



11 Alghanim honored for nurturing a new generation of business leaders



24 Iraq caught in the middle of Washington-Tehran face-off



27 'Exciting, but weak', is Bundesliga in decline?



Ramadan KAREEM

| | |
|--------|-------|
| IMSAK | 03:11 |
| Fajr | 03:21 |
| Dhur | 11:45 |
| Asr | 15:20 |
| Magrib | 18:37 |
| Isha | 20:06 |

Assembly calls for 'extreme' caution as tension escalates

MP Adasani to grill Finance Minister over alleged violations



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held an iftar (fast-breaking) banquet in honor of First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Army Chief of Staff Lt General Mohammad Khuder and senior commanders of Kuwaiti army yesterday at Dasman Palace.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly called yesterday for taking 'extreme' caution and sufficient preparations amid explosive security and political developments in the region that could escalate in a military confrontation. The Assembly said in a statement that it has followed with great concern the highly dangerous military, security and political developments in the Arabian Gulf and the region amid high potential for a breakout of armed conflict.

This requires taking the highest degree of caution and necessary measures to prevent the region from sliding into a circle of disputes and rifts that could destroy the states and its population, the statement said. The statement was issued following a special session held by the Assembly last week to study the grave developments and conflict between Iran and the United States.

The statement said that the Assembly debated in the closed-doors session the government's preparedness to deal with the developments and the possibility of a war breaking out and ways to provide

sufficient protection for citizens and expatriates. The session heard briefings by Cabinet ministers about contingency plans in the oil sector, food security, health and media, the statement said.

The statement expressed the National Assembly's high estimation of the role played by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the official stance of Kuwait in adopting a policy of positive neutrality and exerting great effort to defuse tensions and avert conflicts. The statement called on citizens and expatriates to consolidate internal front and strengthen national unity to confront challenges and dangers.

In the meantime, MP Riyadh Al-Sane said yesterday that he has decided to take part in the grilling against Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf because of the alleged violations at the Kuwait Investment Authority. He said that KIA has refused to allow the Audit Bureau to carry out its role in inspection and supervision.

MP Bader Al-Mulla had said that he will file to grill the Finance Minister early.

Continued on Page 24

KD 1 for updating bank information

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Starting from July, clients who fail to visit their banks to update their contact information will face a KD 1 charge for updating their information. An official from the Central Bank of Kuwait said this fee will be taken from clients who fail to respond to their bank's reminders to provide updated contact information by visiting a local branch.

Continued on Page 24

'Golden Card': UAE gives foreign investors permanent residency

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates said yesterday it will grant 6,800 foreign investors permanent residency under a new "Golden Card" system after they invested a combined 100 billion dirhams (\$27 billion) in the Gulf state. Typically, foreigners have renewable visas valid for only a few years, often tied to employment, but the gov-

ernment announced plans last year to ease its visa policy.

"We launched a new 'Golden Card' system to grant permanent residency to investors and exceptional doctors, engineers, scientists and artists," Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai and the vice president and prime minister of the UAE, said in a tweet yesterday. "The first batch of 6,800 investors with 100 billion dirhams worth of investments will be granted the 'Golden Card.'"

In May last year the Gulf Arab state announced plans to grant long-term permits to investors, senior scientists and entrepreneurs, in an effort to support its economy and real estate market, which had been hurt by low oil prices, but had not mentioned the Golden

Card. Economic growth has slowed since a slump in oil prices in 2014 and white-collar professionals are seeing stagnant or even falling employment.

"The permanent residency 'Golden Card' will be granted to exceptional talents and everyone who positively contributes to the success story of the UAE," Sheikh Mohammed said in his tweet. Last year, the UAE cabinet also approved providing renewable 10-year visas to foreigners with investments in the UAE of at least 10 million dirhams, if non-real estate assets account for at least 60 percent of the total. Investors can bring spouses and children into the country. It also approved five-year residency to owners of UAE real estate worth at least 5 million dirhams. — Reuters

Houthis step up missile, drone attacks on Saudi

DUBAI: Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis have stepped up missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia this week in a resurgence of tactics that had largely subsided since late last year amid United Nations-led peace efforts. The latest hostilities coincide with rising tensions between Iran and Gulf Arab states allied to the United States and come just as a sensitive, UN-sponsored peace deal is being carried out in Yemen's main port of Hodeidah, a lifeline for millions.

The Houthis, who claimed responsibility for last week's armed drone strikes on oil assets in Saudi Arabia, said yesterday that one of their drones hit an arms depot at the kingdom's Najran airport near the Yemeni border, causing a fire.

The Saudi-led military coalition said a

civilian facility in Najran province was targeted with an explosive-laden drone. It said on Monday that Saudi defense forces intercepted Houthi ballistic missiles fired towards Makkah, Islam's holiest site. The Houthis denied doing so. On Sunday, the Houthis said they would attack 300 vital military targets in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE head a Western-backed coalition of Sunni Muslim states that intervened in Yemen in 2015 to try to restore the internationally recognized government ousted from power in the capital Sanaa by the Houthis in late 2014. The movement has during the war repeatedly targeted Saudi cities and vital installations - mostly in border

Continued on Page 24



ABU DHABI: File picture shows a drone which the Emirati armed forces say was used by Houthi rebels in battles against the coalition forces led by the UAE and Saudi Arabia. — AFP

Iran's reach puts US, allies in striking range

BAGHDAD: Threats of conflict between the United States and Iran have highlighted the places and ways their forces, proxies or allies could clash. Iran backs militias in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, where US troops are also based, and in Lebanon and Yemen, located next to Washington's closest regional allies Israel and Saudi Arabia.

It is situated opposite Saudi Arabia on the Gulf, and along the Strait of Hormuz, passageway for almost a fifth of the world's daily crude oil consumption. Washington this month sent military reinforcements to the area, saying it feared an Iranian attack. Last week, unidentified assailants struck Saudi oil assets and on Sunday others fired a rocket into Baghdad's heavily fortified

"Green Zone" that exploded near the US embassy. Iran denied any role in either incident.

US President Donald Trump warned this week that Iran would be met with "great force" if it attacked US interests in the Middle East. At the weekend he tweeted that "If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran." The Iranian government has condemned Trump's remarks and US deployments as provocative and called for respect and an end to a US squeeze on Iran's oil exports aimed at forcing it to negotiate.

However, a commander of its powerful Revolutionary Guards said this month US assets in the Gulf were now targets. "If (the Americans) make a move, we will

Continued on Page 24



AT SEA: Photo shows the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) while conducting a replenishment-at-sea with the fast combat support ship USNS Arctic (T-AOE 9). — AFP

Ramadan Kareem

Boot Camp

By Dr Zaynab D'Elia

As Laila put the finishing touches on the evening meal, she knew exactly where her teenage son, Hamid, would be. Sitting in front of the television watching one of those "Boot Camp" reality shows. One week, it was Weight Loss Boot Camp, another a mock military Boot Camp, and another a Writer's Boot Camp. As he sat at the table he said to his family, those Boot Camp shows are great! It's amazing how a person can change in so little time with the right training and persistence.

After dinner, Hamid's father stopped by his room to say goodnight. Hamid was surprised to see his mother come in the room too, and both of them sat beside him on the bed. "You know, Hamid dear," his father said, "I think you are old enough this summer to go to Boot Camp." Hamid was elated. "Really Dad! You will let me go to Boot Camp?" Hamid could hardly control his excitement and was thinking of how he would add Boot Camp to his Facebook page for all his friends to see.

First though, he had a thousand questions. "But which Boot Camp, father? Where will I be going? What will I be doing? What will I learn? How will I change?" Hamid's mother chimed in. "This year, my dear son, you will be entering the month of Ramadan as a mature person. That will be your Boot Camp!" Hamid was puzzled, but his mother and father explained. What you see on TV are different kinds of Boot Camp.

One is about getting physically fit, another about learning how to defend yourself and your society, another about learning how to develop your potential. The blessed month of Ramadan offers you all this and more! Through fasting, you are burning off the extra accumulated stores in your body. In fact, fasting is one of the best known detox methods in the world! And because you are getting your eating under control for an entire month, you are really teaching your body that YOU are the boss!

Continued on Page 24

Local

Amir congratulates Indonesian President on re-election

PM receives ALO Director, Mishref Cooperative Society CEO



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of congratulations yesterday to President of Indonesia Joko Widodo on the occasion of him winning the recent presidential elections. In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished utmost wellbeing for President Widodo, as well as everlasting prosperity for the friendly people of Indonesia and for bilateral relations further development. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Indonesian president.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met separately with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Fayez Ali Al-Mutairi, on the occasion of his re-election as the director general of the Arab Labor Organization (ALO). His Highness the Prime Minister also received CEO of Mishref Cooperative Society Ali Al-Qadeeri. His Highness the Prime Minister praised the role of the society's board for their unique and high-quality services at Mishref area. — KUNA



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with director general of the Arab Labor Organization (ALO).



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with CEO of Mishref Cooperative Society Ali Al-Qadeeri.

Kuwaiti FM receives message from Saudi counterpart

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday a written message from Saudi Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Assaf on enhancing bilateral ties between both countries and tackling several issues of common interest. This came during a meeting between Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud. Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and a number of foreign ministry's officials attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled

received the credentials of the new Ambassador of the Republic of Chad to Kuwait Al-Batool Zakaria. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled expressed his best wishes to the diplomat and hoped that she would continue her role in enhancing bilateral relations between Kuwait and the Republic of Chad. The meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's office affairs Sheikh Dr Ambassador Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran, and senior officials from the Foreign Ministry. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al-Saud. — KUNA photos



Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the new Ambassador of the Republic of Chad to Kuwait Al-Batool Zakaria.

Zain sponsors girgian celebration at Social Care Centers



Anwar Al-Ansari and Hanadi Al-Mubaileesh recognize Waleed Al-Khashti for Zain's sponsorship.



KUWAIT: US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman with Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain's team, event organizers, and Care Center residents.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its main sponsorship of the girgian celebration organized by the Public Authority of the Disabled at the Ministry of Social Affairs' Care Centers. During the event, the company shared the joys and blessings of the holy month of Ramadan with orphans, elderly, and people with special needs as part of its extensive social campaign during the holy month.

The event witnessed the presence of the Ambassador of the United States of America to the State of Kuwait Lawrence

Silverman, Deputy General Manager of the Education and Rehabilitation Division at the Public Authority of the Disabled Anwar Al-Ansari, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, Deputy Manager of the Medical, Psychiatric, and Social Division at the Public Authority of the Disabled Hanadi Al-Mubaileesh, Shaikha Suhaila Salem Al-Sabah, as well as representatives of many ministries and embassies.

Every Ramadan, Zain is keen to reach out to the many segments of the commu-

nity, including orphaned children, the elderly, and people with special needs to share the joys and blessings of the holy month with them. 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 in the holy month of Ramadan.

Zain's team of volunteers participated in distributing gifts and girgian candy to care centers in an atmosphere filled with joy and happiness. The company believes the holy month of Ramadan is a special

time of the year, and it is always keen on sharing the blessings of this time with those who are less fortunate in the community. Zain's continuous participation with different segments of society is a testament to the company's belief that improving the lives of communities in which it operates is central to its overall activities.

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 programs to cater to the different segments of society.

Qaeda, IS still a threat to world peace, Kuwait warns

Protecting GCC from terror groups requires int'l coordination: Kuwait

NEW YORK/VIENNA: Kuwait affirmed on Monday that Al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State (IS) still remain a threat to world peace. The remarks were made by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN Mansour Al-Otaibi during a subcommittee Security Council session. Otaibi added IS continues to develop its secret network in Iraq and Syria, and aims to continue executing terrorist operations that endangers all success made by the international community in those countries, which forces us to exert more efforts to boost our work and cooperation if you want to maintain such success.

The ambassador noted that the three committees in charge of combating terrorism including experts that involved with them are considered one of the main tools to the council in combating the phenomena of terrorism, which in turn work to find the best suitable methods to end such epidemic that threatens world peace and security. Otaibi noted that solid cooperation that exists currently between the three committees and member countries, based on Security Council resolutions in combating terrorism, enabled the international community to make many achievements noticeable in the exchanged of visits, workshops, and joint media efforts along with international organizations, including exchange of information, among other practical steps. The diplomat thanked all who chaired the three committees in charge of combating terrorism, for their efforts and exchange of visits in addition to their evaluations, analysis, and

overall procedures along with member countries.

On another subject, Otaibi underlined the importance of sectors that require the greatest attention in light of the new proliferation risks and supporting national plans related to resolution 1540, including regional and global visits carried out by the committee and its team of experts with the importance of taking into account the special circumstances of countries in implementing anti-proliferation measures. "Kuwait has expressed its concern on more than one occasion about the challenges faced by the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the world today, the proliferation of these weapons and the increased risk of falling into the hands of non-state actors are issues of great concern, especially in light of the growing threat of terrorism."

“**Transnational crimes rise in alarming rate**”

Protecting GCC
Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative at International Organizations in Vienna, Sadeq Marafi said that protecting the interests of GCC countries from criminal and terrorist organizations requires regional and international coordination. Marafi made his remarks on the sidelines of the 28th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice being held in Vienna from May 20 to 24, 2019. He stressed the importance of the meeting in terms of topics on its agenda, as an opportunity to review the ongoing preparations for the 14th United

Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to be held in Kyoto, Japan, in April 2020. He referred to a number of topics related to combating and preventing organized crime around the world, including terrorism, money laundering and other crimes that threaten countries' stability. He added that the current session will discuss, among other things, the role and responsibility of criminal justice systems in preventing and combating crime motivated by intolerance or discrimination in all its forms, in addition to reviewing the 2030 sustainable development plan. Member States will discuss draft resolutions addressing crime prevention and criminal justice, including preventing and countering child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse online, cybercrime and terrorism and tackling all forms of transnational organized crime especially smuggling of cultural property. More than 100 side events and 24 exhibitions are scheduled to take place on the margins of this year's session.

Transnational crimes

In a speech during the session, Marafi said that Kuwait has affirmed that crimes, especially the organized ones, are increasing at an alarming rate, and had cross-border effects and growing links with terrorist activities. Marafi stressed Kuwait's commitment to the principles established by its constitution and legislations to enhance international and regional cooperation in order to achieve greater national and international stability and security. In this regard, he noted that Kuwait's accession to the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for the period (2019-2021) reflected a desire to contribute to efforts to strengthen international cooperation frameworks.

Ambassador Marafi highlighted Kuwait's measures to implement the principles and frameworks set forth in the previous deci-



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a subcommittee Security Council session. — KUNA

sions with regards to sustainable development and the promotion of the rule of law, the National Development Plan was adopted in accordance with the vision of the State of Kuwait 2035, which was recognized by Kuwait and in line with UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 of the Sustainable Development Plan 2030, he added. On legislative compliance with these goals, several laws have been enacted in Kuwait, including the establishment of the Public Authority for Combating Corruption, regulations regarding financial disclosure, the law on the fight against information technology crimes and a law on the rights of the child and another law on the establishment of the National Bureau for Human Rights.

Regarding the strengthening of interna-

tional cooperation in the framework of strengthening the fight against all crimes, Ambassador Marafi pointed out that Kuwait has signed many agreements on legal and judicial cooperation in criminal matters in the framework of mutual legal assistance. In his speech, the Kuwaiti ambassador pointed out Kuwait's interest in combating cybercrime, which is contributing to the spread of all types of transnational crimes, noting that Kuwait in 2015 issued a law on the fight against information technology crimes as a legislative basis at the national level. He also pointed out the importance of supporting the international efforts to combat all illegal use of Internet and calling for drafting an international convention in this regard under the umbrella of the UN.— KUNA

Panel submits '4,000 naturalization' bill to parliament

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Rapporteur of the parliamentary interior and defense committee MP Nayef Al-Merdas said that a bill on granting citizenship to a maximum of 4,000 people had been submitted to the parliament pending approval before the term is concluded. Merdas added that all needed documents and files of those legally qualified for citizenship should be prepared beforehand to avoid excuses of lack of time. "However, according to statements by the head of the illegal residents apparatus before the 2012 parliament, 34,000 bedoons recorded in the 1965 census deserve citizenship," he underlined.

Separately, Chairman of the parliamentary legislative affairs committee Khaled Al-Shatti said the committee will set a plan for dealing with the request to examine the constitutionality of the grilling motion filed against His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah by MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari.

In other news, Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi said investigations concerning building storage areas in Subbiya are still in progress. Responding to an inquiry by municipal councilmember Ahmed Al-Enezi, Manfouhi said the public prosecutor had been notified of the case and that the municipality's legal department is currently investigating the matter.

Cabinet reviews academic certificates' examination report

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Cabinet on Monday reviewed the fourth report of the committee charged with examining the academic certificates of civil servants and residents, referring to an explanation presented by the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Mohammad Al-Azmi.

During its weekly session headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on the results of his recent visit to Kuwaiti forces stationed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to partake in the Hope Restoration Operation. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on the outcome of the recent visit



The scene inside an office in a Farwaniya building where a fire was reported.

Firemen battle four blazes around Kuwait

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A fire on the third floor of a six-storey building in Farwaniya was put out by Jleeb and Farwaniya fire stations. The building was first evacuated and no injuries were reported. Meanwhile, a fire on the first floor of a Fahd Al-Ahmad house was put out without injuries. In the meantime, a burning house in Waha was evacuated and the fire put out without injuries. Separately, fire broke out in a Jahra Cooperative Society branch. Jahra firemen evacuated the place and fought the fire. No injuries were reported, as investigations are being made to determine the cause of the fire.

Road accident

A Kuwaiti told Wafra fire station about an accident near 306 Road. When firemen arrived at the scene, they found a vehicle that had crossed the barriers and flipped over. The injured occupants were outside the vehicle. A 25-year-old Arab man was having difficulty breathing and had suffered a head injury. He was helped until he was medevacked to hospital. A 24-year-old Asian man suffered shoulder and chest pain and was taken to hospital by paramedics.

of the Pakistani Minister of Foreign Affairs Shah Qureshi and his accompanying delegation to Kuwait. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah pointed to the results of the meeting with Pakistan's Foreign Minister, during which they discussed a number of issues of common interests in addition to discussing the exchange of experiences and information in all fields.

In the meantime, the Cabinet condemned the sabotage terrorist attack that targeted the two Saudi cities of Makkah and Jeddah by two missiles, as well as the drone attacks on two main pumping stations in the eastern region of Yanbu port in Saudi Arabia. It affirmed the solidarity of Kuwait with the brothers in the Kingdom and its support for all measures taken to protect its security and stability and called on the international community to take the necessary measures in the face of these criminal acts and their repercussions. The Cabinet also condemned the armed attacks in the governorates of Giza and Cairo, as well as the armed attack of a tourist bus in front of the Egyptian Museum in the Arab Republic of Egypt recently, which resulted in the death and injury of a number of innocent civilians. — KUNA

Man to police: Wife didn't make iftar

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti man went to the police station to lodge a complaint against his wife for not preparing the iftar meal. No case was filed because officers told him that his complaint does not constitute a criminal offense, and resolving the matter did not fall under their jurisdiction, a police source said.

Newborn found

A baby was rushed to Farwaniya Hospital after being found by an Asian man in a bag near a Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh mosque. Policemen and paramedics went to the area and found a newborn male. Detectives are working on determining his mother's identity.

Physical assault

A Kuwaiti was charged with beating two Egyptians in the Capital education zone. A police source said a dispute took place between a citizen and Egyptians who work at a department there, and things escalated to physically beating and injuring them. Both men brought medical reports stating the injuries they suffered, then lodged a complaint.

Mechanic attack

A mechanic lodged a complaint against a Kuwaiti who attacked him in an Industrial Jahra garage due to a dispute over his car's repair. A police source said a citizen got his car repaired by an Afghan mechanic in Jahra, then when he drove away, the malfunction reoccurred, so he returned. But a disputed erupted and the citizen lost his cool and beat the Afghan.

Fugitive nabbed

Authorities sent a bedoon to central prison to serve a seven-year jail sentence. The bedoon was arrested upon his arrival at Kuwait airport with a European passport, although he left the country using a Kuwaiti passport. The bedoon was involved in a forgery case for which he was sentenced to seven years followed by deportation after he was able to leave the country using the passport of a Kuwaiti. Police authorities said the bedoon while abroad insulted Kuwait and its leadership by organizing activities and demonstrations in front of Kuwait embassies, especially during national days, and also used his Twitter account as a platform to attack Kuwait and its leadership. — Al-Rai

Legalese

Freelance talent



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

This article is for entrepreneurs and creatives alike. There is no doubt on the importance of having active entrepreneurs and creatives in our society. With that said, there are many choices that need to be made on your journey as a business owner. One of these decisions is whether or not to hire a freelancer. The same goes for the creatives out there - if you are an artist, a graphic designer or a photographer, you probably want to know what the consequences and the legal differences are between working full-time or freelancing. I have written this article to highlight the most common questions about freelancing in Kuwait. Before I can do that though, let's define full-time, part-time and freelance work.

Full-time: A full-time job is when your time is dedicated to one job entirely, usually 40-48 hours a week.

Part-time: Although there is no definition for part-time jobs in Kuwait, a part-time job is of 4 hours a day.

Freelancing: Is when you are hired to complete a task for a specified amount of money.

Hiring a freelancer

Question 1: Should I hire talent through service providers or hire a freelancer? What should I watch out for from a legal perspective for both options?

Fajer: Deciding how or who to hire can be very tricky, but at the end of a day, it's a purely business decision that I should not really interfere with as a lawyer. But I can assist with things to keep any eye out for as a small business when making those decisions. There are a few options to look at:

1. Acquiring services through a specialized firm: If you need to hire a specialized firm, you need to be careful with the agreement that you sign. Many startups make the mistake of not signing an agreement with a service provider that includes detailed information of what they need, like how many hours of services, the exact services needed or expertise required. For example, let's say you are looking to hire a company for developing a mobile application. It is important to specify if the development will be for Google Play or the App Store. My advice is to be as detailed as you can.

2. Freelancer: Hiring a freelancer can be both positive and negative at the same time. With freelancers, you will be able to get work devotion at a very low cost, but many legal issues arise. Things to watch out for is how to make sure this person is liable for submitting the work required, and how to avoid a legal employment relationship where the startup may be responsible for employment responsibilities and obligations towards the freelancer.

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

Electricity restored in Nuzha after hour-long blackout

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: An hour-long blackout hit parts of Nuzha in the early hours of yesterday. Informed sources noted that the blackout was the result of a malfunction in a power unit, which was immediately dealt with by Ministry of Electricity and Water emergency technicians.

Charity inspections

The Ministry of Social Affairs' Acting Undersecretary Hana Al-Hajeri said 744 charity-related field inspection visits were made during the first half of Ramadan to follow up the charity donation collection project. Hajeri added that violations detected included using unstamped receipt books, violating the schedules set by the ministry and using one of the marquees to collect blood money.

Coding system

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued a new resolution mandating all insurance companies to use a unified type coding system on all insurance documents they issue from Jan 1, 2020. The ministry explained in a statement issued yesterday that all insurance companies will be provided with special forms with a fixed code per insurance type, aside from the serial number.

Qaeda, IS still a threat to world peace, Kuwait warns

Protecting GCC from terror groups requires int'l coordination: Kuwait

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“**Transnational crimes rise in alarming rate**”

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Legalese

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By Attorney Fajer Ahmed



This article is for entrepreneurs and creatives alike. There is no doubt on the importance of having active entrepreneurs and creatives in our society. With that said, there are many choices that need to be made on your journey as a business owner. One of these decisions is whether or not to hire a freelancer. The same goes for the creatives out there - if you are an artist, a graphic designer or a photographer, you probably want to know what the consequences and the legal differences are between working full-time or freelancing. I have written this article to highlight the most common questions about freelancing in Kuwait. Before I can do that though, let's define full-time, part-time and freelance work.

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Question 1: Should I hire talent through service providers or hire a freelancer? What should I watch out for from a legal perspective for both options?

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Qaeda, IS still a threat to world peace, Kuwait warns

Protecting GCC from terror groups requires int'l coordination: Kuwait

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The ambassador noted that the three committees in charge of combating terrorism including experts that involved with them are considered one of the main tools to the council in combating the phenomena of terrorism, which in turn work to find the best suitable methods to end such epidemic that threatens world peace and security. Otaibi noted that solid cooperation that exists currently between the three committees and member countries, based on Security Council resolutions in combating terrorism, enabled the international community to make many achievements noticeable in the exchanged of visits, workshops, and joint media efforts along with international organizations, including exchange of information, among other practical steps. The diplomat thanked all who chaired the three committees in charge of combating terrorism, for their efforts and exchange of visits in addition to their evaluations, analysis, and

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On another subject, Otaibi underlined the importance of sectors that require the greatest attention in light of the new proliferation risks and supporting national plans related to resolution 1540, including regional and global visits carried out by the committee and its team of experts with the importance of taking into account the special circumstances of countries in implementing anti-proliferation measures. “Kuwait has expressed its concern on more than one occasion about the challenges faced by the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the world today, the proliferation of these weapons and the increased risk of falling into the hands of non-state actors are issues of great concern, especially in light of the growing threat of terrorism.”

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Cabinet reviews academic certificates' examination report

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Cabinet on Monday reviewed the fourth report of the committee charged with examining the academic certificates of civil servants and residents, referring to an explanation presented by the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Mohammad Al-Azmi.

During its weekly session headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on the results of his recent visit to Kuwaiti forces stationed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to partake in the Hope Restoration Operation. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet on the outcome of the recent visit



The scene inside an office in a Farwaniya building where a fire was reported.

Firemen battle four blazes around Kuwait

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A fire on the third floor of a six-storey building in Farwaniya was put out by Jleeb and Farwaniya fire stations. The building was first evacuated and no injuries were reported. Meanwhile, a fire on the first floor of a Fahd Al-Ahmad house was put out without injuries. In the meantime, a burning house in Waha was evacuated and the fire put out without injuries. Separately, fire broke out in a Jahra Cooperative Society branch. Jahra firemen evacuated the place and fought the fire. No injuries were reported, as investigations are being made to determine the cause of the fire.

Road accident

A Kuwaiti told Wafra fire station about an accident near 306 Road. When firemen arrived at the scene, they found a vehicle that had crossed the barriers and flipped over. The injured occupants were outside the vehicle. A 25-year-old Arab man was having difficulty breathing and had suffered a head injury. He was helped until he was medevacked to hospital. A 24-year-old Asian man suffered shoulder and chest pain and was taken to hospital by paramedics.

of the Pakistani Minister of Foreign Affairs Shah Qureshi and his accompanying delegation to Kuwait. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah pointed to the results of the meeting with Pakistan's Foreign Minister, during which they discussed a number of issues of common interests in addition to discussing the exchange of experiences and information in all fields.

In the meantime, the Cabinet condemned the sabotage terrorist attack that targeted the two Saudi cities of Makkah and Jeddah by two missiles, as well as the drone attacks on two main pumping stations in the eastern region of Yanbu port in Saudi Arabia. It affirmed the solidarity of Kuwait with the brothers in the Kingdom and its support for all measures taken to protect its security and stability and called on the international community to take the necessary measures in the face of these criminal acts and their repercussions. The Cabinet also condemned the armed attacks in the governorates of Giza and Cairo, as well as the armed attack of a tourist bus in front of the Egyptian Museum in the Arab Republic of Egypt recently, which resulted in the death and injury of a number of innocent civilians. — KUNA

Man to police: Wife didn't make iftar

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti man went to the police station to lodge a complaint against his wife for not preparing the iftar meal. No case was filed because officers told him that his complaint does not constitute a criminal offense, and resolving the matter did not fall under their jurisdiction, a police source said.

Newborn found

A baby was rushed to Farwaniya Hospital after being found by an Asian man in a bag near a Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh mosque. Policemen and paramedics went to the area and found a newborn male. Detectives are working on determining his mother's identity.

Physical assault

A Kuwaiti was charged with beating two Egyptians in the Capital education zone. A police source said a dispute took place between a citizen and Egyptians who work at a department there, and things escalated to physically beating and injuring them. Both men brought medical reports stating the injuries they suffered, then lodged a complaint.

Mechanic attack

A mechanic lodged a complaint against a Kuwaiti who attacked him in an Industrial Jahra garage due to a dispute over his car's repair. A police source said a citizen got his car repaired by an Afghan mechanic in Jahra, then when he drove away, the malfunction reoccurred, so he returned. But a disputed erupted and the citizen lost his cool and beat the Afghan.

Fugitive nabbed

Authorities sent a bedoon to central prison to serve a seven-year jail sentence. The bedoon was arrested upon his arrival at Kuwait airport with a European passport, although he left the country using a Kuwaiti passport. The bedoon was involved in a forgery case for which he was sentenced to seven years followed by deportation after he was able to leave the country using the passport of a Kuwaiti. Police authorities said the bedoon while abroad insulted Kuwait and its leadership by organizing activities and demonstrations in front of Kuwait embassies, especially during national days, and also used his Twitter account as a platform to attack Kuwait and its leadership. — Al-Rai

Legalese

Freelance talent

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed



This article is for entrepreneurs and creatives alike. There is no doubt on the importance of having active entrepreneurs and creatives in our society. With that said, there are many choices that need to be made on your journey as a business owner. One of these decisions is whether or not to hire a freelancer. The same goes for the creatives out there - if you are an artist, a graphic designer or a photographer, you probably want to know what the consequences and the legal differences are between working full-time or freelancing. I have written this article to highlight the most common questions about freelancing in Kuwait. Before I can do that though, let's define full-time, part-time and freelance work.

Full-time: A full-time job is when your time is dedicated to one job entirely, usually 40-48 hours a week.

Part-time: Although there is no definition for part-time jobs in Kuwait, a part-time job is of 4 hours a day.

Freelancing: Is when you are hired to complete a task for a specified amount of money.

Hiring a freelancer

Question 1: Should I hire talent through service providers or hire a freelancer? What should I watch out for from a legal perspective for both options?

Fajer: Deciding how or who to hire can be very tricky, but at the end of a day, it's a purely business decision that I should not really interfere with as a lawyer. But I can assist with things to keep any eye out for as a small business when making those decisions. There are a few options to look at:

1. Acquiring services through a specialized firm: If you need to hire a specialized firm, you need to be careful with the agreement that you sign. Many startups make the mistake of not signing an agreement with a service provider that includes detailed information of what they need, like how many hours of services, the exact services needed or expertise required. For example, let's say you are looking to hire a company for developing a mobile application. It is important to specify if the development will be for Google Play or the App Store. My advice is to be as detailed as you can.

