

3 Education Ministry denies expats' termination rumor



13 Modi kept his job, but most Indians worry about theirs



28 Russia's Potapova ends Kerber Grand Slam bid



Ramadan KAREEM

IMSAK	03:08
Fajr	03:18
Dhur	11:45
Asr	15:20
Magrib	18:40
Isha	20:10

Iran vows to defend itself against military aggression

Iraq warns of 'danger of war' as Iranian FM visits



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and other top officials at Bayan Palace yesterday. — Amiri Diwan

BAGHDAD: Iran will defend itself against any military or economic aggression, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said yesterday, calling on European states to do more to preserve a nuclear agreement his country signed. Speaking at a Baghdad news conference with his Iraqi counterpart Mohammed Al-Hakim, Zarif said Iran wanted to build balanced relations with its Gulf Arab neighbors and had proposed signing a non-aggression pact with them.

"We will defend against any war efforts against Iran, whether it be an economic war or a military one, and we will face these efforts with strength," he said. Strains have increased between Iran and the United States after this month's attack on oil tankers in the Gulf region. Washington, a firm backer of Tehran's regional rival Saudi Arabia, has blamed the attacks on Iran.

Tehran has distanced itself from the bombings, but the United States has sent an aircraft carrier and an extra

1,500 troops to the Gulf, sparking concern over the risk of conflict in a volatile region. Iraq stands with Iran and is willing to act as an intermediary between its neighbor and the United States, Hakim said.

Baghdad does not believe an "economic blockade" is fruitful, he added in a reference to US sanctions. "We are saying very clearly and honestly that we oppose the unilateral actions taken by the United States. We stand with the Islamic Republic of Iran in its position," Hakim said. The United States and Iran are Iraq's two main allies.

Meanwhile, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi arrived in Oman and discussed "regional developments" with Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, the sultanate's minister responsible for foreign affairs, Oman News Agency reported. Bin Alawi last week said that his country is trying "with other parties" to calm Iran-US tensions. Separately, state

Continued on Page 24

Turkey sends weapons to Syrian rebels

AMMAN: Turkey has equipped an array of mainstream Syrian rebels it backs with fresh supplies of weaponry to help them try to repel a major Russian-backed assault, senior opposition officials and rebel sources said. Russia is backing the Syrian army's large aerial and ground assault as it seeks to gain control of the last big stretch of rebel-held territory in the northwest of the country.

Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad launched the assault last month, saying rebels had breached an existing ceasefire, triggering a civilian exodus by bombarding Idlib

and adjacent areas. It has been the biggest escalation since last summer between Assad and his enemies in Idlib province and a belt of territory around it.

Ankara stepped up supplies in recent days after failing to persuade Russia in recent meetings of a joint working group that it should end its escalation to avert a major influx of refugees pouring into Turkey, two senior opposition figures said. In doing so Turkey signaled its readiness to preserve its influence in northwestern Syria, where it has beefed up its troop presence in a dozen military bases that were set up under a de-escalation deal with Russia, a senior rebel commander said.

Turkish officials were not immediately available to comment. Overnight, a Turkish military convoy arrived at a base in northern Hama near rebel-held Jabal Al Zawiya,

where Russian and Syrian jets have been pounding for weeks, a rebel and a witness said. The delivery of dozens of armored vehicles, Grad rocket launchers, anti-tank guided missiles and so-called TOW missiles, helped roll back some Syrian army gains and retake the strategically located town of Kfar Nabouda, one senior opposition figure said.

The TOW missile had been the most potent weapon in the arsenal of rebel groups battling Assad during the conflict. It was extended by Western and Arab foes of Assad until a CIA-led program of military support to help moderate rebels was suspended in 2017. A Western intelligence source said Washington had given a "green-light" for the Turkey-backed mainstream rebels to use the TOW missiles, which had been in storage in the latest campaign.

Continued on Page 24



MAARET AL-NUMAN: A man evacuates a young bombing casualty after a reported air strike by regime forces and their allies in the jihadist-held Syrian town of Maaret Al-Noman yesterday. — AFP

French IS members sentenced to death

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi court yesterday sentenced three French citizens to death after they were found guilty of joining the Islamic State group, the first IS members from France to be handed capital punishment, a court official said. Captured in Syria by a US-backed force fighting the jihadists, Kevin Gonoré, Leonard Lopez and Salim Machou were transferred to Iraq for trial.

They have 30 days to appeal. Iraq has taken custody of thousands of jihadists repatriated in recent months

from neighboring Syria, where they were caught by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces during the battle to destroy the IS "caliphate". The Iraqi judiciary said earlier in May that it has tried and sentenced more than 500 foreign suspected IS members since the start of 2018. Its courts have condemned many to life in prison and others to death, although no foreign IS members have yet been executed.

The trials have been criticized by rights groups, which say they often rely on evidence obtained through torture. Those sentenced yesterday were among 13 French nationals caught in battle-scarred eastern Syria and handed to Iraqi authorities in February on suspicion of being members of IS's feared contingent of foreign fighters.

Continued on Page 24

Modi, Khan speak for the first time since air strikes

NEW DELHI: The leaders of India and Pakistan spoke by phone yesterday, their offices said, in their first conversation since before tit-for-tat air strikes in February, their worst bust-up in years. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan congratulated his counterpart Narendra Modi on his recent election victory, the two nuclear-armed arch foes said in separate statements.

Khan "expressed his desire for both countries to work together for the betterment of their peoples," Pakistan's foreign ministry said. "Reiterating his vision for peace, progress and prosperity in South Asia, the Prime Minister said he looked forward to working with Prime Minister Modi to advance these objectives," it added.

Modi meanwhile "stressed that creating trust and an environment free of violence and terrorism were essential for fostering cooperation for peace, progress and prosperity in our region," India's foreign ministry said. In February a suicide bombing in Indian-administered

Continued on Page 24



Indian PM Narendra Modi



Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan

News in brief

Withdrawing driving licenses

KUWAIT: Hawally Police Patrols Director Colonel Rashed Al-Hajeri said driving licenses will be withdrawn for 13 traffic violations including speeding, running traffic lights, reckless driving, driving on the wrong side of the road on highways, blocking traffic, racing, using private vehicles as taxis, driving a vehicle without license plates, violating general ethics, endangering drivers, driving on the left emergency lane in non-designated areas and driving on the right emergency lane. — A Saleh

Working outdoors

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources at the Public Authority for Manpower said the annual ban on laborers working outdoors during the hot summer will go into effect starting June 1 and will last until the end of August - a period during which working outdoors will be banned between 11 am and 5 pm. The sources added that the Manpower Authority has urged all employers to respect these timings, adding that the teams will begin inspection tours during the ban period.

Egypt unfreezes assets

CAIRO: Egypt has unfrozen the assets of its Mubarak-era interior minister, who was acquitted on all corruption-related charges earlier this month, a judicial source confirmed yesterday. The Illicit Gains Authority decided last Thursday to lift freezes on Habib Al-Adly's assets and those of aides who were key players in the graft that dominated Egypt under long-time autocrat Hosni Mubarak. — AFP

The merits of supplication

By Hassan T Bwambale

Supplication or invocation (duaa) to Allah (to Whom belongs all might and majesty) is part and parcel of worshipping Allah (God Almighty). In whatever problem you find yourself, just resort to Allah in supplication. Allah says in the Holy Quran what can be translated as: "And your Lord says: call on Me; I will answer your prayer. But those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell - in humiliation." (40:60)

If we only pray to the Lord of the present and the future, He will respond, forgive us, guide us, and make our lives smooth and easy. He will also guide us to solutions for the problems we face. In order to have our supplications and invocations heard and taken into consideration, we have to fulfill some conditions, which act as prerequisites. Following are some of them:

Supplication is divided into two categories, they are: Supplication of praise in which you praise Allah (SWT) according to how He loves to be praised and according to Prophet Muhammad's teachings, and the supplication in which you Ask God Almighty either to give you what you want or to solve your problems. The good news is that if you praise Allah (SWT) in a way that pleases Him, even if you fall short of words to describe what you want from Him, He knows what's in your heart and mind, He will grant it to you.

Sincerity and devotion to Allah: When you raise your hands in supplication to Allah Almighty, your

Continued on Page 24

Local

Amir meets top Kuwaiti officials, visiting Iraqi figure

Dr Bahr Al-Oloom grateful for Kuwait's supportive stance to Iraq



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi figure Dr Ibrahim Mohammad Bahr Al-Oloom. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi figure Dr Ibrahim Mohammad Bahr Al-Oloom.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi figure Dr Ibrahim Mohammad Bahr Al-Oloom.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Among His Highness the Amir's audiences were Acting National Assembly Speaker Essa Al-Kandari, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and visiting Iraqi figure Dr Ibrahim Mohammad Bahr Al-Oloom. The meetings were attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received

Dr Bahr Al-Oloom, who briefed him on the latest developments in Iraq. Dr Bahr Al-Oloom expressed gratitude towards Kuwait's supportive stance to Iraq. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad affirmed during the meeting that the stability and development of Iraq would bring welfare to the region, adding that hopefully the fellow Arab country would return to the forefront of the regional and international scenes. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad also met Dr Bahr Al-Oloom yesterday.

In the meantime, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Kandari, and Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad. His Highness the Crown Prince then received

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also met Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince later met Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad finally met Kuwait's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Ali Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to newly sworn-in president of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa. In the cable, His Highness wished Ramaphosa and the friendly people of South Africa utmost prosperity and for bilateral relations further development. His Highness the Crown

Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables.

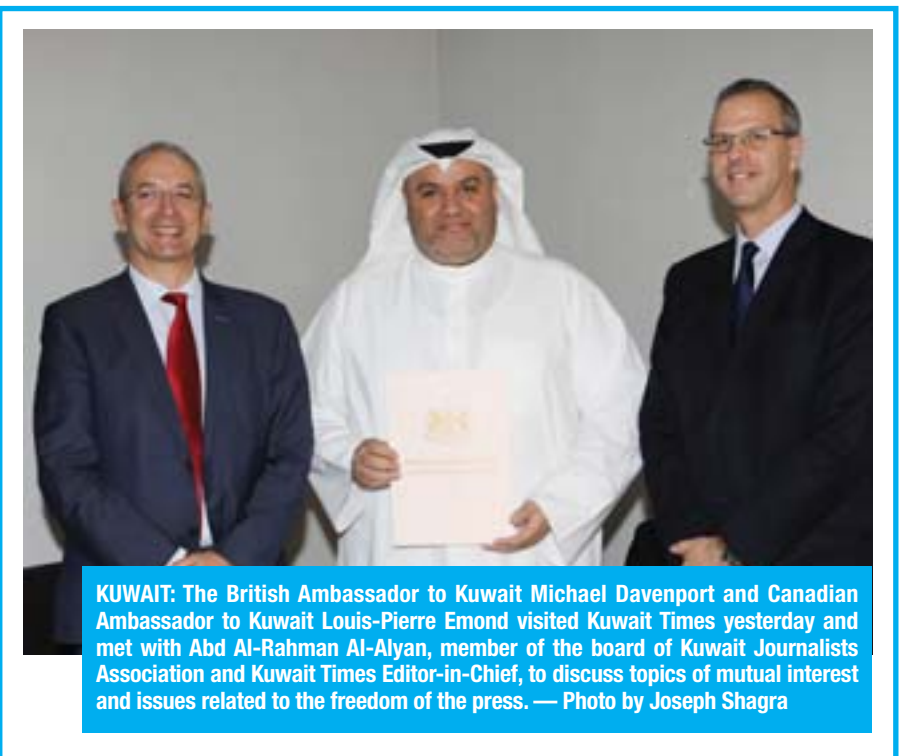
Separately, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari over the victims of a terrorist attack on a bus in north Nigeria, which left a number of people dead or injured. In the cable, His Highness the Amir prayed Allah Almighty to bestow mercy on the deceased and swift recovery for the injured. His Highness the Amir voiced Kuwait's strong condemnation of this heinous terrorist act that targeted innocents and runs counter to all religious and human values. Two more cables of similar sentiments were sent to the president of Nigeria by His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister. — KUNA

KFH organizes Umrah trip for its employees

KUWAIT: Provident Fund at Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized a trip for its employees to the holy city of Makkah to perform Umrah. This comes as part of the Bank's keenness on enhancing the one-family spirit amongst all employees and as part of its social activities and Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 5'. Members of KFH volunteers team were part of the Umrah trip. They distributed iftar meals in Makkah.

Meanwhile, KFH volunteers team continues its efforts in distributing daily 1,000 iftar meals at 6 locations. The locations are: Nayef Palace, Alshamlan Mosque, Souk Al-Mubarakiya and Hawalli Park and Ramadan Aman Traffic intersections. KFH's efforts in the social responsibility, while contributing in strengthening the social ties.

KFH's 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.



KUWAIT: The British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport and Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Louis-Pierre Emond visited Kuwait Times yesterday and met with Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, member of the board of Kuwait Journalists Association and Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief, to discuss topics of mutual interest and issues related to the freedom of the press. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

NBK's team concludes its participation in 'Innovation Challenge'

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) team concluded its fifth season of the Innovation Challenge Program organized by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) in collaboration with the prestigious University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Anderson School of Management.

The four-months program, launched by KFAS for the first time in 2015, aims to develop innovative human capabilities in the private sector and foster a culture of creativity and knowledge growth to transform Kuwait's economy into a knowledge-based economy.

NBK team presented its project revolving around innovative banking services after discussing it with NBK top management headed by Salah Al-Fulaij, CEO of NBK Kuwait, Emad Ahmad Al-Ablani, General Manager, Group Human Resources at NBK, and Mohamed Al-Othman, General Manager, Consumer Banking Group, as well as a number of NBK executives.

The Innovation Challenge program provides an

opportunity to develop participants' innovation capabilities through developing innovative solutions to challenges faced by banks over the course of their business. The program focuses on a number of topics including; building a culture of innovation, generating new business models, design thinking and innovation and value proposition design.

The program is centered around real business challenges that each team identifies the areas where they need to innovate. That challenge is explored throughout the program phases and teams apply their learning on their innovation projects.

Teams work on their innovation challenge with specific deliverables and are required to complete all deliverables in order to participate in the final module which includes a mixture of lectures and site visits to innovative companies.

NBK's strategy is based on continuous innovation and development, which has been reflected in achieving its unique position as a top innovative bank, both locally and regionally. The bank always strives to maintain its leadership in this field by introducing innovative approaches and further developing its human capital skills through providing creative training programs designed in accordance to the highest standards of excellence, covering both training and skill development to produce highly trained professional staff. NBK attains the best banking experts to share their expertise with NBK employees.



Local

Education ministry denies delaying expat staffs' firing: Replacement policy ongoing

Efforts to regulate medical ads to prevent commercial fraud

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Following up reports about the Ministry of Education's (MoE) decision to cancel the termination of 400 expatriate employees, MoE's assistant undersecretary for administrative affairs Fahd Al-Ghaiss strongly refuted the report, noting that it is nothing but rumors. Ghaiss stressed that MoE fully respects Civil Service Commission's (CSC) instructions concerning the replacement of expatriate employees with national manpower according to a preset annual rate. Earlier reports had claimed that the ministry postponed the termination of 400 expatriate office boys until further notice due to a severe shortage in most schools.

Commercial fraud

In view of some medical ads deemed as abusive and deceptive, Kuwait Medical Association (KMA)

Chairman Dr Ahmad Thowaini Al-Enezi announced moves to regulate medical ads in collaboration with the health and information ministries. Enezi stressed the significance of regulating these ads to prevent commercial fraud. "KMA will soon hold a symposium to discuss these regulations," he underlined, noting that doctors must respect the profession's ethics. Enezi explained some ads have been using medicine as a means for profiteering and that some TV shows had been involved in the process. He urged the ministry of information to do something to stop such programs.

KD 4.5 million

Well-informed sources said a tender to furnish and equip the Kuwait Investment Authority headquarters will cost around KD 4.5 million to supply, examine, hand over, maintain furniture and equipment and interior design.

KD 1.38 million

Kuwait Municipality facilities' consumption of electricity in the last fiscal year ending on March 31, 2019 was worth KD 1.38 million; ie KD 114,000 a month or KD 3,800 a day.

Ministers' responses

The National Assembly office decided declassifying nine ministers' responses to parliamentary inquiries made this May, including those made by the Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf. Notably, the assembly's office usually receives lawmakers' objections to ministers' requests to respond to inquiries behind closed doors to protect highly classified information.

Livestock vaccination

The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish

Resources (PAAAFR) officially urged the finance ministry to pass a special budget it requested to provide vaccinations needed to immunize the entire livestock in Kuwait. Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf met PAAAFR Chairman Sheikh Mohammed Al-Yousif and chairman of the dairy products' producers union Abdul Hakeem Al-Ahmed to discuss the provision of the vaccinations.

Ramadan violations

Ministry of Social Affairs' acting undersecretary Hana Al-Hajeri said 970 field inspections visits had been made since the beginning of Ramadan to follow up the charity donation collection project. Hajeri added inspection teams have filed 65 citations for unlawful donation collection kiosks, nine for not respecting the awqaf ministry schedule, five for placing cash donation boxes inside mosques and one for collecting blood money.



Kuwait's Air Force delivers aid to Syrian refugees in Jordan

AMMAN: A plane belonging to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense arrived in Jordan yesterday, carrying about 13 tons of aid to Syrian refugees, sent by Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO). The humanitarian aid was delivered under direct orders from His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to ease the suffering of Syrian refugees, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Aziz Al-Dihani said. He hailed the humanitarian efforts of IICO and the continuous donations of Kuwaiti philanthropists, governmental organiza-

tions and NGOs to aid the refugees. Meanwhile, assistant supervisor for IICO's office in Jordan Ziyad Abu Talib noted that this is the sixth batch of humanitarian aid delivered by Kuwait's Air Force. He added that the aid includes food, clothes and blankets. — KUNA



Kuwaiti society offers 155 tons medical supplies to Yemen

ADEN: Kuwait Society for Relief handed over 155 tons of medical supplies to the Yemeni Ministry of Health on Saturday as a first tranche of a \$2 million worth donation from His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The contribution of His Highness the Amir, the humanitarian leader, is meant to support the 'Kuwait is Beside You' humanitarian campaign continuing for the Yemeni people over the last three years. Yemeni Minister of Public Health and Population Nasser Ba'um expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir for his generous contribution to the humanitarian campaign. Speaking to reporters on the fringes of the ceremony of the aid delivery, he

said, "Kuwait Society for Relief and Patients Helping Fund Society stood by the Yemeni people during the hardest times."

"The medical supplies, donated by Kuwait, include intravenous fluids and antibiotics which will play essential role in shoring up the health sector across the Yemeni governorates," the minister added. Meanwhile, director general of the national program of medical supplies Soad Maysari expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti government and people for supporting the Yemeni health sector. Kuwait Society for Relief had previously offered 505 tons of medical supplies, including drugs and intravenous fluids, to Yemen. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said the general cleanliness and road occupancy department in Hawally carried out several inspection campaigns resulting in the removal of 13,572 cubic meters of rubbish, trees and shrubs, issued four cleanliness citations, sweeping and cleaning of main and side streets, washing and changing 400 containers and removing 34 abandoned cars. The public relations department said complaints related to the municipality can be reported to the hotline 139. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Interior Ministry mourns Coast Guard martyr



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Interior Ministry Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham participates in the funeral of Coast Guard officer Abdullah Al-Failakawi.

