



3 Kuwait firemen free child stuck in washing machine



24 Boeing acknowledges flaw in 737 MAX simulator software



28 Green triple-double fuels Warriors' comeback win



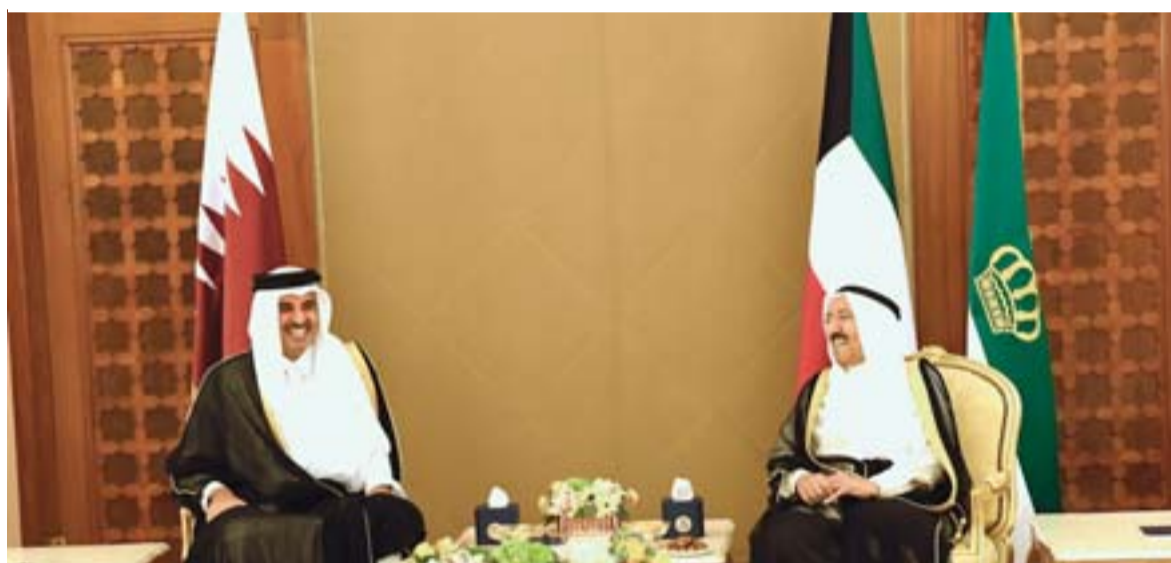
Ramadan KAREEM

IMSAK	03:13
Fajr	03:23
Dhur	11:44
Asr	15:20
Magrib	18:36
Isha	20:04

Saudi calls for urgent Arab talks over Iran-US tensions

Saudi Arabia 'does not want war but is ready to defend itself'

Qatar Amir in Kuwait



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday held an iftar (fast-breaking) banquet in the honor of Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani and his accompanying delegation. Qatar's Amir arrived in Kuwait in a fraternal visit to congratulate His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the holy month of Ramadan. — KUNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has called for emergency regional talks to discuss mounting Gulf tensions, saying yesterday that it does not want war with Iran but is ready to defend itself. King Salman invited Gulf leaders and Arab League member states to two emergency summits in Makkah on May 30 to discuss recent "aggressions and their consequences", the kingdom's official SPA news agency reported Saturday.

The announcement came days after mysterious sabotage attacks against several tankers in highly sensitive Gulf waters and drone attacks on a crude pipeline by Iran-aligned Yemen rebels, which Riyadh claimed were carried out on Iranian orders.

The United States has also deployed an aircraft carrier and bombers to the Gulf over alleged threats from Iran. Saudi Arabia's minister of state for foreign affairs, Adel Al-Jubeir, said yesterday his country does not want to go to war with Iran but would defend itself. Saudi Arabia "does not want a war, is not looking for it and will do everything to prevent it," he said.

"But at the same time, if the other side chooses war, the kingdom will respond with strength and determination to defend itself and its interests." The kingdom's regional allies welcomed the Saudi invitation. The UAE's foreign ministry said the current "critical circumstances" require a unified Arab and Gulf stance. The meetings will be a "significant opportunity for the countries of the region to achieve their aspirations for establishing peace and stability," it said.

Four ships including two Saudi oil tankers were damaged in mysterious sabotage attacks last week off the UAE's Fujairah, near the Strait of Hormuz—a vital maritime route for oil exports which Iran has threatened to close in the event of a war. That incident was followed by drone strikes Tuesday by Yemen's Iran-aligned rebels on a major Saudi oil pipeline built as an alternative export route if the Strait of Hormuz were to be closed.

Jubeir said the UAE was leading the probe into the damaged oil tankers, but added that "we have some indications and we will make the announcements once the investigations are completed". The Emirates has said three Western countries—the US, France and Norway—would also be part of the investigation, along with the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Neither of the two Gulf states, both close allies of the United States, have given details on the exact nature of the ship attacks.

Despite international skepticism, the US government has cited increasing threats from Iran, a long-time enemy of both the US and its regional allies, including Israel and Saudi Arabia. SPA said yesterday that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman had spoken with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about enhancing security in the region. The US has already strengthened its military presence in the region, deploying several of strategic B-52 bombers in response to alleged Iranian threats. US President Donald Trump last week predicted that Iran would "soon" want to negotiate. — AFP

Saudi recommends 'gently' driving oil down inventories

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said yesterday he recommended "gently" driving oil inventories down at a time of plentiful global supplies and that OPEC would not make hasty decisions about output ahead of a June meeting. "Overall, the market is in a delicate situation," Falih told reporters before a ministerial panel meeting of top OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers, including Saudi Arabia and Russia.

While there is concern about supply disruptions, inventories are rising and the market should see a "comfortable supply situation in

the weeks and months to come", he said. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, of which Saudi Arabia is de facto leader, would have more data at its next meeting in late June to help it reach the best decision on output, Falih said.

"It is critical that we don't make hasty decisions - given the conflicting data, the complexity involved, and the evolving situation," he said, describing the outlook as "quite foggy" due in part to a trade dispute between the United States and China. "But I want to assure you that our group has always done the right thing in the interests of both consumers and producers; and we will continue to do so," he added.

OPEC, Russia and other non-OPEC producers, an alliance known as OPEC+, agreed to reduce output by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) from Jan 1 for six months, a deal designed to stop inventories building up and

weakening prices. Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak told reporters that different options were available for the output deal, including a rise in production in the second half of the year. The energy minister of the United Arab Emirates, Suhail Al-Mazrouei, said oil producers were capable of filling any gap in the oil market and that relaxing supply cuts was not "the right decision".

Mazrouei said the UAE did not want to see a rise in inventories that could lead to a price collapse and that OPEC would act wisely to maintain sustainable market balance. "As UAE we see that the job is not done yet, there is still a period of time to look at the supply and demand and we don't see any need to alter the agreement in the meantime," he said. US crude inventories rose unexpectedly last week to their highest since September 2017, while gasoline stockpiles decreased more

Continued on Page 24



JEDDAH: (Left to right) Nigerian Energy Minister Emmanuel Ibe Kachikw, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak, and Saudi Arabian Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih arrive to the one-day OPEC+ group meeting in the Saudi city of Jeddah yesterday. — AFP

Ramadan Kareem

Roll up your sleeves

By Hassan Twaha Bwambale

From the Islamic perspective, according to Al-Imam Al-Menawi, laziness means inactivity, negligence and carelessness in doing things that are imperative where activeness is mandatory. This kind of negligence is dispraised and disparaged. (Al-Tawfeeq 281) Al-Imam Al-Raghib said, "Whoever gets accustomed to being lazy and indolent and decides to lean towards luxury and rest most of the time, will eventually lose that rest and luxury as a consequence, and will pay a high price."

For example, if someone does a sedentary work where he rarely moves, time will come when he will contract some preventable diseases as a result of his inactivity, which will cost him money, effort and time.

Laziness is divided into two categories: First, sluggishness of the mind in that you don't use it in critical thinking, pondering, and looking at the blessings and bounties of Allah Almighty, on one hand, and abandoning the consideration of and seeking things that may benefit you in this temporal life, on the other hand. Since everything was created for us (Al-Quran 2: 29), it behooves us to learn how to tap into the resources that Allah (SWT) created for us and benefit from them categorically and effectively, all the while keeping them safe for generations to come.

Second, physical inactivity: This entails carelessness and lassitude in performing physical exercise. This vice leads communities and individuals into backwardness. If you neglect your body in that you are so lazy to work out, you will face the consequences. Due to the fact that there is a correlation between the body and the mind, when the body

Continued on Page 24

Iraq slams Exxon for evacuating its staff amid tension

BAGHDAD: Iraq yesterday slammed as "political" a decision by US energy giant ExxonMobil to evacuate staff from a southern oil field after Washington ordered personnel to quit its Baghdad embassy. "The temporary withdrawal of employees has nothing to do with security in southern Iraqi oil fields or any threats," Oil Minister Thamer Al-Ghadban said. "The reasons are political and probably linked to tensions in the region," he added in a statement released by the oil ministry.

Ghadban called the move to pull out staff from the West Qurna oil field west of the southern port city of

Basra "unacceptable and unjustified". Exxon did not confirm the withdrawal. "We are closely monitoring. As a matter of practice, we don't share specifics related to operational staffing at our facilities," a spokeswoman said. "ExxonMobil has programs and measures in place to provide security to protect its people, operations and facilities. We are committed to ensuring the safety of our employees and contractors at all of our facilities around the world," she added.

On Wednesday the United States ordered the evacuation of non-emergency staff from its Baghdad embassy and Arbil consulate, citing an "imminent" threat from Iranian-linked armed groups in Iraq. It came 10 days after the Pentagon deployed an aircraft carrier task force and B-52 bombers to the Gulf to fend off an unspecified alleged plot by Tehran to attack US forces or allies. Both the US and Iran are key allies of Shiite-majority Iraq, and Baghdad has been under pressure from Washington to limit ties with its Shiite-ruled neighbor. — AFP

Foreigners get rare chance to sample Emirati culture

DUBAI: No question was off limits for curious tourists and foreign residents of Dubai wanting to learn more about Emirati culture and the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Emiratis make up less than 10% of those living in Dubai, the most populated emirate in the seven-emirate United Arab Emirates federation, making it hard for foreigners to meet them.

Dubai goes to great lengths to market itself as open to different cultures and faiths as the Middle East's financial, trade and leisure centre, and a government cultural centre is inviting visitors to find out more about Emirati life. "There are no offending questions," said Emirati Rashid Al-Tamimi from the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding. "How do you worship, what

is the mosque, why do you wear white, why do women wear black ... is everybody rich in this country?"

Emirati volunteers gathered at a majlis - the traditional sitting room where the end-of-fast iftar meal is served at floor-level - were asked about dating and marriage, what they think of Dubai's comparatively liberal dress codes for foreigners, and aspects of the Muslim faith. "We learn from them, they learn from us. (Foreigners) have been here a long time and I feel they see themselves as Emiratis, and we are proud that they do so," said Majida Al-Gharib a student volunteer.

Visitors broke the day's fast with dates and water, before sampling Emirati cuisine, including biryani and machboos rice and meat dishes. Seven-year-old Anthony from Poland, who goes to school in Dubai, said he came to find out more about the breaking of the fast meal because many of his friends at school do it. 2019 has been designated the Year of Tolerance in the United Arab Emirates and there is a minister of state for tolerance. However, like its Gulf Arab neighbors, the UAE does not allow dissent or criticism of its leadership. — Reuters

News in brief

Saudi to tax e-cigarettes

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia has imposed a special tax on electronic cigarettes and sugary drinks, extending similar taxes introduced in 2017 as it seeks to reduce a budget deficit caused by low oil prices. The General Authority of Zakat and Tax said a 100% tax would be levied on electronic cigarettes and products used in them, and a 50% tax on sugared drinks. Saudi Arabia, the Arab world's largest economy, already had a 100% tax on cigarettes and tobacco products, a 100% tax on energy drinks and a 50% on fizzy drinks. — Reuters

Ozil dines with Erdogan

ANKARA: Arsenal's German midfielder Mesut Ozil dined with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a Ramadan iftar meal in Istanbul late Saturday, a move likely to cause a backlash after previous meetings caused controversy. Images in Turkish media showed a smiling Ozil and model fiancée Amine Gulse, sitting at a table on either side of Erdogan at the Ottoman-era Dolmabahce Palace. The iftar, the meal for breaking the fast during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, was also attended by young Turks ahead of Youth and Sports Day on Sunday, a national holiday in Turkey. — AFP

KIA denies media reports

KUWAIT: Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) yesterday denied 'false press stories' it said was carried by several media outlets in Kuwait and Pakistan claiming that it is pursuing a \$20 billion investment program in Pakistan. "KIA would like to emphasize that the story is false and unfounded, and does not have a relationship with the person cited by the media outlets as the source," the authority said in a statement.

Amir receives invitation from Saudi King to attend 14th OIC Islamic Summit

Jordan King visits Kuwait today to congratulate Amir on Ramadan



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah reads a letter from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, delivered by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, which included an invitation to partake in the 14th OIC Islamic Summit scheduled in Makkah on May 31 to June 1. Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud handed in the letter to His Highness the Amir during a meeting at Bayan Palace yesterday.

In other news, Jordanian King Abdullah II and his accompanying delegation are set to arrive in Kuwait today on a fraternal visit to congratulate His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

Amir invited to visit Pakistan

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received yesterday at Bayan Palace the visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Qureshi handed in a letter to His Highness the Amir from President of Pakistan Arif Alvi. The letter commended the high level of cooperation between the two countries and means to develop ties. It also

included an invitation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah to visit Pakistan. Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah attended the receptions of the Pakistani FM and the Saudi Ambassador.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Chairman of Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council and the Cassation Court, and President of the Constitutional

Court, Justice Yousef Jassem Al-Mutawaa, in addition to First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, in addition to Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

Amir condoles with Afghan president

Separately, His Highness the Amir sent

a condolence cable yesterday to Afghanistan's president Mohammad Ashraf Ghani over the victims of a market attack in the western province of Herat. In the cable, His Highness the Amir affirmed Kuwait's strong condemnation of such a criminal act that targeted innocent lives and goes against all human values. His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow mercy upon the victims and speedy recovery to all the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to Afghanistan's president. — KUNA

News in brief

KCCI Chairman meets Chinese envoy

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Ali Al-Ghanem met yesterday with Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait. The meeting tackled means of boosting bilateral trade ties between the two countries, and they also discussed economic cooperation, especially in investment opportunities in both public and private sectors, in addition to boosting collaboration in all fields. — KUNA

OTC trading down 99.29%

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Over the Counter Market (OTC) witnessed a 99.29 percent plunge last week, when compared to the previous week. Total trading reached 760,400 shares at a value of KD 83,700 (around \$276.21) done through 22 transactions. OTC report, issued yesterday, indicated that 'immediate' transactions had a positive performance, with trading reaching 301,300 shares, at a value of KD 6,020 (around \$19,800) done through 12 transactions. — KUNA

New diversion open

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART) announced the new diversion on the alternative road of Nuwaiseeb highway opened for traffic yesterday morning. The new diversion starting at the 59th km of the road extends for 1,400 km. PART said in a statement. It noted that it prepared a plan for carrying out 74 road and infrastructure projects in collaboration with the Interior Ministry's traffic department to ease traffic across the country. — KUNA

Pakistan could help facilitate de-escalating tension in region: FM

KUWAIT: Pakistan expressed readiness to facilitate in de-escalating tension in the region and support peace and stability, visiting Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said. "We are concerned about rising tension between the US and Iran," Qureshi said in an interview yesterday. "Pakistan would always be supportive of peace and stability, we would be more than happy to facilitate in de-escalation and I am sure Kuwait is equally interested in de-escalation."

The minister noted, however, "relations between Kuwait and Pakistan have been historically cordial, and politically we have had excellent relations, we have been supporting each other at the regional level and on many global issues our policies on a number of issues are common, and our approach on many regional issues, on the issue of Palestine, they are close to each other."

Kuwait's role

Qureshi meanwhile said Kuwait wanted the settlement of the Kashmir dispute according to UN Security Council resolutions. In terms of Kuwait's role in the Security Council, Qureshi said "I think they played a very balancing and a very mature role, especially during the recent standoff between India and Pakistan... and they helped deescalate and defuse tensions." With regard to his visit to Kuwait, the minister said "I am here in Kuwait to build a comprehensive economic relationship, because there are 105,000 Pakistanis who have contributed to the economic development of Kuwait and I feel that we can facilitate more, by sending skilled and semi-skilled manpower to Kuwait, for further economic development."

"One of the issues that I intend to talk about is how to enhance our economic relationship, the other was to exchange thoughts and get input from the



SKUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi. — KUNA

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister on some of the evolving regional developments that are of mutual interests," he said. Qureshi met yesterday with Kuwait's Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and the two sides discussed issues of mutual interest, the Interior Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Closer ties

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held a meeting with his Pakistani counterpart and his accompanying delegation, during which they discussed the close relations between both friendly countries and ways of promoting and developing them in all fields. Both ministers also discussed a number of

issues pertinent to bilateral coordination and ways of addressing various regional challenges, the latest regional and international developments and issues of mutual interest.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Ambassador Ali Al-Said, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Pakistan Nasser Al-Mutairi and several other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled had held an iftar banquet on Saturday in honor of the Pakistani Foreign Minister and his accompanying delegation on the occasion of his official visit to the country. — KUNA



Ahmad Al-Amir

Gulf Bank moves towards a greener future with Omniya

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank continues to 'go green' as it joins Omniya's nationwide recycling initiative. The bank has signed a cooperation agreement to recycle plastic waste used at the bank's head



office and in the surrounding areas. The agreement comes as part of the bank's corporate social responsibility program, in which sustainability and the environment has played an integral role, and will see the placement of a recycling receptacle in front of Gulf Bank's Head Office, Crystal Tower. The recycling receptacle will be used to collect used plastic from the bank and surrounding area.

Commenting on the initiative, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank, said: "Following our

recent participation in Earth Hour and Earth Day, the bank is renewing its support of raising awareness surrounding environmental issues. Through the agreement with Omniya, the bank is promoting the importance and ease of recycling, increasing awareness amongst employees and customers. The bank has a responsibility to support the preservation of our environment and we are proud to be contributing to its health." The Omniya Project was founded in 2015, by young Kuwaitis aiming to raise awareness and spread the culture waste recycling.



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem received US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman in his office yesterday. Kuwaiti MP Mubarak Al-Harees was present at the meeting. — KUNA

Local

Kuwaiti teachers increased by 3,800, expats dropped by 800 in one year

Company qualified to get rid of Rehaiya used tires

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Recent Civil Service Commission (CSC) statistics showed that the total number of Kuwaitis working as teachers increased by 3,800 teachers over the past year, while that of expatriate teachers dropped by 800 in the same period. Comparing the new statistics with those of the previous year, the total number of teaching staff members increased from 82,800 during the first quarter of 2018 to become 85,800 by the end of the same period this year. Statistics also showed that by the end of the first quarter of 2019, the total number of Kuwaiti teachers was 59,700 compared to 55,900 in the same period in 2018. The total number of expat teachers dropped from 26,900 to 26,100 during the same period.

Meanwhile, well-informed educational sources said the results of final exams for students in grades 5-11 will be accessible through the education ministry's website and those of respective schools today, while grade sheets will be distributed tomorrow. Separately, minister of education Hamed Al-Azmi issued a ministerial decision appointing Osama Al-Sultan as assistant undersecretary for public education and head of the administration of the scientific section's control, instead of Fahd Al-Ghaiss.

In another educational concern, well-informed educational sources said the total number of seats

various educational facilities will provide for high school graduates in the 2019-2020 academic year will exceed 31,000, with a majority in Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) colleges. The sources added that this number is more than the 30,000 students, including Kuwaiti students and children of Kuwaiti women, who are expected to graduate from high school this year and are eligible for higher education. The sources said the total number of local scholarship seats will be 7,000.

Regional developments

Well-informed sources at Kuwait's foreign ministry stressed that the ministry is in constant contact with Kuwait's ambassadors abroad to follow up the latest regional developments. The sources also denied social media reports that Kuwait had urged its citizens in Iran and Iraq to return home, following a similar call by Bahrain.

Used tires

Well-informed sources said that the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) qualified the Korean CS

Tech company to get rid of used tires and remove them out of Rehaiya. The sources added that the company had made the best offer to deal with the tires in two phases to prepare the site, import the equipment needed and get rid of 300,000-400,000 tons of used tires. The sources added the plan includes removing the tires and recycling them instead of burying them in landfill sites.

Kuwait Airways planes

Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) received two out of three planes it had leased to cover for shortages until it receives the first purchased plane from Airbus by July. In this regard, informed sources said KAC had leased three planes from ALAFCO for a year effective this May, adding that KAC will receive the third plane within a few days. Notably, KAC had grounded three of its old planes in April pending selling them, which made the carrier cancel or reschedule some flights until the leased jets entered service.

Working hours

The Interior Ministry recently asked for offering

a tender to supply, install and maintain the central punch in and out systems at various ministry sectors in order to unify working hours in various departments.

Final statement

Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf stressed that according to the State Audit Bureau's report about the 2017-2018 final statement, no violations had been committed by the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects. Responding to an inquiry by MP Humoud Al-Khodhair about the measures taken over the alleged violations, Hajraf stressed that the report only included remarks that were all dealt with to prevent them from recurring.

Serious injuries

Jahra detectives received reports about a young man covered in blood in an open yard in Jahra, said security sources, noting that an ambulance rushed the man with serious injuries to the head, arm and legs to hospital. The man turned out to be a 22-year-old bedoon, who after recovering, told detectives that a group of young men - including one he identified as someone with whom he earlier had problems with - intercepted and assaulted him, stole his vehicle and dumped him in the open yard. A case was filed and a search is on for the assailants.



Kuwait denies urging citizens to leave Iran

the government acts as a monitor, regulator and an auditor instead of an operator. Mujaibel stressed the vision is based on handling state budget imbalances through fighting corruption and cutting expenses, rationalizing the government's manpower, developing human resources and reforming the educational system.

Municipality meeting

In other news, Kuwait Municipality's supreme planning committee held a meeting yesterday to discuss official work plans. Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Sholah, who chaired the meeting, said that he welcomes ideas and initiatives that will help achieve the municipality's aims, noting this includes ideas from municipal officials, employees and even citizens who can all contribute through filing complaints or proposals through the municipality website or in person.

Union symposium tackles economic situation, 2035 vision

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: In collaboration with the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, the public sector employees syndicates union organized a symposium titled "Kuwait 2035: Kuwaiti Syndicates' Joint View," in which the main speaker was member of the supreme council for planning and development Nasser Al-Mujaibel. Mujaibel started by giving a quick historical background about Kuwait in the past and how the founding fathers established it to become an international trade

route. He also spoke about its socioeconomic stability and how it turned into a point of attraction for migrants from everywhere.

Economic situation

Further, Mujaibel talked about Kuwait's current economic situation, warning that oil prices are expected to drop to a minimum in the coming 20 years in view of the growing demand for new sources of energy. "Kuwait's sovereign fund currently includes around KD 200 billion and the annually growing budget worth KD 22.5 billion," he explained, warning of funding the budget from the sovereign fund because it will not last more than 20 years and affect Kuwait's credit rating.

Speaking about Kuwait's 2035 vision, Mujaibel said that it aims at turning Kuwait into an international financial and economic hub capable of attracting private sector investments to lead the development process, while

the government acts as a monitor, regulator and an auditor instead of an operator. Mujaibel stressed the vision is based on handling state budget imbalances through fighting corruption and cutting expenses, rationalizing the government's manpower, developing human resources and reforming the educational system.

Municipality meeting

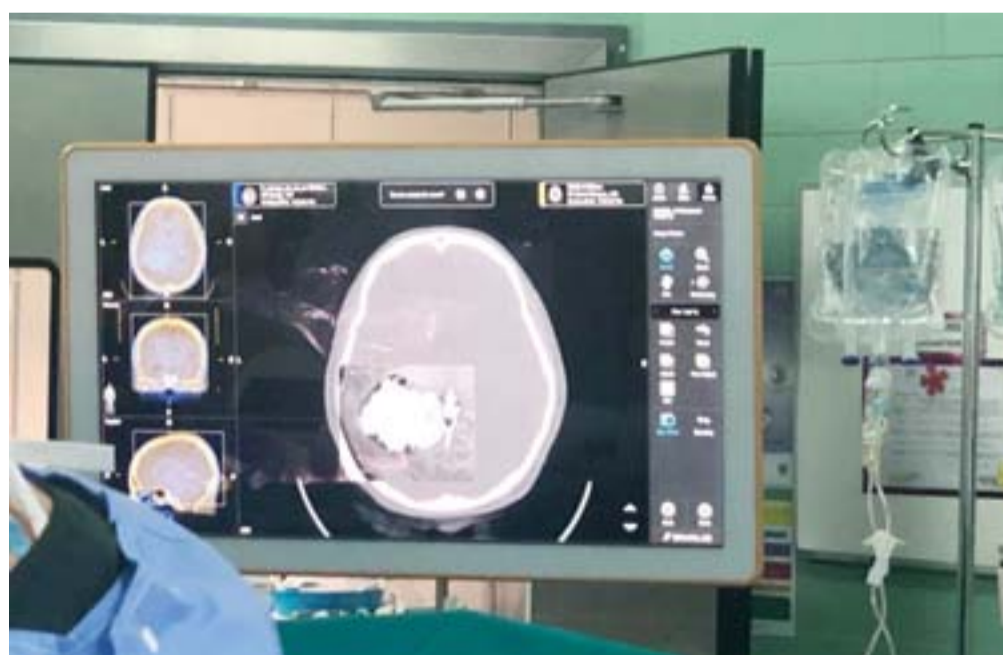
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Kuwaiti team uses new technique to remove brain tumor

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti medical team succeeded in eradicating a brain tumor using the surgical technique 'Curve,' the latest in specialized treatment. The 39-years-old Kuwaiti patient was suffering from a persistent headache due to seven-centimeter tumor in a sensitive area of the brain near the center of movement, said the head of Specialized Surgical Department at the Ministry of Health Dr Tarek Al-Sheikh. Dr Sheikh, who is also head of neurosurgery at Ibn Sina Hospital, added that the operation was critical and took three hours using a surgical navigator device called Curve.

The new technique helped surgeons to accurately reach the tumor without causing any damage to brain cells or nerves. The usage of this sophisticated German technique allowed the medical team to conduct the operation in a fast and standard time while minimizing the related complications. The device used to determine the exact location and size of the tumor, which was easy for surgeons to remove completely without any side effects, he added.

The mechanism used in this technique, which is the first of its kind in Kuwait and the third in Gulf after Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to collect more than 250 two-dimensional images of the patient's brain and turn it into a complete three-dimensional image that is stereoscopic and completely similar to brain geography. It identifies the best and easiest routes to reach directly to the affected areas of the brain (tumors or congenital defects in the arteries) with amazing accuracy without compromising or exposure to the centers of the brain and sensitive tissues, ensuring the patient's full safety of any surgical complications, Dr Sheikh explained. — KUNA



The scene inside a Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh house where a fire was put out.

Firemen free child trapped in washing machine

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firemen freed a child who became stuck in a washing machine inside a Firdous house. The boy was unharmed in the incident. Meanwhile, firemen put out a fire that broke out in a feed store in a Sulaibiya cow farm. Sulaibikhat, Kabd, Shuhada and backup stations battled the blaze. No injuries were reported. In the meantime, Jleeb and Ardiya firemen dealt with an apartment fire in a nine-storey building in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. The building was evacuated before the fire was put out. No injuries were reported as well.



KUWAIT: Firemen free a child who became trapped in a washing machine inside a Firdous house.



KUWAIT: A local bank foiled a man's attempt to install skimming equipment at an ATM machine inside one of its branches. The European man was arrested after employees called police when the bank's security system detected his attempt, the bank posted on its Twitter account.

