek an audience with our leaders and follow us on social media," he added. "After 17 years of struggle we are winning the actual war and the digital war against infidels and the puppet regime established by the Americans to govern

Afghanistan." Afghan and Western officials dispute both statements. Government forces and their military allies, they say, are inflicting heavy casualties on the Taliban on the battlefield, and continue to launch air strikes to destroy their camps. The Taliban's media operation is dismissed as misinformation.

"Their false claims and exaggerated reports have reached an absurd style beyond any reason," said Colonel Knut Peters, the spokesman for NATO-led Resolute Support in Afghanistan, who closely tracks Taliban statements. "They are obviously trying to boost their own self-confidence while their fighters are dying in large numbers." Since October, US and Taliban officials have held talks aimed at preparing the ground for US forces to withdraw from Afghanistan in return for a Taliban guarantee that the country will not be used as a base for militant attacks elsewhere. In recent months, the Taliban have repeatedly rejected calls to declare a ceasefire, and instead intensified their attacks on Afghan forces and government offices.

Taliban newsroom

Afghan journalists who have been covering the Taliban since the 1990s said before the advent of social media the group sent out handwritten pamphlets and news reports to Afghan reporters based in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Javed Hamim Kakar, a senior editor with Pajhwok Afghan News, the country's oldest private news agency, said the insurgent group has since created a complex network to disseminate news. But a tendency to exaggerate casualties inflicted undermines the Taliban news operation's credibility, he said. In April, for example, the Taliban reported its

fighters had carried out a successful attack on Bagram, the largest US air base in Afghanistan about 50 km north of Kabul, in which it said dozens of foreign service personnel were killed or wounded. US officials in Kabul denied the attack had taken place. "If you send them a query they respond very fast, but accuracy is always a question. Propaganda is part of fighting, the Taliban are very good at it," Kakar said.

Mujahid and Ahmadi accept there have been numerous instances when they have published unsubstantiated claims of attacks and that sometimes fighters have presented an exaggerated version. "There are allegations that our communication is rife with sensationalism and embellishment but we never abandon the truth," said Ahmadi. "We correct it immediately." The government is also often accused of inflating its battlefield reports. A senior defense official familiar with the situation acknowledged the government often under-reports casualties among Afghan forces, while readily providing numbers for Taliban militants they say they have killed. There is no independent confirmation of the figures given by either side, making it impossible to fully assess the on-the-ground situation.

The Taliban's communications operation, which is now run at an annual cost of 25 million Afghani (\$323,000), started out as a small office in Kabul when the Islamists ruled the country from 1996 to 2001 and has expanded since they were ousted. It now publishes six magazines in Pashto, Dari, Urdu and Arabic, and posts news reports on 10 websites in five languages, as well as operating smaller websites that offer theological guidance, videos, and war poetry written by fighters. — Reuters

'Widow candidate' tradition in deadly Philippines polls

MANILA: Gertrudes Batocabe never wanted to enter the Philippines' cutthroat politics, but after her husband was shot dead, allegedly by a rival in next week's midterm election, she felt bound to take his place. "It's not really automatic that the wife takes over, but in this case I cannot see my opponents sitting down (quitting)" she told AFP, holding back tears. "I have a lot of things to do for Rodol, for the people of Daraga," she said, referring to her husband and the central city where she is running for mayor.

In taking over his candidacy, Batocabe was among at least half a dozen women standing in for their slain husbands this year - a long tradition in the Philippines' notoriously deadly politics. Dozens of people, including candidates and their supporters, routinely get killed in the fierce competition for elected posts that are a source of wealth in a nation with deep poverty. Over 18,000 seats, ranging from local councils to the upper house Senate, are up for grabs when the nation's more than 61 million voters are called to cast ballots on Monday.

One widow styled her campaign as a quest for justice for her husband, who was murdered last year after announcing plans to run for mayor in Trece Martires, a city south of Manila. "My name is Gemma Lubigan. I will take up the fight of Vice-Mayor Alex Lubigan," she told a cheering crowd at a recent campaign rally. A political rival, the sitting mayor of Trece Martires, was initially fingered as a suspect, but prosecutors have declined to file charges.

Political widowhood reached its apogee in the Philippines in 1986, when Corazon Aquino took power after a bloodless popular revolt that toppled the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. The upheaval was triggered by the 1983 assassination of her opposition leader husband Benigno Aquino at the hands of security forces loyal to Marcos,



DARAGA, Philippines: This photo taken on April 30, 2019 shows Gertrudes Batocabe (center), wife of the late congressman Rodol Batocabe, posing for photos with supporters during a campaign rally. — AFP

forcing her into politics. In the Philippines, widow candidates carry a powerful aura of suffering and perseverance that resonates with voters in the overwhelmingly Catholic nation, experts say. "It works especially in the Philippine context because widowhood has symbolic elements that are very much valued in politics," said University of the Philippines political science professor Jean Franco told AFP. The Philippines also lacks a strong party system so family dynasties play a similar role, with wives called on to assume the clan's figurehead position after a slaying.

'I'm careful'

Some of Asia's most powerful political families have been marked by the same phenomenon. India's Sonia Gandhi was pushed into politics after her husband, former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, was assassinated. Benazir Bhutto led Pakistan's return to democracy about a decade

after her father was ousted as prime minister in a coup and subsequently executed. Political analyst Franco said the rise of the Philippine widows also marks a way into the nation's male-dominated political arena. "Many of our female politicians, especially at the local level, are members of political dynasties," she added.

Before Rodol's murder, the plan was for the Batocabes to groom their first-born son, a newly minted lawyer, to follow his father's footsteps into politics. But that changed after Rodol, who was an ally of President Rodrigo Duterte, was gunned down days before Christmas while handing out gifts to elderly and disabled Daraga residents. The incumbent mayor of Daraga is charged with orchestrating the killing, leaving Batocabe acutely aware of the risks she faces in running. "I'm careful, is the word, but I've been given so much protection by the president," she said, referring to an armed security detail. — AFP

Social networks under intense surveillance in Pak

ISLAMABAD: Threats, arrests, blocked accounts and restricted posts - Big Brother is watching more closely than ever in Pakistan as authorities accelerate efforts to censor social networks, further reducing an already shrunken space for dissent. In the past 18 months, a slew of journalists, activists, and government opponents - both at home and overseas - have faced intimidation or the threat of legal action for their online posts. Censorship is already rife among Pakistan's mainstream media, with the Committee to Protect Journalists noting last year that the military had "quietly but effectively" imposed strict limits on the scope of general news reporting.

Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter were regarded as the last holdouts of dissenting voices, but now that has changed. In February, authorities announced the creation of a new enforcement arm to root out social media users accused of spreading "hate speech and violence" as part of the crackdown. Gul Bukhari, a columnist and sometime government critic who was briefly abducted by unidentified men last year, said the assault on social media was carefully organized and coordinated. "It is the last frontier they try to conquer," Bukhari explained.

Journalist Rizwan-ur-Rehman Razi was among the people targeted. He was arrested in February at home in the eastern city of Lahore for publishing "defamatory and obnoxious" content against the state. A few days earlier, he had criticized extra-judicial executions allegedly committed by the security forces, according to a copy of his tweets seen by AFP. Released after two nights, he has not tweeted since, and his posts have been deleted.

The net cast by the crackdown is a wide one, with Shahzad Ahmad, director of the digital security NGO Bytes for All, pointing to the harassment of civil rights activists, the political opposition, and bloggers. According to Annie Zaman, an expert on cyber-censorship in Pakistan, this is made possible by an all-encompassing 2016 law that prohibits online posts that are deemed to compromise state security or offend anything from "the glory of Islam" to non-defined notions of "decency and morality". "Because this law is vague, it gave more space to the authorities to censor online," Zaman said. Offenders can face up to 14 years in prison. — AFP

HK extradition row sparks parliament scuffles

HONG KONG: Anger over Hong Kong's controversial plans to allow extraditions to the Chinese mainland boiled over in the city's legislature yesterday as rival lawmakers scuffled with each other in chaotic scenes. The legislative meeting on the government's disputed extradition bill was originally chaired by pro-democracy lawmaker James To, but the pro-Beijing camp earlier this week forcibly unseated To and replaced him with their choice of chairman, Abraham Shek.

Rancor between the two political camps exploded with rival lawmakers shouting and tussling amidst a dense pack of reporters, as pro-democracy lawmakers tried to seize the microphone and stop their counterparts in the legislature from controlling the meeting. Pro-democracy lawmaker Gary Fan collapsed and was carried out from the chamber on a stretcher, while others from the pro-Beijing camp claimed they were wounded.

"We couldn't possibly agree to the suggestion that our meeting chaired by James To should be suspended in any way, because it is completely constitutional and legal," pro-democracy lawmaker Claudia Mo said after the meeting. But pro-Beijing lawmaker Shek insisted it is "legal" for

him to host the meeting. Hong Kong's government is pushing a bill through the city's legislature which would allow case-by-case extraditions to any jurisdictions it doesn't have an already agreed treaty with, including mainland China, Macau and Taiwan.

The plan has sparked huge protests and mounting alarm within the city's business and legal communities - as well as foreign governments - who fear it will hammer the semi-autonomous financial hub's international appeal and tangle people up in China's court system. Historically Hong Kong has balked at mainland extraditions because of the opacity of China's criminal justice system and its liberal use of the death penalty.

Tens of thousands of people hit the streets last month to protest against the bill. But Hong Kong's pro-Beijing government has argued the bill must be passed quickly to stop 20-year-old resident Chan Tong-kai evading justice for the murder of his girlfriend during a Valentine's holiday in Taipei last year. Chan admitted to Hong Kong police that he killed his pregnant girlfriend Poon Hiu-wing, also from Hong Kong, and then flew home. Police were unable to charge him for murder or extradite him to Taiwan because no agreement is in place. Taiwan authorities said on Friday that it has no intention of asking Hong Kong to return a murder suspect because it is concerned that Hong Kong's extradition law puts its people at risk of being snatched by China. Chiu Chui-cheng, deputy minister of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, said Taiwanese people feared ending up like Lee Ming-che, a democracy activist who disappeared on a trip to the Chinese mainland and was later jailed for "subverting state power". — AFP



HONG KONG: Hong Kong pro-democracy lawmakers scuffle with pro-Beijing lawmaker Abraham Shek (top center) in an attempt to seize microphones from him as scuffles break out between lawmakers in the Legislative Council yesterday. — AFP

News in brief

BJP activist arrested over meme

KOLKATA: Indian police have detained a ruling party activist after she posted a meme superimposing the head of a state chief minister on a photograph of a Bollywood star in a see-through dress, an officer said yesterday. The announcement injected controversy into campaigning ahead of polls opening in West Bengal state today, where the right wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Trinamool Congress are locked in a tense battle for votes in the country's general election. Priyanka Sharma, a local BJP youth activist, was arrested for sharing a viral meme on Facebook that superimposed the head of Trinamool leader and state chief minister Mamata Banerjee on a picture of actress Priyanka Chopra at the Met Gala in New York last week. — AFP

Lanka probes honeymoon death

COLOMBO: The husband of a British bride who died on her honeymoon in Sri Lanka will be kept in the country at least until a formal hearing on the death is held on Wednesday, police said. Khilan Chandaria is not under arrest or facing a charge, but has been stopped from leaving Sri Lanka since his wife Ushela Patel, 31, died on April 25. The bride died just six days after her wedding and two days after the couple checked into the Amari Galle resort in the resort town of Galle, south of the capital Colombo. The couple's family has told British media that the newlyweds had suffered severe food poisoning. Chandaria, 33, was also taken ill. He could not be contacted immediately, but he has told the British media that both of them felt feverish and vomited blood after falling ill. — AFP

Indonesian police hunt inmates

JAKARTA: More than 100 inmates escaped from an Indonesian jail on Sumatra island yesterday, police said, in the latest breakout to hit the country's creaking prison system. The prisoners fled the jail in Siak district on Sumatra island early in the morning after rioting and a fire broke out at the detention center. Footage on local TV stations showed the facility engulfed in flames. Authorities launched a massive manhunt and 115 prisoners had been recaptured by late morning. Riau province police chief Widodo Eko Prihastopo said. Dozens of detainees from a prison population of more than 650 remained at large, he added. The rioting was triggered after guards beat several inmates who were caught using methamphetamine, police said. Three detainees suffered stab wounds and a policeman was shot during the rioting, the local health office said. — AFP

Rights groups, kin demand answers on missing activists

BANGKOK: Three Thai activists in exile and accused of insulting the country's powerful monarchy have gone missing, rights groups and a family member told AFP Saturday, as demands mount for answers on their whereabouts. The activists, Chuheep Chiwasut, who broadcasts political commentary online, and two colleagues, Siam Theerawut and Kritsana Tupthai, were arrested in Vietnam early this year and sent back to Thailand this week, according to rights groups. The mother of Siam, 34, said he was last heard from a few months ago.

"He said he is fine, and talked about what he has eaten and places he has visited, but did not say where he was," Kanya Theerawut told AFP, adding she had visited police this week but was told there was no information available. "I want to know where my son is," she said. A senior official with Thailand's special branch police confirmed the three men were in Vietnam but had no information about the arrests. Thailand's deputy prime minister denied they were in Thai custody on Friday.

Scores of dissidents, academics and pro-democracy activists have been pressed into self-exile since the junta seized power in a 2014 coup, in what analysts say is one of the biggest waves of political flight in Thailand's troubled recent history. The majority fled to neighboring Laos and Cambodia to avoid charges and jail terms. — AFP

Analysis

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Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

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Washington Watch

Justice Prevailed

Dr James J Zogby
President Arab American Institute

On May 9th, 2019, a jury in US District Court for Washington, DC found a former US diplomat guilty on 14 counts of threatening me and other employees of the Arab American Institute "because of [our] race and ethnicity" and "because of [our] efforts to encourage Arab Americans to participate in the political life in the United States." So read the opening of a press release issued by the US Department of Justice.

These convictions bring to a close a 12-year long ordeal during which time the same individual had repeatedly sent emails threatening me, my staff, and the Arab American community. He had already been convicted of the same crime in 2008 for sending threatening emails and making phone calls to my office. At that time, he admitted his guilt saying that he had intended to threaten us and even apologized for his actions. Despite this admission, after serving time in prison and a period on probation, he began threatening us again between 2012 and 2017.

The renewed threats grew in intensity after several terrorist acts that occurred here in the US and abroad. The severity of the language he used caused us deep concern, especially when seen against the backdrop of the increasing frequency of mass shootings occurring here in the US. The indictment of the defendant cited his repeated use of lines like - "the only good Arab American is a dead Arab American" or "America cleansed of Arab Americans will be America free of terror" or "America will never be safe until America is cleansed of James Zogby..." or "Death to all Arab Americans" or "the Arab American Institute is a terrorist organization."

The trial lasted three days during which time members of my family, my staff, and I testified on these threats had on us, our families, and on our ability to do our advocacy work on behalf of our community. After closing arguments, the jury deliberated and the next day they issued their verdict finding the culprit guilty on all of the charges against him. The DOJ press release summed up the case in the following manner: "Threats aimed at individuals because of their race and national origin have no place in our society and violate federal civil rights laws," said Assistant Attorney General Eric Dreiband.

"The Department of Justice will continue to hold criminals accountable who commit such acts of hate so that all individuals in this country can engage in civic life and political discourse." "Evidence presented at trial established that from 2012 to 2017, [the charged individual] sent over 700 emails to AAI employees, culminating in five death threats in 2017. According to court documents, [he] previously pleaded guilty in 2008 to sending threatening emails to AAI employees. Evidence presented at trial showed that [he] used nearly identical language that he admitted were threats in 2008 as he did in 2017.

"According to testimony in court, AAI employees were frightened of [the charged individual], because he had sent them death threats in the past and continued to do so over a decade later. Additionally, according to witness testimony, many AAI employees lived in fear that [he] would follow through his threats and physically harm them. They further testified to the toll it took on them personally and their families and loved ones."

This is not the first time we have faced threats of violence or actual violence. As I testified in court, I received my first death in 1970; my office was fire-bombed in 1980; my friend and colleague, Alex Odeh, was murdered at his office in 1985; and two other individuals were convicted of death threats against me and sentenced to terms in prison in the years since the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

While we, of course, know that the danger of new threats will always be with us, needless to say, we are enormously relieved by these guilty verdicts and are deeply gratified by the tireless efforts made by the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to defend our rights to engage in our advocacy work on behalf of our community and our country without fear of threats of hate-based threats of violence.

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



An Indian woman and a girl of a shepherd community carry water back to their makeshift camp in Iyawa village near Sanand, some 35 kms from Ahmedabad, after migrating from the drought-stricken Kutch's Banni region of India's western Gujarat state. — AFP

India parties court farmers with green promises

When Ishwar Chand Sharma, a farmer in northern India, committed suicide just days before the start of the country's general elections, police found a note in his pocket with a plea: "Don't vote for the BJP." While police worked to authenticate the note, Sharma's son said that his 65-year-old father blamed the policies of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the debt that drove him to reportedly drink poison. A mix of extreme weather, spiraling operating costs and plunging food prices has thrown millions of India's farmers into crisis, leading to more than 300,000 suicides over the past two decades, according to government data.

As Indians vote for the lower house of parliament in a massive month-long election that ends on May 19, the plight of farmers has become a key battleground for the leading BJP and its main opposition, the Indian National Congress, or Congress. The BJP, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, came to power in 2014, when its promise to improve farmers' lives earned it a landslide victory against the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA).

But rights groups say few farmers, who make up almost half of India's working population, are any better off than they were before that election. This time, said Ashok Dhawale, president of the All India Kisan Sabha farmers' association, many are giving their votes to Congress, drawn by its manifesto focusing on the farming crisis, climate change and the environment. "The BJP is well aware that it has antagonized the farmers," said Dhawale. "Congress's manifesto inspires some hope as of now."

Loan defaults

One of the main complaints farmers say they have against the BJP is what they see as the party's failure to implement the recommendations of the so-called Swaminathan Commission. Set up by the UPA government in 2004, the commission made recommendations on how to make farming more sustainable.

They included improved access to resources such as clean water, technology and credit; a guaranteed minimum selling price for most food crops; and policies to help "drought proof" farmers in dry regions. But so far, no gov-

ernment has fully implemented the recommendations, said Satnam Singh Behru, president of the Consortium of Indian Farmers Association.

Meanwhile, farmers are finding it increasingly difficult to earn a living. Recent data from the Reserve Bank of India show that the share of loans in default in the agriculture sector has been rising since 2011. By September 2018, the total amount of unpaid farming loans had jumped to 1 trillion rupees (\$14 billion) from around 700 billion rupees at the same time the year before. Farmers have held several large protests in Mumbai and Delhi since the last election, calling for the government to institute the commission's policies in full. "The BJP government stabbed us in the back," Behru said.

In response to the criticisms, BJP spokesman Gopal Krishna Agarwal said that the party has taken significant steps to improve the lives of the country's farmers over the past five years. He pointed to the government's announcement last year that it would institute one of the Swaminathan recommendations and raise the guaranteed minimum profit farmers make if market prices fall. It would do that by buying crops from farmers for 50 percent more than what it cost to produce them, he said. "Our government has also done remarkable work on risk mitigation (for farmers)," he said. He highlighted changes the party made to crop insurance so that farmers should now get payouts if they lose at least 30 percent of their crops, when previously the threshold was 50 percent. "There are still a lot of issues," Agarwal said. "It's a work in progress."

Clean power, clean water

In the current election, both the BJP and Congress are pledging to finally implement all of the recommendations in the Swaminathan Commission report. But Congress has also dedicated a large part of its manifesto to a new climate action plan designed to protect and restore India's natural resources and help farmers cope with the country's increasingly intense droughts. The BJP's manifesto "is either vague or mum (silent) on climate issues," said Indian social and environmental activist Medha Patkar. "The Congress manifesto is somewhat deeper (because) they

involved a lot of people and organizations working on environmental issues." Among Congress' green campaign promises are dedicated funding to develop a state-of-the-art climate information system and to increase the share of solar and wind in India's energy supply. The party's platform also includes plans to clean up water bodies and restore forests by tapping into existing legislation that guarantees people in rural areas at least 100 days of paid, unskilled work every year.

And the party wants to replace the country's various environmental bodies with an independent Environment Protection Authority to establish and enforce environmental standards and regulations. Congress has always been "pro-farmer," Tariq Anwar, a member of parliament and former junior agriculture minister in the second Congress-led UPA government, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a telephone interview. "The party has laid out a broader vision aimed at improving the lives of farmers," he said.

Changing votes

There are signs that the vision is pulling in voters. Some current polls predict the BJP's ruling alliance will beat Congress in the election, but this time only by a thin margin. Food and agriculture policy analyst Devinder Sharma believes that to have a chance of winning Congress needs to persuade voters outside the agricultural sector that the problems facing farmers affect them too. "Whether or not Congress' focus on farming issues could give it a boost in the polls largely depends on the party's success in getting the message across to the masses," he said.

After supporting the BJP in the last election, Gurdial Singh Virk, a 58-year-old farmer from Punjab, said he is switching his vote to Congress. He said he is not sure whether Congress will be able to live up to its promises. But he and many of the farmers he knows are desperate for something to change. "As a prime minister, Modi has duped the farmers of the country. We will never vote for him or his party again," he said. "We're not very optimistic about the Congress either, but then there are no alternatives." — Reuters

Venezuela troops turn blind eye to routes into Brazil - at a price

The only official border crossing between Venezuela and Brazil has been closed for weeks but just a mile away a steady stream of migrants and smugglers still flows between the countries - for a price. Every day, hundreds of Venezuelans bribe National Guard officials to make their way into Brazil along old indigenous trails that cross the sun-baked savannah, according to interviews with two dozen migrants and two former National Guard officers.

Many of those using the paths are fleeing their crisis-stricken homeland to seek a better life abroad. Others are simply looking to purchase food, medicine and basic goods unavailable in Venezuela, they said. The only formal crossing between the countries was closed in February by Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to block an opposition attempt to bring US aid in from Colombia and Brazil.

Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido has urged the military to oust Maduro, branding him a dictator, while the government in turn calls Guaido a puppet of Washington and a coup-mongerer. With roughly a quarter of Venezuela's 30 million people in need of humanitarian assistance due to an economic meltdown, according to the United Nations, the illicit border crossings remain a lifeline for many Venezuelans.

The migrants interviewed by Reuters said that Venezuelan National Guard soldiers had taken advantage of the border closure to collect 50 reais (\$12.50) per car on the parallel crossings. The tariff was higher for vehicles coming back loaded with rice, flour and sugar, they said. Those without cash to pay the informal toll must take even longer paths, hauling their luggage on foot for up to six hours, in a desperate trek witnessed by Reuters.

"Wearing Venezuelan uniforms, they brazenly demand money even to pass on

foot. They're raking it in," said Yeral Garate, as he waited with five other hungry migrants for rice to cook in a pot over a wooden fire on a trail inside Brazil. Neither the Venezuelan government nor the National Guard, which runs border controls, replied to requests for comment. Maduro has in the past said that criticism of the military is linked to opposition efforts to tarnish the armed forces.

More than 3.4 million Venezuelans have left the country since 2015 due to a political and economic crisis, according to the United Nations. Garate said that a lack of food and medicine, miserable wages and Maduro's "catastrophic" policies drove him to flee. He said he took a bus to the border from his hometown of Maturin in eastern Venezuela, and then walked 11 miles (18 km) over rolling scrubland to Brazil, with only the few possessions he could carry.

The trip can be easier for those with the means. Hired drivers offer packages from Puerto Ordaz in southern Venezuela to the border town of Santa Elena de Uairen, 400 miles (640 km) to the south, and then across trails to Pacaraima - with border bribes included. A reservation for the Pemón indigenous tribe that straddles the border is crisscrossed with dirt tracks along which cars, jeeps, vans, pickups and motor bikes ferry migrants to Brazil and return with goods.

National guards

Two National Guard sergeants, who had recently deserted from their posts at the border, said that bribe taking was systematic there and that military officials would compete to be sent to the lucrative postings. "They charge 50 reais per car to access the trails and 100 reais for larger vehicles. People who bring back lots of goods also have to pay," one of the sergeants told Reuters in Brazil.