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior held a funeral on Saturday for Abdullah Al-Failakawi who was martyred while on duty in a Coast Guard boat accident. On behalf of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Lt Gen Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Undersecretary of the Ministry Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham expressed sincere condolences to the family of the martyr. Lt Gen Nahham paid homage to Failakawi, saying he proved to be a

dedicated service member who shouldered his responsibilities selflessly, according to a press release by the Ministry. Lt Gen Nahham called on the other service members who were injured in the accident and conveyed to them the regards of the Lt Gen Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, wishing them quick recovery. On Friday, the ministry announced that a Coast Guard boat capsized and crashed, killing Failakawi and wounding ten others. — KUNA

Kuwait Times

Established 1961

Ramadan, Kareem

History of Kuwait



KUWAIT: Traditional coffee shops are an important part in the history of Kuwait, as they served as the daily forum for people. It is worth mentioning that the first coffee shop in Kuwait was the Bu Nashi Cafe, which opened in 1780. (Source: The KOC archive. Researched by Mahmoud Zakaria, Researcher in Heritage, the Ministry of Information)



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of France to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy and Resident Coordinator of the United Nation Dr Tarek El-Sheikh hosted a 'Ramadan ghabqa' at the ambassador's residence recently. Diplomats and media persons attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



'Shorter working hours and special food'

By Nawara Fattahova

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

Hussein, 30, enjoys the holy month of Ramadan for many things that are special for this month only. "On the professional level, I love work in Ramadan as my working hours are much shorter than the rest of the year. My timing is from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm only, so it is short and comfortable," Hussein told Kuwait Times.

He also loves the Ramadan atmosphere and social life. "During this holy month, I gather daily with my family and meet with my friends and relatives at ghabqas. Also, religious practices are special as we have the 'taraweeh' and 'qiyam' prayers that I perform only during this month," he added.



Ramadan's 'special food' is also another favorite for Hussein. "In Ramadan, I get to eat some dishes that are special to this holy month, such as 'tashreeb' and 'Iqeemat,' as well as the 'Vimto' drink," he said.



Kuwait Times Established 1961 Ramadan, Kareem



KUWAIT: Worshippers perform the 'qiyam' prayer at the Grand Mosque on the night of the 21st day of Ramadan early yesterday morning. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

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Under the dome:
Fears Pacific nuclear
'coffin' is leaking

Race to lead Britain out of EU pits old foes



US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump join Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie Abe for dinner in Tokyo yesterday. (Inset) Trump and Abe pose for a photograph while playing a round of golf at Mobara Country Club in Chiba. —AFP

Trump downplays N Korea missile launches

Trade beef aside, Trump and Abe bond over burgers, sumo and golf

TOKYO: US President Donald Trump yesterday downplayed recent North Korean missile launches as he teed off a state visit to Japan with a round of golf and a trip to the sumo with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Before his official schedule began, Trump tweeted that North Korea had tested “some small weapons” that had “disturbed some of my people, and others, but not me”. This appeared to be a reference to US National Security Advisor John Bolton, who said Saturday there was “no doubt” the launches had contravened UN Security Council resolutions. But Trump said: “I have confidence that Chairman Kim will keep his promise to me.”

The American president maintains that North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un has pledged he is serious about denuclearization, although experts say there is still a wide gulf between the two sides over what that means. Trump and Abe's talks are expected to touch on tensions with Pyongyang, which have mounted after a summit in February in Hanoi collapsed without an agreement, and trade negotiations as Tokyo and Washington attempt to thrash out a deal.

On trade, Trump tweeted that “great progress” was being made but “much will wait” until after Japanese upper house elections expected in July - with rumors rife Abe

might also call a snap general election at the same time. The serious diplomacy starts today, when Trump will be the first foreign leader to meet Japan's new emperor, Naruhito, who has been on the Chrysanthemum Throne for less than a month following his father's historic abdication. Yesterday was about cementing diplomatic bonds between the two countries through the leaders' shared passion for golf and a chance for Trump to see one of Japan's most famous sports - sumo.

'The President's Cup'

Trump entered the hallowed Ryogoku Kokugikan sumo stadium to loud cheers - and a few scattered boos - with spectators standing to take photos as the US president waved and smiled. He and his wife Melania, accompanied by Abe and his wife Akie, sat in special seats a few rows from the sumo ring. Front-row seats at the sumo are usually on the floor, but the two couples were given modified seats with backs, and were ringed by security personnel. Trump looked serious as he listened to explanations from Abe and others around him about the bouts between the sport's top wrestlers.

The US leader then presented tournament winner, Japanese wrestler Asanoyama, with the “President's Cup,” a

specially made trophy weighing 27-32 kg and measuring 1.4 m that was unveiled to an audible murmur of appreciation from the audience. A set of wooden steps leading up to the raised “dohyo” sumo ring were installed for Abe and Trump to walk up, with both leaders donning shiny black slippers to enter the space, which is considered sacred. Trump read in English from a scroll, offering Asanoyama the cup “in honor of your outstanding achievement”, before lifting the massive trophy with the help of a sumo official and presenting it to the wrestler with an enormous grin.

Wagyu and ice cream

The presidential sumo visit prompted high security, with long lines forming at metal detectors in the blazing heat before the tournament kicked off. “I thought we would see some level of tight security. But I didn't realize that it was going to be this much.” 76-year-old Hisato Koizumi from Tokyo told AFP as he waited. “We got today's tickets by chance. I don't like this.” Miyo Hirase, 80, called the measures “overkill”. “It's a pain. There aren't so many bad people in Japan,” she said. Excitable fans were also warned against throwing their seat cushions - as tradition dictates whenever a yokozuna or grand champion is felled - lest the president be hit. After the sumo,

self-employed Masamitsu Kurokawa, 56, said Trump had an “aura” and was “in a different class”.

Earlier, Trump and Abe kicked off the visit with a round of golf - the fifth time the leaders have played together. Trump arrived at the course outside Tokyo by helicopter, sporting a red sweater and black trousers with a red USA cap. He was greeted by a casually-dressed Abe, who later tweeted a selfie of the two leaders grinning into the camera. Aerial footage on local television showed the pair practicing and putting on the manicured greens despite the unseasonably warm weather. They were accompanied by Isao Aoki, one of Japan's most successful golfers.

The two leaders rounded out the day with a meal at a traditional Japanese grill restaurant, with wagyu beef and vanilla ice cream among the menu items. Trump said he and Abe had discussed “trade and military and various other things”. “I think we had a very productive day.” Despite the bonhomie, trade was never far from mind. “Great progress being made in our trade negotiations with Japan. Agriculture and beef heavily in play,” Trump tweeted after arriving back in Tokyo from the suburban golf course where the two played 16 holes. “Much will wait until after their July elections where I anticipate big numbers.” —AFP

News in brief

Rivlin says Jews unsafe in Germany

JERUSALEM: Israeli President Reuven Rivlin said yesterday that Germany's warning to Jews on the dangers of wearing the traditional kippah cap were a “capitulation to anti-Semitism” and evidence Jews were unsafe there. Germany's government commissioner on anti-Semitism, Felix Klein, said in an interview published Saturday he “cannot advise Jews to wear the kippah everywhere all the time in Germany,” due to increasing anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish attacks there. Rivlin said Klein's remarks “shocked” him, and while appreciating the German government's “commitment to the Jewish community”, accused it of bowing to those targeting Jews in Germany. Anti-Semitic crimes rose by 20 percent in Germany last year, according to interior ministry data which blamed nine out of 10 cases on the extreme right. —AFP

Ireland votes to relax divorce law

DUBLIN: Ireland voted by an overwhelming majority to relax its constitutional restriction on divorce, results showed yesterday, the latest in a series of reforms to modernize the charter of the once devoutly Catholic nation. Some 82 percent of voters cast their ballots in favor of removing a provision requiring couples to live separately for four out of the previous five years before dissolving their marriage. The Irish government has signaled it will bring forward new legislation shortening the requirement to two out of the prior three years. The outcome of Friday's referendum will also see Irish lawmakers granted powers to recognize foreign divorces once it is signed into law by the president. The mandated separation period was a hangover condition from the 1995 referendum which granted Irish couples the right to divorce by a slim majority of 50.3 percent. —AFP

Kurdish prisoners end hunger strike after Ocalan call

ANKARA: Thousands of inmates in Turkish prisons ended their mass hunger strike yesterday, heeding a calling by militant Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan whose jail conditions they were protesting. The action had grown to involve some 3,000 people held in different prisons, since the first hunger strike was launched last November by a detained lawmaker from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) over Ocalan's isolation in prison.

But after the militant leader was allowed to see legal representatives for the first time in eight years this month, Ocalan told his lawyers the hunger strikes “had achieved their goal” and called for them to end. “After the call... we are ending our hunger strikes,” the prisoners' representative, Deniz Kaya, said in a statement, quoted by Kurdish news agency ANF. Ocalan, the co-founder of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), has been held on Imrali island off Istanbul since 1999.

The first visit by his lawyers took place on May 2. After Turkish authorities lifted an official ban on lawyers' visits to Ocalan, a second trip by two of his lawyers was made on May 22. The hunger strike was initially launched by the MP Leyla Guven while she was in custody, although she was later released. Other detainees then followed suit. Eight people also killed themselves over the issue, according to the HDP.

Guven, announcing the end of her hunger strike, said in a statement that although the action was successful, “our struggle against isolation and our struggle for social peace will continue in all areas”. “With this resistance, Turkey's peoples, Turkey's democracy has won,” Guven later told reporters in Diyarbakir in the Kurdish-majority southeast. Three other HDP MPs said they would also end their hunger strike.

Role in Syria?

Ocalan's PKK, blacklisted by Ankara and its Western allies as a terror group, has been waging an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984 during which more than 40,000 people have been killed. Ocalan was caught in Feb 1999 in Kenya and jailed several months later after he was found guilty of treason, separatism



DIYARBAKIR, Turkey: Deputies of Pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Dersim Dag, Tayyip Temel and Murat Sarisac give a press conference to announce the end of their hunger strike yesterday. —AFP

and murder. Despite almost complete isolation, Ocalan is still a key figure of the Kurdish insurgency and the movement generally in the region.

His lawyers said Ocalan indicated he would “play a positive role” in Syria in confronting the issues there “including the Kurdish issue” if he was given the chance. Ocalan previously said in a message following the May 2 visit that “Turkey's sensitivities” should be taken into account in Syria, where the US-backed Kurdish YPG militia is battling the Islamic State group. Turkey says the YPG is a “terrorist offshoot” of the PKK. Guven said Ocalan's voice being heard was “very important for Turkey's democratization and peace in the Middle East”.

'No new peace process'

The visits come just weeks before a controversial rerun of the Istanbul mayoral election, which was lost by the ruling party of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on

March 31. Experts say Kurdish votes played a significant role in Erdogan's party loss and he is hoping for their support in the repeat vote on June 23. But Turkish Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gul said Friday the lawyers' visits “had nothing to do with a peace process” and “no link to the Istanbul elections”.

Ocalan had called for a ceasefire in 2013 to allow peace talks a chance to reach a negotiated settlement. However, fighting between Turkey and the PKK intensified after the collapse of the ceasefire in the summer of 2015, dashing hopes of a peaceful solution to the conflict. Ocalan's lawyers said the rebel chief said the permission given for these meetings “did not mean the existence of a negotiation process”. Ocalan noted that Turkey fundamentally needed “democratic negotiations and honorable peace”, adding through his lawyers that the authorities' reaction to his comments would be clear within “30-40 days” but he gave no further details. —AFP

International

Long after guns fall silent, Mosul residents suffer from hearing loss

MOSUL: For months, Alia Ali endured the din of fighting in Iraq's second city Mosul. Then a missile slammed into her home, killing her husband and her hearing. The 59-year-old lost her sense of sound in the final phase of the ferocious battle between government forces and militants of the Islamic State group, not long before the guns fell silent in July 2017. For nearly nine months, air strikes, mortar rounds and car bombs pummeled the city relentlessly, and thousands of residents still suffer hearing problems ranging from tinnitus to profound deafness. "I lost my sense of hearing two years ago," Ali recalled. "A warplane hit our neighborhood in the fight for the western half of the city and my husband died of very bad burns," she told AFP. Ali spent two years piecing her life back together, but could not afford to get specialized care for her diminished hearing. "We lost our home and all our possessions - we didn't have money to go to private clinics," she said.

Blasts in conflict zones can propel debris into the human ear and rupture the eardrum, which transmits sound further into the cochlea. Nerves in the cochlea, which sends sound on to the brain to be processed, can also be destroyed by explosions. Mines have noise levels approaching 170 decibels - twice the loudness needed to cause permanent damage to ears. In Mosul, civilians were

exposed to repeated loud blasts that sent between 15 and 20 a day to hospitals complaining of hearing loss. "They were bleeding from their ears because of the shelling, but they had nothing to stop the flow," according to hearing specialist Mohammad Saleh. "Some never recovered because their nerve cells were torn by the loud sounds." Mosul's health infrastructure was ravaged by IS' reign and subsequent fighting, with the 6,000 hospital beds available before the jihadist takeover reduced to just 1,000.

With help from outside charities, hospitals are slowly reopening wing by wing. At Jumhuriya hospital in west Mosul, a specialized hearing impairment center opened its doors less than a year ago with backing from Iraq's Dary Humanitarian Organization. The waiting room is packed with people, young and old, waiting to get long-delayed hearing tests to see how badly the blasts have damaged their ears. "My hearing deteriorated after three mortars hit my house in west Mosul," 65-year-old Fathi Hussein yelled. He can only respond to questions that are virtually screamed, and answers them at the same volume. "I put off treatment because I'm poor. I don't have the money for consultations or medicine," he said.

Since the centre opened less than a year ago, it has treated several thousand patients, according to specialist Mohammad Said.



MOSUL: Iraqi patients queue to get hearing consultation at Jumhuri hospital, a specialized hearing impairment center, on Feb 24, 2019. — AFP

"We have distributed 2,000 hearing aids so far. More complex cases get sent to hospitals in Baghdad for treatment, including cochlear implants which aren't available here yet," Said told AFP. He expects there are thousands more cases that have yet to visit the Jumhuriya centre. "Some patients went to private clinics, others went elsewhere in Iraq or even left the country and still others have received no treatment at all," he said.

For younger patients, partial deafness

means more than just shouting to be heard - it can affect schooling. "In kids especially, hearing loss can damage speaking ability," Said said. "It's extremely important because it means the hearing aids we distribute aren't enough, and these children are in need of treatments and speaking rehabilitation that we don't offer here." Five-year-old Mohammad may not remember much of life under bombardment in Mosul, but it will likely mar his education for years to come.—AFP

UN chief rejects Yemen president's accusation of bias

DUBAI: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has assured Yemen's leader that the world body will remain impartial in efforts to resolve the country's conflict, rejecting accusations that its envoy was siding with rebels. The pledge came in a letter from Guterres to President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, who had accused the UN special envoy to Yemen of bias. "I would like to assure you that every effort will be made to maintain the impartial stance that is expected of the United Nations," while implementing a ceasefire agreement, Guterres said in the letter seen by AFP yesterday.

In his own letter addressed to Guterres, Hadi accused envoy Martin Griffiths of "providing the Houthi militia with guarantees to stay in Hodeida and its ports under the umbrella of the UN". "I can no longer accept these offences by your special envoy which threaten chances to find a (lasting) solution," Hadi said. Hodeida is the main entry point for the bulk of Yemen's imports and humanitarian aid, providing a lifeline to millions of people.

Earlier this month, the United Nations supervised the rebels' handover of the ports of Hodeida. Saleef and Ras Issa to a "coast guard", but the government said they were in fact Houthi forces in different uniforms. The pullback is in line with a ceasefire deal for Hodeida reached in Stockholm in December. Guterres said that he and Griffiths were prepared "to discuss the legitimate concerns of the government of Yemen referenced in your letter, which we take very seriously."

He also gave an assurance that the United Nations had no plans to set up an international administration in Hodeida. The UN humanitarian coordinator in Yemen, Lise Grande, on Sunday condemned a deadly strike on a petrol station east of the city of Ta'ez. The attack on Friday killed 12 civilians, seven of them children, she said, updating an earlier death toll. "Innocent lives continue to be lost in Yemen because of this conflict," she said in a statement, without identifying the assailants.—AFP

Sudan opposition rejects strike call in protest rift

KHARTOUM: Sudan's main opposition group and supporter of the protest movement yesterday rejected its call to stage a two-day general strike, in the first sign of a rift within the movement negotiating the launch of civilian rule. Talks between leaders of the umbrella protest movement, the Alliance for Freedom and Change, and army generals who seized power after ousting autocrat Omar Al-Bashir last month are deadlocked over who should lead a new governing body - a civilian or soldier.

In a bid to step up pressure on the generals, the protest

movement has called for a general strike starting Tuesday, but the National Umma Party, a key backer of the movement, rejected the measure. "We reject the general strike announced by some opposition groups" in the Alliance for Freedom and Change, the National Umma Party said in a statement. "A general strike is a weapon that should be used after it is agreed upon by everybody," Umma said. "We have to avoid such escalated measures that are not fully agreed."

The National Umma Party led by former premier Sadiq Al-Mahdi said any such decision should be taken by a council of leaders of the protest movement. Such a council was still not in place and "will be composed in a meeting on Monday", it said. It was Mahdi's elected government that Bashir, who himself was deposed on April 11, toppled in an Islamist-backed coup in 1989. In a recent interview with AFP, Mahdi warned protesters not to "provoke" the army's rulers as they had been instrumental in ousting Bashir.

Minutes after Umma's statement, another key member of the protest movement, the Sudanese Congress Party, said the strike will go ahead as planned. It said the strike was a new measure "to complete the mission of the revolution, which definitely will achieve its victory". The military toppled Bashir after months-long protests across Sudan led by the Alliance for Freedom and Change against his iron-fisted rule of three decades. But the generals who seized power have resisted calls from protesters and the international community for civilian rule.

Thousands of demonstrators remain camped outside the army headquarters in central Khartoum demanding that the generals step down. Talks between the generals and protest leaders remain deadlocked over who should lead a new governing body to oversee the formation of a civilian administration - a soldier or civilian. Protest leaders insist a civilian must head a new sovereign council and that civilians should make up the majority of its members, proposals rejected by the ruling generals.—AFP

After years in jail, Syrian mother eyes new life

MAARAT MASRIN, Syria: After giving birth and raising a toddler during four years in a Syrian prison, 30-year-old Hasna Dbeis is now free - and determined to forge a new life for her family. Dbeis says she was two months pregnant when she was detained in August 2014 in the Eastern Ghouta suburbs of Damascus, accused of working with rebels; an allegation she denies. She was shuffled around various detention centers, including one where she saw her father and brother for the last time. "They were tortured in front of me," she told AFP, her face veil revealing tired eyes.