KRCS launches fund campaign for premature babies in Yemen

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced yesterday the launch of a campaign to premature babies in Yemen tomorrow. KRCS Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi stressed the importance of increasing efforts to protect Yemeni children by providing medical equipment and medicines, in addition to nurses whom they need the most. Hasawi added that Yemeni premature babies need special

care as they are exposed to serious conditions that may lead to death or major health problems. KRCS will provide more support to those health care programs to back the health of women and children, Hasawi continued. The KRCS official noted that this campaign is in coordination with the Avenues Mall, where people could easily donate through K-Net services or by KRCS website. — KUNA



International Advertising Association (IAA) & Crowne Plaza Hotel Host their Annual Ghabqa



The International Advertising Association (IAA) & Crowne Plaza hotel hosted a "joint venture Annual Ghabqa" on 12th May 2019 in Al Baraka Grand Ballroom under the patronage of the Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Faisal Al Humoud Al Malek Al Sabah. The event was attended by Mr. Srinivasan K Swamy, Chairman & World President, Mrs. Thea Skelton Festival Director of Dubai Lynx, Mr. Adnan Al Rashed Honorary IAA President, Mr. Walid Kanafani President of IAA Kuwait Chapter, Mr. Antoine Flouty Area General Manger Kuwait, General Manager Crown Plaza & Holiday Inn Kuwait Al Thuraya City, along with top VIP officials from Media, Advertising agencies, PR companies, Consultancy firms & Market researchers.

Over 700 guests attended the event & were welcomed by The Regional Manager of Intercontinental Hotels Group Mr. Antoine Flouty, Area General Manger Kuwait, General Manager Crown Plaza & Holiday Inn Kuwait Al Thuraya City who wished them all a blessed "Ramadan Kareem" & pointed out some of the major achievements of Crowne Plaza. Flouty highlighted that the Al Baraka Grand Ballroom which has been created to satisfy the desires of those who are looking to have their lavish boutique weddings, corporate affairs & social soirees are created by the Crowne Plaza professionals.

Walid Kanafani the IAA President of Kuwait Chapter extended his Ramadan wishes to everybody. Mr. Kanafani detailed in a full presentation the major IAA achievements & activity during last two years.

Kanafani mentioned that 2018 is a very special year for the IAA, we are celebrating our 80th Anniversary worldwide & 20th Anniversary in Kuwait.

Kanafani highlighted the participation of IAA Kuwait Chapter in the IAA Global Marketing Summit in New York April 2018, Arabnet Conference October 2018 as well as the participation in IAA World Congress Feb 2019 & Dubai Lynx held in March 19 as a major achievement. He announced the future participation of the chapter in Cannes lions June 2019, IAA Global Conference in Bucharest October 2019, Arabnet Conference October 2019 as IAA Kuwait is considered a strategic partner. The conference will highlight the state of digital economy and business in Kuwait, as well as delve into the latest trend in digital media & marketing and the latest trends in mobile and web. & future participation in the IAA World Congress in Russia May 2020.

Kanafani discussed the success of the major Apprentice conference 3 that IAA Kuwait held in March 2019. The IAA Apprentice Conference was conceived to contribute to the much talked about challenges for the marketing and communications industry in attracting the best and brightest young men & women. The inaugural event brought together junior & senior undergraduate students as well as young industry professional delegates. The program includes presentations, discussions & workshops with regional and international industry professionals, recruiters & clients where students had the chance to listen, practice, network & impress! The central idea is to enhance & empower

graduating students with first-hand knowledge of real-world industry practice & opportunities in the new communications landscape & to help them get hired. The event witnessed 12 professional speakers with the participation of 120 Students from different local & private specialized universities.

Kanafani shared with the audience that the IAA created a campaign to promote advertising. The new IAA "Case for Advertising" campaign focuses on many of the core benefits that are deeply rooted in marketing communications – that advertising promotes choice; educates; informs; encourages innovation; creates jobs; supports the arts, entertainment & sports; & contributes to the costs of providing news & information. The campaign focus is for consumers & governments to understand the value of advertising in its many forms, including sponsored content. Advertising – your right to choose.

Finally, Kanafani encouraged the audience to join the IAA Kuwait Chapter & reap the benefits of the organization. Sheikh Faisal Al Humoud Al Malek Al Sabah thanked IAA & Crowne Plaza by wishing all a Happy Ramadan & appreciated the effort of the IAA to improve the quality of the people working within the Advertising Industry by providing them with insightful seminars, workshops & related trainings.

Mr. Srinivasan K Swamy, chairman & IAA Worldwide President extended his Ramadan wishes to the esteemed audience & talked about the latest IAA objectives, IAA Accreditation, The upcoming

congress in Russia May 2020 & the positivity of the Kuwait chapter in term of activation in the local market. Mr. Swamy said over three days, the IAA's World Congress will address the startlingly simple but profound question: What's Coming Next for leaders among marketers, brand custodians & the media.

Mrs. Thea Skelton Festival Director of Dubai Lynx highlight the importance of the participation in Dubai Lynx. Dubai Lynx Awards began in 2006, incorporating the Festival in 2007 and the aim is to fuel creativity across the MENA. Four days festival to include the Gala Awards Dinner. Dubai Lynx has over 64 speakers. IAA Kuwait is considered the exclusive representative of Dubai Lynx in Kuwait.

Walid Kanafani president of IAA Kuwait Chapter honored Sheikh Faisal Al Humoud Al Malek Al Sabah, Mr. Srinivasan K Swamy, Mrs. Thea Skelton, Mr. Antoine Flouty for their support to IAA. In addition, Kanafani honored Al Rai, Al Anba & White Dental Clinic for their participation in provide the audience gift items.

All esteemed honored extended their happiness for their participation in the event by welcoming everyone and encouraged all to work as one hand & as a team to improve the productivity in Kuwait.

A generous raffle draw was also amongst the highlights of the event as well as the Oriental Music Band and a very prestigious laser show.



Local



Zain shares joys of girgian with Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center

For second year running as part of company's social campaign during Ramadan



Aisha Al-Salem recognizes Zain officials during the event.



Aisha Al-Salem and Zain officials with the children during the event.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its sponsorship of the girgian event organized by Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center for children with special needs for the second consecutive year. The event witnessed the attendance of the children, their families, Zain volunteers, and President of Al-Kharafi Activity Kids Center Aisha Al-Salem.

Zain's support to this event came as part of the company's comprehensive Ramadan social campaign and its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, where it aims at sharing the joys and blessings of the holy month with different segments of the society. Zain's volunteers celebrated the special occasion with children and their families in an atmosphere

filled with happiness and joy.

The company's volunteers delighted the children and their families by distributing Zain's girgian and gifts while also organizing many other fun activities. Zain believes in the importance of embracing the beautiful values of the Islamic religion as well as the noble traditions of the Kuwaiti heritage, all year round and especially during the holy month of Ramadan.

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 stressed that it has always been

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

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



Al-Kharafi Center's children enjoying the event.



KUWAIT: KFH voluntary team at Naif Palace.



KFH voluntary team at Hawally park.

KFH continues 'Feed the Fasting' campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continued its 'Feed the Fasting' campaign in different locations 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 in

different locations, as they prepare and distribute 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.

NBK shares iftar meal with Khairan Coast Guard Center

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized a special visit to Khairan Coast Guard Center to share a Ramadan iftar meal with them in order to show its gratitude for their continued efforts and sacrifices in maintaining the country's safety and security. The visit is part of 'Do Good Deeds in Ramadan' Program organized every year. Khaled Al-Matrouk, NBK Chief Security Officer and

NBK senior management participated in visiting the center. They were welcomed by Colonel Tareq Al-Wazzak, Director of Naval Brigade Unit at the General Directorate of the Kuwaiti Coast Guards and Acting Colonel Bashar Al-Musallam.

"NBK is proud of our public institutions and supports their vital role in serving the community," NBK's Public Relations Manager Abdul Mohsen Al-Rushaid said. "NBK is always keen on visiting the Coast Guard Centre to share an iftar meal with its officers, to express its gratitude for leaving their families during the holy month of Ramadan to serve the nation and keep it safe."

Rushaid added that NBK is proud to support the Coast Guard's efforts and sacrifices, similar to other various social and humanitarian organizations that are committed to fulfilling their social duties and services. Rushaid

highlighted the important role played by Coast Guard officers, describing it as a key and pivotal element in maintaining Kuwait's security and stability since they represent the country's protective shield.

The visit is part of a comprehensive program set up especially by NBK for the holy month of Ramadan, including NBK iftar tent and field visits to remote areas, as well as iftar program at Naif Palace and the distribution of small snacks to people to break their fasting. During the holy month of Ramadan, the bank participated in 'Be the Change' recycling campaign in cooperation with Omnia Projects Management and buying Eid clothes for the children of underprivileged families in cooperation with LOYAC, in addition to many activities and initiatives including visiting children at hospitals, distributing gifts and hosting a girgian party.



It's family time in Ramadan

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

"I like the family bonding and family visits in Ramadan," Mahar Darwish says. "Every Ramadan, I see most of my relatives from all walks of life. I spend time with them and talk to them - we become more open to whatever family issues need to be sorted out. Family members whom I haven't seen for many years tend to be easier to connect with. They say the best part in the family is bonding with the little ones. I play football and draughts with the kids and whatever else they play - I become a small boy if necessary. I tease them, share stories



with them...these are all an important part of Ramadan."

"I really hope it is Ramadan the whole year round. I love fasting - it's healthy, and I don't feel hungry during the day. My spirit and mind immediately adjust to the Ramadan timings. No food is no problem at all. Also, generosity is the name of the game in Ramadan. Ramadan is really unique - I hope we all feel the same. I also love to watch soap operas in Ramadan."



Defiant Morales launches bid for fourth term

EU fears voter apathy despite populist surge



Indian nuns from the Mother Teresa Missionaries of Charities queue to cast their votes as a paramilitary force personnel stands guard at a polling station at St Mary's School in Kolkata yesterday. (Inset) Indian voters pose for a picture as they show their ink-marked finger after casting their vote at a polling center on the outskirts of Amritsar yesterday. —AFP

India's acrimonious election comes to an end

Modi on tenterhooks over second term

KOLKATA: Voting ended yesterday in India's most acrimonious election in decades that will decide whether Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi gets a second term in power. As the final polling booths closed, a huge security cordon was thrown around the voting machines and boxes of paper votes used in the 542 seats for the world's biggest election before the official count starts on Thursday.

Tens of thousands of police and paramilitaries on duty in West Bengal state were a symbol of the mounting tensions between Modi's right wing Bharatiya Janata Party and the opposition during the six weeks of voting. Long queues formed outside polling stations in the eastern state but the BJP and its rivals again accused each other of using violence, fraud and intimidation. An improvised bomb was thrown at one Kolkata polling station and security forces intervened to stop BJP, communist and other groups blocking different booths across the state capital that was hit by two days of street battles last week.

Modi's constituency in Varanasi, the holy city in Uttar Pradesh state, was also among those to vote. Conjoined

twins Sabah and Farah twins voted in the Bihar capital of Patna and 102 year old Shyam Saran Negi, who has taken part in every Indian vote since independence in 1947, cast his ballot in mountainous Himachal Pradesh state, highlighting the huge diversity of the exercise. But most attention has focused on the BJP campaign to project Modi's strongman image, playing up recent cross-border air strikes against Pakistan. The opposition, led by the Congress party and its leader Rahul Gandhi, have accused him of pursuing divisive policies, neglecting the economy and leaving many farmers in ruin. Modi and Gandhi have hurled insults at each other on a near daily basis with the prime minister calling his rival a "fool" while Gandhi derides Modi as a "thief".

Jaded voters

The animosity has taken a toll on voters. "All the abuse and misconduct claims suggest that standards in Indian politics have slipped badly," Asit Banerjee, a history teacher in Kolkata, said as he queued to vote. "Endless mudslinging and bitter comments pervaded the campaign. We are losing hope in a democracy, it is

time for a reset," the 60-year-old told AFP. Writing in the Hindustan Times, political commentator Karan Thapar said Modi's message "played on our insecurities and strummed upon our deep inner fears". He also criticized Gandhi's campaign.

Pollsters say Modi remains personally popular but his party's overall majority is at risk from a backlash against the government. The 68-year-old Modi has held 142 rallies across India during the campaign, sometimes five a day, but pollsters say the BJP could lose dozens of the 282 seats it won in its 2014 landslide.

\$7 billion vote

On Saturday Modi, dressed in a long robe and saffron sash, trekked to a Himalayan shrine to meditate, with images showing him seated on a bed inside a holy cave in the country's north. Hoping to become the fourth member of Nehru-Gandhi dynasty to lead India, Rahul Gandhi has struggled to make himself heard above the din of the BJP's campaign juggernaut. The Delhi-based Centre for Media Studies estimates that the outlay on this election could top \$7 billion, making

it one of the priciest contests globally - with the lion's share of the spending by the BJP trying to woo India's 900 million eligible voters.

Lots of it has been spent on social media, with the parties using armies of "cyber warriors" to bombard India's hundreds of millions of Facebook and WhatsApp users with messages. Fake news and doctored images have abounded, including of Gandhi and Modi having lunch with Imran Khan, prime minister of arch rival Pakistan, or of a drunk Priyanka Gandhi, a politician and the sister of Rahul. Violence has also broken out. Maoist rebels killed 15 troops and their driver in the western state of Maharashtra on May 1, the latest attack in a decades-long insurgency.

Gandhi, 48, has tried several lines of attack against Modi, in particular over alleged corruption in a French defense deal and over the plight of farmers and on the economy. Modi's government has fallen short on creating jobs for the million Indians entering the labour market every month, the shock introduction of a cash ban in 2016, while Indian banks are struggling with huge bad debts. —AFP

Amash first GOP lawmaker to call for Trump impeachment

WASHINGTON: Republican lawmaker Justin Amash said Saturday that he believed Donald Trump has engaged in "impeachable conduct," becoming the first politician of his party to call for removing the president from his party. The Michigan representative also accused Attorney General William Barr of "deliberately" misleading the public over the actual content and tenor of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference aimed at tipping the election to Trump.

In a series of tweets, Amash - a member of the ultra-conservative Freedom Caucus - said "few members of

Congress even read Mueller's report," which identified "multiple examples of conduct satisfying all the elements of obstruction of justice". "Undoubtedly any person who is not the president of the United States would be indicted based on such evidence," he added. "Contrary to Barr's portrayal, Mueller's report reveals that President Trump engaged in specific actions and a pattern of behavior that meet the threshold for impeachment."

Amash's comments went even further than those by most Democratic leaders in Congress. Fellow Michigan lawmaker Rashida Tlaib, a Democrat, urged Amash to co-sponsor her impeachment resolution. "@justinamash come find me in 1628 Longworth. I've got an impeachment investigation resolution you're going to want to cosponsor," she wrote in response to Amash's thread. Trump has proclaimed he was fully exonerated by Mueller's report. But some Democrats argue that the document lays out multiple occasions in which the

president may have obstructed justice, including Senator Elizabeth Warren, a 2020 presidential candidate who has called for impeachment proceedings. Other senior Democrats including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi have cautioned against such a move, stressing it could deeply divide the nation of about 325 million people. They warn it could backfire politically in the run-up to the 2020 election, especially with the Republican-controlled Senate likely to acquit the president in the event of impeachment by the House of Representatives. —AFP



Justin Amash

Trump 'pro-life' with exceptions for rape, incest

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has declared himself "strongly Pro-Life", days after two US states passed tough new restrictions on abortions, but said exceptions should be made for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. The US president spelled out his position on abortion - set to feature prominently at next year's election - in his first comments on the hot-button issue since Alabama's governor signed a near-total ban on the termination of pregnancy.

"As most people know, and for those who would like to know, I am strongly Pro-Life, with the three exceptions - Rape, Incest and protecting the Life of the mother - the same position

taken by Ronald Reagan," Trump tweeted late Saturday. Trump, who is seeking to expand on his conservative support ahead of his re-election bid, added: "The Radical Left, with late term abortion (and worse), is imploding on this issue. "We must stick together and Win for Life in 2020."

Alabama's governor on Wednesday signed a near-total prohibition on abortions widely seen as the country's most restrictive ban, and the Missouri legislature on Friday made the procedure illegal from eight weeks of pregnancy. Neither make exceptions for rape or incest - only for cases where the mother's life is in danger. Republican-led legislatures in Georgia, Ohio, Mississippi, Kentucky, Iowa and North Dakota have also enacted laws banning abortion from the moment a fetal heartbeat is detected.

Supporters hope that legal battles over the laws will reach the Supreme Court, as they pursue the long-sought conservative goal of overturning its landmark 1973 abortion ruling, known

as Roe v Wade. Roe v Wade guarantees women's rights to abortion as long as the fetus is not viable - around 24 weeks of pregnancy. Trump, a bombastic, twice-divorced billionaire, won over the evangelical vote during his 2016 campaign by promising to appoint anti-abortion justices at the Supreme Court.

He has since brought two conservative appointees to the highest court in the land - Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh - shifting the balance of the nine-person bench. In a series of tweets on the deeply polarizing issue, Trump said the US had "come very far in the last two years" on abortion, and praised "two great new Supreme Court Justices". Yesterday, defenders of women's reproductive rights are set to march in protest against Alabama's new abortion law in four of the Southern state's cities, including the capital Montgomery. "People should have the right to make the decisions that are best for their bodies without state interference," organizers said on Facebook. —AFP

Lanka president vows to eliminate extremist threat

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's president marked the 10th anniversary of the end of a protracted war with Tamil rebels yesterday by vowing to crush Islamist militants responsible for Easter bombings that killed 258 people. Maithripala Sirisena said Sri Lankan security forces and intelligence units could use their experience in defeating separatist Tamil guerrillas a decade ago to meet the new challenge from religious extremists. The government has blamed a local group for the April 21 attacks against three churches and three luxury hotels that also left 500 injured and shattered a fragile decade-long peace in the island of 21 million people. "With experience from a war that lasted over three decades, we are now compelled to meet a completely different threat," Sirisena told a commemoration ceremony. "We have been able to arrest all those who were behind the Easter attacks. Some have been killed in confrontations," he said. "This gives me confidence that we can completely eliminate the threat from international terrorism."

Muslims account for 10 percent of the population in the mainly Buddhist nation, which has been under a state of emergency since the attacks that were also claimed by the Islamic State group. Army chief Mahesh Senanayake said the military was paying tribute to around 28,000 soldiers who died in the war that ended on May 18, 2009 with the killing of Tamil Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. Some 5,000 government troops and police are also listed as missing since the end of the insurgency. Sri Lankan forces have been accused of killing about 40,000 Tamil civilians in the final months of the conflict, a charge successive governments have denied. Nearly 16,000 others are also reported missing, according to the newly established Office of Missing Persons. The official remembrance ceremonies in Colombo took place a day after members of the 2.5-million-strong Tamil community mourned their war dead in the northeastern coastal district of Mullaitivu where the rebels mounted their unsuccessful last stand. —AFP

International

Biden offers anti-Trump theme: Stop fighting and 'start fixing'

Veteran politician looking to cement status as the man to beat

PHILADELPHIA: Democrat Joe Biden made a passionate appeal for national unity Saturday but also took square political aim at Donald Trump, branding the president a "divider in chief" who must be ousted in 2020. At a boisterous rally in Philadelphia, the former vice president urged voters to end the mean-spirited pettiness and partisan squabbles that have left Americans angry and dispirited in recent years.

"This nation needs to come together," the veteran politician told a crowd estimated at 6,000 in Philadelphia, in the largest rally of his nascent campaign. "Our president is the divider in chief," he added, accusing Trump of demonizing opponents and using scapegoats to fuel animosity. "If the American people want a president to add to our division, to lead with a clenched fist, closed hand and a hard heart, to demonize opponents and spew hatred, they don't need me," Biden said in a raised voice. "They've got President Donald Trump."

Biden, 76, came to Washington in a less polarized era, and he cited his work across the aisle during his 36 years in the US Senate to assure Democrats that "compromise is not a dirty word" and can lead to successes going forward. "Let's stop fighting and start fixing," he

said. The number two to popular president Barack Obama is now making his third White House bid, and relishes his prime position atop the pack of 2020 Democratic contenders.

But the party eminence appeared to ignore the primary jockeying with his Democratic rivals and cast his eye directly at the general election battle against Trump. After a month of more modest events, the large-scale rally in Pennsylvania's largest city highlighted the importance Democrats place on winning back the swing state that Trump snatched in 2016. Biden was born and raised in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the sun-splashed downtown event was a nod to his modest roots.

But far from being the underdog, Biden is looking to cement his status as the man to beat. He is a blue-collar voter whisperer who claims he is best positioned to defeat Trump. But Biden must also balance the concern that while he is the most experienced candidate out there, he embodies the Washington insider cachet that many voters rejected in 2016 when they chose Trump over former secretary of state Hillary Clinton.

"Maybe he's a little bit establishment, but he was always Joe from Scranton," Mickey Kirzecky, a health care consult-

ant who attended the rally, told AFP. "He still has that, and I think that's going to be tough for Trump to fight." Polls give Biden a growing lead over the 22 other hopefuls. The latest RealClearPolitics aggregate puts him at 39.1 percent support, more than double the 16.4 percent of his nearest rival, liberal Senator Bernie Sanders. No one else is in double digits.

As voters start paying more attention, Biden - who to date has campaigned mostly in broad strokes - will be under pressure to flesh out policies on everything from healthcare and wages to immigration. Next month he will be expected to provide details on multiple positions - and engage his party rivals more directly - when Democrats gather for their first televised debate of the 2020 season. Biden has already called for a clean energy "revolution," and in his Saturday speech assured that he supports the traditional Democratic goals of protecting voting rights and broadening access to health care.

But Biden warned that none of those goals could be achieved should Trump secure another four years in the White House. "If you want to know what the first and most important plan in my climate proposal is: Beat Trump," he said. "Beat Trump. Beat Trump."



Joe Biden

Even as some supporters encourage Biden to take the high road, the Democrat displayed a willingness for confrontation as he said the president "embraces dictators and tyrants like (Vladimir) Putin and Kim Jong Un". Biden has aligned himself closely with Obama, drawing support from African-American voters, and he went out of his way Saturday to praise Obama's "courage," character and vision. In doing so he took another swipe at the current Republican president, who has routinely boasted about the well-performing US economy. —AFP

News in brief

Turkey says to produce S-500s

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday said Turkey and Russia would jointly produce S-500 defence systems after Ankara's controversial purchase of the S-400 missile defense system from Moscow. "There is absolutely no question of (Turkey) taking a step back from the S-400s purchase. That is a done deal," Erdogan said in Istanbul. "There will be joint production of the S-500 after the S-400." Erdogan told an audience of young people asking questions. Washington says the deal with Moscow is a threat to Western defense and in April suspended deliveries of the F-35 stealth fighter jet to Turkey in a bid to halt the purchase. — AFP

Minister denies activist faced threat

RIYADH: A senior Saudi official denied the authorities posed any threat to prominent Palestinian human rights campaigner Iyad Al-Baghdadi, who has said the Norwegian security services warned him of a threat against him from Saudi Arabia. "I've really never heard of anyone named Iyad Al-Baghdadi," Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel Al-Jubeir told reporters. "It could be that the goal of his allegations is to obtain permanent residency in some country. But with regards to us, we don't have any information about him." —Reuters

Protesters want civilian as head

KHARTOUM: Sudan's protest movement said that it is determined to have a civilian as head of a new governing council ahead of negotiations yesterday with army rulers to finalize its makeup. The Alliance for Freedom and Change, the umbrella group that brought down autocratic leader Omar Al-Bashir after months-long protests against his three-decade rule, said the talks were set to begin at 9:00 pm (1900 GMT) yesterday. The military council had announced the previous night that the new round of talks would be held at the presidential palace in Khartoum. —AFP

US holding Iran scientist 'hostage' for 7 months: Bro

TEHRAN: The US has detained an Iranian scientist for nearly seven months for allegedly attempting to ship growth hormones, Iranian media said yesterday, quoting his brother as saying he is being held "hostage". Masoud

Soleimani, 49, a professor and senior stem cell researcher at Tehran's Tarbiat Moddares University, left for the US on Oct 22, 2018, state news agency IRNA said. He was to undertake a six month study in the US, but was arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation at Chicago airport, according to semi-official news agency ISNA. His visa was cancelled and he was transferred to Dayton prison in Atlanta, IRNA said.

According to Iran's English language state-run channel Press TV, Soleimani was invited by the Mayo Clinic, a university hospital in Minnesota, to conduct a research program. "For months we weren't given any clear answers until we managed to find out where he was by hiring a lawyer

and following up," IRNA quoted Soleimani's brother, Rasoul, as saying. During Soleimani's sole court appearance on May 14, he was told he was charged with "trying to transfer some 'growth hormone vials' via two students to Iran," the brother told ISNA.

"The vials were not subject to sanctions and have a purely medical use ... the Americans' absurd claims have baffled everyone inside and outside the country," Rasoul Soleimani added. IRNA said Rasoul had emphasized that his "brother is certainly the hostage of the US government". Rasoul said that the family had not previously talked to the media because of Iran's "national security", according to ISNA. —AFP

Hadi Clinic hosts the German Ambassador's delegation in support of joint healthcare cooperation between the two countries

www.hadclinic.com.kw



Mr. Fahad Al-Mailam and Dr. Faten Al-Mailam with the German Ambassador Mr. Karlfried Bergner



The German Ambassador, Mr. Karlfried Bergner with Dr. Faten Al-Mailam and Dr. Mahmoud El-Sayed

In line with Hadi Clinic's continuing commitment of developing the healthcare sector in the Middle East and enhancing means of collaboration with the most prestigious German hospitals, Hadi Clinic hosted a senior level delegation from the German Embassy, headed by His Excellency the German Ambassador, Mr. Karlfried Bergner. The assembly was welcomed by the General Manager Mr. Fahad Al-Mailam, the Deputy General Manager Dr. Faten Al-Mailam and a selection of senior healthcare professionals.

The meeting discussed means of evolving further cooperation, specifically focussing on facilitating the exchange of professional expertise in advanced complex surgical procedures involving cutting-edge robotic technology, which will become part of a wider healthcare cooperation programme.

Of late, the cooperation between Hadi Clinic and Germany's private hospitals has witnessed a qualitative leap and continuous activities, through signing several collaborative agreements aiming to transfer the German expertise in advanced complex surgical operations to Hadi Clinic. Those including neurosurgeries, endoscopic spinal surgeries and

advanced endoscopic-orthopaedic surgeries such as knee, femur, shoulder, elbow and ankle replacements and reconstructions. Furthermore, the deal also focuses on the latest laparoscopic and plastic surgeries, thereby enabling our patients to undergo advanced complex surgeries of the highest quality without the need for them to have to travel abroad for such treatments.

In addition, Hadi Clinic and Unfallkrankenhaus Hospital have future plans for exchanging experiences in the remaining medical specialties, with particular emphasis on patient safety. This shall involve organising structured training programmes for both medical and nursing staff so as to enhance the depth and breadth of services that patients will receive at Hadi Clinic.

His Excellency, the German Ambassador Mr. Karlfried Bergner, has affirmed that the agreement that was finalised in April 2019 with the Unfallkrankenhaus Hospital aims to facilitate the transfer of medical expertise of proficient international standards to the State of Kuwait, which shall substantially improve the quality of health services provided to Kuwaiti Citizens. The German Ambassador also welcomed the continuing cooperation between Kuwait and Germany in all

sectors, stating that such cooperative arrangements can only be of mutual benefit to the Kuwaiti and German nations.

Hadi Clinic's Deputy General Manager, Dr. Faten Al-Mailam, stressed on the significance of the agreement, stating that it represents a unique and huge step in the provision of healthcare in Kuwait. Through this agreement and others to come, it will become possible to replicate the German healthcare model in Kuwait, thereby providing patients with exclusive world class quality treatment that eliminates the need for traveling abroad for similar treatments.

Hadi Clinic's General Manager, Mr. Fahad Al-Mailam, stated that the agreement was a clear indication of Hadi Clinic's unwavering commitment to partner with the best medical institutions in the world in order to facilitate the exchange of professional expertise, advanced therapies and knowledge transfer. Mr Fahad further explained that the pursuit of this endeavour is supportive of the already established significant healthcare system development in Kuwait, which shall ultimately help in achieving the realisation of His Highness Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad's vision of 2035 that aims to transform Kuwait into a leading regional hub in all fields.

International

EU fears voter apathy despite populist surge

No big personalities have emerged among supposed candidates

BRUSSELS: Four days before Europe's 400 million potential voters are called to the polls, EU leaders hope to reverse the usual low turnout to avoid opening the door to eurosceptic forces. The European Parliament, that will be elected in votes across 28 nations between Thursday and Sunday, has never been more important in framing the continent's laws. But each such continent-wide vote since the first one in 1979 has seen a lower turnout than the last, and much of the energy in this year's race has come from populists opposed to deeper integration. No big personalities have emerged among the supposed candidates to lead the European Commission, the top job in Brussels and one that may end up being assigned by Europe's national leaders.