The sergeant said he had defected because he disagreed with the way opposition protests were being repressed in Venezuela. Some six dozen Venezuelan military officers have defected across the border in recent weeks, according to the Brazilian army. Six National Guard soldiers questioned by Reuters in Brazil said that lucrative bribe taking by military officials at border crossings and other black market activity was one reason that many troops had ignored the opposition's call to unseat Maduro. — Reuters

Gangs to gardens: Kenya youth shun crime to create green spaces

As a young man, Moses Muchina used to rob people who were unlucky enough to have to cross through the Kenyan slum of Korogocho after dark. Until a few years ago, People's Park was a dumping site in the slum north-east of Nairobi - filled with garbage and even human waste - and a crime hotspot. "Women's handbags and mobile phones were our key targets," said Muchina.

With nearly one in five Kenyan youth unemployed, according to the World Bank, car jacking, burglary, and robbery with violence are common across Nairobi and its slums. But today, People's Park is no longer a "no-go zone," as Muchina called it. With well-manicured grass, stone paths and trees offering shade from the scorching sun, it has become a popular spot for Korogocho residents to meet and play. And it was Muchina, along with a group of former gang members, who led the transformation. As co-founders and mentors of the youth-led volunteer group Komb Green Solutions they have been cleaning up public spaces in and around Korogocho for the past two years.

Local residents say they now feel safer, and officials credit the project with helping reduce the rates of robbery and homicide in the area. "Many of our children were killed as a result of engaging in crime," said Phelistus Libulele, who leads a weekly meeting for community health volunteers in the park. Before the Komb Green project, she used to have to rent a venue so the group could meet safely. "That narrative has now changed for the better of our future generations," she said.

'Wake-up call'

What Muchina described as his "wake-up call" came in 2017, when he noticed crime levels rising in the area. Over the span of a few years, several young men he

knew from the area were lynched by members of the public or gunned down by the police, he said. Muchina thought that if young people could focus on "meaningful activities" that could keep them away from crime and prevent more deaths. He was working in construction at the time, having picked up some masonry skills when he spent time in prison for gun possession, and also attended police-run forums to help reform ex-gang members.

He started asking people at work and at the forums if they would volunteer some time to tackle the garbage that was making the local park unusable. One who took him up on the offer was Frederick Okinda, now chairman of Komb Green Solutions. "I got into crime while in high school," Okinda said. "I used to see my friends with loads of money, and that tempted me even more. I was very stupid at that time."

It was after he lost his tenth friend in a police shooting that he finally decided he had to find a way out of crime, and ended up at the police forum where he met Muchina. The two gathered a group of 16 men and women, some of them former gang members and sex workers, and with donations from local residents bought the tools they needed to start their first clean-up project. Today, Komb Green Solutions - whose name Muchina said is a call for young people in Korogocho to "comb away" their involvement in criminal activities - has grown to about 70 members.

Shaping their environment

Korogocho area chief Omache Nyabuto said that while there are no reliable crime rate figures for the slum, he has seen reports of serious crimes drop in the two years since the group cleaned up the park. Nyabuto stressed that there are also other factors behind the growing peace in the area, but said the park has had a huge positive effect.

To get even more benefit out of the space, he has launched a personal campaign asking people to donate small stalls so that Komb Green members can make money selling drinks and snacks to people visiting the park. He is also working to convince internet service providers to install WiFi in the park. "That will help youths look for job opportunities online and help them interact with the world," he said. — Reuters

Business

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2019

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LONG BEACH, California: A container ship unloads its cargo beside the Battleship USS Iowa at the main port terminal in Long Beach, California on Friday. Two days of talks to resolve a worrisome US-China trade battle ended with no deal, but no breakdown either, offering a glimmer of hope that Washington and Beijing could find a way to avert damage to the global economy. —AFP

Trump ratchets up tariffs on all China imports

After talks, tone out of White House veers from anger to nonchalance

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump cranked up the heat in a trade battle with China on Friday, ordering a tariff hike on almost all remaining imports from the world's second-biggest economy, but Beijing said talks would continue to resolve the row.

After tweeting that two days of trade talks in Washington had been "candid and constructive," the businessman-turned-politician changed tack and followed through on a threat he had been making for months.

"The President... ordered us to begin the process of raising tariffs on essentially all remaining imports from China, which are valued at approximately \$300 billion," US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said in a statement. The move came less than 24 hours after Washington increased punitive duties on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports, raising them to 25 percent from 10 percent, days after the Trump administration accused Beijing of renegeing on its commitments.

Details on the process for public notice and comment will be posted Monday, ahead of a final decision on the new tariffs, Lighthizer said. They were not expected to go into effect for several months.

China's top trade negotiator, Vice Premier Liu He, had warned earlier that Beijing "must respond" to any US tariffs. The developments came as two days of talks to resolve the

trade battle ended Friday with no deal, but no immediate breakdown either, offering a glimmer of hope that Washington and Beijing could find a way to avert damage to the global economy.

"Over the course of the past two days, the United States and China have held candid and constructive conversations on the status of the trade relationship between both countries," Trump tweeted. "The relationship between President Xi (Jinping) and myself remains a very strong one, and conversations into the future will continue." The tariffs on China "may or may not be removed depending on what happens with respect to future negotiations!"

Liu told reporters the talks had been "productive" and said the two sides would meet again in Beijing at an unspecified date, but he warned that China would make no concessions on "important principles." "Negotiations have not broken down, but rather on the contrary, this is only a normal twist in the negotiations between the two countries, it is inevitable," Liu said. The seemingly positive messages-coming before the announcement that Trump had ordered the latest round of tariffs-had cheered Wall Street with shares rising after being under pressure all week.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Lighthizer met for about two hours with Liu on Friday and then headed for the White House to brief Trump, who had said he was in no hurry to

reach a deal, arguing the United States was negotiating from a position of strength.

"We have a consensus in lots of areas but to speak frankly there are areas we have differences on, and we believe these concern big principles," Liu said.

Liu pointed to three major areas of disagreement: whether to cancel all trade war tariffs when an agreement is reached, the exact size of Chinese purchases of US goods, and a "balanced" agreement text. "Any country needs its own dignity, so the text must be balanced," Liu said.

Liu and his backer Xi cannot be seen as giving in too much with trade concessions to the US in fear of triggering comparisons to past "unequal treaties" forced on China in the 19th and 20th centuries. "Every country has important principles, and we will not make concessions on matters of principle," Liu said.

'Darkness before dawn'

Yang Delong, chief economist at First Seafront Fund Management in Shanghai, told AFP that the "sudden hardening" of Trump's tone is likely linked to the 2020 US presidential election.

"The US hopes China will make greater concessions in many areas, these concessions might harm a foundation of our economic development or impact our institutional reform," Yang

said. "When it comes to core interests China is not able to yield," he said. Washington is pressing China to change its policies on protections for intellectual property, as well as massive subsidies for state-owned firms, and to reduce the yawning trade deficit.

After weeks of rising optimism about the chances for an agreement, the tone out of the White House has veered from anger to nonchalance.

In a series of early morning tweets Friday, Trump said there was "absolutely no need to rush" towards a deal. The US leader continues to argue that tariffs could in some ways be preferable to reaching a trade deal.

"Tariffs will bring in FAR MORE wealth to our country than even a phenomenal deal of the traditional kind," Trump wrote.

Since last year the United States and China have exchanged tariffs on more than \$360 billion in two-way trade, weighing on both countries' economies.

Economists stress that duties are paid by US companies and consumers and result in higher prices, while farmers and manufacturers complain about the loss of markets for their exports due to retaliation from China. Liu compared the negotiations to a marathon: "When you get to the last stage it is comparatively the hardest stage, now we need to hold on, it is the darkness before dawn." —AFP

Zuckerberg 'optimistic' on regulation after Macron meeting

PARIS: Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg on Friday said he was "encouraged" and "optimistic" about the regulatory framework being suggested by France for the social media giant and other online platforms, after a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron.

The meeting followed the drawing up of a report by experts and top French civil servants proposing that each member state of the European Union set up its own regulatory authority to police social networks. The report commissioned by the French government-for which the experts were given unprecedented access by social networks-slammed the online firms' efforts to self-regulate and their "lack of credibility".

Zuckerberg met Macron at the Elysee Palace amid pressure

to crack down on the spread of disinformation as well as a call from a co-founder of Facebook for the California-based giant to be broken up.

"I am encouraged and optimistic about the regulatory framework that will be put in place," Zuckerberg said after leaving the meeting.

"Overall I think in order for people to trust the internet... there needs to be the right regulation put in place," he said. The report called "Creating a French Response to Make Social Media Responsible" has been submitted to France's digital ministry.

It acknowledged the huge freedoms offered by social media in the modern world, but said that "the capacities offered by social media provoke unacceptable abuses of these liberties."

"These abuses by individuals or groups have not yet received a satisfactory response from Facebook, YouTube, Twitter or Snap, to name but some," it said.

"Hopefully this can become a model and not just a national model for France but can be worked into... a framework across the EU overall," Zuckerberg added. "I am very optimistic and grateful for the partnership and experimentation and the seriousness and diligence that the government put in this," he said.

The report said that the response by big social media groups like Facebook to abuses and disinformation too often

came after the fact and when damage was already done.

"(Self-regulation) lacks credibility," it concluded, adding that the lack of transparency "arouses suspicion over the reality of the action by the platforms." Facebook has its European headquarters in low-tax Ireland, which under current rules would have responsibility for regulating it.

The report proposes a regulatory authority in each EU member state, rather than relying on regulation of them in the countries where they are based.

"Through the excesses that they enable, social networks create problems in other countries, (which are) difficult to see by the home country," the report added. Macron has been one of Europe's most vocal critics of light-touch regulation of Zuckerberg's empire which includes Facebook as well as the widely used Instagram and WhatsApp platforms. —AFP



Mark Zuckerberg

US hits shippers for bringing Venezuela oil to Cuba

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday imposed sanctions on two shipping companies for delivering Venezuelan oil to ally Cuba in what it called a response to actions against opposition lawmakers in Caracas. The Treasury Department said it was taking aim at the Monsoon Navigation Corp., headquartered in the Marshall Islands, and Liberian-based Serenity Maritime Ltd. for owning ships involved in oil transfers that took place through March.

The United States accuses its longtime nemesis Cuba of propping up President Nicolas Maduro by sending security forces, with Venezuela paying its ally back through oil. "The US will take further action if Cuba continues to receive Venezuelan oil in exchange for military support," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement. —AFP

Business

NBK Economic Report

Pace of Kuwait's credit growth pricked up in first quarter 2019

KUWAIT: Kuwait's credit growth edged higher to 5.2 percent in Q1 2019 from 4.2 percent in Q4 2018. This was supported by stronger lending to both businesses and households, as well as the usual end-of-quarter jump in lending for the purchase of securities. Growth in deposits decelerated to 2.4 percent y/y in Q1 2019 from 3.2 percent y/y in Q4 2018, due mainly to a drop in government deposits by 11.5 percent y/y.



Lending to businesses rose 6.1 percent y/y in Q1 2019, up from 5.2 percent y/y in Q4 2018. This was driven mainly by a significant improvement in lending to real estate (4.9 percent y/y) and trade sector (3.9 percent y/y). Business confidence was supported by an environment of higher average oil prices in the Q1 2019 that may have helped to boost confidence and enhance the appetite for credit. Household borrowing decelerated to 5.6 percent in Q1 2019 from 6 percent y/y in Q4 2018, driven by a slowdown in housing loans to 5.4 percent y/y from 6.8 percent y/y last quarter. Meanwhile, growth in consumer loans continued its upward trend to 7.8 percent y/y in Q1 2019, the fastest pace in more than four years.

This likely benefited from the new CBK's loosening of lending restrictions (November 2018), which increase the maximum limits of non-housing loans to 25 times the salary or a maximum of KD 25,000 (up from 15 times or maximum of 15,000 KD). Regarding non-bank financial institutions, the pace of deleveraging recorded slowed in Q1 2019, reaching -4.4 percent y/y from -19.1 percent y/y in Q4 2018.

Private deposits grew by 5.1 percent y/y in Q1 2019, up from 4.1 percent in Q4 2018, due to the rise in both time deposits (7.6 percent y/y) and foreign currency deposits (6.5 percent y/y). Meanwhile, government deposits dropped by 11.5 percent y/y in Q1 2019, despite an increase of 2.6 percent m/m in March. As such, the money supply (M2) increased by 5 percent y/y, up from 3.9 percent in Q4 2018.

Table 1: Monetary indicators

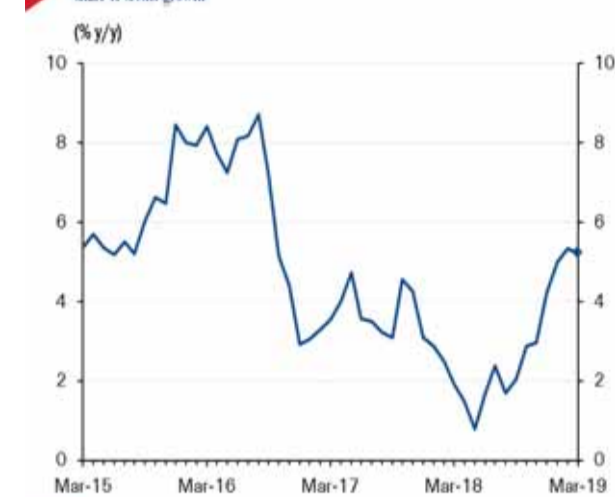
	KD mn				% m/m				% y/y			
	Dec18	Jan19	Feb19	Mar19	Dec18	Jan19	Feb19	Mar19	Dec18	Jan19	Feb19	Mar19
Total system liquidity (M2)	38,606	38,597	38,681	38,947	0.7	0.0	0.2	0.7	-3.9	5.2	4.7	5.0
Currency in circulation	1,755	1,742	1,806	1,803	1.6	-0.7	3.7	-0.1	0.5	4.4	4.5	4.6
Private sector deposits	36,851	36,855	36,875	37,144	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.7	4.1	5.2	4.7	5.1
KD deposits	34,235	34,165	34,167	34,387	0.8	-0.2	0.0	0.6	4.8	5.4	5.2	4.9
Sight deposits	8,624	8,388	8,484	8,689	2.1	-2.7	1.1	2.4	2.4	-0.1	-1.0	0.3
Savings deposits	4,991	5,068	5,105	5,100	0.6	1.5	0.7	-0.1	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.7
Time deposits & CDs	20,620	20,708	20,578	20,599	0.3	0.4	-0.6	0.1	6.3	8.6	8.7	7.6
Foreign currency deposits	2,617	2,690	2,708	2,757	-0.9	2.8	0.7	1.8	-4.3	3.2	-1.2	6.5

Table 2: Consolidated bank balance sheets

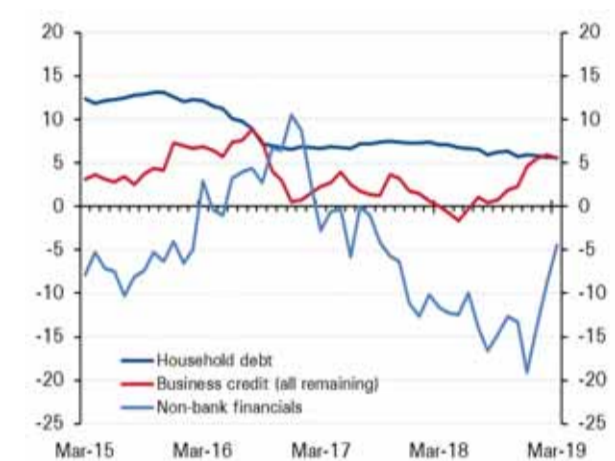
	KD mn				% m/m				% y/y			
	Dec18	Jan19	Feb19	Mar19	Dec18	Jan19	Feb19	Mar19	Dec18	Jan19	Feb19	Mar19
Total bank assets	66,545	65,944	66,383	67,431	1.9	-0.9	0.7	1.6	4.9	5.1	5.0	5.6
Core liquid assets	6,181	6,189	6,118	6,290	-2.6	0.1	-1.1	2.8	23.1	21.3	15.9	18.5
Cash and CBK deposits	1,625	1,672	1,921	2,064	15.0	2.9	14.9	7.4	48.8	31.2	38.4	32.3
CBK bonds	3,001	3,001	3,001	2,971	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.0	3.7	3.8	-1.0	-2.2
Time deposits with CBK	1,555	1,515	1,195	1,255	-19.6	-2.6	-21.1	5.0	50.2	62.1	39.0	76.8
Public debt instruments	3,862	3,862	3,780	3,715	0.1	0.0	-2.6	-1.2	-23.7	-23.6	-24.1	-23.1
Interbank deposits	1,839	1,292	1,789	1,964	53.4	-29.8	38.5	9.8	46.5	18.2	32.9	65.2
Credit facilities	36,861	36,975	37,136	37,421	0.9	0.3	0.4	0.8	4.2	5.0	5.3	5.2
Foreign assets	13,803	13,515	13,403	13,954	3.8	-2.1	-0.8	4.1	8.4	9.8	7.7	7.3
Other assets	3,999	4,112	4,177	4,087	-2.5	2.8	1.6	-2.1	0.8	4.0	5.6	2.5
Total bank liabilities	57,608	56,988	57,425	58,219	1.8	-1.1	0.8	1.4	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.3
Total deposits	45,101	44,451	44,346	44,933	2.6	-1.4	-0.2	1.3	4.0	4.2	3.1	3.8
Private sector deposits	36,851	36,855	36,875	37,144	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.7	4.1	5.2	4.7	5.1
Government deposits	6,633	6,507	5,876	6,026	5.3	-1.9	-9.7	2.6	-1.5	-1.4	-10.4	-11.5
Interbank deposits	1,817	1,089	1,596	1,763	55.3	-32.7	46.6	10.5	31.3	6.5	31.0	59.5
Foreign liabilities	6,091	5,989	6,503	6,818	-0.5	-1.7	8.6	4.8	8.8	5.5	13.4	13.1
Other liabilities	6,417	6,548	6,575	6,468	-1.3	2.1	0.4	-1.6	10.2	13.6	12.3	7.9
Shareholder equity	8,937	8,956	8,958	9,212	2.2	0.2	0.0	2.8	3.7	3.7	3.5	7.3

Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

Chart 1: Credit growth (%/y)



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

NBK and Mastercard launch multicurrency prepaid card with a choice of 15 currencies

KUWAIT: In line with its commitment to bring innovative banking solutions that cater to customers and their diverse lifestyles, National Bank of Kuwait and Mastercard have launched the NBK Multicurrency Prepaid Card that allows travelers and students living abroad to have the money they need at their convenience without the need to carry cash.

Customers can apply for the NBK Multicurrency Mastercard Prepaid Card through the NBK Online Banking and NBK Mobile Banking App and it will be delivered to them free of charge. The card can be used at any NBK ATM and international ATMs free of cash advance charge, which makes it work exactly like a debit card.

NBK Multicurrency Mastercard Prepaid Card can be reloaded easily with a choice of 15 different currencies including Kuwaiti dinar, UAE dirham, Bahraini dinar, Saudi riyal, Egyptian pound, Qatari riyal, Omani riyal, Jordanian dinar, Singaporean dollar, Canadian dollar, Indian rupee, Swiss franc, Sterling pound, euro and US dollar.

Bharath Subramanian, Debit Cards Head, National Bank of Kuwait said, "The NBK Multicurrency Mastercard Prepaid Card was designed to facilitate banking worldwide for our customers, especially during their travel. The card is a convenient and easy way to make hassle-free transactions anywhere, and can be reloaded with 15 currencies, in addition to many other features. It is also the ideal card for students abroad."

Subramanian explained that the NBK Multicurrency Mastercard Prepaid Card is the ideal card to have when travelling as it allows the user to be in control of the amounts uploaded onto the card and gives customers access to a variety of benefits including: Offers on a wide selection of hotels, ease in booking at hotels and access to the NBK Rewards Program that offers many advantages and promotions.



Bharath Subramanian

Girish Nanda, General Manager, Mastercard, commented: "We are pleased to collaborate with NBK to launch the NBK Multicurrency Mastercard Prepaid Card, offering NBK Cardholders an easy, secure and convenient alternative to cash payments while abroad. Travelers today are looking for innovative solutions that enhance their vacation experiences, and with the NBK Multicurrency Prepaid Card they can enjoy a worry-free holiday by avoiding the risks of carrying cash while benefiting from the convenience of paying in local currencies across the world."

With the NBK Multicurrency Mastercard Prepaid Card, customers don't need to exchange currencies and avoid changes in currency exchange rates, while purchases are calculated based on the exchange rate when the card is reloaded. The card can be used anywhere in the world, and it includes the free medical travel insurance policy required when applying for a Schengen visa. The card gives access to exclusive offers on hotels and flight bookings. Customers also gain points in the NBK Rewards Program, which can be redeemed at over 850 stores in Kuwait.

Global stocks shrug off latest tariffs as US-China talks grind on

NEW YORK: Global stocks largely shrugged off new US tariff measures on Friday as officials agreed to continue trade negotiations, while ride-hailing company Uber tumbled in its long-awaited market debut. Wall Street endured a roller-coaster session, with the Dow shedding more than 350 points early in the session in the hours after Washington raised duties on \$200 billion in Chinese imports to 25 percent from 10 percent.

But investors were cheered by President Donald Trump's upbeat comments after the talks ended with no deal, but also no breakdown. That helped the Dow score a 0.4 percent gain on the session.

"The markets are putting an optimistic spin on very little information," said Maris Ogg of Tower Bridge Advisors.

"The message we got is more 'We'll keep talking, stay tuned,'" she added. "It creates more uncertainty and leaves the market in a limbo."

Russ Mould, investment director at stockbroker AJ Bell, said markets were adopting a wait-and-see approach despite the latest US tariff meas-

ures-and he suspected that a deal would eventually be clinched. "Investors hate uncertainty as it leads to speculation about what might and might not happen. Once they have the real facts, investors can properly assess the situation," Mould told AFP.

"I suspect that markets still believe a deal can and will be done, because both President Xi and President Trump need one."

Earlier, Paris and Frankfurt finished higher, while London and Tokyo fell modestly. European markets also got a boost from strong economic data, including accelerated British economic growth, and a stronger trade surplus for Germany.

Frankfurt's Dax index outperformed its European peers largely thanks to a whopping surge in Thyssenkrupp shares which rose over 20 percent after the steel conglomerate said it was dropping its merger plans with Tata of India.

Speed bump for Uber

In its market debut, ride-hailing company Uber tumbled 7.6 percent from its initial public offering price, while arch-rival Lyft slumped 7.4 percent. Both companies have grown rapidly despite heavy losses but some investors are skittish about their prospects for profitability.

The drop was a "big disappointment" and suggested lower demand than expected for a major name like Uber, said Matt Kennedy, senior IPO market strategist at Renaissance Capital.

"Silicon Valley may not care about losses, but Wall Street does," he said. —AFP

Global air freight is falling in a sign of economic strain

LONDON: Global air freight volumes are falling at some of the fastest rates since the end of the great recession in a warning sign that recessionary forces are

building in the world economy.

Freight indicators are available with a much shorter lag than most macroeconomic statistics, which makes them a good barometer of the economy's health.

Air freight carries some of the highest-value cargo and reacts quickly to changes in demand, making it a good leading indicator for freight movements and the economy in general. Freight volumes are now declining at major airports around the world in a signal the global manufacturing and distribution system is under growing stress. Hong Kong International Airport, the busiest

cargo hub in the world, reported volume down 7 percent for the three months between February and April compared with the same period a year earlier.

London's Heathrow Airport reported volume down by more than 3 percent over the same period, and growth rates have been sliding for almost two years. In North America at Memphis International Airport, the busiest hub in the United States, volume was up by 1 percent in January-March, but that was a marked slowdown from 5 percent growth in May-July 2018.