She is one of tens of thousands of Syrians jailed during the conflict for opposing President Bashar Al-Assad. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says around 200,000 people have gone missing since the civil war started in 2011. Nearly half are believed to be held in government jails. Dbeis said she was kept in solitary confinement for 40 days at one stage, in a cell littered with garbage. Insects crept up the walls, and the screams of inmates being tortured rang around her, she recalled.

She was allowed out of jail only once, when she went into labor. "A newborn came into my life and I didn't know what to do," she said, clad in black. After giving birth to Mohammad, Dbeis was transferred to the notorious Al-Fayhaa prison in Damascus. The facility housed other mothers, including Iraqi women detained on suspicion of working with the Islamic State group, she said.

Dbeis shared a cell with her newborn and a 20-year-old Ethiopian woman. Her cellmate, who other inmates called Lamees, would help her sew clothes for the little boy, she said, but also care for the infant when Dbeis was being interrogated. Guards usually entered her cell at around midnight to take her to another room where she was beaten and suspended by the wrists, she said. The first time, she recounted, "the interrogator started by taking off my veil. He looked at my hair, brought a knife, and started cutting" it. "Then he started beating me," she said.

Her hands were cuffed behind her back, she said, and she was left hanging from her wrists for hours. She also contracted tuberculosis, she claimed, and had to be kept away from her child for more than four months while she received treatment. By the time she recovered, her son - then nine months old - thought Lamees was his mother. "He didn't know who I was," Dbeis said.

For three years, her hope for a better life dwindled, as she watched Mohammad grow up in a cell, the sound of other children playing echoing in from outside. "I used to dream of walking in the street with my child and entering a store to buy him clothes like normal mothers do," she said.

In April 2018, she was released. She did not return to Eastern Ghouta, which had fallen under government control that month, after regime bombardment and a crippling siege.

New regime assault

Instead, she boarded a bus that took rebels and their families from the Damascus suburbs to opposition-held territory in the northern province of Aleppo. Dbeis remembers the first time Mohammad saw a stand selling tomatoes. "He ran towards it, grabbed a tomato, and started gobbling it up," she said. "He'd never seen a tomato before."

But catching up with one of her sisters in the neighboring province of Idlib brought new trauma. Dbeis was told that her mother was dead and that her husband had been killed by regime forces. Two of her sisters were detained by the government, and the fate of her father and brother -



MAARAT NASRIN, Syria: Hasna Dbeis, a 30-year-old former detainee in a Syrian-regime jail, rests with her son Mohammad outside her home in this town in the rebel-held part of Idlib province on May 14, 2019. - AFP

who she last saw in jail - was unknown. "After hearing about my family's heart-wrenching fate, I decided to start a new life," Dbeis said.

She remarried and moved to Idlib, a region outside regime control ruled by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate. But four months after her wedding, her 25-year-old husband was hit in the stomach by shell shrapnel, leaving him unable to work. In a desperate bid to provide for her family, she joined a sewing workshop employing former female detainees. "The money I make, I spend on my home," said Dbeis, who makes children's clothes. But her life is under renewed threat. Since late April, heightened bombardment of Idlib by the regime and its ally Russia has sparked fears of an imminent full assault against the jihadist stronghold.—AFP

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International

European voters set stage for battle for EU’s soul

Eurosceptic parties hope to capture third of the seats

BRUSSELS: Europeans headed to the polls in their tens of millions yesterday as 21 countries chose their champions in a battle between the nationalist right and pro-EU forces to chart a course for the union. Turnout by midday was higher than it had been in 2014 in some countries, notably France and Romania, and roughly stable in others, as reports began to trickle in from around the continent. Seven EU member states had already voted, but no official results can be published until the rest have taken part.

Eurosceptic parties opposed to the project of ever closer union hope to capture as many as a third of the seats in the 751-member Strasbourg assembly, disrupting the pro-integration consensus. The far-right parties of Italian deputy PM Matteo Salvini and France's Marine Le Pen will lead this charge, and anti-EU ranks will be swelled by the Brexit Party of British populist Nigel Farage. France's President Emmanuel Macron has taken it upon himself to act as figurehead for the centrist and liberal parties hoping to shut the nationalists out of key EU jobs and decision-making.

"Once again Macron is daring us to challenge him. Well let's take him at his word: On May 26, we'll challenge him in the voting booth," Le Pen told a rally on Friday. It was not clear at midday which side was carrying the day, but the battle seems to have motivated French voters, with 19.26 percent turning out, 3.5 points up from the same point in 2014.

'Extremists are mobilizing'

Meanwhile, the mainstream parties are vying between themselves for influence over the choice of a new generation of top EU officials, including the powerful president of the European Commission. And turnout will be closely scrutinized in case another drop in participation undermines the credibility of the EU parliament as it seeks to establish its authority. Britain and the Netherlands were first to vote, on Thursday, followed by Ireland and the Czech Republic on Friday with Slovakia, Malta and Latvia on Saturday, leaving the bulk of the 400 million eligible voters to join in yesterday.

At the last EU election in 2014, Slovakia had the lowest turnout of any country, at less than 14 percent, and centrist president Andrej Kiska is worried that "extremists are mobilizing". Poland's right-wing government, led by Law and Justice (PiS), has been accused of breaking European law by undermining the independence of the judiciary, but Polish voters still say they support EU membership. "I would like there to be no nationalists in the parliament, or at least that they do not have a majority," retiree Ryszard Dabrowski told AFP at a Warsaw polling station.

But the right and the far-right have not had everything their own way so far. In the Netherlands, the center-left party of EU vice

president Frans Timmermans won the most votes and added two seats for the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) in parliament, according to exit polls. The S&D's center-right rival the European People's Party (EPP) was buoyed by exit polls suggesting that Prime Minister Leo Varadkar's pro-EU Fine Gael party was in the lead in Ireland.

Jobs fair

Even if Britain leaves the European Union on Oct 31, the latest deadline for Brexit, then its MEPs could still play a role in this summer's scramble to hand out top jobs. Thursday's votes from Britain won't be counted until after polls close in Italy, but Farage's Brexit Party appears on course to send a large delegation to a parliament it wants to abolish. Macron is pinning his hopes on his Renaissance movement joining with the liberal ALDE voting bloc and other centrist groups to give impetus to his plans for deeper EU integration.

But much will depend on who gets the top jobs: The presidencies of the Council and the Commission, the speaker of parliament, the high representative for foreign policy and director of the European Central Bank. EU leaders have been invited to a summit dinner on Tuesday to decide how to choose the nominees, and Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel is expected to back the lead EPP candidate Manfred



LE TOUQUET, France: French president Emmanuel Macron looks at his wife Brigitte casting her ballot at a polling station yesterday for the European parliamentary election. — AFP

Weber for the Commission. Macron and some others oppose both Weber, a German conservative MEP with no executive experience, and the idea that the parliament should get to choose one of its own for Brussels' prime post.

Whichever way the leaders lean, there will be no immediate decision. Instead, Council president Donald Tusk will take note of how the debate went and draft the nominations before a June 21 EU summit. — AFP

Eurosceptics won't have it all their own way in polls

MADRID: Ireland, Spain, Portugal, the Baltic states... The expected surge in support for eurosceptics in elections to the European Parliament will likely spare several countries which have reaped huge benefits from EU membership. "These countries were transformed by their membership of the EU," says Jean-Dominique Giuliani, president of the Robert Schuman Foundation think tank, which would explain the lack of major eurosceptic forces.

Dublin for instance "became the gateway for investments of the Gafa (tech giants Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple) in Europe," he adds. Spain, Portugal and the Baltic states also benefitted from ample EU funds. According to the latest Eurobarometer survey published by the European Parliament, 83 percent of respondents in Ireland have a positive opinion of EU membership. That's well above the average of 61 percent for the 27 member states, excluding the United Kingdom which is in the process of leaving the bloc.

Still, this average is the highest since the early 1990s. Voters in the Netherlands appear to have shown their attachment to the bloc with pro-EU parties heading for a surprise win in the multi-day elections that end on Sunday, according to an exit poll released Thursday.

Prosperity, freedom

Where Ireland is concerned, the country has received €42 billion (\$47 billion) in EU development aid since it joined the bloc in 1973, according to Irish government figures. In all, 700,000 jobs have been created and foreign trade increased 90 fold. The main parties are pro-European. Prime Minister Leo Varadkar has called his ruling Fine Gael party "the party of Europe". Ireland, which will bear the economic brunt of Britain's looming exit from the EU, has consistently been backed by its EU partners. An exit poll in Ireland suggested Varadkar's Fine Gael was in the lead.

In Spain, which elects the fifth-biggest contingent of lawmakers to the 751-seat European Parliament, citizens are broadly pro-EU, says Jose Ignacio Torreblanca of the European Council on Foreign Relations think-tank. And that is because the EU rhymes with freedom. Spain's return to democracy following the death of longtime dictator Francisco Franco in 1975 and its entry in 1986 into the then European Economic Community "are two sides of the same coin," he adds.

EU membership helped thrust Spain into the modern world. EU development funds for example helped the country build Europe's largest high-speed rail network. Even the program of far-right party Vox, which won seats in the Spanish parliament for the first time in a general election last month, starts off by saying "We believe in Europe because we are Europe". Like Spain, in Portugal 69 percent of the population looks upon EU membership favorably, according to the Eurobarometer, despite drastic austerity imposed by Brussels after the financial crisis.

The country joined the bloc in the same year as its neighbor after decades of dictatorship. It has "benefitted greatly from the European project" in terms of improved social services, education and transport, says the head of the ruling Socialist Party's poll list, Pedro Marques. The poverty rate for senior citizens in Portugal has been halved since statistics started being kept in 1995, he notes. As in Spain, polls show Portugal's ruling Socialists will win the most seats while support for the populist right will be negligible.

But what of other member states like Hungary and Poland that also benefitted economically from the EU but elected eurosceptics to power? According to Giuliani, it's all down to history. "For Spain, Europe is democracy and prosperity. In Hungary or in Poland, Europe is prosperity, security but it's something that runs up against the desire to recover national sovereignty," 20 years after the end of communism, he says.

It's an entirely different story for the Baltic states. The EU and NATO allowed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, once ruled from Moscow, to reassert their sovereignty. They became member states in 2004 and for them, the EU means access to the single market and security in the face of their giant, increasingly assertive Russian neighbor. — AFP

Could EU vote spell the end of Italy populist rule?

ROME: Italy's far-right League and anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) have bickered incessantly since the coalition came to power nearly a year ago, and their performances at the European elections yesterday could lead to the end of their partnership, analysts say. Matteo Salvini, hardline interior minister and head of the anti-immigrant League, has seen his party's popularity shoot up on an "Italians first" campaign which has left the M5S and its leader Luigi Di Maio flagging in the polls.

With a fracturing coalition the League could move to dump its partner and call snap national elections if a swell in European parliamentary votes puts enough wind in its sails. "Should the results (Sunday) confirm the current level of support for right-wing parties, Salvini will probably be tempted to pull the plug sooner rather than later," Agnese Orlolani of the Economist Intelligence Unit told AFP. But she added: "The most likely scenario is some form of government crisis late this year or early in 2020."

The March 2018 general election in the eurozone's third largest economy saw the League take home just 17 percent of the vote, while the M5S - which set itself up as the honest, environmentally-friendly alternative to a corrupt



MILAN: Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini casts his ballot at a polling station for the European parliamentary elections yesterday. — AFP

old political guard - pocketed over 32 percent. But in the EU elections the last opinion polls before a pre-vote media blackout showed the League boasting over 32 percent, while the share of the politically inexperienced M5S had plummeted to around 20 percent.

'Monday morning crisis?'

"For most Italians, the EU vote is being seen as part two of last year's general election," polling expert Antonio Noto said. The M5S has upped its attacks on the League in recent weeks, taking advantage of a series of embarrassing cor-

Race to lead Britain out of EU pits old foes

LONDON: The race to become Britain's next premier heated up yesterday as Environment Secretary Michael Gove joined a crowded field of hopefuls with competing visions of how to finally pull their divided country out of the EU. Gove's bid for the leadership in the aftermath of the 2016 Brexit referendum scuppered the chances of his one-time ally Boris Johnson, who is also running this time around and is seen as the current favorite. Theresa May's resignation announcement on Friday drastically raised the chances of Britain crashing out of the European Union without a deal on Oct 31 - the current deadline set by EU leaders.

Some of the eight contenders to replace May have said they will seek to negotiate changes to a draft divorce deal struck with the EU last year but would be prepared to proceed with a



LONDON: A combination of recent pictures shows the eight contenders declared as of yesterday to replace Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May when she resigns on June 7: (From left) Rory Stewart, Esther McVey, Jeremy Hunt, Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, Dominic Raab, Andrea Leadsom and Matt Hancock. — AFP

no-deal Brexit if refused. The EU has said it is not prepared to renegotiate the terms of the deal. A no-deal Brexit would face fierce opposition in parliament, including from MPs in the ruling Conservative Party who backed staying in the EU.

Finance minister Philip Hammond yesterday warned he might even be prepared to take the drastic step of voting to bring down a future Conservative government in order to avoid no-deal. He told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show that leaving the EU without a deal would have "very significant economic and fiscal impact on the country". "It

would challenge not just me but many of my colleagues," Hammond said. May is bowing out with her legacy in tatters and the country in agony over what to do about the voters' decision to abandon the European project after more than four decades. Former foreign minister Johnson said on Friday in Switzerland: "We will leave the EU on October 31, deal or no deal". Former Brexit secretary Dominic Raab, an even more committed eurosceptic, has echoed that position. "We'd be willing to walk away from the negotiations," he told Andrew Marr. Esther McVey, another contender, set out a similar position. — AFP

determine any damage because the electricity supply had been knocked out.

Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra urged citizens "to remain calm" in a message on his official Twitter account. "We're evaluating the affected areas," he said. The Ministry of the Interior said on its official Twitter page that no injuries or deaths had been reported, but some houses had collapsed. Hugo Araujo, the mayor of the city of Yurimaguas near the epicenter, said, "there are many old houses that have collapsed after this strong earthquake."

Seismologists at the Geophysics Institute of Peru said the quake, which lasted just over two minutes, measured 7.5 magnitude, revising their earlier assessment of 7.2 magnitude. Experts at the US-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center said there was "no tsunami threat because the earthquake is located too deep inside the earth." The shockwave of yesterday's tremor also extended to neighboring Ecuador, where power cuts were reported in parts of the Amazon region. "We have carried out the respective monitoring in each city to collect information and report damage after the earthquake, so far we have no news," wrote Ecuadorian Vice President Otto Sonnenholzner on his Twitter account. The president of Ecuador, Lenin Moreno, who was in Lima to attend a regional summit later yesterday, tweeted that the town of Yantzaza had experienced power cuts, adding that officials would provide more information about the quake's impact as it became available. — AFP

Rivals focus on inequality in tight Lithuania runoff

VILNIUS: Lithuanians began voting yesterday in a tight presidential runoff between two centre-right rivals in a race marked by low populist sentiment and concerns over inequality in the Baltic eurozone state. Conservative-backed independent Ingrida Simonyte - an ex-finance minister who oversaw biting austerity cuts during the financial crisis - narrowly won round one on May 12 against fellow economist Gitanas Nauseda, also running as an independent in his first bid for public office.

Simonyte, scored 31.13 percent ahead of 30.95 percent for Nauseda, who has since won backing from the governing Farmers and Greens Union after its candidate, Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis, came third in round one with 19.72 percent support. No opinion polls were issued before Sunday's vote coinciding with European parliament elections, but analysts expect Nauseda to prevail due to his independence, broad political appeal and personality.

"I like both candidates but I'm voting for Nauseda," Vilma Abromaviciene, a 63-year-old Vilnius financial sector employee told AFP. "He's independent from political parties, and will not be pressured or controlled by them. His goal is to unite everyone." Experts noted that by choosing two pro-EU, centre-right candidates, Lithuanians who see the European Union as a source of prosperity and security have bucked growing eurosceptic and populist sentiment in the bloc.

The victor will replace popular incumbent President Dalia Grybauskaitė, a 63-year-old independent who cannot run for a third consecutive term. Dubbed the "Iron Lady" for her hard line on Russia, Grybauskaitė is tipped as a possible next European Council president.

Although Lithuanian presidents do not directly craft economic policy, bread and butter issues have dominated the race. Lithuania is struggling with a sharp population decline owing to mass emigration to Western Europe by people seeking better opportunities. The rivals have pledged to bridge the rich-poor divide in the nation of 2.8 million where, despite solid economic growth, almost 30 percent are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, notably in rural areas. Growth is forecast at 2.7 percent this year, above an average of 1.1 percent in the 19-member eurozone, but income inequality is still among the highest in the EU.

Both candidates are trusted economists with similar ideas about fighting poverty by distributing the fruits of growth more equally, although Simonyte has shied away from Nauseda's promises of "creating a welfare state". Insisting that he is "truly independent", the 55-year-old former bank advisor has vowed to forge a "Lithuania that cares about everybody, not just the privileged". Decades of TV appearances as an economic expert have made the married father of two a household name reputed for intelligence, calm and moderation. — AFP

International

Under the dome: Fears Pacific nuclear ‘coffin’ is leaking

Runit ‘monstrosity’ symbol of mess left by US nuke test program

MAJURO, Marshall Islands: As nuclear explosions go, the US “Cactus” bomb test in May 1958 was relatively small - but it has left a lasting legacy for the Marshall Islands in a dome-shaped radioactive dump. The dome - described by a UN chief Antonio Guterres as “a kind of coffin” - was built two decades after the blast in the Pacific Ocean region. The US military filled the bomb crater on Runit island with radioactive waste, capped it with concrete, and told displaced residents of the Pacific’s remote Enewetak atoll they could safely return home.

But Runit’s 45-cm thick concrete dome has now developed cracks. And because the 115-m wide crater was never lined, there are fears radioactive contaminants are leaching through the island’s porous coral rock into the ocean. The concerns have intensified amid climate change. Rising seas, encroaching on the low-lying nation, are threatening to undermine the dome’s structural integrity.

Jack Ading, who represents the area in the Marshalls’ parliament, calls the dome a “monstrosity”. “It is stuffed with radioactive contaminants that include plutonium-239, one of the most toxic substances known to man,” he told AFP. “The coffin is leaking its poison into the surrounding environment. And to make matters even worse, we’re told not to worry

about this leakage because the radioactivity outside of the dome is at least as bad as the radioactivity inside of it.”

‘Staggering’ challenges

The dome has become a symbol of the mess left by the US nuclear test program in the Marshall islands when 67 bombs were detonated between 1947-58 at Enewetak and Bikini atolls. Numerous islanders were forcibly evacuated from ancestral lands and resettled, including Enewetak’s residents. Thousands more islanders were exposed to radioactive fallout and suffered health problems. The people of Enewetak were allowed home in 1980, and about 800 islanders now live in the southern part of the atoll, 20 km from Runit.

After the US military withdrew, the Marshall Islands government officially accepted a “full and final” settlement to cover the impact of the nuclear tests. But there have long been complaints that the compensation paid by Washington was inadequate, and the United Nations has described “a legacy of distrust” towards the United States. UN Secretary General Guterres raised the issue earlier this month after meeting Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine in Fiji, when they discussed the nuclear legacy and the prospect of radioactive leakage from Runit dome.