Protest vote

Political scientists say the European parliamentary election amounts to 28 parallel national votes, often marked by low turnouts and a strong tendency towards protest voting. This will be the case in Britain, which kicks off the cycle of voting on Thursday and where MEP Nigel Farage's Brexit Party is dominating the race. But the spectacle of Britain's chaotic departure may have concentrated minds elsewhere in Europe, and a ZDF opinion poll found that 60 percent of Germans

may take part, up from 47 percent in 2014. Voter participation has traditionally been lowest among the young, but this year concerns about a "climate emergency" have seen hundreds of thousands take to the streets to demand action.

Little known leaders

It has always been difficult to find candidates for top EU jobs that inspire passion across so many different countries and language groups, but previous frontrunners were at least experienced leaders. None of the so-called "spitzenkandidats" - figures chosen by pan-European parties to lead their campaigns - is a former national leader. Indeed, the frontrunner as head of the biggest group, the center-right EPP, is obscure German conservative Manfred Weber, a veteran legislator with no executive experience and a low profile.

Some low-watt star power is provided by outgoing competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager, whose ministerial career inspired the Danish fictional TV series Borgen, but her campaign never caught light. In reality, if Weber or Vestager gets the job it will not be the voters' choice but because member state leaders decide to nominate one of them after the political horse-trading that follows the vote.

Nationalist backlash

For now, only Britain is on the verge of quitting the union altogether, but nationalists, right-wing populists and eurosceptic conservatives hope to break apart the cozy Brussels consensus. Polling at the start of the campaign period pointed to around 173 members being elected from these groups, even if their own differences would make it hard for them to unify as one voting bloc. Since then, however, a scandal involving talk of Russian money and influence peddling has forced the resignation of Austria's far-right Vice Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache. It remains to be seen whether the specter of a resurgent far-right will mobilize left-wing and liberal voters to block them.

Main parties weaker

While they may remain the biggest voting blocs, the main center-right and center-left groupings that have dominated pan-European politics in recent years look set to lose ground. Even if the Socialists hold the line, their strong contingent of Labour Party MEPs will only remain in Europe as long as Britain does, and outside of Spain their other members are losing ground. The European

People's Party, home to EU Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker, may remain the largest group, but it has broken with its Hungarian allies from Prime Minister Viktor Orban's Fidesz. According to opinion polls, the top two groups could lose 30 seats each, meaning that the will not be able to form a joint majority and may have to reach out to liberals and Greens. The liberal ALDE list is looking forward to an infusion of new blood from French President Emmanuel Macron's new Renaissance movement and from Spanish party Ciudadanos.

Aftermath

For veteran Brussels' insiders, the big night will not be next Sunday when the first results of the parliamentary race emerge, but two days later when the national leaders meet for dinner in Brussels. The first shots have been fired, with Merkel and Macron admitting to their differences, but between them, under EU Council president Donald Tusk, the leaders will debate the five top jobs in Europe. Tusk hopes that by the time of the June 21 summit, they will have nominees to lead the Commission, the Council and EU policy, along with the parliamentary and the director of the European Central Bank. — AFP

Austrian president calls for Sept poll in wake of scandal

VIENNA: Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen yesterday called for fresh elections in September after a corruption scandal embroiling the far-right brought down the coalition government in spectacular fashion. Just days before key EU elections, Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache was forced to resign in disgrace Saturday following explosive revelations from a hidden camera sting. Conservative Chancellor Sebastian Kurz - whose 18-month coalition with the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) had been held up as a European model - reacted by pulling the plug on their union.

"My preference is for early elections in September, if possible the beginning of September," Van der Bellen told journalists on Sunday after holding talks with Kurz. The president will hold further talks with other party leaders over the coming weeks in order to fix a date. The dramatic developments followed the publication by two German newspapers on Friday of footage from a sophisticated hidden-camera sting months before Austria's last parliamentary elections in 2017.

In the tapes - of unknown provenance - Strache is seen openly discussing the possibility of awarding public contracts in return for campaign help for the FPÖ from a woman posing as the niece of a Russian oligarch. The woman says she specifically wants to gain control of the country's largest-circulation tabloid, the Kronen Zeitung. Strache is seen suggesting that new owners could make staff changes and use the paper to help his party in its election campaign.

'Enough is enough'

Kurz said Saturday the latest revelations were the final straw after a string of FPÖ-related scandals dogging the government. "Enough is enough," the chancellor told a press conference in Vienna. Strache for his part insisted in his emotional resignation statement that he had been the victim of a "targeted political attack" but also described his own actions as "stupid" and "irresponsible". The FPÖ was also due to meet yesterday to confirm leadership changes after Strache's exit.

Neither Van der Bellen nor Kurz commented on who would replace the vice-chancellor in the run-up to elections and whether top FPÖ politicians-including controversial Interior Minister Herbert Kickl-would be allowed to stay in post. The damning revelations, which saw protesters take to the streets on Vienna on Saturday, broke as the campaign for European Parliament elections on May 23-26 was nearing its climax.

They risk dealing a blow to a far-right populist alliance marshalled by Italy's Interior Minister Matteo Salvini and in which the FPÖ plays a key part. The FPÖ's lead MEP candidate Harald Vilimsky had been due to attend a rally organized by Salvini in Milan on Saturday, but cancelled the trip because of the scandal.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel reacted to the news out of Austria by warning of the dangers of far-right politicians "for sale", who wanted to "destroy the Europe of our values". The tapes contained a litany of other embarrassing material for Strache, and analysts predicted setbacks for the FPÖ from its current position in the polls. As well as repeating unsubstantiated rumors about Kurz, Strache also hinted at ways political donations could escape legal scrutiny by going to a foundation linked to the FPÖ. Elsewhere in the recordings, he discussed the possible part-privatization of public broadcaster ORF and expressed admiration for the media landscape in neighboring Hungary, where press plurality has been severely curtailed under nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban. — AFAPF



VIENNA: Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen (left) and Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz deliver a press statement after a meeting yesterday. — AFP

Czech PM draws ire as rapeseed blossoms

PRAGUE: Shiny yellow rapeseed plants have sprung to life in the Czech Republic and angry residents blame their billionaire leader for infesting the country with the lucrative plant. "People say it stinks, it's ugly yellow, looks invasive. But you can't blame the plant - the problem is in the way we're using it," says natural scientist Jakub Hruska from the Czech Academy of Sciences. "By growing rapeseed we ruin the countryside, water, soil, biodiversity," he told AFP, owing to the harmful effects of using too much fertilizer and herbicide.

With fields of rapeseed covering 16 percent of the Czech Republic's arable land, it tops the charts as the European Union's keenest grower. Prime Minister Andrej Babis, who leads a minority center-left cabinet, is widely seen as the chief benefactor because he made his fortune as owner of the Agrofert group, which covers the entire rapeseed-processing cycle. Agrofert's units grow rapeseed, produce fertilisers and pesticides, sell farming technology and process rapeseed into fatty acid methyl ester (FAME), or biodiesel, which is added to diesel fuel under a Czech law inspired by an EU directive on biofuels.

"The fertilizers and herbicides business is flourishing and Agrofert is there as a very tough and able player," says Hruska. The second wealthiest Czech, Babis claims he has transferred Agrofert to a trust to avoid a conflict of interest as prime minister and tycoon. But the European Union recently voiced doubts about the move and

Parents try to remove doctor in right-to-die case

LILLE, France: The parents of a Frenchman kept alive in a vegetative state for a decade were to try yesterday to have the doctor caring for their son removed before he halts life-sustaining treatment the same day, their lawyers said. The last-ditch move by the parents of Vincent Lambert - left quadriplegic with severe brain damage after a 2008 car accident - aims to have the doctor immediately struck off France's medical register, the lawyers said in a statement Sunday. The parents would also seek to have the doctor, Vincent Sanchez, criminally prosecuted and lodge new appeals to continue care for Lambert, they added.

The flurry of legal action spoke to the desperation of the parents just ahead of the planned halt Monday of the nutrition and hydration Lambert receives in the Sebastopol Hospital in the northern French city of Reims. They have already pleaded with President Emmanuel Macron to step in and override the court order.

Family torn

But the case has torn their family apart, pitting them legally and emotionally against other relatives who concur with doctors that the humane path given Lambert's condition is to end life support. In 2014, the doctors, backed by

Dutch lead populist charge in EU elections

THE HAGUE: A flamboyant Dutch populist could open the floodgates for a tidal wave of eurosceptic and anti-immigration parties across the continent in this week's European Parliament elections. Classics-quoting climate skeptic Thierry Baudet founded the Forum for Democracy just two years ago, but his party is on course to beat Prime Minister Rutte's Liberals when the Netherlands votes on Thursday. As the first country in the EU to vote, along with exit-bound Britain, Dutch exit polls will be closely watched as a bellwether of a populist earthquake ahead of official results for the whole EU on Sunday.

"What happens in the Netherlands is also happening elsewhere in Europe," Claes de Vreese, politics professor at the University of Amsterdam, told AFP. Once best known for naked Instagram selfies and controversial comments about women, Baudet, 36, stunned Europe in March when the Forum became the biggest party in the Dutch senate.

In the process he stole votes from Geert Wilders, the bleached-blond anti-Islam leader who has long dented the Netherlands' image abroad as a bastion of tolerant liberalism. Baudet is now aiming for similar success on the European stage, with latest opinion polls showing the Forum snatching as many as five of the 26 European

launched a probe into Babis's dual role as politician earmarking subsidies and tycoon getting them.

Good money

Rapeseed is used to produce FAME and for alimentary purposes, with each making up roughly half of total Czech output. "Rape oil is ideal for frying, and rapeseed also serves as food for bees," says independent farming analyst Petr Havel. "But it's also a highly cultivated plant, which makes it less resistant to pests, meaning it needs stronger chemical treatment," he told AFP. "The problem is the pesticides stay in the soil and are washed by rain into groundwater or rivers, and they also kill microorganisms, reducing biodiversity." But Czech farmers make good money with rapeseed - roughly twice as much as for wheat. "There's a good market for rapeseed which has this tax relief within biofuel production," said Hruska. "It's Agrofert's business model and they will do their best to preserve it."

'Biggest problem'

Babis came under fire from opposition politicians in April after the cabinet voted to preserve additions of the subsidized FAME to diesel. In the Czech Republic, diesel must contain at least six percent of FAME which is mainly produced by Agrofert's unit PREOL and it benefits from a tax break. Veronika Vreconova, a lawmaker for the right-wing opposition Civic Democrats, said the vote was "driven not by facts, but by the premier's business interests."

A group called "For a Czech countryside without rapeseed" has drawn thousands of fans on Facebook, while a protester at a recent anti-Babis rally displayed a poster with the premier saying "I want an almighty Agrofertistan". Havel and Hruska agree that so-called first-generation biofuels have outlived their usefulness because they fail to



Vincent Lambert

Lambert's wife Rachel, five of his siblings and his nephew Francois, decided to stop his nutrition and hydration in line with France's passive euthanasia law. His parents, devout Catholics, and his half-brother and sister obtained a court order to block the move on grounds his condition might improve with better treatment.

But early this year, a French court sided with Dr Sanchez's decision to stop the care keeping Lambert, now aged 42, alive, in line with the country's laws permitting passive euthanasia. France's Conference of Bishops added its voice to the controversy Saturday, calling on authorities to wait on an opinion being worked on by a UN committee on disabled rights. — AFP



Thierry Baudet

Parliament seats allotted to the Netherlands, similar to Rutte's ruling VVD.

"Baudet is the new flavor of the year," said de Vreese. "He does attract a certain audience of voters who may be disgruntled by the fact that Wilders' style is very confrontational and not particularly intellectual." But while Baudet has toned down his support for a full "Nexit" from the EU after the chaos in Britain, his nativist, anti-immigration message is similar to the one that has swept Europe from Italy to Hungary. His senate elections victory speech declaring that the "Owl of Minerva spreads his wings" - referring to the Roman goddess of wisdom - was typical of narrative that sees an ancient European civilization under threat from immigration. His references to "boreal" or northern Europe echo those made in the past by French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen. Baudet, who has a law doctorate, has also successfully tapped into the populist railing against elites, whether in The Hague or Brussels or Washington, that has transformed western politics in recent years.

"For a long time, Europe has been a very technical story and people did not understand that," Amy Verdun, European politics professor at Leiden University, told AFP. "The populists made things simple. You may not agree with them, but they simplify things for the ordinary citizen." She predicted gains for parties that have a "strong line on Europe, whether anti- or pro-EU." — AFP



PROSTEJOV, Czech Republic: A picture taken in 2015 shows a yellow rapeseed field in full bloom next to solar panels. — AFP

actually cut greenhouse gas emissions. "Their environmental benefits are negligible," said Hruska, adding that the carbon dioxide balance "may end up in the red" given the emissions generated during rapeseed production. "Yet Agrofert will insist on using them because they have the power. I'd say this is the biggest problem."

But a switch to the more eco-friendly biofuels seen in western Europe will take time because Czech companies are not ready technologically. "Second-generation biotechnologies cannot be implemented on a mass scale now," said Hruska. "The government should propose a gradual switch. And it shouldn't sleep on the technological change," added Havel. — AFP

Johnson and Johnson: UK sibling rivalry at heart of EU vote

BATH, United Kingdom: Rachel Johnson glanced at her phone during her European Parliament election campaign launch and saw her Brexit-backing brother Boris, the former foreign secretary, revealing he will run for prime minister.

Despite her moment in the media spotlight being somewhat stolen, the seasoned 53-year-old journalist and one-time reality television star - who wants to keep Britain in the EU - appeared unfazed. Her brother's premiership ambitions have been an open secret since he quit Prime Minister Theresa May's cabinet in frustration at her Brexit strategy last July.

If bookies' frontrunner Boris becomes the next Conservative leader when May goes, he would push a more gung-ho pro-Brexit platform - the antithesis to his sister's beliefs. "I understand this sense of not wanting other people telling you what to do, people you haven't voted for. I get it," Rachel said about Brexit supporters. "But I think we've been stronger in the EU and I think the EU is stronger with us in it. And for that reason, I regard this as an existential question."

The debate tearing at the Johnson family is identical to one that has soured moods in households across Britain since the island kingdom voted in 2016 to end its four decades of membership in the European project. Boris is adamant that it marked the start of a bright and independent future. Rachel is horrified at the idea of Britain losing its European identity. "I couldn't look back on my fifties and have my grandchildren say to me: 'Grandma, what did you do when Nigel Farage took over the country?'"

Former UKIP leader Farage's new Brexit Party is campaigning on the single issue of getting Britain out of the EU by any means and as quickly as possible. Polls suggest his party finishing first, with nearly a third of the vote, when Britons cast their ballots on Thursday.

In contrast, Rachel's nascent pro-EU party, Change UK, is in the low single figures. Formed by a small group of disgruntled former Labour and Conservative lawmakers trying to fill a middle ground void created by the Brexit divide, it is struggling to break through. But Rachel's own chances in the European elections look decent. Her party is polling strongest in the southwest England constituency where she is standing. The mother-of-three has the added advantage of heading the party list. And then there is the Johnson brand name. She is just a year younger than Boris and topped with the same mop of blonde hair that keeps spilling into her eyes. — AFP



Rachel Johnson

International

Ecstatic conservatives bask in Australia election glory

Morrison's campaign was relentless and disciplined

SYDNEY: Australia Prime Minister Scott Morrison yesterday basked in the glow of a "miracle" election victory that sparked praise from the US president, soul searching on the left and speculation about what policies he will pursue. Morrison's Liberal-National coalition bucked the polls to secure a victory for the ages, but it remained unclear if he would garner enough votes to have a parliamentary majority or need to govern with the help of independents.

The latest incomplete projections from the Australian Electoral Commission yesterday showed his party at six short of the 76 seats needed for a majority in parliament. Projections by national broadcaster ABC showed the coalition with 73 seats, and leading in the count in four others. The 51-year-old Morrison may yet have to depend on ecologically-minded independents to pass legislation and manage deep divisions within his fractious coalition with no room for defections.

As awed Australian pundits declared Morrison a campaigning "legend", US President Donald Trump got in on the act, sending a congratulatory tweet. The two men spoke by phone after the results came in, vowing "close cooperation on shared priorities", according to White House account of

the call. Trump's allies will be quick to claim Morrison's win as another victory in the global march of populism. But the results showed a more mixed message from an electorate that appears increasingly split on the significant issues of the day.

Brash billionaire Clive Palmer - who explicitly styled himself on Trump in a free-spending countrywide campaign that promised to "Make Australia Great" - appears to have failed to win a single parliamentary seat. Ex-prime minister Tony Abbott - the poster boy for the right wing of the Liberal party - was unceremoniously turfed out of office after 25 years holding the same seat, with voters opting for a green independent.

Challenging economic outlook

Despite his high political stock, Morrison may face a rocky three-year term. First, he will have to contend with a challenging economic outlook and figure out how to pay for a budget based on improbable growth forecasts. After almost three decades of robust economic growth, Australia's economy is showing signs of stalling. The central bank is widely expected to cut interest rates when it meets next month, in a bid to counter a housing market dip, stagnant wages and a weakening labour market.

Morrison finds himself in the unusual position of having made few promises to the electorate beyond extending tax cuts. His campaign was relentless and disciplined - appearing on the stump before voters day-after-day to warn that the main opposition Labor party would tax voters into oblivion and that its chief, former trade union leader Bill Shorten, could not be trusted. Enough Australians agreed, offering a clear rebuke of Shorten and his policies. But it is less clear what they voted for.

In coal-rich Queensland, voters backed new mining projects that would bring jobs, but which are fiercely opposed in much of the rest of the country. The divisions within Morrison's Liberals were already clear to see yesterday, with right and centrist factions racing to fill the policy void. Some demanded an immediate loosening of rules on fossil fuel exploration, while moderates hinted at a rethink of the party's climate skepticism. "I have to say to you on climate change, it is real. We take it very seriously," said Morrison's deputy, Treasurer Josh Frydenberg.

Inside the vanquished Labor party, Shorten's defeat and quick resignation prompted an immediate jockeying for leadership, with several party stalwarts - including long-time contender from the party's left Anthony Albanese - set to throw their hats in



MELBOURNE: This photo illustration taken yesterday shows Sunday newspapers displaying the victory of Australia's coalition government after they clung to power in a general election they were expected to lose. — AFP

the ring. Party officials defended their decision to set out their policies in detail - which critics said provided Morrison with too big a target and made the vote a referendum on Shorten. At least one other group was also

licking their wounds. Usually reliable pollsters had spectacularly failed to predict the election outcome and will be picking over the numbers for days and weeks to come to see what went wrong. — AFP

Defiant Morales launches bid for fourth term

LA PAZ: Bolivian President Evo Morales launched his campaign for a fourth term on Saturday in a remote coca-growing valley without addressing the biggest controversy in his bid - the fact that he is running at all. Morales, who became the country's first indigenous president in 2006, is defying constitutional term limits. In 2016, voters rejected his proposal to amend the constitution to let him seek another five-year term this year. He later won a court ruling allowing him to run on the grounds that barring him would violate human rights.

Speaking before tens of thousands of people in the province of Chapare - where he first entered politics as a leader of coca farmers - Morales promised on Saturday to bring factories to rural areas and tap the country's potential as a major lithium producer. "We're better than before, sisters and brothers," Morales told the cheering

crowd in a televised speech. One of the remaining leaders of the so-called pink tide of leftists who swept into office in South America earlier this century, Morales has remade Bolivia's status quo since taking office 13 years ago.

He has nationalized strategic resources while overseeing robust growth, cut poverty, empowered once-marginalized Aymara Indians and railed against US-backed policies to control coca, an Andean crop that can be used to make cocaine. "We still have a lot to do. Following the nationalizations, we have now started with industrialization," Morales said. Morales' party has argued that gains for ordinary Bolivians would be erased if the rightwing opposition takes power, and voters should be able to decide.

On the eve of his campaign launch, Morales secured the blessing of the head of the Organization of American States, infuriating his critics who see Morales as a threat to Bolivia's democracy. "To say that Evo Morales can't participate is absolutely discriminatory considering other presidents who have taken part in electoral processes on the grounds of a court ruling," Luis Almagro, the secretary general of the Organization of American States,



CHIMORE, Bolivia: Bolivian President Evo Morales speaks during the launch of his campaign for re-election on Saturday. — AFP

said in televised comments during a visit to Chapare. So far, Morales is leading with 33 percent support compared to his closest opponent, Carlos Mesa, at 25 percent, according to the latest Ipsos survey. But 20 percent of Bolivians are undecided and Morales' once-solid popularity has slipped.

Kirchner to seek vice presidency

BUENOS AIRES: With polls giving her strong support ahead of October elections, former Argentine president Cristina Kirchner made the surprise announcement Saturday that she will seek the vice presidency. The announcement, made in a 12-minute video posted on social media, comes just three days before the leftist politician goes on trial on corruption charges. Kirchner, 66, was widely tipped in polls to win the presidency, but she said in the video that she was asking former cabinet chief Alberto Fernandez to run at the top of the ticket as they seek to oust center-right President Mauricio Macri.

Fernandez, who was chief of staff to Kirchner's husband Nestor from 2003-2007 before holding the same position during her presidency, said he had accepted the offer as soon as he received it, on Wednesday. He is considered a moderate.

The place he chose to kick off his campaign hinted at growing polarization in the landlocked country of 11 million people. A 12-hour drive from the capital La Paz, Chapare is far from the cities where Morales' public appearances are sometimes dogged by protests. — Reuters

Nestor Kirchner died in 2010. Fernandez is also Kirchner's maiden name. Primary elections are set for Aug 11. "We will work together to clean up an economy that day after day is condemning Argentines to a life of poverty," the presidential candidate said, referring to the country's economic crisis.

In her video, Kirchner said Argentines were living through "really dramatic" times, with more people than ever "sleeping on the streets, with problems at work or crying as they face electric or gas bills they cannot pay." Macri responded to Kirchner's move by warning that "returning to the past would be self-destructive. We are on the right path." A series of corruption scandals shadowed Kirchner's 2007-2015 presidency but she has retained a strong base of support, notably among the poorest Argentines. That had helped make her a favorite in polling ahead of the Oct 27 presidential election, with some surveys putting her ahead of Macri. Judge Claudio Bonadio had asked that Kirchner be held in pre-trial detention, but the parliamentary immunity she enjoys as a senator spared her. — AFP



LILONGWE, Malawi: Opposition Malawi Congress Party (MCP) leader and presidential candidate Lazarus Chakwera waves to the crowd as he arrives at the last campaign rally on Saturday. — AFP

In poor Malawi village, hope rests on opposition leader

CHAKWERA, Malawi: The tiny village of Chakwera is typical of thousands of settlements across Malawi - life is tough, families rely on subsistence farming, and food, education and work are all scarce. But flags featuring the black rooster of the Malawi Congress Party hang in the trees, a clue that this is the former home of a man who could be the next president. Opposition leader Lazarus Chakwera, 64, lived in the village, 40 km outside Lilongwe city, until he left secondary school.

Three generations of the family have lived there since the early 1950s, and his relatives still populate the village. Home to only about 50 people, it is situated at the end of a rough path leading through a thick forest, and has no mains electricity, one water pump and virtually no infrastructure. It is the reality of life for many people in Malawi, which is ranked by the World Bank as one of the poorest countries in the world.

Over half of Malawi's population live below the poverty line, and just 11 percent have access to electricity. "Malawi lacks many things - there are no businesses," said Margaret Amos, a thin and glassy-eyed 20-year-old wearing cloth wrapped around her waist, as she walked away from a pump carrying a heavy bucket of water. Amos dropped out of school as her parents could not afford the fees, before marrying early and taking on domestic chores. "If Doctor Chakwera wins, people will be able to start their own business," she said, loyal to the village's prominent son.

A few brown-brick huts are scattered around a clearing where young men rest under a tree in the midday sun. Pigs lie in the mud near the water pump, and goats roam freely searching for small leaves to eat. Four older women sit under a thatched shelter nearby, removing corn from cobs harvested earlier that week. In tomorrow's election, Chakwera hopes to unseat President Peter Mutharika after being narrowly defeated in the last election in 2014.

The result looks in the balance but Chakwera, a former senior pastor in Malawi, can certainly count on the support of his home village. Relatives see him as the country's salvation from corruption, poverty and lack of development. "I have total confidence in my brother-in-law that he's going to take over the government," Patricia Chakwera, Lazarus's outspoken sister-in-law, told AFP. "He will serve all the people in the whole country, because that's what he was doing when he was a church pastor. He worked for everybody, and I'm sure he will do the same once he is president."

His older sister Polina Chakwera says he has not changed from the boy he was growing up. "He was always smart and always number one - he still is," she said, adding that he would conduct school lessons for fellow pupils. Chakwera has campaigned on an anti-graft platform, and has been credited with reviving the MCP, which ruled Malawi from 1964 to 1994 under Hastings Banda's one-party rule but has since been in opposition. — AFP

For US firms, abortion is too hot to handle

NEW YORK: Some subjects are just too sensitive for corporate America. When it comes to the draconian new abortion laws passed recently by some conservative US states, the country's biggest companies have been conspicuously silent. There have been no public condemnations or outraged statements, no investment bans, no calls for boycotts. When corporate America ponders abortion - an intensely personal matter that evokes furious public debate - it sees only a lose-lose proposition.

Contacted by AFP for their views on the issue, roughly a dozen big American enterprises - from high tech and telecommunications giants to leaders in banking, sports, entertainment and distribution - offered no opinion or failed to respond. And yet many of the same companies, under pressure on social media from liberal activists, have responded promptly to some of America's most sensitive social flash points, from immigration to racism to gun violence and even the "restroom law" passed by North Carolina in 2016 to limit the bathroom choices of transgender people.

Some companies have suspended ad campaigns on hugely popular TV series

amid the #MeToo movement to protest alleged sexual offenses by actors and celebrities. But asked about the contrasting approaches, a spokesperson for one of the country's most influential CEOs replied simply, "This issue is different."

Offending half the public

"You struggle to find a more fundamentally controversial issue," said the CEO of a prominent public relations firm, speaking anonymously to avoid offending employees, clients or partners. "Having an opinion on this for the public record isn't beneficial." Abortion is one of "the issues that have the ability to polarize your audience," said Melissa Dodd, professor of public relations at the University of Central Florida.

Hank Boyd, who teaches marketing at the University of Maryland, noted that while "Democrats tend to be more pro-choice... even within the ranks of Democrats about a quarter of them are pro-life". Conversely, about a quarter of Republicans believe in a woman's right to choose. "And if you go to independents, it is almost split right down the middle." Given that deep divide, Boyd added, it is not surprising if business leaders tell themselves, "I don't want to offend half of my base."

Re-inflaming the decades-old debate, Republicans in Alabama and other conservative states launched a major offensive on abortion rights in the past week. Lawmakers in Indiana, Ohio, Louisiana and Missouri have also advanced laws to severely restrict abortion. — AFP

India islanders vote with sinking hearts

GHORAMARA ISLAND, India: Residents on Ghoramara fear that the votes they cast yesterday in India's election may be the last before their island sinks into the Bay of Bengal - a victim of climate change's growing toll. About 4,000 people, including poor fisherman Goranga Dolui, were on the electoral list for the island in the Sunderban delta. "Those who could, have left already. How will the poor like me leave? We hope the government will help us start a new life," he told AFP.

Ghoramara is now about four square kilometres having lost about half its size in the past three decades to rising seas. Ghoramara's voters could still have a role in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bid for a second term. His Bharatiya Janata Party has campaigned aggressively across West Bengal state and the result in the local constituency is on a knife edge. But Dolui is pessimistic about his vote and the results to be announced on May 23 changing the future of the island which is only connected to mainland India by a one-hour ferry ride. "We will keep living here until we can't anymore," he said. Ghoramara's election officer Swati Bandopadhyay said the island may be lost in two or three years as the rate of erosion accelerates with each monsoon season.

Climate overshadowed

"People know this natural process is unstoppable and are gradually moving to the mainland," she added. Thousands of Ghoramara residents have moved in recent years to Sagar, a bigger island in the delta, or Kakdwip on the mainland. But several islands surrounding islands are threatened. Modi held one of his mega election rallies on the West Bengal mainland last week where he talked about security. The environment, however, has not featured in the election battle between the prime minister and opposition leader Rahul Gandhi.