Memphis reported continued growth in domestic

freight shipments (+1 percent) but international freight fell (-1 percent), which is consistent with a relatively resilient domestic economy but weakness spreading from abroad. Around the world, the sharpest slowdown is concentrated on routes to and from Asia, but other domestic and international routes also show slackening momentum. "Conditions facing the industry remain challenging," according to the International Air Transport Association's latest monthly freight report. "The air freight segment continues to encounter various headwinds to growth." —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.			
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES			
US Dollar Transfer	305,000		
Euro	345,110		
Sterling Pound	398,480		
Canadian dollar	229,240		
Turkish lira	52,630		
Swiss Franc	303,630		
US Dollar Buying	303,800		
ASIAN COUNTRIES			
Japanese Yen	2,729		
Indian Rupees	4,379		
Pakistani Rupees	2,187		
Sri Lankan Rupees	1,743		
Nepali Rupees	2,737		
Singapore Dollar	225,760		
Hongkong Dollar	38,875		
Bangladesh Taka	3,603		
Philippine Peso	5,893		
Thai Baht	9,616		
Malaysian ringgit	78,005		
GCC COUNTRIES			
Saudi Riyal	81,388		
Qatari Riyal	83,826		
Omani Riyal	792,723		
Bahraini Dinar	810,420		
UAE Dirham	83,095		
ARAB COUNTRIES			
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20,850		
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17,726		
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1,225		
Tunisian Dinar	105,170		
Jordanian Dinar	430,670		
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2,033		
Syrian Lira	0,000		
Morocco Dirham	32,344		
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd			
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate		
US Dollar	304,340		
Canadian Dollar	227,315		
Sterling Pound	400,840		
Euro	342,770		
Swiss Frank	310,905		
Bahrain Dinar	809,355		
UAE Dirhams	83,265		
Qatari Riyals	84,500		
Saudi Riyals	82,055		
Jordanian Dinar	430,540		
Egyptian Pound	17,753		
Sri Lankan Rupees	1,721		
Indian Rupees	4,390		
Pakistani Rupees	2,154		
Bangladesh Taka	3,605		
Philippines Peso	5,865		
Cyprus pound	18,105		
Japanese Yen	3,750		
Syrian Pound	1,590		
Nepalese Rupees	2,748		
Malaysian Ringgit	74,240		
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45,330		
Thai Bhat	10,526		
Turkish Lira	50,004		
Singapore dollars	223,485		
BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL			
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL	
Europe			
British Pound	0.389612	0.403512	
Czech Korune	0.005302	0.014602	
Danish Krone	0.041827	0.046827	
Euro	0.335517	0.349217	
Georgian Lari	0.132174	0.132174	
Hungarian O.001149	0.001339		
Norwegian Krone	0.030920	0.036120	
Romanian Leu	0.065312	0.082162	
Russian Ruble	0.004688	0.004688	
Slovakia	0.009113	0.019113	
Swedish Krona	0.027663	0.032663	
Swiss Franc	0.295139	0.306139	
Australasia			
Australian Dollar	0.205408	0.217408	
New Zealand Dollar	0.195248	0.204748	
America			
Canadian Dollar	0.221950	0.230950	
US Dollars	0.300600	0.305900	
US Dollars Mint	0.301100	0.306590	
Asia			
Bangladesh Taka	0.003011	0.003812	
Chinese Yuan	0.043272	0.046772	
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037075	0.039825	
Indian Rupee	0.003778	0.004550	
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023	
Japanese Yen	0.002697	0.002877	
Korean Won	0.000249	0.000264	
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069766	0.075786	
Nepalese Rupee	0.002681	0.003021	
Pakistan Rupee	0.001524	0.002294	
Philippine Peso	0.005774	0.006074	
Singapore Dollar	0.218300	0.228300	
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001377	0.001957	

Business

COFE App to Deliveroo your coffee

COFE App and Deliveroo sign exclusive partnership deal in MENA

KUWAIT: COFE App, the online coffee-centric marketplace app announced yesterday that it has signed an exclusive partnership with Deliveroo to offer its customers a better, seamless experience and faster delivery services by utilizing Deliveroo's advanced logistics capabilities.

The agreement enables both companies to scale to new markets together by relying on the strengths of both companies. The collaboration will roll out first in Kuwait and followed by the UAE, KSA, and eventually the rest of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

COFE App Founder and CEO Ali Al Ebrahim said, "We are honored to be partnering with Deliveroo; a globally renowned firm for its innovation and efficiency. However, the significance of the deal extends beyond its impact on COFE and Deliveroo. Today's deal is a partnership between a global leader (Deliveroo) and a local innovator (COFE) who agreed to complement each other's businesses and work together to enter new markets across the Middle East, starting with Kuwait, then the UAE, Saudi Arabia. Today's deal ushers the Middle East's apps sector into a new phase of development and cross-border collaboration. Today's deal is a stepping stone towards turning the MENA region into a single market for the app world, and a milestone in the growth and development of MENA's app business."

Deliveroo UAE General Manager Anis Harb said, "At Deliveroo we want to bring our customers their favorite food and drink, whenever they want, so we're excited to partner with COFE App and bring them their much-loved coffee on demand."

Deliveroo Kuwait General Manager Seham Al-Husaini said, "With an impressive tech infrastructure and an ever-growing consumer base, we're thrilled to be partnering with one of the region's most innovative tech start-ups. The integration ensures our customers

- Rolled out in Kuwait initially, followed by UAE, KSA and the region in phases
- The deal ushers the Middle East's apps sector into a new phase of development and cross-border collaboration: COFE App CEO

continue to have the best service for their coffee deliveries."

Founded in 2013, Deliveroo is the fastest growing European startup for online food delivery services. Based in London, the company operates in two hundred cities in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Australia, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and now Kuwait. Kuwait is considered to be the company's second market in the Middle East and North Africa after the United Arab Emirates and 14th overall. Deliveroo currently works with 80,000 restaurants and 60,000 riders around the world.

COFE App is an online coffee-centric marketplace mobile application conceptualized in Kuwait and developed in Silicon Valley to connect coffee house chains and specialty coffee roasters with coffee lovers through a seamless, easy and efficient user-interface. COFE App enables customers to order and pay for their coffee online. With the app users can get COFE at the coffee shop counter, office, car, classroom, hospital, and airport departures or have it delivered to their preferred address. The entire selection and purchasing process takes place in the app, which offers comprehensive menus and drink customization options.



COFE App features:

- A state-of-the-art Customer Rewards program that enables customers to collect points and redeem them with prizes
- Saves time through a quick, easy, seamless and simple coffee purchasing experience.
- Extensive menu options that enable drinks customization (for example: sugar, milk type,

and other add-ons).

- Multiple delivery options, including fast delivery to office or home, store pick up, and in car delivery service.
- Catering services for meetings and private banquets, with on-site kiosk and barista service.
- Multiple payment options, including cash-on-delivery, debit cards and credit on the account.

Cuba to ration more products due to economic crisis, US sanctions

HAVANA: Communist-run Cuba said on Friday it would control more the sales of certain foodstuff and hygiene products, including adding some back to the ration card, due to shortages that it blamed partly on the tightening of the US trade embargo.

Shop shelves on the Caribbean's largest island have been increasingly empty of late with scarcity of basic products such as eggs, flour and chicken, and massive, hours-long queues for them whenever they come into stock. Cubans have been flooding social media with photos of the queues they are in, under the hashtag #lacolachallenge (queue challenge) to highlight the problem.

Cuba imports 60 to 70 percent of its food. A handful of agricultural reforms in recent years have failed to boost output in its inefficient, centrally-planned economy, which also suffers from a decades-old US trade embargo.

But a decline in aid from key ally Venezuela and lower exports have left it struggling to find the cash to import. More US sanctions since Donald Trump became president have worsened its liquidity crisis.

Interior Commerce Minister Betsy Diaz said on Friday another problem was hoarding by Cubans worried about whether products would disappear and speculators aiming to re-sell goods on the black market. As a result, Cuban supermarkets will from now on limit how much each person can buy of certain products like chicken and soap, she said. Other products such as eggs, rice, beans and sausages, will only be available to purchase with the ration card, and limited to a certain quantity each month.



HAVANA: A man rides a motorcycle with sidecar followed by a Russian-made Lada car along a street of Havana. Shop shelves in Cuba have been increasingly empty of late with scarcity of basic products such as eggs, flour and chicken, and massive, hours-long queues for them whenever they come into stock. —AFP

"Our mission is to fracture all the measures the US government imposes, and today we are setting priorities," Diaz said on the midday state-run news broadcast.

Some Cubans, particularly those on low state salaries and pensions who cannot afford black market prices, expressed relief. "These measures are important for those Cubans most in need," said pensioner Elizabeth Ortega, 72.

Others said it highlighted the mismanagement of the economy. "These measures are a temporary remedy but they do not resolve Cubans' problems in the long run," said Ithosvany Perez Rodriguez, 34, who runs a small

shop in Havana. "The country produces too little and so does not have enough money."

The head of the Communist Party Raul Castro introduced a series of reforms around a decade ago in the hope of opening up and boosting the economy, which is one of the world's last Soviet-style command economies. However that reform drive has tapered off in recent years partly due to discontent with some of its consequences such as rising albeit still low inequality and less state control. The move on Friday represents a setback to one of the proposed reforms, to end the universal rationing system, introduced just after the 1959 revolution. —Reuters

Tariff tumult boosts view that Fed may cut US rates

MERIDIAN, Miss./SAN FRANCISCO: US President Donald Trump's decision to jack up tariffs on goods from China fueled market bets Friday that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates later this year, with one Fed policymaker suggesting he could be receptive if economic data deteriorates.

Since January, the Fed has signaled it expects to leave rates unchanged while it takes stock of competing economic crosswinds, including lower-than-ideal inflation and faster-than-expected GDP and jobs growth. In contrast Trump and other top administration officials have repeatedly urged the Fed to cut interest rates to boost economic growth, which is expected to slow this quarter from a 3.2 percent annual pace last quarter as the stimulative effect of last year's tax cuts fade.

But asked Friday if the new US tariffs could lead to a rate cut, Atlanta Fed President Raphael Bostic did not rule it out. "Depending on the severity of the response, it could," Bostic told reporters. "It really depends. It depends on what businesses decide to do and then it depends on how long the tariffs are in place."

Fed projections published in March suggest most policymakers expect rates to be on hold through the end of the year. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell earlier this month predicted that recent low inflation readings were driven by transitory factors, and reiterated his view that there is no pressing need now to either raise or lower rates.

Inflation readings published Friday suggested price pressures remain muted. —Reuters

Uber shifts into reverse in disappointing Wall St debut

NEW YORK: Uber shares skidded Friday in a disappointing Wall Street debut following a massive public offering from the global ride-hailing giant. After pricing at \$45 for the initial public offering (IPO) — translating to a market value of \$82 billion — Uber shares began the trading day lower, and closed with a loss of 7.6 percent at \$41.57.

The decline, in a volatile session for Wall Street, came amid doubts over Uber's path to profitability despite one of the biggest tech IPOs ever. The drop was a "big disappointment" and suggested lower demand than expected for a major name like Uber, said Matt Kennedy, senior IPO market strategist at Renaissance Capital.

Kennedy said that both Uber and US rival Lyft were lower on concerns about hefty losses at the ride-hailing services. "Silicon Valley may not care about losses, but Wall Street does," he said.

Ross Gerber of the investment firm Gerber Kawasaki said Uber had been overhyped, despite concerns about its business model, and estimated Uber's value at no more than \$60 billion.

"I don't buy ride sharing and the current economics," Gerber tweeted. "Questionable employment practices.

And an unsustainable pricing structure. We're passing on \$uber and \$lyft for now."

Despite the staggering valuation, Uber dialed back some of its earlier ambitions for a value exceeding \$100 billion after a rocky start for Lyft earlier this year. Lyft, meanwhile, slumped more than seven percent, bringing its shares down about 29 percent since its March debut.

NYSE fanfare

Chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi and an Uber team rang the opening bell on the New York Stock Exchange after the firm raised about \$8.1 billion in the IPO. While Uber has lost billions since launching its first rides in 2011 in San Francisco, the company is aiming to develop a global brand that helps transform local transportation. Whether Uber can drive to profitability using this model as it disrupts traditional taxi and transport services is a key question.

Daniel Ives at Wedbush Securities was upbeat on Uber despite the weaker-than-anticipated valuation.

Ives said in a research note that Uber has "established itself as the clear number one player in the ridesharing industry and is paving a similar road to what Amazon did to transform retail/e-commerce and Facebook did for social media."

Risks to business model

Some of the risks surrounding Uber and its rivals were highlighted Wednesday as thousands of drivers turned off their apps in a US-wide strike over pay and working conditions.



NEW YORK: Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi talks to traders after the opening bell during his ride sharing company's IPO at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Friday on Wall Street in New York City. —AFP

The strikes targeting Uber and Lyft highlighted a dilemma for rideshare firms, which have faced challenges from regulators and traditional taxi operators for using a business model relying on independent contractors. One group protested outside the New York Stock Exchange, some holding signs that read "Invest in our lives-Not their stocks."

"While we aim to provide an earnings opportunity comparable to that available in retail, wholesale, or restaurant services or other similar work, we continue to experience dissatisfaction with our platform from a significant number of drivers," Uber said in a filing with securities regulators.

In a securities filing on Thursday, Uber said it had reached an agreement with a large majority of the roughly 60,000 drivers contesting their status as independent contractors and who had instituted arbitration proceedings against the firm. The company anticipates the total cost of the individual settlements, combined with attorneys' fees, will fall between \$146 million and \$170 million.

Uber maintained it was sticking to its plans on how it classifies drivers.

"Our business would be adversely affected if drivers were classified as employees instead of independent contractors," the company said. —AFP

China outlines 3 disagreements in US trade talks

BEIJING: China's top trade negotiator said more talks will be held with the United States as he revealed what Beijing considers the three main differences keeping the two sides from reaching a deal.

Speaking to reporters in Washington on Friday, Vice Premier Liu He for the first time gave details on where the negotiations stood following two days of talks with US counterparts, with tariffs and how much China should import from America among the disagreements. "Negotiations have not broken down, but rather on the contrary, this is only a normal twist in the negotiations between the two countries, it is inevitable," Liu said. "Both sides agree they will meet again in Beijing in the future and keep pushing forward the negotiations," he said without giving a date.

Since last year the United States and China have exchanged tariffs on more than \$360 billion in two-way trade, gutting US agricultural exports to China and weighing on both countries' manufacturing sectors. Liu said the two days of talks in the US were "productive".

"We have a consensus in lots of areas but to speak frankly there are areas we have differences on, and we believe these concern big principles," he said.

First, the Chinese side believes all punitive tariffs must be cancelled if an agreement is reached, he said, indicating that it remained under discussion.

Second, Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump agreed to a preliminary figure for purchases of US goods when they declared a trade truce in Argentina last year, he said.

"In the end, what is the figure? Now both sides have different views, we think this is a very serious thing that cannot be changed easily," he said. —AFP

Business

Lexus excels in Auto Express 2019 Driver Power Survey

Best manufacturer for the third year in a row



KUWAIT: There's still no finer carmaker than Lexus, according to the results of the 2019 Auto Express Driver Power Survey, achieved with an unmatched overall satisfaction rating of 92.04 per cent. Lexus achieved the highest rankings for the interior and comfort, exterior and reliability categories. The results are based on the opinions and experiences of car owners.

Driver Power is the UK's largest, most comprehensive car satisfaction poll. Success in the survey is based on the first-hand experience of thousands of UK car owners who responded to Driver Power survey questions about the quality, reliability and performance of their vehicle.

Lexus models also dominated the Driver Power



model categories, with the RX taking the award for Best Premium Large SUV and rated best for interior and comfort; the RC coupe emerging as Best Sports Car and best for reliability and build quality; the IS saloon Best Compact Executive Car and runner-up to the Best New Car of the Year; and the GS saloon named Best Executive Car.

Lexus continues to enjoy substantial growth around the world, expanding its footprint in emerging markets as well as reaffirming its strength in established ones. The brand's clear focus on amazing products and guest experiences provided by the finest dealers will support its global growth for years to come.

Gulf Bank's monthly salary draw to be held tomorrow

KUWAIT: Tomorrow, Gulf Bank will be holding its fourth monthly salary draw. The draw will be held in the bank's head office branch, in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

Commenting on the draw, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank said: "Gulf Bank's Salary account offers customers a range of benefits, including entry into our monthly draws. The bank is committed to providing value to our loyal customers, and we are delighted to continue to play a role in making their dreams come true. Looking forward to continue to build relationships with existing and new Gulf Bank customers."

The Salary account gives new customers the opportunity to receive either a KD 100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank or an interest-free loan of up to KD 10,000. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and will be eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank.

Customers can also enjoy additional benefits like a free of charge Visa or MasterCard credit card for a year, as well as a chance to apply for a loan of up to KD 70,000, or a consumer loan of up to KD 25,000.

With the new 2019 Kuwaiti salary offer existing and new customers, who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank are automatically enrolled in the monthly draws, giving them the chance of winning cash prizes of up to 12 times their salary, and a yearly draw of Kuwait's largest salary prize of up to 100 times their salary.



Ahmad Al-Amir

Nissan Al-Babtain commends national skills contests 2019 winners

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the sole authorized dealer of Nissan in the State of Kuwait is proud to announce its national skills contests winners who will proceed to participate in the Nissan regional skills competitions to be held in Dubai.

The annual skills contests comprises of four competitions - Nissan Service Technician Excellence Competency Award (NISTEC), Nissan Sales Executive Excellence Competency Award (NISEC), Nissan Parts Executive Excellence Competency Award (NIPEC) and Nissan Service Advisor Excellence Competency Award (NISAC). CEO of Al-Babtain group Saleh Al-Babtain said, "Every year, our staff demonstrates an outstanding aptitude and unparalleled customer experience services in sales and aftersales. Many of this year's winners have continued to advance in their skills and maintained their award winning positions throughout. The Nissan annual contests enable our employees to refine their abilities and take their expertise to the next level. I wish all contestants good luck at the regionals."

The contest is a regular platform to constantly challenge every Nissan Al Babtain personnel to perform to the best of their abilities and raise the bar of excellence in their area of operations. Displaying exceptional qual-



ity of expertise, the technician winners of the 2019 contests under NISTEC Anesh Antony (first place), Bibin Thomas (second place) and Subin K (third place) followed by the Service Advisors' winners - Maha Ali (first place), Mohammed El-Homsani (second place) and Essam Refaat (third place) under NISAC. Under the category of NIPEC, the Parts Executives' awards went to Ranju Krishnan (first place), Sadik Aboobakker (second place) and Subhash Sathyarayanan (third place) while under NISEC for Sales Executives', the awarded were Emad Abdullah (first place), Hisham Ghazi (second place) and Rabia Shibli (third place).

Continuing on the road to high performance, for the second year in a row - Dr Meyyappan Mahendran, Group L&D Manager received an award of appreciation from Nissan Gulf and Mustafa Farag, Service Manager of the Shuwaikah branch was awarded again for the best performing branch.

The Kuwait based contest was attended by senior management of the Al-Babtain group including Al-Babtain Chief Human Resources Officer, Abdul Mohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain and Nissan Regional Office delegates Fatma Zenagui, Nissan Gulf - GM and the General Manager of Aftersales, Surendra Acharya.

Meet the Huawei P30 Pro with super camera and super performance

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

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

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

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

The camera setup also includes the Huawei SuperZoom, a periscope styled lens cleverly designed to fit in the sleek and elegant body of the Huawei P30 Pro. This state-of-the-art design uses a prism element that bends light at



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

The Huawei ToF Camera, an exclusive to the Huawei P30 Pro is also a key part of the new camera module. With its rich bokeh and sophisticated depth information-capturing capabilities, the ToF camera supports multi-level, depth of field effects and portrait segmentations capable of identifying even the smallest details, delivering one of the best portrait shots on a smartphone. The Huawei P30 Pro houses a 32MP front camera, which is paired with deep-learning algorithm-assisted facial recognition and image segmentation support. By having these technologies work in tandem, photos come out crisp and more natural, even in tough-to-shoot conditions.

In addition to the high-end camera hardware, the Huawei P30 Pro also features powerful image stabilization technologies that brings together Optical Image Stabilization and Huawei AI Image Stabilization (AIS). This delivers the best stabilization offered by Huawei, be it a long exposure shot, snapshot, low light shot or even a video.

Twice the fun with Huawei dual-view video

On the Huawei P30 Pro, users can enjoy a brand new way of shooting videos with the



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

Super powered hardware

The Huawei P30 Pro is powered by a large 4,200 mAh battery that is capable of providing users with almost an entire day of extensive use. Complemented by the 40W Huawei SuperCharge, users can charge up approximately 70 percent in just 30 minutes. Additionally, the Huawei P30 Pro also supports 15W wireless charging and houses a unique wireless reverse charge feature. Thanks to this, users can place their friend's phones or other devices, even from other brands, including earphones and wearables on the phone to instantly start charging it, provided it supports the Qi Wireless Charging Standard.

At the heart of the Huawei P30 Pro lies the Kirin 980, Huawei's flagship processor and its most powerful smartphone chipset yet. The Kirin 980 is capable of enhancing performance and efficiency it's new and improved hardware focused on performance and efficiency.

Along with improving performance and efficiency, the Kirin 980 can also adapt to AI scenes such as face and object recognition,

object detection, image segmentation and intelligent translations. This allows users to take perfect shots, even of moving subjects with clear focus.

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

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

No compromise on looks

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

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



US consumer prices rise; underlying inflation tame

WASHINGTON: US consumer prices rose in April but underlying inflation remained muted, suggesting the Federal Reserve could keep interest rates unchanged for a while. The Labor Department said on Friday its Consumer Price Index increased 0.3 percent last month, lifted by rising gasoline, rents and healthcare costs. The CPI gained 0.4 percent in March.

In the 12 months through April, the CPI increased 2.0 percent after advancing 1.9 percent in March. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the CPI increasing 0.4 percent in April and advancing percent 2.1 percent year-on-year. —Reuters

What's On

Oncost announces the winners of Shuwaikh Mega Car Draw

Oncost, Kuwait's leading family grocer, held a prize draw on April 2nd at their Shuwaikh store, to announce winners of the recently concluded 'Shuwaikh Mega Draw' promotion. The Shuwaikh Mega Draw promotion, which was held from February 18th to March 31st, entitled shoppers to a draw coupon with every KD10 worth of purchase from Oncost's Shuwaikh wholesale store.

The draw was held in front of top management and members from Oncost, including COO Remesh TA, Marketing Manager Talal Algharaballi, and Operations Manager Hassan Khalil, and in the presence of Ministry of Commerce representative. The first-prize of a brand new 2019 GS4 SUV from GAC Motor went to Ahmed Mohamed Khalaf. The second-prize of a Samsung Galaxy S9 was awarded to Mohammed Akram Mohammed, while the third prize winner, Shaikh Khaja Hussein, walked away with an Oncost gift voucher worth KD 75.

Oncost, which has been revolutionizing retail

shopping in Kuwait since its inception in 2011, is well-known for its flexibility and amenability when it comes to accommodating the needs of the market. The brand prioritizes convenience and high-level service while striving to provide shoppers with significantly discounted prices.

Oncost recently acquired Gulfmart, the well-known supermarket chain that has been operating in Kuwait since 1999. The takeover broadens the market reach of Oncost with 21 stores now spread across the country. Announcing the merger, Oncost CEO Saleh Al-Tunaib said, "Over the next five years, we plan on increasing the number of branches we own to 35, and look forward to entering the Saudi and the UAE markets through strategic partnerships with professional retail groups in those countries." He also pointed out that with the acquisition of Gulfmart, the total market share of Oncost in the local food market would reach 4 percent, which he said would be increased further in the future.



Kuwait Towers offers the true spirit of Ramadan



Touristic Enterprises Company is offering traditional Ramadan experiences to celebrate the spirit of the season with family and friends at Kuwait Towers. Bringing an exclusive collection of meals, visitors observing the Holy month can enjoy new tastes and flavors, designed by specialty Chefs at Horizon Restaurant. Set in a stunning location with spectacular views over Kuwait City, Horizon Restaurant offers a delectable Iftar Oriental buffet, available from 6:30 pm until 8:30 pm. To honor local traditions, the premise will host Ghabka celebrations well, from 9:30pm until 1:00 am, where guests will be treated to a scrumptious set menu. Additionally, creating a memorable Ghabka ambiance, guests can enjoy listening to the tunes of authentic Oriental music. Kuwait Towers also offers the option of an impeccable outdoor catering service. Touristic Enterprises Company wishes all a joyous and peaceful month of Ramadan.