2. Freelancer: Hiring a freelancer can be both positive and negative at the same time. With freelancers, you will be able to get work devotion at a very low cost, but many legal issues arise. Things to watch out for is how to make sure this person is liable for submitting the work required, and how to avoid a legal employment relationship where the startup may be responsible for employment responsibilities and obligations towards the freelancer.

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

Electricity restored in Nuzha after hour-long blackout

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: An hour-long blackout hit parts of Nuzha in the early hours of yesterday. Informed sources noted that the blackout was the result of a malfunction in a power unit, which was immediately dealt with by Ministry of Electricity and Water emergency technicians.

Charity inspections

The Ministry of Social Affairs' Acting Undersecretary Hana Al-Hajeri said 744 charity-related field inspection visits were made during the first half of Ramadan to follow up the charity donation collection project. Hajeri added that violations detected included using unstamped receipt books, violating the schedules set by the ministry and using one of the marquees to collect blood money.

Coding system

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued a new resolution mandating all insurance companies to use a unified type coding system on all insurance documents they issue from Jan 1, 2020. The ministry explained in a statement issued yesterday that all insurance companies will be provided with special forms with a fixed code per insurance type, aside from the serial number.

Local



Symphony Style Kuwait, a Radisson Collection Hotel, hosts unique Ramadan ghabqa

KUWAIT: Exceptional Media ghabqa took place in the opulent Ebreez Ballroom at Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel. Like every year, Ramadan is never gone without the anticipated exceptional ghabqa at Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel, celebrating the holy month of Ramadan with country ambassadors and embassy officials, major companies, key corporate partners and media representatives and advertising agencies in Kuwait on Sunday, May 19th, 2019.

The event was kick-started with a warm welcome by the hotel management team and a heart-touching speech by Peter Schuler, General Manager at Symphony Style Kuwait who explained that "The road to success is not only limited to working hard as a team, but also in finding the ongoing support from valued partners. This day is a unique occasion in which we can express our sincere appreciation for the continued support."

The momentum of the evening was carried on by a speech by Maged Hanna, Director of Sales and Marketing, as he gave further greetings and gratitude to the attendees and sponsors of the event whom he invited to partake in the immersive activities and entertaining programs. The opportunity to win appealing prizes from airline tickets from Atlas Global, accommodation across Radisson Collection, Radisson Blu and Park Inn hotel worldwide, in addition to dining and stay gifts in Symphony Style Kuwait, White Dental Clinic, Dagher and Co International, D & H International Co, Bebe, Pronovias, BSB, Bimba Y Lola, Men Bur, Tim Tailor, Karen Millen, Lipsy and Celio, Al-Ghanim Auto Ford, X-cite Al-Ghanim, Amouage perfumes, Wahran Trading Company, Mohamed Naser Al-Hajery and Sons Ltd, Panasonic, Vivenza perfumes, Simon Bolivar, Nestle, Loreal, The Showtime Events, Best Al-Yousifi Electronics, and Food Choice.

The evening took place in the opulent Ebreez Ballroom with its sophisticated and elegant design and decor, which offered a rich cultural yet contemporary experience and was a fantastic chance to engage and communicate in a unique and elegant surrounding. It also presented a platform to showcase how Symphony Style Kuwait is the ideal place to create memorable moments for any occasion. The evening ended with enlivening sounds of traditional live music and irresistible Ramadan Buffet of delicacies and traditional favorites.



Burgan Bank celebrates girgian with Kids

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, a dynamic local bank and a great contributor to society, recently celebrated girgian with children in its branches at The Avenues Mall and Discovery Mall on 14th and 15th of May 2019. With the help of popular 'BuBa' Kids Account mascot, Burgan Bank provided entertainment for children and their families.

An important celebration that reflects the Kuwaiti culture in general and Ramadan's spirit in specific, the Bank's yearly girgian events serve to reflect the giving and sharing spirit of Ramadan, the holiest month of the year. During the festivities, Burgan Bank staff distributed girgian gift boxes to all the children, who were captivated by the fun games and activities.

Burgan Bank's support for this initiative falls under its full-fledged community program titled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies are aligned with the needs and interests of society.



KFH celebrates girgian with kids at Discovery Mall

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) celebrated confectionary 'girgian' with kids at Discovery Mall. This comes as part of KFH's Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 5' that affirms the pioneering role of the bank in the social responsibility, while contributing in strengthening the social ties. KFH voluntary team distributed girgian confectionary and gifts to the children amidst friendly and passionate Ramadan atmospheres.

Girgian is considered as an important occasion for children to enjoy. It is a folkloric event associated with the holy month of Ramadan and it contributes in spreading joy and love among children. It is worth noting that KFH is keen on holding girgian events on an annual basis in efforts to reinforce ties with all segments of the society.

KFH Ramadan program 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.



VIVA celebrates annual Ramadan ghabqa for staff

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, celebrated its annual Ramadan's ghabqa for its staff and the staff its arm to provide Internet services Qualitynet, at Four Seasons Kuwait Hotel, in the presence of VIVA CEO Engineer Maziad Nasser Al-Harbi.

VIVA said that the continuous communication amid employees fosters the

relationships between them and creates a motivating work environment to increase more efforts in order to maintain producing services, products and solutions that enriches the telecom market. The event featured different entertainment activities, presented by the Kuwaiti MC Hasan Dashti, including traditional band's show and competitions. At the end, participants enjoyed valuable prizes, and suhoor food.





Ooredoo supports entrepreneurs in 'Murouj' Ramadan market

First market was held Friday to support entrepreneurs and local businesses

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait is strategically partnered with 'Souq Murouj' for the fourth consecutive year. The market was held last Friday, May 17, 2019 in which Ooredoo supported local entrepreneurs and businesses. The market, which was held at Murouj Complex, included an Ooredoo

dedicated booth, local farm produce, artisanal food products and crafts, with a 'street food' section aimed at highlighting the culinary diversity of Kuwait's local food community. The Ooredoo booth shared the joy of celebrating girgian with the children in the market by giving them girgian boxes full

of delightful treats. Commenting on this sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait Senior Director of Corporate Communications Mijbil Alayoub said: "We are happy to be supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs through this engaging project, especially during the holy month of

Ramadan. This sponsorship comes in tandem with our social responsibility strategy, which in turn is based on our core values of caring, connecting and challenging. We look forward to meeting those young enthusiastic small business owners as well as our valued customers at the next market."



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Showdown in Congress between Trump and Democrats intensifies

Muslim villagers talk of leaving as divide with Hindus widens

Page 9

Page 8



JAKARTA: Protesters sit and take photos as policemen keep watch during a demonstration outside the Elections Oversight Body (Bawaslu) yesterday. (Inset) Indonesian President Joko Widodo and his running mate Ma'ruf Amin speak with residents yesterday. — AFP photos

Widodo re-elected as rival cries foul

Security minister warns security forces will crack down on mass protests

JAKARTA: Heavily armed Indonesian troops were on high alert yesterday amid fears of civil unrest in the capital Jakarta, as the surprise early announcement of official election results handed Joko Widodo another term as leader of the world's third-biggest democracy. The election commission had been due to give the divisive poll's final tally today, but results were announced early yesterday instead. Presidential challenger Prabowo Subianto, a 67-year-old retired general, vowed to take his claims of widespread cheating to court as several thousand supporters rallied in the sprawling capital.

Tensions have also spiked since police said last week that they arrested dozens of Islamic State-linked terror suspects who planned to cause chaos by bombing post-election protests. On Friday, the US embassy in Jakarta issued a heightened security alert for Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim majority nation which has long wrestled with Islamist militancy. Other embassies issued similar warnings.

The front of the elections commission office was barricaded with razor wire and protected by scores of security personnel yesterday, after Subianto warned that mass demonstrations could break out if he lost. The former military man - who has strong ties to the Suharto dictatorship which collapsed in 1998 - has unleashed a stream of rhetoric since unofficial results for the April 17 poll put Widodo ahead by a wide margin.

Yesterday, he rejected the official results, but called on supporters to remain calm as he pursued "legal avenues" - candidates have three days to file a formal complaint at Indonesia's Constitutional Court. Subianto unsuccessfully challenged the 2014 election which he also lost to Widodo. Analysts and election officials discounted his fraud claims. "The scale of abuses and errors in the conduct of the election are clearly very minor overall," said Jakarta-based political analyst Kevin O'Rourke. Yesterday, thousands of Subianto supporters marched through the streets and held a peaceful protest outside the election supervisory agency's

office - as police in riot gear looked on. "We have only one request - that the election is honest and fair," said 35-year-old Dani Firdaus.

'Please concede'

Chief Security Minister Wiranto warned that security forces would crack down on mass protests. "I'm calling on all parties to have a big heart and be a good sport," he said. "If you lost, please concede." Widodo, 57, got a rock star welcome when he visited a poor Jakarta neighborhood where he formally declared victory, as cheering residents hung out of windows to hear him speak. "Hopefully he can keep making Indonesia better and more modern," resident Septani, who goes by one name, told AFP.

The presidential campaign was punctuated by bitter mudslinging and a slew of fake news online, with much of it aimed at the presidential candidates. The soft-spoken Widodo - who pointed to his efforts to boost Southeast Asia's biggest economy with a huge infra-

structure push - stood in stark contrast to fiery nationalist Subianto, a strongman who courted Islamic hardliners and promised a boost to military and defense spending.

A record 245,000 candidates ran for public office in Indonesia's elections, from the presidency and parliamentary seats to local positions - the first time all were held on the same day. Widodo and Amin won the country's top jobs with 55.5 percent of the vote against 44.5 percent for Subianto and his wealthy financier partner Sandiaga Uno, the commission said yesterday. Some 85.6 million votes were cast in favor of Widodo out of about 154 million, it added.

Widodo scoring thumping victories in holiday hotspot Bali and heavily populated East Java, while Subianto landed big wins in religiously conservative Aceh and West Java. Nine parties won seats in parliament, led by The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, which Widodo belongs to, and followed by Gerindra and Golkar. — AFP

Jailed Catalan separatists take parliament seats

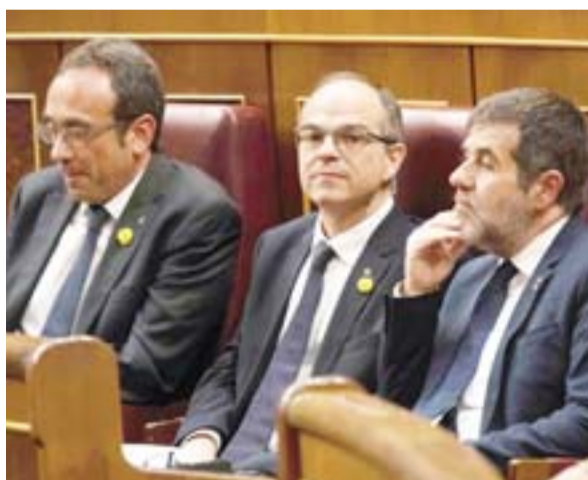
MADRID: Five jailed Catalan separatist leaders elected to the Spanish parliament last month were temporarily released from prison yesterday and escorted by police to the assembly to be sworn in as lawmakers. The Supreme Court allowed the five men, on trial for their role in Catalonia's 2017 secession attempt, to leave jail to take up their seats, but they are likely to be quickly suspended because of their legal situation. They won office in an April 28 general election which was won by acting Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Socialists but without a majority.

Oriol Junqueras, Jordi Sanchez, Jordi Turull and Josep Rull won seats in the Congress, the lower house of parliament, while Raul Romeva was elected to the Senate, the upper house. They were greeted with applause from other members of their parties when they arrived. Like other lawmakers they swore to respect the Spanish constitution - the same constitution they are accused of having violated with their independence push.

Romeva vowed to respect the constitution "as a political prisoner, until the proclamation of the Catalan Republic" as he took his seat in the Senate. The sight of the separatist leaders, who sparked Spain's worst political crisis in decades with their bid to break Catalonia away, taking their seats in parliament may inflame passions on both sides of a divided country.

'Given our voice back'

The five are among 12 Catalan leaders on trial in connection with a banned independence referendum held on October 1, 2017 that was followed by a short-lived declaration of independence. "They want to silence and marginalise us, and the ballot box has given our voice back," former Catalan vice-president and the



MADRID: Jailed Catalan elected members of parliament Jordi Sanchez, Jordi Turull and Josep Rull attend the first plenary session of the lower house of parliament yesterday. — AFP

head of Catalan separatist party ERC, Oriol Junqueras, told AFP in a written interview from jail before he was sworn in. The conservative Popular Party (PP) and center-right Ciudadanos have said they will try to stop the five men from occupying their posts.

The chambers' governing bodies, which are due to be elected later on Tuesday, will decide whether or not to suspend the five men. "The suspension is obvious...they can't hold their posts," acting Deputy Prime Minister Carmen Calvo told news radio Cadena Ser. While the Socialists emerged as the biggest party in the 350-seat lower house in last month's elections, they lack a majority. To be sworn in as prime minister again Sanchez is likely to rely on some parties abstaining from voting.

But if the jailed Catalan lawmakers are not allowed to take part in Sanchez's investiture vote, and are not replaced, the threshold to be approved will be lower and he could be sworn in without relying on Catalan separatist parties abstaining. — AFP

Local MP, at least 10 others, killed in northeast India

GUWAHATI, India: A state legislator in the northeast Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh and at least 10 others were killed yesterday in an attack by suspected separatist militants, officials said. The attack follows the end of India's typically violent general elections on Sunday, as well as state assembly polls in Arunachal Pradesh - which borders China, Myanmar and Bhutan. Lawmaker Tirong Aboh and some family members were killed when insurgents opened fire on their convoy of vehicles in the Tirap district of the state, police said.

Kiren Rijiju, Indian minister of state of home affairs, confirmed the number of killed to be 11. "I'm shocked and saddened by the brutal attack and tragic killing of... Tirong Aboh of Arunachal Pradesh, his family

including 11 people," he tweeted. "Strongest possible action will be taken against those responsible for such dastardly attack," he added. A top officer told AFP on condition of anonymity that reinforcements had been rushed to the area.

As in previous years, the general elections have been rocked by violence. On May 1 some 15 troops and driver were killed by Maoist rebels in the western state of Maharashtra. A grenade attack in Guwahati, capital of the northeastern state of Assam, injured 12 people, officials said. A local separatist group, the United Liberation Front of Assam, claimed responsibility.

Aboh represented the Khonsa constituency for the National People's Party (NPP) - allied to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party - and was standing for a new term. He was travelling from Dibrugarh in neighbouring Assam to Khonsa when the incident took place. Militants belonging to a faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), one of several separatist groups in the area, are suspected to have carried out the attack after making threats to Aboh. — AFP

Fleeing into fields, a family runs from Idlib attacks

ATMEH, Syria: Ali Al-Ahmed and his family fled on foot through the fields when the bombs began raining down on their house in northwestern Syria, escaping a major offensive by the Syrian army and its Russian allies. "In the early hours of the morning, the artillery stopped. Then the warplanes and helicopters came out," Ahmed, a 25-year-old farmer, said, recalling his last hours in the village of Habeet which he fled with his family of five dozen.

Scattered during their frantic escape from the vil-

lage, the family are now reunited in a makeshift shelter in an olive grove near the border with Turkey. They are among some of the 180,000 people uprooted by the military escalation. It marks the biggest upsurge in violence since last summer between President Bashar al-Assad and his insurgent enemies in Idlib province and a belt of territory around it. At least dozens of people have been killed; the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says unconfirmed reports indicate more than 170 civilians have lost their lives.

The night before Ali's family left the village, they hid indoors or in basements. They feared moving around the village even to check whether other inhabitants were still alive. Shelling hit his small truck, which they had planned to escape in. "The warplane was flying overhead," he said. "So we stood there watching the truck burn." —Reuters

International

EU leaders sounding alarm over populist election threat

Macron warns bloc faces 'existential threat'

BRUSSELS: Two days before voting begins in European parliamentary elections, national leaders are scrambling to mobilize their supporters to resist a populist challenge. European governments fear a good showing for eurosceptics in the vote, which begins tomorrow and runs to Sunday, will disrupt Brussels decision-making. Opinion polls predict a significant advance for nationalist and populist forces opposed to closer European Union integration and threatening mainstream reform efforts.

French President Emmanuel Macron called the vote the most important European parliamentary election since the first in 1979 and warned the EU faces "an existential threat". Turnout has fallen in each EU vote since 1979, and mainstream leaders hope Britain's Brexit spectacle and a scandal for the Austrian far-right will mobilize voters.

'Stand as one'

The outgoing president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, urged an audience at a trade union convention in Vienna "to fight where it is worth fighting". "And it is worth making it clear for the next decades - also in the coming European elections - that trade unionists, social democrats and Christian democrats, others should stand there like one man when it comes to pushing back the danger from the extreme right," he said.

British voters - along with the Dutch - will vote first

tomorrow, with those in the 26 other member states following suit over the next three days. In Britain, Nigel Farage's anti-EU Brexit Party is expected to top the polls, and eurosceptic populists are riding high in Italy and breaking through elsewhere. The eurosceptics have not had it all their own way, though. In Austria, far-right Vice-Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache was entrapped on hidden-camera footage offering to sell influence to a supposed representative of a Russian oligarch.

'Filling their pockets'

Strache resigned, but the scandal has undermined the attempt by Austria's conservative Chancellor Sebastian Kurz to draw the extreme right into a coalition government. "What happens there certainly has not only a national, but a pan-European meaning," Germany's minister for European affairs Michael Roth said in Brussels. "It becomes clear that the strategy has failed to contain, to immobilise, to disenchant nationalists and populists through governmental responsibility," he said.

Roth said far-right figures have "also filled their pockets" in other EU countries and accused them of paying "lip service" to democracy and the rule of law. Accusations from the centre will not deter the populists, who hope to mirror the national success of Italian vice premier Matteo Salvini and Hungary's Viktor Orban. "Everything has

changed," French far-right leader Marine Le Pen told AFP, ahead of a vote in which she hopes to beat Macron's new Renaissance movement into second place. "Before we were on our own on the European scene... But in the space of a few months, a whole range of political forces have risen up in spectacular fashion."

The run-up to the vote has seen political tensions mount. In Germany, the far-right AfD party cancelled its election night party in Berlin, citing alleged "threats from left-wing terrorists". And in Britain on Monday, Farage had to abandon a walkabout in the city of Newcastle after a protester doused him with milkshake. Opinion polls at the start of the campaign pointed to around 173 members being elected to the 751-member Strasbourg assembly from far-right populist, eurosceptic or nationalist groups.

Meanwhile, the main centre-right and centre-left groupings that have dominated pan-European politics in recent years look set to lose ground. According to opinion polls, the top two groups could lose 30 seats each, meaning they will not be able to form a majority and may have to reach out to liberals and Greens. The liberal ALDE hopes for an infusion of new blood from Macron's Renaissance and from the Spanish party Ciudadanos. For Brussels insiders, the big night will not be Sunday when the first results of the parliamentary race emerge, but two days later when the national leaders meet for dinner.—AFP

Progress in fight against fake news?

PARIS: Despite the warnings, the campaign for the European Parliament elections has yet to be marked by a flood of fake news, but it is still too early for the EU to declare victory over misinformation. Ever since the US presidential elections in 2016, which were marked by false information spread on social media aiming to manipulate the electorate, EU member states have been on their guard against fake news. In an unprecedented move in February, the heads of the German, British and French foreign intelligence services issued a joint statement warning against foreign interference in elections in Europe.

The EU polls that will run in member states from May 23-May 26 will be a key test of whether new alert systems put in place since then have had any impact. "This is the key phase now," a European diplomatic source told AFP on condition of anonymity. "We are particularly careful in the days before the elections." But, so far, "there has yet to be a Europe-wide alert."

A rapid alert system, staffed by a dozen people, has been set up in the EU's External Action Service to closely watch social media and warn of possible risks of interference. Tech giants and especially Facebook, Google and Twitter have come under immense pressure from EU governments to react better and quicker to take down fake news spread through their sites. News media, including Agence France-Presse (AFP) have also sought to directly combat fake news, by setting up fact-checking services which can explicitly contradict false information.

If the EU elections do show an improvement, it is another question whether this is because the situation has improved or just a further sign of apathy for polls where only 42.5 percent of the electorate voted last time around in 2014. A second European official said even if multiple examples of information manipulations had been reported, none of them was yet of a sufficient scale to justify launching a pan-European alert.—AFP

Le Pen seeks Macron downfall in French European polls

PARIS: From her French parliamentary office, where her cigarette and a book entitled "10+1 Questions on the European Union" sit atop folders on her desk, far-right leader Marine Le Pen is plotting revenge. Two years ago, the 50-year-old lost to French leader Emmanuel Macron in a bitter presidential election that left her physically exhausted and facing questions over her future. But after a break, a re-branding exercise of her party - previously known as the National Front - and an overhaul of its program, she has campaigned since January with the head of state in her sights.

In European parliament elections in France on May 26, she sees the chance not only to deal a blow to Macron's faltering

presidency, but for her ideas to move further into the political mainstream. "Everything has changed," she said in an interview with AFP last week in the parliamentary office she has occupied since winning a seat in the National Assembly two years ago. "Before we were on our own on the European scene... we didn't have any allies. But in the space of a few months, a whole range of political forces have risen up in spectacular fashion," she said.

In the last year and half, parties who share her anti-immigration and anti-EU positions have entered governments in Italy and Austria, while making gains in parliaments from Berlin to Stockholm and even Madrid. France has been the exception, where Macron and his new centrist, pro-European party Republic on the Move kept the populists out of power in 2017. Le Pen has called for the European polls to be a referendum on Macron's term just as the 41-year-old looks to recover from six months of anti-government protests by "yellow vest" demonstrators. "At the national level, if he comes out on top, he will obviously draw an illusory sense of legitimacy and start what he has called the 'Second Act' of his term," Le Pen said. "So I am saying to the French: get in his

way, I beg you. Stop him by voting for the only party list in front of Emmanuel Macron," Le Pen added.

Polls show Le Pen's party, now named the National Rally, winning about 22-24 percent the election, a slight edge over the centrist alliance that includes Macron's party. The election will see voters across the European Union cast ballots for party lists, with the share of votes then determining how many MPs on the list are sent to the European parliament. Under the changes pushed through by Le Pen, the National Rally has ditched its long-standing policy of wanting to leave the EU - a so-called "Frexit" - and its proposal to abandon the euro common currency.—AFP



Marine Le Pen

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| Amsterdam | 160 | 950 |
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| London Heathrow | 169 | 641 |
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International

Showdown in Congress between Trump, Democrats intensifies

President tells ex-White House lawyer to ignore subpoena

WASHINGTON: The clash between US President Donald Trump and the Democratic majority in Congress intensified on Monday, with the White House telling the president's former lawyer to ignore a subpoena to testify about Trump's alleged obstruction of justice in the Russia probe. And in a big setback for Trump, a federal judge denied the president's attempt to quash another subpoena from Democratic lawmakers ordering an accounting firm to release years of Trump financial documents dating from before he took office.

That decision marks the first time US courts have waded into the conflict that pits the president against Democrats who have opened a raft of probes into his administration since they took control of the House of Representatives in January. In a sign of the uphill battle their investigations face, an attorney for Trump's former lawyer Don McGahn said his client would follow the White House's instructions and not testify about Trump's alleged obstruction of justice at a House Judiciary Committee hearing set for Tuesday.

"Under these circumstances, and also conscious of the duties he, as an attorney, owes to his former client, Mr. McGahn must decline to appear at the hearing tomorrow," his attorney William A. Burck wrote to the committee, adding that his client "understands from your prior correspondence that the Committee

would vote to hold him in contempt should he not appear." Earlier in the day, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler called the White House's move "the latest act of obstruction," and said "the Committee will convene as planned tomorrow morning, and Mr. McGahn is expected to appear as legally required". "The first thing we're going to have to do is hold McGahn in contempt," Nadler told CNN in an interview late Monday. He added: "You're dealing with a lawless president willing to go to any lengths to prevent testimony that might implicate him - that does implicate him."

Democrats want McGahn to talk about special counsel Robert Mueller's sprawling, 22-month probe into whether Trump colluded with Russians while running for president and then tried to impede the probe into that question after he was elected. In his final report, released in mid-April, Mueller said he hadn't gathered evidence of collusion that would warrant charges of criminal conspiracy. But it detailed a series of moves by the presidency against Mueller's investigation, including an attempt to sack Mueller that was blocked by McGahn.

Trump has hit back against these investigations, saying he's a victim of "harassment". "The Democrats do not like the conclusion of the Mueller investigation... and want a wasteful and unnecessary do-over," his spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said on Monday.

Financial investigation

The White House has also refused to cooperate with a Democrat-led investigation of Trump's finances prior to his election. Last month, lawmakers issued a subpoena for records dating back to 2011 after Trump's one-time lawyer Michael Cohen testified that his boss would often change the estimated value of his assets and liabilities on financial statements as he felt was needed for various purposes. Trump and affiliated organizations and entities then filed a suit requesting that the court declare the subpoena "invalid and unenforceable" as it questioned the legislative validity of the Democrats' demands.

US District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington on Monday refused to block the subpoena saying, "it is not for the court to question whether the committee's actions are truly motivated by political considerations". In another twist to this saga, the House Intelligence Committee on Monday made public the transcripts of testimony by Cohen, who is currently serving a prison sentence in part for lying to Congress, made to lawmakers behind closed doors.

According to the transcripts from hearings held earlier in the year, Cohen said he'd followed directions from Trump's personal lawyer to lie about when a proposed Trump



MONTOURSVILLE, Pennsylvania: US President Donald Trump holds up his fist as he leaves after speaking during a Make America Great Again rally at Williamsport Regional Airport on Monday. — AFP

Tower project in Moscow was called off. "Make no mistake, any attempt by the president, his associates or administration to suborn perjury, obstruct our investiga-

tion or mislead the public will not be tolerated - and will be exposed," intelligence committee chairman Adam Schiff said in a statement. — AFP

News in brief

Lula wants to marry if freed

BRASILIA: Brazil's imprisoned ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, still loved by large parts of the population, plans to remarry if he is released from prison, a former minister said. Lula, 73, a widower for the past two years, has been sentenced to more than two decades behind bars in two separate corruption cases. "He is in love and the first thing he wants to do after getting out of prison will be to marry," Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira, who held cabinet posts in finance and science, wrote on Facebook - reportedly to the dismay of Lula's aides. According to the website of the weekly Epoca, the prospective bride-to-be is Rosangela da Silva, a sociologist aged about 40. They have had a longstanding friendship, after meeting during the 1990s. Lula's wife of 43 years, Maria Leticia, died in Feb 2017. — AFP

Slovenia looking for new spies

LJUBLJANA: Slovenia's spy agency yesterday published its first ever public advert to recruit new agents "to strengthen and refresh" the former Communist country's intelligence services. "We call on those interested in the intelligence and security fields, motivated by challenges and prepared to adjust to the agency's specific line of work," the Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency (SOVA) said in an ad in the daily Delo and other newspapers. One major requirement, however: Candidates must be Slovenian citizens. They can apply for different posts. Tasks include gathering information through secret collaboration, exchanging intelligence with foreign countries, and preparing analytical reports or forecasts. — AFP

Japan FM puzzles followers

TOKYO: Bemused followers of Japan's foreign minister were left scratching their heads yesterday after a bizarre tweet about bacon, sparking tongue-in-cheek speculation he could be tweeting classified information in code. "Ah, bacon is in fact ^%&\$+*!%...." Taro Kono tweeted in Japanese from his verified account to his 513,000 followers, prompting confusion and many times the number of retweets and 'likes' he usually gets from more orthodox tweets about diplomatic meetings. On Sunday he tweeted his son had greeted him by "screaming bacon with all his might" when he returned home in the early hours. "What does he want to do?" he tweeted, uploading an image of a sheet of paper on which someone had handwritten the word "bacon" in Japanese. — AFP

Aussies flock to Kiwi migration site

WELLINGTON: The number of Australians making online queries about migrating to New Zealand has surged after conservative Prime Minister Scott Morrison's shock election win, official data showed yesterday. Morrison's Liberal-National coalition defeated the opposition Labor party on Saturday night to secure a third term in office, despite every public poll during the campaign predicting a Labor win. Immigration New Zealand (INZ) said the number of Australians visiting its website for prospective migrants increased 12-fold to 8,522 the day after the election, up from 715 the previous Sunday. The number who took the next step and submitted details to register interest in migrating soared from 20 to 512 over the same period. — AFP

Man who threw milkshake charged

LONDON: British police yesterday charged a man who threw a milkshake at Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage with common assault and criminal damage. The incident in Newcastle in northern England on Monday sparked condemnation from across the political spectrum, following a series of similar ambushes on populist and far-right candidates in the European elections. Police said the criminal damage charge against Paul Crowther, 32, related to a microphone that Farage was wearing while he was campaigning in the city. Crowther, who was detained and handcuffed at the scene, will appear in court next month. He told reporters that his action was in right of protest against people like him. "The bile and the racism he spouts out in this country is far more damaging than a bit of milkshake to his front," Crowther said. — AFP

Fifth Guatemalan child dies in US immigration custody

LOS ANGELES: A 16-year-old boy died Monday at a Border Patrol station in Texas, becoming the fifth child from Guatemala to die since December after being apprehended by US border patrol agents. US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said the teen, who was detained in south Texas's Rio Grande Valley on May 13 after crossing the border, was found unresponsive at the agency's Weslaco Station during a welfare check. Authorities said the cause of death was unknown but local news reports said the boy had reported Sunday that he was not feeling well and he was seen by a nurse who determined he had the flu.

He was prescribed the medicine Tamiflu and moved to

the Weslaco facility to avoid other detainees getting sick. Agents last check on him about an hour before he was found dead. "The men and women of US Customs and Border Protection are saddened by the tragic loss of this young man and our condolences are with his family," CBP acting commissioner John Sanders said in a statement. "CBP is committed to the health, safety and humane treatment of those in our custody."

The agency said the teen, identified as Carlos Gregorio Hernandez Vasquez, was due to be moved to a facility for youth run by the Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement. Under federal law, unaccompanied minors must be moved to an HHS facility within 72 hours of being detained. It was unclear why Vasquez had not been moved to such a facility within the required time period. The boy is the fifth child to have died in recent months after making the long journey from Guatemala to the US and being detained by border agents.

The Border Patrol agency has come under intense scrutiny in recent months over its treatment of children apprehended at the border. Last week a two-year-old boy

from Guatemala died at a hospital in Texas after he and his mother were detained by border patrol. In April, a 16-year-old boy from Guatemala died after staff at an HHS facility noticed he was sick and transferred him to a hospital.