“The Pacific was victimized in the past as we all know... the consequences of these have been quite dramatic, in relation to health, in relation to the poisoning of waters in some areas,” he said. Marshalls Foreign Minister John Silk said he appreciated Guterres bringing the Runit dome to world attention with this comments. “We are pleased that the Secretary General made these statements, since so often it seems that these ongoing legacy issues that continue to impact our people are forgotten by the international community,” he said.

Uncertain future

Rhea Moss-Christian, who chairs the Marshall Islands National Nuclear Commission, said the country “needs the support of the international community to address the staggering health and environmental challenges across the Pacific”. The consequences of the dome failing are unclear. A 2013 inspection commissioned by the US government suggested radioactive fallout in the Enewetak lagoon sediment was already so high a catastrophic failure would not necessarily result in locals receiving increased dosages of radiation.

Silk, noting that the US government had committed to ongoing monitoring of the dome,



ENEWETAK, Marshall Islands: Picture taken by the US Defense Nuclear Agency in 1980 shows the huge dome built over top of a crater left by one of the 43 nuclear tests over Runit Island. — AFP

said an independent assessment of the structure’s status “would be helpful”. But Ading said the situation was “a constant source of anxiety

for the people of Enewetak”. “We pray that the Runit dome does not eventually become our coffin,” he said. — AFP

News in brief

600 test HIV positive in Pak city

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said yesterday over 600 people, most of them children, had tested HIV positive in a city in southern Sindh province. Concern grew after hundreds of people were allegedly infected by a doctor using a contaminated syringe in Rato Dero city and surrounding villages of Larkana district. Some 681 people, of which 537 were children from two to 12 years of age, had been tested positive for HIV until yesterday in Rato Dero,” special health advisor Zafar Mirza told a press conference in Islamabad. He said 21,375 people had been screened in Rato Dero, adding “the increase in the number of patients being tested positive for HIV is a matter of grave concern for the government”. With about 20,000 new HIV infections reported in 2017 alone, Pakistan currently has the second fastest growing HIV rates across Asia, according to the UN. — AFP

2 Afghans jailed for killing girl

KABUL: An Afghan court yesterday sentenced two teenage boys to 30 years in prison for the abduction and killing of a young girl whose brutal murder provoked a national outcry. Six-year-old Mahsa Ahmadi was snatched off a Kabul street in March and was killed after her parents were unable to pay a ransom of \$300,000. Police eventually arrested two boys and released a video clip showing them confessing. They said they had picked up Mahsa, driven her away on a motorcycle, taken her to a house and then strangled her after the ransom wasn’t paid. In a televised court hearing, a judge sentenced the two youths to 30 years each in prison. Their ages were not released, but the judge said they were under 18. For Mahsa’s father, the sentence was too lenient. “I want the severest punishment for them, they should be hanged,” he said. But the judge said since they were minors they could not be executed. — AFP

Aide to BJP minister shot dead

MUMBAI: An aide to an Indian ruling party candidate, who recently defeated Congress party chief Rahul Gandhi for a seat in parliament, was shot dead overnight, police said yesterday. Surendra Singh was an aide to Smriti Irani, a former television actress and minister in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s cabinet. In one of the biggest upsets of the election that handed Modi’s Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) a second term, Irani beat Gandhi in the Amethi constituency, which had been held by his family almost continuously for the last four decades, in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Singh worked closely with Irani and distributed sweets and paraded with celebrating supporters on Friday, a day after the election results, his relatives told Reuters partner ANI. He had gone to sleep on the veranda outside his home when unidentified gunmen shot him, Amethi Superintendent of Police Rajesh Kumar told Reuters yesterday. Seven people have been arrested, Kumar said, adding it was too early to draw conclusions about a motive. — Reuters

Sri Lanka detains nearly 100

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka’s military has detained nearly 100 suspects during four days of search operations against remnants of an Islamist group blamed for the Easter attacks that killed 258, officials said yesterday. Some 3,000 military personnel were deployed in and around the capital as well as other key towns for cord-on-and-search activities that began on Thursday, a military official said. In the first three days, security forces took 87 suspects into custody and they were handed over to police for further investigations, he added. “The number of people detained could be around 100 by now,” a security official said adding that almost all were taken in for possessing drugs and in some cases illegal weapons. Similar raids were carried out in North Western Province, north of Colombo, where anti-Muslim riots this month left one man dead and left hundreds of Muslim-owned shops, homes and mosques destroyed. — AFP

Sumo wrestlers meet their match in Trump

TOKYO: The big men of Japanese sumo met their match yesterday in the form of an even bigger star: Donald Trump. Trump was the first US president to attend a tournament in sumo’s hallowed Ryogoku Kokugikan arena and when he entered, the crowd of more than 10,000 cheered and whistled. The president, on a feel-good visit to Japan that peaks Monday when he becomes the first foreign leader to meet with newly enthroned Emperor Naruhito, responded the way he always does in a crowd.

He waved, he pumped his fist, he beamed. Even more than most normal politicians, Trump loves being centre of attention and here on the other side of the world he proved his star power. Four low seats awaited Trump, First Lady Melania Trump, and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie. The furniture was a break in tradition - everyone else watching sumo ringside sits on simple mats. But Abe had pulled out all the stops to make sure Trump was happy.

For several minutes, the crowd seemed to forget the sumo ring, instead turning to



TOKYO: US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump are accompanied by Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie Abe as they watch a sumo demonstration during the Summer Grand Sumo Tournament yesterday. — AFP

Trump, who wore a light pink tie, and his ex-model wife, who wore a deep pink dress. Thousands of mobile phones flashed and filmed. “This is a very rare opportunity. He’s got an aura,” said spectator Masamitsu Kurokawa, 56, who works in the service industry. “He is in a different class.”

Longing for limelight

That said, sumo crowds are passionate about their uniquely Japanese sport and as soon as the action in the ring recommenced,

even Trump appeared briefly forgotten. Giant sumo grapplers pushed and buffeted each other. The crowd veered from nervous anticipation to delirious cheers. Trump was maybe a little baffled by the proceedings, getting meager help from his many years of watching and promoting the more far more garish US pastime of professional wrestling.

His initially buoyant demeanor dimmed and other than a few words with Abe and occasional chats with his wife, he sat stolidly, staring straight ahead. But if the

wrestlers were having their moment, no one was going to keep Trump, real estate showman and populist political rule-breaker, from the limelight for long. Japanese wrestler Asanoyama lost his final bout, but was still far ahead enough of his competition overall to keep the title of champ. The crowd sang the Japanese national anthem.

Up into the ring came Asanoyama to collect his first trophy and the crowd cheered. Now Abe arrived to present an even bigger second trophy, the Prime Minister’s Cup, which was so large that a child could have curled up inside. The crowd cheered even more loudly. But then came the American trophy.

This is officially known as the President’s Cup, but is already popularly known as the “Trump Cup”. Unlike the previous two, the US trophy was carried into the ring under a white sheet. An official in traditional Japanese garb then pulled this off, revealing a glistening, also gigantic cup, and prompting a chorus of whistling and “oohs”.

Entering the ring, Trump read a brief presentation to Asanoyama. He got a big cheer when he mentioned that the award was being given in the new imperial era of Reiwa. Then going back to his instincts for hamming it up in front of photographers, Trump mock grimaced as he lifted the huge cup - clearly something he would not have tried to do without the help of one of the sumo officials at his side. — AFP

PNG premier quits amid gas deal tensions

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea: Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O’Neill resigned yesterday following a string of high-profile political defections that threatened his leadership. O’Neill - who had been in power since 2011 - handed over the reins to veteran politician Julius Chan, who has twice been prime minister. “I will be stepping down as prime minister in the coming days, when I visit the governor-general... (to) pave way for a new government,” O’Neill told reporters in the capital, Port Moresby.

“We have agreed for a change of direction, that leadership of the government will be now handed over to Sir Julius Chan, who is a veteran leader and one of the founding fathers of our nation,” Chan, 79, who was prime minister from 1980-82 and 1994-97, said his government would not be a lame-duck administration. “We are not just going to be a caretaker government, we will work. The transformation of PNG. I don’t intend to be a lame duck. We will move this country forward,” he told reporters.

O’Neill, 54, had avoided a vote of no confidence earlier this month after the defections of his defense, health and forest ministers. His People’s National Congress Party had a small majority in parliament and he faced repeated closed-door requests from party allies to step down. O’Neill was under pressure following the signing of a multi-billion-dollar deal for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project with France’s Total and US firm ExxonMobil earlier this year.

The LNG project would almost double PNG’s gas exports. But James Marape, who had led the government



PORT MORESBY: Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O’Neill (right) and member of parliament Julius Chan attend a function yesterday. — AFP

in parliament and was also the finance minister, resigned citing the failure of the government to ensure national firms and locals benefit from the contract. Local communities had complained bitterly about not benefiting from similar deals in the past. Marape said in a separate press conference yesterday the opposition could rally 63 out of 111 members of parliament on their side.

PNG’s parliament is due to sit tomorrow, with O’Neill’s resignation - and whether it is formalized by a visit to the governor-general - possibly changing the dynamics ahead of a possible vote of no confidence. “By offering to resign, it basically resets that question,” said Shane McLeod, a PNG specialist at the Australian thinktank the Lowy Institute. “The question is: what will parliament be voting on Tuesday? Will it be moving a vote of no confidence in the current prime minister? Will it be voting on a vacant role of prime minister? Will it be something else? It’s just a bit uncertain.” McLeod said it was possible O’Neill’s announcement could have been a way to win back MPs who had deserted his government for the opposition. — AFDP

created after her disappearance on May 8. “It did come down to life and death and I had to choose. And... I chose life. I wasn’t going to take the easy way out, even if that meant more suffering and pain for myself,” she said. Eller, who also works as a physical therapist, has been in the hospital since her rescue. She suffered a broken leg, a torn meniscus in her knee, sunburns and scrapes, The New York Times reported. A grassroots fund-raising campaign collected more than \$70,000, which paid for a helicopter to be hired for the search.

Video of her rescue shows Eller being hoisted into a helicopter as a volunteer shouts “And there she goes!” as she was lifted out of a steep ravine lined with waterfalls. “I have the most gratitude and respect, and appreciation - I can’t even put it into words - for the people that have helped me, for the people that have paid for me, for the people that were at base camp,” said Eller from the hospital. Eller’s boyfriend was the last to see her before she disappeared. Police found her car at a parking lot near a hiking trail. She had gotten lost after leaving the trail to rest, the New York Times said. — AFP

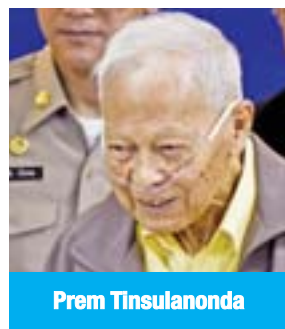
Thai unmatched powerbroker Prem dies aged 98

BANGKOK: Former prime minister and close advisor to Thailand’s revered royals Prem Tinsulanonda died early Sunday aged 98, a senior parliamentarian said, ending a decades-long career of unrivalled influence over Thai politics. Prem “passed away this morning around 9 o’clock”, interim house speaker Chai Chidchob told MPs on the third day of Thailand’s new parliament. “I would like to ask everyone to stand for a moment in memorial.”

Hailed as a stabilizing force by allies but loathed by critics as a conservative underminer of democracy in the kingdom, Prem was a top aide to the late beloved King Bhumibol Adulyadej and helped cement the unshakeable bond between the monarchy and the military. As Privy Council president his influence endured through a tense succession period after Bhumibol died in 2016 and Prem was briefly appointed regent before Bhumibol’s son Maha Vajiralongkorn ascended the throne.

Prem presided over the king’s surprise wedding to Queen Suthida days before his coronation earlier this month. With assistants helping him stand, he took part in a key sacred water ritual on coronation day alongside 2014 coup leader and junta chief Prayut-Chan-O. The participation highlighted his legacy of cementing the army’s self-designated role as protector of the royals. The general helped establish the all-powerful “monarchized military” seen in Thailand today, according to Paul Chambers, lecturer at Naresuan University in Thailand. “Prem proved time and again that his savvy acumen could prevent or facilitate army coups that helped the palace,” Chambers told AFP.

Born in southern Songkhla province in 1920, 12 years before Thailand’s absolute monarchy was abolished, Prem experienced most of modern Thai history. He graduated from the country’s top military academy in 1941, showcasing his talent on the frontline by fighting the French in Cambodia and later the British in Burma. He was a key figure in the kingdom’s battle against communists in its northern provinces and was rewarded with the top job of army chief in 1978. But the ambitious commander only held the position for two years before seizing power in what was widely viewed as a silent coup. His 1980-1988 rule as premier brought a rare period of political and economic stability to Thailand thanks to his patronage of military officers but most importantly through the trust he forged with Bhumibol. — AFP



Prem Tinsulanonda

MONDAY, MAY 27, 2019

12 Fed puts monetary tightening on hold despite better global outlook



13 Modi kept his job, but most Indians worry about theirs



13 Bangladeshi fishermen protest fishing ban



SHANGHAI: People browse for items in a Huawei store in Shanghai on Saturday. —AFP

Huawei employees voice fears for future

Founder brushes aside ban on using American components, software

BEIJING: While Huawei's founder brushes aside a US ban against his company, the telecom giant's employees have been less sanguine, confessing fears for their future in online chat rooms. Huawei CEO Ren Zhengfei declared this week the company has a hoard of microchips and the ability to make its own in order to withstand a potentially crippling US ban on using American components and software in its products.

"If you really want to know what's going on with us, you can visit our Xinsheng Community," Ren told Chinese media, alluding to Huawei's internal forum partially open to viewers outside the company. But a peek into Xinsheng shows his words have not reassured everyone within the Shenzhen-based company.

"During difficult times, what should we do as individuals?" posted an employee under the handle Xiao Feng on Thursday.

"At home reduce your debts and maintain enough cash," Xiao Feng wrote. "Make a plan for your financial assets and don't be overly optimistic about your remuneration and income."

This week Google, whose Android operating system powers most of the world's smartphones, said it would cut ties with Huawei as a result of the ban. Another critical partner, ARM Holdings—a British designer of semiconductors owned by Japanese group Softbank—said it was complying with the US restrictions.

"On its own Huawei can't resolve this problem, we need to seek support from government policy," one unnamed employee wrote last week, in a post that received dozens of likes and replies. The employee outlined a plan for China to block off its smartphone market from all American components much in the same way Beijing fostered its internet tech giants

behind a "Great Firewall" that keeps out Google, Facebook, Twitter and dozens of other foreign companies. "Our domestic market is big enough, we can use this opportunity to build up domestic suppliers and our ecosystem," the employee wrote.

'Advance with our company'

For his part, Ren advocated the opposite response in his interview with Chinese media. "We should not promote populism; populism is detrimental to the country," he said, noting that his family uses Apple products.

Other employees strategized ways to circumvent the US ban. One advocated turning to Alibaba's e-commerce platform Taobao to buy the needed components. Another dangled the prospect of setting up dozens of new companies to make purchases from US

suppliers. Many denounced the US and proposed China ban McDonald's, Coca-Cola and all-American movies and TV shows.

"First time posting under my real name: we must do our jobs well, advance and retreat with our company," said an employee named Xu Jin. The tech ban caps months of US effort to isolate Huawei, whose equipment Washington fears could be used as a Trojan horse by Chinese intelligence services.

Still, last week Trump indicated he was willing to include a fix for Huawei in a trade deal that the two economic giants have struggled to seal and US officials issued a 90-day reprieve on the ban.

In Xinsheng, an employee with the handle Youxin lamented: "I want to advance and retreat alongside the company, but then my boss told me to pack up and go", followed by two sad-face emoticons. —AFP

Renault, Fiat Chrysler in tie-up talks

PARIS: French and Italian-US auto giants Renault and Fiat Chrysler are set to announce talks on an alliance, with a view to a potential merger, informed sources said yesterday. Renault and FCA are likely to unveil the move "within hours, perhaps tomorrow (Monday), before the (Paris) bourse opens," one of the sources told AFP on condition of anonymity, adding an eventual "merger" was on the agenda. The same source added that a statement would cover "the possibility of a convergence between the two groups" which "will be studied" with a view to a potential merger.

A Renault board meeting is scheduled for 8:00 am (0600 GMT) today. Renault's current major partnership is with Japan's Nissan, in which it holds 43 percent. Nissan in turn owns 15 percent of its French partner Renault but the imbalance in the relationship has led to serious friction, highlighted by the arrest of former Renault and Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn in Tokyo.

The Financial Times reported Saturday that the Renault-FCA discussions were at an "advanced" stage and could lead to "extensive cooperation". The Wall Street Journal said the talks were "wide-ranging" and could include Renault and Fiat Chrysler "joining large portions of their businesses".

However, The New York Times took a more cautious line, saying the discussions were in early stages, the specifics unclear and "could still collapse". Contacted by AFP, neither Renault nor Fiat would comment.

Nissan likely 'furious'

The Financial Times, quoting multiple people informed on the talks, said: "The agreement may ultimately lead the carmaker (Fiat-Chrysler) to join the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi Alliance in the future," if Nissan can be won over. Such an alliance would be the world's biggest with estimated total production of some 16 million vehicles. The Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi currently makes around 10.8 million automobiles, compared with Germany's Volkswagen and Japan's Toyota, both on around 10.6 million.

However, the tie-up with FCA could make Renault much more powerful, potentially further upsetting the balance in the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi combination where Ghosn was pushing for much more

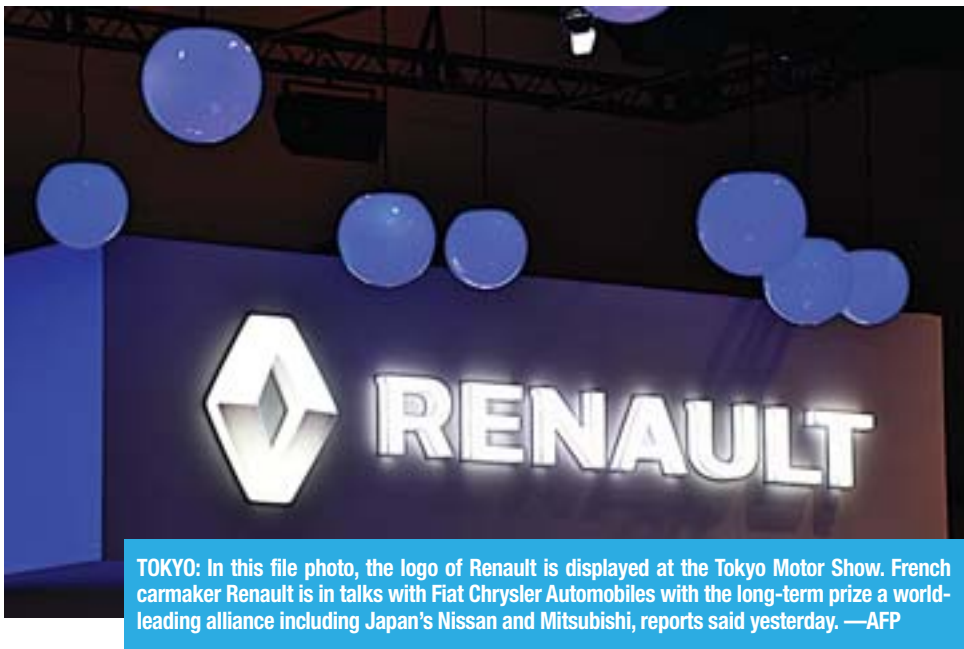
say before his downfall.