ICSK ACCA orientation

The Indian Community School Senior, structured an ACCA orientation for its students on 27th April, 2019, Saturday. The ACCA widely known as the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, is the global professional accounting body offering the Chartered Certified Accountant qualification. In order to edify the students about ACCA, this orientation was hampered out by the Principal of ICSK Senior, Dr V Binumon. The program was initiated with a silent prayer. The gathering was acquainted to the program by the Deputy Vice Principal, Mrs. Susan Rajesh. The Principal of ICSK Senior, Dr V Binumon greeted and welcomed the gathering and propelled them with a

power point presentation. The prominence of the ACCA course was informed to the students and the benefits of the course too. It has different levels like:

- i) Introductory level
- ii) intermediate level
- iii) diploma
- iv) advanced diploma etc....

The ACCA degrees are available from Oxford University and University of London. In order to further educate the students about ACCA, Dua a student of ACCA dispensed a presentation about ACCA. A question and answer session was generated for the audience by the ACCA mentor and guide, Akhil in order to clarify their doubts and concerns. The orientation was witnessed by the Chairman [Board of Trustees] ICSK, Shaik Abdul Rahiman, Treasurer [Board of Trustees] ICSK, SN Raju, Principal of ICSK Senior, Dr V Binumon, Vice Principal Dr Sam T Kuruvilla and Deputy Vice Principal, Susan Rajesh.



ICSK Amman invests school senate 2019-2020

The Indian Community School Kuwait, Amman witnessed a solemn Investiture Ceremony on Thursday, May 2nd, 2019 in the presence of the distinguished Chief Guest Susovana Sujit Nair, Medical Oncologist, Kuwait Cancer Control Centre and parents. The Investiture Ceremony is one of the significant occasion of the school where the newly elected senate members are officially vested with their responsibilities. The ceremonial lamp was lit by the Chief Guest escorted by the Principal Rajesh Nair C, Senate Advisor Jaya Nirmal, Academic Supervisor Sumitra NandaKumar and Senate President Mannar Mohammed.

The Chief Guest invested the Senate Advisor, House Mentors, The Core Senate,



The House Captains and Asst House Captains with the badges of office. Principal Rajesh Nair administered the oath to the members of the Senate. This was followed by an inspirational song sung by the newly elected senate as an expression of keeping their promises with unity and sincerity.

In her address the Chief Guest emphasized on the qualities of the great leader. She inspired the newly elected members of the

senate to shoulder their responsibilities with vigor. She mesmerized the gathering with a befitting melodious patriotic song and the gathering gave her a standing ovation. The prefects of the four houses were invested with badges by their house mentors. The Senate President gave the acceptance speech which was followed by the vote of thanks proposed by the Vice President of the school senate Elvina Ann Mathew.

Al Hamra Real Estate conducts emergency evacuation drill

Al Hamra Real Estate Co recently conducted an emergency evacuation drill for Al Hamra Business Tower's employees and visitors, under the supervision of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD), Civil Defense, Ministry of Interiors, Ministry of Health, and the Al Hamra Property Management Team. The evacuation took place with the purpose of ensuring the employees were equipped with the necessary defensive techniques to follow in the case of a fire outbreak. To ensure the overall safety employees and the visitors of the tower, the drill included exercises such as evacuations, how to manage injuries and fires. The staff practiced the latest training procedures and real-life learning scenarios to protect themselves and the lives of their co-workers.

Al Hamra Real Estate Co. Marketing and Public Relations Manager, Mr.

Abdullah Al Mansour said: "We would like to extend our gratitude to the members that successfully conducted the drill to guarantee the security of our valued visitors and employees. It is essential to carry out our utmost efforts in maintaining the safety of all, through precautionary in-house drills and measures on a regular basis. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD), Civil Defense, Ministry of Interiors, and Ministry of Health and following international standards of emergency protocols as well as the most efficient best practice methods." As top priority and armed with the objective of ensuring adequate response time, Al Hamra Real Estate Co continues to safeguard the health and safety of its personnel through the effective application of world-class security measures.



Artist Sara Hasan participates in the 'Ramart' exhibition

Kuwait Formative Artist Sara Hasan participated in the "Ramart" exhibition that was held at the Turkish art museum in Istanbul for the first time. The exhibition's focus was on the use of the Arab alphabet in formative arts and how it is employed to reflect ideas in an art form so it becomes an important part of the Islamic art. Sara Hasan said Ramart represents an effective art window to bring Arab and foreign talents in a



platform to instill the Arab calligraphy as a basic part of the formative and visual arts.

She said the Arab and cultural cooperation between the state of Kuwait and Turkey enabled the exchange of intellectual and

artistic taste in a standard that is worthy of Kuwait and its artists. Ramart was held for the first time in Istanbul with the participation of 99 artists of various schools and generations, representing 22 states. The exhibition was held from May 5 until May 12 with distinguished participation from Kuwait with the works of artist Sara Hasan. The exhibition was able to bring the present and past together, and that was alluded through exhibitions, discussions, exchange of experiences and technical workshops.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Board of the Exhibition Alpay Tarhan said the project is a new art platform that is harbors many art schools, adding that the exhibition will held every Ramadan, and will be part of the world culture through art, so it gains its strength from the prestigious history that goes hundreds of years in the meeting of civilizations.

Health & Science

Amazon's Bezos unveils lunar lander project 'Blue Moon'

WASHINGTON: Jeff Bezos, the richest man in the world and head of space company Blue Origin, announced Thursday his intent to participate in the new race to the Moon with a high-tech lander to carry vehicles and equipment. "This is Blue Moon," the 55-year-old said at a carefully choreographed presentation in Washington, as curtains lifted to show a model of a huge vessel.

The lander will weigh more than three metric tons empty, 15 fully fueled, and be capable of carrying 3.6 tons to the lunar surface — or 6.5 in a variant model. It is supported by four legs, with an upper deck where equipment can be fixed. A large tank of liquefied hydrogen fuel occupies its center. "It's an incredible vehicle, and it will go to the Moon," the Amazon founder declared.

Bezos didn't announce a specific date for the project's first launch, but Blue Origin later said it was capable of meeting President Donald Trump's announced goal of returning people to the Moon by 2024. "We can help meet that timeline, but only because we started three years ago," he said. "It's time to go back to the Moon, this time to stay."

Fifty years after American astronauts first walked on the Moon, the United States is among

countries showing renewed interest in Earth's natural satellite. The vehicle will be capable of carrying scientific instruments, four self-driving rovers and a future pressurized vehicle for humans. The goal is to land on the Moon's south pole, where ice deposits were confirmed in 2018. Water can be exploited to produce hydrogen, which in turn could fuel future exploration of the solar system.

Space colonies

The White House's intention to return to the Moon in 2024 has sent NASA into a frenzy of activity, because that particular mission was originally anticipated for 2028. Nothing is ready: not the powerful Space Launch System (SLS) rocket being developed by Boeing which is necessary to transport vehicles and astronauts. Not the components of the future mini-station in lunar orbit, which will act as a rest stop between Earth and the Moon. And not the lander nor rovers needed by astronauts, among whom will be the first woman to set foot on the Moon.

But Bezos, who rarely speaks about the projects at Blue Origin, which he founded in 2000 and finances with more than \$1 billion per year, clearly suggested he wants to help NASA. Several other aerospace companies are also

expected to bid to build the lander for the space agency, which is in the process of finalizing requests for proposals. Lockheed Martin proposed its own lander concept some months ago.

Bezos, who also owns The Washington Post, did not talk to journalists at the event. The lander's unveiling came as Bezos outlined in a lengthy monologue his broader vision to build an infrastructure that would sustain the colonization of space by future generations of humans and shift polluting industries off the Earth.

This would involve the construction of artificial worlds in space, inspired by designs first proposed by the late physicist Gerard K. O'Neill, one of Bezos's heroes, intended to give humanity an escape route in case of limited resources on Earth. "My generation's job is to build the infrastructure," said Bezos.

"We're going to build the road to space." Blue Origin is working on two other major projects: New Shepard, a suborbital rocket to fly tourists into space; and New Glenn, a heavy lift, partly reusable launch rocket. Bezos confirmed his commitment to fly the first people in New Shepard this year, and New Glenn in 2021. The New Shepard rocket first reached space last year, achieving a height of 66 miles in April 2018. — AFP

First case of monkeypox detected in Singapore

SINGAPORE: Singapore has reported its first ever case of monkeypox, brought in by a Nigerian man thought to have contracted the rare virus by eating bushmeat at a wedding. Symptoms in humans of monkeypox — which is endemic in parts of Central and Western Africa — include lesions, fever, muscle ache and chills. Transmission is usually via close contact with infected animals such as rodents and monkeys and is limited between people. It has only been fatal in rare cases. The man who brought in the virus arrived in Singapore on April 28, the city-state's health ministry (MOH) said in a statement late Thursday. The 38-year-old developed symptoms two days later and is currently isolated at an infectious disease centre in a stable condition, the ministry said.

At least 23 individuals who had been in close contact with the man had been traced, and those who are in Singapore will be quarantined and monitored for 21 days as a precaution, MOH said. One had already left Singapore on May 5 before the Nigerian was diagnosed at hospital but has since made contact with the city's health authorities and has reported he is well. "The risk of community spread of monkeypox in Singapore is low," said Leo Yee Sin, executive director of Singapore's National Centre for Infectious Diseases.

He said that on average "each infected person transmits the infection to less than one other person", which makes the virus less infectious than the common flu. Outside Africa, human monkeypox infections had only been previously reported in the United States, Britain and Israel, according to the US Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. — AFP

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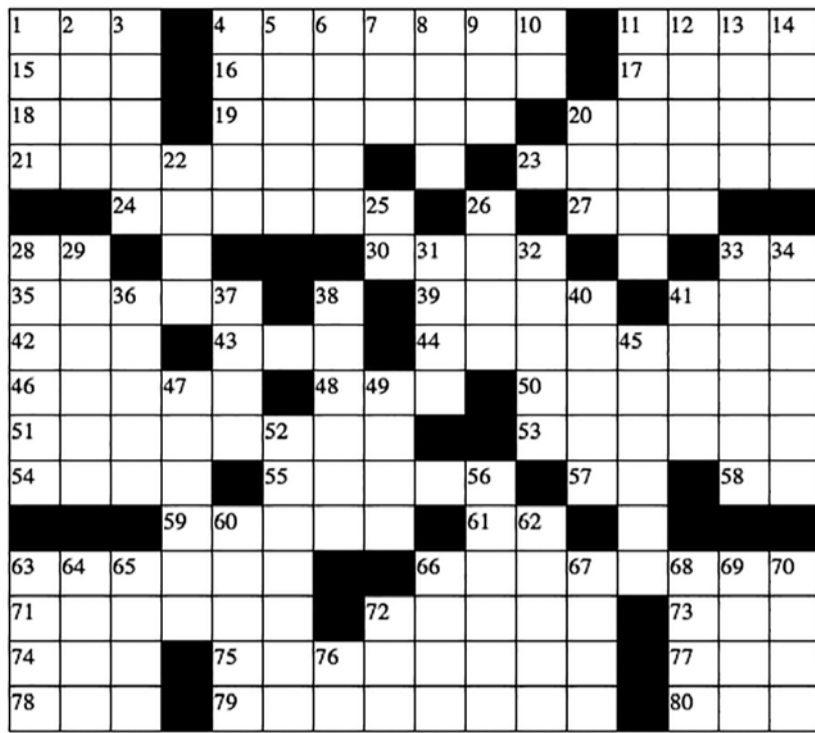
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- ACROSS**
- A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
 - Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
 - An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
 - English economist who argued that the laws of supply and demand should operate in a free market (1772-1823).
 - Re-equip a factory or plant.
 - South African term for 'boss'.
 - A native or inhabitant of Iran.
 - Expandable metal or wooden wedge used by printers to lock up a form within a chase.
 - The sign language used in the United States.
 - The basic unit of money in Cambodia.
 - The federal department responsible for safeguarding national security.
 - In operation or operational.
 - African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
 - Wild sheep of northern Africa.
 - Fleshy and usually brightly colored cover of some seeds that develops from the ovule stalk and partially or entirely envelopes the seed.
 - The capital and largest city of Yemen.
 - A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
 - Scottish sea captain who was hired to protect British shipping in the Indian Ocean and then was accused of piracy and hanged (1645-1701).
 - The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
 - A quantity of no importance.
 - Subject to death.
 - A rounded thickly curled hairdo.
 - The state of being disregarded or forgotten.
 - Dried root of two plants of the genus Polygala containing an irritating saponin.
 - A large Yoruba city in southwestern Nigeria.
 - A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
 - Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
 - King of Saudi Arabia from 1964 to 1975 (1906-1975).
 - A mound of stones piled up as a memorial or to mark a boundary or path.
 - A growth in strength or number or importance.
 - The froth produced by soaps or detergents.
 - Of or relating to the wrist.
 - English illustrator of several of Dickens' novels (1815-1882).
 - A member of an Indian people formerly living along the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
 - Acknowledge a new land owner as one's landlord, of tenants.
 - Not stale or old.
 - Long-winged web-footed aquatic bird of the gull family.
 - Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
 - A lump on the body caused by a blow.
 - On or toward the lee.
 - A small cake leavened with yeast.
 - (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
 - (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
 - Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
 - The sixth day of the week.
 - A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- DOWN**
- United States physiologist (born in Germany) who did research on parthenogenesis (1859-1924).
 - Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
 - The mechanical process of wearing or grinding something down (as by particles washing over it).
 - A sensation (as of a cold breeze or bright light) that precedes the onset of certain disorders such as a migraine attack or epileptic seizure.
 - (computer science) A coding system that incorporates extra parity bits in order to detect errors.
 - In captivity.
 - The act of providing approval and support.
 - An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
 - An island in the Aegean Sea in the Saronic Gulf.
 - An informal term for a father.
 - Before noon.
 - Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
 - A partly sheltered anchorage.
 - A federally sponsored corporation that insures accounts in national banks and other qualified institutions.
 - Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
 - An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
 - Shrubby lichens of the family Usneaceae having a flattened thallus.
 - A city in central New York.
 - A corporation's first offer to sell stock to the public.
 - Favoring one person or side over another.
 - Round gourd of the calabash tree.
 - Nicaraguan statesman (born in 1945).
 - (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
 - Long-tailed arboreal mustelid of Central and South America.
 - A state in New England.
 - An associate degree in nursing.
 - A territory in southwestern Germany formerly ruled by the counts palatine.
 - A soft gray malleable metallic element that resembles tin but discolors on exposure to air.
 - Go ashore.
 - Small spiny outgrowth on the wings of certain insects.
 - (informal) Roused to anger.
 - The smallest multiple that is exactly divisible by every member of a set of numbers.
 - A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
 - A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
 - (folklore) Fairies that are somewhat mischievous.
 - A large estate in Spanish-speaking countries.
 - Failing to speak or communicate etc when expected to.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have clear mental perception, logic and the ability to get the answers you need and be able to express them concisely. If you have to work this Saturday, then you should be able to get your point across precisely. If not on the job, using this talent should be a good quality to have in other situations as well. Have lunch out with friends and get your gift of gab on with them. You can converse on any subject much like a trivia champion. Go shopping later and get those household items you remember as having loved when you were a child. They're back in style. The great recycling mode of God is to remember the old and make it new again.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You're in a talkative vein today and you're enjoying others more too. A higher up at work may find you just the right person to exchange ideas with now. That should go well. Make sure you watch what you're saying though. Be thoughtful about decisions made today because they may not be the best for you. You may even be too generous with money, unless you have another Zodiac Sign (moon or ascendant) that helps you retain it. On the good side material gain is in the making for you. Go out tonight with family and your love and don't think about watching your words.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

If you're working on this Saturday, then you already have a leg-up with your superiors. You're able to describe in detail the project they've asked you about. You're able to make them see it as you describe it. Your mind is clear with great logical and practical thinking which can make you talk all day long. Other workers and friends flock to you for explanation. Higher ups notice this as well. Be with someone you love later in the day. Enjoy talking, walking in the park or some other thing you love to do. Having fun this evening is a topper for a great day.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Frustration bothers you especially when you're trying to get things accomplished now. Take your time if you don't have to work. Rest and relax as much as possible. Do something you like even if it means you get no work done. Sometimes enjoyment for yourself goes a long way towards making your work better later. Cancer. You could find yourself hard to satisfy today. It could be a must that you stay alone and let others tend to their own issues now. Read a book. Watch Game of Thrones. Get carried away in Calgon if you even know what that means. Enjoy.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Thankfully, it's time for a day just for you or at least you and your family and friends. Make the most of it since you've had the week from, well you know. It could have been worse though. You did feel better about yourself towards the end of the week. Get out and do something you love. Go out with friends you've missed while working so hard. You're in the mood for discovering the beauty in your life and what you've done with it which is a wonderful thing to do at times. Looking for things you've accomplished and blessing yourself for them gives you more oomph towards doing it again in a different manner. Others love being with you. Let them be choosy as to whom they are. This is about you now too.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today is the day to understand your darker side. Everyone has this. Most often they don't want to admit it though. Perhaps some good gossip you couldn't pass up started your foray into your conscious and how you handle items that seem bad to others. It's good for you to take a real look at yourself without wearing rose colored glasses. Only you can make judgements about your inner most secrets and rise to the occasion to manifest better in your life. Without realization you have these feelings you can't correct them. Once you've worked through these items then you're on to more sensitive emotional stresses.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a wonderful time to hang out with people you love especially if they're younger. You like being in a group where you can learn new things. Exploring and educating yourself is a deep need now even though this should be a day you rest. Emotional discussions where you take an issue apart, then rebuild it in the correct manner makes you realize there are different, more effective ways sometimes where love is concerned. This may also be a good time to make changes you've wanted around your home. Decorations may need to go and be replaced.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be looking for a new home today or redecorating in a light way. This is giving you the bug for doing more though which you may consider later. Family, friends and certain neighbors mean more to you now than they have in a while. Take the time to see them either for a brunch meeting or in another manner. Just enjoy seeing them today even if it's on the phone. Your home is a place to belong which is also something you need today. You want roots, a place to feel safe. You've got it along with the family and friends who love you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today you have a real thankfulness for thoughts and ideas. Don't be surprised if you get or make a call to someone you haven't heard from in a while. Take the time to enjoy the conversation. Because this is a tense time in your life, make sure you don't pour out all your feelings to your long-lost friend. This is a good time to look over your life, thank the powers that be for what you have and get on with what you love. Keep those you care for close because it gives you a sense of being needed which is the same as showing love in your eyes.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a day of emotional therapy between you and someone you care about fiercely. Discussing the situation that is bothering you is the best way to come to terms with something that makes you feel bad. Making sure you can use this incident to your benefit or at least, get rid of the feelings that are bothering you is the ultimate prize. It's nice to know that you have someone who cares enough to listen and to help you make a decision. For a new undertaking with your work, this might be the very day to get in touch with those seeking your special abilities. You're good with your thoughts and communication skills. Go for it.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You're in the mood for seeing what makes everything, no matter what it is, tick. Inquisitiveness is always part of your nature but it's amplified in a huge way now. Figuring out how to make money grow is part of what's driving you. Sex is another item that seems to be uppermost in your mind too. Your ideals keep you on the straight and narrow. Friends and family offer you the security you need in order to proceed with your desires. You're still looking yourself over to try to find out why others may think you'll do certain things that you won't. It'll get easier.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a time for creativity and imagination but don't go too far with those who disagree with you. Stay home and ignore them today. Read a book. Play with the dog or cat. Have lunch brought in. Generally, pamper yourself. You can't satisfy everyone else but you can satisfy yourself. Make this day all about you. You've got a quick, sharp mind. Knowing what your emotions can do but knowing that you can take care of them on your own makes you feel safer now. Crying won't happen and neither will complaining. Sit on the patio. Fresh air will perk you up.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Flowers 1 - Word Search

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

- | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| AMARYLLIS | GLADIOLUS | PETUNIA |
| ASTER | HEATHER | SNAPDRAGON |
| CALLA | HYACINTH | STOCK |
| CLEMATIS | IMPATIENS | TULIP |
| DAFFODIL | JASMINE | VIOLET |
| DELPHINIUM | LILAC | |
| FREESIA | LISIANTHUS | |
| GARDENIA | NARCISSUS | |

Friday's Solution

Fish 3 - Solution

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

- | | | |
|----------|-------------|-----------|
| BASS | MARLIN | STEELHEAD |
| BLUEFISH | PADDLEFISH | SUNFISH |
| BONITO | PIKE | TILAPIA |
| CISCO | POMPANO | TUNA |
| CREVALLE | ROCKFISH | WEAKFISH |
| GOLDFISH | ROOSTERFISH | |
| GRAYLING | SHAD | |
| HADDOCK | SHEEPSHEAD | |

Friday's Solution

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

Daily Sudoku

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

Friday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2019



An Indonesian woman prepares meals for Muslims breaking their fast during the holy month of Ramadan at Jogokariyan Mosque in Yogyakarta. — AFP

'BACURAU' AT CANNES A BRIGHT SPOT FOR TROUBLED BRAZIL FILM INDUSTRY

With "Bacurau," Kleber Mendonça Filho returns to the Cannes film festival for the second time, determined to shine a light on the turmoil in Brazilian cinema under far-right President Jair Bolsonaro. Shot in Sertão do Serido, an impoverished and isolated region in northeastern Brazil, "Bacurau" tells the story of a village turned upside down by the death of a 94-year-old female resident. Mendonça said his third feature film—co-directed by Juliano Dornelles and in competition for the coveted Palme d'Or in Cannes—reflects the difficult times Brazil is now enduring under Bolsonaro.

But in an interview with AFP, the 51-year-old director stopped short of calling himself an activist. "Making films about human dramas, about people facing all kinds of difficulties, can be seen as a form of activist cinema, but I do not want to put 'activist filmmaker' on my business card," says Mendonça, whose previous film "Aquarius" was in competition in Cannes in 2016. "I am a Brazilian filmmaker, I live at a time when Brazilian society is suffering and stories are springing up."

The film, set on the border between the northeastern states of Paraíba and Rio Grande do Norte, is the first that Mendonça has made outside his hometown of Recife, the capital of nearby Pernambuco state. He says the movie featuring veteran actress Sonia Braga—who also starred in "Aquarius"—shows Brazil can produce "great" movies. But Mendonça said attempts by the Bolsonaro government to dismantle the country's arts sector was worrying.

"I'm happy and a little sad at the same time because this second selection in Cannes comes at a very strange moment for our film industry, which was on an upswing and is now experiencing a serious crisis," Mendonça says. In Cannes three years ago, the team behind "Aquarius" brandished placards to denounce a "coup" against Brazil's left-wing former president Dilma Rousseff, shortly after she was stripped of office. But this time, says Mendonça, the film itself will be the protest. "Today, what is happening with Bolsonaro is widely covered by the international press," he says. "In May 2016, it felt like people did not know what was going on here."

Cultural Marxism

Since Bolsonaro's presidential election victory in October 2018, the arts sector has been in crisis, as the far-right president seeks to purge the country of what he calls "cultural Marxism." The culture ministry no longer exists—it is now simply a department of the new citizenship ministry, which also includes sports. "This idea of 'cultural Marxism' is nonsense," says veteran film producer Luiz



In this file photo Brazilian director Kleber Mendonça Filho poses during a photocall for the film 'Aquarius' at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Carlos Barreto. "Art is created by the free flow of ideas. No government can label artistic expression with preconceived ideas, ideologies."

In the first three months of the year, coinciding with the start of Bolsonaro's term, state financing for Brazilian audiovisual projects amounted to just over one million reais. At that rate, total funding for 2019 would be less than half of what was offered in 2018. In comparison, in 2009 during Brazil's economic boom, state funding in that category topped 34 million reais. On top of that, Bolsonaro has announced plans to cap a tax credit mechanism for financing cultural projects.

Brazilian cinema is also threatened by a crisis at ANCINE, the government body responsible for distributing funds for audiovisual productions. At the end of March, the agency suspended financing of film and TV projects after it came under government scrutiny over its accounting procedures. For Mendonça, the situation at ANCINE was "artificially created to end Brazilian cinema." "What strikes me is this apparent feeling of fear, even rage, towards artists. I cannot understand that because we are Brazilians too and we love our country," he says. But for Barreto, the situation is all too familiar.

"I feel like I've seen this movie before, at different times in the past, like in the early 90s. As soon as Brazilian cinema hits its stride, it is destabilized," Barreto said.—AFP

Rihanna teams up with LVMH to launch luxury fashion brand

Pop idol Rihanna said Friday that she will team up with French luxury giant LVMH to launch her own luxury fashion brand in spring, becoming the first black woman to head up a house for the firm. The new luxury house will be called Fenty after Robyn Rihanna Fenty, the full name of the Barbados-born superstar, who already has her own highly successful Fenty sportswear and Savage lingerie labels.