Rights groups denounced the latest death and demanded accountability. "It is appalling that children continue to die on US Border Patrol's watch," the American Civil Liberties Union said in a statement. "Keeping children in custody goes against our American values. 'We've demanded that the Trump administration change its inhumane detention practices to prevent tragic deaths from happening.'"

Amnesty International asked "how many deaths it will take for the administration to ensure the safety and security of children". "It is dangerous and cruel to detain people, particularly children, in crowded and unsanitary conditions for seeking protection," it added. Border enforcement officials earlier this year said the country's immigration system had reached a "breaking point" of illegal border crossings that have overwhelmed the system, especially in the Rio Grande Valley. — AFP

Assembly extends rule as Caracas rally marks election win

CARACAS: Venezuela's Constituent Assembly, made up entirely of loyalists of President Nicolas Maduro, announced Monday it has extended its mandate to rule the crisis-stricken country for another 18 months until the end of 2020. The move comes a year after the contested re-election of embattled Maduro, locked in a struggle for power with Juan Guaido, who has declared himself interim president and is backed by more than 50 countries including the United States. In a decree approved unanimously and which applies immediately, the Constituent Assembly extended its functioning "at least until December 31, 2020".

The pro-Maduro body has effectively sidelined and replaced Venezuela's opposition-dominated National Assembly, which is led by Guaido. It was originally set up by Maduro to write a new constitution, and gave itself absolute power following its creation in August 2017. It has never presented any project related to the constitution. Its creation - initially intended to last only two years - came after months of anti-Maduro protests that left 125 people dead.

Maduro has presided over the collapse of the oil-rich country's economy, leading to shortages of basic food and medicine, and causing millions of Venezuelans to flee. The "Constituent Assembly is the greatest guarantee of political stability," Maduro said later Monday, as he rallied thousands of supporters in Caracas to mark the anniversary of his controversial May 2018 re-election following polls widely denounced as rigged. Maduro also reiterated

US lawmakers clash on Iran intel before briefing

WASHINGTON: US lawmakers clashed Monday over intelligence on Iran, with an ally of President Donald Trump accusing Tehran of provocations that could draw a military response, ahead of a classified briefing on the tensions. Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan and General Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, will head Tuesday to the US Capitol to apprise lawmakers from both chambers on the latest developments, an administration official said.

Senior officials already briefed a key group of eight lawmakers on Thursday but Democrats, who control the House of Representatives, called for a wider meeting with all elected lawmakers. Senator Lindsey Graham, a Republican who has closely aligned himself with Trump, said he received his own briefing Monday from National Security Advisor John Bolton, a longtime hawk who called for an attack on Iran before taking his White House job.

"It is clear that over the last several weeks Iran has attacked pipelines and ships of other nations and created threat streams against American interests in Iraq," Graham tweeted. "If the Iranian threats against American personnel and interests are activated we must deliver an overwhelming military response."



CARACAS Government supporters attend a rally in the surroundings of Miraflores Presidential Palace on Monday to mark the one-year anniversary of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro's re-election. — AFP

his proposal to bring forward National Assembly elections, currently due for December 2020, telling the crowd: "I want elections now!"

Supporters carrying "March for Victory" banners took to the streets of the Venezuelan capital, many waving flags of the ruling Socialist party and wearing red T-shirts as they marched to Miraflores presidential palace. Some carried banners saying "Trump, end the blockade on Venezuela" - a reference to a raft of crippling US sanctions on Maduro's regime. "We celebrate the first anniversary of the popular victory of May 20, the day in which Venezuela decided in favor of peace, democracy and freedom," Maduro wrote on Twitter. The rally took place exactly one year after Maduro was re-elected with 68 percent of the vote in an election boycotted by the opposition. "It's been a battle, a war. They haven't let him govern," said Maduro supporter Hector Aular, 62, describing the first year of the new government as "hard."

A Democratic lawmaker, Representative Ruben Gallego of Arizona, quickly challenged Graham and said he had seen the same intelligence. "That is not what is being said. This is total information bias to draw the conclusion he wants for himself and the media," Gallego tweeted. Another Democrat, Senator Chris Murphy, accused the Republicans of twisting the intelligence "to make it sound like Iran is taking unprovoked, offensive measures against the US and our allies." "No one should defend the actions Iran has taken - they've been out of control for years - but dumb wars start when each party mistakenly believes that the other party's defensive or reactive actions are actually offensive and proactive," Murphy tweeted.

He did not go into more detail, but some analysts and diplomats say Iran is making a predictable response to the United States, which has tried to stop all of its oil sales and designated its elite Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist group. Last week Yemen's Houthi rebels - who are backed by Iran and are being bombed by US ally Saudi Arabia - claimed responsibility for a drone attack on a key oil pipeline inside the kingdom. The incident came after the mysterious sabotage of four ships, including two Saudi oil tankers, off the coast of the United Arab Emirates.

The United States has not officially blamed Iran for the incidents but has repeatedly accused Tehran of plotting attacks, especially in Iraq, where Tehran holds wide influence. Trump a year ago withdrew the United States from a multinational accord still backed by European allies under which Iran drastically scaled back its nuclear work in return for promised sanctions relief. Trump warned on Sunday: "If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran. Never threaten the United States again." — AFP

Daily duels over abortion outside Alabama clinics

MONTGOMERY: It's been a particularly tough week for Margaux Hartline, a volunteer who holds a large umbrella over women going into an Alabama abortion clinic so their faces are unidentifiable to religious activists. Last week, the southeastern US state passed the strictest anti-abortion law in the country, and Hartline says there's been a jump in "harassment" from anti-abortion activists who shout from across the street at women going into the clinic. "They're ramping everything up, and we're very worried that more people are going to show up," said Hartline, 25.

Wearing a rainbow-colored vest, Hartline works from the porch of the "Power House," the headquarters of a local reproductive rights group that escorts women into Reproductive Health Services, the clinic right next door which is one of only three in the state. Abortion is among the most divisive political issues in the US, and the doorsteps of abortion clinics nationwide have become the sites of daily standoffs between pro- and anti-abortion rights activists.

On the one side are activists who stake out clinics and attempt to convince women not to have abortions with tactics that reproductive rights advocates say are aggressive and involve harassment or shaming. "If they find any kind of identifying information, if you have a school sticker on the back of your car or something, they will do whatever they can to identify you and they'll call your school, your church, your family, your job, anything. They're actively trying to ruin these people's lives," Hartline said.

On the other side are people like Hartline, who waits for women to park in front of the clinic before approaching them with a big blue umbrella that she holds over their heads, shielding their faces as anti-abortion activists shout "Don't kill your baby!" "It's disgusting. It really is. They want to shame these patients as much as possible," Hartline said.

'The baby is innocent'

But to 61-year-old Susan Decker-Bunce, among the crowd of activists who shouts at women entering the clinic, what happens inside is murder. "If you see the ultrasound, if you see the heartbeat, you know it's life," she told AFP. "If you see that it looks like a baby, it's not a clump of cells. You can see the head, the arms, the legs, the tiny little toes." The new Alabama law, HB314, virtually outlaws terminations of pregnancy, threatening doctors with between 10 and 99 years in prison for abortions and offering no exceptions for cases of incest and rape.

Set to go into effect in November, the law is likely to be blocked in state courts by lawsuits from human rights groups. But for anti-abortion activists, who refer to themselves as "pro-life," it's all part of the plan to trigger a legal battle over the procedure in the US Supreme Court that could overturn the landmark 1973 ruling that made abortion legal in the United States. Decker-Bunce defended the law. "It's not the baby's fault, it was the father that did the raping," she said. "The baby is innocent." — AFP

International

In an Indian village, Muslims talk of leaving as divide with Hindus widens

NAYABANS, India: Muslims in Nayabans, an unremarkable village in northern India, say they remember a time when their children played with Hindu youths, and people from either faith chatted when the frequented each other's shops and went to festivals together. Such interactions no longer happen, many say, because of how polarized the two communities have become in the past two years, and some are frightened and thinking of moving away - if they can afford it.

Muslim residents who spoke to Reuters said they thought tensions would only worsen if Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) wins a second term in the current general election, as exit polls released on Sunday indicate is likely. Votes will be counted tomorrow. "Things were very good earlier. Muslims and Hindus were together in good and bad times, weddings to deaths. Now we live our separate ways despite living in the same village," said Gulfam Ali, who runs a small shop selling bread and tobacco. Modi came to power in 2014 and the BJP took control of Uttar Pradesh state, which includes Nayabans, in 2017, partly on the back of a Hindu-first message. The state's chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, is a hardline Hindu priest and senior BJP figure. "Modi and Yogi have messed it up," said Ali. "Dividing Hindus and Muslims is their main agenda, only agenda. It was never like this earlier. We want to leave this place but

can't really do that." He says about a dozen Muslim families have left in the past two years, including his uncle. The BJP denies its policies have stoked community divisions.

Cow killing

At the end of last year, Nayabans, a village of wheat-fields, narrow cemented streets, bullock carts and loitering cows, became a symbol of India's deepening divide as some Hindu men from the area complained they had seen a group of Muslims slaughtering cows, which Hindus regard as sacred. Angry Hindus accused police of failing to stop an illegal practice, and a Hindu mob blocked a highway, threw stones and burned vehicles. Two people were shot and killed - including a police officer.

Five months later many Muslims, who only number about 400 of the village's population of more than 4,000, say the wounds haven't healed. And in a country where 14 percent of the population are Muslim and 80 percent Hindu, Nayabans reflects wider tensions in places where Muslim residents are heavily outnumbered by Hindu neighbors. The BJP denies it is seeking to make Muslims second-class citizens or is anti-Muslim.

"There have been no riots in the country under this government. It's wrong to label criminal incidents, which we denounce, as Hindu-Muslim issues," BJP spokesman Gopal Krishna Agarwal said. "The opposition has been

playing communal politics but we believe in neutrality of governance. Neither appeasement of any, nor denouncement of any. Some people may be finding that they are not being appeased anymore."

Call to prayer

To be sure, villagers say Nayabans was not free of conflict in the past - attempts to build a mosque in 1977 led to communal riots in which two people were killed. But for the 40 years after that there had been relative harmony, villagers say. Some Muslim residents said Hindu hardliners started asserting themselves more in the village after Yogi took office in March 2017. The atmosphere worsened around the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in 2017 - Hindu activists demanded Muslims stop using a microphone in their madrasa, which also acts as a mosque, to call people to prayer, arguing it disturbed the whole community.

The Muslims reluctantly agreed to stop using the mike and speaker - even though they say it had been operating for many years - to keep the peace, but the move created deep resentment. Some Hindus were unsympathetic. "God knows what they are moaning about," said Hindu elder Om Prakash, a 63-year-old tailor. "There's peace here but we won't tolerate any mike there. That's a madrasa, not a mosque." Islam requires the faithful to pray five times a day. Without the reminder of hearing the call, some Muslim

residents say they risk missing prayer times. "We can't express our religion in any way here, but they are free to do whatever they want," said Muslim law student Aisha, 21. She said that Hindu men from the village often shouted anti-Muslim slogans during festival processions. At least a dozen Hindus in the village denied that was the case. Aisha remembers when relations were better. "Earlier they would speak very nicely to us, but now they don't," said Aisha. "If there was any problem at all, or someone was sick in the family, all the neighbours would come over and help - whether Hindus or Muslims. Now that doesn't happen."

'Empty out'

Sharfuddin Saifi, 38, who runs a cloth shop at a nearby market, was named in a complaint filed with the police by local Hindus over the cow incident last year. After 16 days in jail, he was released as the police found he had nothing to do with the suspected slaughter, but said he found much had changed. Hindus now shun his business. The money he spent on lawyers meant he had to stop going to Delhi to buy stock for the shop, which is largely empty. And he withdrew his 13-year-old son from a private school because he could no longer afford it. "For someone who had never seen the inside of a police station or even dreamt of committing a crime, it's a big thing," he said of the trauma of his detention. — Reuters



NEW DELHI: Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh N Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal and women's wing secretary of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) M Kanimozhi talk to media representatives outside the Election Commission of India yesterday. — AFP

Congress calls to ignore exit polls

NEW DELHI: India's main opposition Congress party has told its workers not to lose heart and to remain vigilant at vote-count centres after exit polls predicted a clear election victory for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The counting of votes cast in the seven-phase general election will take place tomorrow, with the result expected later that day. Modi's ruling coalition is projected to win between 339 and 365 seats in the 545-member lower house of parliament with a Congress-led opposition alliance getting only 77 to 108, an exit poll from India Today Axis showed on Sunday.

The ruling alliance, led by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), seems assured of victory and was to meet in New Delhi later yesterday to discuss a new government. But exit polls in India have proved misleading before and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the younger sister of party president Rahul Gandhi, urged party workers to ignore

them and to protect the ballot boxes. "Don't let rumors and exit polls discourage you. This is being spread to break your determination," she said in an audio message late on Monday.

"This has further raised the need for you to remain alert. Please keep vigil outside strongrooms and counting centres. We are confident that our combined efforts will bear fruit," she said, referring to centres where electronic voting machines are kept. The Election Commission said it had received some complaints about attempts to tamper with voting machines in strongrooms, but they were not true. "All such reports and allegations are absolutely false, and factually incorrect," it said in a statement.

The two Gandhis are members of the latest generation of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty to aspire to govern India. The staggered general election, billed as the world's biggest democratic exercise with some 900 million eligible voters, began on April 11 and finished on Sunday. The BJP says it is confident the final results will reflect the exit polls. Yesterday afternoon, workers decorated the party's headquarters in Delhi with lights and flags and put up big tents in anticipation of the celebrations to come. — Reuters

Afghans fear end of golden age of press freedom

KABUL: Beneath the gaze of the TV cameras a woman begins speaking, at first softly but with growing passion as she faces the "Butcher of Kabul" across a crowded auditorium and asks if he wants to apologize for alleged war crimes. Without missing a beat, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the ruthless former warlord blamed for rocket attacks which reduced much of the Afghan capital to rubble in the 1990s, declined to do so. The dramatic moment during a recent televised news debate highlights how far media freedom has come in Afghanistan, where - for now - traumatized civilians can stand and at least try to hold powerful men to account, live on camera.

"Years ago, these kind of questions could get you killed, but now people can challenge the most dangerous people in mainstream and social media," Mustafa Rahimi, a university student, said after watching the debate. But today, even as hundreds of media outlets proliferate across Afghanistan, consumers and journalists alike worry a potential peace deal between the Taleban and the US could sound the death knell for a golden age of press freedom.

"We are concerned about a total or a partial ban on media," Sediqullah Khaliq, the director of Hewad TV and radio in Kandahar - the birthplace of Taleban - told AFP. "There is fear that we may go back to a media blackout or having a state-con-

trolled press." While in power, the Taleban raged against traditional forms of mass communication and entertainment, banning television, movies and allowing only Islamist programming or propaganda to be broadcast on the only radio station, Voice of Sharia.

Anyone caught watching TV faced punishment and risked having their television set smashed and then displayed from a lamppost. Almost all electronic products were outlawed as un-Islamic. For a while, trees in Kabul fluttered with the magnetic ribbon tape from destroyed cassettes. Photographs of living things were illegal, and ownership of a video player could lead to a public lashing.

A deadly trade

Afghanistan is the world's deadliest place for journalists, who face many risks covering the conflict and who have sometimes been targeted for doing their job. Nine journalists, including AFP Kabul's chief photographer Shah Marai, were killed in an Islamic State attack in April 2018. Media watchdog group Reporters Without Borders (RSF) reported that 2018 was the deadliest year on record for journalists in Afghanistan, with at least 15 media workers killed while working.

Despite the risks, hundreds of media organizations have blossomed since 2001, and today there are more than 100 television channels, 284 radio stations and just over 400 newspapers and magazines, according to a government report. With one of the world's lowest literacy rates, television and radio play a huge role in Afghan culture, and Afghans have grown accustomed to outlets holding their politicians to account. Warlords, politicians, Taleban sympathizers and government officials are openly challenged in televised debates, radio programs and on social media. — AFP

'Mother of Satan' bombs show foreign hand in Lanka blasts

COLOMBO: One month after the Sri Lanka suicide attacks that killed more than 250 people, investigators have told AFP the bombers used "Mother of Satan" explosives favored by the Islamic State group that are a new sign of foreign involvement.

Detectives said the back-pack bombs used in the April 21 attacks on three churches and three hotels were manufactured by local jihadists with Islamic State expertise. They named the explosive as triacetone triperoxide, or TATP, an unstable but easily made mixture favored by Islamic State militants who call it "Mother of Satan".

It was also used in the 2015 attacks in Paris, by a suicide bomber who hit the Manchester Arena in England in 2017 and attacks on churches in Indonesia one year ago. Islamic State has claimed the Sri Lankan bombers operated as part of its franchise. But Sri Lankan and international investigators are anxious to know just how much outside help went into the attacks that left 258 dead and 500 injured. "The group had easy

access to chemicals and fertilizer to get the raw materials to make TATP," an official involved in the investigation told AFP. Sri Lankan detectives say the National Thowheeth Jama'ath (NTJ), local militants blamed for the attacks, must have had foreign help to assemble the bombs.

"They would have had a face-to-face meeting to transfer this technology. This is not something you can do by watching a YouTube video," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity. Investigators had initially believed that C4 explosives - a favored weapon of Tamil Tiger rebels - were used, but forensic tests found TATP which causes more burning than C4. Police have also confirmed that 100 kg of explosives found in January in the island's northwest was TATP. — AFP

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Women bring light to remote villages on Zanzibar islands

As a single mother, Salama Husein Haja was low in the pecking order in her village in Tanzania and struggling to eke out a living for her family as a farmer. But now she hopes to gain status and a stable income after being trained as a community solar engineer for a project bringing light to scores of rural villages where no homes are connected to electricity on the islands of Zanzibar. Grandmothers and single mothers - many of whom have never learned to read or write - are among those being trained under the program which they say could transform lives in their poor fishing and farming communities.

"We struggle a lot to get lighting," said Haja, 36, a vegetable farmer and mother of three children from a village on Unguja, the largest and most populated island in the Zanzibar archipelago. "When you don't have electricity, you can't do many things like teaching children. It forces you to use a lamp. The smoke is harmful, the eyes and the chest are affected."

"When the electricity is there, it's better." Life is challenging for women in Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous region of Tanzania made up of numerous islands where half the population lives below the poverty line. Women are almost twice as likely as men to have no education, and are less likely to own a land or have access to a bank account, according to a Tanzania-wide government survey in 2016.

Many poorer and rural families also lack access to electricity, compounding the challenges they face. The island region's entire energy grid depends on an underground cable connecting it to the mainland which was damaged in 2009, plunging it into darkness for three months. Furthermore, only about half of houses in Zanzibar are connected to mains power, with many of the remainder forced to rely on polluting fuel lamps for light.

Role models

"We only use a lamp inside," said Aisha Ali Khatib, a mother of nine, training as a solar engineer alongside Haja at the Barefoot College in Kinyasini village on Unguja. "The lamp uses paraffin ... Buying one spoon of paraffin is 200 shillings (\$0.09) but I can go for two days without making 200 shillings."

Solar power offers solutions to connect rural villages with little prospect of getting mains power and increase resilience and sustainability. Millions of people across sub-Saharan Africa are getting access to electricity through off-grid renewables, the International Energy Agency said last year, which forecasted strong demand to boost growth in the sector up to 2022.

The solar training scheme offered by Barefoot College, a social enterprise that began in India and is now working in East Africa, also focuses specifically on training women. The project was designed to address the fact that women are much less able to leave their villages due to poverty and family links while also empowering women in Tanzania's male-dominated society by offering them decently paid work.

Communities in participating villages are asked to nominate two women aged between 35 and 55 to leave their families and travel to the college to train as engineers. Many of those chosen lack formal education, but they are recognized as people who can command authority and who are deeply embedded in the life of their villages. "When you educate a woman, you educate a whole community," said Fatima Juma Haji, a solar engineer trainer at Barefoot college in Zanzibar.

"When you educate a man, he will not stay in the village, he will go away but when you educate a woman, she goes back to her village and helps improve." Women on the project spend five months living and training at the college, after which they return to their villages and set up solar lighting systems for their family and neighbors. Households pay a few dollars a month for power - a cheaper option than buying paraffin or electricity from the grid.

Some of the money is used to pay the engineers a salary in return for maintaining the village's equipment and funds raised can also be ploughed back into community projects. Women on the scheme said they had benefitted by gaining a stable income stream, and a new sense of independence and respect within their villages. "We have been given a better life because after we leave here, we will be engineers and will go back to teach others," said Haja. "When I go back I will have status, I will be knowledgeable and I will be proud." — Reuters

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



Scotland's First Minister and leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), Nicola Sturgeon meets with European citizens during a European Parliament election campaign event at the Out of the Blue Drill Hall in Edinburgh yesterday. — AFP

Women gaining ground in European Parliament

The number of women members of the European Parliament has doubled since direct elections were first held in 1979 but they still remain the minority, particularly in the top jobs. Here is an overview.

Around a third

Women made up just 16 percent of the 1979 parliament; in today's outgoing assembly, they represent around 36 percent of the 751 MEPs. This is on average higher than in the national parliaments of the European Union's 28 member nations where female representation in 2018 was on the whole just under 28 percent, according to the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). On a worldwide scale, women occupy an average of 24 percent of parliamentary seats, according to the global Inter-Parliamentary Union of national parliaments.

Country matters

The largest representations of women in national European Parliament delegations are from Finland (77 percent), Ireland (54.5 percent) and Croatia (54.5 percent). Malta and Sweden each have equal numbers of men and

women, while Spain is not far off at 48 female. At the other end of the scale, in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Romania the portion of women Euro-MPs is less than 20 percent. For the upcoming elections, 11 EU states will impose, to varying degrees, gender quotas in their electoral lists. This includes Italy, Greece and Luxembourg for the first time.

For the 2014 elections, two countries among those with gender quotas had demanded full parity, even though the obligation was not met: France, which ended up with 43.2 percent of women MEPs, and Belgium with 33.3 percent. Gender quotas met voluntarily by political parties can be more successful in boosting the representation of women than the "fast track" of legally binding legislative quotas, the EPRS notes. As an example, it points to the cases of Sweden and Denmark, which have large percentages of women in their national parliaments.

Two presidents

The European Parliament has had only two women presidents, out of 18, since 1979, and few women occupy the assembly's senior positions. The very first president

was a woman, French Holocaust survivor and women's rights icon Simone Veil, who held the role from 1979 to 1982. Another Frenchwoman, centre-right former lawyer Nicole Fontaine, was president from 1999 to 2002. In the outgoing parliament, female MEPs occupy a third of the seats in the executive and women head two of the 11 political groups. Less than a third of the parliament's international delegations were headed by female Euro-MPs in January 2018. By contrast, women represent nearly 60 percent of the parliament's administrative staff.

Better than other EU bodies

The European Parliament nonetheless has greater female representation than the EU's executive Commission, the European Central Bank and the Council of Ministers - none of which have ever had a woman as president. In 2014 a group of Euro-MPs threatened to reject the composition of the proposed Commission because it had only four women among 28 members. Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker, who has complained that member states do not present enough female candidates, eventually gathered nine to join the body. — AFP



Migrants hang around their tents set up under the ring road at a migrant and refugee makeshift camp at the Porte de la Chapelle, in northern Paris. — AFP

'Invisible' migrants cling to shelters along motorways

Along the ring road northeast of Paris, hundreds of migrants huddle in rows of tents covered in tarps or blankets as a blur of cars race by just a few meters away. AFP photographers have documented their lives. "We go to sleep at around 3:00 am, when traffic starts to go down," Ahmed, a Somali who has been living under an overpass near the Porte d'Aubervilliers for two months, told AFP. Usually only drivers in passing vehicles can see the makeshift shelters, where clothes are draped on concrete railings or hung from metal fences to dry, children ride bikes and infants in strollers nap as women make a meal. "It's like we're invisible," Ahmed says. For years migrants had been massing on canal banks or along unused rail lines in the north of the capital, some hoping for asylum, others fleeing at the first sign of police to avoid expulsion.

But in recent months authorities have cleared many of the camps as they swelled in size, after residents complained of trash and the acrid smoke of cooking fires. "They don't let us stay in front of the social cen-

tre," said Hana, a Sudanese woman watching over her children, aged 2 and 4, outside her tent along an exit ramp off the ring road. She is supposed to meet a social worker soon, "so maybe we'll be moved into an apartment," she said.

Most of the migrants stick together by country of origin. "Here, it's Somalia. Over there is Eritrea and Ethiopia," said Omar, adjusting the plastic sack he uses to sit on the damp grass. The authorities have started to clear these new camps as well, last Friday taking in around 200 people at the Porte d'Aubervilliers, mostly Afghans. "We don't need money. In Afghanistan my family had three cars," Marzban told AFP the night before the evacuation.

"But we couldn't stay because of the insecurity," he said, adding that he had come to Paris after being expelled from Austria. A few days later, around 50 tents had already reappeared at the site. Mayor Anne Hidalgo last month denounced "chaos" on the outskirts of Paris, accusing the government of being "in denial" about the city's needs for accommodating an estimated 900 to 1,800 people in various camps.

A new record of nearly 124,000 asylum requests were filed across France last year, a 23 percent jump from 2017. Of those, the government's Ofpra migrant protection agency granted refugee status to 46,700 people. President Emmanuel Macron's government enacted last August a new immigration law that speeds up the asylum process but also accelerates deportations. — AFP

'Plan B': Huawei's operating system headache after Android ban

Google's decision to partially cut off Huawei devices from its Android operating system has presented the Chinese tech titan with one of its most dramatic challenges yet: how to keep up with the competition if it cannot use the platform that powers nearly every other smartphone in the world? It is a possibility for which the Shenzhen-based firm, the world's second-largest smartphone maker by sales, has been preparing for years - reportedly since 2012 - by building an operating system of its own.

Huawei has acknowledged its existence, but the platform remains shrouded in mystery. "We have prepared our own operating system. If it should be the case that we can no longer use these systems (like Android)... we would therefore need to be well-armed," Richard Yu, CEO of Huawei's Consumer Business Group, told German newspaper Die Welt in an interview published in March.

"That is our Plan B. But we would of course prefer to work together with the ecosystems provided by Google and Microsoft." That system could now become more important than ever to Huawei. Washington last week imposed a ban on the sale or transfer of American technology to the firm - which could impact hundreds of millions of Huawei phones and tablets around the world.

Google has said it will comply with the US restrictions, and bar Huawei from access to some core components of Android and its proprietary services. While both Google and Huawei have reassured users that their phones will continue to function as normal, this could present major problems for Huawei, and apps on its phones could become unusable if it does not have access to code licensed by Google to phone makers.

And if the ban is not lifted, it could also run into trouble when the next version of Android is rolled out, because Huawei would not have the kind of access enjoyed by its rivals such as Samsung. Its own platform, currently undergoing trials, is named "HongMeng" and "will gradually replace the Android system", China's state-owned Global Times said Monday, citing other local media reports without more details.

'Exceptionally difficult' In developing a possible successor to

Android on its devices, Huawei is attempting something other industry behemoths like Microsoft and Samsung have failed to do: create a platform that attracts both users and app developers. The technical development is just one aspect of the challenge, analysts say. It takes years to build trust and confidence among app makers to write and sell software on the platform, and to convince users to adopt it. Building an operating system "is exceptionally difficult to do well and to do successfully", said Ryan Whalen, deputy director of the Law and Technology Centre at the University of Hong Kong.

"Just look to players like Nokia, BlackBerry and Microsoft that have all failed recently in similar endeavours," he told AFP, adding that Huawei would have to deal with a "competitive disadvantage" as its rivals will feature core Android services. Without full access to Android and popular Google services, Huawei - which has launched its products at glitzy ceremonies in major markets around the world - could find it difficult to convince customers to choose its phones over those pushed by rivals.

Microsoft pulled the plug on its Windows Phone platform earlier this year, and Samsung's Tizen system is barely known compared with Android and Apple's iOS, which runs iPhones and iPads. Huawei knows "that being a big telecom company, you have to have your own core technology eventually", Wong Kam Fai, a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong said. "They have it, but they are not ready for production yet. It would have been better if this thing happened two or three years later, but it is happening now so they just have to speed up." — AFP



A Huawei computer is displayed in a retail store in Beijing. — AFP

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2019

Business

Alghanim honored for nurturing a new generation of Mideast business leaders

KUWAIT: Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Group CEO of Alghanim Industries, has been recognized by JA (Junior Achievement) Worldwide for his breakthrough efforts to foster creativity, critical thinking, and business skills among youth in the Middle East.

One of the world's largest youth-serving non-profit organizations, JA Worldwide honored Alghanim at its 100th anniversary gala, held in Boston, Massachusetts, on May 2, 2019. The organization cited his record of launching and leading INJAZ Al-Arab, a JA-affiliated organization that supports education and entrepreneurship for students in the region. A Co-Founder and first Chairman of INJAZ Al-Arab, Alghanim also chairs its country chapter, INJAZ Kuwait.

INJAZ prepares students in three principal areas: work readiness, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship. Engaging local business leaders to act as volunteer mentors, INJAZ bridges the gap between the classroom and the real world. In its signature program, a six-month experience culminates in a business competition where program participants pitch their business ideas to a panel of judges drawn from the private sector.

Founded in 2005, INJAZ Al-Arab has achieved extraordinary success, impacting more than 3 million students across 14 countries in the Arab world. More importantly, the impact is growing: in the 2017-2018 academic year alone, INJAZ Al-Arab served more than 360,000 youth.

The work is underpinned by INJAZ Al-Arab's unique public-private-partnership model. Working with the ministries of education in all 14 countries, the group interfaces more than 3,000 schools, 400 universities and a network of 45,000 corporate volunteers.

INJAZ Al-Arab's work in Kuwait exemplifies its broader, regional impact. At a recent Middle East entrepreneurship competition, a team of Kuwaiti high school students won the 'Best Company of the Year' award for Agrivage, a startup which converts food waste into soil. Kuwaiti university students also won the competition's 'Best Social Impact' award for Youth Creations, a startup which develops socially-conscious entertainment products.

Successful INJAZ Kuwait alumni include Othman Boodai, the founder of eco-friendly product manufacturer Green Plastic Factory, and Hamed Al Khamis, founder of the restaurant group Slice. These young founders are creating hundreds of new jobs and inspiring their counterparts to follow their lead each year.

"One conversation with Omar. That's all it took for me to learn how deeply committed he is to preparing young people for successful careers and rewarding lives," said Asheesh Advani, President & CEO, JA Worldwide, who presented Alghanim with his award at the Centennial Gala in Boston. "If you want to see an example of JA in action, go speak with Omar. Go see what he and our staff and volunteers have done with INJAZ Al-Arab. We're proud to have them in our network, and thrilled to honor their work."