Party manifestos barely mention the melting Himalayan glaciers sending water pouring into the Bay of Bengal, or pollution caused by coal mining, or shrinking forests. There was little talk of the notoriety of New Delhi and 13 other Indian cities among the world's 15 cities with the most polluted air. "Both major parties have sidelined discussion of the environment during the campaign," Aarti Khosla, director of Climate Trends, a New Delhi-based initiative on climate change and clean energy told AFP. "Whilst the public across the world is generating awareness on environmental issues, it is clearly missing in India."

Critics say the lack of debate on the environment has also clouded discussion on the key areas of agriculture, jobs, water supplies and migration. Retired school teacher Satish Chandra Jana, 75, has lived all his life on Ghoramara but is despondent. "We are struggling to live here and have even constructed a home on Kakdwip," he told AFP, sat on the deserted village square. "I just don't feel like leaving this place. My heart and life story is connected to this island," Jana added. The younger generation cannot afford to be as nostalgic as Jana. Ghoramara is not connected to India's electricity grid and relies on unreliable solar energy for power. The disappearing farmland is taking jobs with it. Tapas Kumar Sasmal, 50, a retired soldier who was born on Ghoramara and returned there to vote, said only about 10 percent of the original inhabitants remain. — AFP



GHORAMARA ISLAND, India: Indian voters arrive with a ferry to cast their vote during the 7th and final phase of India's general election yesterday. — AFP

Analysis

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Miracle win offers Australian leader authority, stability

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison may have won more than just another three years in office for his conservative coalition government. By winning what was seen as an unwinnable election, the unexpected leader has cemented his authority over the Liberal Party, giving him the muscle to end a decade of instability that has seen a revolving door of prime ministers.

It was a stunning personal victory for Morrison, who largely flew solo during campaign as senior ministers stayed close to home to defend seats thought to be at risk. "It was a one-man show. There will be much written about this in the years to come," Haydon Manning, a professor of political science at Flinders University, told Reuters. "He delivered the victory against the odds."

Morrison became prime minister as a compromise candidate after a right-wing faction ousted Malcolm Turnbull as Liberal Party leader last August. The resulting Liberal-National coalition was behind in every opinion poll - including an exit poll on Saturday - since Morrison took over, with voters angry at Turnbull's ouster and frustrated by a perceived lack of action over climate change and a dearth of fresh policies.

But Morrison on Saturday defied those odds, securing re-election in what he described as a miracle. The coalition is on course to win a third term either with the support of independents or through an outright majority. After a decade of political turmoil that saw both Labor and the coalition depose several prime ministers, changes Morrison introduced last year mean that it is now very difficult for his party to remove him now that he has won an election.

Aspiration message

The secret of Morrison's success, lawmakers, election strategists and analysts say, was twofold. First, he could see a path to victory through target areas such as the urban fringes of Queensland state, where he won enough seats to offset expected swings against the government in city-based seats. And he was able to frame the ballot as a contest between him and Labor leader Bill Shorten, whose reform agenda was portrayed by the government as at odds with Australian aspirations.

"Morrison's biggest asset was Bill Shorten. He made the election a personal contest and in the end, the people never liked or trusted Shorten," John Hewson, former leader of Australia's Liberal Party, told Reuters. Hewson now shares a connection with Shorten: as Liberal leader in opposition in 1993, he similarly lost what was considered an unloseable election after releasing a detailed and comprehensive tax reform policy well ahead of the vote.

In this weekend's election, Labor proposed removing two generous tax concessions enjoyed primarily by older, wealthy Australians. But rather than winning favor with younger voters, the policies became the target of Morrison's campaign, fostering suspicion of Labor. Morrison - who centered his campaign on his government's economic credentials - used Labor's tax proposals as evidence that the opposition was "coming after your money". A Labor strategist said the government successfully cobbled together a coalition of support among voters in urban fringes and rural townships. "They won a lot of voters from older Australians with its attacks about a retirement tax. But we lost votes from younger people that we didn't expect," said the strategist, who declined to be named as he is not authorized to talk to the media. "We didn't do enough to talk about jobs for these people in these regions."

Shortly after the first vote counts were released on Saturday evening, it was clear a shock was in the works. Although Morrison's support for the mining industry was expected to deliver victories in the north of Queensland, a state where coal is a major employer, victories in the outer suburbs in the south of the state belied exit polls. On Saturday, Morrison embarked on a last-ditch visit to the southern island state of Tasmania before flying back to his Sydney electorate to vote. That bore fruit, with the government's winning two seats in Tasmania from Labor that may help deliver an outright majority. Morrison was also able to limit swings against the government in Victoria, seen as the major weak spot after a stinging rejection of the Liberal Party at state elections in November.

In rural areas, the National Party comfortably fended off what were expected to be strong challenges from independent candidates after the party had lost safe seats in state elections. Throughout the campaign, Morrison continued to privately stress that a victory was possible. Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said on Sunday. But he often seemed alone in that belief. "I have to say, until it happened, I didn't think it would happen," Liberal Senator Arthur Sinodinos said on ABC TV late on Saturday night. — Reuters

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Indian National Congress Party president Rahul Gandhi (center) and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra (centre right) gesture to supporters on Rahul's visit to file his candidacy nomination in Kalpetta town in the Wayanad region of southern Kerala state. — AFP

Rahul Gandhi: Destiny's child or an 'empty suit'?

Rahul Gandhi, vying to become the latest prime minister from India's most famous dynasty, has worked hard to shed his image as an entitled footloose princeling and political lightweight. But the great-grandson, grandson and son of three past premiers of the world's biggest democracy still faces a tough task beating Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the elections.

No relation to independence hero Mahatma Gandhi, Rahul was born in 1970 when his grandmother Indira Gandhi-daughter of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru-was premier. In 1984, Indira was shot dead by her Sikh bodyguards and she was succeeded by her son Rajiv Gandhi, Rahul's father. Rajiv was himself assassinated in 1991 by a Tamil suicide bomber when Rahul was 20.

Rahul was enrolled at Harvard but dropped out after a year, following his father's death. He later graduated from Rollins College, Florida and in 1994 earned a master's degree from Cambridge. While in his 20s, he lived in London, where he worked at a management consultancy for a time. His Italian-born mother Sonia Gandhi, widow of Rajiv, took charge of the Congress party in 1998 before handing over the reins to Rahul, her first-born, in 2017.

'Empty suit'

Ten years earlier, in 2007, leaked US diplomatic cables said Rahul was viewed as an "empty suit" and "light-

weight", with little known about his political beliefs-if he had any. But by 2009, the US assessment was now that Gandhi sounded like a "practiced politician who knew how to get his message across and... was comfortable with the nuts and bolts of party organization and vote counting". "He was precise and articulate and demonstrated a mastery that belied the image some have of Gandhi as a dilettante," a leaked cable by senior US diplomat Peter Burleigh said. After Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) crushed Congress at the 2014 election, Gandhi set about reviving and rejuvenating the party, while keeping older hands onside.

A speech in the lower house last year drew widespread applause and forced political pundits to take notice. He ended it by giving an uncomfortable-looking Modi a surprise hug. He has also, in contrast to the Hindu nationalist Modi, reached out to Muslim voters and stressed his secular credentials, and also to women, promising to bring legislation setting aside seats in parliament for them. Last December, Congress secured victory in three key state elections, including in Modi's northern Indian "cow belt" heartland, suddenly making Gandhi look like a serious contender.

'Not foolish'

During the campaign for the election-which wraps up on Sunday, with results four days later-Gandhi has

attacked Modi's record on farmers, jobs and his close ties to business. "Across India, people are frustrated and angry. Mr Modi is attempting to use hyper-nationalism to divert the attention of the people," he said in a recent interview to the Kolkata-based Telegraph newspaper.

"But the people of India are not foolish. They can see through this game," he said. Election adverts show him hugging an emaciated peasant woman, while Gandhi's leftist manifesto pledges to end abject poverty by 2030 and give cash transfers to 50 million families. But tea-seller's son Modi is no pushover, using traditional and social media, as well as tub-thumping speeches, to dominate the headlines. Modi has capitalized on India and Pakistan's tit-for-tat airstrikes in February to appear as the patriotic "chowkidar" (watchman) of India.

Gandhi's attempts to score points with allegations of dodgy dealings related to India's purchase of Rafale jets from France have also failed to stick with voters in a big way, opinion polls have suggested. And at the same time, Modi seldom misses an opportunity to contrast his own humble beginnings with his silver-spoon adversary, deriding Gandhi as "shahzada" (crown prince). Gandhi "appears to be clinging to the socialist ideas of his grandmother and doesn't realize that people have changed, that even the poor have changed", Parsa Venkateshwar Rao, a veteran journalist and political commentator said. — AFP

Poor boy Modi becomes India's nationalist powerhouse

Stern, sharp and shrewd, Narendra Modi fought his way off the streets to become one of India's most popular and polarizing prime ministers. There is no middle ground between admirers and adversaries of the man-now running for a second term-who helped his father run a railway station tea stall before launching his career in nationalist politics. The 68-year-old makes much of his humble roots while unashamedly portraying himself as the tough guy protecting India's national security and Hindu values, pressing its claims to be the world's rising power.

Doubts have been expressed over his economic reforms and businesses still complain about the sudden cancellation of high-value banknotes in 2016 in a bid to combat the black-market economy. But little mud has stuck and few dispute that "NaMo", as he is known, drives India's national agenda while expertly baiting neighboring Pakistan and the opposition Congress party, especially its leader Rahul Gandhi. And audiences love the Modi spectacle. His Twitter following of more than 46 million makes him one of the world's most-tracked leaders.

With his neat white beard and a vast collection of headgear, Modi regales rallies with stories of how he is "a son of soil", contrasting himself with Gandhi as a spoiled member of the dynasty that has dominated India since independence seven decades ago. "They dislike me because of my humble origins. Can a party stoop so low?" he said at one event. "Yes, a person belonging to a poor family has become prime minister. They do not fail to hide their contempt for this fact. Yes, I sold tea, but I did not sell the nation."

'Mr 56 inch'

Narendra Damodardas Modi is said to have joined the Hindu hardline Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) nationalist group at the age of eight and left home as a teenager, abandoning a marriage arranged by his family, to become an RSS activist. An assiduously hard worker, Modi rose through the ranks of the RSS and its partner Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to become chief minister of his Gujarat home state in 2001.

Bolstering the Gujarat economy and espousing outspoken nationalist causes provided the launchpad for him to lead the BJP into the 2014 general election. The country was seduced by his story and the party won the biggest landslide in India's history, decimating Congress. Modi is not without shadows in his history and chinks in his communications defenses. After a train carrying Hindu pilgrims caught fire killing about 60 people in 2002, riots broke out that left at least 1,000 people, mainly Muslims, dead. Modi was accused of complicity in stirring up the riots but two courts found there was no case to answer.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes part in a press conference in New Delhi. — AFP

Sometimes Modi's comments come back to haunt him. While campaigning in 2014 he claimed to have a 56-inch muscle man's chest to make tough decisions. His opponents and comedians still mock him as "Mr 56 inch". Journalists have a difficult time as Modi has never given a press conference as prime minister and critics say his rare television interviews are carefully stage-managed. Rahul Gandhi regularly hits out at what he calls Modi's "autocratic backlash" since taking power.

'Nehruvian touch'

"Mr Modi believes that he is the lord of India, just like the British believed," Gandhi said. "He can brush aside the Supreme Court, he can extort any amount of money he wants from any corporate, he can go and brush aside the Election Commission." Modi's personal-politics will be the "defining" issue of the Indian election, even his party admits, while many experts say that Modi is carrying his party through this election. "Take away Modi and 90 percent of the speeches of the opposition leaders would be over," Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told the Indian Express in an interview.

Modi can be compared to India's founding prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru in his ability to dominate the conversation, according to Harsh Pant, an international relations professor at King's College in London. "Modi dominates the message in an extraordinary way," said Pant. "The young follow him because of his story. 'If I made it, then so can you'. He has the Nehruvian touch." "Normally there is a strong anti-incumbency side to Indian politics, but there is no sign that people are withdrawing from him." Pant and others say, however, that Modi's real impact will only be revealed if he can secure and complete a second term in power. — AFP

Fear of change: Negative politics wins Australia poll

Australia's conservative government held on to power at national elections thanks to a highly effective negative campaign warning voters against the centre-left Labor Party's large policy reform agenda, analysts said yesterday. Labor led every opinion poll in the two years prior to Saturday's election but fell well short of a parliamentary majority after the vote, in a surprise result for the ruling Liberal-National coalition. Analysts said opposition leader Bill Shorten's unpopularity with voters and his struggle to explain the party's complex tax policies were used by Prime Minister Scott Morrison to devastating effect.

Labor's failure also reflected a broader trend across Western societies of voter cynicism towards bold policy platforms, said Australian National University senior fellow Mark Kenny. "I think we're in an age where it is very difficult to communicate big ideas and to sell imagery," Kenny told AFP, adding that right-wing populists around the world had been successful in invoking nostalgia and anxiety over the future to win elections.

"It's quite hard to run a change or proposed change and to inspire the imaginations of voters and hold that against a very spirited and surgical scare campaign."

Morrison successfully cast Labor's proposals - particularly on removing tax concessions and tackling climate change - as too risky and damaging to household finances at a time when the national economy was slowing down. "He fought an absolutely masterful negative campaign against Shorten and Labor," La Trobe University fellow Tony Walker said. The government's anti-Shorten slogans focused on hip pocket issues, such as "The Bill Australia Can't Afford", which appeared to have resonated with voters while Labor failed to make the case for change.

Battleground state

Morrison's campaign was particularly effective in Queensland, a battleground state that swung in favor of the government and where Labor's perceived urban bias rankled with regional and rural voters. Voters in the state's mining towns, already angry with delays in the approval of a major India-backed coal mine promising thousands of jobs, did not warm to Labor's big climate action plans and lukewarm commitment to the project.

"It seemed there was... sometimes mixed messaging about how much they supported it and I think that's come home to roost," University of Queensland politics expert Chris Salisbury told AFP. "The regions in Queensland are desperate for economic and employment opportunities and (voters believed) that the coalition was better placed to secure those opportunities." Labor blamed its Queensland collapse on mining magnate Clive Palmer's estimated Au\$60 million (\$41 million) spend on election advertising. While Palmer himself failed to secure an upper house Senate seat, support for his party and the anti-immigration One Nation boosted the government's vote thanks to Australia's complex preferential voting system. Unlike Labor, the coalition campaigned on almost no new policies. Analysts say the fallout from the shock outcome could lead future political campaigns to shun bold or big ideas. "It'll be damaging if parties can only operate in a safe zone that they think isn't going to offend the electorate," Salisbury said. — AFP

Business

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CHENNAI: Indian workers carry out maintenance work on a boat at a fishing vessel construction yard during trawling ban period in Chennai. India's farmers and business community complained publicly that they suffered a drop in their businesses. —AFP

Modi's shock policy moves hit economic growth

J&J's biggest India plant idle 3 years after completion; facility was expected to employ 1,500

PENJERLA/NEW DELHI: It was supposed to be Johnson & Johnson's biggest manufacturing plant in India. It was to eventually employ at least 1,500 people and help bring development to a rural area near Hyderabad in southern India. Yet, three years after the US healthcare company completed construction of production facilities for cosmetics and baby products on the 47-acre site, they stand idle.

Two sources familiar with J&J's operations in India and one state government official told Reuters production at the plant, at Penjerla in Telangana state, never began because of a slowing in the growth in demand for the products. One of them said that demand didn't rise as expected because of two shock policy moves by Prime Minister Narendra Modi: a late 2016 ban on then circulating high-value currency notes, and the nationwide introduction of a goods and services tax (GST) in 2017.

J&J spokespeople in its Mumbai operations in India and at its global headquarters in New Brunswick, New Jersey, declined to respond to a list of questions from Reuters.

Modi's office did not respond to a call and an email with questions. Aimed at rooting out corruption and streamlining the tax system, the double whammy of 'demonetization' and GST - were two of Modi's signature policy moves. But instead of encouraging economic activity as intended, they did the opposite, at least in 2016-2018, by sapping consumer demand, according to some economists.

Many businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, complained publicly - some in their financial statements - that they suffered a drop off in orders. The suspended J&J project stands as one of

the most vivid examples of the impact on the broader investment picture.

In the first month after demonetization, some business surveys showed that sales of products such as shampoos and soap fell more than 20 percent. Lack of jobs growth and a farm-income crisis because of low crop prices have hurt Modi in the current general election, according to several political strategists.

Still, Modi and his ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party are expected by many of the strategists to be in a position to get a second term - probably with support of some other parties - when votes are counted on Thursday, partly because of his strong stance on national security issues.

Big investments, great expectations

A range of Modi's business policies, such as capping prices of medical devices, forcing tech companies to store more data locally and stricter e-commerce regulations have in the past two years hurt plans of American multinationals such as J&J, Mastercard, Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart.

The groundbreaking of the J&J facility in Penjerla, its third in the country, was carried out with much fanfare in 2014, attended by Telangana state's Chief Minister Chandrababhai Naidu, who hailed the foreign investment as a big win for local communities.

A document dated April 2017 that lists products the company planned to make at the facility, submitted to the Telangana government and reviewed by Reuters, names baby oil, baby shampoo, baby lotion, baby hair oil, face wash and creams.

Shaukat Ali, running a tea shop under a bamboo stall on barren land outside the plant, said local workers check in routinely for possible vacancies at the J&J site, but nothing has come up in years.

At the local pollution control board office, the member secretary Satyanarayana Reddy said the J&J plant had all the required approvals and he was not sure why it hadn't started production.

"It is unusual for such a big plant to stay idle for so long," he said. "But there is no problem from our side." Chandrasekhar Babu, an additional director at the Telangana industries department, said a J&J company official told him the plant hadn't started due to lack of demand. GST and demonetisation were two key reasons the plan didn't kick off, one of the sources said, adding that lack of consumer demand since then dented company's plans.

The second source familiar with J&J's plans said the company miscalculated Indian market demand. On a recent visit by a Reuters reporter to the J&J plant, plush, furnished conference rooms and cubicles sat inactive; M. Sairam, who said he was the site manager, told Reuters production areas with machines were idle too.

Planned further expansion

Local officials had hoped the initial J&J plant would be only the beginning. After the groundbreaking in 2014, Pradeep Chandra, who was Telangana's special chief secretary of industries, told Business Today magazine that "based on the extent of land (J&J) have acquired we believe that they are looking at much larger expansion here."

Local media reports at the time said the J&J facility would employ some 1,500 people. A J&J official, who was not identified by name, was reported subsequently in December 2016 in India's Business Standard as saying that the \$85 million plant would be operational by 2018 after it had overcome procedural delays. The official was quoted as saying the company had earmarked an additional \$100 million for expansion.

Vikas Srivastava, the managing director of J&J Consumer (India), who was at the 2014 groundbreaking, did not respond to calls for comment. Reuters also talked to two workers outside a sprawling Procter & Gamble facility making detergents and diapers, which is next to the J&J plant. They said they were part of the P&G plant's production team and the plant had been running below capacity.

A P&G spokesperson denied that, saying the plant was "operating at full capacity in line with our business plans". "India is a priority market for P&G globally and in recent quarters, P&G's business in India has registered strong double-digit growth consistently," the company said.

The weak rural economy, where most Indians work, has also hurt growth in sales of basic items such as detergents and shampoo in the past year. Hindustan Unilever Ltd, an industry bellwether that would compete with the likes of J&J and P&G in some categories, said its volume growth shrank to 7 percent in the quarter ended March 31, down from double-digit growth in the previous five quarters. The company warned that the daily consumer goods segment in India was "recession resistant ... not recession proof." —Reuters

Huawei will not bow to US pressure, says founder

BEIJING: Chinese telecoms giant Huawei is ready to deal with Washington's crackdown and will reduce its reliance on US components, its founder told Japanese media. President Donald Trump effectively barred Huawei from the US market on Wednesday and added it to a list which would restrict US sales to the firm amid an escalating trade war with Beijing. "We have already been preparing for this," Huawei founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei told a group of Japanese journalists Saturday in his first interview since Trump's move. Ren said Huawei would continue to develop its own components to reduce its dependence on outside suppliers. Huawei is a rapidly expanding

leader in 5G technology but remains dependent on foreign suppliers. It buys about \$67 billion worth of components each year, including about \$11 billion from US suppliers, according to The Nikkei business daily. The usually elusive Ren, 74, has come out of the shadows in recent months in the face of increasing pressure on his company. Ren's army background and Huawei's opaque culture have fuelled suspicions in some countries that the firm has links with the Chinese military and intelligence services.

Huawei is also the target of an intense campaign by Washington, which has been trying to persuade allies not to allow China a role in building next-generation 5G mobile networks. US government agencies are already banned from buying equipment from Huawei. "We have not done anything which violates the law," Ren said, adding the US measures would have a limited impact. "It is expected that Huawei's growth may slow, but only slightly," he said, according to The Nikkei.

A former army technician, Ren founded Huawei in 1987 with only \$5,000, according to company lore. Huawei now claims to have nearly 190,000 employees, operates in 170 countries, and reported revenue of more than \$100 billion in 2018. Ren



Huawei founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei. —AFP

said his company would not yield to pressure from Washington. "We will not change our management at the request of the US or accept monitoring, as ZTE has done," he said, as quoted by The Nikkei, referring to fellow Chinese telecoms giant ZTE, which was also targeted by Washington. ZTE came close to collapse last year after US firms were banned from selling it vital components over its continued dealings with Iran and North Korea. Trump later reversed the decision and in return ZTE had to pay a \$1 billion fine and accept monitoring by the US Commerce Department. —AFP

Canada aims to ratify trade deal after lifting tariffs

OTTAWA: Ottawa plans to proceed "full steam ahead" on ratification of a free trade agreement with the US and Mexico, Canada's foreign affairs minister said Saturday, after the neighbors scrapped reciprocal tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. Canada had been "very clear" that as long as the tariffs were in place "it would be very hard for us to move forward with ratification," Chrystia Freeland told CBC News.

On Friday, US President Donald Trump announced the lifting of tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Canada and Mexico. Ottawa and Mexico City also announced the elimination of reciprocal duties.

The steep US tariffs imposed last year — 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum—

became a major stumbling block to ratifying a new North American trade pact negotiated last year by the three countries. With the removal of the obstacle, "our government now intends to move forward with the ratification," of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement, Freeland said, describing the process as progressing "full steam ahead."

However, she did not specify when the deal would be presented to Parliament, which remains in session only until June. Freeland acknowledged that despite the lifting of the aluminum and steel tariffs, it would be "naive" to think US protectionism is no longer a threat.

"Eternal vigilance is required," she said. Meanwhile, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Saturday the US move to withdraw tariffs was a "triumph" for Mexico.

"It was a triumph for the Mexican government negotiators, a triumph of diplomacy. We even gave a bit of little help to the government of Canada. Not to brag," Lopez Obrador told reporters in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. He stressed that his administration is working toward "free trade, not a trade war." —AFP

Business

Vietnam salt farmers battered by imports, unpredictable weather

Mineral misery deepens as incomes become unstable

HON KHOI: The salt farmers of Hon Khoi rise before dawn as they have for generations, fanning out across shallow seawater pools in southern Vietnam to harvest the precious mineral, hoping for a better season than the last. The work is punishing and the incomes unstable, subject to seesawing demand swayed by foreign imports, and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns. Many people in the sleepy seaside town in Khanh Hoa province have worked much of their lives in the salt fields—an Instagram hotspot where workers wearing conical hats ferry mountains of the saline crystals in bamboo baskets along reflective ponds against a setting sun.

They shuffle carefully along narrow ledges separating the rectangular plots that are pumped full of salty seawater. But the farmers say life is tough on the fields where they toil during the annual harvesting season from January to June.

"This job is no fun at all, we have to work so hard in the sun and then during the cool season we are off," said Nguyen Thanh Lai, his tan skin weathered from nearly four decades working in the fields.

He sells his harvest to local traders who pass it up the value chain until it reaches dining tables or factories around Vietnam, where it is used to preserve fish, con-coct Southeast Asia's popular, pungent fish sauce, or make soda water.

Lai has long struggled to raise his five kids, but he says both demand and market price used to be more reliable. "In the past we didn't make losses in salt production, now there are losses," the 60-year-old told AFP, wearing two hats to shield from the searing morning sun.

As technical supervisor, he typically earns around \$360 a month during the harvesting season—more than double what his most salt workers take home.

But his income zigzags depending on demand, which itself fluctuates based on imports from abroad.

Climate woes

Vietnam produced about one million tons of salt in 2015, according to the latest official data, and often clocks surpluses, but it still ships salt in, mostly from China and India. The country imported 500,000 tons of the mineral in 2017 despite a 147,000-tonne surplus of domestic production.

The imported product is of a quality required for industrial use, something the local salt is not always suitable for. Officials at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development did not respond to AFP's requests for comment.

But unpredictable demand is not all Vietnam's salt farmers are up against.

In Hon Khoi—a popular tourist destination for throngs of visitors who pack its white sandy beaches—farmers are also contending with climate change.

Shifting weather patterns have upended work in an industry that depends on sunny, dry days for maximum production. "If the weather is good, we can work for six months. If it rains, we all go hungry," said Nguyen Quang Anh, who has labored in the fields for two decades.

"Climate change really has had an impact because salt production needs stable weather," the 57-year-old farmer said. The UN says climate change has "undermined" the lives of farmers in Vietnam, where the wet season has come earlier or brought in heavier rains in recent years.

"In Vietnam and elsewhere, climate change has put weather in flux. When you can no longer plan for the future, you can only hope," said Dechen Tsering, UN Environment's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. Vietnamese authorities vowed to reform the sector in 2014, rolling out a 15-year plan to modernize the industry in a bid to help struggling farmers like Anh.

The blueprint called for production to triple by



HANOI: Vietnam's salt farmers toil in the fields during the annual harvesting season from January to June.—AFP

2030, promised new technology, and called on local officials to support farmers hit by fluctuating weather patterns.

Few have felt the impact of the plan—or ever heard about it—in Hon Khoi, where the salt industry remains the main employer. That means many are

taking a gamble on the sector.

"Sometimes I'm nervous, but I'm in the business so I have to accept the risks," said Nguyen Van Vinh, who just started working in the fields this season to supplement his income running a small stationery shop. "If I don't harvest salt, I won't earn enough." —AFP

Is California's high-speed rail plan a pipe dream?

SAN FRANCISCO: Keith Erwin was about to buy the land that his auto repair shop sits on when he was turned down because California's much awaited high-speed rail line was going to pass through the spot. Five years later, he sees no train coming anytime soon and no longer believes in it. "It's a train that's going to go nowhere," the mechanic said at his garage in Fresno, just steps from where the train is supposed to eventually pass. Even though construction is well underway in Fresno, Erwin insisted: "I think they're out of money. I don't think they're going to build it at all from what we see."

In February, newly elected Governor Gavin Newsom announced he was drastically revising downward the high-speed rail project to link Los Angeles to San Francisco in three hours, even though the plan was approved in a 2008 referendum. The federal government indicated Thursday it was scrapping a \$900 million subsidy due to "chronic" construction delays. A

growing chorus of critics and multiple court challenges set back the project, and construction only began in 2015. Train travel has not been popular in this sprawling state—the most populous in the country—where the car is king.

While many countries began providing high-speed rail starting in the 1980s, California kept investing in road infrastructure. "The culture of the state itself has really been about our vehicles and our cars... but now that's changing," California High Speed Rail regional director Diana Gomez told AFP. Her group is responsible for creating, building and implementing the project. She noted that younger generations now want to use public transportation and are placing their bets on high-speed rail, which is better for the environment.

Minimalist solution

Traveling the 380 miles that separate Los Angeles from San Francisco takes at least six hours by car. It's only an hour by plane but chronic traffic jams to get to the airport followed by security checks make the three-hour train journey an appealing solution for many travelers.

"But let's be real. The project, as currently planned, would cost too much and take too long. There's been too little oversight and not enough transparency," Newsom said in his State of the State address in February. "Right now, there simply isn't a path to get from



SAN FRANCISCO: Construction of the high-speed railway line crosses the San Joaquin River in Fresno, California, amid ongoing construction of the railway in California's Central and San Joaquin Valleys.—AFP

Sacramento to San Diego, let alone from San Francisco to L.A. I wish there were."