The world's biggest fashion conglomerate LVMH, which is owned by the industry titan Bernard Arnault, said the brand will be based in Paris and make ready-to-wear clothes, shoes and accessories. "Mr Arnault has given me a unique opportunity to develop a fashion house in the luxury sector, with no artistic limits," Rihanna said. "I couldn't imagine a better partner both creatively and business-wise, and I'm ready for the world to see what we have built together."

Rumours have been rife for months that LVMH, which owns such iconic brands as Dior, Louis Vuitton, Fendi and Givenchy, was assembling a group of top designers for the project. On Friday Arnault confirmed the rumors, saying that LVMH had built up a "talented and multicultural" team to support Rihanna's newest brand.

True entrepreneur

With her huge fan base and nearly 170 million social media followers, Rihanna is one of the most powerful style influencers on the planet. A new large-scale luxury label—especially one led by a black woman—is a huge development in the fashion world. The top end of the market has been traditionally hogged by historic French and Italian houses. Despite its dominance, LVMH has not started a luxury brand from scratch since Christian Lacroix in 1987.

Fashion insiders say the first creations for Rihanna's new line are likely to be unveiled later this month. Fashion analyst Serge Carreira said the "relatively novel move (to set up the luxury house) makes complete sense. 'It is millennials who are driving growth in the luxury market,' he told AFP. And Rihanna personifies their values and the "battle for diversity, women's rights and a vision of the future," he added.

A regular on the front row of fashion shows, and particularly at Dior in Paris, the singer has also proved herself to be a canny creator. As well as her existing Fenty sportswear line, Rihanna upped sales at Puma when she became its creative director, and has also dipped her toe into lingerie.

Her Fenty Beauty operation—which is also involved a hook-up with LVMH—racked up sales of more than \$100 million within weeks of its 2016 launch. "Everybody knows Rihanna as a wonderful singer, but through our

partnership at Fenty Beauty, I discovered a true entrepreneur, a real CEO and a terrific leader," LVMH's Arnault said in a statement.

New album also imminent

Rihanna is not the only pop icon to have become a fashion industry player. Beyoncé, who has her own Ivy Park and House of Dereon labels, last month signed a deal with German sportswear giant Adidas. It already has a deal with rapper Kanye West, who has his own Yeezy brand and has made no secret of his ambition to lead a major Paris fashion house. The fashion industry bible Women's Wear Daily has speculated that Rihanna's luxu-



In this file photo Barbadian singer Rihanna poses as she arrives for the screening of the film 'Okja' at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

ry brand could be launched alongside her ninth album.

The singer has been teasing the release of her long-awaited follow-up to her double-platinum 2016 album "ANTI" for months. She told a BBC television chatshow last June that she was in the studio working on it and her best friend Jennifer Rosales said in March that the album was finished. Black designers have been making dramatic inroads into the fashion industry of late, with the American Virgil Abloh the most talked about designer at recent Paris fashion weeks.

Abloh, whose parents come from Ghana, now heads LVMH's treasured Louis Vuitton menswear line as well as his own hugely cool Off-White Label. Rihanna, who shot to fame with her "Music of the Sun" and "Good Girl Gone Bad" albums, is locked in a legal battle with her father over the use of the Fenty name. Rihanna is suing her father Ronald Fenty over the use of the family name in his company, Fenty Entertainment. Forbes magazine put the singer's net worth last year at \$210 million.—AFP

Phoebe Waller-Bridge: Offbeat and in demand

She's made a killing in the US with "Killing Eve," is storming back with a second season of "Fleabag" and has been called in to polish up the new James Bond script: Phoebe Waller-Bridge is seemingly unstoppable, propelled along by her offbeat humor and piercing pen. The British actress and screenwriter is hard to miss, standing tall-literally, at five feet 10 inches — in the television landscape, with her brown bob, ready laugh and elegant nose as sharp as her wit.

That wit is on full display in "Fleabag," the hit series based on the one woman play of the same name that "PWB" wrote in 2013. The show, whose second season starts streaming May 17 on Amazon, plays with convention by having the protagonist break the proverbial fourth wall and talk directly to viewers in her deep, staccato voice.

In "Fleabag," Waller-Bridge serves up a cocktail of unfiltered humanity, along with dark, irreverent humor and sex-none of it gratuitous. "My original inspiration was to say the things that I feel like women normally only say in the shadows," she said in a March interview with the website Broadway World, ahead of a run of sold-out performances of the "Fleabag" play in New York. "We sort of pretend that we're innocent and adorable and like these perfect little creatures," she said, "but actually we have many, many other layers."

Titular character Fleabag, a young woman bat-

ling against the rules—and with herself—has a screw (or several) loose, and can veer self-destructive, but never becomes a caricature. Instead, the character is a very British blend of impeccable manners and a keen sense of derision, just like her creator. Phoebe Waller-Bridge is "not apologetic about having a flawed heroine," Andrew Scott, one of the main characters in Season 2, told AFP. Scott is best known for an untinged performance of his own, that of James Moriarty in the BBC's 2010 version of "Sherlock."

Understanding of humanity

All that has been enough for Waller-Bridge to be hailed as a feminist heroine, regularly compared to American screenwriter Lena Dunham, though their universes are fairly far apart. "Because it's written by a female, people point out that it's a feminist show, but I think sometimes that just undermines the actual work," said Scott. "I think her grace and gift is her understanding of humanity."

But the feminist theme is reinforced by Waller-Bridge's propensity to offer fellow actresses equally dense, complex roles, such as in "Fleabag," in which Olivia Coleman, who won an Oscar for "The Favourite," delights as the heroine's passive-aggressive stepmother. It's also clear in the offbeat thriller series "Killing Eve," written by Waller-Bridge and starring Jodie Comer and Sandra Oh, who won a

Golden Globe for her work in the lead role.

With new "Fleabag" episodes on the horizon and the second season of "Killing Eve" streaming on BBC America for the US, Waller-Bridge is gearing up to teach an old spy new tricks. She's been called upon to live up to the script for the 25th installment of James Bond's adventures, at the express request of 007 himself, actor Daniel Craig, who wanted to inject more humor into the film set for release next year.

Beyond that, she has been signed to executive produce a new HBO series, titled "Run," about a woman given a chance to break with a humdrum existence and reinvent herself—written by PWB's longtime associate Vicky Jones who directed the "Fleabag" play. As for "Fleabag" the series, it's most likely winding down, Waller-Bridge has hinted, after a slightly less abrasive second season.

"It's kind of deeper in a sense," said Scott of the six upcoming episodes. Scott plays Fleabag's love interest, a priest who ponders returning her affections. "We wanted to just try and tell an unusual love story and to talk about religion in a way that appeals to people of our generation," he said. Waller-Bridge has also foregone some of the more unsettling aspects of the first season in favor of deeper emotions, though still armed with her favorite weapon: humor.

She "plays on the comedy of embarrassment like



nobody else," said British actress Fiona Shaw on the online radio show SiriusXM. Shaw appears in both "Fleabag" as the main character's therapist, and "Killing Eve" as a section head for MI6. "Just when you're laughing, it will say something very sad, or just when you're sad it will say something very funny," she said. "So you're absolutely punched in the stomach all the time."—AFP

In this file photo British actress/writer Phoebe Waller-Bridge poses as she leaves the Festival Palace after the screening of the film "Solo: A Star Wars Story" at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP



In this file photo Kim Kardashian and Kanye West arrive for the 2019 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. — AFP

It's a boy! *Kardashian,* West welcome 4th child

Television reality star Kim Kardashian West said Friday that she and rapper Kanye West have welcomed their fourth child, a boy born via surrogate. "He's here and he's perfect!" the 38-year-old Kardashian, who also has her own make-up and fragrance lines, tweeted. She had announced the couple were expecting in January, telling the US program "Watch What Happens Live With Andy Cohen" that the youngest Kardashian to keep up with was due "sometime soon."

The new baby joins three other siblings: Sister Chicago, who was born last year via surrogate, five-year-

old sister North, and three-year-old brother Saint. The couple has yet to announce the new baby's name. Kardashian said the newborn was "also Chicago's twin lol I'm sure he will change a lot but now he looks just like her." Kardashian has been open about her struggles with pregnancy and decision to use a surrogate, as she had previously suffered from placenta accreta—a serious condition where the placenta becomes too deeply attached to the wall of the uterus.—AFP

Ariana Grande becomes new face of Givenchy

French fashion house Givenchy on Friday named pop princess Ariana Grande as the face of its fall/winter campaign, calling her "a strong, independent woman of refreshing character and style." "A modern muse and the voice of a generation, Ariana has emerged as one of the most influential forces in pop culture today," Givenchy, which is owned by the luxury goods conglomerate LVMH, said in a statement.

"She naturally embodies the spirit of the Givenchy woman with impertinence, generosity and a lightning wit—all cloaked in a touch of mystery." The announcement came one day after the fashion brand teased the reveal, posting to social media a video clip with the silhouette of a woman quickly identified as Grande thanks to her signature high, extra-long ponytail.

"I am so proud to be the new face of Givenchy. It is a house I have forever admired, and to now be part of that family is such an honor," Grande said of her first campaign for a major luxury house. "I love this clothing and the confidence and joy it brings to the people wearing it. Not only is the clothing timeless and beautiful, but I'm proud to work with a brand that makes people feel celebrated for who they are, and unapologetic about whatever they want to be."

The 26-year-old Grammy winner's Givenchy campaign is set for release in July. In a new teaser published Friday, Givenchy portrays Grande as a modern-day Holly Golightly from the classic film "Breakfast at Tiffany's,"



In this file photo Ariana Grande arrives for the 2018 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. — AFP

dressing her in the character's iconic little black dress—a Givenchy number—worn by actress Audrey Hepburn. Considered the "original brand ambassador," Hepburn shared a muse-designer relationship with the house's founder Hubert de Givenchy for decades.

Grande is the second pop idol to announce a collaboration with LVMH Friday, after Rihanna said she was teaming up with the French giant to launch her own luxury fashion brand in the spring-making history by becoming the first black woman to head up a house for the firm.—AFP

Avengers' Zoe Saldana: A superhero battling female stereotypes

As a green-skinned alien in the blockbuster movie "Avengers: Endgame", actress Zoe Saldana hopes she can promote a clear message - that time's up on old-fashioned female stereotypes. Saldana, who also starred as Neytiri in the 2009 box office smash hit "Avatar" and in "Star Trek", said she does not like being characterized by her race or sex and is raising her children in a gender-neutral environment.

"I'm not actively playing a strong woman, I'm just playing a whole woman versus something that is just there to be objectified and fill in all the boring spaces in a movie that come from a weak storyline," she said. "When I go for a job, or I start a business or I make a decision, it has never been because I'm a woman or because I'm a person of color. It is because I'm a human, I'm a voter, I'm a taxpayer, I'm a human being and because I matter."

Walt Disney Co's Marvel Studios - which made the "Avengers" films - has beefed up women's roles in its movies, winning praise for its first female-led superhero movie "Captain Marvel" "Women are so relevant in life, and in all places, that the logical thing to do is to capture them accurately and build them accurately," said Saldana, who was speaking at Chivas Venture, a social entrepreneurship competition in Amsterdam. Saldana's desire to improve women's equality starts at home, where she has decided to bring up her three young sons in a gender-neutral environment.

"What my husband and I are actively learning every day and practicing is how to not run a household like it's a patriarchy or a patriarchy," said Saldana, 40, who is married to Italian artist, Marco Perego-Saldana, who took her surname. She said this involves sharing household duties equally and dismantling any stereotypes, such as mothers as more stern or fathers as more fun, because this creates an "imbalanced perception" that children carry throughout their lives.

Born in New Jersey to a Puerto Rican mother and Dominican father, Saldana also wants to tell the stories of Latinos and other underrepresented groups in the media through her business Besé, a digital media platform launched in 2018. "We are creating content that is American content but we are broadening that narrative ... and accepting and celebrating the diversity that comes from being a nation that is built on immigration," she said.—Reuters

Guns N' Roses suing over rose-style beer



In this file photo singer Axl Rose of Guns N' Roses performs at The Joint inside the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

The band Guns N' Roses is suing a Colorado brewery for naming one of its beers "Guns N' Rose," saying the alleged trademark infringement has caused the hard rockers "irreparable damage." The offending craft beer—whose moniker is stylized with an accent on the e, referencing the type of wine—is made by Oskar Blues Brewery, part of the Canarchy Craft Brewing Collective in the western US state.

In its complaint filed Thursday in Los Angeles federal court, the band, which is seeking undisclosed damages and legal costs, accused the brewery of selling products that "intentionally trade on the GNR's goodwill, prestige, and fame without GNR's approval, license, or consent." "As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's wrongful acts, GNR has suffered and continues to suffer and/or is likely to suffer damage to their trademarks, business reputation, and goodwill," the complaint read.

The rock group's partners include Axl Rose, Slash and Michael McKagan. The headbangers hold the brewery is falsely implying a connection to the band by using an alleged play on its name to market its ale, which the Guns N' Roses says has been sold since 2018 in canned and keg form. Oskar Blues Brewery did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment.

The firm had attempted to trademark its logo in 2018 but dropped the bid after pushback from the band. According to documents, the beer and accompanying merchandise is set to be sold until March 2020. Oskar Blues does appear to have removed the beer from its website, having previously described it as "a crisp AF, subtly hopped rose-style ale brewed with prickly pear and hibiscus."—AFP

Anne Hathaway gets Hollywood Walk of Fame star

Actress Anne Hathaway was honored Thursday with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, while promoting her new movie "The Hustle." "I'm really very moved by every aspect of this," said Hathaway, 36, who thanked "the fans who showed up and gave me their time, and people who've been in my life for decades." Hathaway's star faces the entrance of the TCL Chinese Theatre, an iconic Hollywood tourist destination. It's also next to that of Hattie McDaniel, the first black actress to win an Oscar for her role as the slave Mammy in "Gone With the Wind" in 1940.

"Oh my god, I'm just very overwhelmed," said Hathaway. Hathaway's metaphorical star started to rise when she

gained fame in 2001 with her motion picture debut as shy, bumbling high school student Mia Thermopolis in "The Princess Diaries." Since then, she has gone on to star in "Brokeback Mountain," "The Devil Wears Prada" and "Ocean's 8." She also won an Oscar for best supporting actress in 2013, for her portrayal of Fantine in "Les Misérables."

She was accompanied at the ceremony by her parents, her husband actor Adam Shulman, and actress Rebel Wilson, who co-stars with Hathaway in "The Hustle." The film, which opens Friday in the US, follows Hathaway and Wilson as two scam artists who team up to take down the men who have wronged them.—AFP



US actress Anne Hathaway is honored with the 2,663rd Star on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame in front of the Chinese theatre in Hollywood. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Palestinian craftsman Issam Zughair, right, helps an elderly man transport a large Ramadan lantern.



Palestinian craftsman Issam Zughair stands with his wife next to an assortment of Ramadan lanterns in the entrance of his shop in the old city of Jerusalem. — AFP photos

In Jerusalem's Old City, lantern maker lights up Ramadan

At his shop in Jerusalem's Old City, Palestinian craftsman Issam Zughair makes traditional lanterns for Muslims marking the holy month of Ramadan, battling competition from cheap Chinese imports. Zughair's shop is decked out with lamps both large and small, some hanging from the ceiling and others displayed outside to draw the attention of passers-by during lively Ramadan evenings. He learned the trade from his father, a carpenter who originally made lanterns out of wood.

"My father opened this shop in the 1950s—we want to protect that heritage," Zughair said, sitting with his wife in their small home above the business. The largest lantern in the shop is two meters tall, shaped to resemble a mosque and created especially for Ramadan. It was made from sheet metal and glass, using a technique that is believed to date back to the Fatimid caliphate in 10th century Egypt.

Zughair believes the lantern is the largest traditionally-made one in Jerusalem. "There is no-one that rivals me in building them," he said. The 67-year-old imports materials from Egypt and Turkey and crafts the lanterns in his Old City shop. He can add Koranic verses, religious phrases or names of God, according to the wishes of buyers. Lanterns play a special role during Ramadan, which began on Monday.

As Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, nocturnal life takes on added significance. Traditionally, lanterns light the way for religious events. Najeh Bkerat, from the Al-Aqsa

Academy for Science and Heritage in Jerusalem, said they are a symbol of Islamic culture and heritage, especially during the fasting month. "People carry them as an expression of the light, the goodness and the joy of Ramadan," he said.

Walls and China

Zughair said he starts to receive requests for personalized lamps a month before Ramadan. Clients are from Jerusalem and the Israeli-occupied West Bank as well as Arabs from Israel itself, the majority of whom identify as Palestinian. The lanterns sell for between 10 and 1,000 shekels (\$3 to \$280), depending on their size and the intricacy of their design. But Zughair said he has seen a major slump in demand for the more ornate models since the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising, or intifada, in 2000.

Israel began constructing a wall in 2002, cutting off Jerusalem from much of the West Bank. Israeli authorities said it was necessary to curb Palestinian militant attacks, but critics labelled it as collective punishment and a land grab. "Before the intifada, all of Palestine used to come to buy from me, but today I have lost 70 percent of my customers as a result," Zughair said.

The purchasing power of Palestinian residents of east Jerusalem has declined by 30 percent since 2000, said Ziyad Hamouri from the Jerusalem Centre for Social and

Economic Rights, citing the wall as a key barrier to trade. Zughair also faces another threat—cheap Chinese knock-offs. "I don't have any competitors in the market except China," he said.

Ramadan atmosphere

In a shop selling household appliances inside a gate of the walled Old City, Hamzeh Takish displayed a selection of small Chinese-made plastic lanterns, some of which play popular Arabic songs. Their prices start from just 15 shekels (\$4). "I don't sell the traditional lanterns, people here are looking for new—every year they introduce new designs," he said. Alaa Wael, 27, was buying six Ramadan lanterns, two for his home and the rest for relatives. "They only cost 10 shekels, the type doesn't matter to me," he said. "What is important is that it works and adds a Ramadan atmosphere."

Ramadan in Jerusalem is not limited to lanterns. The labyrinthine streets of the Old City are festooned with lights and decorations for the whole month. Four committees, representing different neighborhoods including the Christian quarter, compete to have the most eye-catching displays as tens of thousands of Muslims flock to Al-Aqsa mosque for prayer. The committees provide food to the needy throughout the month.

One put up a 12-metre iron and nylon Ramadan lantern, with families gathering to watch. "We start working a month before Ramadan," said Ammar Sidr from the Bab Hata neighborhood committee. "We're experienced in decorating and coordinating colors and adding some personalized touches."—AFP



This photo shows an aerial view of Mount Everest, centre right, taken during a flight from Nepal to Bhutan. — AFP

Everest braces for record year amid overcrowding fears

The tented city at the foot of Mount Everest is bustling as mountaineers brace for potentially the busiest year yet on the world's highest peak, prompting concerns about overcrowding and safety. Since Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay made the first ascent in 1953 more than 4,000 climbers have reached the top of Everest, according to the authoritative Himalayan Database. Recent years have seen especially rapid growth, with the mountain opening up to more people as competition between expedition organizers has caused costs to plummet.

But rising numbers mean greater risk—a higher chance of bottlenecks as larger teams lumber their way to the summit, potential shortages of oxygen tanks, and increased risk of frostbite and even death. A photo of a huge traffic jam below the summit in 2012 prompted calls for better crowd management, and even a cap on the number of permits issued annually. Nepal currently grants permits to all who apply and are willing to pay \$11,000 to scale the 8,848-metre peak. This year the government has handed out 378 climbing permits according to the tourism department.

That tops the previous record of 373 in 2017. Most Everest aspirants will need the help of Nepali guides to reach the summit, meaning about 750 climbers will tread the same path to the top in the coming weeks when the weather is expected to be most favourable. And at least 140 others are preparing to scale Everest using the northern route from Tibet, according to expedition operators, taking the potential total past the 2018 record of 807 when five people died.

Put a limit

Spring is the busiest time of year on the mountain as the icy winds and bone-chilling temperatures are more forgiving than at other times. Even so the climbing season is short, with ascents expected to begin in the coming days and usually wrap up by the end of May or the first week of June. Ice doctors, the elite Sherpa mountaineers who set the ropes to the summit for hundreds of paying clients to climb, are currently waiting for a favourable weather window to begin their ascent.

But powerful jet streams raging around the top of Everest have expedition opera-

tors worried about the number of summit days, raising the likelihood of many climbers going up at the same time. Mountaineering blogger Alan Arnette said that problems could arise at the end of the season due to overcrowding when desperate climbers push onward to the summit despite a narrowing weather window. "Perhaps Nepal should put a limit like China has done or the US Park Service for Denali," Arnette said.

"But I doubt Nepal ever will do this because there is too much money at stake and they seem unable to refuse business, regardless of the risks," he said. Nepal has raked in over \$4 million in Everest permit fees alone in 2019, a much-needed source of revenue for the cash-strapped country. Expedition operator Dawa Steven Sherpa of Asian Trekking conceded that while "there are some concerns about overcrowding", mountaineering companies have become better at crowd management and are working together to schedule their teams. "It is also a little too early to talk about (whether) the weather will impact the summit days," he said.

Adventure of our lives

Many of the climbers are now completing their acclimatization ascents. Among them is accomplished mountaineer Kami Rita Sherpa, 49, who is planning his 23rd ascent of the peak, breaking his own record for the most summits of Everest. This season, the Nepal route will also see more women than ever before, with 76 female climbers attempting the feat. "This is not easy to break in a male-dominated industry, but we are here to climb and prove that we can do it," Nima Doma Sherpa told AFP last month before leaving for base camp.

American climber Cory Richards and Ecuadorian Esteban Tópo Mena are attempting to establish a new route on Everest, a decade after a South Korean team successfully ascended the mountain after carving a new path along its southwest face. "Our bodies and minds feel strong and we are getting our spirits ready for the adventure of our lives," Mena said in an Instagram post on Tuesday. The duo will climb "alpine style"—without supplemental oxygen.—AFP

Secret chamber uncovered at Nero palace

A team of archaeologists have discovered a secret chamber decorated with detailed frescoes during restoration work at Emperor Nero's Domus Aurea or Golden Palace constructed two millennia ago. The team came across an opening leading to a room covered with depictions of mythical creatures including centaurs and the god Pan, officials from the Colosseum archaeological park, supervising the work, told AFP on Friday.

The archaeologists have dubbed the chamber, which will require excavation with much of it buried and just its vault currently visible, Sala della Sfinge, or the Room of the Sphinx and say it is a significant discovery. The find offers a tantalizing glimpse into "the atmosphere of the 60s of the first Century AD in Rome," the Colosseum officials said, adding that what could be seen of the vault was "very visible and fairly well preserved."

Set against a white background can be seen "red-edged squares finessed with yellow-ochre lines and golden bands punctuated by a dense series of floral elements," the officials said. Each of the tiles depicts different types of animal form—from panthers to birds, centaurs and a sphinx, while others show musical instruments. The archaeologists were working on a nearby area of the complex set beneath a hill next to the Colosseum in ancient Rome's historic centre when they chanced upon the chamber.