"The Middle East is brimming with talented young people. They're full of ideas for solving major problems - and they can't wait to get started," said Omar K Alghanim. "This award is deeply meaningful to me after nearly 15 years of work with INJAZ. But every bit of effort I have put into INJAZ has been repaid many times over in inspiration. The young people in our programs inspire me, the INJAZ team and all our volunteers. We owe them our thanks, and our ongoing support."

Attendees at the gala included global figures in international public policy and senior business executives from around the world, including Jim Yong Kim, the former President of the World Bank; Kai-Fu Lee, Chairman and CEO of Sinovation Ventures; Sheikha Hanadi Bint Nasser Bin Khaled Al-Thani, Founder and Chairperson, Amwal and Chairperson, INJAZ Al-Arab Regional Board; together with representatives of Citigroup, Oliver Wyman, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Sun Group. Omar Kutayba Alghanim is the Group CEO of Alghanim Industries, a Kuwait-based company that owns and operates businesses, investments and assets all over the world. During nearly fifteen years at the helm of this company, Omar has been a catalyst for growth and expansion for more than 30 businesses in 40 countries.

He is also Chairman of Gulf Bank, a leading financial institution in the region. Alongside these two positions, Omar is committed to improving social, economic and educational outcomes in the Arab world as a member of the World Economic Forum International Business Council and as Chairman of the Family Business Council - GULF (FBCG).

The FBCG is a nonprofit organization focused on improving long-term governance among family owned businesses, which account for 90 percent of the regional private sector economy. This passionate belief in private sector development and the role it should play in society led him to co-found INJAZ Al-Arab, which develops entrepreneurial skills in young people from primary school to graduation and beyond. Omar also takes an active role in addressing the dire challenges facing refugees in the region, partnering with the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) to help fund education programs for Syrian youth and children.

Omar received a Bachelor of Science in Business from New York University.



BOSTON: Omar Kutayba Alghanim delivering a speech during the ceremony



BOSTON: JA Worldwide honoring Omar K Alghanim at its 100th anniversary gala held in Boston on May 2, 2019. Alghanim received the award from Asheesh Advani, President & CEO, JA Worldwide.



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2019

Business

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

GCC debt issuance strong in Q1; global benchmark yield slides

Low global inflation, dovish monetary policy weigh on yields

KUWAIT: Yields trend down in 1Q19, GCC issuance at record high Benchmark global bond yields trended lower in 1Q19 before edging slightly higher in April, against expectations of slower global growth, trade uncertainty, and dovish policy shifts by central banks in the US and Europe. Yields in the GCC tracked lower, helped by rising oil prices which have benefitted fiscal consolidation efforts. There was however a surge in regional debt issuance dominated by sovereigns in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, taking advantage of low borrowing costs, good credit ratings and strong appetite for regional paper among international investors. We expect regional yields to remain low this year given low policy rates and modest inflation, while regional issuance should increase after a modest 2018.

International yields decline

The slowdown in global growth, dovish signals on monetary policy, low inflation and trade war effects saw global benchmark yields continue to trend down in 1Q19. In the US, the 10-year treasury yield declined by 27 bps q/q to 2.41 percent at the end of Q1, close to its lowest in over a year, reflecting a lower growth outlook and growing anticipations that the US Federal Reserve would revert to cutting interest rates for the first time in over a decade later this year.

This drop also resulted in the so-called inversion of the 10-year-three month yield curve - sometimes a signal of impending recession - although this inversion proved short-lived. Stronger economic data including above-consensus GDP growth in 1Q19, a fall back in inflation to well below the Fed's 2 percent target and also optimism on a US-China trade deal (which has since faded) scaled back expectations of a rate cut, helping to push the 10-year yield back up to 2.51 percent by end-April.

In the EU, political uncertainty (leadership changes, Brexit, political strife in Italy and France), low inflation and weak growth (exports, manufacturing) stemming from weaker global demand and detrimental US tariffs, caused European benchmark yields to also trend lower in 1Q19. The German Bund suffered the steepest decline among global benchmarks, losing 32 bps q/q. In contrast, Japanese sovereigns were the least changed in 1Q19, declining by less than 10 bps.

GCC yields also decline

GCC yields tracked their global counterparts lower in 1Q19 albeit with even steeper declines. The falls were led by Bahrain and Oman, which dropped by 95 and 90 bps

q/q respectively despite continued pressure on fiscal positions. The drop in Bahrain sovereign yields was sparked by the provision of a \$10 billion support package by neighboring countries Kuwait, KSA, and UAE last year, of which \$2.3 billion was recently disbursed, in tandem with a series of fiscal reforms undertaken by Bahrain, promoting a more positive outlook. Oman Yields also fell sharply partly due to the promise of fiscal reforms, namely VAT and excise tax implementation. All GCC sovereigns now have stable outlooks and most have investment grade ratings, except Oman and Bahrain. Yields across the GCC also likely fell due to the sharp recovery in oil prices from December lows, with Brent ending March at \$68/bbl, up 27 percent q/q.

Various developments point to yields remaining low through 2019. Oil prices have continued to climb with Brent now above \$70/bbl amid signs that the global oil market is tightening, affected by rising geopolitical tensions. This will support fiscal positions and may limit the potential increase in debt issuance in 2019. Meanwhile, the US Fed is unlikely to hike interest rates further this year (and could even cut if the US economy weakens), capping any potential rise in regional bond yields. However, opposing forces are at play: the recently escalating geopolitical risks in the gulf may apply upwards pressure on GCC yields in 2019.

International demand for GCC sovereigns is expected to receive a large boost this year due to the imminent inclusion of five (except Oman) GCC sovereigns in the JP Morgan Emerging markets Bond Index (EMBI). With \$300 billion in assets under management allocated to this index by institutional investors, and an assigned GCC weight of 11.3 percent in the EMBI index, the region is estimated to receive approximately \$30 billion in fund inflows, with more than half going to the larger debt markets of KSA and Qatar.

There has also been progress on the regulatory front, including the recent enactment of the UAE debt law (October 2018) and establishment of a debt management office. The Saudi Tadawul saw the launch of bond and sukuk trading in April. These developments should serve to improve debt management and regulation, transparency, market access, and availability of timely information.

Regional issuance strong in 1Q19

The pace of GCC debt issuance slowed in 2018, but rose sharply in 1Q19 to a historical high of \$32 billion, resulting in a 9 percent y/y increase in outstanding debt to \$478 billion. The debt issuance was dominated by Saudi and Qatari sovereigns and quasi-sovereigns which

Chart 1: Global benchmark yields

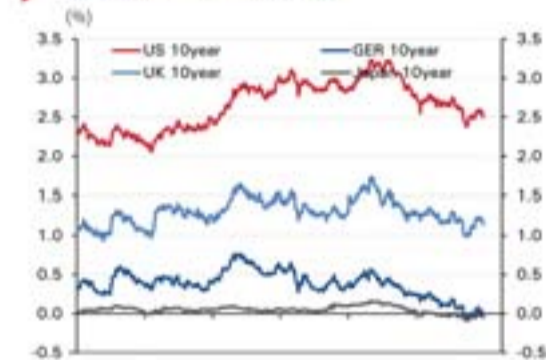


Chart 5: Outstanding GCC debt securities



Table 1: Gross GCC Issuance by sector (USD billion)

| | 3Q17 | 4Q17 | 1Q18 | 2Q18 | 3Q18 | 4Q18 | 1Q19 |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Public | 22.7 | 23.4 | 1.1 | 25.6 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 29.2 |
| Financial | 9.0 | 1.9 | 3.0 | 1.2 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 2.0 |
| Non-financial | 4.0 | 3.6 | 7.6 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Total | 34.0 | 28.9 | 11.7 | 27.9 | 7.5 | 8.3 | 31.8 |

Table 2: Gross GCC Issuance by country (USD billion)

| | 3Q17 | 4Q17 | 1Q18 | 2Q18 | 3Q18 | 4Q18 | 1Q19 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Bahrain | 4.2 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 2.8 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.0 |
| Kuwait | 4.6 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 0.0 |
| Oman | 0.8 | 0.9 | 7.5 | 0.3 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 0.0 |
| Qatar | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.5 | 17.3 | 2.6 | 1.5 | 15.8 |
| KSA | 11.1 | 12.6 | 0.5 | 4.5 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 13.8 |
| UAE | 2.7 | 13.6 | 2.6 | 2.8 | 2.2 | 3.4 | 2.8 |
| GCC | 24.0 | 28.9 | 11.7 | 27.9 | 7.5 | 8.3 | 31.8 |

comprised over \$29 billion. Also noteworthy is the debut issuance of \$12 billion of Aramco bonds in April, oversubscribed by a very large margin reflecting strong investor appetite. The Aramco issuance is part of an additional \$16bn in regional issuance scheduled for 2Q19. Moreover, Bahrain and Oman announced their intention to issue debt in 2019. With regards to Kuwait, issuance is expected to remain relatively low until the renewal of the public debt law, which expired in 2017. The law will enable the state to increase its debt ceiling to \$25bn from a current \$10 billion.

Outside of the GCC, Egypt issued \$4 billion in dollar-denominated bonds in February with maturities of 5, 10

and 30 years, in order to finance the state budget. The issuance was five times oversubscribed. Egypt also sold €2 billion worth of 6 and 12-year euro-denominated bonds in April. It does not plan to tap the international debt market again before the next fiscal year that begins in July.

The issuance of GCC sovereign bonds is expected to be solid in 2019 overall, despite rising oil prices and the boost to public revenues. This is due to largely expansionary budgets and refinancing needs arising from maturing debt. Moreover, the cost of borrowing remains relatively low thanks to good credit ratings and slow US policy rate hikes, foreign investor interest is on the rise, and market access continues to improve.



'Amazon' gives e-commerce giant its own Internet domain

SAN FRANCISCO: E-commerce giant Amazon was on its way to running its own online neighborhood Monday after the Internet's address keeper granted the ".amazon" domain to the company.

After waiting in vain for years for the US online retail colossus and an alliance of South American countries to resolve their battle over the right to web addresses ending with ".amazon," the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) this month sided with the Seattle-based company.

In 2012, Amazon applied for ".amazon" and two internationalized versions of the name. Brazil and several other countries put the US company on notice that they were opposed to the idea.

"Due to its inseparable semantic relation to the Amazon forest, that domain should not be, in any way, the monopoly of a company," the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued on its website.

"On the contrary, it is imperative that the States concerned be able to participate in the management and use of the name in order to defend and promote the natural, cultural and symbolic heritage of the Amazon region, as well as foster the regional economy and the digital inclusion of the populations living there."

ICANN said it balanced concerns of all involved and stilled the company's application for the domain in hopes the internet firm and member states of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization would work out a solution.

"ACTO and the Amazon corporation have been unable to come to a mutually acceptable solution or agree on an extension of time for continued discussions," ICANN said.

"In light of this, the board is now moving forward with the next steps laid out... and is directing ICANN org to continue processing the .AMAZON applications toward delegation." There will be a public comment period as per procedures established for granting new domain names.

The Brazilian Foreign Ministry said it feared the ICANN decision did not sufficiently take into account the interests of the South American governments involved and undermined the rights of sovereign states. —AFP

US garlic growers profit from trade war as most farmers struggle

GILROY, California: Unlike millions of other US farmers, garlic growers are profiting from the trade war with China and have cheered President Donald Trump's latest economic attack accordingly.

Sales of California-grown garlic are now increasing after decades of losing ground to cheaper Chinese imports. Sales are poised to get even better as Chinese garlic faces even higher tariffs, with no end to the trade war in sight. "In a perfect world, we'd love to see the tariffs stay on forever," said Ken Christopher, executive vice president of family owned Christopher Ranch, the largest of three remaining commercial garlic producers in the United States. While many farmers are suffering through the trade war because they relied heavily on imports to China, US garlic growers benefit because they rely overwhelmingly on domestic sales. Tariffs on Chinese garlic

increased from 10 to 25 percent on May 9, when the US hiked tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods and dashed hopes that a US-China trade deal could come soon.

While soybean farmers in the US Midwest watched silos fill with unsold crops as top buyer China all but stopped purchases, Christopher Ranch saw domestic garlic sales rise 15 percent in the last quarter of 2018 after the US applied a 10 percent tariff on imports of Chinese garlic in September.

Then Trump ordered even higher tariffs this month after trade talks broke down when China backtracked on a host of issues crucial to US officials. The escalation came just a few weeks before the US garlic harvest.

"The timing couldn't be better for us," Christopher said. "We anticipate a surge in demand for California garlic in the coming weeks." Christopher, 33, whose farm has 59,000 acres of grass-like garlic fields in Gilroy, California, traveled to Washington D.C. in July to urge the Trump administration to include garlic in the list of imports that would face tariffs.

In lobbying for tariffs, Christopher follows in the footsteps of his father, who fought to implement an anti-dumping duty of up to 400 percent on Chinese garlic in the 1990s. "We understand in a broader economic sense that a trade war is not in the US best interest," he said, "But since the tariffs were happening anyway, we needed to be sure that garlic was part of the equation." — Reuters

CBK launches Ayadi money delivery service

KUWAIT: Within its constant efforts to provide its clients with the best service and save their time and effort, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the launching of its free 'Ayadi' (Eid cash gifts) money delivery service through the Cash Xpress and CBK Mobile applications.

In this regard, CBK's Assistant Manager for Individual Banking Services, Noura Kayed said that CBK provides this service to its clients on the occasion of the advent of Eid Al-Fitr. The service would save clients' time and efforts and spare them the need to line up at banks to get cash. He added that the service would be available for personal services clients noting that the minimum sum to be ordered is KD 100 and the maximum is KD 2,000.

Further, Kayed added that Ayadi money would be delivered from 10 am till 3 pm and from 8 pm till midnight. He added that the money would be handed to the client in person after receiving an SMS message and showing his/her ID.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

| ASIAN COUNTRIES | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| US Dollar Transfer | 304.900 |
| Euro | 341.490 |
| Sterling Pound | 388.750 |
| Canadian dollar | 228.050 |
| Turkish lira | 50.880 |
| Swiss Franc | 303.380 |
| US Dollar Buying | 296.700 |
| ASIAN COUNTRIES | |
| Japanese Yen | 2.769 |
| Indian Rupees | 4.381 |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.189 |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 1.728 |
| Nepali Rupees | 2.730 |
| Singapore Dollar | 222.550 |
| Hongkong Dollar | 38.846 |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.599 |
| Philippine Peso | 5.817 |
| Thai Baht | 9.565 |
| Malaysian ringgit | 77.980 |
| GCC COUNTRIES | |
| Saudi Riyal | 81.361 |
| Qatari Riyal | 83.798 |
| Omani Riyal | 792.463 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 810.150 |
| UAE Dirham | 83.068 |
| ARAB COUNTRIES | |
| Egyptian Pound - Cash | 20.750 |
| Egyptian Pound - Transfer | 17.845 |
| Yemen Riyal/for 1000 | 1.225 |
| Tunisian Dinar | 105.140 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 430.710 |
| Lebanese Lira/for 1000 | 0.203 |
| Syrian Lira | 0.000 |
| Morocco Dirham | 32.299 |

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

| Rate for Transfr | Selling Rate |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| US Dollar | 304.540 |
| Canadian Dollar | 226.702 |
| Sterling Pound | 390.904 |
| Euro | 341.961 |
| Swiss Frank | 308.985 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 809.883 |
| UAE Dirhams | 83.317 |
| Qatari Riyals | 84.557 |
| Saudi Riyals | 82.105 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 430.819 |
| Egyptian Pound | 17.879 |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 1.731 |
| Indian Rupees | 4.340 |
| Pakistani Rupees | 2.083 |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.607 |
| Philippines Peso | 5.797 |
| Cyprus pound | 18.117 |
| Japanese Yen | 3.778 |
| Syrian Pound | 1.591 |
| Nepalese Rupees | 2.719 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 73.937 |
| Chinese Yuan Renminbi | 44.578 |
| Thai Bhat | 10.589 |
| Turkish Lira | 50.609 |
| Singapore dollars | 223.632 |

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| CURRENCY | BUY | SELL |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| British Pound | 0.380138 | 0.394038 |
| Czech Korune | 0.005146 | 0.014446 |
| Danish Krone | 0.041506 | 0.046405 |
| Euro | 0.332183 | 0.345383 |
| Georgian Lari | 0.109346 | 0.109348 |
| Hungarian | 0.000947 | 0.001137 |
| Norwegian Krone | 0.030578 | 0.035778 |
| Romanian Leu | 0.054375 | 0.071225 |
| Russian ruble | 0.004707 | 0.004707 |
| Slovakia | 0.009123 | 0.019123 |
| Swedish Krona | 0.027423 | 0.032423 |

| Swiss Franc | 0.294667 | 0.305667 |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Australasia | | |
| Australian Dollar | 0.201229 | 0.213229 |
| New Zealand Dollar | 0.191913 | 0.201413 |
| America | | |
| Canadian Dollar | 0.221542 | 0.230542 |
| US Dollars | 0.300800 | 0.306100 |
| US Dollars Mint | 0.301300 | 0.306100 |
| Asia | | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 0.003013 | 0.003814 |
| Chinese Yuan | 0.042615 | 0.046151 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 0.036757 | 0.039507 |
| Indian Rupee | 0.003735 | 0.004507 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 0.000017 | 0.000023 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.002680 | 0.002860 |
| Korean Won | 0.000245 | 0.000260 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 0.069213 | 0.075213 |
| Nepalese Rupee | 0.002683 | 0.003023 |
| Pakistan Rupee | 0.001480 | 0.002250 |
| Philippine Peso | 0.005747 | 0.006047 |
| Singapore Dollar | 0.215763 | 0.225763 |
| Sri Lankan Rupee | 0.001378 | 0.001968 |
| Taiwan | 0.009557 | 0.008737 |
| Thai Baht | 0.009251 | 0.009801 |
| Vietnamese Dong | 0.00013 | 0.00013 |
| Arab | | |
| Bahraini Dinar | 0.794183 | 0.810683 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.017605 | 0.020205 |
| Iranian Riyal | 0.000084 | 0.000086 |
| Iraqi Dinar | 0.000210 | 0.000270 |
| Jordanian Dinar | 0.425139 | 0.434139 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 1.000000 | 1.000000 |
| Lebanese Pound | 0.000151 | 0.000251 |
| Moroccan Dirhams | 0.020535 | 0.044536 |
| Omani Riyal | 0.785630 | 0.791310 |
| Qatar Riyal | 0.079481 | 0.084421 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.080220 | 0.081520 |
| Syrian Pound | 0.001293 | 0.001513 |
| Tunisian Dinar | 0.097511 | 0.105511 |
| Turkish Lira | 0.044126 | 0.053971 |
| UAE Dirhams | 0.081588 | 0.083288 |
| Yemeni Riyal | 0.000991 | 0.001071 |

Business

OECD cuts global growth forecast as US-China tensions escalate

Governments urged to act urgently to reinvigorate growth

PARIS: The OECD yesterday cut its forecast for the world economy, urging governments to resolve their trade disputes as the latest flare-up in the US-China trade war threatens to crimp global growth.

"Governments must act urgently to reinvigorate growth that benefits all," the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development said as it pared back its forecast for global growth to 3.2 percent this year from 3.3 percent earlier. "Resolve trade disputes through increased international cooperation while fixing the international rules-based system," said the OECD, a Paris-based forum that advises the world's advanced economy.

"Invest in infrastructure, digital transformation and skills to meet tomorrow's challenges. In the euro area, combine structural with fiscal policies to stimulate activity."

The OECD's updated forecasts did not take directly into account the latest flare-up in the long-running trade war between Washington and Beijing, "insofar that there is still a great deal of uncertainty about the length of time (tariffs) will remain in place and the future evolution of the trade relationship between the two countries," an OECD source told AFP.

Nevertheless, the projections did "incorporate" the increased uncertainty generated by the trade tensions, the source said. As both Washington and Beijing slap trade tariffs on more and more of each other's goods, President Donald Trump has barred US companies from engaging in telecommunications trade with foreign companies said to threaten American national security.

US internet giant Google, whose Android mobile operating system powers most of the world's smartphones, then announced that it was beginning to cut ties with China's Huawei, which Washington considers a national security threat.

OECD secretary general Angel Gurría told a news conference it was imperative that Washington and Beijing bury their differences. "There is an urgent need that we sit around a multilateral table and that we create the conditions that will allow trade to continue to underpin global growth and global well-being," he said. "We have a lot of work to do, but if we do it together we will have a much better chance to succeed."

The organization's chief economist Laurence Boone said the "worst scenario possible" was that



PARIS: Angel Gurría, General Secretary of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), delivers a speech as he presents the OECD Economic Outlook at the OECD headquarters in Paris yesterday. — AFP

trade tensions would continue and snowball. "A climate of uncertainty (was) detrimental to investment and for confidence" and could erode purchasing power, she argued.

While the OECD pared back its global growth forecast for the current year, it predicted a pick-up in activity to 3.4 percent in 2020. It notched up its forecast for US growth this year by 0.2 percentage point to 2.8 percent, but predicted a slowdown to 2.3 percent next year. Chinese growth was projected to slow to 6.2 percent this year and 6.0 percent next year. The outlook for euro area growth was unchanged at 1.2 percent this year. — AFP

US tech firms to take hit from Huawei sanctions

WASHINGTON: The tough sanctions imposed on Huawei by President Donald Trump could deal a blow to the many US firms that make up the Chinese tech giant's supply chain.

American firms last year sold an estimated \$11 billion worth of components to Huawei, which was put on a blacklist last week by Washington over national security concerns as trade frictions grow between the US and China.

Trump's executive order could effectively ban makers of US hardware and software from selling to Huawei by requiring a special license from Washington. The Commerce Department on Monday delayed the sanctions on Huawei for 90 days, saying the additional time was needed to allow for software updates and other contractual obligations.

The agency said it was granting Huawei a "temporary general license" through August 19 allowing for transactions "necessary to maintain and support existing and currently fully operational networks and equipment, including software updates and patches, subject to legally binding contracts and agreements" signed before May 16.

Hardware and software

Bloomberg News reported that US-based chipmakers Intel, Qualcomm, Broadcom and Xilinx have indicated they would halt shipments to the Chinese firm which is the world's number two smartphone maker and a leader in telecom infrastructure and super-fast 5G networks. Google said it would comply with the US order, leaving Huawei without access to critical services for the Android operating system such as Gmail and Google Maps.

Microsoft, which supplies the Windows operating system for many Huawei devices, did not respond to an AFP query on how the order might impact the Redmond, Washington-based firm.

Bob O'Donnell of the consultancy Technalysis



BRUSSELS: People stand at Huawei Cybersecurity Center in Brussels during a press conference by Huawei Chief Representative to the European Institutions. — AFP

Research said any ban would almost certainly affect Microsoft. "If it affects Google I don't see why it wouldn't affect Microsoft," O'Donnell said.

"Any version of Windows comes from Microsoft, since there is no open-source version."

Moving toward independence

Roger Kay, founder and analyst at Endpoint Technologies Associates, said the ban is likely to accelerate efforts by Huawei and other Chinese firms to develop their own sources of microprocessors and other components. "The short-term effect on both American and Chinese companies are inevitably negative," Kay said.

"The longer-term effect is that Huawei and other Chinese companies turn away more sharply from American suppliers." Neither Intel nor Qualcomm responded to queries on how they would respond to the order on Huawei.

Avi Greengart, founder of the research firm Techspontential, said a ban on sales to Huawei could hit a wide range of large and small US firms including Corning, which makes the popular Gorilla Glass for smartphones, and Dolby, a producer of video and audio software for handsets. — AFP



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Business

Gulf Air reveals Salalah in series of new destinations for 2019

Airline continues its network expansion for 2019



MANAMA: Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, yesterday revealed its second destination for 2019 being Salalah, in Sultanate of Oman. Commencing on 15 June and operating until 14 September 2019, Salalah will be added as a seasonal summer destination as the airline continues revealing throughout the year its further network expansion plans for 2019.

Gulf Air's Chief Executive Officer Kresimir Kukco said "We are constantly on the lookout for ways to enhance our customers' travel experience by adding new routes and increasing flight frequencies, we chose Salalah as part of our summer schedule in response to positive customer feedback by expanding our network

in tune with the demands of the season. With competitive fares and convenient flights from Gulf Air, I am sure travelers can enjoy their best summer vacation by visiting this fabulous destination," he said.

Salalah provides a welcome relief with its cool climate, monsoon rains, misty mountains, flowing wadis and verdant gardens while the popular Salalah Khareef Festival offers a wholesome family vacation.

Earlier in 2019, Gulf Air announced its new boutique business model concept, which will reinforce its focus on product and customer experience. As already done in the hospitality industry, Gulf Air will differentiate itself as a

boutique airline that is unique in the way it operates comparing to airlines that are more volume driven. This approach will give the airline a competitive advantage that will translate in its new fleet, new Falcon Gold class offering, new exclusive products, new destinations for 2019 and its presence in the new terminal at Bahrain International Airport due to open towards the end of the year.

With the new business model concept, Gulf Air aims to grow strategically in size, expand to more boutique destinations in 2019 and continue its fleet modernization program by receiving additional 2 Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner's and 4 Airbus A320neos this year.



Why your Cloud provider's business must be as stable as yours?

Digital businesses cannot afford to have unauthorized data access in the Cloud nor have their Cloud Services Provider unexpectedly shut down shop, says Yasser Zeineldin, CEO at eHosting Datafort.

At the start of this decade, many regional IT managers expressed concern whether their organizations would ever embrace Cloud as a platform or not. They mused that Cloud is perhaps suitable for very specific workloads, but they would never migrate these mission critical workloads to an external platform. As we move into the next decade, much of the regional mindset has changed to embrace Cloud as a business enabling platform, while keeping mission critical workloads on a Private Cloud or even Hybrid Cloud platform.

The sheer cost and agility advantages of the Public Cloud platform is driving regional IT spending into this area at a double-digit growth rate. The requirements of in-country data regulations and compliance is attracting large Cloud providers to invest locally. And such players are increasingly investing inside the region and in countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia, in a relatively steady but consistent manner. According to global research and



Yasser Zeineldin

According to Gartner's latest Emerging Risks Report and Monitor, the majority of risk executives reported being most concerned about the probability and impact of potential data risks associated with Cloud Computing.

While adoption and migration of Cloud delivers immediate capex and opex benefits and brings agility into the organization, IT and cyber security managers must balance the speed of adoption with increasing levels of control and compliance into the Cloud. Institutional and country level audits like GDPR, punitive measures by the Board, and other corporate shareholder guidelines, do not allow any lack of rigor by IT and cybersecurity managers in this area.

For enterprises that are actively moving to the Cloud, there are the two principal risk areas that need to be actively monitored going forward. The first area of risk is the migration of on-premises data to Cloud platforms and this could include sensitive, private and confidential infor-

mation as well as historical transactional data about the organization, its suppliers as well as its customers.

IT and cybersecurity managers must ensure that the same level of compliance around security policies and employee sign-on that exist on-premises are maintained for Cloud platforms as well. They must know where the data is resident and who is responsible for the migration and movement of the data to Cloud platforms. Once resident on the Cloud, they must remain in control and responsible for who has access to data in the Cloud. The Cloud data access policies must remain mirrored to the on-premise policies and it is the IT and cybersecurity managers who are responsible for this in-cloud compliance.

The second area of risk is around the economic, financial and technology stability of the Cloud Hosting Provider and its ecosystem of suppliers. Rapid migration of data to the Cloud is driving the spawn of gold-rush Cloud Service Providers, either as direct or indirect players. IT and cyber security managers must be particularly concerned if their Cloud Services Providers change their Service Level Agreements or display any evidence of inability to provide their services.

The combination of the above two risks, namely unauthorized access to Cloud data and inability to provide Cloud services, due to lack of compliance by either the organization or the Cloud Service Provider, can have disastrous consequences for the organization. While such an extreme situation is yet to occur in the region, global advisory firms like Gartner are drawing attention to the possibility, as an emerging data risk in Cloud Computing.

As a corollary, end users are advised to engage with economically stable and well-entrenched Cloud Services Providers, while the gold-rush is ongoing.

Special Ramadan offers by Renault Al-Babtain

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Renault in the State of Kuwait is delighted to announce that customers can avail Ramadan offers and invites them to discover the best of European performance in Renault Megane at its Renault Store in Al-Rai during Ramadan.

The offer includes ten-year warranty, free 1-year service or 20,000 km free maintenance, free one year insurance and free registration including third party insurance.

Renault Megane 2019 is equipped with generous space for its occupants i.e. dimensions of 4.63m long and 1.81m wide, and a record wheelbase in its class of 2.71m. Owing to its dynamic styling and advanced features, the new Megane represents the next level in the compact saloon category. It comes with a 1.6-litre engine, 115hp designed to enhance driving enjoyment and reduce fuel consumption.

Externally, its muscular bonnet, broad shoulders, tight curves and sculpted slides emphasize its modern, sophisticated character. At the rear, the new lighting signature traces an intense, dark-red horizontal line. Proudly supporting its chrome diamond, MEGANE affirms its ambition and dominates the road.

With comfort at its core, its sculpted, wrap-around seats, worthy of the finest design workshops, the Renault MEGANE welcomes you in the greatest of style. It comes in 3 immaculately finished upholstery, including one in perforated leather. From the speedometer and its centre console to the vents, it is jam-packed with real satin-finish chrome details.

Enriched with driving technologies, the R-LINK 2 system and its large touchscreen makes total control of the vehicle only a touch away. Passengers can choose the MULTI-SENSE driving mode according to the mood while staying connected with R-LINK 2 for more comfort: with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay and get easy access to smartphone's music display using the large onboard R-LINK 2 screen. Backed by a digital speedometer, Bluetooth radio with voice recognition, USB & Jack sockets, 4.2" display, 4 speakers, ergonomic center console, large 8.7-inch, intuitive, vertical touchscreen, etc. on board All-New Renault MEGANE, one is at the heart of the action.

Renault Al-Babtain encourages Renault fans to stop by the showroom situated in Al Rai to explore the car and its features during this Ramadan.



City managers explore a smart future at 2019 Shenzhen Smart City Forum

KUWAIT: The 2019 Shenzhen Smart City Forum with International Friendship Cities opened yesterday with the theme "ushering in a bright future for smart cities". The forum brings together Shenzhen officials, Huawei executives and smart city experts, UN-Habitat experts and scholars, delegates from cities around the world with smart city experience, as well as high-tech enterprises to share their latest development concepts and practices. The forum aims to promote communication and cooperation in building smart, digital cities.