The project budget has jumped 20 percent over initial estimates, to reach \$77 billion. But California is not giving up on what critics call the "train to nowhere." Newsom said focus would now be on a section of the corridor that's only about a third of the total distance, linking Merced and Bakersfield,

with Fresno at the halfway point. Industry watchers say the reduced ambitions are a mistake. "It absolutely does not make sense," said Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, an urban planning professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). "Any transit project needs big (urban) centers as origins and destinations, and so to have something like that... all but kills the project." —AFP

Take this app: Tech firms tackle opioid crisis with software

WASHINGTON: Technology firms are taking aim at the opioid crisis and related health problems with a new class of treatments—digital therapeutics—deliv-

ered by smartphone. These new treatments, backed by medical research and offered by prescription, are seen as potential ways to supplement, and in some cases replace, pharmaceuticals to treat addiction and an array of other mental and physical health issues. Smartphone technology may be well-suited to behavioral therapy for addiction, depression and other disorders by making treatment more accessible and trackable by medical professionals, researchers say.

"Digital therapeutics are validated scientific treatments delivered in the

form of software, which can increase access and provide an immediacy," said Yuri Maricich, head of the clinical and regulatory team at Pear Therapeutics. The company has received approval in the United States for apps to treat opioid addiction and other kinds of substance abuse. "It's the same level of rigor (as pharmaceuticals) in terms of how the products are manufactured. We've run randomized clinic trials to make sure it produces the desired outcome and that it is safe," Maricich said.

In January, Pear launched in coordination with Novartis unit Sandoz the

reSET-O prescription digital therapeutic 12-week cognitive behavioral therapy to treat opioid addiction after receiving approval by the US Food and Drug Administration. It is offered with the commonly used medication buprenorphine for adults under the care of a therapist. The app includes a dashboard that allows medical teams to monitor a patient's progress and offer reminders and training. The patient follows on-screen prompts by answering quiz questions, reporting medication usage and reporting substance use, cravings and triggers. —AFP

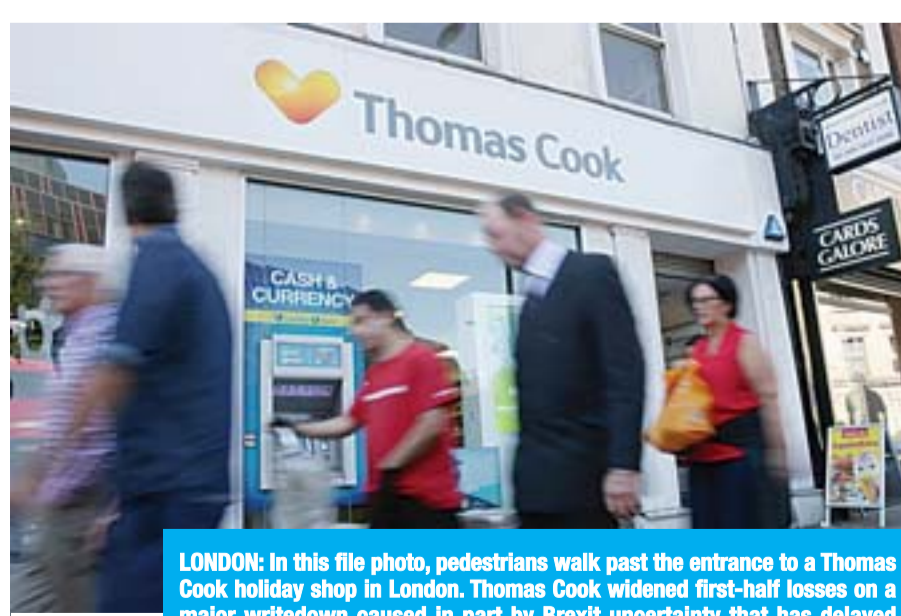
Concerns for Thomas Cook trips after share collapse

LONDON: British holidaymakers yesterday flooded troubled tour operator Thomas Cook with concerns about their trips, after its share price collapsed. All eyes are on what will happen to the stock value of Britain's oldest and largest independent travel company when the markets reopen on Monday. Shares dived on Friday after Citigroup reportedly warned in a broker note that the stock was worthless. The company's share price fell 27.26 percent to just 14.26 pence in midday deals on the London stock market. The news came one day after Thomas Cook revealed that first-half losses widened on a major writedown, which it blamed in part on Brexit uncertainty that has delayed summer holiday bookings.

The firm posted a net loss of £1.47 billion (\$1.89 billion, 1.69 billion euros) in the six months to March 31, after customers also put off trips abroad last winter. The loss after tax, after a writedown of £1.1 billion, compared with a net loss of £254 million in the first half of its 2017-2018 financial year. Responding to customer concerns on its social media pages, the company said that all its holidays were financially protected through ATOL, the tour operators' licensing scheme. "This announcement has no impact on future holidays or flight only bookings. All our holidays are fully ATOL-protected, so customers can continue to book with confidence," the firm said on Twitter.

Company sees 'headwinds'

In reaction to the company losses, Thomas Cook chief executive Peter Fankhauser said the first half of the year had been characterized by "an uncertain consumer environment" across all its markets. "Our current trading position reflects a slower pace of bookings, against a strong first half in 2018," he said. "As we look ahead to the remainder



LONDON: In this file photo, pedestrians walk past the entrance to a Thomas Cook holiday shop in London. Thomas Cook widened first-half losses on a major writedown caused in part by Brexit uncertainty that has delayed summer holiday bookings, the British tour operator said.—AFP

of the year, it's clear that, notwithstanding our early decision to mitigate our exposure in the 'lates' market by reducing capacity, the continued competitive pressure resulting from consumer uncer-

tainty is putting further pressure on margins. "This, combined with higher fuel and hotel costs, is creating further headwinds to our progress over the remainder of the year." —AFP

Wall Street Week Ahead

Tariffs could lead to markdowns in retail shares

NEW YORK: US retailer stocks have moved from buoyant to bruised this year and the intensification of the US-China trade war makes them especially vulnerable because consumer products would be targeted in the next round of threatened tariff increases. The potential impact of the trade dispute is likely to be a key issue next week when Home Depot, Nordstrom, Kohl's and Target are due to report results. Although it reported better-than-expected earnings, Macy's shares slipped this week after it said the latest tariffs on Chinese imports by Washington are hitting its furniture business and warned that additional tariffs would affect clothing and other areas.

Late last week, after Washington imposed a tariff rate increase to 25 percent on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports, US President Donald Trump ordered his trade chief to begin the process of imposing tariffs on all remaining imports from China, which would subject about \$300 billion worth of Chinese imports to tariffs. The proposed list of products subject to possible US tariffs would cover nearly every consumer product such as clothing, shoes and lawnmowers. The S&P 1500 Retailing index had been outperforming the benchmark S&P 500 this year as the market bounced back from a December selloff and optimism grew that the United States and China may soon come to a trade agreement.

But the index has fallen more than the broader market in recent weeks as optimism on the trade front has eroded. Since April 30, the retailing index is down about 3.4 percent, compared with about a 2.5 percent decline in the S&P 500. "There's already been an impact. The question is how much more of an impact it is going to be. Combined with sluggish sales, it's not a good combination for sentiment in anything retail right now," said Michael James, managing director of equity trading at Wedbush Securities in Los Angeles. Retailers have been struggling from the tightening grip of Amazon.com, and, more recently, investors have worried that wage pressures could become a bigger risk for the group.

US government data this week seemed to add to the concerns. US retail sales unexpectedly fell in April as households cut back on purchases of motor vehicles and other goods. The results from retailers in the coming days round out an earnings season that has been mostly better than expected. First-quarter S&P 500 earnings now are expected to have risen 1.4 percent from a year ago versus a 2.0 percent decline estimated at the start of April, according to IBES data from Refinitiv. That has eased worries that the S&P 500 would have a "profit recession" of at least two straight quarters of declining earnings this year, but the latest developments on the trade front only further cloud the earnings outlook for retailers and other companies.

"It's the biggest macro wild card for the market," said Anthony Saglimbene, global market strategist at Ameriprise Financial in Troy, Michigan. So far, there has only been limited impact in the retail space from tariffs, according to Bank of America Merrill Lynch analysts. "We see food and discount retailers as largely insulated from the recent tariff increase to 25 percent on \$200 billion of Chinese imports," they wrote in a note on Thursday.—Reuters

Business

Burgan Bank successfully concludes conference on leadership challenge

Leadership challenge edition designed to inspire, engage, and help leaders develop modern skills



KUWAIT: Ghadah El-Kadi during the panel discussion with the speakers Graham Moore, Chris Nel and Debbie Nicol.



KUWAIT: (From left to right), Halah El Sherbini leading a panel discussion with Raed Al-Haqhaq, Fawzi Al-Musallam, Mohammed Al-Haj and Venkat Menon.



KUWAIT: Halah El Sherbini and Mohammed Al-Haj with Burgan Bank leaders

KUWAIT: To further solidify its position as a dynamic financial powerhouse, Burgan Bank recently hosted three master facilitators of "The Leadership Challenge" in a one-day conference titled "Burgan Bank Leadership Conference - The Leadership Challenge Edition" at Salwa Al-Sabah ballroom. Continuing to invest in its employees for long term growth, the conference incorporated the use of several resources and tools, designed to help leaders develop the skills needed to meet current leadership challenges.

Organized by the Learning and Development department at Burgan Bank under the Human Resources Group leadership and Burgan Kuwait CEO, the conference was held in collaboration with Vigor events, a first-class innovative platform in the Middle East and North Africa. The intense conference brought together leaders and managers from Burgan and KIPCO Group to discuss modern leadership trends and valuable insights about "The Leadership Challenge" practices. The conference was designed to give attendees a tangible method on how to practice, experience and put in use five key practices: 'Model the Way', 'Inspire a Shared Vision', 'Challenge the Process', 'Enable Others to Act' and 'Encourage the Heart'.

The Speakers included 3 Leadership Challenge Master Facilitators namely Graham Moore, Chris Nel and Debbie Nicol; international speakers and highly experienced leaders along with the Burgan Bank team. Encompassing a highly interactive facilitation experience, the conference provided 3 interactive keynotes, two panel discussions, and three workshops. In addition to the panel discussion with the three master facilitators moderated by Senior L&D Manager Ghada El-Kadi, another panel discussion was held involving Leaders from KIPCO Group, mainly Vice Chairman and CEO KHC Fawzi Al-Musallam, Vice Chairman and CEO Gulf Sat Mohammed Al-Haj, Burgan Bank CEO- Kuwait Raed Al-Haqhaq, Group Chief Operations and Technology Officer Venkat Menon and moderated by Group Chief



KUWAIT: A group picture of Burgan Bank senior management and employees

Human Resources and Development Officer Halah El Sherbini. These panel discussions led the 250 attendees through a leadership exemplary journey and highlighted the leadership challenges in the region.

Raed Al-Haqhaq, Chief Executive Officer of Burgan Bank- Kuwait said, "The initiative was meant to create synergy in our corporate community by implementing a common modern leadership language. Internally, we manage a successful leadership model that creates a solid platform for us to strengthen each other through a shared vision and cascade our strong culture across management layers. Burgan owes its success to its unique culture and inspiring values of Progression, Excellence, Commitment and Trust."

Group Chief Human Resources and Development Officer Halah El Sherbini reiterated "It is our continuous commitment to progression and excellence that has made us who we are today as Burgan. This unique initiative, The Burgan leadership conference is a clear reflection of our level of investment in the growth and development of our leaders across all levels. One of our strategic initiatives as Burgan HR is to build group synergies and higher collective capabilities for sustainability in today's modern complex environment and we are equipping our leaders with modern organizational skills that are essential for our success."

Senior Manager Learning and Development Ghada El-Kadi said, "we are going through transformation and

we are all playing a strong part in implementing the strategic direction of Burgan Bank. This conference comes from the L&D-HR team as a response to this objective by growing leadership potential in the bank and making sure employee levels of engagement develop and by that positively impacting our performance results and our community."

The speakers addressed many questions in different fields under the 'Current Leadership Challenges' wherein the Burgan Bank leaders shared best methods and exercises to face and overcome daily obstacles that might recur in the region as a result of the mistaken understanding of the leader's role or the cultural barriers that may deter the leadership spirit within an organization.

Nissan Al-Babtain launches special campaign to bring joy to children

KUWAIT: Honoring the blessed spirit of the Holy month of Ramadan, Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Nissan in the State of Kuwait, recently launched a special campaign to bring joy to the less fortunate. Contributing to building positive memories this season, Nissan Al-Babtain collaborated with the Children's Home, an orphanage managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor as part of their annual national cause.

The campaign encourages customers to test drive any of the Nissan vehicles during the period of Ramadan to enjoy new experiences. Nissan Al-Babtain will in turn donate a generous amount for each test drive taken to the Children's Home.

This nationwide CSR initiative falls under the brands mission to give back to the community in which it thrives and its duty towards Kuwait and its people. Nissan Al-Babtain wishes its customers a joyous Ramadan and invites customers to seize the opportunity to discover its great performance vehicles while also bringing smiles to the little children this season.



Three things you can enjoy doing this Ramadan with your Huawei P30 Pro

KUWAIT: Ramadan is such a special occasion that we cherish and wait for every year. We love what it brings along including family gatherings at Iftar and Suhour. In this article, we are going to discover three things Huawei P30 Pro - the flagship champion and a phone that created quite a frenzy since its launch - offer to you to make the most of Ramadan.

Ramadan nights captured beautifully

While the streets during the daytime may be quiet, Ramadan nights are buzzing with activity. The city would be illuminated with stunning street lamps and Ramadan lanterns, the night markets bustling with shoppers and events popping up everywhere highlighting different aspects of Ramadan and offering unique experiences. Taking stunning images and videos at night time would not be an issue when you use the Leica Quad camera set-up on the HUAWEI P30 Pro, which ensures crisp and clear shots even with minimum light.

Iftar seen from two sides:

With the Huawei P30 Pro dual-view feature that is launching within this month, you can take cool videos when you gather with your friends and family members around Iftar and capture these moments beautifully. Whether it is at home or in a public tent, you can now take two videos at the same time: one video showing the whole tent with the dangling Ramadan lanterns and the delicious Ramadan food, and on the another video you can zoom into your best friend while he's biting into that piece of cake - this fun and cool video feature enables you to record one scene but with two different



perspectives! Feature will be enabled via HOTA update at a later date.

Short of time in Ramadan?

Ramadan is a busy month for all of us, between friends and family gatherings to the normal day-to-day things to do, work and other duties. We feel like as if time is flying by, and since smartphones are becoming part of our daily lives, you certainly need a phone that can keep up with all of that. Well! Huawei P30 Pro comes with a long-living 4,200mAh battery that lasts most of the day and can be charged up to 70 percent in just 30 minutes. You can even help your friends and family if their devices run out of battery, thanks to the Wireless Reverse Charge feature, provided they support Qi Wireless Charging.

No one has time for phones that lag right?! To make sure that your phone does not stutter or lag, the HUAWEI P30 Pro comes with powerful hardware to ensure a super smooth and improved performance while browsing Internet for the latest iftar or suhor recipes or if you have some free moments during the day and would like to play your favorite video games. The Huawei P30 pro also comes with a big storage of 256G or 512GB to store all these Ramadan memories be it videos or photos and it is supported by 8GB of RAM for a fast phone experience.



Al-Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma weekly account

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly and monthly draws on Al-Najma Account and the draw on the "Salary and Cash on Top" campaign. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The results of the draw were as follows:

- 1- Al-Najma monthly account - the prize of KD 20,000 was for the share of Hamed Salman Saheb.
- 2- The "Salary & Cash on Top" campaign prize of KD 1,000 and was for the share of Taibah Ali Hussain Bo Najmah.

The Bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

As regarding "Salary & Cash on Top" campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees as well as the retirees and which is valid until 31 December 2019 and the mechanism of joining this campaign for availing its benefits, the Bank explained that Kuwaiti employees with a salary of KD 500 and above whether newly recruited or in service can transfer their salary to the Bank and avail the benefits of this campaign by getting instant cash gift of KD 250 or an interest free loan five times the salary up to KD 10,000, add to this they will automatically enter the weekly draw on KD 1,000. As for the expatriate customers categorized under Premier Banking Account with a salary KD of 1,700 and above, they will get instant cash gift.

The retirees with pension KD 1,000 and above will also get an instant cash gift of KD 150 when transferring their pension to the Bank and automatically enter the weekly draw on a prize of KD 1,000 and avail the benefits of this campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees working in private and public sector as well as the retirees. Further, the campaign provides customers with the opportunity to get additional benefits and take advantage of the advanced and unrivalled services and products the Bank provides to its customers to meet their needs and expectations.

What's On



Ooredoo celebrates girgian with children in Razi, Ibn Sina, and Farwaniya hospitals



Ooredoo Kuwait participated via its volunteer program in celebrating girgian with the children in hospitals last week, as part of the company's agenda for the holy month of Ramadan. The visits included the hospitals of Al Razi, Ibn Sina, and Al Farwaniya. The program's volunteers shared the festivities of this traditional joyous occasion by distributing boxes of sweets on the children. The boxes were previously prepared by the volunteers in an event that fosters the values of caring and connecting, two of the core values of Ooredoo Kuwait.

This year saw the launch of the fifth edition of the volunteer program, which is operated in collaboration with Spread the Passion non-profit organization. The program aims to educate youth and provide them with necessary training before matching them with volunteer opportunities. The program received

more than 300 applicants this year. Ooredoo's volunteers have participated in more than 150 activities since the inception of the program five years ago, including iftar meal distribution in the company's iftar tent opposite the company's head office. Members of the program also contribute regularly in organizing visits to hospital wards throughout the holy month and around the year.

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



NBK distributes iftar meals in Abu Halifa and Mahboula

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) distributed iftar meals in Abu Halifa and Al Mahboula areas in line with NBK iftar charitable campaign conducted throughout the holy month of Ramadan as part of "Do Good Deeds in Ramadan" program. NBK convoys toured the inner-city neighborhoods of both areas, where dozens of volunteers distributed iftar meals to fasting people.

"NBK continues to carry out its field visits to distribute iftar meals to fasting people throughout the holy month of Ramadan. Visiting Kuwait International Airport is part of the field visits that the bank seeks to carry out during this holy month, besides mosques, ministries, hospitals and places where there is a large number of low-income families, in addition to visiting public facilities and other key locations", Yacoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public Relations Officer said.

Al-Baqer added that NBK iftar campaign is a distinctive milestone and a main feature of the Bank's annual Ramadan program. NBK is keen to focus on its initiatives dedicated to serve this campaign year after year, especially through intensive field visits, covering various regions in Kuwait, to provide iftar meals throughout the holy month. As part of this campaign, NBK continues to welcome fasting guests in its iftar tent set up next to the Scientific Center, where a team of dedicated volunteers is present to welcome our visitors and serve them iftar meals, in addition to providing any other required services



they may need.

For over 20 years, NBK has carried out the "Do Good Deeds in Ramadan" program, which includes many events, contributions, social welfare and voluntary activities. This initiative is in line with NBK's keenness to reach out to various social institutions and all sectors of the society, maintaining its leading position as a dedicated private institution that is keeping true to its CSR values through translating them into valuable programs and initiatives that have substantive social dimension.

ACK and KNFSME renew collaboration agreement

Representatives of the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) met with representatives from the Kuwait National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development (KNFSME) to renew their mutual cooperation and collaboration agreement. The meeting which took place on May 5th saw the renewal of the contract along with talks of possible ideas for future cooperative ventures. The KNFSME group was led by KNFSME General Director Mr Ibrahim Al Kandari, while the ACK group was led by ACK President Prof Isam Zabalawi.

Both parties agreed to collaborate to push the CDIO Initiative for teaching engineering which includes a focus on hands-on and active learning. They also agreed to emphasize project incubation for electrical engineering. Other possible future cooperative ventures

considered included offering courses in entrepreneurship, which could help students who've designed projects and invented new useful technologies to market and benefit from their creation. KNFSME and ACK also discussed creating joint "accelerated programs" for students.

Prof Zabalawi welcomed the new ideas and the increased cooperation and would further like to involve the KNFSME in ACK Student Graduation Projects in order to help the projects grow into viable businesses. ACK further plans to invite the KNFSME to participate in the Annual SMEs/Entrepreneurship competition at ACK. ACK would like to thank KNFSME and its representatives for their efforts in furthering the agreement and looks forward to future cooperation.

Dar Al-Shifa organizes Ghabga to celebrate Kuwaiti Women's Day



By Faten Omar

Dar Al-Shifa Hospital organized a Ramadan Ghabga gathering to celebrate 'Kuwaiti Women's Day', in collaboration with the Martyr's Bureau and Women's Diplomatic Committee on Saturday at Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Theater & Hall. During her speech, Narjes Al Yousefi, Board Member at Dar Al-Shifa Hospital, said "Kuwaiti women have proven themselves throughout history and have led active roles in diverse fields of

public interest, economy, and policy."

"We are in attendance to honor the women martyrs of Kuwait such as Asrar Al Qabndy, Wafaa Al Amer, Sanaa Al Fodry and Suad Hasan and many others who were known for their bravery and courage in resisting occupiers, defending the homeland by joining Kuwaiti resistance and organizing anti-occupation marches until they got their martyrdom reward" she added.

For her part, Narjis Al-Shatti, Consultant for Diplomatic Women's Committee, said that

this celebration is one of the most important celebrations in the country, as it was a historic day in the life of Kuwaiti women. "Kuwaiti women were honored by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, who granted women their political rights, empowerment and positions in parliament. The initiative of the late Amir Sheikh Jaber came from his belief in the importance of the role of women and appreciation for the female martyrs of Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion and the sacrifices they made," she said.

Fruit Salad Day celebrated at ICSK Amman

A refreshing Fruit Salad Day was celebrated at the Kindergarten session in ICSK Amman on May 2nd to make the tiny tots aware of the different kinds of fruits that surround us

and the importance of having fruits to main good health. Children brought varieties of fruits like apples, mangoes, bananas, grapes and many more to prepare the fruit salad. Teachers taught the little ones about each fruit and then the children were showed how to make fruit salad. The fruits were cleaned, cut and the fruit salad was prepared in front of the students. Children were encouraged to eat fruits daily and to make it a habit. A day well spent indeed. It was really a fruitful day!



Health & Technology

Dirty data: Firms count the growing environmental costs of digital planet

PARIS: Technology is often touted as a solution to the world's environmental challenges, but it is also part of the problem: industry executives are facing rising pressure to clean up their energy and resource-intensive business. How much energy, for example, does it take to send a one-megabyte email? Around 25 watts per hour, representing 20 grams of carbon dioxide emissions, according to France's CNRS research centre.

It might not seem like much, but the Radicati research group expects 293 billion emails will be sent every single day this year and the power needs to be generated — mostly from fossil fuels. Apps can quickly drain and shorten the life of phone batteries, with Snapchat a particularly "heavy" messaging service because it automatically turns on the camera. Then there are the server farms crunching mammoth amounts of data worldwide, which require huge amounts of electricity both to run and to power air-conditioning which keeps the equipment from getting too hot.

"Under the current global energy mix, the share of greenhouse gas emissions from information and communication technologies will rise from 2.5 percent in 2013 to four percent in 2020," the French think-tank Shift Project said in a recent report. That makes the sector more carbon-intensive than civil aviation (a 2 percent

share of emissions in 2018) and on track to reach automobiles (8 percent), it said.

'Huge impact'

In February, Greenpeace warned about the concentration of data centers, in particular those used by Amazon, in the US state of Virginia, which reportedly help transmit 70 percent of the world's internet traffic. To cope with the voracious energy needs, the local power company Dominion turned to non-renewable fuel sources — drawing the ire of tech firms.

Most have pledged to use as much "clean" energy from wind farms or other sources as possible, with Facebook signing a partnership with Greenpeace several years ago. "The idea that the IT sector can help tackle climate change is not a new one — They've been talking about it for over ten years, and what we need now to see is action," said Gary Cook, an IT campaigner at Greenpeace. "Given their rapid growth, decisions about how they get their power become really critical," he said.

The surge in video and streaming services poses a particular challenge: already in 2017 Greenpeace estimated that the viral K-pop sensation "Gangnam Style", viewed more than 2.7 billion times, had consumed a year's worth of

production from a small power plant. Video streaming now accounts for nearly 60 percent of all "downstream" internet traffic from servers to individual devices, with Netflix alone generating 15 percent, according to an October report from US network analysis and services group Sandvine. Music services also take a toll. In 2000, researchers at the Universities of Glasgow and Oslo found that greenhouse gas emissions from the US music industry alone stood at 157 million kilograms in 2000. But by 2016, even as the use of plastics for CDs and their cases plummeted, the storage and sharing of online music files in the US generated between 200 million and 350 million kilograms of greenhouse emissions.

Recycling costs

Tech executives say they're taking action to shrink their environmental footprints. Carole Marechal of DATA4, which operates data centers in France, Italy and Luxembourg, said her clients can get real-time readings of how much energy and water they are using, as well as their share of greenhouse gas emissions. "But it's not limited only to energy consumption," Marechal said, pointing to the energy and resources required to build digital infrastructures worldwide, and to recycle them. — AFP

Activists petition to halt Japan dolphin hunt

TOKYO: Campaigners on Friday urged a court in Japan to halt so-called "drive hunting" of dolphins in the country as part of an unprecedented lawsuit that argues the practice violates Japanese law. The plaintiffs argued before the court that the hunting method is cruel, and also that the capture of dolphins for sale to aquariums cannot be deemed a traditional cultural practice, said Kyoko Yoshida, who is representing the activists.

The lawsuit, filed in February, is the first-ever legal challenge to the hunt in the town of Taiji, in Japan's western Wakayama prefecture, the plaintiffs say. The town was thrust into the international spotlight by the Oscar-winning documentary "The Cove", which filmed the

process of "drive hunting," whereby fisherman herd dolphins into a cove by beating on boats to disorient them.

The panicked animals can get tangled in nets, suffocate and drown, and can also be injured or killed when they smash into rocks, activists say. Other dolphins are killed when fisherman thrust a long metal rod repeatedly into the body to damage the spinal cord, a practice activists consider excessively cruel. Many in Japan felt the film unfairly targeted the town's fishing community, but others were horrified by the disturbing footage. The plaintiffs want the governor of Wakayama to revoke a three-year drive hunting permit in Taiji. But defenders of the hunt say dolphins have long been a traditional source of meat and call the practice an important part of local culture. They also point out that dolphins are not endangered.

Activists say an increasing number of dolphins are also being trapped and sold live to aquariums as demand rises from China or elsewhere. — AFP

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مستشفى دار الشفا Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tel: 1802 555

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

Specialized in:

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

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

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

Specialized in:

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

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

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

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

Scope of Clinical Practice:

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

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

مستشفى دار الشفا Dar Al Shifa Hospital
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DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

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

Academic Certificates - Training

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

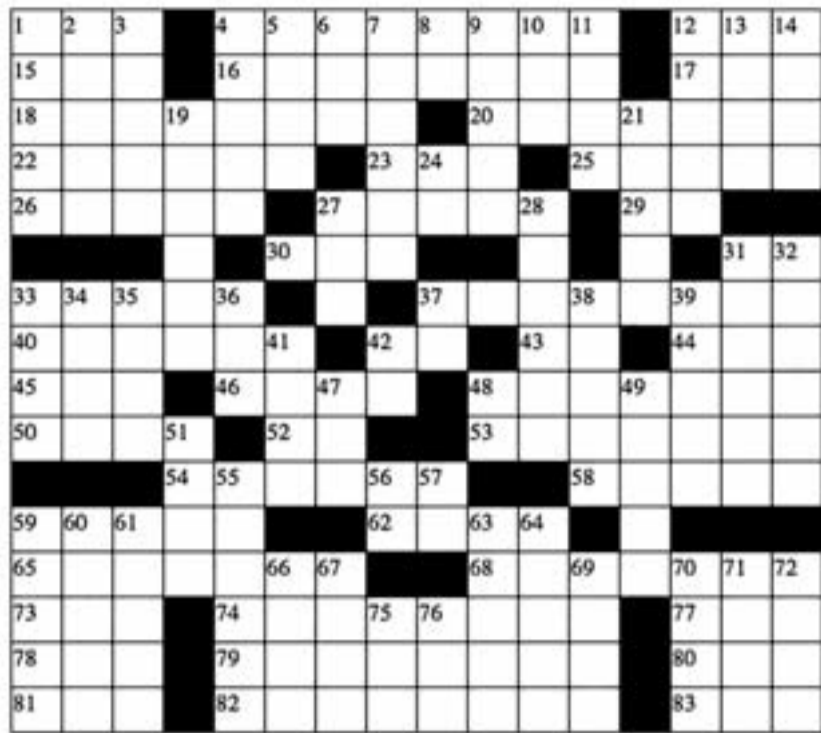
Scope of clinical Practice.