"The question now is 'what is the reaction of the Japanese going to be?'" said one source close to the issue, suggesting they could be "furious." "Nissan has not been involved in this dossier," the source noted.

In recent weeks, Renault has been pushing for changes to its tie-up with Nissan, suggesting the formation of a 50-50 holding company to run both firms. Nissan however has resisted, feeling it is the bigger company and should be treated as such. Last year, Renault sold 3.9 million vehicles and Nissan 5.65 million, with Mitsubishi accounting for another 1.22 million. Fiat Chrysler meanwhile sold 4.8 million autos but has been under pressure in Europe, stoking speculation it was looking for a partner as the industry is forced to consolidate in the face of declining demand and a costly switch into electric cars.

FCA chief Mike Manley said earlier this month in Milan that his company would play an "active and constructive" role in this process. Fiat Chrysler is widely seen as a latecomer to the electric vehicle market but is well placed in the US SUV and pick-up sectors.

Renault meanwhile has pushed ahead in electric cars but is relatively weak in North America so the two companies would be a



TOKYO: In this file photo, the logo of Renault is displayed at the Tokyo Motor Show. French carmaker Renault is in talks with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles with the long-term prize a world-leading alliance including Japan's Nissan and Mitsubishi, reports said yesterday. —AFP

good fit. Following his arrest, Ghosn was bailed for a second time on April 25 and is now preparing for trial on four charges of financial misconduct ranging from concealing part of his salary, to using Nissan funds for personal expenses.

The reports did not spell out the level of

any involvement by Nissan in the current Renault-FCA discussions although one FT source said it was absent. Early this year, rumors circulated that Renault was interested in Fiat-Chrysler after its hopes for a full merger with Nissan or even French competitor PSA were dashed. —AFP

NBK Money Markets Report

Fed puts monetary tightening on hold despite better global outlook

May’s departure sends pound crashing

KUWAIT: In their latest meeting, the Federal Reserve’s rate setters said that they aim to keep interest rates unchanged even if they notice an improvement in global conditions. They said that they are sticking to their “patient” approach to policy. The minutes of the latest meeting held on April 30 and May 1 showed that policy makers engaged in an extended debate over the composition of the regulator’s balance sheet in the longer term. Many of the participants said they wanted an increased scope to counter a future downturn by shifting from short dated bond holdings to long term debt, hoping that this would provide an extra boost in case of a future downturn. It is worth mentioning that the Fed is struggling to figure out why the US inflation has remained sluggish in spite of unemployment hovering over a half century low and the economy approaching a record long expansion.

US manufacturing growth slumps

Recent data out of the IHS Markit flash survey of US manufacturers fell to nine and a half year low of 50.6 in May from 52.6 in April. Additionally, services PMI dipped to 39-month low of 50.8 down from the previous reading of 52.7. This massive drop in both sectors can be attributed to the escalating trade tensions with China. The growth in new orders from both domestic and foreign buyers declined and the surveyed firms said to be “putting the brakes on hiring.”

If we take a step back and look at the big picture, the tariffs imposed by both sides of the trade war have taken its toll on American companies. Their sales have declined and some had to find new suppliers and ambiguity remains the theme of the current situation

with China. Thus, the market have priced in 84 percent probability of a cut in January 2020 meeting of the Fed.

In the FX markets, flows into safe-haven assets were the main theme of the week. The Swiss Franc was the biggest gainer last week with 1.07 percent increase over the US dollar, followed by the Japanese Yen which climbed by 0.93 percent. Subsequently, the dollar index had a volatile week and yet ended the week lower by 0.42 percent as 9 year low PMI data surfaced last Thursday.

May’s resignation

Theresa May faced a cabinet revolt as ministers plotted behind the scenes last week forcing her to pull the parliamentary vote on her revamped deal. The Eurosceptic cabinet ministers met on Wednesday morning to discuss efforts to stop May from seeking parliamentary approval for her withdrawal agreement bill amid increasing calls by Conservative MPs for her to resign. The political uncertainty knocked down the pound, with the Cable reached the lowest level for the year at around 1.2606.

The prime minister announced on Friday in a strongly felt speech that she will resign on June 7th triggering a Conservative Party leadership contest which she said would start next week. May said that she has done her best to deliver Brexit and she has done everything she could. May says that her successor will need to find parliament consensus on Brexit, something she failed to do repeatedly. The cable drifted higher after May’s speech as the market adjusted to the news and weighed in the possible future scenarios for the dramatic Brexit situation.



UK’s inflation climbs above target

Consumer prices rose 2.1 percent from a year earlier and ending a three- month spell of inflation below the Bank of England’s 2 percent goal, Office for National Statistics figures published Wednesday showed. The figure was slightly below the 2.2 percent forecast by economists.

The pickup, from 1.9 percent in March, was driven by the lifting of the government cap on default energy tariffs. Electricity prices jumped 10.9 percent and gas increased 9.3 percent, which were higher increases than the levels seen a year earlier. There was also upward pressure from higher auto-fuel prices, while Easter boosted transport costs, air fares in particular. The four-day vacation began on April 19, three weeks later than it did last year. The largest offsetting factor came from cheaper computer games.

Eurozone PMI

The Eurozone composite PMI edged 0.1 higher to 51.6 in May, narrowly missing consensus of 51.7. But optimism fell, attributed to fears of a weakening economy and geopolitical risks, with an escalation in trade ten-



sions and difficulties in the auto sector commonly cited as specific concerns, according to the survey provider.

Taking a deeper look into the PMI readings, the manufacturing sector meltdown continues aggressively. New orders contracted for the 8th consecutive month. The reading for manufacturing PMI remains well below 50 at 47.7.

On the FX front, the single currency traded in with high volatility throughout last week as it reacted to major news regarding Brexit and Eurozone economic data. The euro opened the week at 1.1160 and reached a low of 1.1107, a level not seen since June 2017. However, on Thursday evening the pair reversed its losses after disappointing US manufacturing and services data.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar
USD/KWD opened at 0.30380 yesterday morning.

KAMCO GCC Corporate Earnings Report

Total GCC earnings falls 4.7 %

KUWAIT: Total earnings for GCC-listed companies decreased 4.7 percent y-o-y in Q1-19 to \$17.0 billion from \$17.9 billion in Q1-18. All GCC markets barring Kuwait and Dubai witnessed a decline in Q1-19 earnings. Bahrain Bourse saw the biggest y-o-y decline in earnings by 20.8 percent to reach \$485.4 million and also the second largest net profits drop in absolute terms after Saudi Arabia. Q1-19 net profits of Saudi Arabian listed corporates, which made up 36.9 percent of aggregate GCC quarterly profits, declined 9.2 percent to \$6.3 billion.

In terms of sectors at the GCC level, three of the top 5 largest sectors by market cap including Materials, Real Estate and Capital Goods recorded double digit decline in their Q1-19 net profits resulting in decline in aggregate quarterly profits for the GCC during Q1-19. On the other hand, the Banking and the Telecommunications services sectors saw single digit growth in Q1-19 net profits that only partially offset the decline in aggregate earnings. The banking sector represented 58 percent of the total GCC earnings in Q1-19. All six countries of the GCC saw their Banking sector earnings surge in Q1-19 recording a y-o-y growth of 9.1 percent to reach \$ 10.0 billion for the region. Dubai’s Banking sector witnessed the biggest percentage increase in y-o-y profits for Q1-19, reporting a 17.4 percent jump in net profits followed by Saudi Arabia with a growth of 9.1 percent. The top three banks in the GCC, QNB, FAB and NCB, recorded a combined profit growth of 4.5 percent during the quarter.

The utilities sector was one of the biggest drags on overall profitability during the quarter lead by Saudi Arabian utility names, particularly Saudi Electricity Company which saw its y-o-y losses increase to \$397 million in Q1-19 as compared to \$323.7 million in Q1-18. The GCC Materials sector also reported declining profitability that reached \$1.6 billion in Q1-19 as compared to \$ 2.8 billion in Q1-18. Saudi Arabia’s Material sector lead GCC pack in terms of Q1-19 net profit fall in absolute terms. SABIC saw its net profits fall from \$1.5 billion in Q1-18 to \$908.6 million Q1-19, a fall of nearly \$560 million in absolute terms.

GCC corporate earnings report

Among the six biggest sectors in the GCC market by market capitalization (Banking, Materials, Real Estate, Telecom, Capital Goods and Utilities) only two sectors, Banking and Telecoms, managed to grow earnings during Q1-19 as compared to correspon-

ding quarter in 2018. The share of profit by the aforementioned sectors remained in line with last years at around 88 percent. The biggest decline was recorded in the Utilities sector with an aggregate loss of \$295 million in Q1-19 as compared to a lower aggregate loss of \$185 million during Q1-18. Profits for the sector was once again dragged down by Saudi Electricity Company which reported a loss of \$397 million in Q1-19 as compared to a slightly lower loss of \$323.7 million during Q1-18. Five out of the 13 companies in the GCC utilities sector posted losses during the quarter.

The GCC banking sector accounted for the lion’s share of the aggregate earnings at 58 percent followed by a distant second Telecom sectors at 11.5 percent. In the GCC Banking sector, out of the 64 banks that reported earnings, merely 16 posted a y-o-y decline in earnings during the quarter. The share of top 10 banks in quarterly profits of the sector stood at 60 percent, almost in line with the share during Q1-18. The performance of companies in the Telecom sector was mixed during the quarter however, higher y-o-y profits from STC, Etisalat and Zain pushed the overall profits for the sector. The Real Estate sector in the GCC accounted for the fourth largest share of net income. The sector continues to cause volatility in equity markets in the UAE due to continued oversupply in several segments of the market. During the quarter, Qatar was the only significant market where real estate companies recorded growth in profits. Dubai continues to account for the bulk of sector profits, but after recording a growth in profit in 2018, Dubai’s real estate sector earnings declined 12.5 percent during Q1-19.

Kuwait

Boursa Kuwait-listed companies reported a net profit increase of 6.6 percent during Q1-19 that reached \$1.67 billion compared to \$1.56 billion during Q1-18. Among the major sectors Banks, Capital Goods, Diversified Financials, Telecommunication contributed to the rise in profitability of the exchange. The Biggest impact on higher aggregate stock exchange profits came from the Banking sector which recorded a profit growth of 7.4 percent that reached \$811.1 million in Q1-19 from \$755 million in Q1-18. Five out of the ten listed Kuwaiti banks reported double digit growth in profitability during the quarter while CBK’s net profit plunged almost 90 percent despite flat net interest income led by higher provisions and operating expenses during the quarter. After the Banking sector, the Capital Goods sector was the biggest contributor in terms of earnings growth, led by National Industries Group which reported a 45.7 percent y-o-y growth in profit in Q1-19. The group’s profits reached \$89.05 million supported by a partial divestment of an associate. Gulf Cable and Electrical Industries almost tripled its Q1-19 profits on the back of higher investment income.

The diversified financial sector recorded a profit growth of 17.1 percent that reached \$172.1 million in Q1-19 on the back of higher profits recorded by some of the bigger players in the sector. Telecom earnings also recorded positive earnings during Q1-19

with a growth of 6.3 percent to reach \$215.2 million. This surge was solely led by Zain that recorded a net profit growth of 15.1 percent on the back of higher revenues. Meanwhile, the insurance sector saw top five of the eight players recording strong growth in earnings during Q1-19 that was offset by decline in profits for the smaller three players in the sector. The sector profits stood at \$52.8 million in Q1-19, a 15.8 percent rise from Q1-18. Kuwait Insurance reported an 18.4 percent y-o-y jump in profits that reached \$19.4 million driven by better operating performance combined with higher investment earning.

Saudi Arabia

The total net profit for the companies listed in the Saudi Arabia declined by 9.2 percent to \$6.3 billion in Q1-19 against \$6.9 billion in Q1-18. The growth was primarily led by the Banking sector which recorded a profit growth of 12.7 percent which was partially offset by a profit decline of 43 percent for the Materials sector. Aggregate profits for the exchange was also negatively affected by Consumer Durables, Pharmaceutical and Real Estate sectors. Within the banking sector, Riyad Bank reported an almost 50 percent jump in net profit that reached \$438.5 million in Q1-19 on the back of higher fee income. On the other hand, profit decline in the material sector was primarily on the back of a 38.1 percent drop in profits for SABIC that reached \$908 million in Q1-19 led by lower average selling prices. Furthermore, Maaden posted losses of \$ 33.9 million in Q1-19, against a net profit of \$170.1 million in Q1-18. The decline was due to low prices of all products and decreased sales volume. Nevertheless, SAFCO reported a 41.4 percent y-o-y increase in profits during the quarter.

Dubai

Net profits for DFM-listed companies recorded a modest rise of 1.4 percent in Q1-19 to reach \$2.7 billion compared to \$2.6 billion in Q1-18. In terms of sectors, three out of the five largest sectors: the Real Estate sector, the Telecommunications sector and the Capital Goods sector posted y-o-y decline in net profits. However, the Banking Sector and the Insurance sectors Q1-19 gains in net profits buoyed the overall net profits for the exchange. The banking sector recorded 17.4 percent jump in Q1-19 net profits to \$1.5 billion, the biggest percentage rise in profits among GCC banking sectors. Emirates NBD contributed the largest increase in net profits with a sequential and y-o-y growth of 15 percent to reach \$746.8 million driven by loan growth and stable margins. Meanwhile, Emirates Islamic Bank delivered the largest y-o-y increase in profits that almost doubled in Q1-19 to \$ 111.9 million up from \$56.8 million in Q1-18. The increase in profitability was attributed to higher funded income, lower cost and balance sheet growth.

Abu Dhabi

The total net profit for listed companies on the Abu Dhabi Stock

Exchange for Q1-19 decreased 2.6 percent to \$2.6 billion compared to Q1-18 profits of \$2.7 billion. The diversified financial sectors and the real estate sector were the main contributors which dragged down the exchanges’ Q1-19 net profits. Moreover, other large market cap sectors such as the banking sector and the telecommunications services sector only managed to deliver modest increases in Q1-19 profits of 2.4 percent and 2.1 percent, respectively. In the diversified financial sector, Waha Capital posted a loss of \$15.7 million for Q1-19 compared with a profit of \$29.2 million during Q1-18. The company suffered a loss of \$45.1 million in its private investments mainly driven by the adjustment and reassessment of the value of its AerCap Holdings recoverable amount. The real estate sector was the second largest contributor of the fall in profits of the exchange with profits declining by 18 percent y-o-y to \$156.9 million in Q1-19 as compared to \$191.5 million in Q1-18 largely led by Aldar Properties’ 17.3 percent drop in earnings.

Qatar

Net profit for Qatari-listed companies declined during Q1-19 by 4.1 percent y-o-y to reach \$2.88 billion primarily led by fall in profits for the capital goods sector that almost halved during the quarter. Banks continued to outperform other sectors with a 4.0 percent rise in the net profit to reach \$1.69 billion in Q1-19, accounting for 58.8 percent of the overall exchange profits during the quarter. QNB reported a 4 percent y-o-y increase in Q1-19 that reached \$ 980 million. Quarterly net profit for Qatar Islamic Bank grew by almost 10 percent y-o-y to reach \$188.2 million in Q1-19 compared to \$171.7 million in Q1-18.

Bahrain

Total net profits for companies listed on Bahrain Bourse decline 20.8 percent in Q1-19 to \$485.4 million compared to \$ 612.6 million in Q1-18. The two largest sectors by market cap, the Banking sector and the Telecommunications Services sector both recorded robust increases in Q1-19 net profits. However, this was primarily undone by the loss in the Capital Goods sector. Aluminum Bahrain declared Q1-19 loss of \$42 million compared with its \$90 million profits in Q1-18. The company’s turn from profit to loss was attributed largely by the impact of higher alumina prices on top of a challenging market. On the other hand, Bahrain Bourse’s Banking sector and the Telecommunications sector, the two largest sectors of the exchange by market cap, saw their Q1-19 net profits rise 6.3 percent and 14.8 percent, respectively. The Banking sectors Q1-19 earnings increased by 6.3 percent to \$407.4 million from \$383.2 million in Q1-18. Al-Ahli United Bank was the largest earnings contributor of the sector for the quarter in terms of absolute net profits. The bank reported a net profit of \$192.9 million for Q1-19 compared to \$ 174.7 in Q1-18 due to growth in operating income which was mainly driven by an increase in net interest income attributed to growth in loans.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.650
Euro	344.560
Sterling Pound	391.480
Canadian dollar	228.200
Turkish lira	51.370
Swiss Franc	307.260
US Dollar Buying	296.450
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.781
Indian Rupees	4.384
Pakistani Rupees	2.051
Srilankan Rupees	1.724
Nepali Rupees	2.735
Singapore Dollar	222.370
Hongkong Dollar	38.814
Bangladesh Taka	3.591
Philippine Peso	5.846
Thai Baht	9.590
Malaysian ringgit	77.916
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.294
Qatari Riyal	83.730
Omani Riyal	791.813
Bahraini Dinar	809.490
UAE Dirham	83.000
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.759
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.021

Yemen Rival/for 1000	1.224
Tunisian Dinar	105.050
Jordanian Dinar	430.360
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.272
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.290
Canadian Dollar	227.140
Sterling Pound	388.330
Euro	342.520
Swiss Frank	306.445
Bahrain Dinar	809.220
UAE Dirhams	83.250
Qatari Riyals	84.490
Saudi Riyals	82.040
Jordanian Dinar	430.470
Egyptian Pound	18.055
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.724
Indian Rupees	4.383
Pakistani Rupees	2.016
Bangladesh Taka	3.604
Philippines Peso	5.807
Cyprus pound	18.105
Japanese Yen	3.780
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.741
Malaysian Ringgit	73.530
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.545
Thai Bhat	10.545

Turkish Lira	50.585
Singapore dollars	220.210
BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL	
Europe	
British Pound	0.380003
Czech Korune	0.005187
Danish Krone	0.041607
Euro	0.333637
Georgian Lari	0.108943
Hungarian 0.001148	0.001338
Norwegian Krone	0.030993
Romanian Leu	0.054710
Russian ruble	0.004734
Slovakia	0.009111
Slovenia Krona	0.027859
Swedish Krona	0.298102
Swiss Franc	0.309102
Australia	
Australian Dollar	0.202486
New Zealand Dollar	0.193163
America	
Canadian Dollar	0.221575
US Dollars	0.300550
US Dollars Mint	0.301050
Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003010
Chinese Yuan	0.042583

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037168
Indian Rupee	0.003709
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017
Japanese Yen	0.002701
Korean Won	0.000246
Malaysian Ringgit	0.068802
Nepalese Rupee	0.002680
Pakistan Rupee	0.001456
Philippine Peso	0.005712
Singapore Dollar	0.215982
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001378
Taiwan	0.010169
Thai Baht	0.009220
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013
Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.793520
Egyptian Pound	0.017580
Iranian Riyal	0.000084
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210
Jordanian Dinar	0.424785
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020505
Omani Riyal	0.784981
Qatar Riyal	0.079413
Saudi Riyal	0.080153
Syrian Pound	0.001292
Tunisian Dinar	0.097686
Turkish Lira	0.043913
UAE Dirhams	0.081520
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990

Business

Modi kept his job, but most Indians worry about theirs

1.2 million vie to enter cutthroat job market

NEW DELHI: Asad Ahmed, one of about 1.2 million young Indians entering the cutthroat job market each month, diligently scribbles notes at a computer class in New Delhi. While nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi won a new five-year term promising to step up his campaign for a “new India”, 18-year-old Ahmed is pessimistic about getting a new job.