Ai Xuefeng, Deputy Mayor of Shenzhen, hosted the opening ceremony with Wang Weizhong, Secretary of the CPC Shenzhen Municipal Committee, Xie Yuan, Deputy Chair of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, and Frank Ross, Lord Provost of Edinburgh speaking at the forum's opening. Guest speakers included Guo Ping, Rotating Chairman of Huawei; Ugo Valenti, CEO of Smart City Expo World Congress; and Rui Costa dos Santos, Governor of the State of Bahia, Brazil.

Wang Weizhong, Secretary of the CPC Shenzhen Municipal Committee, delivered a welcome speech: "This year witnesses the 70th anniversary of People's Republic of China, and also 40 years since the establishment of Shenzhen city. Shenzhen reflects the historical achievements China has made, serving as a window to display China to the world. We hope to make more friends with an open heart taking the opportunity of this forum, and together contribute wisdom and power for a common human community."



Guo Ping, Huawei Rotating Chairman, shows the Maslow model for smart city construction.

"Huawei is dedicated to building a smart city digital foundation that enables integrating, exploring, analyzing, and sharing data, by using ubiquitous connectivity, a digital platform, and pervasive intelligence," said Guo Ping in a speech entitled 'Building a Maslow Model for Smart Cities'. "More importantly, we develop a digital brain for cities in hand with application partners, building a common ecosystem with mutual advantages. This brain will provide advanced ways to help cities make informed development decisions and will allow e-government, transportation, and policing domains to go digital. In doing so, we hope to build smart cities featuring smart administration, more benefits for residents, and prosperous industry development."

In his speech 'A New World of Smart Cities', Ugo Valenti said: "Innovative technologies, including 5G, IoT, AI, and cloud, are disruptively renovating how cities are governed and managed. By nurturing Public-Private-People Partnerships, a co-creation model among government, corporations, and citizens, smart cities will facilitate a more open decision-making process, and bring a people-centric new world."

The highlight of the opening ceremony was a high-end dialogue. It attracted attendees from government departments, enterprises, and the academic community. The panel explored emerging technologies, how to construct big-data-based city ICT infrastructure to safeguard public security and



Executives attend the panel discussion at the Shenzhen Smart City forum.

order, and how to enhance modern city governance, public welfare, and economy by leveraging digital services and a disruptive digital brain. The result will be better smart cities with active smart economies.

"The usage of digital technology has become one of the criteria to assess a city's intelligence level. Future smart cities will have five new infrastructural platforms, namely cloud, IoT, data lake, AI, and a video surveillance network. These five platforms will form a foundation for us to achieve ubiquitous connectivity, realize pervasive intelligence, and streamline heterogeneous ICT systems. Huawei uses its cloud as the basis to integrate various new ICT technologies, such as AI, IoT, big data, converged communications, video, and GIS, to build a comprehensive digital platform," said Yan Lida, President of Huawei Enterprise BG.

"This platform provides technical enablement for government and enterprise customers, helping them easily cope with complicated technical issues. In addition, Huawei built 12 OpenLabs around the globe to conduct customer-oriented joint innovation with partners. Building a smart city is a long and constantly evolving process. Based on Huawei's digital platform, cities will be like organic life. New applications will emerge and

grow through iteration, and eventually achieve overall prosperity," continued Yan Lida.

"The United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals include one on sustainable cities and communities. We hope to drive the realization of SDG through smart city endeavors with confidence. We are to face the challenge from smart city construction, but also embrace its unlimited potential. From the perspective of the UN, international cooperation is significant. We see a very good platform here today for cities to share experience," said Atsushi Koresawa, Director for UN-Habitat Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

This event is hosted by Shenzhen Municipal People's Government and organized by Shenzhen Foreign Affairs Office. As a co-organizer, Huawei is a global leading Smart City and Safe City solution provider. Huawei has developed city digital platform, digital brain, and city IoT solutions leveraging new ICT technologies, such as IoT, big data, video cloud, converged communications, GIS, and AI. Together with ecosystem partners, Huawei is drawing a blueprint for smart cities. Huawei Smart City and Safe City solutions have served more than 700 cities in over 100 countries, helping to promote local security and social and economic development.

What's On

KIB organizes an adventurous girgian event at The Avenues



KIB's unique girgian takes place in an exciting atmosphere.



A fun maze for kids



Distribution of girgian gifts amongst visitors at The Avenues



An impressive turnout for KIB's girgian event



Spreading happiness and joy amongst children at KIB's girgian event

As part of its ongoing commitment to carrying out its social role during the Holy Month of Ramadan, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) organized a fun-filled girgian celebration at the Grand Avenues. Held last weekend, the two-day celebration featured last year's exciting girgaeen candy pool and an entirely new attraction that was sure to put a smile on everyone's face.

On his part, Nawaf Najia, Senior Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: "Ramadan has always had a different flavor to it - welcoming us with its own set of customs and rituals that have been passed down from many generations. As partners in the community, we aim at reaffirming the value these traditional events have on our community,

as they bring us closer together and strengthen bonds across all ages."

Najia also noted that this year's celebration featured an array of entertaining activities and games for children. The annual event included a pool of candy where participants were suspended and then lowered into the pool. This year, the event also introduced a new, fabu-

lous attraction - a children's maze. As part of its Ramadan program, KIB continues to organize various events and activities that aim at serving diverse segments of the local community. By doing so, the Bank reaffirms its dynamic role in the community and its social mission to leave a positive impact on all its members.



Al-Raya organizes Ghabqa for Kuwait media figures

Al-Raya United Company recently threw a Ghabqa banquet for media figures at Sultan Ibrahim restaurant. It was attended by the Al-Raya board chairman Jassem Al-Fajji, CEO Adanan Al-Salem, company employees and representatives of the Kuwaiti media. Speaking on the occasion, Al-Fajji thanked the media for its constant support, noting that Al-Raya has grown way beyond Kuwait and is now covering seven international markets.



The Diplomatic Women's Committee in collaboration with the embassy of Kyrgyz Republic organized a Girgian festival at Bait Bader Al-Mohammad Al-Jabber Al-Sabah over the weekend. Diplomats, along with their spouses and children captivated the audience with their skill. — Photos by Joseph Shaqra

Health

High-security Ebola burials spark dismay in struggling DR Congo

BUTEMBO, DR Congo: People in Ebola-hit eastern DR Congo are struggling to come to terms with high-security burials that are part of a hard-pressed strategy to roll back the disease. Anyone who dies of the highly infectious hemorrhagic fever has to be buried in carefully-controlled conditions designed to minimize the risk of infection from body fluids. But that means ceremonies are carried out in sanitized conditions, with relatives and friends kept at a distance—for many, a traumatic break with traditions that demand the body of a loved-one be seen or touched.

"We're astonished she's being buried like this," said Denise Kahambu as she watched the specially-prepared burial in Butembo of her 50-year-old cousin, Marie-Rose. "They said she died of Ebola," she said skeptically. First declared last August, the epidemic has now claimed nearly 1,200 lives — 200 of them in May alone. The outbreak is the second deadliest on record, after an epidemic that killed more than 11,300 people in West Africa in 2014-16. The burial in Butembo followed strict precautions. A pick-up truck delivered the coffin to the burial site, where a grave had been prepared, as the family stood by at a distance.

Gloved Red Cross workers handled the bur-

ial, which took place in silence and without a religious ceremony. A family member or loved one was allowed only to place a cross on the tomb, once they too had donned protective gloves. Half a dozen police officers escorted the convoy and remained on guard throughout. On Friday, two burial teams from the treatment centers were attacked by stone-throwing crowds at Butembo and Bunia, a little further north in Ituri province, according to the health ministry. One burial worker was injured.

Culture shock

"The custom is that the body of the deceased first returns to the home. And once people have mourned, they have the chance to touch the body for the last time," said Seros Muyisa Kamathe, a guide and interpreter in Beni and Butembo. "Before going to the cemetery, you open the coffin so people can take one last look at the deceased." And normally it would be the family and neighbors who would take responsibility for digging the grave-and deciding where it should be.

Ebola experts say denial and resistance were familiar obstacles in the 2014-16 epidemic in the West African states of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The World Health Organization

(WHO) has a 12-step protocol for dealing with burials so that handling of the remains is kept to a minimum, but it also emphasizes the importance of respect and mourning. "The burial process is very sensitive for the family and the community and can be the source of trouble or even open conflict," it acknowledges. No burial should begin until family agreement has been obtained, and workers should engage with the community "for prayers to dissipate tensions and provide respectful time," it says.

Armed escorts

The burial process is part of the notoriously time-consuming and labor-intensive task of combating Ebola. And in this troubled region, the challenge has been further complicated by bloody deadly attacks on Ebola treatment centers by local militias. Suspicion, political infighting in the capital Kinshasa and militia violence provide a fertile breeding ground for the virus. Sometimes local people cover the graves overnight as a sign of their opposition, the ministry said. In Butembo, health workers need an armed escort when they go looking for cases of Ebola in some neighborhoods, an AFP photographer noted during one outing Saturday evening. — AFP

Aussie election may have global climate impact

SYDNEY: Brutal droughts, floods and wildfires were expected to make the environment a pivotal issue in Australia's election, instead victory for the climate change-skeptic Liberal party could have global implications. Australia's Liberal-National coalition secured victory late on Saturday night despite polls suggesting an opposition Labor Party win. In coal-rich Queensland, voters swung hard to the government fearing a Labor government would curb mining projects and cost them jobs.

Concerns that Labor would block the creation of the massive Indian-backed Adani coal mine helped voters abandon the party in their droves. The northeastern district of Herbert had been the most marginal seat at the last election, with

only a 0.02 percent difference between the main parties. This time the Liberals took 58 percent of the vote. That result—and others like it—could have ramifications far beyond Australia.

In the emissions stakes, Australia is a minnow compared to the bellowing economies of China or the United States. But its role as the world's largest coal exporter gives the country outsized influence in the climate stakes. Experts say the coalition government's election victory makes it much more likely that the Adani project will go ahead. Eventually, they say, billions more tons of coal will be available to export and burn in places like India.

"It is probable that they will push for the final approvals to go through as quickly as possible," Samantha Hepburn, an energy and resources law expert at Deakin University, told AFP. The Labor-led Queensland state government—which also has a say—is likely to come under enormous pressure to approve the project despite concerns about the environment. — AFP

CLINIC

PAGE





248 33 199





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248 33 199

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- o Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- o Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

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- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
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- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendicectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

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

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
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Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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- ◆ 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

daralshifa
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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.

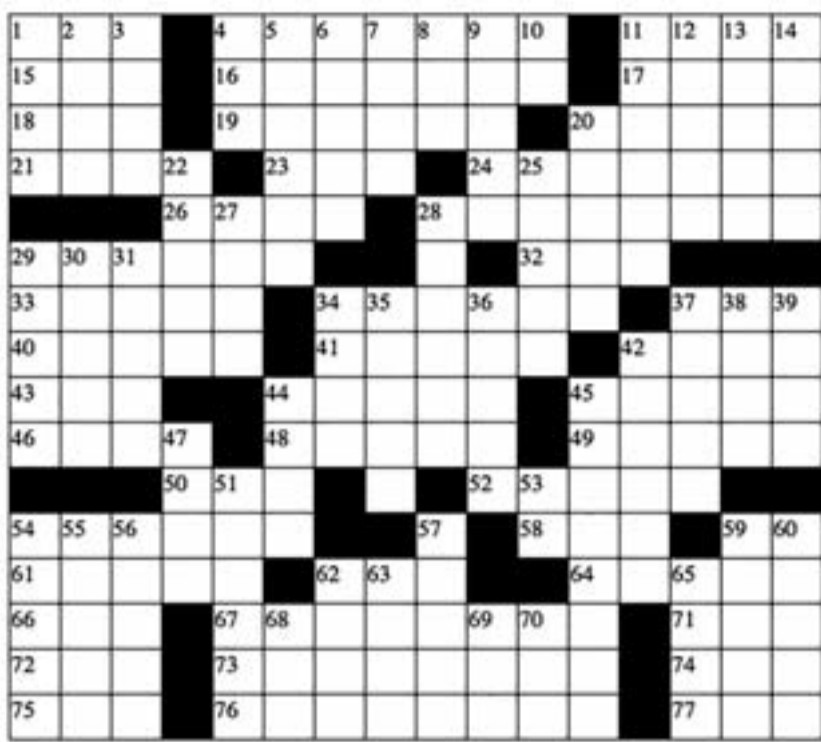
Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ 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** Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

Stars

CROSSWORD 2214



ACROSS

1. A bachelor's degree in naval science.
4. (zoology) Lacking a tail or taillike appendage.
11. (old-fashioned) At or from or to a great distance.
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
16. A Dravidian language spoken in southern India.
17. A challenge to do something dangerous or foolhardy.
18. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
19. A city is east central Sweden north northwest of Stockholm.
21. A small cake leavened with yeast.
23. The basic unit of money in Romania.
24. Shah of Iran who was deposed in 1979 by Islamic fundamentalists (1919-1980).
26. Free from favoritism or self-interest or bias or deception.
29. Any unsaturated aliphatic hydrocarbon.
32. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
33. (Norse mythology) Race of ancient gods sometimes in conflict with the Aesir.
40. Inability to coordinate voluntary muscle movements.
41. United States industrialist who manufactured plows suitable for working the prairie soil (1804-1886).
43. A local and habitual twitching especially in the face.
46. (prefix) Within.
48. Of or relating to Oman or its people.
49. An Oscan-speaking member of an ancient people of Campania.
50. A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
52. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
54. Small genus of Asian evergreen trees having columnar crowns and distinguished by leaves lacking a midrib.
58. A young woman making her debut into society.
61. Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
64. A form of Japanese poetry.
66. Seed vessel having hooks or prickles.
67. (Greek mythology) Founder of Troy.
71. An associate degree in applied science.
72. A metal-bearing mineral valuable enough to be mined.
73. Small tree or shrub of New Zealand having a profusion of axillary clusters of honey-scented paper-white flowers and whose bark is used for cordage.
74. The compass point that is one point east of due south.
75. The cry made by sheep.
76. Capable of having having clear evidence of eliminated without trace.
77. A slight amount or degree of difference.

DOWN

1. Divulge information or secrets.
2. Kamarupan languages spoken in northeastern India and western Burma.
3. Someone who works (or provides work-

- ers) during a strike.
4. A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
5. Very small northern fish.
6. Typical geese.
7. Relatively small fast-moving sloth.
8. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
9. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
10. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
11. A port city in southwestern Turkey on the Gulf of Antalya.
12. The capacitance of a capacitor that has an equal and opposite charge of 1 coulomb on each plate and a voltage difference of 1 volt between the plates.
13. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
14. Tie again or anew.
20. Green algae common in freshwater lakes of limestone districts.
22. A linguistic element added to a word to produce an inflected or derived form v l.
25. Administer an oil or ointment to.
27. Open to or abounding in fresh air.
28. Reduce in worth, character, etc.
30. Of or relating to the ancient Latins or the Latin language.
31. Order by virtue of superior authority.
34. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
35. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
36. German iris having large white flowers with lavender-tinged falls and a fragrant rhizome.
37. Genus of tropical plants with creeping rootstocks and small umbellate flowers.
38. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
39. A city of central China.
42. Melon having yellowish rind and whitish flesh.
44. A cord fastened around the neck with an ornamental clasp and worn as a necktie.
45. An industrial city in the Donets Basin.
47. Evergreen trees and shrubs having oily one-seeded fruits.
51. Deprive of by deceit.
53. A public promotion of some product or service.
55. (Zoroastrianism) Title for benevolent deities.
56. Small genus of hairy herbs with yellow flowers.
57. Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus Draba having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
59. Jordan's port.
60. Being derived from.
62. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
63. In the Roman calendar.
65. American political cartoonist (1840-1902).
68. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
69. Tag the base runner to get him out.
70. The address of a web page on the world wide web.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you want to learn. It's not just learning through educational material, it's learning about your friends and family. This isn't something most people really study but for you, it's learning what makes others tick. Psychology could be a new job occupation if you choose. You're more outgoing, even dynamic, according to others but you feel it as well. You've got a lust for research and you want to be in the middle of it too. Everything is interesting to you at this point, Aries. You want to be number one in all you take on. Second best won't do at all. Enjoy tonight with friends.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, today you have the feeling that anything not about work or making money for the future isn't going anywhere. If it's not work, then it's not worth fooling with, is your opinion. You want to be around people but not just for fun and social activities. Instead you want to learn and figure out new manners for doing what you need for material growth. This can be a little bit of a hard time because you're having to sedate on your witty side and more extreme on your practical side, Taurus. But to your good, inventions and creative solutions are right up your alley now.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, the stars are giving you two items that really mark a time of digging in and pressing on at work. Emotional seriousness is at the forefront of your mind now instead of your usual blend in with the crowd, but leave them knowing who you are, by the time you're finished, kind. You're doing both but you're doing it with a purpose now, Gemini. This is a time for assimilating information and using it to your benefit. Remembering what you've done in the past and knowing what errors you made then helps you use those items to do better now. Involvement with others is something you've done in the past and will continue to do in the future in order to meet your goals.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you're still in the mood for studying and learning but you're also putting it into practical application as well. Anything used in communication with others is highly prized at this time. You work towards making what you say more prevalent now. You feel you need to know a little about everything. Cancer, which is a good trait for business. Exchanging information is part of what you crave. You're too strict on yourself which tends only to make you feel bad about yourself. That will get you nowhere quickly. You're thinking of changing either your job or your personal life but really haven't made up your mind which. Bring your family and friends closer. You need them.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, you want to work and you want to win at it. With your sober orientation towards work and your ambition, you're sure to make your job better and more profitable. Emotionally, you seem to have everything under control which also aids you at work. Leo, when you're not upset work is more easily done. The time that's coming into play now, through the stars, is making a time where you have a higher mental focus and better communication skills as well. This is here for a while. You need to be thankful for the good it brings. Knowing a little about everything brings you pleasure as well as helps you in everyday life. You're blessed.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, you'll find yourself getting silent and going within today. Coming to terms with your past and realizing working in the now is the only manner in which to get what you need is at the heart of your feelings. This is a major life's change for you now, Virgo, but it's a successful one and will continue for a while. You'll realize this later. Another change that is here is you have a greater focus on anything mental. Also, you'll find yourself talking with others and getting all kinds of needed and wanted information from your intimate, but not sexual, conversations. Home and family mean so much more to you now. Gratefulness abounds. Your life is good. Enjoy.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, you've gone inside yourself so that you can figure out how to proceed in life. You have an intense focus on mental and communicative issues right now. This focus is really more than you have probably ever felt before. Gathering pertinent information about many subjects is right up your alley, Libra. Take heed to what you do today because this time that's started will find you with these same thoughts for some time to come. This is a path of self-discovery and any type mental occupation. A need to know a little about everything is part of this cycle. Enjoy.



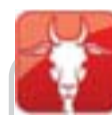
Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, your focus is on communication. Working with others is at a greater point now than it ever has been. Making them understand what you're thinking and working with you in harmony makes you know you're on the right path. You're probably more on the go than you have been lately, Scorpio. Studying, writing and any sort of communication will lead to a better fulfilled life for years to come. Intellectual growth is what you're seeking. Romance is another item on your agenda. At least the physical part of love is on your mind at this time. Take the time to satisfy that urge.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, don't be too strict on yourself now. You're feeling the march of time. Know that you have all the time you need to get what you desire. Look to the presidents of the United States. Most are much older and have made it to the pinnacle of their careers just as you can. Ambition is weighing heavily upon you. Work towards what you want but make motivation your running mate. The stars are giving you extra help on your mental ability making all types information easier for you to comprehend and use, Sagittarius. Self-discovery is part of the assistance even if you think that may not be so good right now. You've got spiritual backing. Use it.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, getting your ideas and thoughts across to others goes easily today. The only problem with this is those thoughts and ideas may be something you don't really need to express because others may not take them well, or at least not how they were meant, Capricorn. Your mind expresses thoughts that are very intense in nature. You have nervous energy that could cause issues where making decisions are concerned. Tomorrow you may have to rethink and redo what you've done today. Clear headedness isn't your best quality now. Take some time with your dog or cat. They understand you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Aquarius, curiosity is part of your mental acuity now. A need to know a little about everything has you hitting the books, so to speak. People already think you could be a master at Trivia but you don't worry about what they think. You only know what you like and that is learning. Aquarius, your usual comedic words aren't in your conversation today. Your energy has been drawn in so that others think you want to be left alone and do so. This may not be so easy at work now. You're willing to work hard but you want something in exchange, material wealth.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, drive to get what you want is intensified while you find yourself too strict on you also. The cycle that's begun for you has your emotions pushing you to communicate in a manner which you haven't before. Mental focus goes along with this to make this time a period of building the success in work-related issues and with love in a manner that you desire, Pisces. This cycle may stretch out for a long period of time although you may be unable to get used to the constant examination of self and others. Really, this is going to be a great time of learning and studying for you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movie Actresses 1 - Word Search

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

- | | | |
|------------|----------|-------------|
| BECKINSALE | LOHAN | THURMAN |
| BULLOCK | MACLAINE | TOMEI |
| CRUZ | PFEIFFER | WATTS |
| DUNST | PORTMAN | WEAVER |
| HAYEK | RYDER | WINSLET |
| JOHANSSON | SARANDON | WITHERSPOON |
| KIDMAN | SPACEK | ZELLWEGER |
| KNIGHTLEY | STREEP | |

Yesterday's Solution

Home Sweet Home - Solution

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

- | | | |
|----------|------------|------------|
| ATTIC | DININGROOM | LIVINGROOM |
| BASEMENT | FAMILY | LOVE |
| BATHROOM | FENCE | PATIO |
| BEDROOMS | FIREPLACE | PETS |
| BEDS | GARAGE | ROOF |
| CHIMNEY | GARDEN | STAIRWAY |
| CLOSETS | KITCHEN | TREES |
| COMFORT | LAWN | WARMTH |

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2019



A man rides a bicycle past graffiti street art on the side of a building in Bristol, south west England (See story and more photos page 22). — AFP photos

Fire and ice: Chinese fans love, loathe GoT finale

Chinese fans faced their own battles to watch the "Game of Thrones" finale, scrambling for ways to see it after a delayed stream by rights-holder Tencent and staying off social media for hours to avoid spoilers of the popular show. A group of 150 people gathered at a screening in Beijing's trendy "798" art district to see the final episode late Monday, hours after it aired in the United States. "To be honest, I'm not very satisfied with (the finale) and a bit disappointed," said Ji Yuan, who stopped reading the news and China's Twitter-like Weibo site to avoid spoilers before joining the group at the 798 district.

Another fan, Liu Maodi, read all the books by "Game of Thrones" author George R.R. Martin and said he was "really disappointed" about the ending. Easily dominating the discussion on Weibo was the death of top character Daenerys Targaryen, which generated the hashtag "#DragonMotherDies#" that briefly was the platform's most-viewed topic. It was viewed more than 350 million times and generated nearly 80,000 comments, with many mourning the loss of the dragon-riding, slave-emancipating "Breaker of Chains" whose quest for the Iron Throne drove much of the plot. "This kind of junk scriptwriter should be killed by a dragon," said one comment, echoing disappointment expressed by fans worldwide over the final season.

Season eight has been widely panned as rushing to a climactic conclusion, with fans particularly objecting to the Mother of Dragons' rapid descent into madness and tyranny. "#DragonMotherDies# 2011-2019, I've been following the show for eight years, now this is what you



In this file photo Fans watch HBO's "Game of Thrones" series finale at a viewing party at Brennan's bar in Marina del Rey, California.

got to show me?" said one angry commentator. "Game of Thrones" has been hugely popular in China, spawning online fan organizations and group screenings. This despite much of the show's notorious sex and gore being relegated to the cutting room floor by China's censors, prompting many to download pirated, uncensored versions. "I think (censorship) is acceptable since we don't have a rating system here in China, so some of the bloody and violent scenes are not very suitable for young audi-

ences," fan Jia Wang told AFP. "The deleted scenes in general don't have much influence on the plot," she added.

Speaking before viewing the finale, she expected to "be very emotional" when the show ends. "It has been accompanying me for so many years," Jia said. Chinese Internet giant Tencent, which has shown censored versions online, announced Monday morning just before it was expected to air the finale that it would instead be delayed. "Dear users, we are very sorry to notify you that Game of Thrones season 8 episode 6 will not be online on time due to media transmission problems," it said on Weibo. It said a new broadcast time would be announced later, giving no further details. That provoked grumbling online by fans, some of whom planned to take the morning off work to watch the last episode and had to find other ways to see the show.

"Even the cut-down version is delayed. It's really forcing people to watch the pirated version," one commenter complained. After eight years of chivalry, sex, death and dragons, final-season buzz has been intense, making the finale one of the most hotly anticipated events in TV history. The season seven finale set an all-time US record for premium cable TV with 16.5 million people watching live or streaming on the day of transmission and 15 million more tuning in later. Airing in 170 countries, the show is also the most expensive ever, with a \$15 million per episode budget in its final run. — AFP

Whitney Houston estate working on hologram tour, new album



In this file photo taken on September 1, 2009, Whitney Houston performs on ABC's "Good Morning America" in New York City. — AFP

The estate of Whitney Houston has struck a deal aiming to revive the late superstar's brand, potentially launching a touring hologram and album of unreleased music. New York-based company Primary Wave Music Publishing announced Monday it penned an agreement with megacelebrity Houston's estate, acquiring 50 percent of its assets including royalties from her music, films and merchandising. The most awarded female artist of all time, Houston died at 48 years old in 2012 after a public struggle with drugs, following a decade that saw her go from America's sweetheart to tabloid drama queen.

"With Primary Wave's global appeal and wealth of contacts, the partnership will advance the artistry and integrity of Whitney's legacy to a stratosphere that she herself left us all to enjoy for a lifetime," Pat Houston, the late artist's sister-in-law and executor of the estate, said in a statement. "Before she passed, there was so much negativity around the name; it wasn't about the music anymore," Pat Houston told The New York Times.

"People had forgotten how great she was. They let all the personal things about her life outweigh why they fell in love with her in the first place." She told the paper a hologram tour featuring the artist's laser-generated likeness is the first priority of the new contract, which could be followed by branding deals and a potential Broadway musical. "Whitney Houston is an incomparable artist whose voice resonates in people's lives to this day," said Lawrence Mestel, head of Primary Wave, which focuses on marketing classic catalogues of megawatt names including Bob Marley, Smokey Robinson and Def Leppard. "She is the definition of an icon and we are thrilled to partner with Pat Houston and the entire Houston family to further the legacy of this legendary artist." — AFP

GoT finale draws staggering 19.3 million viewers

The finale of "Game of Thrones" drew a staggering 19.3 million viewers in the US Sunday evening, cementing the fantasy epic's status as the most watched television series in HBO history. The streaming service said the record number of viewers was across all platforms—HBO, HBO Go, and HBO NOW—and exceeded the previous series high of 18.4 million viewers set last week. "Season 8 of Game of Thrones is averaging 44.2 million viewers per episode in gross audience, an increase of more than 10 million viewers when compared to season 7," HBO said in a statement to AFP.

"In addition, the episode scored the most-watched single telecast record on HBO ever, with 13.6 million viewers for the 9:00 p.m. airing," it added. The previous record for a single telecast in HBO history — 13.4 million—was held by the season four premiere of "The Sopranos" in 2002. The record for the most-watched US television show is still held by the Korean War comedy MASH, which attracted nearly 106 million viewers for the final episode in 1983. — AFP



In this file photo The cast of Game of Thrones pose with the Emmy for Outstanding Drama Series during the 70th Emmy Awards at the Microsoft Theatre in Los Angeles. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Features

Liam Gallagher doc to premiere at Cannes film festival

A new feature-length documentary about former Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher's years in the musical wilderness is to be shown at the Cannes film festival, its producers said yesterday. "Liam Gallagher: As it Was" will be released next month to coincide with his second solo album, which is expected to hit the shelves soon. Co-director Charlie Lightening



In this file photo British singer Liam Gallagher gestures to the crowd while performing with his band Beady Eye on third day of the Glastonbury Festival of Contemporary Performing Arts. — AFP

and his crew began followed the British singer-whose gift for making headlines is nearly as prodigious as his musical talent—just before his comeback. Gallagher's first solo album, "As It Was", was a hit in 2017 and Lightening told British music magazine NME that his new record is "gonna blow people away".

In a trailer for the film, which is showing at the Cannes market, Liam blames his brother Noel for the break-up of the Manchester band. Oasis—once billed as the biggest British band since The Beatles—imploded in 2009 after Liam threw a plum at his older sibling.

The bickering brothers have still not buried the hatchet a decade after their famous final falling out, with Liam regularly taking swipes at his until now more successful sibling on social media. "Liam is one of the most influential and accomplished musicians of the last 30 years," Seth Needle of distributors Screen Media told Variety, adding that the film "showcases his talent and personality like nothing before." Lightening previously directed projects about Paul McCartney and British singer Jamiroquai. His co-director Gavin Fitzgerald made "Conor McGregor: Notorious" about the Irish mixed martial arts star as well as "The Fighting Irish" documentary on MMA fighters. — AFP

Sherpa climbs Everest twice in a week for record 24th

Only last week Nepali mountain guide Kami Rita Sherpa set a new record by climbing Everest a 23rd time. Yesterday for good measure he did it again, expedition organizers said. "This is historic. He made his record climb this morning, guiding a team of Indian police," Mingma Sherpa of Seven Summit Treks told AFP. A guide for more than two decades, Sherpa first summited the 8,848-metre (29,029-foot) peak, the world's highest, in 1994 while working for a commercial expedition. In the 25 years since, the 49-year-old has made 35 summits on five 8,000-metre peaks, including the world's second-highest mountain, K2 in Pakistan.

Last year he ascended Everest for the 22nd time, breaking the previous record of 21 summits he shared with two other Sherpa climbers, both of whom have retired. Returning last week to a colorful welcome at base camp after his 23rd climb, Sherpa had already said that he wanted to go up for a second time this season. "I am very happy and proud. I think I might go up the mountain again this season," he had said over a crackly phone line after his descent.

The accomplished climber has often said he did not

intend to make records, but accumulated his summits in course of his work as a guide. "I did not climb for world records. I was just working. I did not even know you could set records earlier," he said last month before setting off for Everest base camp. With their unique ability to work in a low-oxygen, high-altitude atmosphere, ethnic Sherpa guides are the backbone of Nepal's climbing industry, helping clients and hauling equipment up Himalayan peaks.