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

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com **Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228**
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2212



- ACROSS**
- A room equipped with toilet facilities.
 - One who habitually ignores the law and does not answer court summonses.
 - God of the earth.
 - North American republic containing 50 states - 48 contiguous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
 - Free-tail bats.
 - The organ of sight ('peeper' is an informal term for 'eye').
 - Combine with carbon, in chemistry.
 - (of pages) Worn or soiled by thumb and fingers by frequent handling or turning.
 - Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
 - Hormone released by the hypothalamus that controls the release of thyroid-stimulating hormone from the anterior pituitary.
 - Any of various perennial South American plants of the genus *Loasa* having stinging hairs and showy white or yellow or reddish-orange flowers.
 - A disassembled barrel.
 - A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
 - Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc.
 - (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
 - An alloy of copper and zinc (and sometimes arsenic) used to imitate gold in cheap jewelry and for gilding.
 - The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
 - A small piece of cloth.
 - The capital and largest city of Japan.
 - Fertility goddess in ancient Greek mythology.
 - The 4th planet from the sun.
 - A radioactive element of the actinide series.
 - A state of abnormal softening of tissue.
 - An informal conversation.
 - The table in Christian churches where communion is given.
 - Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
 - Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
 - United States heavyweight boxing champion (1866-1933).
 - (Bible) The archangel who was the messenger of God.
 - (Sumerian) Sun god.
 - A battle during the American Revolutionary War (1777).
 - (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
 - Psychoactive substance present in marijuana.
 - A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
 - The longest division of geological time.
 - A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
 - City in central Iran.
 - Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- DOWN**
- United States screenwriter and filmmaker (born in 1944).
 - The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
 - Roman scholar (116-27 BC).
 - Caught or fixed.
 - Disturb in mind or make uneasy or cause to be worried or alarmed.
 - A lyric poem with complex stanza forms.
 - Make fat or plump.
 - A radioactive element of the alkali-metal group discovered as a disintegration product of actinium.
 - Gracefully slender.
 - Hormone secreted by the posterior pituitary gland (trade name Pitressin) and also by nerve endings in the hypothalamus.
 - Make high-pitched, whiney noises.
 - Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
 - Opinion or judgment.
 - English monk and scholar (672-735).
 - A tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
 - A combination of MODulate and DEModulate) Electronic equipment consisting of a device used to connect computers by a telephone line.
 - A motorized wheeled vehicle used for camping or other recreational activities.
 - An ugly evil-looking old woman.
 - A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
 - A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.
 - Relating to or characteristic of Hungary.
 - A sodium salt of carbonic acid.
 - (Roman mythology) God of love.
 - 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
 - A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
 - A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
 - A modified leaf or leaflike part just below and protecting an inflorescence.
 - An inn in some Eastern countries with a large courtyard that provides accommodation for caravans.
 - An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
 - Liquid containing proteins and electrolytes including the liquid in blood plasma and interstitial fluid.
 - A metric unit of length equal to one hundredth of a meter.
 - (Norse mythology) God of light and peace and noted for his beauty and sweet nature.
 - Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
 - A port city of south central Ukraine on an arm of the Black Sea.
 - A public promotion of some product or service.
 - A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
 - A blind god.
 - Annual to perennial herbs of the Mediterranean region.
 - 100 agorot equal 1 shekel.
 - A villainous Jew in Charles Dickens' novel "Oliver Twist".
 - (military) Signal to turn the lights out.
 - A device in which something (usually an animal) can be caught and penned.
 - A small cake leavened with yeast.
 - The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
 - An organic compound that contains a hydroxyl group bonded to a carbon atom which in turn is doubly bonded to another carbon atom.
 - A narrow way or road.
 - A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
 - (Brit) A tough youth of 1950's and 1960's wearing Edwardian style clothes.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your friends love your quiet authority right now and take the chance on you to help. Coming up with good solutions for some of their problems is your role to play at this time. After careful consideration, you give them great information. It's appreciated. Take this as a compliment on your honesty, being able to keep a secret and your practical minded applications to a messy issue. Circumstances may also have you using conservative views to create situations that can help in your own life as well. You understand others who are important to you much better now which makes your life run more smoothly. This is a time you feel better about you. Smile.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today is a great time to think about your life, what you want and what you've achieved. Do it from the privacy of your home while you enjoy being alone now and having those over you love later. It's your day. Make it what you please. Take some time to be with yourself. You need that now. Rest a little and think a little. Perhaps a good movie or some great music will perk up your day. You may even call someone whom you haven't spoken with or seen in some time. Have fun with family, friends and pets later.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Communication of all kinds becomes more important today, especially when with family and the neighbors who're like family. This satisfies a deep emotional need. On another hand, your quest for love may take you to a place that could cause problems with others you love. Sex and money count for a lot now to you and will for some time. Maybe it's too much according to those for whom you care. Wanting something or someone so much that it injures your abilities when it comes to money matters and investments you have with other people can make those others feel you're inadequate in a very personal way. Know that this is a focus now and take care of it before it gets any bigger.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You're feeling the urge to rebel against your own inner demons. What you consider good for you seems to be superficial. Therefore, you're in the mood to take your secret self apart, look it over and change what you're doing so as not to feel like you're hurting your spiritual self. Internal pressures come flying out of your mystical closet so that you must deal with them now. You want anything you do to be above board and straight forward. Anything that is secretive or feels a little off makes you cringe. Today, like yesterday, brings a younger person or woman back into your life to assist you with your needs. Take time to socialize later. That seems to pick up your spirits right now.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This may be a challenging day where you feel uneasy. Going against tradition could find you bucking the establishment in a group situation. Difficulties and blocks may find you having to work through items that take time away from the work you love. Personally, troubles are brewing even more than you know now. Communication skills are lacking in that you can't get your point across. You feel alone and a little unsure of you or your situation. Your home life takes precedence over other matters now. Care what ails you and make your transition but make sure the problems won't follow you to a new relationship.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Emotionally you draw care and love from family and friends. This helps you to remain stable in your thinking when you'd like to chase your dreams. Their care promotes better happenings in your life. They give you the latitude to consider something new and different. Right now, you may be thinking about one person whom you suspect of doing you wrong. Dark feelings could overtake your mind. Do your best to rid yourself of those thoughts immediately. When that negativity is felt, all it can do is bring more negativity to you. Look to romance and have a good time. That brings the best positive thoughts.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a frustrating day even if you do have to work on this fine Sunday. You'd really rather be socializing. It so happens that you can do what you want now. Call a group of friends to come over for brunch, hang out around the patio, eat something light and enjoy good communication on something superfluous. Relaxing is the best thing you can do today because you tend to be tense at this time and don't know why. After everyone has gone home, take time to hang out with your dog or cat, really all your pets. Enjoy the rest of your evening in your own way surrounded by those you love and those who love you unconditionally.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today is a time of thinking. Being alone to discover and mull over what you're considering now is best. That doesn't mean you can't enjoy this Sunday. Studying your life from past until now and realizing how to make your choices work is on your mind. You've got help from people who are willing to give you the opportunity to try. Take time to be with family today and discuss those breaks with them. They'll help you come to a good decision by propping you up and helping in any way they can. Thank goodness for family. The nervous energy you feel is the opening of the door to your new life.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Right now you're at a time where you need to lean on your standards to get through some obstacles. Friends and family help too as you go on your merry way through life. Thankfulness for the emotional support you garner from those close keeps you feeling as if you can make the transition needed. Outmoded patterns in your life is why this is going on now. Thoughts of retarding habits in love and in your workspace has you wondering whether you need to change those behaviors. Doing the same thing with the hope that it changes the next time is considered stupid by some who've changed. Make your world better.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Make decisions for work and home with a clear mind and the ability to integrate ideas to assist on whatever project. Talk is something you can do now even though you generally don't think it's that necessary. It's not that you're antisocial. It's just that you learn more from watching and listening more than talking, you think. Let others idiosyncrasies go. Don't give them the time of day when irritated by something they've said or done. Taking it on will only cause more dissent in your life. That's something you'd rather leave outside the gate especially with some of the days you've had lately.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Good gossip might be just the thing you need to brighten your day today as long as it's not horrible. Sensitivity to others problems is one of the best qualities you exhibit now. Being able to think about their problem and come up with a good solution brings both you and your friend, who's troubled, better times. Laughter is the best medicine they say and you're ready to deal out the comedic side of you to anyone close. Others who visit now come to hear your quick wit and see how you look at life as well.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a day you should take to yourself. The only others that you'll feel safe in having with you may be your dog or cat. Saying the wrong thing to those who come around you may happen easily now. This can occur without you even realizing you've said something to offend. Sit in the back yard or work on your flower beds so as not to invite neighbors either. If someone does happen to come over, then make it idle chat rather than a full-blown conversation. You're safer that way. Ideas and thoughts are okay as long as you keep them to yourself. There's no need for antagonism, either for them or for you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Hockey - Word Search

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

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------|
| ASSIST | NET | RINK |
| CHECK | OFFSIDE | SCORE |
| FACE OFF | OVERTIME | SKATES |
| FIGHTING | PASS | SLAP SHOT |
| GLOVES | PENALTY | STICK |
| GOALIE | PERIODS | |
| HAT TRICK | PLAYER | |
| HELMET | PUCK | |

Yesterday's Solution

Good Eating - Solution

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

- | | | |
|--------|----------|------------|
| BEANS | FRUITS | RICE |
| BREADS | MEAT | VEGETABLES |
| CEREAL | MILK | VITAMINS |
| CHEESE | MINERALS | WATER |
| DAIRY | NUTS | YOGURT |
| EGGS | OILS | |
| FATS | PASTA | |
| FIBRE | POULTRY | |

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

MONDAY, MAY 20, 2019



A Muslim man reads the Holy Quran during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan at the Datok mosque in Pattani province. — AFP

Denmark's fabulous food journey, from hearty fare to haute cuisine

Long known for their hearty meat-and-potatoes fare, Danish chefs have now carved out a name for themselves in the culinary world with trailblazing dishes at star-studded restaurants. With cold winters and sandy fields battered by winds from the North Sea and Baltic, Denmark is worlds away from the sun-drenched orchards of France and Italy, whose bountiful crops have served up gastronomic feasts for centuries.

Heavily dependent on its pork industry and known for its beer and aquavit, the Scandinavian country has traditionally had little to boast about in the kitchen. So when Copenhagen hotspot Noma opened 15 years ago—it has since been voted the world's best eatery repeatedly by British magazine Restaurant—it was seen as the herald of "New Danish Cuisine": inventive dishes using high-quality organic, local and seasonal ingredients. Noma paved the way for a new generation of chefs raring to break new ground such as those at gourmet restaurant Geranium, the only Danish eatery to boast three Michelin stars.

'New story of Nordic cuisine'

Noma, started by acclaimed chef Rene Redzepi, took cuisine "to a new level", says chef Wassim Hallal, whose Restaurant Frederikshøj in Aarhus also has a Michelin star. "That's how the new story about Nordic cuisine started." Fully booked months in advance and popular with celebrities, Noma has not only elevated Danish cuisine to new heights, it has also given the country a lot of very valuable publicity. According to VisitDenmark, some 1.3 million gastro-tourists visited the nation in 2017, accounting for 28 percent of foreign visitors.



People enter the Noma restaurant in Copenhagen.

And topping it all off, Denmark, now home to 27 restaurants with Michelin stars, in January won the prestigious Bocuse d'Or, the gastronomy equivalent of the World Cup, nudging out its Scandinavian neighbors Sweden and Norway. It was a French chef, Daniel Letz, who earned Denmark its first Michelin star in 1983. A lot has happened since then, with awards raining down on the country in recent years.

Starting from scratch

Denmark's culinary successes have been attributed paradoxically to the country having no gastronomic traditions to speak of. "When you have traditional dishes, it's difficult to reinvent them," says Szilvia Gyimothy, associate professor in tourism research at the University of Aalborg-

Copenhagen. As a result, Danish chefs have learned to make do with what they have at hand and tend to have an interest in organic foods. They've invented new dishes far from the traditional heavy peasant fare of pork with potatoes and gravy.

Creating refined, delicately flavored meals, chefs favor local specialties, honoring the country's environmental mindset. "Instead of looking (at) what is happening in the world, it helps to follow nature and see what is fresh now and what's happening in the season. That's what inspires us," says William Jorgensen, one of the chefs and owners of Gastrome. At his establishment in Aarhus' Latin Quarter, customers dine on halibut with lemon confit and watercress, blood oranges with buckwheat, garlic and verben, or potatoes with birch syrup and spruce.

Danish terroir

The late culinary awakening has seen the new chefs make it their trademark to use in-season, locally-grown products and the maritime diversity of the country's shores, defining a Danish terroir for the first time. And it's mostly all organic, with a sharp focus on responsible consumerism: more than half of Danes buy organic foods at least once a week, according to Organic Denmark. "Sustainability is earning a lot of focus in Scandinavia but it's not something that concerns others, for instance American chefs," Gyimothy says.

Denmark is considered a pioneer in recycling and sorting of waste. In Copenhagen, each household is encouraged to compost its own kitchen waste, and the goal is to recycle 50 percent of household trash by 2022. At his vegetarian eatery, Moment, bathed in light and backing onto a permaculture farm, Morten Storm Overgaard, a geologist and professor at the University of Aarhus, is



In this file photo Danish chef Rene Redzepi, co-owner of the restaurant Noma in Copenhagen, Denmark, poses for a photograph prior to a premiere of "Ants on a Shrimp" in Amsterdam. — AFP photos

pushing the culinary experience to the extreme. He insists people "should use every opportunity to make as ethical choices as possible", covering everything from the building to the dishes and drinks served, the interior design and dishware. Here, everything is sustainable and eco-friendly. "All dishes have to take their point of departure in our garden," he says. And many end up back in the garden: at Moment, like at Gastrome, almost nothing gets thrown away. "We use the bread and the peel for the chickens and they fertilize the ground in our garden," Jorgensen says. — AFP



A staff member lights a candle outside Noma restaurant in Copenhagen.



A cardboard bridge is lifted by white balloons near the Castle of Amboise, Central France. This ephemeral sculpture, 18 meters long and 250 kilos of cardboard is the work of French artist Olivier Grossetete. — AFP

German star in Cannes a go-to actor for Hollywood

He's played an SS assassin for Quentin Tarantino and shared a bed with Angelina Jolie in a spy thriller. While you might not know his name, you're about to hear an awful lot more about August Diehl. In his first starring role at Cannes, the German actor has stepped into the role of a lifetime as anti-Nazi martyr Franz Jaegerstaetter in "A Hidden Life", a World War II true-story adaptation by Hollywood legend Terrence Malick.

The notoriously reclusive Malick, who rarely gives interviews or shows his face on the red carpet, is expected to skip the Cannes limelight, leaving Diehl to play ambassador for the film. But the secretive director may well be in town, with an apparent sighting of him walking down La Croisette late Friday in the company of two men. The picture is billed as a return to narrative form for Malick, the director of "Badlands" and "The Thin Red Line", after the philosophical musings of recent films including his 2011 Cannes winner "The Tree of Life" starring Brad Pitt.

In the film, Diehl portrays the Austrian conscientious objector Jaegerstaetter, who refused to serve in Hitler's army on religious grounds and was sentenced to death at age 36. As for most German-speaking actors with Hollywood dreams, World War II is rarely far away as a

subject. Diehl, 43, burst onto the international scene with a small but iconic part in Tarantino's "Inglourious Basterds" next to Austria's Christoph Waltz, who would win an Oscar for his portrayal of the erudite, vicious SS Colonel Hans Landa.

At his side, Diehl played Landa's brash counterpart Dieter Hellstrom, a Gestapo officer stationed in France. In a pivotal scene in a tavern, Hellstrom unmasks Michael Fassbender's character as a British spy by the way he orders a round of drinks.

'Manly but no beauty'

Through most of his career, Diehl has embraced the path of a character actor rather than a leading man. "Striking, manly but no beauty-full of character and in a likeable way, crazy", was how Berlin daily Tageszeitung described the charismatic Diehl with the "bulging eyes". The son of an actor and a costume designer, Diehl lived on a farm in France's Auvergne region as a boy before returning to Germany for school.

He attended Berlin's prestigious Ernst Busch acting academy and launched his career in the top theatres of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. His first major movie



In "A Hidden Life", German actor August Diehl portrays the Austrian conscientious objector Franz Jaegerstaetter. — AFP

role came in 1999 with "23" based on the true story of a drug-addicted hacker with a paranoid vision to change the world. The riveting performance won him Germany's top film acting prize. A devotee of the Method school of total immersion in a role and a Robert De Niro admirer, Diehl has said his approach on screen is generally less-is-more. "I always want to give the audience not quite enough," he told German media.

A revolutionary fervor

Diehl played a Jewish concentration camp prisoner in the searing Austria drama "The Counterfeiters", which clinched the best foreign language film Oscar in 2008. Two years later he was cast as Jolie's side in "Salt", at the recommendation of his "Inglourious Basterds" co-star Pitt, Jolie's partner at the time. He played the long-suffering arachnologist husband of a woman accused of being a Russian sleeper agent. While the part did little to test his acting chops, it propelled him into a new orbit of stardom, even as he continues to tread the boards of Vienna's renowned Burgtheater.

Haitian-born director Raoul Peck saw a revolutionary fervor and flickering intelligence in Diehl's eyes to cast him as the lead of the acclaimed 2017 film "The Young Karl Marx". A similar spirit is expected to run through Malick's new picture as an intimate portrait of moral awakening and resistance. — AFP



In this file photo taken on October 1, 2015 shows veteran Hollywood actor Harvey Keitel walking on the red carpet for the opening ceremony of the 20th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan. — AFP

Harvey Keitel to play Meyer Lansky in gangster biopic

Veteran US actor Harvey Keitel is headlining a new biopic about Jewish mobster Meyer Lansky, who was a close friend and contemporary of notorious gangster Bugsy Siegel, the distributors said Saturday. Entitled "Lansky", the film focuses on the latter part of his life when the now retired-boss of Murder Inc. was in his 70s and living anonymously in Florida's Miami Beach, Voltage Pictures said. When Lansky takes on a journalist to tell his story, played by "Avatar" actor Sam Worthington, the FBI use him as bait to entrap the underworld kingpin whom they suspect of slashing away millions. The film is in pre-production with shooting due to start in August.

Keitel is known for playing hard-boiled tough guys, taking on roles in cult classics such as Quentin Tarantino's "Reservoir Dogs" (1992) and "Pulp Fiction" (1994), but also starring in Jane Campion's Oscar-winning "The Piano" (1993). The picture is being directed by Eytan Rockaway, who wrote the script based on a story by Israeli director Ido Fluk and writer/producer Sharon Mashih.

Although the screenplay is partly fictional, Fluk's story was partially based on interviews with Lansky by the director's father, history professor Robert Rockaway. "He interviewed Lansky for his research spanning decades for classes that he teaches, and lectures that he gives around the world," the director wrote in an email. In 1993, his father published a book called "But He Was Good to His Mother: The Lives and Crimes of Jewish Gangsters". "Eytan's fierce talent and unparalleled access to the psyche of Meyer Lansky will elevate 'Lansky' to genre-best status," said Voltage's chief operating officer and president Jonathan Deckter, describing it as a "mind-blowing story".

Born in 1902, Lansky moved to the United States with his parents at the age of nine and by his mid-teens, he was already running a gang with Siegel and went on to play a key role in liquor smuggling, gambling and guns for hire. With the FBI hot on his trail and fearing a grand jury summons and prosecution for tax fraud, he tried to flee to Israel in 1970 but after a year or so was deported back to the US. He died of lung cancer in 1983 and was buried in Miami after an Orthodox Jewish ceremony. — AFP



Indian actress and model Priyanka Chopra (left) and US singer songwriter Nick Jonas arrive for the screening of the film "The Best Years of a Life (Les Plus Belles Annees D'Une Vie)" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

Almodovar's ode to filmmaking hits the right notes at Cannes

Pedro Almodovar is used to a good reception from what he called "faithful" audiences in France - so much so, the director joked on Saturday that he was "Franco-Spanish". His latest movie, a loosely autobiographical portrait of a tormented filmmaker, could up the ante for the Oscar winner after an enthusiastic response from critics at the Cannes Film Festival, where it is a contender for the top Palme D'Or award. "Pain and Glory" reunites Almodovar long-time collaborators Antonio Banderas and Penelope Cruz in a wistful dive into the world of cinema and the highs and lows of creativity.

As ageing director Salvador, played by Banderas, looks back on his life, other themes dear to Almodovar take hold too, including the character's relationship with his mother and his explorations of desire and love. "I project myself in this film, but it's not to be taken literally," Almodovar, wearing dark glasses, told a news conference following the movie's Cannes premiere the night before, where it received a standing ovation.

From a scene about Salvador's sexual awakening to a tense discussion with his mother, many episodes were invented, he said, adding though his experiences had informed the fiction. "I did live through a love that was broken off at a moment when the flame was very much still alive, because of a set of circumstances," Almodovar said. "That's a very painful thing. It's not natural to have to end it...it's like cutting off your own arm."

'Don't ask'

Delving into Almodovar's life was also a challenge for a cast deeply connected to the director - starring in his early movies propelled both Banderas and Cruz into international stardom. Cruz, who featured in "All About My Mother" and "Volver" among other Almodovar classics, said she had felt unusually shy about grilling the filmmaker in preparation for "Pain And Glory", where she plays the protagonist's mother. "It was curious," Cruz said. "I think there was a form of respect towards someone who is lay-

ing themselves bare...There was something inside me that made me think 'don't ask'. Banderas said he had tried to wipe the slate clean in his eighth collaboration with Almodovar.

"To create this character I had to kill Antonio Banderas," he said. Almodovar, 69, headed the jury at Cannes in 2017, but has never won the Palme D'Or. "Pain And Glory", which already premiered in Spain, was one of the filmmaker's "best and most personal movie in years", IndieWire critic Eric Kohn wrote after its Cannes screening.

"Driven by Banderas' lovely, nuanced turn and the slow-burn exposition, it's impossible not to feel the emotional turmoil on both sides of the camera," Kohn said. Almodovar's "All About My Mother" won the best foreign language film Oscar in 2000 while his drama "Talk To Her" clinched the best original screenplay Academy Award in 2003. — AFP



(From left) Argentinian actor Leonardo Sbaraglia, Spanish producer Esther Garcia, Spanish producer Agustin Almodovar, Spanish actress Nora Navas, Spanish actor Asier Etxeandia, Spanish actress Penelope Cruz, Spanish film director Pedro Almodovar and Spanish actor Antonio Banderas arrive for the screening of the film "Dolor Y Gloria (Pain and Glory)" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



(From left) Spanish actress Penelope Cruz, Spanish film director Pedro Almodovar and Spanish actor Antonio Banderas pose during a photocall for the film "Dolor Y Gloria (Pain and Glory)" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



(From left) Argentinian actor Leonardo Sbaraglia, Spanish actress Penelope Cruz, Spanish actor Asier Etxeandia, Spanish film director Pedro Almodovar, Spanish actress Nora Navas and Spanish actor Antonio Banderas pose during a photocall for the film "Dolor Y Gloria (Pain and Glory)" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



(From left) Spanish actor Asier Etxeandia, Spanish actress Nora Navas, Spanish film director Pedro Almodovar, Spanish actress Penelope Cruz, Spanish actor Antonio Banderas and Argentinian actor Leonardo Sbaraglia arrive for the screening of the film "Dolor Y Gloria (Pain and Glory)" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos

'Avengers' star to go under cover in comedy cop flick

"Avengers" star Chris Hemsworth is to play an undercover detective in a \$40 million comedy about two mismatched cops investigating a series of casino heists, the distributors told media at Cannes yesterday. Entitled "Down Under Cover", the film

has been snapped up by Paramount with production expected to start in February.

The picture casts the Australian actor opposite fast-rising comedy star Tiffany Haddish, with the ill-suited pair thrown together in an investigation in which the main suspects happen to be a troupe of Australian male erotic dancers. Paramount has pledged a budget of \$40 million (36 million euros), with production expected to start in February. Brothers Anthony and Joe Russo, who directed "Avengers: Endgame" are producing, with the script written by Peter Hoare. A director has not yet been chosen. Hemsworth, 35, played Thor in the Avengers franchise, while 39-year-old Haddish made her breakthrough in 2017 with "Girls Trip", a comedy in which she plays a loud-mouthed but endearing friend. — AFP



Chris Hemsworth

Lifestyle | Feature



In this file photo taken on September 27, 1985 Chinese-American architect I.M. Pei poses with the architectural model of the Louvre Pyramid in Paris. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken on June 22, 2006 Chinese architect of the Louvre Pyramid I.M. Pei smiles in the Napoleon courtyard of the Louvre museum in Paris.



In this file photo taken on April 8, 2007 a general view shows the new Islamic Museum of Art, designed by architect I.M. Pei., in Doha, Qatar.

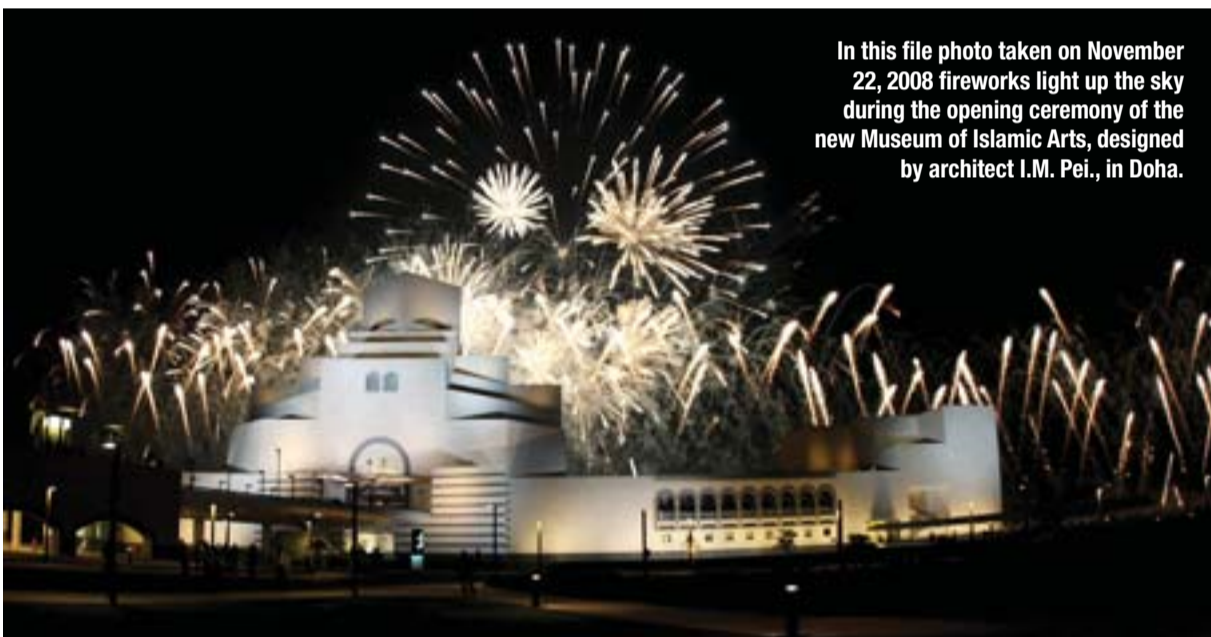
I.M. PEI, A PILLAR OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE, DIES AT 102

I.M. Pei, the preeminent US architect who forged a distinct brand of modern building design with his sharp lines and stark structures, has died in New York, his sons' architecture firm said Thursday. He was 102 years old. From the controversial Louvre Pyramid in Paris to the landmark Bank of China tower in Hong Kong, the Chinese-born Pei was the mastermind behind works seen as embracing modernity tempered by a grounding in history. Pei Partnership Architects confirmed Pei's death to AFP. The New York Times, citing Pei's son Li Chung, said the architect had died overnight Wednesday into Thursday.

said a New York Times review 30 years after its unveiling. French president Francois Mitterrand was so impressed that he had Pei hired to build a glass pyramid into the courtyard of the Louvre, the world's most visited museum. The project was deeply controversial in Paris and Pei endured a roasting from critics before the giant glass structure opened in 1989, but his creation is now an icon of the French capital. "I received many angry glances in the streets of Paris," Pei later said, confessing that "after the Louvre, I thought no project would be too difficult."