“There are so many people in Delhi and the competition is intense,” said Ahmed, dressed like the other students in a black-and-white uniform at the three-month community course run in a police station in Old Delhi.

“I know this stint may not be enough for me to get a job but I am trying my best.” Modi came to power in 2014 promising jobs, but delivering on that has been a challenge. And as soon as the election euphoria settles, Modi’s government will have to find ways to boost investment and revive manufacturing to create new jobs. Like Ahmed, most of the other 60 students at the government-sponsored “skill development” classes at the Old Delhi police station, all from poor families, were also apprehensive.

Nudrat Akram, 19, signed up for the course because her family could not afford to pay for higher education. “I want a job in the retail sector where I can earn 10,000 rupees (\$143) a month,” Akram said, as she practiced speaking English with pretend customers.

More jobs, more debt

India’s conservative prime minister came to power in 2014 on a pro-business platform, promising to create 10 million jobs a year. The world’s fastest-growing major economy has grown about 7 percent a year since, but jobs have been elusive. The promise was barely mentioned in Modi’s triumphant re-election campaign. Nearly two-thirds of India’s 1.3 billion population are of working age, between 15 and 64, but an

increasing number are in the unemployed list. No official data has been released for more than two years but a recent leaked report—denied by the government—put the unemployment rate at a 45-year high of 6.1 percent.

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, a private research firm, estimates the jobless rate rose to 7.6 percent in April. “The economy is going to be a huge problem. The government simply cannot create jobs for millions entering the workforce,” said political analyst Parsa Venkateshwar Rao.

“Modi will rely on businesses but they are also struggling so he has a real problem on his hands.”

‘Not easy to survive’

Unemployment is particularly dire for women. A Deloitte consultancy report in March said female labor force participation fell to 26 percent in 2018 from 36 percent in 2005 because of poor education and socio-economic barriers. The manifesto of Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) promised a \$1.4-trillion infrastructure boost to create jobs if it won the election. It offered metro trains for 50 cities and to double the national highway network. But analysts say the government, which has drastically increased its debt over the past five years, will have to borrow huge new amounts to pay for the works.

In 2015, Modi launched a Skill India program aiming to train 500 million people by 2022. But the results have been mixed. According to 2018 data, only a quarter of people who joined the scheme found jobs.

“The Skill India mission has not had as much success as say the highway program,” said economist Arvind Virmani.

“The real crisis is about job skills and basic education.” India’s rural jobs guarantee program offers work to about 70 million people at a minimum wage for 100



An Indian vendor sells handmade baskets and baby cradles to commuters on a road in Amritsar yesterday. —AFP

days a year, but there is no equivalent for the growing numbers of urban youth. Experts say the government must consider an urban employment guarantee scheme in order to reap the true benefit of its economic growth.

At the Delhi classes, 18-year-old Sehar, who uses

one name, is worried about helping her poor family, including four younger sisters. Her father, who works at a hospital, is the only earner.

“I am the eldest and I want to help my family, it’s not easy to survive in this city.” —AFP

Pakistan bracing for austere budget under IMF: Finance chief

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is preparing a belt-tightening budget to tame its fiscal deficit, the de facto finance minister said on Saturday, adding that both civilian and military rulers agreed austerity measures were needed to stabilize the economy.

But Hafeez Shaikh, Prime Minister Imran Khan’s top finance adviser, declined to say whether the military’s hefty budget would be cut following last week’s agreement in principle with the International Monetary Fund for a \$6 billion loan.

The IMF has said the primary budget deficit should be trimmed by the equivalent of \$5 billion, but previous civilian rulers have rarely dared to trim defense spending for fear of stoking tensions with the military. Unlike some other civilian leaders in Pakistan’s fragile democracy, Khan appears to have good relations with the country’s powerful generals.

More than half of state spending currently goes on the military and debt-servicing costs, however, limiting the government’s options for reducing expenditure.

“The budget that is coming will have austerity, that means that the government’s expenditures will be put at a minimum level,” Shaikh told a news conference in the capital Islamabad on Saturday, a few weeks before the budget for the 2019/20 fiscal year ending in June is due to be presented.

“We are all standing together in it whether civilians or our military,” said Shaikh, a former finance minister



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Abdul Hafeez Shaikh gestures during a press conference next to special assistant to the Prime Minister for Information and Broadcasting Firdous Ashiq Awan, in Islamabad on Saturday. —AFP

appointed by Khan as part of a wider shake-up of his economic team in the last two months. In the days since last week’s agreement with the IMF, the rupee currency dropped 5 percent against the dollar and has lost a third of its value in the past year. Under the IMF’s terms, the government is expected to let the rupee fall to help correct an unsustainable current account deficit and cut its debt while trying to expand the tax base in a country where only 1 percent of people file returns.

Shaikh has been told by the IMF that the primary budget deficit—excluding interest payments—should be cut to 0.6 percent of GDP, implying a \$5 billion reduction from the current projection for a deficit of 2.2 percent of GDP.

The next fiscal year’s revenue collection target will be 5.55 trillion rupees (\$36.88 billion), Shaikh told the news conference, highlighting the need for tough steps to broaden the tax base. —Reuters

Bangladesh, fishermen protest fishing ban

COX’S BAZAR: Hundreds of Bangladeshi fishermen staged a protest in the country’s south yesterday, police said, after the government imposed an unprecedented two-month long fishing ban on the Bay of Bengal. Carrying placards and banners, the fishermen marched to Cox’s Bazar city from coastal villages days after the government’s 65-day long fishing embargo came into effect.

“This is wrong. This is injustice. No other country in the world has ever imposed such a long ban,” said union leader Kolim Ullah through a loudhailer during the protest.

Ullah said the ban has hit the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of people in Bangladesh’s coastal districts, home to about 20 million people, most of whom depend either directly or indirectly on fishing. “The embargo has especially hit the poor fishermen hard. They don’t know any other work,” he said.

Bangladesh imposed the ban on fishing in the Bay of Bengal last week in an effort to replenish depleted stocks. The junior minister for fisheries, Ashraf Ali Khan, said the ban would run from May 20 to July 23, and that navy and coast guard vessels would patrol the bay to prevent boats from putting to sea.



COX’S BAZAR: Bangladeshi fishermen stage a protest in Cox’s Bazar yesterday after the government imposed two-month long fishing ban on the Bay of Bengal. —AFP

Bangladesh frequently slaps seasonal bans on fishing in deep seas and coastal rivers, but authorities said this was the longest-ever imposed for shallow waters near the coast. It covers all types of fishing boats. Ullah said the protesters submitted a memorandum to the administrator in Cox’s Bazar demanding the ban be shortened to one month and the government stop foreign fishing vessels from entering Bangladeshi waters.

As part of compensation measures, the Bangladesh government has announced it will provide free rice for nearly half a million families of badly affected fishermen. But SM Nazrul, another union leader, said the aid is promised only for the registered fisher-

men, while “the number of unregistered fishermen is eight times more than the registered ones.” Fishermen have also threatened to march towards the capital Dhaka if the embargo is not shortened.

“The ban is slapped on just before Eid,” said fisherman Mohammad Rafique, referring to the largest Muslim festival of Eid al-Fitr. “How will we celebrate Eid when we don’t have a penny in the pocket?”

The bans has also hit Rohingya refugees, nearly a million of whom have fled a military crackdown in Myanmar and found shelter in squalid camps near Bangladesh’s Teknaf and Ukhiya fishing towns.

The refugees are not permitted to

work outside the camps but thousands have secretly found work in the sea-going fishing trawlers owned by Bangladeshis. Thousands of Rohingyas work as crew members in a bid to find a better life. This ban would throw these Rohingyas back on the streets,” Abdus Salam, a boat owner in Shamlapur fishing village, told AFP.

Every year Bangladesh imposes a weeks-long ban on the fishing of Hilsa—a popular Herring-like staple—and has created six sanctuaries in its network of coastal rivers to allow spawning.

The bans have boosted the Hilsa catch by more than 150 percent since 2004 and turned it into a \$2 billion industry. —AFP

Much in trade talks to wait until after Japan July vote: Trump

TOKYO: The United States and Japan are making “great progress” on trade talks, but “much” of the negotiations will wait until after Japanese elections in July, US President Donald Trump tweeted yesterday. “Great progress being made in our Trade Negotiations with Japan. Agriculture and beef heavily in play. Much will wait until after their July elections where I anticipate big numbers!” Trump wrote, referring to upper house elections in Japan this summer.

Japan and the United States still need to work to narrow their differences on trade, Japan’s economy minister said on Saturday, following a meeting with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer. Toshimitsu Motegi met with Lighthizer in Tokyo for trade talks ahead of a meeting today between the leaders from the two nations. Motegi said there was no discussion of President Donald Trump’s decision to declare some auto imports a national security threat.

“We deepened our understanding of each other’s positions on trade. However, we’re not in complete agreement,” Motegi told reporters following the talks. “There are still some gaps. We need to work to narrow our differences.” He said he did not expect a total, or even partial agreement on trade at Monday’s summit. Trump arrived in Japan on Saturday for a largely ceremonial state visit meant to showcase strong ties even though trade relations remain problematic. He urged Japanese business leaders to increase their investment in the United States while chiding Japan for having a “substantial edge” on trade. The United States is engaged in a trade war with China in protest against Beijing’s treatment of US companies, and tensions with Japan and the European Union over trade are simmering. —Agencies

UK stocks shrug off May’s exit, but Brexit risk lurks

LONDON: Britain’s FTSE 100 held its gains on Friday after Prime Minister Theresa May announced her resignation date as head of her party in a widely expected move that nevertheless raises the prospect of a successor likely to seek a more hardline Brexit deal.

The FTSE 100 added 0.7 percent and the midcap index rose 0.5 percent, slightly off its opening levels, as traders and investors said the market had already priced in May’s move when rumors first started circulating. Housebuilders, considered prone to any hit to the economy from a chaotic “no-deal” departure from the European Union, barely budged after May’s speech. “It’s been so well-flagged and UK assets have been hammered all week. Realistically we know no more or less than we did yesterday,” said a trader.

Housebuilders, retailers, domestic banks and other Brexit-sensitive stocks fell sharply earlier this week when pressure grew on May and investors grappled with the likelihood of Boris Johnson, who wants a tougher divorce deal, as her successor. The former foreign secretary is favourite to win the Conservative party leadership contest, according to Oddschecker. May will step down as prime minister once the new party leader is chosen, expected in July. “Theresa May’s announcement ... comes as no surprise, but it could lead to a chain reaction that will ultimately be negative for UK market sentiment,” said Seema Shah, senior global investment strategist at Principal Global Investors. —Reuters

Business

KIB awarded again ISO 22301:2012 for business continuity management

The only bank in Kuwait to have obtained this ISO certification

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) was recently inspected by the British Standards Institution (BSI) in relation to the ISO 22301:2012 certification requirements for Business Continuity Management (BCM) Systems. The BSI concluded that KIB satisfies all requirements of the ISO standard, thereby re-certifying the Bank's Business Continuity Management system for three more years until 2022. The surveillance assessment was conducted without any non-conformity and as per the report, the BCM system managed under KIB's Risk Management, continues to achieve its intended outcomes.

KIB was originally awarded the ISO 22301:2012 certification in 2013, and has been re-certified in 2016 and now in 2019. KIB continues to be the only bank in State of Kuwait to have obtained this ISO certification, as a result of its proactive risk management and its endeavor for continued implementation of a sound and effective business



Feroz Noorani

can continue effectively and smoothly in the event of any disruption. This reaffirmation of our ISO certification

process. On this occasion, Feroz Noorani, Chief Risk Officer and General Manager of Risk Management at KIB, expressed his delight and gratitude for having the Bank once again awarded the ISO re-certification, saying: "At KIB, we maintain a robust and effective Business Continuity Management system and Crisis Management plan that ensures that our key services and operations

demonstrates our commitment to delivering exceptional banking services to our customers at all times - even during crisis situations."

Noorani lauded the efforts of KIB Executive Management and all KIB employees who have demonstrated their strong understanding of the Bank's policies and procedures, as well as their role during the auditing process and readiness for any eventuality of business disruption or a crisis. He also noted, the significant role all employees play in improving the Bank's business operations and continuity of services at all times.

The ISO report has also commended the Bank's Executive Management for its effective role in ensuring the successful implementation and readiness of all procedures and processes at all times. Noorani added that "The ISO 22301:2012 re-certification for Business Continuity Management is a testament to KIB's track record in pro-

viding excellent customer service while maintaining internationally accepted standards at all times".

An internationally reputable certification, the ISO 22301:2012 was developed to ensure effective implementation of business continuity within organizations even during crisis scenarios. Accordingly, adhering to ISO 22301:2012 aims at protecting institutions from both severe and minor incidents that might disrupt workflow by providing effective emergency response plans and proper crisis management.

BSI is one of the largest certification bodies across the globe and is also the national standards body of the UK. By providing organizations with set business standards, reviewing operations and providing certifications for proper implementation of management system standards, BSI helps them improve performance, reduce their risk and help them become more sustainable.

KIPCO appoints Eric Schumacher as Group Treasurer

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - announced the appointment of Eric Schumacher as Group Treasurer.

Schumacher has close to 30 years of experience in corporate and investment banking, and a proven track record of managing regional and global commercial banking businesses. Prior to joining KIPCO, Schumacher held leading positions with HSBC, Bank FAB and Citi, and was based in Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and Riyadh over the last decade. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce and an MBA from Concordia University in Canada. He is also a Chartered Financial Analyst.

Schumacher is replacing Declan Sawey, who recently retired after working with KIPCO for 12 years.

Commenting on the appointment, Faisal Al-Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), said: "We are delighted that Eric has joined the company. As we continue to implement our long-term strategy of diversifying our investor base to provide financial flexibility to the company, Eric's expertise and knowledge of the regional financial players will be valuable for us moving forward. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Declan for his many years of dedicated service."

Schumacher said: "KIPCO is one of the region's renowned investment companies, and I am excited to be given the opportunity to work across the many businesses it operates. I look forward to working with my new colleagues to support the company's strategy and create greater value for our shareholders."



Eric Schumacher



Burgan Bank grants premier customers free valet parking at selected places

KUWAIT: For the convenience of its Premier customers, Burgan Bank recently announced that it has added new locations with free valet parking service. It's designed to offer the premier customers with more comfortable shopping and dining experience. Customers carrying either the VISA Signature or Qatar Airways MasterCard World Credit Card are now entitled to free valet parking service at several prime locations in Kuwait such as: Salhiya Complex, Oishi Sushi, Triangle Restaurant, Ubon Restaurant, Slider Station, Salwa Al-Subah Theatre and Hall and Marina Mall and Marina Hotel.

Our Premier customers can now enjoy a more comfortable experience away from the hassle of finding a parking space for their car. The free valet parking service has been introduced as a part of the bank's wide range of valuable privileges and benefits that is especially designated for our Premier customers.

WALL STREET WEEK AHEAD

Trade protection doesn't have to exclude growth stocks

NEW YORK: The escalating US-China trade war has sent dividend-rich sectors like utilities higher, but investors don't need to get all defensive just yet, according to strategists who say there are plenty of growth stocks with some insulation from China.

Some investors are seeking safety in domestic US growth stocks ranging from software and online advertising to aerospace and recruitment since President Donald Trump's May 5 tweets showed that US talks with China were in trouble.

While the prospect of a prolonged trade war has shaken the market, investors are also trying to protect themselves from the risk that they could miss out on gains in the event that the United States and China reach a surprise agreement.

Because of the difficulty handicapping the chance of a US-China deal, John Praveen Portfolio Manager at QMA in Newark, New Jersey, said he would not "completely sell out" of stocks. But he said: "If I was 5 percent overweight stocks, I might reduce it to 3 percent and see if I could reduce exposure to semiconductors and technology."

"If you're looking to avoid the pure dividend play and avoid the China trade narrative, you have to look at stocks that are a pure play on the US economy," said Peter Kenny, founder, Kenny's Commentary LLC in New York. Broadly speaking, investors have been raising their defenses. While the S&P has fallen roughly 4 percent since Trump announced his plan to raise tariffs on Chinese goods in early May, utilities - a low-growth sector with reliably high dividends - has risen more than 2 percent.

But growth-hungry investors are seeking more nimble companies with little exposure to overseas sales or

Chinese imports even in the beaten down technology sector, where semiconductor stocks have lead the recent declines.

Online advertising platforms and cloud software are two technology segments that would not be directly affected by China tariffs, according to Daniel Morgan, portfolio manager at Synovus Trust in Atlanta. In online advertising, Morgan favors Twitter, Facebook and Snap Inc over Google parent Alphabet, which suspended business with China's Huawei this week as a result of the trade battle.

He also likes software providers such as Salesforce.com, which derives 70 percent of its revenue from the Americas and only 10 percent from Asia-Pacific. However, Salesforce.com has fallen more than 5 percent since the Trump tweets.

Another option is Workday Inc, which has risen about 4 percent since May 5 and derives 75 percent of its revenue from the United States.

Steve Lipper, senior investment strategist at Royce & Associates favors US-facing companies offering services such as recruiting and merger advice due to a strong US labor market and solid merger activity. But while US-facing recruitment firms such as Kforce and ASGN Inc may not be hurt directly by the trade war, Robert W. Baird analyst Mark Marcon notes that they would suffer if tariffs caused the economy to weaken.

Instead, Marcon favors domestic payroll software companies such as Automatic Data Processing Inc and Paychex Inc., which tend to do better than recruiters in a downturn. But even if their fundamentals remain strong, payroll companies like Paycom and Paylocity could be vulnerable in a selloff due to relatively high valuations, Marcon said. In industrials - a sector with heavy exposure to China - Burns McKinney, a portfolio manager at Allianz Global Investors in Dallas likes defense stocks such as Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, which could benefit if US-Iran hostilities keep intensifying.

Since sectors like utilities have risen so much, Royce's Lipper is favoring less obvious safe choices. "Be wary when the consensus view is already reflected in valuations," said Lipper, but he added: "The US economy is so diverse that there are always areas that are insulated from whatever you have a concern about." — Reuters

Nissan Al-Babtain Launches special Ramadan aftersales service campaign

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Nissan in the State of Kuwait, is pleased to announce its latest aftersales service campaign that is applicable on all Nissan models prior to May 2016. Bringing its customers, the best of this season's deals with added benefits, the new offer stands valid up to 3rd of June 2019.