Mountaineering has become a lucrative business since Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay made the first ascent of Everest in 1953. Nepal has issued a record 381 permits costing \$11,000 each for this year's spring climbing season, sparking fears of bottlenecks en route to the summit if poor weather cuts down the number of climbing days. Most Everest hopefuls are escorted by a Nepali guide, meaning over 750 climbers will tread the same path to the top in the coming weeks.

And at least 140 others are preparing to scale Everest from the northern flank in Tibet, according to expedition operators. This could take the total past last year's record of 807 people reaching the summit. Many Himalayan mountains—including Everest—are at peak climbing season, with the window of good weather between late April and the end of May. The death toll is already mounting, however. An Indian climber died on Everest last week while a search continues for an Irish mountaineer who slipped and fell close to the summit. Six other foreign climbers have died on other 8,000-metre Himalayan peaks while two are missing. — AFP



This handout photo released by Seven Summit Treks shows Nepali mountaineer Kami Rita Sherpa posing at the top of Mount Everest after summiting it for the 23rd time, breaking his own world record set last year. — AFP photos



Nepali mountaineer Kami Rita Sherpa spins prayer wheels at Boudhanath Stupa on the outskirts of Kathmandu.



Indian actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan arrives for the screening of the film "La Belle Epoque" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

'John Wick' opens strongly as 'Avengers' nears historic mark

"Avengers: Endgame" finally yielded the top spot at the North American box office this weekend to the latest "John Wick" action film, but the Marvel Studios/Disney blockbuster edged closer to historic status as the all-time No. 1 grossing film. "Avengers" took in a domestic total of \$30 million in its fourth weekend out, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations said Monday, bringing its worldwide total to \$2.62 billion, just shy of the \$2.79 billion "Avatar" earned in 2009.

But in North America, it fell well behind Lionsgate's new "John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum," which posted a strong \$57 million for its opening three-day weekend. The third "John Wick" movie again stars Keanu Reeves as a retired hitman, this time being chased by an army of killers after a \$14 million contract is put on his head. The film also stars Halle Berry, Laurence Fishburne, Ian McShane and Anjelica Huston. In third, down one spot from last weekend, was Warner Bros.' family-friendly "Pokemon: Detective Pikachu," at \$25.1 million. Based on a Nintendo video game and subsequent anime series, it has the animated title character (voiced by Ryan Reynolds) teaming up with a young boy (Justice Smith, in a live-action role) to seek the boy's missing father.

"A Dog's Journey" from Universal placed fourth, at \$8.1 million. Based on a novel of the same name, it stars Dennis Quaid and Josh Gad in the story of a dog that is repeatedly reincarnated, each time to protect someone close to it—a plot device that works for some animal lovers but which critics have called "emotionally manipulative" and "insufferable." The movie is a follow-up to 2017's "A Dog's Purpose." In fifth was "The Hustle" from United Artists, at \$6.1 million. The female-driven revamp of "Dirty Rotten Scoundrels" stars Rebel Wilson and Anne Hathaway as two con-women trying to scam an internet millionaire.

Rounding out the weekend's top 10 were:

- "The Intruder" (\$4 million)
- "Long Shot" (\$3.3 million)
- "The Sun Is Also a Star" (\$2.5 million)
- "Poms" (\$2.2 million)
- "UglyDolls" (\$1.8 million)—AFP

Chinese film will show at Cannes, but without its makers

The premiere of Chinese movie "Summer of Changsha" went ahead at the Cannes film festival, organizers said yesterday, despite the team behind it saying they would not be there. Zu Feng's tale of betrayal—which was screened yesterday—is one of two Chinese noir movies showing at the world's biggest film festival. But yesterday speculation was mounting that it had become the third Chinese film to be pulled from a major festival this year after falling foul of the censors.

In a message posted on the film's official account on Chinese social media platform Weibo, the producers said: "Due to technical reasons, the producer and all leading creators of the film 'Summer of Changsha' will not participate in the 72nd Cannes Film Festival and the related official activities." But the festival said the premiere would go ahead without the director and cast. AFP attempted without success to contact the production team.

China recently introduced regulations that require filmmakers

to be handed a "dragon seal" of approval before films may be screened at festivals abroad. Another Chinese crime thriller, Diao Yinan's stylish "The Wild Goose Lake", was shown without incident last week at Cannes, where it is competing for the Palme d'Or top prize against Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time In Hollywood", which premiered yesterday.

Fame has been no protection from the new rules which govern China's strictly-controlled movie industry. One of the country's most famous directors, Zhang Yimou, the maker of "Raise the Red Lantern", was forced to withdraw "One Second" from the Berlinale in February on the eve of the festival. Another Chinese movie, "Better Days", that had been scheduled to show in the German capital, failed to get the go-ahead in time from Beijing. — AFP



Stop it! Japan anti-groper app becomes smash hit

A Tokyo police smartphone app to scare off molesters has become a smash hit in Japan, where women have long run the gauntlet of groping on packed rush-hour trains. Victims of groping can activate the Digi Police app, which either blasts out a voice shouting "stop it" at top volume, or produces a full-screen SOS message—which victims can show other passengers—reading: "There is a molester. Please help." The app has been downloaded more than 237,000 times, an "unusually high figure" for a public service app, said police official Keiko Toyamine. "Thanks to its popularity, the number is increasing by some 10,000 every month," Toyamine told AFP.

Victims are often too scared to call out for help, she said. But by using the SOS message mode, "they can notify

other passengers about groping while remaining silent". There were nearly 900 groping and other harassment cases on Tokyo trains and subways reported in 2017, according to the latest available data from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department. "But it's the tip of the iceberg," Toyamine said, with victims often hesitant to come forward. Offenders face up to six months in jail or fines of up to 500,000 yen (\$5,500 dollars). The potential jail sentence is increased to 10 years if violence or threats are used.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department quietly launched the free Digi Police app three years ago. It initially aimed to provide information for elderly people, as well as parents and their children about scams or prowlers.

But the function to "repel molesters" was added a few months after the launch. And an online conversation about the app—caused by a female pop idol being assaulted late last year—resulted in its sudden popularity. Yui Kimura, a 27-year-old beer shop employee on the nation's northern island of Hokkaido, says she is always worried about groping whenever she visits the capital. "I tend to be vigilant on Tokyo trains as dodgy men can happen to be in front of me at any time," Kimura said.

Reina Oishi, a 21-year-old university student in Tokyo, also said: "I want to download the app as I have been groped so many times." Experts agree that the app could be a boon for "silent" victims. "Molesters tend to target those who appear shy and reluctant to lodge a police

complaint," said Akiyoshi Saito, a certified social worker who supported some 800 former molesters during a rehabilitation program. Groping on trains can occur in any country where trains are frequently crowded, Saito told AFP. "But the idea that men are superior to women, which is Japan's traditional bias, may help sustain" sexual harassment on trains in the country, he added. Awareness of the issue has risen in Japan in recent years, with women exchanging tips on how to avoid the unwanted attention online. East Japan Railway runs women-only carriages during rush hours and has set up security cameras on some lines notorious for a high rate of groping. — AFP

Lifestyle | Cannes Movies

Cannes hails 'heartrending' Moroccan film about unmarried mothers

Maryam Touzani never forgot the day a young woman knocked on the door of her home in Tangier asking for work. "She was from a village and she was heavily pregnant. My mother had no work for her but was afraid to let her go... she wasn't in a good way and had clearly nowhere to go," the Moroccan actress and director said. Sex outside marriage is illegal in the Muslim-majority country, and at the time a single mother who tried to give birth in a hospital would be thrown in jail. "The girl had been going door-to-door, so my mother took her in for a few days until we worked something out.

"But there was no solution-she had been going from town to town after running away from her family, working as a cleaner and hairdresser until people noticed her predicament and then she would have to move on. "So she stayed with us until she had the baby," said Touzani, whose powerful new film "Adam", at the Cannes film festival, was inspired by the woman's heartbreaking dilemma over what to do with the child. "She wanted to give up her baby straight away to give him a chance of a decent life, and to restart her own and become a respectable woman again," Touzani told AFP. But when the baby arrived, things weren't so simple.

'Give the baby up'

"Because she gave birth over a bank holiday weekend, she had to keep the baby until the adoption office opened. I was with her as she tried to suppress the maternal instinct, to put distance between herself and the child. It was painful to watch and really shook me. "Little by little I saw her resistance break" and the pain grew as the bank holiday drew to an end. "I went with her to give the baby up," Touzani said. The hell that woman went through came home to when she became pregnant herself shooting "Razzia", a huge hit in the kingdom in 2017, which she wrote and starred in. "When I felt the baby move inside me I began thinking of her and I understood. And straight away I started to write, it poured out of me..."



Moroccan actress Nisrin Erradi, Moroccan film director Maryam Touzani, Moroccan producer Nabil Ayouch and Moroccan actress Lubna Azabal pose as they arrive for the screening of the film "Adam" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on May 20, 2019. — AFP photos

Already talked of as an Oscars foreign-language contender, "Adam" shines a light on a hidden woman's world in the conservative North African country. Critics at Cannes hailed how the first-time director turned this "deceptively simple story... into gold" with the Hollywood Reporter praising its "great delicacy... made heartrending by the superb performances of Lubna Azabal and Nisrin Erradi." In the film, a village girl who flees to Casablanca played by Erradi is reluctantly taken in by a widowed baker (Azabal) hiding her own grief.

Children sold and abandoned

While Touzani does not go there in her touching, intimate tale, unmarried mothers are complete pariahs in

Morocco, she said, often regarded as prostitutes. "It is the worst thing that can happen to a woman," she told AFP. Until 2004 their children's birth could not even be registered, meaning they have no legal status. "They simply didn't exist," she said. The shame is so intense that "children are often sold or abandoned", adding to the country's army of street children. "There are so many terrible stories," Touzani said. The writer-director has not shied from touching on raw nerves in her homeland.

Her husband Nabil Ayouch's banned feature "Much Loved" was based on a documentary of the same name she made about prostitution. It was branded "an affront to moral values and Moroccan women" shortly after its premiere at Cannes, with actress Loubna Abidar forced



Moroccan film director Maryam Touzani poses during a photo session on the sidelines of the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes.

to flee to France after being attacked in the street in Casablanca. "Razzia", in which Touzani played the lead, also touched on taboos.

But she is convinced many who condemned the films in public were secretly pleased they had brought issues out into the open that Morocco needs to deal with. "There is a facade that everything is all right on the outside even if people are tormented inside. It is good to let in some air and light, and people are relieved and happy things are being spoken about." "I am not at all afraid for 'Adam'. In any case, nothing comes from fear." — AFP



(From left) Belgian actor Othmane Moumen, Belgian actress Myriem Akheddiou, Belgian director Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Belgian actress Victoria Bluck, Belgian actor Idir Ben Addi, Belgian director Luc Dardenne, Belgian actress Claire Bodson and French actor Olivier Bonnaud wave as they arrive for the screening of the film "Young Ahmed (Le Jeune Ahmed)" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos



(From left) Belgian actor Othmane Moumen, Belgian actress Myriem Akheddiou, Belgian director Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Belgian actress Victoria Bluck, Belgian actor Idir Ben Addi, Belgian director Luc Dardenne, French actor Olivier Bonnaud and Belgian actress Claire Bodson pose during a photocall for the film "Young Ahmed (Le Jeune Ahmed)" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes.

him she is an apostate, leading the boy to try to stab her in her home.

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, often called Belgium's kitchen-sink answer to the Coen brothers, said deadly Islamist attacks in recent years including in 2016 in their own country drove them to explore how young people can be led so far astray. "We start the film with a boy who's been radicalized and try to tell how he can or cannot leave this kind of enchantment and come back to earth," Jean-Pierre, 68, told AFP.

Obsessed with 'purity'

The sweet-faced bespectacled Ahmed, who has barely lost his baby fat, seems an unlikely jihadist and draws the sympathy of the educators and authorities who try to help him turn his young life around. Jean-Pierre said the brothers spent six months interviewing experts in the field about the types of intervention used to counteract brainwashing among young radicals. In the film, Ahmed (first-time actor Idir Ben Addi) is sent on day-release to a farm that works with delinquent youths where he meets a spirited blonde girl named Louise. Their instant attraction confuses him and challenges his obsession with "purity".

"Young Ahmed" is set like the Dardennes' previous gritty slices of working-class life in their native French-

speaking Wallonia, an area that served as a base for the Islamist terrorist cell that carried out the November 2015 Paris attacks. "Our film looks at religion, how it can attract or take possession of you completely," Luc, 65, told AFP, noting that it was less concerned with the economic and social factors that usually dominate their other movies.

'Not stupidly naive'

Although some critics questioned the film's hopeful ending, Jean-Pierre told reporters that the brothers' optimism was rooted in Ahmed's still impressionable age. "It's not a stupidly naive-it's a film about peace because we believe that life is always stronger, it prevails," he said. "Totalitarianism, fanaticism are always overcome by life-they always lose out in the end."

After their Palme d'Or wins for "Rosetta" in 1999 and "The Child" in 2005, the Dardennes demurred when asked about a possible hat-trick at this year's gala awards ceremony on Saturday. "Cannes is home for us but so is Belgium," Luc said. "But we don't want to be presumptuous-we're not the only people at home here. There are so many films and we're just happy to be here among them." — AFP

Don't give up on radicalized Muslim youths, say Cannes directors

When is it too late to save a radicalized Muslim teenager? Two-time Cannes winners the Dardenne brothers said yesterday their new film is a call not to give up on these "lost" youths. "Young Ahmed", which premiered at the world's top film festival, tells the story of the son of a single mother who falls under the influence of an Islamist hate preacher. Ahmed attends a public school where a dedicated teacher, a secular Muslim, tries to take him under her wing. The imam sees her as a threat to Ahmed's indoctrination and tells

Tarantino back at Cannes 25 years after 'Pulp Fiction'

A quarter-century after nabbing the coveted Palme d'Or at Cannes for "Pulp Fiction," Quentin Tarantino is back at the world's top film festival yesterday to show his all-star new picture "Once Upon A Time in Hollywood." The mastermind behind hits including "Reservoir Dogs" and the "Kill Bill" series, Tarantino, 56, is in Cannes to premiere his ninth movie, one of the festival's most hotly-anticipated screenings. It's a remarkable trajectory for the self-taught American director born in the southern state of Tennessee and raised in the suburbs of Los Angeles, a high school dropout who developed an encyclopedic knowledge of movies while working in a video store.

"People ask me if I went to film school," he told Rolling Stone magazine in 1994, the year "Pulp Fiction" changed the course of independent film. "And I tell them, 'No, I went to films.'" After his debut as a screenwriter, Tarantino's name exploded onto the scene with his first feature film "Reservoir Dogs," an extraordinarily violent, low-budget gangster movie that quickly became a cult smash. Its popularity helped him forge his own image as a filmmaker, a blend of arrogance and reverence for the greats of the craft including Jean-Luc Godard, John Woo and Sergio Corbucci. An unabashed "cinema nerd", Tarantino is today seen as a master of genre films who has inspired generations of directors after him.



US film director Quentin Tarantino flashes the victory sign as he arrives for the screening of the film "The Wild Goose Lake (Nan Fang Che Zhan De Ju Hui)" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival.

Omnipresent violence

"Reservoir Dogs," a film about the aftermath of a jewelry heist gone wrong, contains all the traits for which Tarantino has become famous: non-linear story structure, snappy dialogue, graphic violence and plentiful pop-culture references. A stomach-churning scene where a sadistic gangster played by Michael Madsen cuts off the ear of a police officer has made its way into Hollywood folklore. "I'm a big fan of violence in cinema," Tarantino told Britain's Daily Telegraph. "I believe Thomas Edison invented the camera to film people beating the shit out of each other. It really affects the audience in a big way, but at the same time you know it's just a movie."

It's not something he condones in real life, however: "To say that I get a big kick out of violence in movies and can enjoy violence in movies but find it totally abhorrent in real life-I can feel totally justified and totally comfortable with that statement," he told Britain's Observer in 1994. Tarantino followed "Reservoir Dogs" with "Pulp Fiction," a mesmerizing ensemble piece that skillfully weaved together multiple Los Angeles underworld characters. The film was nominated for seven Oscars including Best Picture and landed Tarantino a Best Original Screenplay Academy Award while actors John Travolta, Uma Thurman and Samuel L. Jackson all received nominations.

Schlock series

Tarantino returned in 1997 with "Jackie Brown," his well-received adaptation of Elmore Leonard's novel "Rum Punch," before taking a prolonged sabbatical as he worked on his martial arts epics "Kill Bill: Volume 1" and "Kill Bill Volume 2" starring Thurman. In typical Tarantino fashion, the films blurred multiple genres, with influences ranging from spaghetti Westerns to blaxploitation and Asian martial arts movies. Tarantino's next film, 2007's "Death Proof", paid homage to the low-budget, high-bodycount B movies that were a staple of drive-in cinemas and seedy theaters throughout the US in the 1960s and 1970s.—AFP

'I was slapped 30 times': Cannes film exposes actress abuse

Actress Wu Ke-xi has never been raped by an all-powerful movie mogul-as happens in her striking new movie at the Cannes film festival. But the Taiwanese star knows what it is to be humiliated by a director drunk on his own power. She will never forget being repeatedly slapped in the face during the shoot of an advert for a mahjong video game early in her career. Wu was publicly punished for having the temerity to ask the director a question.

"I just wanted to know whether a shot would be a close-up or in long shot so I could prepare myself," the actress told AFP in Cannes, where "Nina Wu"-which she both wrote and stars in-is in the official section. "The director asked the whole crew to collect all the banknotes they were using in the advert and to bring to him. He made a fan out of them. Then he asked another actor to slap me in the face with them about 30 times. "It went on and on, him shooting it all in close-up. Everyone was shocked. This wasn't in the script." It was a punishment for speaking out of turn, Wu said. Hers was only a bit-part, and "someone who is so low class didn't have the right to ask a question." "For the rest of the shoot everyone was stunned."

'I was shunned'

Then an odd thing happened. Wu, 36, noticed that the crew began shunning her. "They had to choose which side they were going to be on, I guess. And nobody wants to



(From left) Taiwanese actress Sung Yu-hua, Taiwanese actress Wu Ke-Xi, Taiwanese actress Hsia Yu-Chiao (Kimi Hsia Yu-Chiao) and Taiwanese film director Midi Z pose as they arrive for the screening of the film "Nina Wu" at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos

get fired." Soon she was feeling their hostility at her very presence. "So they started bullying me too. After that experience I went home and for two weeks I had flashbacks of being slapped in the face. "I had nightmares and the director's voice was in my head all the time. I would experience this humiliation over and over again. I would open the fridge to get something but I wasn't there. I was on the set getting slapped. I wanted to cry all the time."



Taiwanese actress Wu Ke-Xi poses during a photocall for the film "Nina Wu".

Wu had been traumatized. "She had a kind of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)," said the film's Myanmar-born director, Midi Z, with whom Wu has worked on the acclaimed "Ice Poison" and "The Road to Mandalay". "What happened to me was not very serious," the actress added. But it got her thinking—"What would women or men who suffer really bad things do through?"—AFP



Graffiti street art is pictured on the shutters of a cafe in Bristol, south west England.



Graffiti street art, entitled Mild, Mild West, by British street artist Banksy, is pictured on the side of a building in Bristol, south west England.



Graffiti street art is pictured on the side of a row of terraced houses in Bristol, south west England.

BANKSY'S HOME CITY AN URBAN CANVAS FOR ELUSIVE ARTIST

Five years ago, British street artist Banksy adorned the side of a once uninspiring white brick building in Bristol with the familiar image of a girl gazing out solemnly. The dank courtyard beneath the stencil has, like many other spots the mysterious artist has decorated in his purported home city in southwest England, become one of Britain's most photographed places.

A parody pastiche of "Girl with a Pearl Earring" by Dutch Golden Age painter Johannes Vermeer, it bears all the hallmarks of Banksy's cheekily irreverent style. The elusive Briton, whose identity is said to be known to only a handful of friends, has positioned the work so that a hexagonal security alarm box sits in place of the earring. The creation, now one of his most famous, is known as "The Girl with a Pierced Eardrum". It attracts admirers daily, many of them tourists on a well-trodden trail heavily documented on social media. "Well Hung Lover", around 15 minutes walk away, is another popular stop. Depicting a naked man hanging from the ledge of a window, below a lingerie-clad woman and a suited man looking out, it has graced the wall of a former sexual health clinic since 2006. Standing on the street transfixed by the image, a group of French schoolchildren listen attentively to a guide narrating the remarkable backstory of the king of street art.

'Nobody ever listened to me'

Banksy's most famous, or perhaps infamous, work is now called "Love is in the Bin". Moments after the paint-

Bristol street art. "As a young boy, he'd come to the centre and watch people paint," he told the Huffington Post. "He was heavily into hip hop culture, graffiti."

Banksy then purportedly joined the DryBreadZ Crew (DBZ), a gang of street artists formed in the early 1990s. It was a time of cultural blossoming for the city, which included the so-called Bristol Sound of Massive Attack and Portishead, pioneers of trip hop music.

'Accepted'

In 2001, the artist reportedly accompanied Bristol amateur football club Easton Cowboys on a tour of Mexico, playing as a goalkeeper and producing several stencilled works while there. His notoriety mushroomed as his politically pointed murals—denouncing consumerism, the fate of refugees in Europe and other issues—began to appear around the world, from Calais to Gaza. But Banksy appears to have never forgotten Bristol, regularly returning to erect new works.

Over the last two decades he has helped to make this city of 460,000 inhabitants on the Avon River one of the world capitals of street art, laying the ground for the 150 or so artists who work there today. "Banksy has led the charge and his popularity and his rise have allowed street art to be accepted," said Jody Thomas, a local street artist.



Graffiti street art is pictured on the side of a building in Bristol, south west England.



An alleged work by British street artist Banksy depicting a migrant child wearing a lifejacket holding a pink flare, is painted on the outer wall of a house overlooking the canal Rio de Ca Foscarei, in Venice. — AFP photos



Graffiti street art, known as The Girl with the Pierced Eardrum, by British street artist Banksy, is pictured on the side of a building in Bristol, south west England.

'He's like Santa Claus'

Walking around the city, the unique relationship it has forged with this art form is ubiquitous. The Bedminster neighborhood has become an open-air museum studded with urban frescoes. In Stokes Croft, between DJ shops and falafel restaurants, Banksy's "Mild Mild West" mural—depicting a teddy bear ready to fight with anti-riot police—looms large. What Banksy has given to Bristol, the city has returned to him, by helping to preserve his anonymity as if there is a secret pact with its inhabitants.

"There's been occasions where his identity may have been on the verge of (coming) out and other people have had conversations or taken actions (so) that it's not happened," said Steve Hayles, of the Upfest Gallery. "He's like



Graffiti street art, entitled Mild, Mild West, by British street artist Banksy, is pictured on the side of a building in Bristol, south west England.



Graffiti street art is pictured on the side of a building in Bristol, south west England.



A pedestrian walks past graffiti street art on the side of a building in Bristol, south west England.



Graffiti street art is pictured on the side of a block of high-rise residential flats in Bristol, south west England.

Santa Claus," he added, noting: "People don't want to ruin the illusion". "You don't want people going up to your kids and (saying) Santa Claus isn't real. "In the same way that you don't want to go up to people and go... 'well this is Banksy'." — AFP



A man rides a bicycle past graffiti street art on the side of a building in Bristol, south west England.

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times south easterly wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a slight chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

| WEATHER WARNING | | | No Current Warnings | | |
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| STATION | MAX. EXP. | MIN. REC. | SFC. CHART 21/05/2019 0000 UTC | | |
| KUWAIT CITY | 38 °C | 27 °C | | | |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 40 °C | 25 °C | | | |
| ABDALY | 41 °C | 23 °C | | | |
| BUBYAN | - °C | - °C | | | |
| JAHRA | 42 °C | 26 °C | | | |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 35 °C | 27 °C | | | |
| SALMIYAH | 32 °C | 28 °C | | | |
| AHMADI | 31 °C | 28 °C | | | |
| NUWAISIB | 37 °C | 25 °C | | | |
| WAFRA | 41 °C | 24 °C | | | |
| SALMY | 42 °C | 25 °C | | | |

| 4 DAYS FORECAST | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| DAY | DATE | WEATHER | Temperatures | | Wind Direction | Wind Speed |
| | | | MAX. | MIN. | | |
| Wednesday | 05/22 | Hot and rising dust over open areas | 41 °C | 26 °C | NW | 15 - 45 km/h |
| Thursday | 05/23 | Hot | 42 °C | 28 °C | NW | 15 - 38 km/h |
| Friday | 05/24 | Hot and rising dust over open areas | 43 °C | 30 °C | NW | 15 - 45 km/h |
| Saturday | 05/25 | Hot and rising dust over open areas | 45 °C | 31 °C | NW | 15 - 45 km/h |

| PRAYER TIMES | |
|--------------|-------|
| Fajr | 03:22 |
| Sunrise | 04:53 |
| Zuhr | 11:44 |
| Asr | 15:20 |
| Sunset | 18:36 |
| Isha | 20:05 |

| RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| MAX. Temp. | 36 °C |
| MIN. Temp. | 27 °C |
| MAX. RH | 65 % |
| MIN. RH | 28 % |
| MAX. Wind | SE 43 km/h |
| TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR. | 0 mm |

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Razak Bawa Petkar Ashfaq Abdul, holder of Indian Passport No. R2311158, hereby wish to correct my name from Razak Bawa Petkar Ashfaq Abdul to Given Name: Ashfaq Abdul Razak and Surname: Petkar. Hereafter in all my documents my name will appear as Ashfaq Abdul Razak Petkar. (C 5533) 21-5-2019

I, DIANA VALERIAN FERNANDES would like to change my father's name Cosmos Xavier Fernandes to Cosme Xavier Corneio Cipriano Fernandes as per his birth certificate. (C 5532) 17-5-2019

WANTED

Full Or Part Time English + Art craft Teachers «Native language» & Helper
 Tel: 25611588 / 22
 E-mail: aefs@yahoo.com

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988

Airlines

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



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

| Arrival Flights on Wednesday 22/5/2019 | | | | Departure Flights on Wednesday 22/5/2019 | | | |
|----------------------------------------|------|-------------------|-------|------------------------------------------|------|------------|-------|
| Airlines | Flt | Route | Time | Airlines | Flt | Route | Time |
| FEG | 441 | Asyut | 00:05 | RBG | 554 | Alexandria | 14:35 |
| IGO | 1757 | Kochi | 00:10 | RBG | 218 | Asyut | 14:35 |
| THY | 772 | Istanbul | 00:20 | JZR | 1223 | Jeddah | 14:35 |
| KAC | 102 | London | 00:50 | QTR | 8595 | Beirut | 14:45 |
| JZR | 734 | Cairo | 01:00 | KNE | 536 | Jeddah | 14:55 |
| JZR | 722 | Alexandria | 01:00 | GFA | 382 | Taif | 15:00 |
| MSR | 618 | Alexandria | 01:35 | GFA | 222 | Bahrain | 15:00 |
| KLM | 446 | Bahrain | 01:45 | FDB | 5060 | Dubai | 15:05 |
| QTR | 1086 | Doha | 02:30 | QTR | 1079 | Doha | 15:15 |
| KAC | 414 | Bangkok | 02:40 | KNE | 530 | Jeddah | 15:55 |
| GFA | 211 | Bahrain | 02:50 | KAC | 563 | Amman | 16:00 |
| JZR | 502 | Lahore | 02:55 | JZR | 405 | Kochi | 16:00 |
| KAC | 156 | Istanbul | 02:55 | KAC | 743 | Dammam | 16:05 |
| RJA | 648 | Amman | 03:05 | KAC | 775 | Riyadh | 16:05 |
| ETD | 305 | Abu Dhabi | 03:05 | ABY | 128 | Sharjah | 16:15 |
| OMA | 643 | Muscat | 03:05 | KAC | 785 | Jeddah | 16:20 |
| MSR | 612 | Cairo | 03:15 | ETD | 304 | Dhabi | 16:20 |
| KAC | 418 | Manila | 03:20 | OMA | 646 | Muscat | 16:20 |
| QTR | 1076 | Doha | 03:30 | KAC | 619 | Doha | 16:25 |
| KAC | 382 | Delhi | 04:05 | SVA | 505 | Madinah | 17:00 |
| IGO | 1751 | Chennai | 04:10 | FDB | 052 | Dubai | 17:10 |
| KAC | 784 | Jeddah | 04:25 | QTR | 1073 | Doha | 17:25 |
| KAC | 796 | Madinah | 04:25 | KAC | 155 | Istanbul | 17:35 |
| JZR | 404 | Hyderabad | 04:50 | KAC | 361 | Colombo | 17:35 |
| JZR | 102 | Bahrain | 04:50 | KAC | 283 | Dhaka | 17:40 |
| DHX | 170 | Bahrain | 05:05 | UAE | 858 | Dubai | 17:40 |
| THY | 770 | Istanbul | 05:20 | KAC | 503 | Beirut | 17:40 |
| JZR | 402 | Mumbai | 05:25 | KAC | 343 | Chennai | 17:50 |
| KAC | 344 | Chennai | 05:30 | KAC | 383 | Delhi | 17:55 |
| KAC | 552 | Cairo | 05:45 | SAW | 706 | Damascus | 18:00 |
| JZR | 112 | Doha | 05:50 | JZR | 253 | Amman | 18:00 |
| BAW | 157 | London | 06:10 | SVA | 511 | Riyadh | 18:10 |
| KAC | 284 | Dhaka | 06:15 | KAC | 615 | Bahrain | 18:10 |
| JZR | 714 | Sohag | 06:20 | JZR | 721 | Alexandria | 18:15 |
| KAC | 678 | Dubai | 06:40 | GFA | 216 | Bahrain | 18:20 |
| KAC | 206 | Islamabad | 06:50 | JZR | 403 | Hyderabad | 18:25 |
| KAC | 302 | Mumbai | 07:05 | JZR | 733 | Cairo | 18:35 |
| IGO | 1755 | CNN | 07:10 | QTR | 1081 | Doha | 19:20 |
| KAC | 358 | Kochi | 07:25 | MSR | 621 | Cairo | 19:30 |
| KAC | 354 | Bengaluru | 08:00 | GFA | 218 | Bahrain | 19:50 |
| KAC | 332 | Trivandrum | 08:05 | KAC | 331 | Trivandrum | 19:55 |
| KAC | 384 | Delhi | 08:10 | ABY | 124 | Sharjah | 20:00 |
| UAE | 855 | Dubai | 08:25 | RJA | 641 | Amman | 20:05 |
| JZR | 708 | Luxor | 08:45 | KAC | 351 | Kochi | 20:30 |
| ETD | 301 | Abu Dhabi | 08:50 | JZR | 401 | Mumbai | 20:30 |
| ABY | 125 | Sharjah | 09:00 | KNE | 232 | Riyadh | 20:50 |
| IRA | 665 | Sharjah | 09:15 | FDB | 058 | Dubai | 20:50 |
| FDB | 5055 | Dubai | 09:20 | KAC | 353 | Bengaluru | 20:50 |
| QTR | 1070 | Doha | 09:30 | DLH | 624 | Dammam | 20:55 |
| IGO | 1753 | Ahmedabad | 09:40 | OMA | 648 | Muscat | 21:05 |
| IAW | 157A | Al Najaf | 10:00 | MEA | 403 | Beirut | 21:15 |
| AXB | 889 | Mangalore/Bahrain | 10:20 | KAC | 301 | Mumbai | 21:25 |
| GFA | 213 | Bahrain | 10:40 | RBG | 214 | Sohag | 21:35 |
| MEA | 404 | Beirut | 10:55 | QTR | 1089 | Doha | 21:50 |
| JZR | 1220 | Jeddah | 10:55 | DHX | 171 | Bahrain | 21:50 |
| QTR | 1074 | Doha | 11:00 | KAC | 205 | Islamabad | 21:55 |
| JZR | 410 | Delhi | 11:50 | KLM | 445 | Bahrain | 22:10 |
| IAW | 157 | Al Najaf | 12:00 | ETD | 308 | Abu Dhabi | 22:15 |
| KAC | 614 | Bahrain | 12:30 | ALK | 230 | Colombo | 22:20 |
| SAW | 701 | Damascus | 12:30 | RBG | 1552 | Alexandria | 22:30 |
| RBG | 553 | Alexandria | 12:30 | UAE | 860 | Dubai | 22:35 |
| THY | 766 | Istanbul | 12:30 | KAC | 383 | Delhi | 22:35 |
| UAE | 871 | Dubai | 12:45 | JZR | 407 | Ahmedabad | 22:40 |
| CLX | 7912 | Luxembourg | 12:45 | GFA | 220 | Bahrain | 22:50 |
| MSR | 610 | Cairo | 12:45 | KAC | 783 | Jeddah | 22:55 |
| QTR | 8594 | Doha | 13:15 | KAC | 411 | Bangkok | 23:00 |
| KAC | 774 | Riyadh | 13:35 | KAC | 551 | Cairo | 23:00 |
| JZR | 212 | Jeddah | 13:45 | ETD | 310 | Abu Dhabi | 23:05 |
| RBG | 213 | Sohag | 13:55 | JAV | 622 | Amman | 23:15 |
| JZR | 152 | Mashhad | 14:05 | QTR | 1083 | Doha | 23:20 |
| KNE | 535 | Jeddah | 14:05 | SVA | 515 | Riyadh | 23:25 |
| | | | | SVA | 503 | Jeddah | 23:45 |

News

Taj Mahal becomes first monument with 'breastfeeding room'

NEW DELHI: The Taj Mahal, built as a monument to a woman who died in childbirth, is set to get a baby feeding room in a first for India where conservative attitudes toward public breastfeeding mean nursing mothers are often shamed and told to cover up. Vasant Kumar Swarnkar, a top official at the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) in Agra city - home to the Taj Mahal - said the baby feeding room would be set up by July to help the "millions of mothers who visit with their babies".