Master architect I.M. Pei in dates

- Celebrated architect I.M. Pei has died at age 102. Here are key dates in his life:
- April 26, 1917: Born I.M. Pei in Guangzhou, southern China, the son of a banker.
 - 1935: In his late teens he leaves for the United States to study architecture, receiving an undergraduate degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1940 and a masters degree at Harvard in 1946.
 - 1955: He creates the agency I.M. Pei and Associates, having been naturalised a US citizen a year earlier.
 - 1956: The construction of Mile High Center in Denver, Colorado, becomes the first in a series of major orders in the United States and around the world.
 - 1978: His East Building of the National Gallery of Art opens in Washington.
 - 1979: Pei completes The John F. Kennedy Library in Boston.
 - 1982: His Fragrant Hill Hotel in Beijing opens.
 - 1983: Pei is awarded the Pritzker Prize, considered the Nobel prize of architecture.
 - 1989: The Louvre Pyramid is opened to the public. The same year, Pei completes the Bank of China office tower in Hong Kong.
 - 1992: He is awarded the Medal of Freedom, the highest US civilian honour.
 - 1995: The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame opens a lakefront museum designed by Pei in Cleveland, Ohio.
 - 2008: His Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, opens.



In this file photo taken on November 22, 2008 fireworks light up the sky during the opening ceremony of the new Museum of Islamic Arts, designed by architect I.M. Pei., in Doha.

"Contemporary architects tend to impose modernity on something. There is a certain concern for history but it's not very deep," Pei, with his owlish round-rimmed glasses, told The New York Times in a 2008 interview. "I understand that times have changed, we have evolved. But I don't want to forget the beginning," he said. "A lasting architecture has to have roots." His work earned the 1983 Pritzker Prize, considered architecture's Nobel. Of his nearly 50 designs in the United States and around the world, more than half won major awards.

Modern angles

Born in China in 1917, banker's son I.M. Pei came to the US at 17 to study architecture, receiving an undergraduate degree in the field from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1940. He then enrolled in Harvard University's Graduate School of Design, where he received a master's degree in architecture in 1946. He became a naturalized US citizen in 1954. In one standout undertaking, he deftly inserted into the monumental structures of the capital of his adopted country the modern angles of the East Building of the National Gallery of Art, opened in 1978. The stunning concrete and glass structure features huge mirrored pyramids and a 50-foot (15-meter) waterfall.

It was "a composition of angular stone forms... that remains the most visible emblem of modern Washington,"

Grace and drama

Other well-known and characteristic Pei projects—often graceful combinations of geometric planes—include the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, Ohio; the Miho Museum of Shigo in Japan; the Morton Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas and The John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. He brought drama to the Four Seasons Hotel in Manhattan and Raffles City in Singapore. His Fragrant Hill Hotel in Beijing, completed in 1982, was intended to incorporate technology and indigenous building principles in a blend that would open the way to a particularly Chinese brand of modern architecture.

Despite being a confessed Islamic art novice, Pei was also commissioned to design the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, which opened in 2008 to great fanfare. The desert-toned building, inspired by the 13th-century Mosque of Ahmad ibn Tulun in Cairo, incorporates geometric patterns and is lit by reflected light entering from above. Pei spent months traveling the Muslim world seeking inspiration. "Islam was one religion I did not know," he told the Times the year of the opening. "So I studied the life of Muhammad. I went to Egypt and Tunisia."

Architectural 'poetry'

Pei dedicated energetic efforts to supporting the arts and education, serving on visiting committees at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Harvard and

MIT as well as a range of US government panels including the National Council on the Humanities and National Council on the Arts. He dedicated the \$100,000 prize money he was awarded as laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize to setting up a scholarship fund for Chinese students to study the craft in the United States, on the condition they return home to design and build. In 1975, Pei was elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Three years later he became Chancellor of the Academy, the first architect to hold the position. He was also one of 12 naturalized US citizens



This file photo taken on June 17, 2013 in Hong Kong shows the Bank of China tower (center left), designed by architect I.M. Pei., and other high rise buildings.



This photo taken on October 10, 2018 shows people visiting the new Suzhou Museum, designed by Chinese-American architect I.M. Pei, in Suzhou in China's eastern Jiangsu province.

then-president Ronald Reagan awarded the Medal of Liberty in 1986.

In 1988, Mitterrand inducted Pei as a Chevalier in the Legion d'Honneur, later raising him to the rank of Officer when Phase II of the glass-and-stainless steel Grand Louvre pyramid was completed in 1993. US president George Bush awarded Pei the Medal of Freedom that same year, when he was also elected an Honorary Academician



In this file photo taken on February 18, 2017 people walk around the pyramid of the Louvre, designed by Chinese-American architect I.M. Pei, outside the Louvre museum in Paris.



In this file photo taken on August 7, 1987 the Louvre Pyramid, designed by Chinese-American architect I.M. Pei, is under construction, in the main courtyard (Cour Napoleon) of the Louvre Palace (Palais du Louvre) in Paris.



This file photo taken on August 30, 2017 shows the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, designed by architect I.M. Pei., in Cleveland, Ohio.



This file photo taken on June 19, 2013 in Hong Kong shows the Bank of China tower, designed by architect I.M. Pei.



Participants pose during the mullet haircut festival in Boussu. — AFP photos



Men has his hair cut during the mullet haircut festival in Boussu.

IN BELGIUM A MULLET IS NOT A HAIRCUT, IT'S A STATE OF MIND

Belgium is all business at the front, in the very serious EU capital Brussels, but it's all party at the back, in the little western town of Boussu. Here, outside an artisanal brewery, hundreds of nostalgics and merry-makers gathered on Saturday to celebrate the mullet, the iconic 1980s hairdo. For some it's a throwback to a simpler time, for others an anti-fashion statement or simply a bit of a laugh-for folklore spe-

cialists it celebrates "dewanne", tomfoolery in the Borinage dialect. "This cut is a state of mind, a declaration of independence. It carries symbolic weight as an affirmation of self," organizer Damien Hubert told AFP, explaining how the festival evolved from a music video film shoot. "To be honest, I'm not sure that many people ever found the cut very attractive. We're not kidding our-

selves about that," he admitted. Laid back outback Australia has hosted mullet festivals in the past, but organizers think that Boussu's—which they hoped would attract around 1,500 people—is a first in Europe. Many of those who turned out on Saturday for a beer and a bold trim were thirty and forty-something nostalgic for the age of rocker Rod Stewart, footballer Chris Waddle or the US adventure series MacGyver, in

which the lead character sports a mullet. "When I was little, I was in love with MacGyver, this is like a return to my childhood," said 31-year-old Marie Vandeville as she went under the razor. "I'll only leave it a few days, afterwards we'll even it up." — AFP

Ramadan Fashion Show 2019



Models present creations by an Iraqi fashion designer during Ramadan Fashion Show 2019 in the capital Baghdad yesterday. — AFP photos



GAZA: Palestinian families break their fast next to a destroyed building during recent confrontation between Hamas and Israel in Gaza Strip during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan. — AFP

Boeing acknowledges flaw in 737 MAX simulator software

NEW YORK: Boeing acknowledged Saturday it had to correct flaws in its 737 MAX flight simulator software used to train pilots, after two deadly crashes involving the aircraft that killed 346 people. Boeing has made corrections to the 737 MAX simulator software and has provided additional information to device operators to ensure that the simulator experience is representative across different flight conditions," it said in a statement.

The company did not indicate when it first became aware of the problem, and whether it informed regulators. Its statement marked the first time Boeing acknowledged there was a design flaw in software linked to the 737 MAX, whose MCAS anti-stall software has been blamed in large part for the Ethiopian Airlines tragedy. According to Boeing, the flight simulator software was incapable of reproducing certain flight conditions similar to those at the time of the Ethiopian Airlines crash in March or the Lion Air crash in October.

The company said the latest "changes will improve the simulation of force loads on the manual trim wheel," a rarely used manual wheel to control the plane's angle. "Boeing is working closely with the device manufacturers and regulators on these changes and improvements, and to ensure that customer training is not disrupted," it added. Southwest Airlines, a major 737 MAX customer with 34 of the aircraft in its fleet, told AFP it expected to receive the first simulator "late this year."

American Airlines, which has 24 of the aircraft, said it had ordered a 737 MAX simulator that will be delivered and put into operation in December. "As a result of the continuing investigation into both aircraft accidents, we are looking at the potential for additional training opportunities in coordination with the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) and Allied

Pilots Association," it added.

The planes have been grounded around the world, awaiting approval from US and international regulators before they can return to service. Only Air Canada has a MAX simulator, industry sources told AFP. Currently, there is only one flight simulator specific to the 737 MAX in the United States, and it is owned by Boeing, according to FAA documentation.

US airlines train their pilots flying the MAX on a simulator built for the 737 NG, the version preceding the 737 MAX in the 737 aircraft family. Southwest said that's because during the certification process for the MAX, Boeing stressed that there were only minor differences with the NG and simple computer and online training could accommodate for the differences.

The FAA, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency and Canadian regulators had approved those recommendations, Boeing stresses. However, the 737 NG lacks an MCAS, specially designed for the MAX in order to correct an aerodynamic anomaly due to its heavier motor and to prevent the plane from stalling. Pilot training will likely be at the heart of the meeting of international regulators in Fort Worth, Texas on Thursday when the FAA will try to convince its counterparts of the robustness of its certification process for the modified 737 MAX.

The American regulator has maintained that training pilots on a simulator is not essential, a position with which pilots and its Canadian counterpart disagree. Boeing said Thursday that it completed its software update on the 737 MAX. The proposed fix, which addresses a problem with a flight handling system thought to be a factor in both crashes, must now win approval from US and international regulators before the planes can return to service. US airlines have targeted August as the date they expect to resume flying on the 737 MAX. — AFP

Bomb blast hits tourist bus near Egypt pyramids

GIZA: A bomb blast hit a tourist bus near Egypt's famed Giza pyramids yesterday, wounding at least 17 people, including South Africans, in the latest blow to the country's tourism industry. The roadside bomb went off as the bus was being driven in Giza, also causing injuries to Egyptians in a nearby car, medical and security sources said. There were no deaths reported.

"A device exploded and smashed the windows of a bus carrying 25 people from South Africa and a private car carrying four Egyptians," the security source said. Video footage captured by AFP showed the bus and car with broken windows on the side of the road. According to the security source, the wounded were being treated for scratches caused by the broken glass.

Ndivhuwo Mabaya, spokesman for South Africa's department of international relations, told AFP that "there might be South Africans involved" but declined to give any figures. Yesterday's incident comes after three Vietnamese holidaymakers and their Egyptian guide were killed when a roadside bomb hit their bus as it travelled near the Giza pyramids outside Cairo in December.

It also comes just little more than a month before the African Cup of Nations hosted by Egypt is to kick



GIZA: Photo shows a bus damaged during a bomb blast near Egypt's famed Giza pyramids. — AFP

off. Egypt has been battling an insurgency that surged especially in the turbulent North Sinai region following the 2013 military ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, who was replaced by former army general Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. In February 2018, the army launched a nationwide operation against militants, focusing mainly on the North Sinai region.

Some 650 militants and around 45 soldiers have been killed since the start of the offensive, according to separate statements by the armed forces. Since first being elected in 2014, Sisi has presented himself as a bulwark against terrorism, promising stability and increased security. Recently, the country's vital tourism industry has started to slowly rebound after suffering strong blows due to deadly attacks targeting tourists following the turmoil of the 2011 uprising that toppled longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak. — AFP

Saudi recommends 'gently' driving oil...

Continued from Page 1

than forecast, data from the government's Energy Information Administration showed on Wednesday.

Saudi Arabia sees no need to boost production quickly now, with oil at around \$70 a barrel, as it fears a price crash and a build-up in inventories, OPEC sources said, adding that Russia wants to increase supply after June. The United States, not a member of OPEC+ but a close ally of Riyadh, wants the group to boost output to bring oil prices down.

Falih has to find a delicate balance between keeping the oil market well supplied and prices high enough for Riyadh's budget needs, while pleasing Moscow to ensure Russia remains in the OPEC+ pact, and being responsive to the concerns of the United States and the rest of OPEC+, the sources said earlier. Yesterday's meeting of the ministerial panel, known as the JMMC, comes amid concerns of a tight market. Iran's oil exports are likely to drop further in May and shipments from Venezuela could fall again in coming weeks due to US sanctions.

Oil contamination also forced Russia to halt flows along the Druzhba pipeline - a key conduit for crude into Eastern Europe and Germany - in April. The suspension, as yet of unclear duration, left refiners scram-

bling to find supplies. Russia's Novak told reporters that oil supplies to Poland via the pipeline would start today. OPEC's agreed share of the cuts is 800,000 bpd, but its actual reduction is far larger due to the production losses in Iran and Venezuela. Both are under US sanctions and exempt from the voluntary reductions under the OPEC-led deal.

Oil prices edged lower on Friday due to demand fears amid a standoff in Sino-US trade talks, but both benchmarks ended the week higher on rising concerns over disruptions in Middle East shipments due to US-Iran political tensions. Tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran are running high after last week's attacks on two Saudi oil tankers off the UAE coast and another on Saudi oil facilities inside the kingdom.

Riyadh accused Tehran of ordering the drone strikes on oil pumping stations, for which Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi group claimed responsibility. The UAE has blamed no one for the tanker sabotage. Iran has distanced itself from both sets of attacks. Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said yesterday that the kingdom wants to avert war in the region but stands ready to respond with "all strength" following the attacks.

"Although it has not affected our supplies, such acts of terrorism are deplorable," Falih said. "They threaten uninterrupted supplies of energy to the world and put a global economy that is already facing headwinds at further risk." The attacks come as the United States and Iran spar over Washington's tightening of sanctions aimed at cutting Iranian oil exports to zero, and an increased US military presence in the Gulf over perceived Iranian threats to US interests. — Reuters

Roll up your...

Continued from Page 1

feels pain, it affects the mind - thus the level of concentration dwindles.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) discouraged laziness: Ibn Abbas (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "I mobilized a neighborhood of Arabs to carry out a mission related to protecting Islam, and they slackened in their response. Allah (SWT) withheld rain from them as a punishment (for being lazy)." (Al-Hakim rated it as Saheeh (authentic) in Al-Mustadrak 2/118. See also As-Silsilah As-Saheeha 6/129.)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would always seek refuge in Allah (SWT) from faults and deficiencies, including laziness. Zaid bin Arqam narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to supplicate saying, "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from inability, laziness, cowardice, miserliness, senility, and the punishment of the grave...." (Muslim 2,722). If Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would seek refuge in Allah (SWT) from laziness, this means it is a terrible vice that we ought to distance ourselves from after asking Allah (SWT) to keep us away from it.

If you choose to be lazy, you will pay the price sooner rather than later. Malik bin Nadhlah (RA) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "There are three categories of hands: the highest of which is Allah's hand, followed by the hand that gives (frequently without fear of poverty) and the lowest being the hand of the beggar. Therefore make sure you give from your surplus and don't be stingy on yourself." (Collected by Imam Abu Dawud 1,649 and its chain of narrators is strong.)

We construe from the hadeeth (prophetic narration)

above that you can't give if you don't earn. So this a clear admonition to abandon laziness and adopt proactivity so that you can earn, so that you can share with others, for which you will reap abundant rewards from Allah (SWT).

The devil ties knots on the lazy people. Abu Huraira (RA) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "The devil ties three knots at the forelock of one of you when he sleeps. By each knot, he encourages you to have a deep sleep during the night, which seems to be very long. So when one wakes up and remembers Allah (SWT), mentions Him and celebrates His praises, one knot gets untied.

When he goes to perform Wudu (ablutions), another knot unties, and when he prays Salat Al-Fajr (the dawn prayer), the third knot is untied. Therefore, the person would wake up active, enjoying a good mood and being characterized as good-hearted. However, if he doesn't do as instructed, he would wake up dejected, melancholic, malicious, apathetic and appearing sly." (Al-Bukhari 3/1,142 and Muslim 776)

Finally, we should understand that Allah (SWT) is our creator: He knows very well what is good for us and what is bad for us. Being active in obliging to the commandments of Allah as well as working hard to fulfill our mundane duties and needs that do not contradict with the Allah's admonitions will benefit us in this world and in the hereafter. So, let's be active during this auspicious month of Ramadan and explore every avenue that will bring us Allah's pleasure.

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

Sports

Astros beat Boston Red Sox to extend winning streak to 10

Trout hits 250th HR as Angels top Royals

BOSTON: Tyler White capped a five-run first inning with a two-run double, and Josh James delivered three scoreless innings of relief as the Houston Astros defeated the host Boston Red Sox 7-3 on Saturday at Fenway Park to extend their winning streak to 10. It is the second 10-game winning streak of the season for the Astros, who will win this three-game series between the last two American League champions. The 1969 Astros were previously the only team in franchise history to post two double-digit winning streaks in the same season. James (1-0) entered with two runners on and no outs in the fifth but worked out of the jam with no damage. He then retired Boston in order in the sixth and seventh innings and allowed zero hits and one walk while striking out two. The Astros made short work of Red Sox right-hander Hector Velazquez (1-3), with the first four batters reaching base safely to open the first inning. Velazquez allowed five runs on three hits and two walks while recording just one out.

NATIONALS 5, CUBS 2

Stephen Strasburg yielded just one earned run and four hits in eight innings, while Juan Soto had two hits and drove in three runs as host Washington topped Chicago. Strasburg (4-3) struck out the side in the third and finished with seven strikeouts before Sean Doolittle pitched the ninth to earn his eighth save—but not before his outing was twice interrupted by Cubs manager Joe Maddon, who filed an official protest because the Nationals' left-hander was tapping his toe on the mound during his delivery. Jon Lester (3-2) allowed five runs on 10 hits in 4 1/3 innings. In August of last season, he gave up eight earned runs on 10 hits in 3 2/3 innings in his only start of 2018 against the Nationals. In his previous five starts of this season before Saturday, Lester gave up just a single earned run, including none in his previous three starts.

RAYS 2, YANKEES 1 (11 INNINGS)

Austin Meadows homered with one out in the top of the 11th inning off Luis Cessa (0-1) as Tampa Bay edged New York at Yankee Stadium. It was Meadows' ninth homer of the season. Hunter Wood (1-0) tossed a scoreless 10th after being activated from the injured list before the game. Jose Alvarado worked around a leadoff single in the 11th and converted his fifth save in six chances after allowing three runs in the ninth inning Friday. The Rays halted New York's four-game winning streak and rebounded after allowing three runs in the ninth on Friday. Tampa Bay also moved to 3-8 in one-run games this year.

ANGELS 6, ROYALS 3

Mike Trout and Shohei Ohtani homered. Griffin Canning threw seven scoreless innings and Los Angeles defeated Kansas City in Anaheim, Calif. Trout's 10th homer of the season was estimated at 473

feet and was the 250th of his career. He joined Alex Rodriguez, Jimmie Foxx, Ken Griffey Jr., Mickey Mantle and Juan Gonzalez as one of just 13 players overall (and sixth American League player) to hit 250 home runs before turning 28. The home run also gave the Angels a 1-0 first-inning lead. Jonathan Lucroy added an RBI single in the second inning to make it 2-0, and Canning took it from there.

PHILLIES 2, ROCKIES 1

Bryce Harper homered, doubled and reached base three times as host Philadelphia handed Colorado its third straight loss. Harper's eighth homer of the season, a 466-foot shot to center field with two outs in the first inning, opened the scoring. Phillies starter Aaron Nola tossed six-plus solid innings and allowed eight hits and one run. Nola (4-0) tied his career high with 12 strikeouts against just one walk. Rockies starter Antonio Senzatela (3-3) was effective in five innings, giving up five hits and two runs (one earned). He walked four and struck out two. But his wild pitch in the third allowed Jean Segura to score what would be the game winner.

REDS 4, DODGERS 0

Tyler Mahle threw six shutout innings as host Cincinnati evened its three-game series by shutting out Los Angeles a day after being shut out. Mahle (1-5) returned home after six straight road starts and limited the Dodgers to four hits, striking out five and walking two. The Reds came in averaging 1.8 runs per game for Mahle, the lowest run support in the majors. Walker Buehler (4-1) pitched six innings, allowing four runs (one earned) and seven hits for the Dodgers. He struck out seven and didn't walk a batter. Dodgers right fielder Cody Bellinger, who came in with the highest batting average in the majors, went 2-for-3 with a walk to raise it to .409.

CARDINALS 8, RANGERS 2

Paul DeJong collected a season-high four RBIs as St. Louis snapped a three-game losing streak with a blowout win over Texas in Arlington. The Cardinals scored more runs in the win than they did during a losing streak in which they were outscored 21-6 by the Rangers and Atlanta Braves. St. Louis ended a three-game winning streak for Texas. Dakota Hudson (3-3) earned his first win of the month after allowing two runs on five hits, striking out five and walking two, in six innings. Ariel Jurado (1-2), who was making his first start of the season, allowed four runs (two earned) on five hits and one walk in 4 1/3 innings.

BRAVES 4, BREWERS 3 (10 INNINGS)

Freddie Freeman hit a walk-off home run to lead off the 10th inning to give host Atlanta a win over Milwaukee, its fourth straight win. Freeman, who was



BOSTON: Josh Reddick #22 of the Houston Astros runs the bases after hitting a home run in the fifth inning against the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

2-for-5, hit a 1-0 fastball from Josh Hader (0-3) into the upper reaches of the right field stands. It was the 10th homer of the season for the Atlanta first baseman and the 199th of his career. The winning pitcher was Jacob Webb (2-0), who worked a perfect 10th inning. Atlanta starter Kevin Gausman pitched six innings and allowed two runs—both in the first inning—on six hits. He walked two and struck out four. It was Gausman's first game back since serving a five-game suspension for intentionally throwing behind Miami pitcher Jose Urena last month.

TWINS 18, MARINERS 4

C.J. Cron and Jonathan Schoop each hit two home runs, and Byron Buxton hit a grand slam as visiting Minnesota belted six homers while cruising to victory over Seattle. It was the fifth time this season the Twins hit five or more home runs in a game, making them the first team in major league history to accomplish that feat before June 1. Buxton and Schoop each finished with five RBIs, while Cron, who also doubled and flew out to the warning track in left, finished with four. Miguel Sano also homered, and Marwin Gonzalez went 3-for-6 with a double as Minnesota pounded out 19 hits while extending its winning streak to a season-best five games.

PIRATES 7, PADRES 2

Josh Bell hit two of four homers clubbed off San Diego starter Nick Margerivius to lead Pittsburgh to a road victory. Bell, who now has 14 homers on the season, combined with Bryan Reynolds for back-to-back shots in the second inning. Bell then hit a three-run homer in the third. The homer assault—as well as the game for Margerivius (2-5) — ended when Gregory Polanco opened the fifth inning with his fourth homer of the season. Left-hander Steven Brault (1-1) got credit for the win, allowing two runs on four hits and four walks with two strikeouts in 3 1/3 innings.

INDIANS 4, ORIOLES 1

Adam Plutko allowed one hit over six innings in his season debut, and Jordan Luplow launched a two-run homer as host Cleveland had little trouble with Baltimore. Carlos Santana homered to lead off the eighth inning, and Francisco Lindor had an RBI single for the Indians, who improved to 13-4 against the Orioles in their past 17 meetings since the beginning of the 2017 season. Trey Mancini recorded Baltimore's lone hit with a solo homer with two outs in the fourth inning. He deposited a 1-0 changeup from Plutko (1-0) over the left-field wall for his team-leading 10th homer of the season. — Reuters

Azerbaijan invites football fans to experience UEFA Europa League final

BAKU: The 68,700-seater Baku Olympic Stadium will host the final between Arsenal and Chelsea later this month, with packages still available

16 May 2019: Azerbaijanis excited to welcome global football fans to enjoy the final of Europe's second biggest club football tournament, the UEFA Europa League, at the Baku Olympic Stadium on 29th of May 2019. The match will see two English teams - Arsenal and Chelsea - battling it out for European glory, attracting excitement from their fans around Europe and the world.

After hosting a series of successful high-profile sporting events over the last few years, including the European Games, the Islamic Games and the Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix this April, Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, is well placed to accommodate a large influx of visitors for this important game.

Besides watching the game, Azerbaijan hopes to tempt spectators to explore the country's many offerings of outdoor pursuits and high-energy activities to 'Take Another Look' at all it has to offer. As one of the safest family-friendly destinations in the region, the country is blessed with endless natural beauty, modern architectural wonders and remnants of rich medieval history. From Baku's modern Flame Towers, to the UNESCO-protected Old City, mud volcanoes and timeless rural villages, there's something for everyone in Azerbaijan.

Baku's buzzing cafes and bazaars make it an ideal destination for fans to enjoy both before and after the match. The country's unique geography and location have resulted in a cuisine infused with the flavours of the Caucasus, the Caspian and the Great Silk Road. From traditional bistros serving local delicacies to chic international restaurants, tourists can revel in a vibrant and affordable culinary scene.

What's more, visitors to Baku can still find a wide range of affordable accommodation options, with an abundance of luxury and mid-range hotels near the stadium and across the city, as well as plenty of well-priced hostels and Airbnbs rentals.

"We are excited to welcome European and global fans to visit Azerbaijan, with two powerhouses of global sport competing for victory here in Baku. After an intensive planning phase for the highly anticipated event, all stakeholders including the State Tourism Agency, government bodies and private businesses are prepped and equipped to welcome visitors and fans for



a celebration of football," commented Florian Sengstschmid, CEO of Azerbaijan Tourism Board.

To meet the increased demand for flights, Azerbaijan Airlines (AZAL) and others have organized more than

40 charter flights to accommodate fans for the match. All services of Baku's Heydar Aliyev International Airport will function at full capacity to ensure the smooth operation of the flights and flow of passengers.

War of Will wins 144th Preakness Stakes

WASHINGTON: War of Will won the 144th Preakness Stakes on Saturday, holding off a field that included a riderless horse to give trainer Mark Casse his first Triple Crown race triumph.

War of Will, who had a tough ride at the Kentucky Derby, had a smooth trip from the number one post under jockey Tyler Gaffalione, taking the lead at the top of the stretch and hanging on to beat late-charging Everfast by 1 1/4 lengths. Owendale was third.

An inquiry was briefly put up on the board at Pimlico racetrack in Baltimore, Maryland, but was quickly taken down. Bodexpress threw Hall of Fame jockey John Velazquez coming out of the starting gate and with outriders unable to catch him ran with the field past the finish line.

That was the biggest drama of the day, a relief after the controversial Kentucky Derby saw Maximum Security cross the line first before he was demoted to 17th for interfering with another horse with Country House declared the winner.

The absence of both of those horses—the first time since 1996 that the Kentucky Derby winner failed to start the Preakness—took a little luster from the race. But it was a sweet comeback for War of Will, who stewards ruled was hindered by Maximum Security in the Kentucky Derby as they turned for home.

"This is even I think probably more special given everything that we've been through," Casse, 58, said. "I'm not even calling it redemption. 'I didn't feel like he got his fair shot (in Kentucky) and that's all I wanted, fair shot. And he showed what he had today.'"

Gaffalione, 24, notched the biggest win of his career. "It really hasn't even hit me yet," he said. "I can't even put it into words." Velazquez said he was "good" after his frightening tumble coming out of the gate.

"He was just not behaving good in the gate," Velazquez said of Bodexpress. "He got me against the wall in the gate. 'When the doors opened, I was off right from the start and he kind of jumped sideways, and I had my feet out of the irons so I lost my balance and I went off.'" — AFP

Sports

World champ Gatlin edges Kiryu to win 100m in Osaka

India gender-row sprinter Chand says she is gay

OSAKA: Justin Gatlin pipped Japan's Yoshihide Kiryu to win the men's 100 metres as fellow American Michael Norman fired a world championship warning with a superb 200m at the Golden Grand Prix Osaka yesterday.

The 37-year-old Gatlin produced a strong finish to clock 10 seconds flat, the reigning world champion dipping at the line to edge out Kiryu by a hundredth of a second at the IAAF world challenge meet in Osaka.

Indonesia's world under-20 champion Lulu Muhammad Zohri broke his own national record as he took third in 10.03 — the fastest time ever recorded by an athlete from Southeast Asia.