Owners of Nissan models prior to May 2016 will now be entitled to a 30 percent discount on genuine car parts, 15 percent off on service labor with 13 points free checkup. Equipped with up-to-date tools and devices and managed by proficient, and trained service advisors, Nissan Al-Babtain invites its customers to gear up for the summer season.

To ensure convenient access to all Nissan customer owners, Nissan Al-Babtain presently owns 8 quick service centers, three main service centers and 14 Parts Outlets located in strategic locations around Kuwait.

Al-Babtain Group was founded in 1948, to present a model of honesty, integrity and total dedication, gaining a solid reputation in Kuwait and the Middle East region. Today, Al-Babtain Group has licensing rights for some of the world's leading brands stretching the globe from the USA to the Far East.



High stakes for enclave as Europe's biggest casino goes bust

CAMPIONE D'ITALIA, Italy: Campione d'Italia, a tiny Italian enclave on the shores of Switzerland's Lake Lugano, is fighting for its survival after its main source of income-a giant casino-went bankrupt.

"SOS Campione is dead" reads a giant banner hung opposite the immense casino, made up of modernistic cubic-shaped blocks with darkened windows stretching 10 floors high. "Rien ne va plus"-the French version of "no more bets"-reads another banner on a tent set up by the unions representing some 500 casino employees, who suddenly found themselves without work.

For the 1,961 inhabitants of this one-square-kilometer (0.4-square-mile) sovereign Italian territory inside southern Switzerland, the closure of the public casino has been devastating. For decades, it guaranteed the prosperity of the town, 23 kilometers (14 miles) from Italy. "Those who were lucky enough to be born here, were lucky enough to have a job," Fiorenzo Dorigo, who worked at the casino for 21 years, told AFP. "Once you were done with your studies and military service, you reunited with all of your old school mates" working at the casino, he said.

But that comradeship and income security evaporated last July, when a local Italian court in Como ordered the casino to close after it failed to honor its financial obligations to authorities in Campione, which is part of Como province.

Hoping for resurrection

The atmosphere in the community now that the casino is shut is "sad", said Evgenia Petrova, a 52-year-old Russian artist, living in Campione since 2012. The typical "Italian positivity", which used to distinguish the village from the surrounding Swiss communities, "is not obvious anymore," she told AFP, looking sadly out the window of her paint-splashed studio.

But residents still hope for the casino's resurrection. A Milan court recently overturned the Como legal ruling on the grounds of procedural inconsistencies. And last month, the Italian government sent an expert to evaluate the possibilities of bringing the casino back to life. Inhabitants are demanding that Rome comes to the rescue. "Campione is Italian. Italy cannot just abandon it. It must take all possible steps" to save the enclave, unionist Vincenzo Falanga said.

Espionage

Campione has a long and rich history. In the year



This picture taken on May 6, 2019 shows the front of the casino in Campione d'Italia by Swiss architect Mario Botta, a tiny Italian enclave on the shores of Switzerland's Lake Lugano. — AFP

1777, a wealthy trader and landowner named Totone donated Campione-later renamed Campione d'Italia under the rule of dictator Benito Mussolini-to the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan, which became part of Italy in 1797.

The picturesque enclave, which with its winding walkways and hills covered in cypress and palm trees offers a magnificent view of the lake, has a unique status. Inhabitants pay taxes to Italy, but almost everything else is Swiss, including the currency, car registration number plates, telephone lines and rubbish collection. It is also a tax haven: there is no sales tax and inhabitants benefit from a generous tax break to compensate for the cost of living, which is also very Swiss-meaning high.

A gaming establishment was first opened in Campione in 1917, but its main purpose was to spy on foreign diplomats during World War I, and it closed two years later.

It reopened in 1933 thanks to a decree, which remains in effect, requiring the casino proceeds to cover all municipal costs. The casino, with its high-rollers, showered Campione in riches for decades, allowing the tiny enclave to dream big-too big, according to some.

Competition, online gambling

In 2007, after seven years of construction, a brand new, 36,000-square-metre, ochre-colored casino, saw the light of day. The colossus, designed by Swiss architect Mario Botta, can accommodate 3,100 gamblers at a time, offering them 56 tables and around 1,000 slot machines to choose from.

But new laws permitting slot machines in bars and cafes and the rise of online gambling have gradually whittled away the house winnings. The strengthening of the Swiss franc against the euro, as well as the opening of three large

Swiss casinos nearby since 2000 have also taken their toll. Over the past decade, as the casino's profits fell, so too did the town's fortunes. The mayor quit, the nursery school shuttered and the tourist office is preparing to do the same.

Swiss and Italian aid groups say that around 200 people now usually show up at their thrice monthly food and other aid distributions. "Campione has not seen a situation this difficult since the war," said Giorgio Zanzi, the administrator sent by Rome to run things after the mayor left.

His office is chilly: Campione can no longer afford fuel to keep the heating on, and municipal employees have not been paid since February 2018. The casino and municipality have together raked up millions in debt, Zanzi told AFP, adding, though, that he was still holding out hope for a rescue. As a result of the downturn, Campione had no candidates for Sunday's local elections and has cancelled the ballot, which should have run in parallel with voting in European elections.

'Small territory, big problems'

Ideas on how to save Campione have been discussed, from investing in tourism or new technologies to the creation of an advantageous tax scheme for businesses. But time is of the essence.

The situation will soon become even more complicated: Next year, the enclave is due to become part of the European Union customs area, raising practical questions about interactions with non-EU member Switzerland.

Authorities in Bern say discussions with Italy about the implications of the change are "under way" but refuse to give details. Campione, Zanzi said, is "a small territory, but with big problems". — AFP

What's On



MoU between KCST and the French Institute for the Development of the French Cultural Attache

Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST) signed with the French Institute for Academic Development of the French Cultural Attache, in the State of Kuwait, for academic cooperation and research exchange. The event was conducted on campus in the presence of KCST President, Professor Khalid Al-Begain, along with Cedric Devais, Director of the French Institute.

The terms of the Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU) includes three main frameworks: encouraging the exchange of students of KCST, a cultural and technological research transfer from major institutions in France, and the organization of scientific and cultural conferences for students of KCST.

The President of KCST Professor Khalid Al-Begain in a press statement: "We are always striving to cooperate with the respective sectors that will further develop our overall education vision, in order to continuously

provide our students well-rounded programs, and to infuse the required skills and knowledge into the labor market". The agreement signed with the French Institute will provide students the advantage to expand their cultural based knowledge through the exchange of experiences from numerous fields.

Al-Begain added that KCST offers Bachelor's degree programs in: Computer Science, Computer Engineering, and exclusively Electronics & Communications

Engineering. Stating that those programs focus primarily on the development of students' technological and technical skills, and pave the way for the youth to achieve their ambitions and empower them within their fields. Finally, Al-Begain stressed that, "KCST spares no effort in reaching out to all parties that share the same values in enhancing the education level benchmark, and to continuously develop it to provide the finest form of knowledge that is demanded by the labor market".

Experience Jumeirah Messilah's exciting summer camp for kids

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa has brought an extraordinary experience for your children with its thrilling summer camp. Starting from June 9th 2019, the summer camp is open for kids of ages 4 to 12 years old and will run daily from 08:30 to 15:30, Sunday to Thursday. Children spending their summer in Kuwait can enjoy a variety of interactive and fun-filled activities guaranteed to help your little ones beat the summer heat.

Kids will have the opportunity to partake in their favorite sports including basketball, swimming, tennis and kick boxing along with enhance their creativity in arts and handicraft classes and much more, all while meeting new friends and discovering new interests and hobbies. Your precious little ones will not only explore a wide range of exciting opportunities but will also develop valuable life skills such as socializing and teamwork in a secure and safe environment.

Georges Akar, Director of Sales & Marketing at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel



& Spa said, "Summer holidays are a great time for kids to learn and try something new. Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa is the perfect place for them as it is a haven for exceptional sporting and leisure facilities that kids will be able to experience at our beach resort. The daily sessions change every day and stimulate the physical and motor-skill development of children, all in the care of our qualified and dedicated team of instructors." Registration for the camp is now open and children can sign up for five days, ten days or for the entire summer, with delectable lunch included in the package. The camp combines fun, sport, creative activities and learning to keep kids active, entertained and happy throughout the summer.



GOFSCO celebrates togetherness at its annual Ghabqa

Gas and Oil Fields Services Company (GOFSCO), one of the largest integrated service providers in Kuwait specializing in the upstream oil and gas sector, both onshore and offshore, recently hosted its annual employee, partners and media Ghabqa at the Sheraton Hotel in Kuwait.

Mubarak Alhajeri - Deputy CEO Business Management at GOFSCO welcomed oil and gas journalists and media representatives where he emphasized his sincere gratitude to their ongoing support to GOFSCO as well as to the oil and gas sector. Additionally, Alhajeri expressed his appreciation to employees who have reflected high professionalism in delivering projects that are up to international standards. He also wished them a blessed Ramadan and praised their efforts and dedication throughout the past year.

Mubarak Alhajeri - Deputy CEO Business Management at GOFSCO said: "We are honored to host our annual Ghabqa event to reflect our appreciation of the significant efforts exerted last year by our employees, partners, and media members. Through sheer



hard work and dedication, backed by a professional team of employees GOFSCO continues to be the vanguard of excellence, within the oil and gas sector. We also take this opportunity to thank our media partners for their continuous support and dedication the

past year." As Kuwait's leading oil and gas services company, GOFSCO will continue organizing events that gather employees, partners, and media members together at a family-oriented setting to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan.



The Ambassador of Peru, Francisco Rivarola Rubio honors Kuwait Times photographer Joseph Shagra for his long-standing support and wished him a hearty farewell on his departure from Kuwait.

ICSK Reflections 2019

We don't learn by doing, we learn by reflecting on what we have done. The more reflective you are, the more effective you are. 'Reflection' is an event of celebration and reverberation that was coordinated on 16th May 2019 to jubilate the victory and triumph of ICSK, Kuwait on the Academic excellence, brilliance and centum results at the AISSE and AISSE March 2019. As it is rightly quoted that 'We are what we repeatedly do' - excellence, then is not an act, but a habit, the results of 2019 have proven the fact that the child prodigies of ICSK are highly competitive, skillful and intellectual by all means.

The program was facilitated to appropriate and laud the stupendous and prodigious teachers of ICSK for their sheer hard work, sincerity and dedication in what they do. It is the hard work of the teachers and the students that has borne fruit. The program started the ball rolling with a mellifluous prayer song presented by the teachers' choir. The gathering was addressed and greeted by the Deputy Vice Principal of ICSK Senior, Susan Rajesh. The result analysis of class 10 and 12 for the year 2019 was presented by the Principal and Senior Administrator of ICSK Senior, Dr V Binumon.

The whiz kids of ICSK who added

feathers to the golden cap of ICSK are: for class 10 the toppers of the ICSK Senior branch are Mahillya Mohan holding the first rank with a stupendous 97.2%, Alma Trisa Sunil who stood second with 97%, and Hiba who stood third with 96.6%. While in The Khaitan Branch, Megha Johnson holds the first position with a huge 99.6%, followed by Vishnu Sagar with 98.2%, and Neha Kunnath with the third rank securing 97.4%. In the Amman branch Neha Merin stood first with 97.8%, Hiba and Siddharth Sunil with 96.4% securing second position and Ashwin Thomas and Sarthak Jogiani securing the third position with 96.2%.

For class 12 the school toppers are Eisha Elizabeth [science stream] bagged the first position with 97.6% [Khaitan Branch] second position is held by Diya Thasnim Choond Thodi with 96.2% [senior branch] and third position by Haneen Abdul Rasheed [senior branch] with 96%. In the Commerce stream Rachel Lourdes Fernandes stood first with 95.6% [senior branch], Alita Janice Quadros stood second with 95% [senior branch] and Rukkayya Mustansee stood third with 94.8%. In Humanities, Joe Mammen John secured the first position with 94.8% [senior branch], Kyra Hollyn bagged the second position with 93.4% [senior branch] and Shaikh Kashifa stood third with 92.4% [senior branch]. ICSK Kuwait is indeed proud and privileged to have such prodigious children in their family.



Health

Malaria returns with a vengeance in Venezuela as economic crisis worsens

CARACAS: If it weren't for the Center for Malaria Studies in Caracas, Francelis Pacheco would have been unable to get treatment for a disease she has contracted around 20 times. Pacheco, 25, sells clothes and cigars in the claustrophobic tunnels of gold mines in southern Venezuela's Bolivar state, where a type of malaria-carrying mosquito is particularly active. "If it weren't for (treatment) here, honestly I don't know what I would have done," Pacheco told AFP as she waited in the clinic for a new diagnosis, having spent several months in Bolivar state and neighboring Guyana, some 600 kilometers from her Caracas home.

The clinic, though, is not immune to Venezuela's economic crisis and is struggling to treat patients. This is a country that lacks 85 percent of the medicines it needs, according to the pharmaceuticals industry. With a tiny budget, the malaria clinic, which was opened in 1973, relies on donations. Between 20 and 30 people a day from all over the country come get diagnosed and receive medication to alleviate the symptoms of a disease that can be fatal.

'Zero funding'

Scientists who would later work for this clinic contributed in 1961 to helping Venezuela become the first country to eradicate malaria. However,

there was a resurgence seven years ago, worsening to become an epidemic in 2016, according to the Red de Epidemiologia NGO. Today the clinic is in a sorry state: yellowed microscopes, a dishwasher stained by purple chemicals, refrigerators corroded by rust.

Over the years, fridges, freezers and air conditioners have stopped working and there's been no budget to repair or replace them. Maintenance costs \$1,000 a month. Until 2007, the clinic received state funding for studies, but the money dwindled and then disappeared, Oscar Noya, the institution's director said. "In Venezuela, scientific and investigative funding is zero!" he said. The clinic has eight staffers who are paid salaries equivalent to \$7 to \$11 a month. "We're at extreme poverty levels," said Noya, adding that "a full-time researcher should earn \$4,000 to \$5,000 a month."

Despite this, the center continues to propose malaria research projects to universities in France, Spain or Scotland, which allows them to secure funding. According to the World Health Organization, Venezuela registered more than 400,000 malaria cases in 2017, making it one of the hardest-hit countries in the Americas. Noya, though, believes the true extent of the epidemic is "close to two million" people affected. The clinic treated 3,500 patients in 2018 alone, a figure that was "150

times greater than the past but with the same number of staff."

Surviving on donations

The government stopped publishing its epidemiology bulletins in 2016 when it acknowledged 240,000 cases. Venezuela is blighted by the worst economic crisis in its recent history with basic necessities such as food and medicine in short supply. Oil production, on which Venezuela is almost entirely dependent, has dropped alarmingly in the last decade while the International Monetary Fund predicts inflation will reach a staggering 10 million percent this year.

President Nicolas Maduro's government blames the country's woes on US sanctions, which the socialist leader claims have cost Venezuela \$30 billion. The malaria clinic survives on donations from NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders, Aid For Aids and the Rotary Club, as well as through international partnerships. The money raised is spent on medicine, quick test kits, gloves and chlorine to clean the facilities. In 2018, they also received anti-malaria medication from the Pan American Health Organization after two years without any, Noya said. "Today, we're on the mat... but we're fighters and that's why we're still here, even though we've had many offers to leave the country" for work, he added. — AFP

Albino panda caught on camera in China

BEIJING: A rare all-white panda has been caught on camera at a nature reserve in southwest China, showing albinism exists among wild pandas in the region, state media reported. The spotless, red-eyed animal was photographed while trekking through the forest mid-April in southwestern Sichuan province, said official news agency Xinhua on Saturday.

The panda is an albino between one to two years old, said Li Sheng, a researcher specializing in bears at Peking University, who was quoted in Xinhua's report. The Wolong National Nature Reserve — where the animal was spotted — told AFP it had no further details about the albino panda. More than 80 percent of the world's wild pandas live in Sichuan,

with the rest in Shaanxi and Gansu province. There were about 548 giant pandas in captivity globally as of November, reported Xinhua.

The number living in the wild has dwindled to fewer than 2,000, according to the World Wildlife Fund. Famed for its "panda diplomacy", in which China dispatches the rare animals to other countries as a symbol of close relations, Beijing has invested in different programs to protect its furry ambassadors in recent years. In 2018, China announced plans to create a bastion for giant pandas three times the size of Yellowstone National Park to link up existing wild populations and encourage breeding of the notoriously slow-reproducing animal. — AFP

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Kuwait Times
248 33 199

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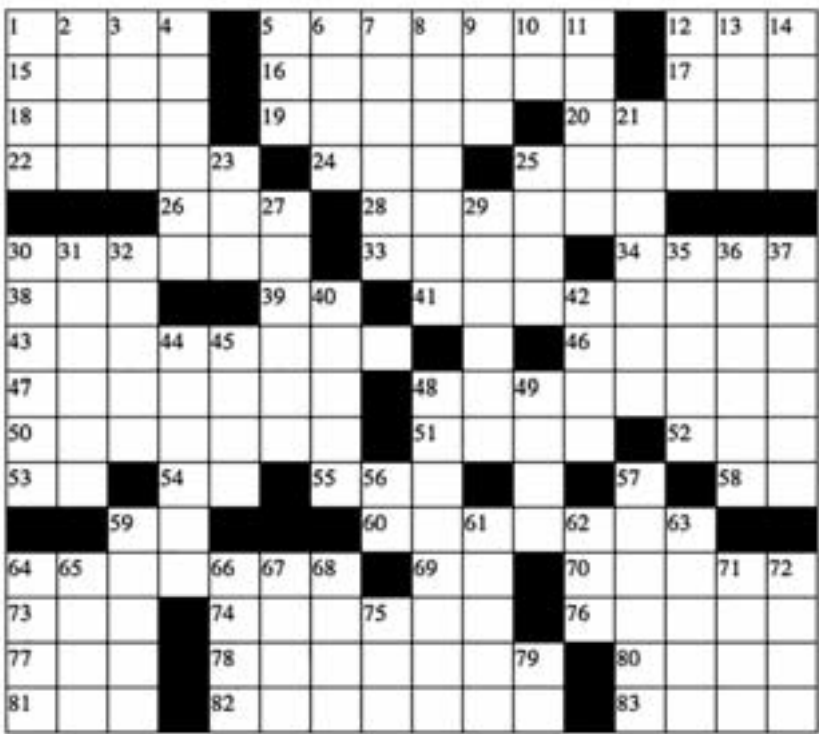
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ACROSS

- 1. Gymnastic apparatus consisting of two parallel wooden bars supported on uprights.
- 5. A disposition that is confused or nervous and upset.
- 12. The basic unit of electric current adopted under the System International d'Unites.
- 15. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- 16. Of or relating to the Sinhalese languages.
- 17. The syllable naming the sixth (submediant) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
- 18. A person who has lied or who lies repeatedly.
- 19. (Greek mythology) The beautiful daughter of Zeus and Leda who was abducted by Paris.
- 20. Fruit-flavored dessert (trade mark Jell-O) made from a commercially prepared gelatin powder.
- 22. Filled with a great quantity.
- 24. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- 26. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 28. A trite or obvious remark.
- 30. A worker who fastens things by tacking them down.
- 33. Situated in or facing or moving toward the east.
- 34. Clothing of a distinctive style or for a particular occasion.
- 38. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- 39. A public promotion of some product or service.
- 41. German philosopher concerned with concept formation in the human mind and with symbolic forms in human culture generally (1874-1945).
- 43. Shrub or small tree having flattened globose fruit with very sweet aromatic pulp and thin yellow-orange to flame-orange rind that is loose and easily removed.
- 46. Ask for and get free.
- 47. Providing protective supervision.
- 50. Dragonflies and damselflies.
- 51. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- 52. Informal terms for your occupation.
- 53. Informal terms for a mother.
- 54. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- 55. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- 58. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- 60. A state of Uganda and site of a former Bantu kingdom.
- 64. Trade name for a drug containing an antihistamine and a decongestant.
- 69. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- 70. (Norse mythology) The chief race of gods living at Asgard.
- 73. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
- 74. Any of various small terrestrial or aquatic crustaceans with seven pairs of legs adapted for crawling.
- 76. Water containing salts.
- 77. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- 78. Act in unison or agreement and in secret towards a deceitful or illegal purpose.
- 80. Being or occurring at an advanced period of time or after a usual or expected time.
- 81. (Norse mythology) God of war and strife and son of Odin.
- 82. Type genus of the family Aplysiidae.
- 83. A town in north central Oklahoma.