A regular visitor to the 17th century monument to eternal love, Swarnkar said he got the idea last week when he spotted a mother hiding under a staircase and struggling to breastfeed her baby despite her husband providing extra cover. "I could see it was so difficult for

her (to feed her child) which is a basic motherhood right. So I thought we have to do something," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Public breastfeeding still carries a social stigma in India where mothers are expected to be covered head-to-toe. Last year, mothers in the eastern city of Kolkata protested outside a mall where employees told a woman to nurse her baby in a toilet and mocked her complaint. The Taj Mahal attracts up to 8 million visitors annually. Swarnkar said he has ordered two other historical monuments in Agra to set up similar feeding rooms.

The ASI said this was the first time it was providing such a facility at any of India's 3,600 plus monuments. "My hope is that more and more monuments - not only in India but around the world - replicate this (plan) so that women can feed their babies comfortably," said Swarnkar. In 2017, the director of London's Victoria and Albert museum apologized to a mother, who was asked to cover up while breastfeeding her baby. Two years earlier, another was expelled from Spain's Corral del Carbon monument for nursing her baby. — Reuters

Iraq caught in the middle of US-Iran face-off

BAGHDAD: Scarred by two decades of conflict, Iraq finds itself caught in the middle of a US-Iranian tug-of-war, fearing it could pay the price of any confrontation between its two main allies. Analysts say third parties may seek to exploit the latest spike in tensions between Tehran and Washington to spark a showdown that serves their own interests.

Iraq "pays a disproportionate tax on Iranian-American tensions and (has) an unenviable frontline position in any future conflict between the two," said Fanar Haddad, an Iraq expert at the National University of Singapore. During the three-year battle to oust the Islamic State group from Iraqi cities, powerful Iran-backed Shiite militias on the ground effectively fought on the same side as US-led coalition warplanes in the skies.

But since Iraq declared victory over the jihadists in December 2017, relations between Washington and Tehran have deteriorated sharply. In May last year, US President Donald Trump pulled out of a landmark 2015 nuclear deal with Iran and later re-instated tough sanctions. This April, Washington dubbed the Revolutionary Guard Corps a "foreign terrorist organization", prompting Iran to designate US troops across the region as "terrorists".

Tensions escalated this month, with Washington deploying a carrier group and B-52 bombers to the Gulf over alleged, unspecified Iranian "threats". The Trump administration last week ordered non-essential diplomatic staff out of Iraq, alleging Iran-backed armed groups posed an "imminent" threat. On Sunday, a rocket was fired into the "Green Zone" of Baghdad that houses government offices and embassies, including the US mission.

There has been no claim of responsibility. For Iraqi

Iran's reach puts US, allies in striking...

Continued from Page 1

hit them in the head," said Amiral Hajizadeh, head of the Guards' aerospace division. Here is an outline of ways in which Iran could strike at the more powerful United States, and its regional allies and interests, if their dispute escalated.

Iraq

Iran-backed Shiite groups gained strength in the chaos after the 2003 US-led invasion, and were incorporated last year into the security forces, underscoring their pervasive role despite the American presence. The strongest groups - trained, equipped and funded by Tehran - are Asaib Ahl Al-Haq, Kataib Hezbollah, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba and the Badr Organization.

The United States says Iran was behind the deaths of at least 603 American armed service members since 2003. Some 5,200 US troops remain in Iraq, located in four main bases, as well as Baghdad airport and the coalition headquarters in the Green Zone. Washington last week ordered a partial evacuation of its embassy. The militias have positions very near places where US forces are stationed, and have powerful rocket and drone capabilities.

The Gulf

Revolutionary Guards commanders have long warned that in a war they could cut off Gulf oil supplies flowing through the Strait of Hormuz into the Indian Ocean. Iran holds one side of the strait, putting shipping in range of its forces from the sea or shore, and allowing it to lay mines. A US official has blamed Iran for last week's attacks on four vessels including two Saudi oil tankers in the Gulf, though Tehran has denied it.

Iran could also strike directly at US forces in the Gulf with missiles. The US Combined Air Operations Center is based at Al-Udaid airbase in Qatar. Its navy Fifth Fleet is based in Bahrain. The US air force also uses Al-Dhafra airbase in Abu Dhabi and Ali Al Salem airbase in Kuwait. The governments of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia say Iran planned attacks on security forces in Bahrain in recent years. Iran and Bahrainis accused of this have denied it.

Missiles could target infrastructure in Gulf monarchies, including water and power plants, oil refineries and export terminals, and petrochemical factories. A 2012 cyber attack targeting Saudi oil giant Aramco and another two years earlier against Iran's nuclear program point to new ways a conflict could play out.

Yemen

Yemen's Houthis chant "Death to America. Death to Israel", daubing the slogan on walls and gluing it to their weapons. The US has backed a Saudi-led coalition targeting the group since 2015. Iran and the Houthis have longstanding links, but both deny coalition claims that Tehran provides training and weapons. The UN says missiles fired at Saudi Arabia share design features with ones made in Iran.

Since the war began, the Houthis have often used

political analyst Essam Al-Fili, the rocket attack was a sign that some sides want to pull Tehran and Washington into a confrontation in Shiite-majority Iraq. "There are those who want to fight Iran with other people's weapons, and those who want to fight the US with other people's weapons," he said. But he added that Iran has "so far favored restraint in Iraq, a country which is vulnerable on the security front".

Several groups in the Hashed Al-Shaabi paramilitary coalition that battled IS denied any link to the rocket attack, with Assaib Ahl Al-Haq chief Qais al-Khazali pointing a finger at "Israeli interests". Analyst Karim Bitar stressed that "the stakes are so high that Iranian proxies cannot act without an explicit green light" from Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard force.

Tehran and Washington "know perfectly well that it's an unwinnable war and that an all-out confrontation would be devastating for both the US and Iran", said Bitar, an expert at France's Institute for International and Strategic Affairs. But, he added, "the inflammatory rhetoric of the past few weeks plays right into the hands of Iran's hardliners" as well as pleasing Saudi Arabia and Israel, "bent on settling old scores with Iran".

Tehran accuses its regional Sunni rival Riyadh and archfoe Israel of pressing the Trump administration to adopt a hard line. But experts doubt the crisis will result in a head-on confrontation with Washington. "There won't be a direct war. The United States is counting on a collapse of the (Iranian) economy, which could be accompanied by limited air strikes," said Iraqi political scientist Hashem Al-Hashemi. He said Washington may also urge Israel to carry out air strikes against Iran's militia allies in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

Meanwhile, memories of American interventions in recent years could also dampen Washington's appetite for an offensive. "The US foreign policy and security establishment knows full well that attacking Iran would make the Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya wars look like walks in the park," Bitar said. "So besides some messages that could be sent on the Iraqi arena, unless utter madness prevails, a large, open, direct war is still unlikely." — AFP

rockets and drones to attack Saudi Arabia, one of Washington's closest regional allies. One came down near Riyadh airport in 2017. UN experts says the Houthis now have drones that can drop bigger bombs further away and more accurately than before. Last week, drones hit two oil pumping stations hundreds of kilometers inside Saudi territory. Houthi control over Yemen's old navy, with speed boats and sea mines, means the group could try to disrupt shipping in the Red Sea.

Syria

While backing President Bashar al-Assad during eight years of conflict, Iran has built a network of militias in government-held areas. These include Lebanon's Hezbollah, the Iraqi Nujaba group, and the mostly Afghan Fatemiyoun group. They have fought near the Syrian-Iraqi border, near the US military base at Tanf, and near the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights.

A senior US official said in February that Washington would keep about 400 troops in Syria after defeating Islamic State, down from about 2,000 before. They are located in the northeast area held by Kurdish-led forces and at Tanf, near the borders with Jordan and Iraq. Israel has struck Iran and its allies in Syria, seeking to drive them far from its frontier. In January it accused Iranian forces of firing a missile at a ski resort in the Golan Heights.

Lebanon

The US blames Hezbollah for its military's bloodiest day since the Vietnam war: the truck bombing at a marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983 that killed 241 US service members. It also accuses it of taking Americans hostage in Lebanon in the 1980s. The group, set up by Iran to resist Israel's occupation of south Lebanon, is today the most powerful in the country. Israel, the US' closest regional ally, regards Hezbollah as the biggest threat on its borders and launched a military incursion into Lebanon in 2006 in a failed bid to destroy it.

Today, Hezbollah says it has a large arsenal of "precision" rockets that could strike all over Israel, including its atomic reactor. It has threatened, in the event of war, to infiltrate fighters across the frontier. A pro-Hezbollah journalist, Ibrahim Al-Amin, last week wrote in Lebanon's Al-Akhbar newspaper that if Israel got involved in any war between the US and Iran, striking at Tehran's proxies, it would "become an actual target for allies of Iran".

Afghanistan

Western officials and analysts say they believe Iran gives some help to the Taliban, either in weapons or through finance and logistics, which could be increased. The Taliban control or influence more territory than at any point since their ouster at the hands of US-led troops following the Sept 11, 2001, attacks on the United States; intense fighting continues.

A report by the US Institute of Peace in March said that up to 50,000 Afghans have fought in Syria as part of the Tehran-backed Fatemiyoun group. It issued a statement two years ago, carried by Iranian news outlets, pledging to fight wherever Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei asked them to. About 14,000 US troops remain in Afghanistan and Washington imposed sanctions on the Fatemiyoun in January. An Iranian official told Reuters that the US used its presence in Afghanistan "to threaten us from these bases". — Reuters



KASHMIR: A Kashmiri Muslim reads the Quran at the Sheikh Abdur Qadir Geelani Shrine during the holy month of Ramadan in Srinagar. Muslims around the world abstain from eating, drinking and conducting sexual relations from sunrise to sunset during Ramadan, the holiest month in the Islamic calendar. — AFP

KD 1 for updating bank information...

Continued from Page 1

"This KD 1 fee is charged for doing the work on behalf of the client. The bank will demand the information from the Public Authority for Civil Information. The bank will start sending the client reminder messages to

update their information a month prior to expiry," said a staff member of the Central Bank. The Central Bank was not able to provide information on the grace period a client will be given before the charge is levied.

Not updating the information may result in blocking the bank account of the client, in addition to other inconveniences. Various banks are easing the process of updating the information through simple steps. At most banks, this can now be done through the ATM without assistance of the bank's staff and outside working hours.

Assembly calls for 'extreme' caution...

Continued from Page 1

next month over a variety of alleged violations in the ministry and other issues under the minister's supervision. Hajraf however said that he was ready to face the grilling, adding that he respects the constitutional rights of lawmakers.

The Assembly's interior and defense committee yesterday postponed vote on a new draft law stipulating amendments to the citizenship law to make it even more

difficult for foreign wives of Kuwaiti men to get citizenship. MP Nayef Al-Merdas said the Interior Ministry has not submitted the draft law because it was waiting approval by the Cabinet.

The amendments stipulate that a foreign wife of Kuwaiti man can obtain citizenship only after 18 years of marriage and when they have children. Under the current law, foreign wives can apply for citizenship after five years of marriage. Merdas also said the committee sent to the national assembly a draft law calling to naturalize up to 4,000 people, mainly stateless people or bedoons. The lawmaker called on the government to quickly start granting citizenship to around 34,000 stateless people that officials have repeatedly said they have the right to be naturalized.

Boot Camp...

Continued from Page 1

The next time you feel like reaching for a snack, you will decide what and when you will eat; your desires and cravings will have been tamed by your will. You also build your stamina, perseverance, and confidence. If you ask someone if they could go without food or drink all day long, they would immediately say, "No way!" And even if they tried, they would abandon the project in a couple of hours.

But in Ramadan, we make a commitment to Allah, and He shows us the great stores of perseverance and stamina that He has given us. We see a side of ourselves we never saw before. Hamid's older brother stopped in and joined the conversation. "When I think of Boot Camp, I think of my military training. We learned to take orders, to wake up early, to train, and finally to be able to defend ourselves and others from attack."

Hamid's father smiled. Well, in the Blessed month of

Houthis step up missile...

Continued from Page 1

areas, but on several occasions the capital Riyadh as well. The Houthis pledged last November to stop attacks on Saudi Arabia and the UAE at the request of the United Nations.

While attacks on Saudi border areas continued, the Houthis had avoided targeting major cities or infrastructure. There have been no reports of attacks on the capital since last June. The coalition has in return conducted multiple air strikes on the Houthi-held Yemeni capital Sanaa which it says target military facilities and aim to neutralize the group's ability to fire missiles and drones. Riyadh and Abu Dhabi accuse Iran of arming the Houthis, a charge denied by the group and Tehran.

Fragile regional ceasefire

It was not yet clear how the rising tension could impact a regional ceasefire and troop withdrawal deal in Hodeidah - the first major diplomatic breakthrough in a conflict that has pushed Yemen to the brink of famine. The deal was stalled for months before a unilateral Houthi withdrawal from Hodeidah and two other Red Sea ports 10 days ago. That is meant to lead to a pullback by coalition forces massed on the edges of Hodeidah, the

main entry point for Yemen's commercial and humanitarian aid imports.

Saudi Arabia accused Iran of ordering last week's drone strikes on two Aramco oil pumping stations, which followed sabotage acts on Saudi oil tankers off the UAE coast. Iran denied being behind the drone attacks. The UAE has yet to blame anyone for the tanker operation, but two US government sources said last week that US officials believed Iran encouraged the Houthis or Iraq-based Shiite Muslim militias to carry it out. Iran distanced itself.

Saudi Arabia will hold an emergency Arab summit in Makkah on May 30 to discuss the implications of the attacks, which came as the United States and Iran spar over US sanctions reimposed on Tehran and over the US military presence in the Gulf. Yemen's conflict is widely seen in the region as a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Houthis, who control the biggest urban centers in Yemen, deny being Iranian puppets and say they are waging a revolution against corruption.

The World Food Program said on Monday it was considering suspending aid deliveries in areas under Houthi control due to fighting, insecurity and interference in its work. Some 9 million of the 12 million Yemenis whom the WFP is seeking to reach with rations each month live in Houthi-held areas. WFP spokesman Herve Verhoosel said, denouncing diversions of aid supplies especially in areas in Houthi hands. "All this needs to stop. We are here to save 12 million people - many of them children and women - to save them from famine," he told a briefing in Geneva. — Reuters

Sports

'Outstanding' Archer picked in England's World Cup squad

Archer ready for challenge of a World Cup despite lack of international experience

LONDON: England selection chief Ed Smith hailed fast bowler Jofra Archer as an "outstanding" talent after including him in the tournament favourites' World Cup squad yesterday. Barbados-born quick Archer only qualified for England in March and has played just three one-day internationals for the host nation of the showpiece event.

But he has now made it into the 15-man World Cup squad that Smith unveiled at Lord's. He edged out left-arm quick David Willey, a veteran of 46 ODIs, after both pacemen featured during England's 4-0 series win at home to Pakistan, which concluded on Sunday.

There was also no place in the squad, captained by Eoin Morgan, for back-up spinner and batsman Joe Denly, with Hampshire slow left-arm Liam Dawson recalled as cover for Adil Rashid, who is nursing a shoulder problem.

Both Denly and Willey were named in England's provisional squad, as was opening batsman Alex Hales. But James Vince, who featured against Pakistan, came in after England decided against selecting Hales following his ban for recreational drug use.

England, bidding to win the World Cup for the first time, reduced their qualification period from seven years to three, a move they insisted was solely to bring them into line with the rest of the world rather than advance the selection of Archer, whose father is English.

"We've seen Jofra Archer play against Pakistan and we've seen the skills he has," Smith told Sky Sports News. "It's pretty straightforward. He's an outstanding talent, that's clear to all of us. He has pace, bounce, skill."

'I'M READY'

Archer said he was ready for the challenge of a World Cup despite his lack of international experience. "I've put it in my head I would have to wait seven years, back in December they changed it a little but I was always prepared to wait," the 24-year-old told Sky Sports.

"I think I'm ready. I've played a lot of cricket, I know how to deal with pressure, crowds, I think I'm ready." Even though Willey offered a different angle of attack as the only left-arm quick in contention, Archer's ability to bowl at 90 miles per hour (145 kilometres per hour) and his variety of slower balls has seen him get the nod.

Willey was among those who questioned the prospect of Archer playing for England at this year's World Cup when the Sussex bowler became eligible.

But Smith, who told Willey he had missed out on Monday, said: "I spoke to David, he's an outstanding man. He's very honest, dignified. He's a very impressive man and cricketer."

England now have two warm-up matches, against Australia on Saturday and Afghanistan on Monday, before launching the tournament against South Africa at the Oval on May 30.

England World Cup squad: Eoin Morgan (Middlesex, capt), Moeen Ali (Worcestershire), Jofra Archer (Sussex), Jonny Bairstow (Yorkshire), Jos Buttler (Lancashire, wkt), Tom Curran (Surrey), Liam Dawson (Hampshire), Liam Plunkett (Surrey), Adil Rashid (Yorkshire), Joe Root (Yorkshire), Jason Roy (Surrey), Ben Stokes (Durham), James Vince (Hampshire), Chris Woakes (Warwickshire), Mark Wood (Durham). — AFP



LONDON: File photo shows England's players pose with the series trophy after winning the fifth One Day International (ODI) cricket match between England and Pakistan at Headingley in Leeds, northern England on May 19, 2019. England beat Pakistan by 54 runs to win the fifth one-day international at Headingley.— AFP

India's Kohli says World Cup will be a hit for runs

MUMBAI: Cricket fans should expect a run bonanza at the ICC World Cup in England and Wales starting this month, India captain Virat Kohli said yesterday. Ahead of India's departure for the tournament, Kohli said local seaming conditions would likely favour batsmen.

"In ICC tournaments the pitches are going to be very good and it's summer in the UK. We expect high-scoring games," Kohli told a press conference in Mumbai. England beat Pakistan 4-0 in a five-match warmup series with nearly every game seeing innings of 350 plus on grounds that will be used for the World Cup.

Kohli insisted, however, that World Cup pressure will bring down the totals. "A bilateral series compared to a World Cup is very different, so you might see lot of 260-270 kind of games and teams successfully defending it because of the pressure factor," said the skipper of India—one of the favourites alongside England and Australia.

Two-time winners India, who start against South Africa in Southampton on June 5, feel they have a strong chance with a potent pace bowling attack led by Jasprit Bumrah. "We go into the World Cup feeling very balanced and a strong side. You saw in the IPL (T20 series), all the players that are in the squad are in great form and playing really well," said Kohli.

India have some worries over their spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal,



MUMBAI: Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli speaks during a press conference at the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) head office in Mumbai yesterday, ahead of the team's departure for England to play in the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup.— AFP

who were less impressive in the IPL. Chahal claimed 18 wickets for Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore, but Yadav struggled with his left-arm wrist spin for Kolkata Knight Riders.

"In hindsight if you look at it, like Kuldeep, who has had so much success, it's important to see a period where things don't go your way. And I am glad it happened during the IPL, rather than the World Cup," said Kohli.

"He has time to reflect and correct things and come into the World Cup even stronger. We know the skill set he possesses along with Chahal. They are two pillars of our

bowling line-up."

The 10-team World Cup returns to a round-robin format and Kohli said consistency was the only way to make the semi-finals. "Everyone has to be at their best game intensity from the first match onwards and you don't have any room for complacency."

"That's why it's the World Cup, the most important tournament in the world," said Kohli, who compared the "intensity" to competing in football's English Premier League or Spain's La Liga. England launch the tournament against South Africa at the Oval in London on May 30. — AFP

N Zealand veterans spurred by 2015 World Cup failure

WELLINGTON: After a surprise run to the final of the 2015 Cricket World Cup, New Zealand are quietly confident they can again exceed expectations in their quest for a maiden title at this year's tournament.

The Black Caps hope to shed their tag as gallant losers after making the World Cup semi-finals six times then finally reaching the decider four years ago, only to be soundly beaten by Australia. While Kane Williamson has replaced Brendon McCullum as captain, the core of the team that came so close to glory remains, giving the New Zealanders powerful motivation for the one-day showpiece that begins in London on May 30.

Boasting a strong batting line-up and a bowling attack expected to flourish in seam-friendly English conditions, the battle-hardened Black Caps are modest but brimming with belief. "If we play close to our potential, then hopefully we can do New Zealand proud," said coach Gary Stead. The Black Caps have a strong one-day international record since late 2017, including series white-washes against Pakistan, the West Indies, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. There was also a tight 3-2 series loss to England, currently favourites to win the World Cup on home turf.

Williamson's men blotted their copy-book with a 4-1 loss to India earlier this

year that raised doubts about their ability against top-class opposition and tempered fans' hopes for the World Cup. But the New Zealanders were insistent the lopsided scoreline was misleading and bounced back to beat India in a T20 series. They enter the tournament ranked fourth in the world, behind England, India and South Africa.

Former England captain Mike Gatting rates the New Zealanders second only to the host nation. "You can no longer call them dark horses as their players are so experienced," he told *The Cricketer* magazine.

"They play some great cricket, they always play as a team and they are well led by Kane Williamson. Ross Taylor is also a fine batsman, and in Tim Southee and Trent Boult they have match-winning bowlers."

It is likely to be the final World Cup for seamers Southee and Boult, as well as veteran batsmen Taylor and Martin Guptill, giving the team extra motivation. Guptill said indications were that it would be a high-scoring World Cup, suiting the Black Caps. "I've got a big smile on my face," he said. "They're looking like some decent batting wickets, which is nice for me." Taylor, gearing up for his fourth World Cup campaign, admitted the seven-wicket loss in the 2015 final still stings and there is a desire to make amends. — AFP

Australia 'pumped' as Smith and Warner seek redemption

SYDNEY: Skipper Aaron Finch says a rejuvenated Australia are "pumped" ahead of their defence of the World Cup, with Steve Smith and David Warner returning from bans for ball-tampering and eager to let their bats do the talking.

Australia beat New Zealand by seven wickets on home turf to be crowned champions in 2015 and extend their record as the tournament's most successful team. From the 11 World Cups played, they have won five and were losing finalists on two other occasions.

On paper it makes them among the favourites, and they head into their opening match against Afghanistan in Bristol on June 1 on a run of eight straight one-day wins, against India and Pakistan.

But it has been a rocky ride, with the "sandpaper-gate" scandal in South Africa last year rattling the team as they struggled to cope with the fallout and the hole left by one-year bans handed to their two leaders and best batsmen-Smith and Warner.

The outlook was bleak after a string of poor results in the aftermath, but laid-back coach Justin Langer and the unassuming Finch have not only steadied the ship but emphatically turned it around. And now they have potential game-changers Smith and Warner back, confidence is sky-high.

"I'm very excited," Finch said of the upcoming challenge. "The fact that everyone is together, everyone's getting on great, the boys are pumped... it literally is the time of your life—a World Cup."

When Langer was appointed after Darren Lehmann stepped down after the ball-tampering affair, a key part of his brief was to torpedo the notorious win-at-all costs culture under then skipper Smith and his abrasive

deputy Warner.

A buzzword of his now is "respect" and he took the team to the World War I battlefields of Gallipoli on the way to England to learn about "humility and perspective". Their mettle will be put to the test at the World Cup and the following Ashes series, with a hostile reception expected from their arch-rival English fans, with Smith and Warner in the firing line.

"We're ready for it," Langer insisted. "If we're under siege the second we get off the plane, we're ready for it." Since returning to the Australian squad in recent weeks, Smith, 29, and 32-year-old Warner have kept a low profile, with all-rounder Glenn Maxwell saying they were "a little bit more reserved" in the dressing room, and were hungry to show what they could do on the pitch.

They have already shown a taste of what to expect. Warner was in prolific form at the Indian Premier League, while Smith stroked a masterful unbeaten 89 and then 91 not out in warm-up games against a New Zealand XI.

Former coach Lehmann tipped the pair to make a big impact. "He (Smith) will be exceptional at the World Cup," Lehmann told Macquarie Sports Radio. "People are worried about the break they have had with 12 months out, but you see them in the IPL performing and making runs."

"David Warner is an excitement machine, at the top of the order he can set it alight. If he has a really good tournament... they'll be hard to stop." The starting XI is firming up but the batting order remains in flux, with Langer yet to decide who will open, with Finch, Warner and Usman Khawaja all in the running.

Smith is expected to come in at three or four with Shaun Marsh and Maxwell making up the top order followed by all-rounder Marcus Stoinis. The pace attack will almost certainly feature Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Coulter-Nile and Jason Behrendorff, but questions remain as to whether Nathan Lyon or Adam Zampa will claim the spinner's spot. — AFP

Mercurial Pakistan pin WCup hopes on rising generation

KARACHI: Pakistan are pinning their hopes for World Cup glory on a crop of youngsters who have the talent to beat anybody but could also pay for their lack of experience. The side have only won the showpiece 50-over tournament once—under the captaincy of current Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in 1992.

Khan pledged to give youth a chance while campaigning for election last year and the squad, with an average age of just 27, reflects the demographics of the country, where around two-thirds of the population are under the age of 30.

The prime minister, a swashbuckling all-rounder in his playing days, tipped 20-year-old leg-spinner Shadab Khan as a potential trump card when he met the squad last month.

Pakistan stole a march on their rivals by arriving early in England to play a five-match one-day series, although they suffered a chastening 4-0 defeat. Coach Mickey Arthur was not too despondent after his side lost the fifth and final ODI on Sunday, saying they had learned lessons despite their drubbing.

"I know there's not too many teams who will arrive in England as prepared as we are in terms of the competition we've played against and match fitness," said Arthur. "All I know is the players are very determined to do well. Every time they go out there they play for 210 million people."

"We'll be ready—come the first game against the West Indies, we'll be ready." Pakistan boast envi-

able options in attack, with 19-year-olds Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mohammad Hasnain part of a pace battery led by Mohammad Amir and Junaid Khan.

Shaheen offers a wicket-taking threat with his steep bounce while Hasnain has the ability to unsettle batsmen with sheer pace, sending down thunderbolts at 150 kilometres per hour (93 miles per hour).

Twenty-four-year-old Hasan Ali, touted for his ability to strike in the middle overs of matches, has already made a name for himself and has useful experience of English conditions. Hasan grabbed 13 wickets to help Pakistan win the Champions Trophy in England two years ago, finishing as player of the tournament.

Aside from the pacemen, Shadab and Imad Wasim are an effective spin duo who can stem the flow of runs and also take wickets. Pakistan's batting is more vulnerable but is led by the dependable Babar Azam, 24, who is ranked seventh in the ODI batting rankings and scored a century against England at Trent Bridge last week.

Imam-ul-Haq, 23, has had to cope with allegations of nepotism over his selection—he is the nephew of chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq—but has come out fighting, smashing 151 against England in Bristol earlier this month.

And fiery Fakhar Zaman, 29, can be a match-winner with his never-say-die approach. The experienced trio of Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Hafeez and captain Sarfraz Ahmed give solidity to the batting while Haris Sohail is a useful player.