While Gatlin targets one last hurrah at the world championships in Doha later this year, Norman laid down a marker by winning the men's 200m in a meet record 19.84 seconds, shaving 0.03 off the mark Namibia's Frankie Fredericks set 20 years ago.

The runaway victor, who last month clocked a personal best of 43.45 in the 400m, left Yang Chun-Han trailing in his wake, the Taiwanese runner-up in 20.50.

Ominously for his rivals, Norman insisted that he can still get faster. "I feel as though there are multiple areas I can improve on," said the 21-year-old. "I didn't feel as though the intensity that I usually have during a 200m was there."

Meanwhile, the Japanese men's 4x100m relay quartet made amends after their disqualification at last week's World Relays in Yokohama by beating Team USA into second place. Clips of Kiryu fumbling and then catching the baton in mid-air went viral, but the Japanese-shock Rio Olympic silver medallists behind Usain Bolt's Jamaica-made no mistake this time as Kiryu anchored them home in a world-leading 38.00

seconds. The Americans, who had Gatlin on their second leg, took silver in 38.73.

Meanwhile, top Indian sprinter Dutee Chand revealed yesterday that she is gay, becoming the first athlete from the socially conservative country to do so, and adding she feared being ostracised by her family after the admission.

Chand, who was at the centre of a lengthy international gender row, told AFP she had been in a relationship with a 19-year-old woman from her village for four years. "I am in a same-sex relationship and I don't think there is anything wrong in it," the 23-year-old said.

"For the moment my focus will be on my career with the world championships and Olympics coming up. "In future after the end of my sporting career, if my heart says that I should stay with her then I will."

The athlete said she feared social ostracism-including at the hands of her family—but added that a recent Supreme Court judgement decriminalising gay sex had given her the courage to speak out. "Recently my sister said something to my mother that got her against this relationship and she scolded me and threatened to malign me in public," she said.

Chand, who was born in a poor village in the eastern state of Odisha, was forced to undergo humiliating gender testing as a teenager. After being diagnosed in 2014 with hyperandrogenism, a condition which produces high male sex hormones, Chand was barred from competing under International Association of Athletics Federation rules.

She took her case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport which ruled in her favour last year, allowing her to compete in the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, where she won silver medals in the 100m and 200m women's



OSAKA: (L-R) Cameron Barrell of the US, Japan's Aska Cambridge, Japan's Ryota Yamagata, Japan's Yoshihide Kiryu and Justin Gatlin of the US compete during the final of the men's 100 metres athletics event at the Golden Grand Prix Osaka, one of the IAAF World challenge meetings yesterday. —AFP

aces. Social media users lavished praise on the athlete following her announcement yesterday, with many singling out her bravery. "It takes tremendous strength to come out in public. More strength to you #DuteeChand! You are and will always be a champion,"

one user said on Twitter.

India's Supreme Court scrapped a colonial-era ban on homosexuality in September, ruling that it was against the constitution. The 1861 law was often used to harass the country's gay community. —AFP

Wilder retains WBC heavyweight title with brutal first round KO

NEW YORK: Undefeated Deontay Wilder brutally knocked out Dominic Breazeale in the first round of their grudge match Saturday night to retain his World Boxing Council heavyweight world title.

Wilder, who has one of the most destructive right hands in heavyweight history, floored the challenger with a one-punch knockout with 43 seconds left in the opening round at Barclays Center arena.

The vaunted knockout artist Wilder swarmed Breazeale from the opening bell, hurting him with a straight right hand then finishing him off later in the round with the devastating right to the chin that was set up by a left jab.

"When I hit him with the right hand the first time his body language changed," said Wilder. "When you been in there with so many different guys you learn to recognize body language. I knew he was slowing down and opening up."

Breazeale barely landed a punch in the fight and his defence was non-existent as he walked right into the knockout blow. He lay motionless on his back, then got up at the count of 10 as the referee grabbed him and waved it off.

Wilder was very focused, showing off his superior handspeed, conditioning and punching power in another one-sided victory. Wilder, 33, improved to 41-0-1 with 40 KOs in making the ninth defence of his title against heavy underdog Breazeale.

Breazeale, who had lost just one previous fight to Anthony Joshua, dropped to 20-2 with 18 KOs.

There was bad blood between the two heading into the fight with the buildup marked by a series of macabre threats from Wilder, who had spoken of his



NEW YORK: Deontay Wilder celebrates after his first round knockout of Dominic Breazeale who looks on in the first round during their bout for Wilder's WBC heavyweight title at Barclays Center in New York City. —AFP

willingness to cause a fatality in the ring. Threats of violence are a stock-in-trade part of promoting fights, but Wilder's gruesome pre-fight comments were condemned by many in the sport as going too far.

Wilder's comments have appalled many in boxing, while WBC president Mauricio Sulaiman has vowed to hold a hearing into the remarks. Wilder backed off on his comments immediately after the knockout in the ring, making light of the death threats.

"Everything just came out of me. There was a big buildup to this fight," he said. "There was a lot of animosity, a lot of chaos, a lot of hatred against each other. This is what makes boxing so great."

"When you get into a fight and settle your differ-

ences as men, that is what this sport is all about. We can handle this with our hands and at end of the day we can say we lived to see another day."

Wilder, who won the bronze medal for the US at the 2008 Olympic Games, moved up the all-time heavyweight defence list and joined four iconic champions who also made nine straight defences: Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Mike Tyson and Lennox Lewis. The all-time record for any division is 25 by Joe Louis. On the undercard, featherweight world champ Gary Russell Jr. dominated former junior featherweight world titlist Kiko Martinez with a fifth-round knockout victory.

Russell was heavily favoured defend his 126-pound belt for the fourth time. —AFP

Montpellier beat Stade Francais to edge closer to Top 14 playoffs

PARIS: Montpellier can continue to dream of making the Top 14 play-offs as they moved into sixth spot after making a 14-man Stade Francais pay in the final 10 minutes of a crucial 42-25 victory yesterday.

Stade hooker Laurent Sempere was shown yellow in the 69th minute and the home side crossed for three converted tries to one to ensure a seventh win in eight games as they battle to be included in the end-of-season finals.

The result left Montpellier ahead of La Rochelle on points difference, but Stade Francais out of the reckoning. Montpellier will next week play a tough away match at newly-crowned European Challenge Cup winners Clermont and will have to do as well as, if not better than, La Rochelle, who are at home to Bordeaux-Begles.

The Parisians' Sekou Macalou ensured a thrilling start, the flanker bursting from a second-minute line-out to intercept a botched Benoit Paillaugue pass and sprint clear for a try converted by Nicolas Sanchez.

Ex-All Black Aaron Cruden spurned an opportunity to pull back a penalty, the powerful Montpellier forward pack rumbling over from a well-worked maul off the line-out, Springbok hooker Bismarck du Plessis grounding the ball.

Paillaugue converted to draw the scores level and

then knocked over the extras after Yvan Reilhac crossed for the home side's second try following a clever one-handed offload by giant Fijian winger Nemani Nadolo.

Stade Francais hit back as Macalou stretched out for his second try, Sanchez converting. Tempers threatened to boil over more than once, and Stade centre Waisea Nayacalevu was yellow carded on the half-hour for a reckless high tackle.

No 8 Louis Picamoles soon after joined Montpellier teammate Fulgence Ouedraogo on the sidelines after head knocks, as Stade came through Waisea's 10 minutes in the bin unscathed. Cruden broke the deadlock in the second-half, on the receiving end of a smart inside pass from Reilhac, who'd ghosted through an absent Stade defence.

Paillaugue converted, but Sanchez pulled back a penalty before the Montpellier scrum-half was yellow carded in the 57th minute. Sanchez booted a second long-range penalty to make it a one-point deficit.

It was Montpellier on the front foot, however, putting together a long sequence of drives that eventually saw Stade hooker Sempere sent to the bin.

The pressure told, Paillaugue burrowing his way over for a try he also converted. Straight from the kick-off, Montpellier latched on to a loose ball and after two kicks ahead from Du Plessis and Gabriel Ngandebe, full-back Henry Immelman managed to touch down, Paillaugue again on target from the tee.

There was a late consolation try for Stade winger Lester Etien, but that was cancelled out when Montpellier's replacement prop Mohammed Haouas sprinted clear from 35 metres for a memorable front rower's try.

In Saturday's action Lyon sealed a Top 14 playoff berth when they beat La Rochelle 29-19. Leaders Toulouse and second-placed Clermont have both already qualified. —AFP

Koepka seizes record seven-shot PGA lead after 54 holes

BETHPAGE: Defending champion Brooks Koepka overcame struggles to grab a seven-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the PGA Championship, the largest 54-hole advantage in tournament history.

Third-ranked Koepka, in prime position for his fourth major title, fired a level-par 70 at Bethpage Black to stand on 12-under 198 entering Sunday's final round.

"I feel confident. I feel good. I feel excited," Koepka said. "It's nice to have a seven-shot cushion. Just hit the center of the greens and try to par this place to death."

"(I'll) just stick to my routine, do what I'm doing. I'm not thinking of seven-shot lead, winning the tournament. I'm thinking of what I need to do on the first shot first tee." The 29-year-old American owned a record edge over a pack on 205 that included top-ranked Dustin Johnson, fellow Americans Harold Varner and Luke List and Thailand's Jazz Janewattananond.

"It's going to take something special to catch Brooks," Johnson said. "But it's definitely do-able on this course." The best final-round comeback by a PGA winner was seven strokes by John Mahaffey in 1978.

"We're all pretty much playing for second," List said. Matt Wallace, trying to become the first Englishman to win the PGA since Jim Barnes in 1919, shot 70 to share sixth on 206 with Japan's Hideki Matsuyama.

No one in major golf history fired a lower 36-hole score than Koepka's 12-under 128, and his seven-stroke advantage was the second-largest major halfway lead, trailing only Henry Cotton's nine-shot edge in the 1934 British Open.

If Koepka does capture the Wanamaker Trophy and the \$1.98 million (1.77 million euros) top prize, he will be the first man to own back-to-back titles at two majors simultaneously. Koepka seeks a third consecutive US Open crown next month at Pebble Beach.

"He's definitely, in these events, playing on a different level than most anyone else," four-time major winner Rory McIlroy said of Koepka. "It's awesome. It's so good. It's great to watch."

Koepka's routine tee blast and wedge approach made him a threat when he found the fairway. He missed a six-foot birdie putt at the first but sank a five-footer at the second and a three-footer at the fifth to reach 14-under and lead by eight.

From there, Koepka grinded through troubles with success to sustain his huge lead. Koepka found tall weeds and greenside rough at the seventh but rescued par by sinking a nine-foot putt and saved par again after missing the green at the par-3 eighth. Then came Koepka's worst slip of the week, a botched tap-in to bogey nine and a missed fairway to bogey at 10. Koepka went into trees and dense rough at the par-5 13th but responded by blasting out to 16 feet and curled in a birdie putt but made a final bogey at 16.

"I left a bunch of putts short," Koepka said. "I'm pleased I'm stroking it well. Just need to hit them a little harder." The PGA's largest prior 54-hole lead was five strokes, last achieved by Ray Floyd in 1982. The low 54-hole tournament score remains 196 by David Toms in 2001. —AFP

Pigot leads Indy 500 qualifying, Alonso struggles

LOS ANGELES: Spencer Pigot posted the fastest Indianapolis 500 qualifying time on Saturday while two-time Formula One world champion Fernando Alonso and fan favourite James Hinchcliffe will try earn starting grid positions.

Pigot turned in a blistering average lap of 230.083 mph in his second lap on Saturday to earn the top seed after the first day of qualifying for the May 26 race.

Spain's Alonso and Canada's Hinchcliffe, however, failed to make the top 30 on the starting grid and will have to take part in Sunday's last row shootout to try and punch their tickets to the 33-car race.

Penske drivers Will Power, of Australia, and Frenchman Simon Pagenaud had the second and third best times of the day behind Pigot.

Under a new format announced this year, positions 10-30 on the 33-car starting grid were locked in on Saturday, the first day of qualifying for the 103rd running of the race.

Saturday's nine fastest drivers will battle for pole in a Fast Nine Shootout on Sunday, the same day that cars outside the top 30 will decide their fates via the last row shootout—a one-hour session in which the last three places on the grid will be up for grabs. —AFP

Sports

'It's a sky blue world': City hailed as England's best ever

'English domestic football has never seen anything quite like this single-season'

LONDON: Manchester City's treble winners have been hailed as English football's greatest ever team after their FA Cup final demolition of Watford completed an historic campaign. Pep Guardiola's side became the first English club to win the Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup in the same season thanks to their swaggering 6-0 success at Wembley on Saturday.

Equalling the record margin of victory for an FA Cup final was the perfect way to cap a remarkable year for City, who followed their record-breaking Premier League triumph in 2017-18 with an even more astonishing run this term.

They are the first English top-flight side to register 50 wins in all competitions in a single season. Guardiola's men also scored a record 169 goals in 61 games this season, beating their own previous best of 156.

City now rank high on the list of the greatest English teams of all-time. Only a select few can claim to be on a par with City, an elite group that includes Arsenal's 2004 'Invincibles', Manchester United's 1999 vintage, who won the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup, and the Liverpool team of 1984, who lifted the old First Division, the European Cup and the League Cup.

The world's media were united in their praise for Guardiola's men, who have won five of the last six domestic trophies. BBC Sport's Phil McNulty wrote: "The club once loftily dismissed as 'noisy neighbours' by then-Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson confirmed they now exert a domestic dominance that speaks eloquently on their behalf with a crushing, brutal 6-0 dismissal of Watford.

"This may have been a victory lap completed with embarrassing ease, with early Watford body blows par-

ried in comfort before a form of footballing torture ensued, but this was arguably the greatest day in City's history as this treble was won ruthlessly, spectacularly."

Eurosport labelled City as the country's greatest ever, writing: "They may not have won the Champions League but the cold hard facts don't lie: Manchester City are the best team to ever grace English football."

The Guardian's Barney Ronay summed up City's majestic form over the last year. "Manchester City's historic FA Cup final win was almost swamped by the glowing list of statistics piling up around them - but nothing can disguise the scale of this achievement and the brilliance of Pep Guardiola's team," he wrote.

"Welcome to the new order. Domestic games: played 51, won 43. Domestic trophies: three out of three. Five-goal hauls: 11. Defeats since Christmas: one. "Scan the history books, fan back to the big city clubs of Victorian times, linger on the red-shirted eras of the last 50 years.

"English domestic football has never seen anything quite like this single-season hit from Manchester City. It turns out we really do all live in a sky blue world now."

'ENJOY THE MOMENT'

City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne came off the bench to score in the FA Cup final, ending an injury-plagued season on a high for the Belgian. De Bruyne insisted it is hard to compare different eras when it comes to rating the all-time greats.

But he was happy to reflect on a truly breathtaking campaign for the treble winners. "It has been an unbelievable season to win three titles. It says enough," De Bruyne said. "To compare generations is very difficult. We are happy to be in the conversation but we should



LONDON: Manchester City's Belgian captain Vincent Kompany (C) lifts the winner's trophy as the players celebrate victory after the English FA Cup final football match between Manchester City and Watford at Wembley stadium in London. Manchester City beat Watford 6-0 at Wembley to claim the FA Cup. —AFP

just enjoy the moment because it doesn't happen very often." De Bruyne says it is "already an honour" to be considered one of the best teams in English football history, but he won't indulge talk of going one better by winning next season's Champions League.

"It is not about topping it, it is about being con-

sistent and trying to achieve the best," he said. "We are not starting the season saying we want to win three titles or four titles, we want to play the way we play and do our best. "It is not all about the end product, it is about the journey and you appreciate it even more." —AFP

Betis coach Setien to leave club after beating Real Madrid

MADRID: Real Betis coach Quique Setien is to leave the club by mutual consent, the La Liga side said yesterday after he enjoyed a memorable end to his two-year tenure by winning 2-0 at Real Madrid.

"Real Betis and Quique Setien have decided that the coach will not be in charge of the club next season," said a statement from the club, who finished 10th in La Liga after coming sixth last season.

"In the last two years Setien has taken Betis back into Europe, he has increased

the squad's value, he has strengthened the club's academy and he has earned massive victories which will go down as some of the best in Betis' history."

Sunday's win at the Bernabeu was Betis' second successive victory away to Real Madrid, while earlier this season Setien's side beat champions Barcelona 4-3, becoming the first team in over two years to win at the Nou Camp.

Betis also beat runners-up Atletico Madrid this season and Setien earned widespread admiration for instilling an attractive and courageous style of play in his team, geared towards having a lot of possession.

Yet his side struggled for consistency and suffered embarrassing defeats to some of the lowest-ranked teams in La Liga, including a 3-0 loss at Leganes and a 4-0 thrashing away to Levante.

Betis ended the season on 50 points, three behind seventh-placed Espanyol who took the final Europa League qualification berth.

"The club would like to show its gratitude to Setien and his coaching staff for



MADRID: Real Madrid's French coach Zinedine Zidane (R) speaks to Real Betis' Spanish coach Quique Setien before the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid and Real Betis at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid yesterday. —AFP

the work they have done in these last two years," added Betis' statement. "They have contributed to the improvement of

the team and the stability of the club and we wish them well in the future on a personal and professional level." — Reuters

Bale bows out on bench as Madrid blow season finale

MADRID: Real Madrid delivered a suitably dreadful end to their miserable season, and Gareth Bale was not even given the chance to say a likely goodbye, as Zinedine Zidane's side were beaten 2-0 at home to Real Betis yesterday.

Zidane had indicated this could be Bale's final game ahead of an expected summer departure but the Welshman was left on the bench, made to watch on as three substitutes came on ahead of him at the Santiago Bernabeu.

None were able to revive another dreary and disjointed Madrid performance, which concluded both the season and first phase of Zidane's much-hailed return as coach. "The best thing for us is that it's over and we can think about next year," he said afterwards. "Because things will change, for sure."

As the players saluted the fans at the end, they were greeted by a chorus of whistles. By then, Bale was already off down the tunnel, perhaps aware that any attempt at a farewell could be given an even colder reception.

"I'm sorry, I didn't give Bale minutes today," Zidane said. "But I don't know what's going to happen. I have to make decisions based on today and the match." Zidane will rightly not be held culpable for most of Madrid's failings this season, including finishing third in La Liga, 18 points behind Barcelona and eight adrift of Atletico Madrid, not to mention crashing out of the Champions League in the last 16.

He will also not be blamed for their league total of 68 points, their lowest in 17 years, nor the 12 defeats. Real Madrid have not had more in a single league campaign since 1974. But even if few expected the deep-rooted problems to vanish after Zidane's arrival in March, most Madrid fans would have hoped at least for signs of improvement.

Instead, they have now won five of his 11 games in charge this season and out of the last five have won one and lost three. Some of the displays, including this one, were as bad as anything seen under either Julen Lopetegui or Santiago Solari. —AFP

FOCC 20th anniversary, ABK CRYcket 2018 held

KUWAIT: Friends of CRY Club, Kuwait (FOCC) celebrated their 20th Anniversary of conducting school cricket tournament in Kuwait on January 18, 2019 at the lush green Kuwait Oil Company stadium, Al Ahmadi. In fact, the FOCC organized tournament is very the first of its kind to promote grass root level cricket in Kuwait providing school children an opportunity to play competitive and organized level cricket. Having established in 1998, FOCC successfully hosted the "ABK CRYcket" tournament which was sponsored by Ahli Bank of Kuwait.

As seen last year, the venue was perfect to launch the much awaited tourney as the facility had all the required amenities and ambiance to conduct a tournament. The weather though, was quite chilly - especially in the morning session but otherwise the entire day was brilliant and the enthusiasm of the participants, parents and friends, so high.

"CRYcket" is an annual softball cricket tournament, played in 7-over match format, for children in two age

groups of under 12 (U-12) & under 14 (U-14). The tournament is open to Schools, Clubs and independent teams and is completed in a single day, with two matches being played simultaneously.

This year, the "Dashing Knights" clinched the winners' trophy in the U-14 category for the second successive year and MG 7 Warriors were the Runners Up. The winner's trophy in the Under-12 was clinched by MG 7 Warriors and Runners Up was CCC. The best player awards were claimed by Anirudh S of Dashing Knights in the U 14 Category & Aryan Siju of MG 7 Warriors in the U 12 category.

Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continued their event sponsorship for the "ABK CRYcket 2018" for the third successive year and FOC would like to extend their gratitude to ABK Management for their support. Our thanks to Arab Times, Kuwait Times, Times Kuwait, and Indians in Kuwait.com for giving us wide publicity.

We had new CRY buddies who joined us this year. The KID'S CORNER, raffle tickets sale, BUY for CRY was under their charge. As usual toys, books and many household items were available at amazing bargain prices. The Raffle draw was as usual a huge success and featured 13 prizes to be won.

This year we had a record registration of 23 teams, out of the 24 available slots. A big thank you to all the Players, Team Managers, Coaches and the Parents. Most importantly, we highly appreciate the umpires

and scorers, our unseen strength, year after year. In the U-12 category teams at the league stage were: CCC, MG Warriors, Dashing Knights, Winning XI, MG Tigers, SCA American Tourister, RCA Strikers, Rising Superstars, 22 Yards Cricket Academy, 664 Hitters, RCA Warriors and Salmiya Riders.

In the U-14 category, teams at the league stage were: CCC, Fresh Starz, Magnificent XI, Dashing Knights, SCA American Tourister, 664 Hitters, RCA, Rising Stars, 22 Yards Cricket Academy, IPS Stars, MG U14

FOCC is proud to be partners with CRY - in our joint mission to help the underprivileged children. Those interested in joining hands with FOCC may please visit www.focckuwait.org, or contact any of the volunteers. With CRY, everybody wins.

first team regulars. As they look ahead to next season, Bayern are not only on the verge of a generational shift, but also of what club president Uli Hoeness has called "the biggest investment programme in our history". Bayern have already completed the signings of World Cup winning French defenders Benjamin Pavard and Lucas Hernandez for 35 million euros (\$39.3m) and a club record 80 million euros (\$89.9m) respectively. RB Leipzig striker Timo Werner, Ajax defender Matthijs De Ligt and Schalke goalkeeper Alexander Nuebel have all also been linked to the club in recent months. Though Hoeness said on Saturday that Bayern would not break any more transfer records, they are expected to make several more signings, with CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge setting his sights on a new winger.

"Because we are losing Robben and Ribery, we need another good alternative alongside (18-year-old Canadian) Alphonso Davies," Rummenigge told Bild newspaper last month. That alternative could be Chelsea talent Callum Hudson-Odoi, for whom Bayern made an unsuccessful bid last January. —AFP

Golden era to brand new dawn: Bayern set for major overhaul

BERLIN: Bayern Munich's seventh successive Bundesliga title win on Saturday marked both the end of a golden era and the dawning of a new age. The 2019 title crowned what has been a glistening decade of success for Bayern, as iconic players such as Franck Ribery and Arjen Robben picked up yet another gong in their final season at the club.

Yet it also heralded the emergence of a new generation under coach Niko Kovac, with the likes of Leon Goretzka and Serge Gnabry establishing themselves as

and scorers, our unseen strength, year after year.

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ROME: Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova (R) poses with the trophy after winning against Britain's Johanna Konta (L) the WTA Masters tournament final tennis match at the Foro Italico camp in Rome, yesterday. —AFP

Pliskova ousts Konta to win Italian Open

First Czech woman to win Rome tournament since Regina Marsikova

ROME: Czech fourth seed Karolina Pliskova swept past Britain's Johanna Konta 6-3, 6-4 to win the WTA Italian Open yesterday. Pliskova, the 2017 French Open semi-finalist, clinched her 13th career title, in the final major warm-up tournament on clay before Roland Garros starts on May 26.

A break in each set was enough for the former world number one to get past Konta, sealing victory on her third match point after 85 minutes on court. "It was a great week for me and my team," said the 27-year-old, now coached by former Rome champion Conchita Martinez.

"There were a couple of tough matches so I was happy to fight through them. I was a little bit nervous today, but it was my first final in Rome, so that's to be expected."

She had never gone past the semi-finals in her four

previous appearances in Rome. Last year she exited in disgrace after smashing a hole in the umpire's chair in a temper tantrum after losing in the second round.

Pliskova, the highest remaining seed, got an early break in the final and swept 3-0 up in just eight minutes on the red clay of the Foro Italico. A double fault when serving for the set handed Konta a break point but the British number one squandered the chance with a smash into the net with the entire court open to her.

Konta then hit a weak forehand shot into the tape and the ball bounced wide, allowing Pliskova to wrap up the first set in 36 minutes. Pliskova broke in the seventh game of the second set, despite Konta saving two break points, with the Czech world number seven powering through for the biggest title of her career since Cincinnati in 2016. She becomes the first Czech woman to win the Rome tournament since Regina

Marsikova in 1978.

'UPHILL BATTLE'

For Konta, who has won three WTA titles, it was her second straight defeat in a final on clay after the Morocco Open earlier this month. "It's always tough playing Karolina," said former world number four Konta, who has slipped to 42nd.

"There's rarely really a rhythm to the match. She plays with big shots, quite flat, and big serves. "It can feel sometimes you're fighting an uphill battle. That was the case today."

"She didn't really have a letdown throughout the match. "She played very consistently. I found it quite hard to get a footing into the match, which is credit to her. The 28-year-old Konta, the first British woman in the Rome final since Virginia Wade in 1971, will now

be seeded at the French Open later this month.

"I'm definitely pleased with this week. This is my second final in three weeks. That's still quite an achievement," said Konta. "I'm looking forward to Paris." Top seeds Naomi Osaka and Petra Kvitova pulled out injured during the Rome event, while Roland Garros champion Simona Halep crashed out in her opening match in Italy.

Four-time Rome winner Serena Williams also withdrew before the second round as her return after a two-month layoff was cut short when her knee injury flared up. In the men's competition, world number one Djokovic-winner at the Madrid Open last weekend will meet defending champion and eight-time winner Rafael Nadal. It will be the 54th clash between the world's top two men's players who have won 12 of the last 14 Rome titles between them. — AFP

Green triple-double fuels Warriors' comeback win

LOS ANGELES: Draymond Green exploded for a seventh career playoff triple-double Saturday as the Golden State Warriors rallied for a 110-99 victory over the Trail Blazers in Portland and a 3-0 lead in the NBA Western Conference finals.

The two-time defending champion Warriors trailed by 18 in the second quarter, but with Green driving them they produced another dominant third period to

seize control of the contest and the series.

No team has come back from an 0-3 deficit to win an NBA playoff series. The Trail Blazers will try to fend off elimination when they host game four today.

Green scored 20 points with 13 rebounds and 12 assists, keeping the Warriors afloat in the first half before superstar Stephen Curry came alive with 21 of his 36 points after the interval.

"I don't even know what to say about Draymond," said coach Steve Kerr. "He was like a wrecking ball out there, destroying everything in his path." His intensity was on display on both ends of the court, and on the sidelines as he exhorted teammates to keep pushing.

Klay Thompson added 19 points for the Warriors, who were again without injured star Kevin Durant. "All my teammates, my coaches have been telling me,

"Draymond, get to the hole, be aggressive," Green said of his mindset.

"We've got guys out there, Steph, Klay and those guys who draw a lot of attention, so it's on me to do my job and come through for those guys." CJ McCollum led Portland with 23 points. Damian Lillard, relentlessly double-teamed by the Warriors, added 19 points.

Center Meyers Leonard, making just his third start of the season, finished with 16 points. "We're going to give it our best effort on Monday. That's all that matters," Blazers coach Terry Stotts said. "We're going to give it our best effort and whatever happens, happens."

Leonard made the most of his opportunity early, connecting on five of seven shots from the field in the first half on the way to 13 points. The Trail Blazers, energized in front of a rowdy home crowd at the

Moda Center, quickly built a 10-point lead before the Warriors trimmed it to two — 29-27 — at the end of the first quarter.

But the Blazers kept the pressure on, stretching the lead to 18 in the second quarter. A steal by Lillard produced a thunderous dunk from Leonard, then Portland's Seth Curry stole the ball from his superstar brother Stephen and raced for a three-pointer that made it 60-42 with 2:28 remaining in the first half.

Portland took a 66-53 lead into the locker room, but the Warriors responded with a monster third quarter, using a 22-6 scoring run to take their first lead of the game, 77-76 on a lay-up by Kevin Looney-assisted by Green.

Golden State out-scored Portland 29-13 in the quarter to lead by three heading into the final frame and pushed the lead to 11 with 4:51 remaining. — AFP