Architects and archaeologists secured the site once home to a gigantic landscaped palace and consolidated the frescoes with a view to embarking upon a further stage of excavation to reveal the room in its full splendour. Built between AD 64 and 68, the immense complex, which other Roman emperors later built on, comprises buildings, gardens and an artificial

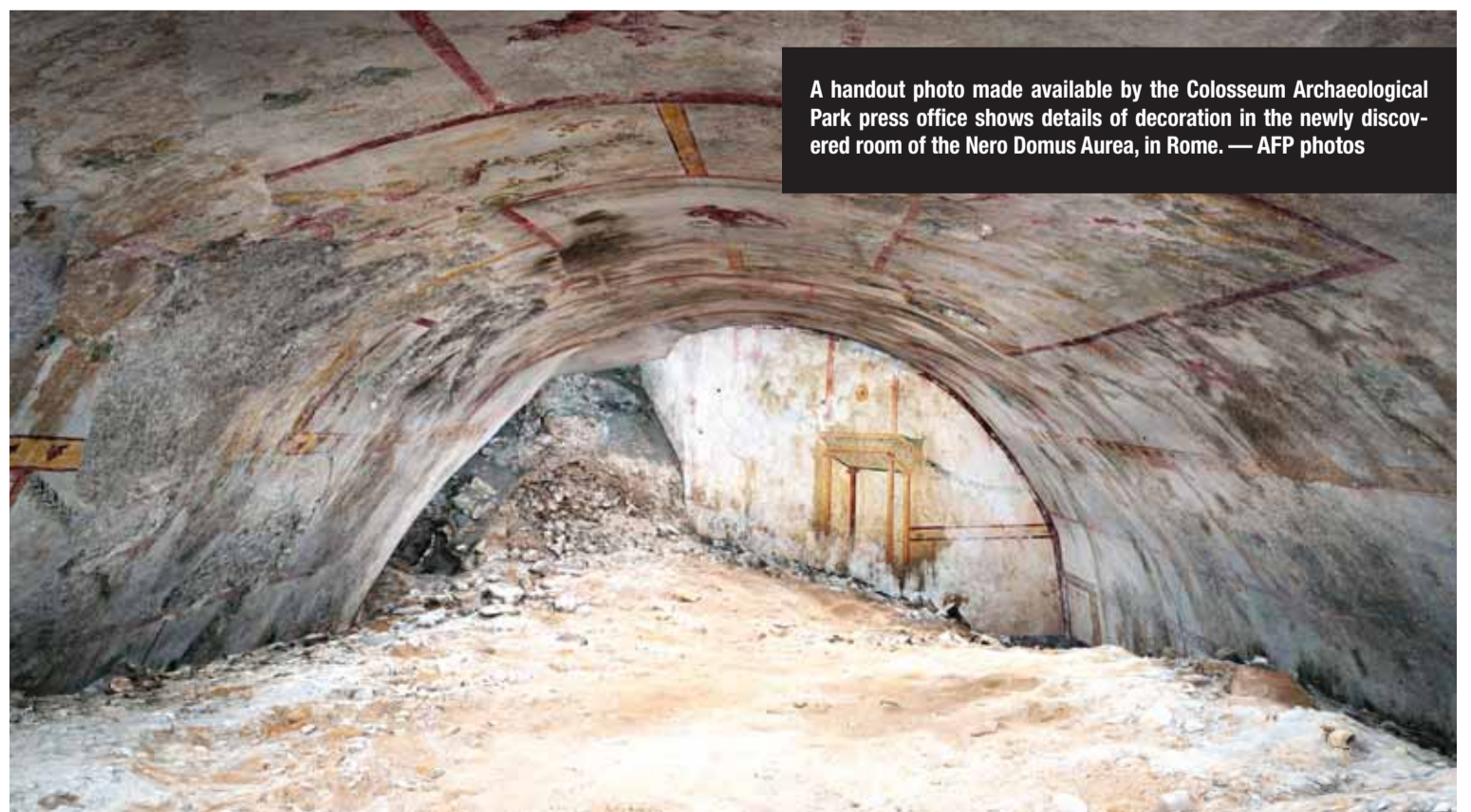


A handout photo made available by the Colosseum Archaeological Park press office shows details of decoration in the newly discovered room of the Nero Domus Aurea, in Rome.

lake. After Nero, who legend has it played the fiddle during the AD 64 fire which laid waste much of the centre of the Roman Empire, died in AD 68, his successors tried to destroy traces of his rule. Emperor Trajan had the Domus Aurea covered over with soil and built baths over it while Vespasian set in train construction of the Colosseum where the ornamental lake had been.

In the intervening centuries, much of the site was abandoned and today only few traces remain visible of what was a huge estate and of

which only a fraction has been excavated with much of it lying under today's modern bustling city. Part of the site was discovered by Renaissance artists including Raphael, some of whom managed to slide down on ropes and squeeze themselves through a hole in the ceiling to gaze upon magnificent frescoes which would inspire their own works.—AFP



A handout photo made available by the Colosseum Archaeological Park press office shows details of decoration in the newly discovered room of the Nero Domus Aurea, in Rome. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Features



LDLC group CEO Olivier De La Clergerie poses with lightsabers in LDLC headquarters in Limonest.-AFP photos



En garde! France embraces the lightsaber - as sport



It has for decades been the dream of the young and the young-at-heart-to be like Luke Skywalker from Star Wars and vanquish foes with a lightsaber. And now, in France at least, the dream can come true and the force be with you after the French Fencing Federation registered lightsaber as an official sport. Fencing already has three very different weapons-foil, epee and saber-which are disciplines up to Olympic level.

But now the lightsaber offers a fourth, which the national fencing authorities hope will win new converts to the sport. "When the world of fiction transforms into sport, it can only be positive," said Olivier Hanicotte, head of the lightsaber project at French Fencing Federation (FFE). He said the idea first came from the United States in 2013-2014 before becoming popular in French fencing halls.

"Then the federation took over to secure and regulate it, because at one point, there were a lot of security concerns, with people not necessarily wearing masks or protection," he said.

The FFE has even created its own lightsaber academy to structure training, organize competitions and ensure safety.

Hanicotte said the idea was not to find a novel way to attract people to traditional fencing but to develop a specific sport. The strategy seems to have paid off-in just two years, the number of participants counted by the FFE has quadrupled, with some 1,200 people now training in 92 clubs.

In Star Wars garb

On a Friday evening, the lightsaber session at a fencing hall in Lyon is so popular that instructor Mathieu Dhennin, 32, has had to turn people away. "The people in my classes range from children of 10 to adults aged 40 to 50 who have been fans of Star Wars from the very first film," he said. Some dress up in costume with a few in the full garb of Darth Vader. "I've come dressed up a few times but it's not compulsory. You can come in a tracksuit. It's easier but it's less immersive," said participant Gauthier Alfonsi.

In order to formalize the new sport, the FFE

has created four different disciplines: Combat light sabre where fighters move rapidly in a circular arena. Choreographed combat where fighters are judged by a panel. "Kata" where fighters search for the perfect move like in tai-chi. Team combat which explicitly uses the mythology of the films and is particularly popular with children. "The moves we use with lightsabers are very close to those used in fencing but there are also moves which are borrowed from other combat sports," said Dhennin, who founded the Lyon lightsaber academy.

Despite some similarities with fencing, the aim was quite different, Hanicotte said. "There are a certain number of moves that obviously resemble sport fencing, but we've organized them in a convention that allows for us to get nearer to the universe imagined by fans," he said.—AFP

Victoria's Secret says TV no longer 'right fit' for lingerie show

The annual Victoria's Secret fashion show, known for its jewel-encrusted bras and supermodels sporting huge angel wings, is bidding farewell to network television. Parent company L Brands Inc said on Friday it was re-thinking the TV special, saying the Victoria's Secret brand "must evolve and change to grow" as it aims to turn its business around. "For the past few months, we've said that we are taking a fresh look at every aspect of our business," the company said in a memo sent to employees by Chief Executive Les Wexner. Screenshots of the memo were posted online. The memo was first reported by CNBC.

"We have decided to re-think the traditional Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. Going forward we don't believe network television is the right fit," Wexner said. The company did not immediately respond to requests from Reuters for comment. The decision follows growing criticism of the television broadcast - which features models such as Gigi Hadid, Kendall Jenner, Alessandra Ambrosio and Lily Aldridge walking the runway in skimpy underwear - as sexist and out of touch.

Victoria's Secret, once the go-to retailer for all things lingerie, has been losing customers as more women shift to cheaper bralettes and sports bras from companies such as American Eagle Outfitter's (AEO.N) Aerie. Pop singer Rihanna's lingerie line, Savage X Fenty, has also taken market share away from the struggling retailer.

Edward Razeq, L Brands chief marketing officer, prompted a furor last year when he said there was no room for plus-size or transgender models "because the show is a fantasy." Television audiences for the show have slumped in the last few years. The December 2018 show, aired on Walt Disney Co's ABC network, was watched by 3.3 million Americans, compared with 12 million in 2001 when it was first broadcast on television. ABC Television declined comment on Friday.

Wexner said in the memo that the Columbus, Ohio-based company will focus on creating content and "a new kind of event" that reaches customers "on platforms that she's glued to." He did not give details. Investors have urged L Brands to separate its Victoria's Secret and Bath & Body Works businesses. Activist investor Barington Capital in March advised the company to retain advisers and explore either a spinoff of the underperforming Victoria's Secret brand or take the much financially stronger Bath & Body Works public. Shares of L Brands were trading flat at \$23.90 in after-hours trading on Friday. —Reuters

Razors in the roses: Venice art Biennale gets political

In the era of "fake news" and social media echo chambers, Venice's Biennale art fair is challenging preconceived biases by suggesting other ways of contextualizing modern society's biggest issues. "What elevates art into something special is the fact that it resists closed mentalities," the international exposition's artistic director, American Ralph Rugoff, said ahead of Saturday's opening.

The theme of the world's most prestigious art gathering is "May You Live in Interesting Times", an (apocryphal) ancient Chinese curse that Rugoff says uncannily captures the world today, as the news cycle spins from crisis to crisis.

"At a moment when the digital dissemination of fake news and 'alternative facts' is corroding political discourse and trust... it is worth pausing whenever possible to reassess our terms of reference," he said in his introduction to the 58th Biennale. For the 2019 edition, which runs until November 24, Rugoff, director of the Hayward Gallery in London, has invited 79 artists to Italy's City of Canals, including for the first time three non-binary artists.

Reversing the world

It's a contemporary exhibition: all the works have been made since 2010, and nearly half the artists are aged under 40. New national pavilions this year include those of Ghana, Madagascar and Pakistan. The artists, more of whom hail from Asia and the Americas than in previous editions, were commissioned to produce works for the Giardini-gardens created by Napoleon in the 19th century-and the Venetian Arsenal complex of former shipyards.

Poland's Roman Stanczak brings to Venice his "Flight", an airplane that the Warsaw-based artist has turned inside out, intended as a metaphorical call for a "reversal of the world". "Dear", by China's Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, is a mock-up of the Lincoln Memorial's marble throne being thrashed by a rubber hose inside a glass case-a violent and futile exercise evoking the modern-day



attraction to psychotic, phallic power.

The pair, renowned for their provocative creations, are also showing "Can't Help Myself", a caged robotic arm which futilely attempts to sweep up a blood-like fluid. Rugoff said that art "cannot stem the rise of nationalist movements and authoritarian governments in different parts of the world... nor can it alleviate the tragic fate of displaced peoples across the globe." "But in an indirect fashion, perhaps art can be a kind of guide for how to live and think in 'interesting times'".

Rust and roses

The fate of some of those forced to flee their homes and attempt the perilous Mediterranean crossing to Europe is powerfully recalled in Swiss-Icelandic artist Christoph Buechel's "Barca Nostra" ("Our Ship"). Buechel's centerpiece is a rusting fishing vessel that sank in April 2015, killing more than 800 migrants trapped in its hull. Laure Prouvost, representing France, offers "Deep See Blue Surrounding You", which features an eccentric roadtrip film, and serves as a commentary on forced migration, human connectivity and the pollution of the world's seas.

US artist Martin Puryear, widely regarded as one of the nation's most distinguished sculptors, presents "Liberty", a series of works which evoke a battle between darkness and light in a commentary about history and race. And feminist Austrian avant-garde artist Renate Bertlmann brings "Discordo Ergo Sum" ("I dissent, therefore I am"), a grid of 312 hand-blown glass roses, out of which protrude razor-sharp blades, in a reference to society's power structures.—AFP



Visitors view artwork during a press preview ahead of the opening of the 58th International Venice Biennale art exhibition in Venice. — AFP photos

Classifieds

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north easterly wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 32 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 11/05/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	38 °C	26 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	39 °C	27 °C			
ABDALY	39 °C	19 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	39 °C	25 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	36 °C	26 °C			
SALMIYAH	33 °C	26 °C			
AHMADI	36 °C	26 °C			
NUWAISIB	41 °C	27 °C			
WAFRA	39 °C	23 °C			
SALMY	37 °C	20 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	05/12	Hot and some high clouds will appear	40 °C	27 °C	N-NW	12 - 35 km/h
Monday	05/13	Hot and Partly cloudy with a chance for rising dust	41 °C	28 °C	NW	15 - 42 km/h
Tuesday	05/14	Hot and Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for rising dust	40 °C	28 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	05/15	Hot and Partly cloudy with a chance for rising dust over open areas	41 °C	28 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:29
Sunrise	04:58
Zuhr	11:44
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:30
Isha	19:55

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	40 °C
MIN. Temp.	26 °C
MAX. RH	54 %
MIN. RH	10 %
MAX. Wind	N 46 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

name changes as Given Name:
 Rasheeda Surname: Abdul
 Kareem (C 5527)
 9-5-2019

I, SHANTI MOL XAVIER daughter of Pullickal Xavier, holder of Indian Passport No. K4659425, issued at Kuwait on 26/04/2012, permanent resident of Pullickal House, Pullyanmala P.O, Idukki DT, 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 LATCHAIAH GARI PALANI KUMAR REDDY S/o LATCHAIAH GARI NARASA REDDY (New Name). (C 5526)

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

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Watanaya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787

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

Flight Schedule

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 12/5/2019					Departure Flights on Sunday 12/5/2019				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	KNE 231	Riyadh	14:10			
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	FDB 5059	Dubai	14:15			
KAC	102	London	00:50	GFA 221	Bahrain	14:15	AIC 988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	KAC 364	Colombo	14:35	JZR 713	Sohag	00:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	KAC 792	Madinah	14:40	MSR 615	Cairo	00:30
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KAC 304	Mumbai	14:45	FDB 072	Dubai	00:30
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	SVA 500	Jeddah	14:45	BBC 044	Dhaka	00:40
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC 618	Doha	14:50	IGO 1758	Kochi	01:10
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC 788	Jeddah	14:55	JZR 409	Delhi	01:10
PGT	840	Istanbul	01:50	KAC 516	Jeddah	15:00	KAC 677	Dubai	01:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	KAC 118	New York	15:00	THY 773	Istanbul	01:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC 692	Muscat	15:00	DLH 625	Frankfurt	01:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KNE 529	Jeddah	15:05	KAC 417	Manila	02:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	ETD 303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	KAC 363	Colombo	02:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	OMA 645	Muscat	15:20	JZR 111	Doha	02:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ABY 127	Sharjah	15:35	PGT 859	Istanbul	02:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC 546	Cairo	15:50	PGT 841	Istanbul	02:50
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	FEG 341	Sohag	16:00	THY 765	Istanbul	02:50
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	JZR 222	Riyadh	16:05	JZR 707	Luxor	02:50
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	FDB 051	Dubai	16:10	ETH 621	Addis Ababa	03:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR 732	Cairo	16:10	KLM 446	Amsterdam	03:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC 502	Beirut	16:15	UAE 54	Dubai	03:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	QTR 1072	Doha	16:15	ETD 06	Abu Dhabi	04:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:30	JZR 1122	Abu Dhabi	16:45	OMA 44	Muscat	04:05
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	SAW 705	Muscat	17:00	QTR 087	Doha	04:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	JZR 116	Doha	17:05	MSR 613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	382	Delhi	05:25	SVA 510	Riyadh	17:10	JZR 1735	Cairo	04:40
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	GFA 215	Bahrain	17:30	LMU 511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR 214	Jeddah	17:35	IGO 1752	Chennai	05:10
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	IRA 665	Shiraz	17:35	QTR 1077	Doha	05:15
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	JZR 724	Alexandria	18:05	KAC 303	Mumbai	05:15
RBG	1156	Asyut	06:00	QTR 1080	Doha	18:10	KAC 103	London	05:20
QTR	8511	Doha	06:05	MSR 620	Cairo	18:30	JZR 1219	Jeddah	05:25
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR 716	Sohag	18:40	THY 771	Istanbul	06:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	RJA 640	Amman	19:05	GFA 212	Bahrain	06:50
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	GFA 217	Bahrain	19:05	RBG 1157	Alexandria	06:50
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	ABY 123	Sharjah	19:20	BAW 156	London	08:00
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	KAC 156	Istanbul	19:25	JZR 211	Jeddah	08:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC 616	Bahrain	19:40	KAC 171	Frankfurt	08:00
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	RBG 555	Alexandria	19:40	KAC 165	Rome	08:00
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	KAC 776	Riyadh	19:45	QTR 8512	Doha	08:05
UAE	855	Dubai	07:35	KAC 381	Taif	20:00	IGO 1756	CNN	08:10
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KNE 381	Taif	20:00	KAC 545	Cairo	08:50
JZR	708	Luxor	08:45	KAC 104	London	20:00	KAC 501	Beirut	08:50
THY	6564	ISL	08:50	KAC 166	Rome	20:00	KAC 161	Geneva	09:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	FDB 057	Dubai	20:05	UAE 856	Dubai	09:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	OMA 647	Muscat	20:05	KAC 117	New York	09:05
FDB	5055	Dubai	09:20	DLH 624	Frankfurt	20:10	KAC 791	Madinah	09:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	MEA 402	Beirut	20:15	KAC 787	Jeddah	09:15
SAW	703	Dammam	09:30	KAC 542	Cairo	20:35	KAC 691	Muscat	09:20
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	QTR 1088	Doha	20:40	ABY 126	Sharjah	09:40
KAC	384	Delhi	09:45	KLM 445	Amsterdam	21:00	KAC 741	Dammam	09:40
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC 172	Frankfurt	21:00	KAC 773	iyadh	09:40
JZR	1220	Jeddah	10:55	ETD 307	Abu Dhabi	21:10	JZR 731	Cairo	09:45
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	UAE 859	Dubai	21:15	ETD 302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC 229	Colombo	21:15	KAC 101	London	10:05
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	JZR 1234	Taif	21:15	FDB 5056	Dubai	10:15
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	THY 764	Istanbul	21:30	THY 6564	Hanoi	10:20
JZR	410	Delhi	11:50	KAC 676	Dubai	21:45	SAW 704	Damascus	10:30
SAW	701	Dammam	12:30	KAC 622	Doha	21:50	KAC 515	Tehran	10:35
ETH	3620	Addis Ababa	12:30	GFA 219	Bahrain	21:50	QTR 1071	Doha	10:40
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	KAC 564	Amman	21:55	IGO 1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC 162	Geneva	22:00	KAC 155	Istanbul	10:40
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	QTR 1082	Doha	22:05	KAC 617	Doha	10:40
KAC	742	Dammam	12:55	ETD 309	Abu Dhabi	22:15	JZR 723	Alexandria	11:20
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	KAC 786	Jeddah	22:20	GFA 214	Bahrain	11:35
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	AIC 981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25	MEA 405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	212	Jeddah	13:45	JZR 254	Amman	23:10	SYR 342	Damascus	12:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	MSC 405	Sohag	23:15	JZR 213	Jeddah	12:05
				MSR 614	Cairo	23:30	QTR 1075	Doha	12:10
				FDB 071	Dubai	23:35	JZR 715	Sohag	12:30
							JZR 221	Riyadh	



JERUSALEM: Palestinian Muslim worshippers pray in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem yesterday on the first Friday prayers of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. — AFP

Pakistan turns to science as moonsighting mullahs fume

ISLAMABAD: Imran Khan's government has drawn the ire of conservative mullahs with calls for a science-based lunar calendar to calculate the start of the holy fasting month of Ramadan in Pakistan, which faces an annual controversy over the date. The beginning of the ninth and holiest month in the Muslim calendar - as well as the Eid holidays and the mourning month of Muharram - is determined by the sighting of the new moon.

In Pakistan a cleric-led "moonsighting committee" announces when the fasting should begin, but for decades it has faced disputes over the accuracy of its decision. "Every year on the occasion of Ramadan, Eid and Muharram a controversy starts regarding moonsighting," Pakistan's science and technology minister, Fawad

Chaudhry, explained in a video he tweeted on May 5 in which he recounted watching the committee use "old technology" - telescopes - to make their calculations.

"When modern means are available and we can determine a final date, the question is why we should not use this latest technology?" he argued. His ministry will form a new committee of scientists, meteorologists and Pakistan's space agency to calculate the correct dates for the next five years with "100 percent accuracy". However the prime minister's cabinet can reject the calendar, he added. In another tweet he warned decisions on how the country should be run "cannot be left to the maulana (clerics)".

"The journey ahead has to be undertaken by the

youth, not mullahs, and only technology can take the nation forward." Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman, head of the moonsighting committee, warned that Chaudhry should stay in his lane. "I have appealed to Prime Minister Imran Khan that only the concerned minister should talk about religious matters," he said in a press conference in Karachi. "Every minister who does not know the sensitivity of the religion, does not understand it, they should not get the free licence to comment on religious matters."

He also pointed out that the committee already has members from the space agency, and also works with the meteorological department. Over the years the committee's chief foe has been Maulana Shahabuddin Popalzai,

an influential cleric based in Peshawar — the capital of northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province - who announces the start of Ramadan and Eid a day earlier than the moonsighting committee.

The split is considered bad for national unity and social harmony - but years of efforts to reconcile Popalzai with the central committee have been in vain. Chaudhry's announcement has ignited an ongoing debate in Pakistan. Many social media users thanked the government for attempting to provide some clarity, but others saw the dark side. "This decision will further divide the nation," complained one Twitter user, Mazhar Arshad, while another, who called himself Ezio Odyssey, warned that a "gang of ignorant has come to power". — AFP

Egypt Christian women told to cover up

CAIRO: A Coptic priest's comments about women's clothing being too revealing in churches has sparked a heated debate this week among Egyptian Christians, the largest religious minority in the Middle East. Father Daoud Lamei, a well-known parish priest in an upmarket Cairo suburb with a sizeable social media following, lambasted Christian women for attire that he deemed immodest.

"Why are girls and women even coming to church if they're wearing revealing and inappropriate clothes?" he said in a widely-shared video. "She who does, will be judged," he added. "I personally think any man, who agrees to his wife leaving her home in that way, will be judged before God."

Lamei made the comments in an April 30 sermon marking Orthodox Easter, which is celebrated by Egypt's Coptic Christian community. "At least during Christmas we don't have to worry about racy clothes because it's cold... we want it to be cold always," joked the popular priest. Coptic Christians make up around 12 percent of the conservative country's population of 100 million, which is predominantly Sunni Muslim.

Lamei's remarks sparked a mixed response from women in Egypt, with some criticizing his stringent tone while others praised the priest for giving worshippers guidelines. "He is condemning these women... instead of explaining the appropriate dress code and attitude in church in general - for every-

one," said Sandra Awad, a 22-year-old student who has attended Lamei's church in the past. But another woman, writing on Facebook, said the priest "spoke with complete respect... so they can wake up and revere the church they're entering."

The debate comes in the wake of a controversial online campaign calling on Christian women to "cover up, so we people can pray". A parallel drive urging Egyptian women to cover up for Ramadan, the Muslim holy month, also appeared this week with users drawing similarities between the two in the sexist language employed. Lamei has denied on social media that he endorsed any online drives and did not respond to AFP's requests for comment. St Mark's Church in the Heliopolis district, where he delivered the sermon, on May 6 published a link on its Facebook page to the full Easter speech.

The Coptic Church has become increasingly political under the leadership of Pope Tawadros II, an enthusiastic supporter of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. It has also taken on a more active role as the sole representative for Copts in public life as a discriminated minority. "The clergy are role models for the community who see them as the guardians of their community, its traditions and its faith," said Elizabeth Monier, an expert on Coptic affairs at the University of Cambridge.

"This is strongly the case when a community feels that it is under threat," she said. The Coptic community has suffered a number of deadly attacks on its churches in recent years, while Egyptian authorities routinely turn a blind eye to sectarian violence involving forced evictions or the shutting down of churches. "Perceived attacks on Coptic traditions or teachings are likely to lead Copts to rally around their clergy and uphold traditions more strongly," said Monier. — AFP

Separately, Yadollah Javani, the elite Revolutionary Guards' deputy head for political affairs, said: "No talks will be held with the Americans, and the Americans will not dare take military action against us." "Our nation ... sees America as unreliable," he said, according to the semi-official Tasnim news agency, echoing a stance Iran has taken since the US withdrawal from the 2015 deal under which Iran curbed its nuclear program in return for relief from economic sanctions.

Thousands of Iranians took part in state-sponsored marches on Friday to support the government's decision to reduce limits on its nuclear program. Iran has threatened to go further if other parties to the deal - Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia - fail to shield it from US sanctions. State TV showed protesters marching after Friday prayers in Tehran and said similar marches had been held across Iran. "America should know, sanctions have no effect!" chanted the protesters. — Reuters

IS claims 'province'...