Pakistan's unpredictability means they can beat any side but they could also lose to weaker teams if things do not go their way. Never was their Jekyll and Hyde character more clearly shown than at the 2017 Champions Trophy in England, where they were crushed by 124 runs by India in their opening match but hit back to beat their fierce rivals by 180 runs in the final. — AFP

Sports

Sanchez's blast caps Yanks' rally, Cabrera lead Rangers past Mariners

Acuna, Soroka propel Braves past Giants

BALTIMORE: Gary Sanchez capped a four-run top of the ninth inning with a three-run homer as the New York Yankees rallied for a 10-7 victory over the Baltimore Orioles on Monday night. The Orioles took an early 6-1 lead, helped by home runs from Hanser Alberto (4-for-5) and Renato Nunez, but three homers sparked the New York comeback. Gleyber Torres homered twice for the Yankees and now has 10 this season, eight of which have come against Baltimore. Torres' second long ball was a solo shot in the eighth off Mychal Givens (0-1) that cut the Baltimore lead to 7-6. New York tied it in the ninth on an Aaron Hicks sacrifice fly before Sanchez (2-for-5, four RBIs) crushed a three-run homer into the left field seats with two outs off Givens, who gave up five runs in 1 1/3 innings. Former Orioles closer Zack Britton (2-0) earned the win, and Aroldis Chapman closed it in the ninth for his 12th save.

RANGERS 10, MARINERS 9

Asdrubal Cabrera smacked two solo homers, and Mike Minor struck out 11 in six innings as host Texas held off Seattle. Rougned Odor contributed a three-run homer, Hunter Pence added a two-run blast and Joey Gallo also went deep to help Texas win for the fifth time in its past six games. The Rangers matched a season best with the five homers, and 10 of their 15 hits went for extra bases. Tim Beckham Jr. went 3-for-4 with a grand slam and drove in a career-high five runs for the Mariners. Seattle, which trailed 10-2 after seven innings has dropped 16 of its past 21 contests.

BRAVES 4, GIANTS 1

Ronald Acuna Jr. hit two home runs, and rookie Mike Soroka allowed two hits over eight innings as Atlanta defeated host San Francisco. Acuna was 3-for-4 with a double and a walk. He led off the game by hitting the first pitch for a home run and added a solo shot in the seventh inning, giving him 11 for the season. The Braves are now 8-2 since Acuna was moved back into the lead-off spot. Soroka (5-1) allowed one run-a solo homer from Brandon Crawford in the sixth. Crawford had both San Francisco hits, the other a single in the eighth inning. Soroka struck out seven, one off his career high, and did not allow a walk. He lowered his ERA to 1.01.

PHILLIES 5, CUBS 4 (10 INNINGS)

J.T. Realmuto hit a solo homer with two outs in the 10th inning, and Philadelphia held on to edge host Chicago in the opener of a four-game series. With a 1-2 count, Realmuto lifted a fastball over the wall in left-

center off Kyle Ryan (0-1) to break the tie. The Phillies had tied the score with two outs in the ninth after the Cubs had scored three runs in the eighth to take a 4-3 lead. The Phillies' bullpen couldn't hold a 2-1 lead for starter Jake Arrieta, who was making his first appearance against Chicago, where he played from 2013-17, winning an NL Cy Young Award in 2015 and helping the Cubs win a World Series the next season.

ASTROS 3, WHITE SOX 0

Backed by solo home runs from Jake Marisnick and Tyler White, Brad Peacock produced his third consecutive strong outing as the Houston opened a season-high, 10-game homestand by blanking Chicago. After surrendering a season-worst seven earned runs in an 8-2 loss at Minnesota on May 2, Peacock (5-2) has allowed one earned run total over his past three starts and 17 innings, good for an 0.53 ERA. Peacock has produced 24 strikeouts against just five walks during that stretch, including nine strikeouts over five innings against the White Sox. Peacock allowed just two hits and did not issue a walk.

RED SOX 12, BLUE JAYS 2

David Price pitched five innings in his first start since May 2, Michael Chavis and Jackie Bradley Jr. each hit two-run homers, and Boston defeated host Toronto in a day game. Xander Bogaerts and Rafael Devers added solo homers and each had three hits and three RBIs for Boston, while Mitch Moreland contributed his season-best three hits. Price (2-2) allowed three hits and two unearned runs while striking out four and walking none in five innings. The left-hander was activated Monday from the injured list after recovering from elbow tendinitis.

METS 5, NATIONALS 3

Amed Rosario and Pete Alonso hit first-inning home runs, and host New York never trailed while snapping a five-game losing streak by beating Washington in the opener of a four-game series. Todd Frazier and Carlos Gomez had back-to-back RBI hits in the third inning to give the Mets a 4-0 lead. The hit for Gomez was his first with the Mets since Sept. 26, 2007. Gomez was dealt to the Minnesota Twins following the 2007 season in exchange for Johan Santana and spent time with five big league teams before signing a minor league deal with New York on March 7 and getting recalled from Triple-A Syracuse on Friday.

ATHLETICS 6, INDIANS 4

Matt Chapman hit a home run and drove in three



BALTIMORE: DJ LeMahieu #26 of the New York Yankees cannot make the out as Joey Rickard #23 of the Baltimore Orioles slides in to second base during the ninth inning at Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore, Maryland. — AFP

runs, and Jurickson Profar and Matt Olson also homered as Oakland defeated host Cleveland. Josh Phegley and Chapman provided RBI singles for the A's, who posted their fourth consecutive win. Brett Anderson (5-3) tossed 5 1/3 strong innings before leaving due to a cervical strain. Roberto Perez and Francisco Lindor each launched a solo homer for the Indians, who have lost three times in four games against Oakland this season. Rookie Oscar Mercado and Jose Ramirez each had RBI singles.

TWINS 3, ANGELS 1

Miguel Sano hit a tiebreaking two-run homer in the eighth inning to lead Minnesota past Los Angeles in Anaheim, Calif. Sano lined a 2-0 fastball by reliever Ty Burrety 391 feet into the bleachers in right-center for his second homer of the season. The blast drove in Eddie Rosario, who had singled. Burrety (2-2) had not given up a home run in 21 appearances covering 23 2/3 innings this season. Luis Arraez went 3-for-4 with a run,

and Max Kepler went 2-for-4 with a walk for Minnesota, which won for the sixth time in seven games. Taylor Rogers (1-0) picked up the win, allowing a hit and a walk in 1 2/3 innings of relief. Blake Parker pitched a scoreless ninth for his eighth save.

PADRES 2, DIAMONDBACKS 1

Franmil Reyes' two-run, sixth-inning homer tipped a pitching duel in favor of rookie Chris Paddock as host San Diego beat Luke Weaver and Arizona. Reyes' 15th homer of the season, a 422-foot drive into the seats in right-center, followed a two-out single by Greg Garcia. The hits were only the second and third allowed by Weaver. Paddock (4-2) allowed one run on five hits and a hit batter in six innings with seven strikeouts. He didn't walk a batter. He lowered his ERA after nine major league starts to 1.93, the lowest mark after nine starts in Padres history. Weaver (3-3) allowed two runs on four hits with seven strikeouts and no walks in six innings. — Reuters

Semenya to race 3,000m at Diamond League's Prefontaine

LOS ANGELES: Two-time Olympic champion Caster Semenya will race the 3,000 meters at the Diamond League Prefontaine Classic on June 30, a distance she can contest without reducing her testosterone levels.

The South African has won two Olympic golds at 800 meters, and has insisted she will not take medication to comply with new International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) rules governing testosterone levels in women athletes that went into effect on May 8. The new rules require women with higher than normal male hormone levels—so-called "hyperandrogenic" athletes—to artificially lower the amount of testosterone in their bodies if they are to compete in races over distances of 400m to the mile.

Semenya won the 800m at the Doha

Diamond League meeting this month in her first race since losing her appeal of the controversial ruling at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. South Africa have said they will lodge an appeal of the CAS ruling with the Switzerland Federal Tribunal citing lack of clarity over how the rules can be implemented.

Semenya's case has provoked a furious debate across sport worldwide about gender and "hyperandrogenic" athletes, those with "differences of sexual development" (DSD). The World Medical Association has urged doctors not to enforce the rules, warning that attempts to do so would breach ethics codes.

As the debate rumbles on, the Prefontaine 3,000m will be Semenya's first race since the rules went into effect. Prefontaine Classic meet director Tom Jordan said Semenya's agent reached out to meet officials asking if she could start in the 3,000.

"We were happy to oblige," Jordan told AFP, adding that he saw "no downside whatsoever" despite the controversy over the new rules. Semenya will be an underdog in a stellar field that includes world 5,000-metres champion Hellen Obiri, 2016 world indoor 1,500-metres champion Sifan Hassan, and 2018 world indoor 1,500 and 3,000-metres champion Genzebe Dibaba.

"To be honest, I'm as curious as any-



Caster Semenya

one to see how she will fare against the world's best distance runners," Jordan said. "Don't forget, Semenya has broken 4:00 for 1,500m, which relatively few athletes have done." Semenya said in a tweet that she would not take medication to lower her testosterone levels.

"Hell no. No way," she said. "I don't know what will happen next. But no one should tell me what to do, if people want to stop me from doing something that's

their problem, not mine." And she said she was fighting a bigger battle beyond the track.

"This is more than a game, more than sports," she said. "This is about human dignity, human pride." The Prefontaine Classic is being held in Stanford, California, this year rather than its usual home of Eugene, Oregon, where a new stadium is being built for the 2021 World Championships. — AFP



TOKYO: International Olympic Committee (IOC) vice president and chairman of the Coordination Commission for Tokyo 2020 John Coates (L) and Tokyo 2020 president Yoshiro Mori (C) attend a meeting of the Coordination Commission for Tokyo 2020 in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) on the Gold Coast in Australia.

"There are concerns over cuts in accommodation, transport and venue upgrades," an ASOIF official told AFP at the time. Yesterday Coates acknowl-

edged the concerns raised by the federations, but said: "We think that you have been working them through and we are confident you will be able to address them," adding that the issues raised would be under discussion during the IOC's visit to Tokyo. — AFP

IOC sees scope for more Tokyo 2020 games budget cuts

TOKYO: Tokyo 2020 can make further reductions to its budget, a top Olympic official said yesterday, despite some sports associations voicing concerns that cost-cutting could harm the running of the Games.

"We appreciate your continued efforts to reduce the operational (budget) and other budgets," said John Coates, chairman of the IOC's coordination committee, at the start of a three-day visit to Tokyo.

He noted that \$2.2 billion had been saved from the construction and infrastructure budget and \$2 billion from the operational budget but insisted: "We think there are still more savings to be obtained." Coates singled out the "overlay" budget for further cuts, which

means money for temporary facilities such as pre-fabricated tents, seating and security fencing. He said this had already been reduced from \$2.1 billion to around \$1.3 billion and added: "I think that together we can help you save some more money there."

"We want to be diligent... We do not want the taxpayers of Tokyo and Japan to be meeting any of these operational costs and I'm confident that will be the case," said Coates. In December, Tokyo 2020 organisers unveiled the latest version of their budget, which stood at 1.35 trillion yen (\$12.1 billion), unchanged from the previous budget released in 2017.

Organisers have admitted that measures to tackle the expected hot weather during the Tokyo summer—such as water sprinklers and special heat-absorbing paint on roads—have driven up the bill.

Measures like this have offset other savings the organisers have been trying to make. However, the Tokyo 2020 organisers are also being squeezed in the other direction, with some sports federations fretting that budget cuts could impact the hosting of the Games.

Eight federations, including sailing, judo and tennis, expressed worries at a recent meeting of the Association of

Sports court's judges feel backlash as fans' passion boils over

LONDON: The Court of Arbitration for Sport is headquartered a stone's throw from Switzerland's Lake Geneva, a world away from the heart of stadiums—but veteran arbitrator Romano Subiotto says passions can run high.

The 68-year-old Briton, who is a European and national anti-trust lawyer based mostly in Brussels, has been involved in around 150 cases over 12 years. CAS this month stirred up strong emotions over its decision to uphold the world athletics body's ruling that will oblige gender-row South African athlete Caster Semenya to take medication to reduce her testosterone—a case that Subiotto was not involved in.

However, Subiotto saw first hand how passionately fans feel after receiving a string of abusive messages from a supporter of Essendon Football Club, an Australian Rules club. In 2015, the Australian Football League's anti-doping tribunal cleared 34 past and present Essendon players of taking a prohibited substance, but the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) appealed to CAS to overturn the decision.

Subiotto was one of the two arbitrators in the case, in which CAS upheld WADA's appeal and the players were found guilty of doping. The first explosive-filled message—which Subiotto showed AFP at the London offices of his firm Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton—arrived within weeks of the January 2016 decision.

"You are not worthy to lick the boots of any of those players, you take the money and ban them for two years," it said. "May you burn in hell." Subiotto received one from the same fan in January 2018 asking: "Are you dead yet?"

He remains plegmatic about the abuse and says such a virulent reaction acts as a spur rather than a deterrent. "Certainly what they do is persuade me to be even more diligent, even more impartial and more steadfast in my conclusions. 'The more people complain the more I feel I have to do my job.'"

These febrile emotions can even affect the judiciary, Subiotto said, pointing to the case that led to Spain's former world cycling champion Alejandro Valverde being banned for two years in 2009. The International Cycling Union (UCI) and WADA appealed against the Spanish Cycling Federation's refusal to open a case against the rider. His DNA sample, taken on a stage of the 2008 Tour de France in Italy, matched plasma seized in Spain in connection with the Operacion Puerto blood doping scandal. — AFP

Sports

Mkhitarian to miss Europa League final over safety fears

Henrikh absence will be a big blow as Arsenal needs to qualify for Champions League

LONDON: Arsenal's Armenian midfielder Henrikh Mkhitarian will miss the Europa League final against Chelsea in Baku amid fears over his safety. Mkhitarian's well-being was a concern for Arsenal due to the tense political dispute between Armenia and final hosts Azerbaijan.

The Premier League club have decided against Mkhitarian travelling with the rest of Unai Emery's squad for next Wednesday's game. "We are very disappointed to announce that Henrikh Mkhitarian will not be travelling with the squad for our UEFA Europa League final against Chelsea," an Arsenal statement announced yesterday.

"We have thoroughly explored all the options for Micki to be part of the squad but after discussing this with Micki and his family we have collectively agreed he will not be in our travelling party." Azerbaijan's ambassador to the UK, Tahir Taghizadeh, had insisted Mkhitarian would be free from any threat of violence, but it was reported the star didn't believe he would be safe on the pitch.

"Having considered all the current options, we had to take the tough decision for me not to travel with the squad to the UEL Final against Chelsea," Mkhitarian tweeted. "It's the kind of game that doesn't come along very often for us players and I must admit, it hurts me a lot to miss it. I will be cheering my teammates on! Let's bring it home."

UEFA, European football's governing body, insisted they had done all they could to ensure

Mkhitarian's safety in Baku. "Working alongside Arsenal FC, UEFA sought and received assurances regarding the player's safety in Azerbaijan from the highest authorities in the country," a UEFA statement read.

"As a result of these guarantees, a comprehensive security plan was developed and given to the club. "While the club acknowledges the efforts that UEFA and the Azeri government have gone to in this matter, we respect the personal decision not to travel with the player."

Mkhitarian had featured in 11 games during the Europa League campaign and his absence will be a big blow as Arsenal look for the victory they need to qualify for next season's Champions League.

"We have written to UEFA expressing our deep concerns about this situation," the Arsenal statement added. "We're also very sad that a player will miss out on a major European final in circumstances such as this, as it is something that comes along very rarely in a footballer's career."

"Micki has been a key player in our run to the final so this is a big loss for us from a team perspective." Armenia captain Mkhitarian skipped the Gunners' Europa League fixture against Qarabag in October because of tensions caused by a dispute over the Nagorny Karabakh region.

Azerbaijan and Armenia have feuded over Nagorny Karabakh since Armenian separatists seized the territory in a war that claimed about 30,000 lives



LONDON: Arsenal's German midfielder Mesut Ozil (2L) and Arsenal's Armenian midfielder Henrikh Mkhitarian (2R) watch as Arsenal's German defender Shkodran Mustafi (R) vies for the ball during a team training session at Arsenal's London Colney training centre in St. Albans yesterday ahead of their Europa League final football match against Chelsea on May 29. — AFP

in the early 1990s. A ceasefire was agreed in 1994 but the two countries remain locked in a bitter dispute with frequent exchanges of fire, and tensions are such

that Mkhitarian also did not travel to Azerbaijan with former club Borussia Dortmund for a Europa League match against Galaba FK in 2015. — AFP

Xavi's last match ends in defeat for Al Sadd

TEHRAN: Xavi Hernandez's dazzling career came to a low-key end when his Qatari side Al Sadd were beaten 2-0 by Iranian giants Persepolis in their last group match of the AFC Champions League on Monday.

The 39-year-old midfield genius, who helped Spain win the World Cup in 2010 and won four UEFA Champions League titles and eight La Liga titles with Barcelona, was cheered by fans at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran where already-eliminated Persepolis produced an improved display to register only their second win in six matches.

Just 11,000 spectators were present in the 100,000-capacity stadium, mostly wearing the red of Persepolis, who won the Iranian league title days before this match. Several home fans brandished banners reading "Adios Xavi" to show their appreciation of the player who with Andres Iniesta formed the backbone of one of Barcelona's greatest ever sides.

Xavi was also honoured by the Persepolis management who presented him with a jersey featuring the number six he has worn in his career. But Al Sadd's second defeat in a row, following their 4-1 thrashing by domestic rivals Al Duhail in last week's Amir Cup final in Doha, meant Xavi's illustrious career ended in a low-key fashion.

LOW-KEY SEND-OFF

Xavi, who became the first player in history to play 150 UEFA Champions League matches, had indicated that he will stay in Qatar to begin a coaching career, probably remaining in a highly-paid role with Al Sadd, rather than return to Spain.

"The idea is to start as a coach in Qatar, where there is less pressure, to test myself and get some experience."

'Exciting, but weak', Is the Bundesliga in decline?

BERLIN: Bayern Munich may have wrapped up a seventh successive Bundesliga title on Saturday, but their domestic dominance was severely tested in one of the most exciting German league campaigns in years.

Perennial champions Bayern, who have romped to the title every season since 2013, finished just two points ahead of Borussia Dortmund, as the title race went down to the final day of the campaign for the first time in a decade.

Yet while the excitement was higher than ever at home, German clubs fared surprisingly poorly in European competition, raising concerns the Bundesliga is a league in decline.

Dortmund's title challenge, though ultimately unsuccessful, provided welcome respite from the hegemony Bayern have enjoyed in recent years.

Since 2013, the Bavarian giants had won six titles in a row by a margin of 10 points or more, and finished 25 points clear of Dortmund in 2013.

Forced to claw back a nine-point gap to retain their crown, even Bayern welcomed Dortmund's newfound strength.

"We are happy to have such opponents, and I hope it continues next year because the Bundesliga and the fans in Germany need that," Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic told broadcaster Sport1 after Saturday's triumph.

"It was nice to have an exciting title race for once."

Nor was it just the title race which provided entertainment until the end. On the last day of the campaign, three clubs were still in the running for Champions League qualification, while six sides still had hopes of a Europa League spot.

For all the excitement, however, there is growing concern the Bundesliga cannot keep up with other major European leagues.



TEHRAN: Sadd's midfielder Xavi runs with the ball during the AFC Champions League group D football match between Iran's Persepolis and Qatar's Al Sadd at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran. — AFP

Xavi told Spain's Efe agency in Tehran just hours before facing Persepolis.

"I think football has bid farewell to one of the best players in the world... it was beautiful to work with a player with Xavi's calibre," Al Sadd's current head coach Jesualdo Ferreira said after the match.

Ferreira has predicted Xavi "will be a great manager". Fellow Al Sadd midfielder Gabi also paid tribute to his captain and fellow Spaniard, calling him a "role model". Al Sadd had already qualified for the last 16 of the Asian

tournament, although Xavi will not play on, and they had hoped a victory on Monday would be an apt send-off for their captain who has been with them for four years.

But although the Spaniard produced some signature passes and saw a late free-kick sail agonisingly over the goal, it was Persepolis who made the most of their chances. Early on, Xavi collected the ball and passed to Baghdad Bounedjah but the Algerian's lob was pushed away by Persepolis goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand. — AFP

Frankfurt-based FAZ newspaper wrote on Saturday the German top-flight was "exciting, but weak", adding the league produced "masses of losers".

It was certainly true in the Champions League this year, as all four Bundesliga clubs were knocked out by the last 16.

Bayern, Dortmund and Schalke were all convincingly beaten by English opposition, meaning there was no German team in the quarter-finals for the first time since 2006.

Eintracht Frankfurt's fairytale run to the Europa League semi-finals aside, it was a barren year for the Bundesliga in Europe.

In 2013, former Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld called the Bundesliga "the best league in the world" after both clubs reached the Champions League final.

Now, many are warning it has become a "second-class" league behind Spain's La Liga and the English Premier League.

Last January, Bundesliga CEO Christian Seifert warned the league could soon become "internationally meaningless" if it did not adapt and keep the pace with its competitors.

Most Bundesliga clubs run on a model of no debt and financial responsibility, and even mighty Bayern struggle to match the huge transfer sums paid out by Europe's biggest sides.

The "50+1" rule, which ensures fan power by guaranteeing club members majority voting rights, means most German outfits are unlikely to attract from wealthy foreign investors, as teams in England and France have done.

The once sacrosanct rule has become increasingly contested of late, with calls for it to be reformed or even abolished.

"I hope the league gives up on 50+1," Bayern president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge told GQ last year.

"I think every club should be able to decide for itself whether it is open to investors or not."

League CEO Seifert, meanwhile, said in January that the Bundesliga had to find the balance between domestic and international success. "We need our top clubs to keep the pace in Europe while also offering exciting competition at home," he said. — AFP

No room for sentiment as Giroud gears up to face Arsenal

LONDON: Olivier Giroud is relishing the prospect of beating his old Arsenal team-mates when he lines up for Chelsea in the Europa League final in Baku on May 29. The 32-year-old French World Cup winner's move across London 18 months ago has failed to deliver the regular first team football he hoped after falling behind compatriot Alexandre Lacazette and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang in the pecking order at Arsenal.

However, he has played a huge part in the Blues run to the Europa League final and is the joint top scorer in this season's competition with 10 goals. "I always like playing against my old teams," Giroud, won three FA Cups in five-and-a-half years at Arsenal, told the Daily Mail.

"It's going to be tough, and it could be painful if it's not going the right way, but you have to put the feelings and memories aside. "I enjoyed the years I spent there. It has been a big part of my career, my first club in England and it will always be special, but now I feel my blood is blue. The same as the national team, blue suits me well."

Giroud, who yesterday signed a one-year contract extension with the Blues, says he found no problem in fitting in with his Chelsea team-mates following his reported £18million (\$22.9 million) transfer.

"I settled in quickly. I felt like part of the family straight away," said Giroud. "I knew a few of the players and I'm a sociable person. I always try to communicate." Giroud believes there is a more cut-throat culture at his new club compared to the Gunners and part of the reason why Chelsea have outstripped Arsenal for silverware over the past decade.

"Maybe you would get more time at Arsenal. They would be more patient," he added. "At Chelsea you have to be ready quickly because in terms of trophies it has been the best club in England for the last 10 years."

"You don't have time at Chelsea and when you are young it is quite difficult to find your place. "I don't want to kill the dreams of these young Chelsea players. "They are very talented, but it makes sense because Chelsea invest more in every transfer window and they buy more top players in the world who are more experienced." — AFP

Women's WCup coach dares China to 'dream big'

SHANGHAI: China's coach admits his side are "far apart" from the elite but has nevertheless told them to defy expectations at next month's Women's World Cup. Jia Xiuquan's team carry the hopes of a country all too used to seeing the men's side disappoint on the international stage.

But the Chinese women face a battle to reach the knockout stages in France with a tough group stage against former two-time champions Germany, Spain and South Africa. "It's me who said our aim was to reach the final of the Women's World Cup," Jia told the Xinhua news agency ahead of the team's June 8 opener against Germany in Rennes. — AFP



25 India's Kohli says World Cup will be a hit for runs



26 Semenya to race 3,000m at Diamond League's Prefontaine



27 Xavi's last match ends in defeat for Al Sadd



LONDON: In this file photo taken on September 03, 2013 Austrian former Formula 1 racing driver Niki Lauda and his wife Birgit attend the world premiere of Rush in central London. Legendary Formula One driver Niki Lauda has died at the age of 70, his family said in a statement released to Austrian media yesterday. — AFP

Former F1 champion Lauda dead

Sporting world mourns death of 'true legend' Niki Lauda

VIENNA: Legendary Formula One driver Niki Lauda has died at the age of 70, his family said yesterday, triggering an outpouring of praise for a man whose track victories and comeback from a horrific crash enthralled race fans worldwide.

Lauda died at the University Hospital Zurich in Switzerland on Monday night surrounded by his closest family members, a spokesperson told AFP. His death comes eight months after he underwent a lung transplant. An Austrian news report said Lauda—who also had kidney transplants—was hospitalised for a dialysis earlier this month in Switzerland.

Walter Klepetko, who performed the lung transplant at Vienna's general hospital last year, said there was no specific cause of death. "It was a long process, and the patient reached its end. Niki Lauda fought. He was a great man. But it has been clear for some time that we cannot bring him back to the 'race track'", he was quoted by the Austrian news agency APA as saying.

The family said in a statement that Lauda died peacefully, highlighting his "unique achievements as an athlete and entrepreneur... his tireless zest for action, his straight-forwardness and his courage."

"A role model and a benchmark for all of us, he was a loving and caring husband, father and grandfather away

from the public, and he will be missed." Lauda won the Formula One drivers' world championship three times, in 1975 and 1977 for Ferrari and in 1984 with McLaren, despite a terrible race crash in 1976.

"Everyone at Ferrari is deeply saddened at the news of the death of our dear friend Niki Lauda," Ferrari said on its Twitter account as social media exploded with the news of his death. "Niki will forever be in our hearts and enshrined in our history. #RIPNiki," his former team McLaren tweeted on their account.

Lauda had been non-executive chairman at Mercedes F1 since 2012 and he was instrumental in bringing in British driver Lewis Hamilton to spark a run of success that has brought five consecutive world drivers' and constructors' championships.

Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff said Lauda was "irreplaceable" and that the team had lost "a guiding light". "Forever carried in our hearts, forever immortalised in our history. The motorsport community today mourns the devastating loss of a true legend," Formula 1 said on Twitter.

VERY, VERY SPECIAL MAN

Lauda was born as Andreas Nikolaus on February 22, 1949, in Vienna into an upper middle-class family, who

did not share his passion for cars. In 1968, without telling his parents, Lauda won his first race with a Mini Racer he had bought with his grandmother's help.

During his driving career, Lauda suffered horrific injuries on August 1, 1976 when, having already won five races that season, his vehicle burst into flames on the Nuerburgring in Germany. He had severe burns to his face and hands, and inhaled toxic fumes which damaged his lungs.

Despite being given the last rites in hospital he made an almost miraculous recovery to race again just six weeks later still bandaged and in intense pain. He missed only two races that season but was unable to hold off the challenge of Britain's James Hunt, who went on to claim his only world title.

The rivalry between the two men—which demonstrated the Austrian's extraordinary courage and fighting spirit—was portrayed in the 2013 film "Rush" by American director Ron Howard. The next season, in 1977, Lauda went on to win his second Formula One world championship with Ferrari.

Former motorcycling world champion Casey Stoner said on Twitter: "RIP Niki Lauda, a true Icon and Motorsport legend." Former F1 driver Johnny Herbert, describing Lauda as "courageous, chatty, and extremely

funny", added on Twitter: "I am going to miss you being around the @F1 paddock but the legend of Niki Lauda will live on, because you were a very very special man."

ONE OF AUSTRIA'S GREATEST

Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said Lauda "fought himself back into life multiple times". "With Niki Lauda, Austria loses one of its greatest personalities... He is a role model for courage, discipline and directness," he said. Lauda quit Formula One at the end of 1979 to pursue his second passion, civil aviation. But he came back to the race circuit in 1982, this time with McLaren, and won his last world championship with them in 1984.

Off the racetrack, Lauda—recognised by his trademark red cap hiding scars from his 1976 accident—founded and then sold several airlines with a majority stake of his latest going to Ryanair in 2018. Tragedy hit in 1991 when a Boeing 767 of his Lauda Air fleet crashed in Thailand on its way from Bangkok to Vienna, killing all 223 people aboard.

In 2008, Lauda married Birgit Wetzinger, a former flight attendant, who had donated a kidney after one of his transplants failed. Besides their twins, a boy and a girl born in 2009, Lauda also had three other sons from previous relationships. — AFP

Warriors beat Blazers in OT to reach 5th straight NBA Finals

LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry and Draymond Green both posted triple-doubles to power the Golden State Warriors to a 119-117 overtime victory over the Portland Trail Blazers on Monday and into a fifth straight NBA Finals.

The two-time defending NBA champions swept the Blazers in four games in the best-of-seven Western

Conference finals. The only other team to reach five straight NBA Finals was the Boston Celtics, when they went to a record 10 in a row from 1957 to 1966.

"I hope it doesn't go unnoticed or underrated—five straight finals hasn't been done since the 60s," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr. "It hasn't been done for a reason, it's really, really difficult and so I just can't say enough about the competitive desire of the group of guys that we have here."

The Warriors will battle for the title starting on May 30 against either the Milwaukee Bucks or Toronto Raptors, aiming to become the first team since the Los Angeles Lakers of 2000, 2001 and 2002 to three-peat as champions.

Curry and Green became the first teammates in league history to have triple-doubles in the same post-season game, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Curry finished with 37 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists, while Green had his second straight triple-double—posting double digits in three key statistical categories—with 18 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists.

Fittingly, Curry and Green combined on the game-winning basket in overtime. Curry feeding Green for a three-pointer that pushed Golden State to a 119-115 lead with 39.6 seconds left in overtime. "Obviously in that situation we want Steph to have the ball, we want Steph or Klay (Thompson) to take the shot," Green said.

"But they were swarming them. So I was just talking to them 'Watch out, watch out.' 'When he passed me the ball, I just let it go. When I shot it, it felt good.'" The Trail Blazers had led 69-65 at halftime, and built the lead to 17 in the third quarter—the third straight game in which Portland led by as many as 17 only to come up short.

With veteran Andre Iguodala having joined superstar Kevin Durant and DeMarcus Cousins on the injured list, the Warriors produced a total team effort to rally again. Thompson scored 17 points while reserve Kevon Looney added 12 points and 14 rebounds and Alfonso McKinnie chipped in 12 points.

"Being without Kevin these last five games has put us in a really tough spot and our guys stepped up in a big way," Kerr said. "The group has a fiber to them—when (these) guys go down they find a way to come together and compete and win."

The Warriors scored the last nine points of the third period to close within 95-87 and knotted the score at 104-104 on Curry's layup with 4:34 left in regulation. "We know we can cover 17 points in a matter of three or four minutes," Green said. "So we always try to keep that mindset—that we're never out of the game." — AFP