Continued from Page 1

Sofi had been involved in several militant groups in Kashmir for more than a decade before pledging allegiance to Islamic State, according to a military official yesterday and an interview given by Sofi to a Srinagar-based magazine sympathetic to IS.

He was suspected of several grenade attacks on security forces in the region, police and military sources said. "It was a clean operation and no collateral damage took place during

the exchange of fire," a police spokesman said in the statement on Friday's encounter.

The military official said it was possible that Sofi had been the only militant left in Kashmir associated with IS. Separatists have for decades fought an armed conflict against Indian rule in Muslim-majority Kashmir. The majority of these groups want independence for Kashmir or to join India's arch-rival Pakistan. They have not, like Islamic State, sought to establish an empire across the Muslim world.

Nuclear powers India and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir, and came to the brink of a third earlier this year after a suicide attack by a Pakistan-based militant group killed at least 40 paramilitary police in the Indian-controlled portion of the region. A spokesman for India's home ministry, which is responsible for security in Kashmir, did not respond to a request for comment. — Reuters

Ramadan: Month of the Holy Quran...

Continued from Page 1

Being an oral revelation first and foremost, devout Muslims learn how to recite the Holy Scripture as it was revealed. Verbatim memorization is common and care is taken to reproduce the exact pronunciation and vocal duration of each letter. Arabic is a rich language, and words of the Quran have great depth and breadth; therefore, they also study the meaning of the words, verses and chapters, and there are encyclopedic works of this nature.

In addition, Muslims study the occasions of revelation, the relation of the holy text to prophetic traditions, and the application of principles by renowned scholars and rulers. The study of the Quran develops moral reasoning and spirituality first and foremost, as well as thought processes of logic, sequencing, deduction, intuition, assimilation and abstraction. Reciting and memorizing it develops memory, enunciation and self-expression.

The printed Quran is revered as a Holy Book and is treated with respect. It is not considered casual reading or handled like an ordinary book. There is only one version of the Quran, and careful measures are taken that prints and reprints of the Quran in Arabic are authenticated by authoritative bodies for accuracy. Since the Quran is an Arabic-language literary masterpiece both technically and aesthetically, it is impossible to portray its rhythm, rhyme, depth of denotation and subtlety of connotation in another language.

There are many translations of the Quran, but we cannot call a translation "the Quran" but only an approximation of the meaning of the Quran. The best English translations have the accompanying original text in Arabic so that it can be consulted. Since Ramadan is the month of the Quran, everyone should have their copy handy and complete reading it in this holy month.

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.

US warns commercial ships...

Continued from Page 1

material stockpiles but continues to comply with commitments to restrict its uranium enrichment activity. Rhetoric has grown heated on both sides. The semi-official ISNA news agency quoted hardliner Ayatollah Tabatabaie-Nejad in the city of Isfahan as saying: "Their billion(-dollar) fleet can be destroyed with one missile. "If they attempt any move, they will ... (face) dozens of missiles because at that time (government) officials won't be in charge to act cautiously, but instead things will be in the hands of our beloved leader (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei)," he said.

60 migrants drown off....

Continued from Page 1

Charity ships have plied the Mediterranean Sea to rescue migrants in large numbers but the number of rescue operations have dwindled as these vessels have come under fire, namely from the populist Italian government, over their action. Italy's far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini has imposed a "closed ports" policy, refusing to allow migrants rescued at sea to enter his country. On Friday, however, more than 60 migrants disembarked in Italy after two boats which had left Libya faced difficulties at sea and needed assistance.

The UN agency for refugees UNHCR called for stepped up search and rescue operations to avoid future tragedies in the Mediterranean, which it calls the "world's deadliest sea crossing". "Across the region we need to strengthen the capacity of search and rescue operations," said Vincent Cochetel, the agency's special envoy for the Mediterranean. "If we don't act now, we're almost certain to see more tragic events in the coming weeks and months," he warned.

According to the UNHCR, the journey across the Mediterranean "is becoming increasingly fatal for those who risk it". "In the first four months of this year, one person has died (crossing the Mediterranean) for every three that have reached European shores, after departing from Libya," it said. Libya, which has been wracked by chaos since the 2011 uprising that killed veteran dictator Muammar Gaddafi, has long been a major transit route for migrants desperate to reach Europe. — AFP

Sports

Verlander, three Astros homers enough to drop Texas Rangers

Acuna lifts Braves past D-backs to stop skid

HOUSTON: Justin Verlander allowed one hit over seven strong innings, and the Houston Astros belted three solo homers while overcoming an injury to star Jose Altuve to beat the visiting Texas Rangers 3-0 on Friday night for their third consecutive victory. Verlander, who improved to 6-1 with a 2.51 ERA, struck out eight and yielded only Asdrubal Cabrera's single to lead off the fifth inning as the Astros won for the sixth time in seven games. It's the third time in Verlander's career that he has allowed just one hit in a start against the Rangers. However, Houston's latest victory might have come with a price as Altuve exited with left hamstring discomfort in the bottom of the first after beating out an infield hit. The team listed him as day-to-day. For the rest of the night, the Astros were just fine without Altuve. Jake Marisnick clubbed his third homer of the season, a deep shot to right-center in the third inning. In the seventh, with two outs and Texas starter Lance Lynn in a nice groove, Yuli Gurriel and Robinson Chirinos delivered back-to-back home runs to pad the Astros' advantage.

RED SOX 14, MARINERS 1

Mitch Moreland hit a three-run home run and had four RBIs, and Eduardo Rodriguez (4-2) pitched seven scoreless innings as Boston moved above .500 for the first time this season with a win over visiting Seattle.

Rafael Devers went 3-for-5 with a homer and four RBIs, and Andrew Benintendi also went deep as the Red Sox won for the ninth time in their past 11 games. Boston had been below .500 since March 30 before evening its record Wednesday. The Mariners, fell below .500 for the first time this season. Seattle has dropped 10 of its past 12.

ATHLETICS 4, INDIANS 3 (12 INNINGS)

Matt Chapman homered to lead off the 12th inning as host Oakland beat Cleveland to win for the third time in four games on the heels of losing eight of the previous nine. Brad Hand (2-2) entered the game to begin the 12th inning and saw Chapman deposit a 3-2 slider over the wall in left field for his 10th homer of the season. The blast was the first walk-off homer of Chapman's career. Ramon Laureano belted a solo homer, and Josh Phegley had an RBI single among his three hits for the Athletics. Jake Bauers ripped an RBI double and scored on a double play, and Francisco Lindor had a sacrifice fly for the Indians, who have lost four of their past six.

BREWERS 7, CUBS 0

Ryan Braun belted a solo homer and Gio Gonzalez (1-0) scattered two hits over 5 2/3 innings and visiting Milwaukee downed Chicago. Yasmani Grandal collected two hits and joined Jesus Aguilar with two RBIs for the Cubs. The Brewers, who have won seven in a row, got to Jose Quintana (4-2), who allowed three runs on four hits in 6 2/3 innings. Both starting pitchers surrendered just one hit through three scoreless innings before Braun deposited a 1-0 fastball from Quintana over the wall in center field with two outs in the fourth.

Women's football tourney begins today

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The women's football team held a technical meeting and tournament draw on Thursday at Kuwait Football Association, where it discussed the rules of the game and referees' duties. Driven by its mission to provide female footballers with equal opportunities in professionally organized sports, "Eighty Percent" hosts the fourth consecutive Women's Football Tournament at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium from May 12 to 23.

In accordance with these efforts, Eighty Percent announced a strategic collaboration with the Kuwait Football

Association (KFA) and supported by LaLiga as an international sponsor. The local sponsors are Ooredoo, Wolf Nutrition, Bayan Dental, Mubkhar and Careem. There are 16 teams participating in the tournament.

Registration for WET 4.0 is open to any GCC or regional team in order to increase the diversity and competitiveness of the tournament as well as creating a sense of cultural exchange.

The women's football tournament has created a ripple of positive change in the women's football community in Kuwait. The tournament has revived a very imperative aspect of women in sports, as well as inspired real actions from both the private and public sectors that are actively contributing to the rise of women's football, not only in Kuwait but the GCC, with unmatched efforts to build the right foundation for girls and women to play professional football in the country.

The women's football tournament is the brainchild of Eighty Percent Sports

KIB sponsors 2019 Al-Roudan's Ramadan Indoor Football Tournament

KUWAIT: As part of its comprehensive Ramadan program, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored the 2019 Late Abdullah Mishari Al-Roudan's Ramadan Indoor Football Tournament. Additionally, the Bank will also be participating in this highly anticipated tournament with a team of professional football players, working together to compete for the winning title.

KIB's sponsorship of this tournament comes as part of the event's immense popularity across the country, making the tournament one of the most highly anticipated sports events taking place throughout the year. Starting off strong in the tournament, the Bank's team won its match against Al-Hadaf football team, with a score of 1-0.

On his part, Senior Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najja, said: "Year after year, we have made sure to include this thrilling tournament amongst our series of activities and initiatives taking place throughout Ramadan. Just as we are active players in our community, we take an active role

YANKEES 4, RAYS 3

Gio Urshela hit a go-ahead, two-run, bases-loaded single in the sixth inning, and New York beat Tampa Bay in St. Petersburg, Fla., in the first meeting of the season between the teams. The Yankees won for the 17th time in 23 games. The Rays dropped to 1-7 in one-run games this year.

New York's Domingo German (7-1) became the first seven-game winner in the majors after his five-inning outing. He allowed three runs on five hits, struck out five, walked two and threw 84 pitches.

TWINS 6, TIGERS 0

Jake Odorizzi allowed just one hit over seven innings, and Mitch Garver and Max Kepler homered to lead Minnesota to its fourth straight victory, a decision over visiting Detroit in Minneapolis. Odorizzi (5-2), the reigning American League Player of the Week after allowing six hits and pitching 13 scoreless innings in wins over the Houston Astros and New York Yankees, won his fifth consecutive start. Jorge Polanco doubled and drove in three runs, and Garver walked three times and scored twice for the Twins, who have outscored their opponents 26-1 while winning each of their past four games.

METS 11, MARLINS 2

Amed Rosario's first career grand slam highlighted an eight-run first inning for host New York. That was more than enough for Zack Wheeler (3-2), who cruised to victory by allowing two runs over seven innings against Miami. The Mets, who scored just 15 runs in a 1-5 road trip that ended Wednesday, busted out hours after COO Jeff Wilpon reportedly met with first-year general manager Brodie Van Wagenen and second-year manager Mickey Callaway. The 11 runs tied a season high set March 30.

The first eight Mets batters reached against Marlins starter Pablo Lopez (2-5), who gave up five singles, including an infield RBI hit by Wilson Ramos, and two walks, including one with the bases loaded to Brandon Nimmo, before surrendering Rosario's grand slam.

BLUE JAYS 4, WHITE SOX 3

Randal Grichuk hit a three-run home run, Teoscar Hernandez added a solo blast and Toronto beat visiting Chicago. Joe Biagini (2-1) pitched 1 1/3 perfect innings in relief to pick up the win for the Blue Jays, who ended a five-game losing streak. Ken Giles pitched a perfect ninth to earn his ninth save of the season. Justin Smoak walked four times for the Blue Jays. Tim Anderson hit a solo home run for the White Sox, who lost their third straight. Chicago starter Dylan Covey (0-2) allowed three hits, five walks and four runs in 4 2/3 innings.

PIRATES 2, CARDINALS 1

Trevor Williams allowed only one run over seven innings as visiting Pittsburgh hung on to beat St. Louis. Starling Marte's single to right field in the eighth made a winner of Williams (2-1), who allowed nine hits but walked only one while striking out five. The tiebreaking rally off



HOUSTON: Carlos Correa #1 of the Houston Astros forces Asdrubal Cabrera #14 of the Texas Rangers out at second and completes a double play in the fifth inning at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas. —AFP

reliever Andrew Miller (1-2) came after the Cardinals tied the score in the seventh on an infield single by Paul DeJong. The hit took St. Louis starter Adam Wainwright off the hook for what could have been a tough-luck loss. The Cardinals had a chance to again tie the score in the eighth. They put runners at first and third with no outs against Pirates reliever Kyle Crick, who recovered to strike out Dexter Fowler, then got Kolten Wong to bounce into a double play.

ROYALS 5, PHILLIES 1

Alex Gordon homered twice and recorded three RBIs to lift host Kansas City past Philadelphia. Jorge Soler also hit a home run for the Royals. Kansas City starter Homer Bailey (4-3) tossed five-plus innings and allowed four hits and one run. He struck out four and walked three.

Bryce Harper reached base safely all four times for the Phillies with a single and three walks. Phillies starter Jake Arrieta (4-3) lasted five-plus innings and gave up seven hits and four runs while striking out five and walking three.

ANGELS 8, ORIOLES 3

Mike Trout homered and drove in three runs as visiting Los Angeles beat Baltimore. Andrelton Simmons and Kole Calhoun each drove in two runs for the Angels. Trevor Cahill (2-3) earned the win with six solid innings. He did not return after rain stopped play for 1 hour, 49 minutes

following the sixth inning. Dan Straily (1-3) started for Baltimore and struggled once more. He gave up six runs on five hits in just 4 1/3 innings.

ROCKIES 12, PADRES 2

German Marquez (4-2) hit a three-run double to help back his solid outing on the mound. Ian Desmond had two of his three singles in a seven-run fourth inning, and Colorado ripped San Diego in Denver. Trevor Story homered among his three hits, and Charlie Blackmon had two hits and scored three runs for the Rockies. Manny Machado had three hits in his first trip to Coors Field since signing with San Diego. Franmil Reyes also had three hits for the Padres.

BRAVES 2, DIAMONDBACKS 1

Ronald Acuna Jr. crushed a two-out home run in the eighth inning as Atlanta snapped a four-game losing streak with a victory over Arizona in Phoenix. Acuna, hitting in the leadoff spot for the first time this season, drove a 2-0 pitch from reliever Yoan Lopez (0-1) off the batter's eye in center field to break a 1-1 tie. Dan Winkler (1-0) pitched a scoreless seventh inning for the win after starter Julio Teheran gave up one run in six innings. The Diamondbacks managed only four hits off four Atlanta pitchers, including Luke Jackson, who recorded his third save. —Reuters



Company, which is socially driven and aims to create unique sporting experiences that elevate the human condition and empower a new generation of athletes. By creating a professional brand

under which the best female talents in football compete and shine, Eighty Percent and partners are directly empowering women in and outside of the football pitch.



in the tournament. This year, we are participating full-fledged with a team of our own. We continue to support the local sports community through sponsoring events that aim at promoting sports across diverse segments of the local community."

Throughout the years, the KIB football team has managed to achieve great successes and reach the finals. The Bank's team embodies important values such as teamwork, sportsmanship, and fair competition; thereby promoting a sense of team spirit and healthy competition between teams. KIB believes this tourna-

ment is a great opportunity for employees to improve their physical fitness, build a healthy lifestyle, boost their productivity, and network with others.

KIB's sponsorship of this event reflects its strong belief in the importance of sports and its positive impact on the wider community, encouraging people to take part in sports of all kinds. It is worth noting that, as part of its leading social responsibility program, the Bank strives to participate in events and activities that support all segments of the local community.

Scintillating Hamilton back on top in Barcelona

BARCELONA: Lewis Hamilton topped the times for Mercedes ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in yesterday morning's third and final free practice ahead of this weekend's Spanish Grand Prix.

The defending five-time world champion clocked an exceptional best lap in one minute and 16.568 seconds to outpace the young Monegasque by half a second in a session interrupted by two red flagged stoppages.

The first of these came when Hamilton's Mercedes team-mate and world championship leader Valtteri Bottas spun into a gravel trap at the Circuit de Catalunya after 20 minutes and the second in the 56th minute when George Russell hit the barriers in his Williams at Turn Four.

The drivers were unhurt, Bottas returning to the pits and later resuming to take third place ahead of four-time champion Sebastian Vettel in the second Ferrari. The Finn had been quickest in both Friday sessions.

In testing conditions, the American Haas team took fifth and sixth places with impressive efforts from Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen, enabling them to beat the Red Bull of Max Verstappen, who was seventh.

Alex Albon was eighth for the Toro Rosso team ahead of Kimi Raikkonen of Alfa Romeo and McLaren's local hero Carlos Sainz. British rookie Russell is set to take a five-place grid penalty after Williams were forced to change the gearbox after his final practice crash yesterday.

Russell was pushing hard into Turn Four where he spun off and after brushing the wall ended up in the gravel trap. "Sorry guys, pushing hard to find the limit and I just overstepped it," he said in a Tweet. "The team are working hard to get the car out for quali..."

The penalty is unlikely to have much effect as the struggling Williams team are expected to place at the back of the grid, as qualifying for the GP gets underway. —AFP

Sports

Thiem ends Federer's clay court return to reach Madrid Open semis

Djokovic, Nadal edge closer to final

MADRID: Dominic Thiem saved two match points and ended the first chapter of Roger Federer's return to clay court tennis with a come-from-behind 3-6, 7-6 (13/11), 6-4 win and reach the Madrid Open semi-finals on Friday.

The 37-year-old Swiss had returned this week to the surface for the first time in three years—his last clay court match was a loss to Thiem in Rome in 2016. While Federer was heading out, there were no such problems for top seed Novak Djokovic who made the last-four when Marin Cilic withdrew and Rafael Nadal, the second seed, who brushed aside Stan Wawrinka 6-1, 6-2.

Thiem, the 2018 Roland Garros runner-up and winner of the Barcelona title last month, prevailed in two hours 10 minutes against Federer having saved two match points in a 15-minute second set tie-break.

He will face world number one Djokovic, who advanced on a walkover when Cilic pulled out with a stomach virus. Five-time champion Nadal needed just over an hour to reach his 11th Madrid semi-final and will face Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas, a winner over defending champion Alexander Zverev by 7-5, 3-6, 6-2.

"It was a good match for me, Stan is not an easy opponent regardless of the scoreline," said Nadal after his 14th quarter-final in the last 15 years in the Spanish capital. "I had to play good tennis and reach my best level." Federer said he was happy to have made his clay court comeback. "I feel very good about my game. I thought I had some good matches here," the 20-time Grand Slam champion said. "I feel good on the clay right now."

Federer now has the option to take up a wild card

being held for him next week in Rome. Otherwise, his next clay event will be the French Open where he last played in 2015. "The match was so close," said Austrian fifth seed Thiem who had also defeated Federer in the Indian Wells final in March. "I was really lucky to save the match points."

"Roger was playing unbelievable on the clay. I'm very, very happy to win. He is so special, maybe the best ever in tennis, he has something different. "Every time you play him, every point is a big challenge."

In the final set, Thiem earned a break for 2-1 as Federer netted a backhand but the Swiss rallied to break back, 4-4. The momentum fizzled out though and a game later Thiem broke again for 5-4 with a lob winner.

'NICE FEELING'

The Austrian served out his fourth victory in six matches against Federer a game later. Meanwhile, Simona Halep closed in on a return to the top of the world rankings after beating Belinda Bencic 6-2, 6-7 (2/7), 6-0 to advance to the women's final.

Halep, currently number three in the world, will reclaim the number one ranking should she win her third title at the Caja Magica. Bencic had defeated Halep in their last two matches, but the reigning French Open champion, who lifted the trophy in Madrid in 2016 and 2017, came through in just under two hours.

Halep will play Dutch seventh seed Kiki Bertens, a finalist in Madrid last year, who defeated 2017 US Open champion Sloane Stephens 6-2, 7-5. "It's such a nice feeling to be back in the final here. I really enjoy playing in Madrid, it motivates me," Halep said. — AFP



MADRID: Austria's Dominic Thiem serves to Switzerland's Roger Federer during their ATP Madrid Open quarter-final tennis match at the Caja Magica in Madrid. — AFP

Dhoni's 'Dad's Army' fight on for one more final

HYDERABAD: M.S. Dhoni's Chennai Super Kings shrugged off their 'Dad's Army' label to reach Sunday's IPL final against the Mumbai Indians with both teams looking to clinch a record fourth title.

Chennai hammered Delhi Capitals, the kid stars of the Indian Premier League, by six wickets on Friday to reach a record eighth final in the Twenty20 tournament. The 37-year-old Dhoni is one of 11 members of the 25-man Chennai squad aged over 30.

Australian Shane Watson is 37 and fellow opener Faf du Plessis, a relative team youngster at 34. Both plundered fifties off the Delhi bowling as Chennai powered past the 147 target with an over to spare and just four wickets lost.

Dhoni, winner of three IPL titles and still a key member of India's World Cup squad, is not bothered by questions about his age.

"I don't mind that because all this increases the anticipation," Dhoni said at the start of the game against Delhi, who were referred to as the 'Kid's Army'. Their captain Shreyas Iyer is 23 and wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant, the likely successor to Dhoni in the national side, just 21.

OLD RIVALS

Dhoni has reliable old warhorses on every front to take on the Mumbai Indians, who beat Chennai last Tuesday to secure their place in the final.

The 35-year-old West Indies paceman Dwayne Bravo, returned figures of 2-19 to restrict Delhi to 147 for nine.

Leg-spinner Imran Tahir, the eldest member of the squad at 39, has 24 scalps and is just one away from overtaking fellow South



VISAKHAPATNAM: Chennai Super Kings cricket captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni plays a shot during the 2019 Indian Premier League (IPL) second qualifier Twenty20 cricket match between Delhi Capitals and Chennai Super Kings at the Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium in Visakhapatnam. — AFP

African Kagiso Rabada of Delhi as the IPL's top wicket-taker.

"We know what to do in different situations, we've made the most of our experience," Watson said after his team's 100th IPL win. "Mumbai Indians have a great team, not too many holes in their team," he acknowledged.

Mumbai, led by India's star batsman Rohit Sharma, will be counting on their rivals' fatigue to help them win.

Dhoni's side will get only 48 hours to get to Hyderabad for the final and recover to take on a side with what appears to be the right mix of youth and experience.

With standout 20-year-old Ishan Kishan in the middle-order and the Pandya brothers—Hardik and Krunal—as well as big-hitting Kieron Pollard, Mumbai finished top of the table after a slow start to the season.

"They are a superstar team. If anyone does anything of repute anywhere in the world of

cricket, they buy him," cricketer-turned-analyst Pommie Mbangwa said on the online Cricbuzz chat show.

"Yet somehow after a certain period of time they have managed to settle on some sort of formula that gets them winning games," said the former Zimbabwe paceman.

Mumbai, owned by Nita Ambani—who is married to India's richest man, Mukesh Ambani—has the bragging rights against Chennai this season after beating them three times, in the league and playoffs.

They have also met in three IPL finals, with Mumbai winning two.

Mumbai won their finals in 2013, 2015 — both against Chennai—and again in 2017 when they beat Rising Pune Supergiant.

Chennai won theirs in 2010 against Mumbai, in 2011 and again in 2018 after coming back from a two-year ban over an illegal gambling scandal involving one of the owners of the franchise. — AFP

Cup, was on the 2001 visit to Gallipoli and told cricket.com.au it was a motivating experience.

"The thing that was really rammed home to us on that trip was what the ANZAC spirit is all about," he said, referring to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. "It really does typify even the modern Australian person."

"I've been lucky enough to travel around the world and play cricket against a lot of opposition teams in a lot of different countries and you just don't see that same sort of spirit in a lot of people from other countries."

"The will to want to do whatever you can for your mate, to help your mate in a time of crisis." Australia head to the World Cup in top form. They won eight straight one-dayers against India and Pakistan before winning their "unofficial" three-game series against New Zealand in Brisbane this week 2-1.

While their starting XI is firming up, the batting order remains in flux. Aaron Finch, Usman Khawaja and Warner all opened against New Zealand. It is Warner's favoured position, but he made just 0 and 2 in his two knocks there since returning from suspension.

Smith fared much better, hitting 89 not out at number four, then 91 not out at three. The pace attack will almost certainly feature Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Coulter-Nile and Jason Behrendorff, but questions remain as to whether Nathan Lyon or Adam Zampa will claim the spinner's spot. — AFP

England leave out Archer as Pakistan bowl in 2nd ODI

SOUTHAMPTON: England left out rising star Jofra Archer as they made changes for the second one-day international against Pakistan at Southampton yesterday.

Team officials had always planned that this five-match series would act as a final audition for places in tournament hosts England's 15-man squad for the World Cup, which starts later this month.

To that end, they made three changes to their side following Wednesday's rain-affected no-result which saw just 19 overs bowled at The Oval. Left-arm quick David Willey came in for Archer, fit-again opener Jason Roy returned in place of James Vince—left out on his Hampshire home ground—and Moeen Ali was recalled in place of fellow spinner Joe Denly for this day game.

Meanwhile left-arm quick Mohammad Amir, left out of his country's provisional World Cup squad but

named in the side that played at The Oval, was reportedly suffering from a viral infection with his place taken by spinner Yasir Shah.

Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed won the toss and elected to bowl first. "It looks like a good batting pitch and we want to try and bowl first and take early wickets," said Sarfraz. "We know it's going to be a high scoring game so we have to be positive. We're hoping we can restrict them to 270-280 and chase the target."

Meanwhile England captain Eoin Morgan said: "It looks a very good, fresh pitch. We like playing here—we have some good memories, and always get some fantastic support."

Teams

England: Jason Roy, Jonny Bairstow, Joe Root, Eoin Morgan (capt), Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler (wkt), Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes, David Willey, Adil Rashid, Liam Plunkett

Pakistan: Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Babar Azam, Haris Sohail, Sarfraz Ahmed (capt/wkt), Asif Ali, Imad Wasim, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, Yasir Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi

Umpires: Chris Gaffaney (NZL), Tim Robinson (ENG)

TV umpire: Paul Reffel (AUS)
Match referee: Richie Richardson (WIS). — AFP

Tiger win electrifies PGA move, but will it boost golf?

BETHPAGE: Shifting the PGA Championship to May in time to be the first major after Tiger Woods snapped an 11-year major win drought was brilliant timing. An electric atmosphere is expected to greet the 15-time major winner next week at the 101st PGA Championship at Bethpage Black with huge numbers of casual television golf fans likely to lift ratings to record levels.

But the PGA of America also hopes Woods winning the Masters last month at age 43 and chasing a 16th major title can boost lagging participation numbers the way his first major win did at the 1997 Masters.

"Obviously Tiger has impact, sort of the moon landing—it's not golf, it's 'Where were you when?' kind of stuff," said PGA of America chief executive Seth Waugh. "We absolutely know the fan base will be cranked up."

"We hope it will have the same effect that he had his first go-around on participation as well. Hopefully we can ride not only the wave and excitement about watching him play, but others wanting to play. Hopefully that knock-on effect has a long-term effect."

The decision to shift the PGA came two years ago as part of a revamp of the global golf calendar, when Woods was still recovering from the spinal fusion surgery that would end his nagging back injuries and allow him to return to elite golf success.

His dramatic breakthrough victory at the Masters brought his first major title since the 2008 US Open and made it a good year to stage a major in May.

"We were very excited about the May change before Tiger made his fireworks in Georgia," Waugh said. "We thought it was smart. It looks brilliant now. "I don't know if we could count on him forever, but that momentum from the Masters into the PGA is extraordinary." Tickets sold out for the weekend. Volunteer helpers grew.

"So we really expect to have an amazing championship at an amazing place. Couldn't be a better kind of story. I think Bethpage is one of those kind of amazing miracles." Waugh said some of the mistakes that followed golf growth in the wake of "Tigermania" in 1997 will not be repeated the second time around.

"We'll be sort of more cautious," Waugh said. "We hope and we expect that we'll get a participation bump here, which we've been waiting for for a while, and hopefully we can ride it into something beyond him and do it in a prudent but a growth way. "We hope this will turbocharge it a little bit."

MORE DAYLIGHT IN MAY

The PGA will have slightly more daylight time than in August and less heat, but the grass is still growing in May and that could make rough management to 3.5 to 4 inches tricky, said PGA of America chief championships officer Kerry Haigh.

"I think the golf course will be in just outstanding condition," he said. "The cool season grasses should be a lot healthier. They will be sort of improving, as opposed to in the August date we were sort of more on a hanging-on, keeping-the-grass-alive mode. "But also more likely possibly have more chance of wind and probably tougher playing conditions." — AFP

Aussies head to Gallipoli for World Cup inspiration

SYDNEY: Australia's cricketers headed yesterday to the battlefields of Gallipoli for inspiration to kick off a gruelling four-month tour taking in the defence of their World Cup crown and an Ashes series.

The team, led by Justin Langer, flew out of Australia late Friday for a multi-day stop in Turkey before arriving in England for three warm-up games ahead of their opening World Cup clash on June 1.

"Where we are right now, on the way to England for a long campaign representing our country, hopefully it will be a real catalyst for gelling together and success," Langer said about visiting the World War I site.

Australia and New Zealand lost more than 10,000 men in 1915 when British and French troops landed on the Gallipoli peninsula in the Dardanelles Strait in Germany-allied Ottoman Turkey. It became a defining event for both nations, marking the first time these newly independent countries fought under their own flags.

The Steve Waugh-led 2001 Ashes-winning side made a similar pilgrimage, but Langer missed the trip, something he has called "one of the regrets of my career". Last year, he took the squad to the WWI battlefields of northern France ahead of his first series in charge following the ball-tampering scandal that rattled Australian cricket.

He said the players learned about "humility and perspective, and understanding how lucky we are". "It's very sobering, and it was an incredible life experience for the boys, and also it gelled the team together with different experiences and interpretations of our history," he said.

"We talk a lot about our history and the humility of times before." Since his appointment, Langer has worked hard in restoring faith in Australian cricket after the "Sandpaper-gate" affair in South Africa that led to bans for then captain Steve Smith, his deputy David Warner and opener Cameron Bancroft.

Cricket Australia on Thursday hailed the team's once-notorious behaviour as significantly improved as Langer's new less-abrasive attitude beds in.

AUSSIE SPIRIT

Smith and Warner's one-year suspensions are now over and they were welcomed back to the Australian fold for three warm-up games against New Zealand over the past week. Former skipper Ricky Ponting, who will be Langer's assistant at the World

Sports

Jurgen Klopp backs Liverpool for Premier League miracle

Salah, Robertson and Henderson will all play through the pain barrier against Wolves

LIVERPOOL: Jurgen Klopp says Liverpool's astonishing European fight-back proves his side will not give up hope of winning the Premier League until Manchester City have the trophy in their hands today. Klopp's team staged arguably the greatest comeback in Champions League history on Tuesday when they thrashed Barcelona 4-0 to overturn a 3-0 semi-final first-leg deficit.

With an all-English Champions League final against Tottenham set for June 1, Liverpool can pour all their energy into one last push to win their first English title since 1990. The Reds are one point behind leaders Manchester City heading into their final game of the season against Wolves at Anfield.

City will retain the title if they win at Brighton but a draw or loss for Pep Guardiola's men would open the door for Liverpool to be crowned champions if they defeat Wolves.

Given Brighton's lowly position, the odds are firmly on a City coronation, but Liverpool boss Klopp says this week's astonishing Champions League drama showed anything can happen when the pressure mounts.

Not only did Liverpool author a fight-back for the ages, but Tottenham scored three times in their semi-final against

Ajax to go through on away goals after trailing 3-0 on aggregate with just 35 minutes left.

"It's been a week of big football moments. But from our point of view it could be a big football moment on the weekend-the week is not over yet," Klopp said. "I think at the start of the week most people expected me to be sitting here and saying 'OK, after not being in the Champions League final, it's difficult to be champions'. Well now we are in the final and it is still difficult.

"We are not used to moments of glory but we win from time to time. Focus is not a problem. The only thing we can do is win this game." In virtually any other season, Liverpool, who have 94 points and have lost only once in the league, would have been champions by now.

Having secured successive Champions League final appearances, the sting of failure will not be quite so sharp if Liverpool do not get a helping hand from Brighton this weekend.

But do not tell that to Klopp and his players. Reflecting the togetherness and desire fuelling their remarkable season, Klopp revealed Mohamed Salah, Andy Robertson and Jordan Henderson will all play through the pain barrier against Wolves.

'IT'S ONLY PAIN'

Salah missed the Barcelona game with a concussion, while Henderson (knee) and Robertson (calf) both suffered injuries in that match. "The famous three words of this week in the dressing room is 'It's only pain'. Very important for all the young lads to learn," Klopp said.

Liverpool fans will be glued to their phones for updates from Brighton as the drama unfolds on Sunday, but Klopp just wants his team to focus on Wolves.

"Maybe our supporters shouldn't celebrate the result before it's 3-0 for Brighton and 87 or 88 minutes played, all the rest is only information, nothing else," Klopp said.

The manager is still waiting for the first trophy of his four-year Liverpool reign, but that pales into comparison with his club's nearly three-decade title drought.

When Liverpool last won the league, it was their 10th title in 15 years—a period of dominance that came to an unexpected end when Kenny Dalglish resigned as manager in February 1991.

In the barren years since then, Liverpool have finished second four times, most famously falling just short when Steven Gerrard's slip in a defeat against Chelsea allowed City to sneak past them in 2014.

While Liverpool have a special relationship with the European Cup, which they



Jurgen Klopp

have won five times, this is a club raised on legendary boss Bill Shankly's demand that "the league is our bread and butter, that's the one I want".

Winning their 19th title would spark delirious celebrations across Merseyside

and, after what he has witnessed this week, Klopp senses one last miracle could be on the cards. "Both teams have to win their games. That's not sure (to happen) in the moment, so we have to focus on that," he said. — AFP

Pochettino says 'stupid' to stay at Tottenham with no plan

LONDON: Mauricio Pochettino said he would be "stupid" to stay as Tottenham manager if the club fails to deliver a blueprint for a future which can keep the London club rubbing shoulders with the giants of the game.

Pochettino this week guided Tottenham into the Champions League final and could finish the Premier League season today as high as third in the table behind Manchester City and Liverpool but ahead of Chelsea, Arsenal and Manchester United.

His success has come despite any significant forays into the transfer market in recent seasons. "I am not open to start a new chapter with no plan, with no clear idea, with not being transparent, telling you and telling our fans what next, what is our objective," said Pochettino who has four years left on his current contract.

"I know very well how this business works. And we know very well that we need to operate in a different



Mauricio Pochettino

way—that doesn't mean to spend more or less money. "If we believe that if we operate in the same way that we have operated in the last five years we are going to be every season in the final of the Champions League, and we are going to be every season in the top four and competing against projects like Liverpool or Manchester City or Manchester United, I think we are very naive.

"If you want to expect the same from Liverpool, from Manchester City or Manchester United and Chelsea, and you put the same expectation on Tottenham, and the people expect the same, of course, give me different tools to work.

"If not, I see the people working in the same way, in the future I'm going to be this guy. I am the most stupid

League', which ranks clubs by revenue, Real Madrid and Barcelona are the top two revenue earners with Bayern Munich fourth and Paris St-Germain sixth.

However, those clubs dominate their domestic leagues, while in England a 'big six' provides a level of intense competition at the top that may well provide the foundation for success in Europe. "It's the toughest league I've ever played as a manager, for the quality of the rivals - no doubts," Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola, who could win his second straight Premier League title on Sunday, said last week. It is a view which has been echoed by Pochettino, Klopp and former Chelsea manager Antonio Conte.

ITALIAN DOMINANCE

It is perhaps no coincidence that when Conte was a Juventus player, a Champions League winner in 1996, Serie A had a level of competition similar to the Premier League's current 'big six'.

The 'sette sorelle', or 'seven sisters' was made up of Juve, AC Milan, Inter Milan, Lazio, AS Roma, Parma and Fiorentina, all of whom were contenders at the top of the table and in Europe.

Between 1989 and 1998, there was only one Champions League final that did not feature an Italian club. The same period also saw four 'all Italian' UEFA Cup finals (the predecessor to the Europa League).

Having intense competition at home doesn't necessarily translate into European success, after all England has only one Champions League winner in the past 10 years with Spain winning the last five editions, but it is likely to have an impact.

Certainly Liverpool, who overturned a 3-0 first-leg deficit in their semi-final with Barcelona, to reach the final with a 4-0 victory at Anfield, look to have benefited from their tough season, in which they have lost just once in the league.

The Saturday before the Barca return, Liverpool had to fight to the end with a 3-2 victory over Newcastle United thanks to a late winner from Divock Origi. Sports psychologist David Horrocks, says there is evidence that coming through high pressure games increases the chances of positive outcomes.

"The deliberate practice theory suggests that the more competitive or demanding scenarios you put yourself in, the higher the likelihood of you succeeding in those situations," he said.

Crucially the influx of talent in the Premier League has not been limited to the top teams. Unlike most of their European counterparts, the Premier League shares television revenue in such a way that the middle to lower ranked teams are also able to bring in quality from abroad or retain their own players more easily. — Reuters

person to work." Pochettino said earlier this week that he may be tempted to walk away from the Spurs hot-seat if he delivered the Champions League title this season. Tottenham will face Liverpool in the final in Madrid on June 2. "I am open like I said before. I am open to everything," he added on Friday. "Of course I love to work, I love Tottenham, I love to be here every day, I enjoy it a lot. I am so grateful but after five years, I think our effort was massive.

"But the problem is I need to know what we need to achieve or for what we are going to fight and then who is going to assess the tools that we have to achieve what we plan to achieve." — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Leicester City v Chelsea FC		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
Liverpool v Wolverhampton Wanderers FC		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 1		
Manchester United v Cardiff City		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 5		
Southampton FC v Huddersfield Town		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 10		
Tottenham Hotspur v Everton FC		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 7		
Crystal Palace FC v Bournemouth FC		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 9		
Watford v West Ham United		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 8		
Fulham FC v Newcastle United FC		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 12 EN		
Burnley FC v Arsenal FC		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Brighton & Hove Albion v Manchester City		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2		
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Athletic de Bilbao v Celta de Vigo		19:30
beIN SPORTS		
FC Barcelona v Getafe CF		19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Rayo Vallecano v Real Valladolid		19:30
beIN SPORTS		
Real Sociedad v Real Madrid CF		19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 1		
Valencia C.F v Deportivo Alaves		19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 8		
Villarreal CF v SD Eibar		19:30
beIN SPORTS		
Real Betis v Huesca		19:30
beIN SPORTS		
Atletico de Madrid v Sevilla FC		19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 7		
Girona v Levante		19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
CD Leganes v RCD Espanyol		19:30
beIN SPORTS		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Torino FC v US Sassuolo Calcio		13:30
beIN SPORTS		
UC Sampdoria v Empoli		16:00
beIN SPORTS		
Frosinone Calcio v Udinese Calcio		16:00
beIN SPORTS		
spal v SSC Napoli		19:00
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
AS Roma v Juventus FC		21:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Eintracht Frankfurt v FSV Mainz 05		05:19:00
beIN SPORTS HD 5		
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Stade Rennais v EA Guingamp		16:00
beIN SPORTS		
LOSC Lille v FC Girondins de Bordeaux		18:00
beIN SPORTS		
Olympique Marseille v Olympique Lyonnais		22:00
beIN SPORTS		

Pressure is a privilege as Man City look to close out title

BRIGHTON: Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola wants his side to embrace the "privilege" of being in pole position to retain the Premier League title when they travel to Brighton today. City go into the final day of the season one point ahead of Liverpool after a title race that has raised the bar from anything the Premier League has seen before.

Liverpool's long wait to win the title could unbelievably stretch into its 30th year despite posting the third highest points tally in Premier League history. With victory on England's south coast on Sunday, City will hit 98 points, two less than their record-breaking campaign last season, but arguably even more impressive having come from seven points behind in January and refusing to budge in a 13-game winning run as the finishing line approaches.

"It's a privilege," said Guardiola on Friday. "Is a dream to be here, honestly I didn't expect months ago when we were seven points (behind) against this Liverpool to be in the position that we are now. "We have the chance to become champion if we win our game and that is what we have to do."

The scale of the achievement in holding off Jurgen Klopp's charging Reds was amplified when Guardiola saw his old side Barcelona thrashed 4-0 at Anfield on Tuesday as Liverpool reached a second consecutive Champions League final.

City could make history by becoming the first side to ever win the English domestic treble as long as they match Liverpool's result at home to Wolves this weekend and defeat Watford in the FA Cup final next Saturday.

But despite all they have achieved this season to this point, Guardiola believes City must finish the job if they are to avoid being "destroyed" by their critics. "We saw in the Champions League, (Barcelona and Ajax) lost once but everybody destroyed the teams, destroyed the managers, destroyed the clubs," added Guardiola.

'YOU HAVE TO WIN'

"Doing incredible, doing well, we know in which world we live and you have to win." City have racked up 157 goals in all competitions this season, but have had to grind it out in recent weeks, winning three of their last four games 1-0.

A wonder strike from captain Vincent Kompany, his first goal from outside the box in 12 years, was needed to see off Leicester 1-0 on Monday, while Sergio Aguero's winner at Burnley the week before crossed the line by 30 millimetres.

Brighton's survival in the Premier League was guaranteed by Cardiff's relegation last weekend and the Seagulls showed they have not switched off for their summer holidays by holding Arsenal to a 1-1 draw at the Emirates a day later.

"In one game anything can happen. One mistake from our side, one incredible performance from the other side, one mistake from the referees can decide the title," warned Guardiola. "That's why we have to be more precise, be better and try to win the game."

City could be boosted by the return of Kevin de Bruyne from injury, but fellow midfielder Fernandinho misses out. — AFP

Cash or competition? What is behind England's domination of Europe?

MANCHESTER: England's Premier League has claimed a clean sweep of all four places in the finals of Europe's two club competitions as the most commercially successful league in the world finally translated its financial power into success on the field.

Liverpool will face Tottenham Hotspur in the Champions League while in the Europa League Arsenal take on Chelsea. No country has ever produced the finalists for the Champions League and the Europa League in the same year before now.

The Premier League's money has been invested in some of the top players in the world. According to FIFA's 'Global Transfer Report' in 2018, \$5.14 billion was spent on players by Europe's top five leagues, with English clubs alone spending \$1.98 billion on transfers from abroad.

But while player purchases, such as the 76 million pounds (\$98.88 million) Liverpool spent on Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk and 56 million on Brazilian goalkeeper Alisson Becker, have been significant, it is perhaps the investment in coaching that has paid the most dividends.

England is now home to some of the sport's elite managers such as Manchester City's Spanish coach Pep Guardiola, Liverpool's German boss Juergen Klopp and Tottenham's Argentine coach Mauricio Pochettino.

There is no question that money talks in football and the Premier League generates the most revenue in European game. European governing body UEFA's 'benchmarking' report, released in January, showed, based on 2017 figures, that England's 20 Premier League clubs snapped up more than one quarter of the total revenue in European football, totalling 5.3 billion euros (\$5.95 billion).

This put them comfortably ahead of Spain's La Liga (2.9 billion euros), the German Bundesliga (2.8 billion euros), Italy's Serie A (2.2 billion euros) and France's Ligue 1 (1.6 billion euros). But that collective strength still leaves English club's main continental rivals in powerful positions.

According to Deloitte's latest 'Football Money

25 Verlander, three Astros homers enough to drop Texas Rangers



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HOUSTON: Clint Capela #15 of the Houston Rockets goes to the basket against Draymond Green #23 of the Golden State Warriors during Game Six of the Western Conference Semifinals of the 2019 NBA Playoffs at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas. —AFP

Curry scores 33 to oust Rockets

Warriors advance to Western Conference finals

LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry scored all 33 of his points in the second half as the Golden State Warriors shook off the absence of Kevin Durant to beat the Houston Rockets 118-113 and advance to the Western Conference finals.

The two-time defending champions punched their ticket to the NBA's final four for the fifth consecutive season and eliminated the Rockets from the post-season for the fourth time in five years.

"We knew at some point we would have a chance to steal this game and we did," said Curry, who played with a dislocated finger on his left hand.

The Warriors clinched the series in six games by reverting to their championship form pre-Durant, who was injured in game five.

Reigning NBA finals MVP Durant suffered a calf strain in the third quarter of game five. Golden State

is hoping to get him back before the end of the playoffs.

"We miss our guy but we know he is going to be back," said Curry of Durant. "This whole playoff run he has been the best player in the league and has carried us so the least we could do is have his back tonight and move on to the next round."

Durant's status is uncertain for game one of the Western Conference finals on Tuesday in Oakland, California, against either the Portland Trail Blazers or the Denver Nuggets.

Warriors forward Draymond Green said they had to revert to their vintage championship form from before Durant joined them in 2016.

"There were some times it felt like that a lot of movement just trying to push the tempo," Green said. "With Kevin, you can kind of be lazy knowing you

can throw the ball to (him) and he'll get that bucket. It definitely was a little throwback for us, for sure."

'STAY OUT OF TROUBLE'

Curry, who went scoreless in the opening half, discovered his scoring touch after the break—especially in the fourth quarter where he poured in 23 points.

Scoreless on zero-for-five shooting in the first half, Curry sank a pair of clutch three-pointers down the stretch of the fourth. He was a perfect eight-for-eight from the foul line in the final 30 seconds.

"I just had to stay out of foul trouble," Curry said. "The guys were telling me to be aggressive and that the floodgates would open at some point. In the fourth quarter it was amazing."

"I was telling myself that if I could get on the court and play consistent minutes, I could do something."

"A night like tonight doesn't happen without belief in myself and the people around me pouring in positivity."

With the Rockets trailing 107-104 Klay Thompson drained a three-point dagger with 36 seconds remaining to clinch the series for the Warriors.

"It is like he is playing in the park shooting on a chain-link net," said Curry of Thompson. "We don't win this game tonight without everybody on the court, especially Klay."

Thompson added 27 points on seven-of-13 three-point shooting, and the Golden State bench contributed 33 points, with Kevon Looney (14 points) and Shaun Livingston (11) both scoring in double figures.

James Harden paced the Rockets with 35 points and added eight rebounds and four steals. Chris Paul produced his best game of the series with 27 points and 11 rebounds but his season is now over. —AFP

Villa hit back to earn play-off advantage

LONDON: Aston Villa took advantage of a late collapse from West Bromwich Albion to edge a 2-1 victory over their midlands rivals in the Championship play-off semi-final first leg yesterday. Dean Smith's side trailed to Dwight Gayle's first half opener at Villa Park, but they recovered thanks to an inspired display from highly-rated midfielder Jack Grealish.

Grealish set up Conor Hourihane's equaliser in the

75th minute and just 202 seconds later won the penalty that was slotted home by Tammy Abraham. Albion's implosion was complete when Gayle was sent off for a second yellow card late on, ruling the striker out of Tuesday's second leg at the Hawthorns.

That makes Villa slight favourites to return to Wembley 12 months after losing the play-off final against Fulham. "I'm pleased we won the game but not pleased with the performance. We can certainly perform a lot better," Smith said.

"Albion came with a game plan to sit behind the ball and slow the game down which they did very well and they capitalised on a mistake from us. "In the second half we were better and we'll be going for the win on Tuesday."

Albion caretaker boss Jimmy Shan admitted Gayle's sending off was a major setback for the second leg.

"He's a big player for us, that's obviously a big frustration," Shan said.

"He is a goal threat but gives you so much more, he is going to be a big blow (on Tuesday)."

GREALISH THE DIFFERENCE

With a lucrative place in the Premier League up for grabs, both sides were determined to seize the initiative. John McGinn and Grealish combined for a short corner to set up Glenn Whelan, who nodded over from six yards.

Jay Rodriguez was teed up on the edge of the area and it took a fine save from Jed Steer to turn the Albion striker's shot onto the crossbar. Albion took a 16th-minute lead when Whelan's awful touch allowed Gayle to race towards the area where Tyrone Mings and Axel Tuanzebe scrambled to cover.

The on-loan Newcastle striker's low drive from 18 yards arrowed into the corner for his eighth goal in eight games. An element of panic hung in the Villa Park air as Abraham glanced wide.

The home jitters grew along with the frustration at Albion's perceived time wasting, with Gayle booked for delaying tactics. Those worries were erased in spectacular fashion as Villa turned the game with two goals in four minutes.

Grealish created space for Hourihane and when he laid the ball off, the Irish international's first-time strike from 20 yards flew just inside a post in the 75th minute.

Then Abraham sent Villa Park wild when he scored from the spot after Kieran Gibbs brought down Grealish. Albion's woes were compounded with two minutes left when Gayle slid in to reach James Morrison's cross but cluttered Steer and saw red. —AFP