DOWN

- 1. The rounded seed-bearing capsule of a cotton or flax plant.
- 2. The capital of Western Samoa.
- 3. Having been read.
- 4. Make a high-pitched, screeching noise, as of a door.
- 5. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary and stimulates growth of Graafian follicles in female mammals, and activates sperm-forming cells in male mammals.
- 6. A German art song of the 19th century for voice and piano.
- 7. Undo the ties of.
- 8. Lac purified by heating and filtering.
- 9. Of a light yellowish-brown color n l.
- 10. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
- 11. A Hindu prince or king in India.
- 12. (prefix) Indicating difference or variation.
- 13. A master's degree in library science.
- 14. A unit of illumination equal to 1 lumen per square centimeter.
- 21. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
- 23. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
- 25. A book of the New Testament.
- 27. The mountain peak that Noah's ark landed on as the waters of the great flood receded.
- 29. (Old Testament) The first of the major Hebrew prophets (8th century BC).
- 31. Type genus of the Alaudidae.
- 32. The highest part (usually the melody) in a piece of choral music.
- 35. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
- 36. Get or find back.
- 37. A slight wind (usually refreshing).
- 40. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- 42. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- 44. A mountain in south central Alaska.
- 45. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
- 48. Extremely pleasing.
- 49. A small cake leavened with yeast.
- 56. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- 57. United States swimmer who in 1926 became the first woman to swim the English Channel (1903-).
- 59. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- 61. A cushion on a throne for a prince in India.
- 62. Tag the base runner to get him out.
- 63. Of or relating to or characteristic of Asia or the peoples of Asia or their languages or culture.
- 65. Showing self-interest and shrewdness in dealing with others.
- 66. A tax on employees and employers that is used to fund the Social Security system.
- 67. A program under which employees regularly accumulate shares and may ultimately assume control of the company.
- 68. A small replica of a person.
- 71. The basic unit of money in Peru.
- 72. Tall woody perennial grasses with hollow slender stems especially of the genera Arundo and Phragmites.
- 75. One of the strands twisted together to make yarn or rope or thread.
- 79. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Even though you know your life is being flooded with psychic phenomena now, you're reticent to tell anyone. That's because you know how others may raise their eyebrows behind your back. Family can be the worst. They say the proof is in the pudding and you have pudding on your face right now from seeing your gut pan out correctly. Because it has, you've been using this gift more and more. That's a good thing. Keep that bit of information to yourself and use it at your discretion. Knowing what can work for you makes life better in every way. Have family or friends over today. Try to have fun.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You plan a great vacation today that takes you away from work and any other encumbrances you may have. Perhaps you want to travel to far-away places with a cabin on the water or study a writer's travel itinerary through a favorite fiction book. Whatever you want to do, think about it before you put your vacation plans into stone. Love is in the air and invites you to spend time with that special someone. You may even be asking yourself today if your life is going to be more than what you're used to now. If so, you are in control. Make it what you want.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your life takes on a mystical quality you know well. Gut feelings present themselves and you're aware that you need to follow them. What's funny is that others see your intuition as part of your practical thoughts. They've followed your gut before when you admitted it came from something higher than you. That decision made a huge difference in their lives as well when it panned out to be right on. Something you started yesterday will produce magnificent results later. Take the time to enjoy a celebration with friends and family later.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have a strong need for being taken care of even when you're taking care of others. It's understandable after the week you've had. Try to take time to enjoy your day and the familial embrace you get when at home. Trying to relax now may be just the thing you need. Forceful thinking and communication have those you love from family to friends listening and taking mental note of what you mention now. Be careful because a little bit of anger is like water on concrete. It goes a long way quickly. This may cause you issues when you say the wrong thing. Think before putting your mouth into gear.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

What you weren't so tolerant of yesterday, Karma has brought back to you with a vengeance. Psychic situations will be here for you, for some time to come. Who are you going to admonish for this, Leo? Forgiveness of self and others is a major point to be discovered at this time. Being understanding is more that you'll have to learn and you've already started today. Events happen to bring these items to your attention, generally in the form of your family, especially if you have children. Family is the part of your life you can't and don't want to turn away. Life, sometimes, makes you have to learn your lessons. It can be a hard task master.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Here comes the psychic in full force again just like you've come to enjoy. A mystical quality invades your dreams, thoughts and emotions at this time. Spiritual learning comes easily now in everything you do, because you can recognize it easily as being spiritual. Taking time with those you love and understanding why you feel as you do where they're concerned gives you a warmer feeling about life. Friends and family seek you out for guidance which they can trust. Try to enjoy this day with those friends and family or take the time to spend some time with you exclusively. You'll be glad you did because you can reminisce over your good times too.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Musical Instruments 3 - Word Search

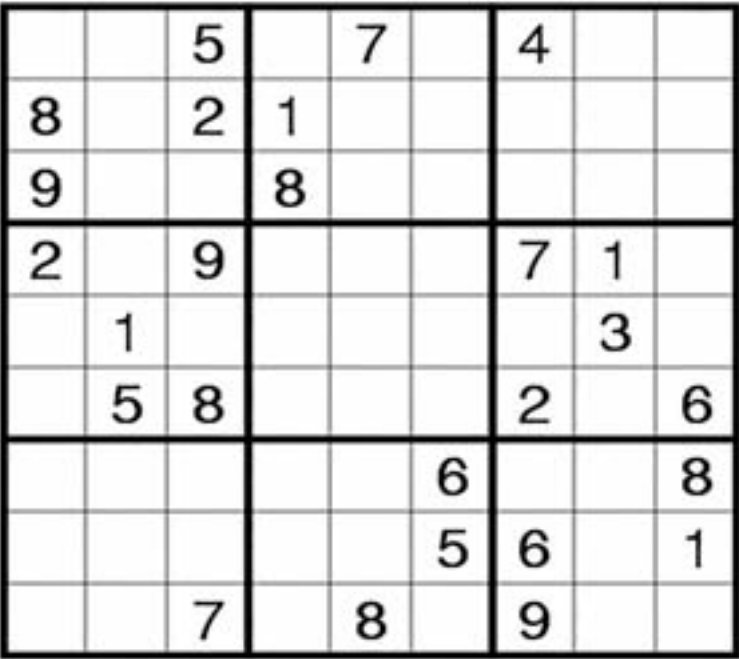


ACCORDION
BAGPIPES
BASS
CASTANETS
CELLO
CORNET
CYMBAL
FIFE

GONG
HARMONICA
JEWS HARP
LAOUTA
LUTE
MANDOLIN
MELODEON
MOCENO

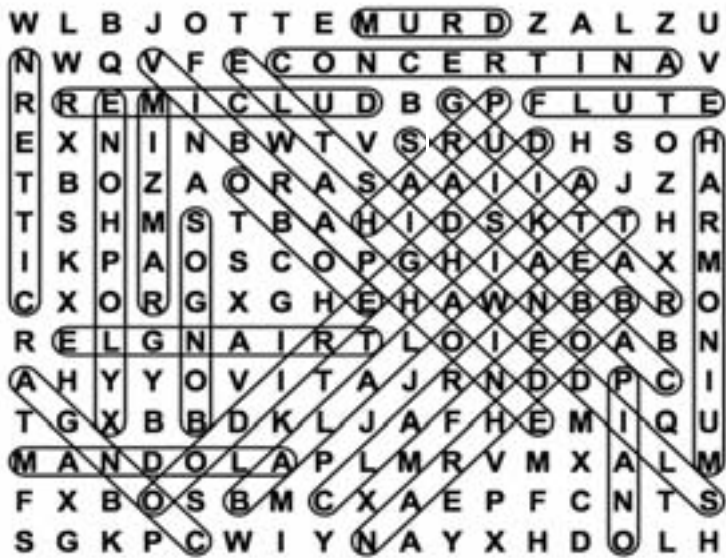
SAXOPHONE
STRUMSTICK
TARKA
TRUMPET
VIOLIN

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution

Musical Instruments 2 - Solution

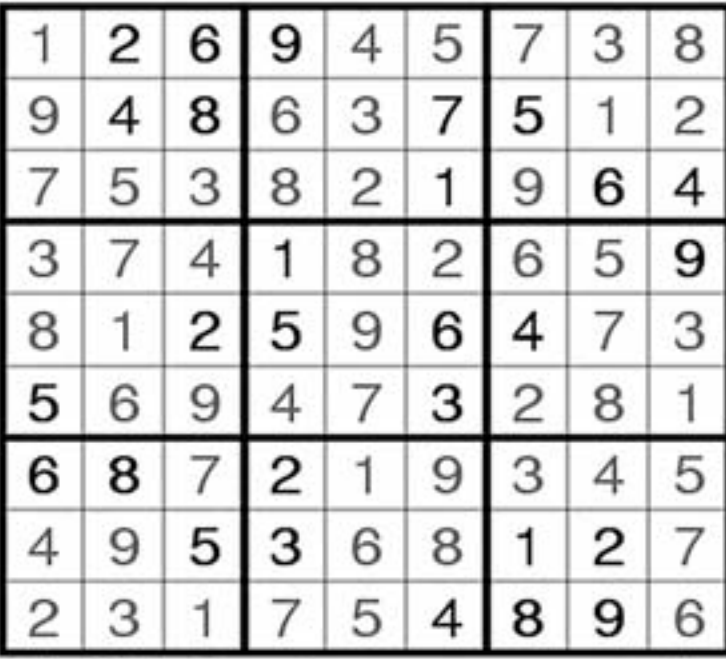


BALALAICA
BODHRAN
BONGOS
CABASAS
CITTERN
CLARINET
CONCERTINA
CONGA

DRUM
DULCIMER
FLUTE
GUITAR
HARMONIUM
HARP
MANDOLA
MIZMAR

PIANO
SLIDE WHISTLE
TRIANGLE
VIBRAPHONE
XYLOPHONE

Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, MAY 27, 2019



Some 3000 participants of the St Petersburg's Choir perform at Dvortsovaya Square to mark the Day of Slavic Literature and Culture in central Saint Petersburg on May 24, 2019. — AFP

ISTANBUL’S MUSICAL FERRY CAN BE A SOULFUL EXPERIENCE

It's already one of the world's most original commutes—the ferry trip between Istanbul's European and Asian sides gives a daily quarter of a million passengers unforgettable views on their way to work. Now the Turkish city is offering music to offset the seascapes, and for the amateur musicians providing it, it's a chance to make some crucial money in difficult economic times. The musicians work hard to ensure their music reflects Istanbul's unique position as a city straddling East and West. “We travel back and forth between the two continents and we try to express emotions sparked by the two cultures: a kind of fusion, a synthesis,” Oguzhan Erdem, one of the ferry musicians, told AFP.

Until recently, ferry musicians played without authorization, but city authorities realized they were missing an opportunity and launched a project to make them an official part of the experience. Erdem plays the Turkish ney reed flute, an instrument traditionally used by Sufis, a mystical branch of Islam, while his band mate plays a Western-style keyboard. “It's merging the East with the West,” said Erdem.

‘Like being in a movie’

In total, 82 musicians work on the intra-city line from 9:00 am until the last ferry at 1:00 am. Ferry musicians rely

on the tips to make their living and it has offered a lifeline for those struggling with Turkey's economic downturn. Erdem, who also plays in the streets and with his band “DoguBang”, had failed to find work as an interior designer. “The job market is so bad. When I was brooding over what I will do, I saw a young girl singing in the ferry one day and asked myself ‘why don't I give it a try’,” he said. He has now been playing the ney on ferries for the past nine months.

Istanbul is full of buskers—both Turkish and foreign—particularly on its busy shopping hub of Istiklal Avenue. Eren Koc, who plays the keyboard, is a sculptor by profession and found himself playing on the ferries after visiting the city for one of his exhibitions. “There are interesting moments on the ferries. When applause suddenly breaks out or some people stand up and dance—it is like being in a movie,” he said. For some commuters, it can be a truly emotional experience after a hard day at work.

“The tunes speak to my soul and rest my mind. It takes me back to the past,” said Nimet, with tears in her eyes as she listened to the ney. “Like the water flowing in the Bosphorus, it is triggering a flow of emotions inside,” she said, wistfully. Erdem is happy to inspire people. “In the evenings people leave work and return to their home. They empty their mind, reach a kind of serenity. I see many

sleeping in peace. This is a source of great pleasure for me,” he said.

Recruiting

Tunc Baydar, coordinator of the project for the municipality, said musicians playing in an unauthorized fashion had previously caused problems for the crew and security personnel. “We kicked off the ‘Music on the Ferry’ project in 2016 so that we could create an environment for those musicians to play in the ferry with permission, more comfortably,” he said. “We have turned the ferry musicians into part of our brand.” Baydar said that they were always on the lookout for new talented musicians.

“We watch their videos on social media. We've even begun recruiting conservatoire students.” Many world capitals have great buskers—and some have even become megastars like Ed Sheeran—but few cities offer as stunning a backdrop. “We listen to music in the metros in Europe but it's so beautiful on the sea,” said Berker Colak, a tourist from Germany who came to Istanbul with his fiancée. “The seagulls and the music create a really authentic ambiance, a real harmony.” — AFP

Senegal star **Seck's** cash counterfeiting case dropped



Senegal star Seck

A cash counterfeiting case against one of Senegal's biggest music stars, Thione Seck, was dropped on Thursday due to defects in the investigation, a judge said. Seck, 64, a Senegalese singer whose career has lasted decades, was detained for nine months after being arrested in May 2015 over accusations of counterfeiting money, including photocopies, ink, scanned bank notes and counterfeit banknotes.

“All prosecutions have been cancelled and the public prosecutor can no longer prosecute them on the basis of the money,” including counterfeit bank notes found at the singer's home, Seck's lawyer Bamba Cisse said on Thursday. The singer claimed he was the “victim of a conspiracy” during his trial, saying Gambians living in Sweden had given him a bag of fake notes as an advance for an upcoming European concert tour.

Investigators never found any evidence this happened. Seck has performed in a number of Senegalese bands, including Orchestra Baobab in the 1970s. — AFP



A man sleeps on the terrace of a coffee shop as a captain of the Eminonu ferry draw his ferry to the Kadikoy dock, in Istanbul. — AFP photos



Musicians Oguzhan Erdem (center) plays ney, Eren Koc (left) keyboard and Zafer Saka (right) guitar during a ferry trip on the Bosphorus from Kadikoy to Eminonu, in Istanbul.



A view shows South Korean director Bong Joon-Ho (center) posing on stage with the laureates and jury members after he was awarded with the Palme d'Or for the film "Parasite (Gisaengchung)".

SOUTH KOREA HAILS BONG JOON-HO'S TOP PRIZE WIN AT CANNES

South Korea on Sunday hailed Bong Joon-ho's Cannes film festival win for "Parasite", saying it had left a historic footprint as the first Korean film to win the Palme d'Or. The top prize win by "Parasite", a black comedy about a family of clever scammers from South Korea's underclass, was a unanimous choice by the nine-person jury at the renowned festival. It was the first big international prize for Bong, the maker of the hugely acclaimed "The Host" and "Snowpiercer", who became the first Korean in the 72-year history of Cannes to scoop the coveted award.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in congratulated Bong for the prize, adding the passion of the "Parasite" staff had created national pride in the country's cinema industry. "I extend my gratitude on behalf of the Korean people," Moon tweeted. "I am very proud of Bong Joon-ho who has risen to the top as one of the world's best directors." Waking up to the news on Sunday morning, South Korean media, critics and fans were ecstatic, with Yonhap news agency reporting that Bong had "finally quenched the thirst" for top recognition at the festival.

The mass-circulated Dong-A Ilbo daily added: "By winning the Palme d'Or at the renowned Cannes film festival, Bong left a footprint in the history of Korean cinema". South Korea had won a handful of prizes at the French festival since 2002 when Im Kwon-taek took the best director award, but had fallen short of receiving the highest honor. Director Park Chan-wook's "Old Boy" won the Grand Prix-the second-highest prize-in 2004, and went on to collect the Jury Prize for his 2009 horror movie "Thirst". "There was always a lingering feeling that South Korea an unfinished homework but with the win, we finally took care of it," said film critic Ha Jae-keun.

Yoon Sung-eun, another film critic, added: "The regular attendance by South Korean directors who knocked on the door of Cannes in the past was also the driving force of this good news." "Parasite" has been distributed to 192 countries ahead of its worldwide premiere, a record for any Korean film. After its premiere in Seoul on May 30, the movie is expected to open across the globe from June through December. Jason Bechervaise, a critic based in Seoul, noted the Cannes win guaranteed the movie's box office success and could pave the way for bigger milestones.

"This is going to generate massive news coverage in Korea days ahead of its release," he said. "Looking ahead, it's also got a very good chance of being Korea's first Oscar-nominated film." Fans praised Bong's accomplishment, saying he had elevated the position of South Korean films on the international stage. "If an artistic movie can prove its marketability, Korean cinema will be able to take another leap forward. Thank you and well done," an online user said. "I screamed with joy very early in the morning! I can't wait to see 'Parasite,'" another commentator added. — AFP



South Korean director Bong Joon-Ho celebrates during a photocall after he won the Palme d'Or for the film "Parasite (Gisaengchung)" during the closing ceremony of the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos



South Korean director Bong Joon-Ho (left) poses during a photocall with South Korean actor Song Kang-ho after he won the Palme d'Or for the film "Parasite (Gisaengchung)".

Winners for the 2019 Cannes Film Festival

Palme d'Or: "Parasite," Bong Joon-ho
Grand Prix: "Atlantics," Mati Diop
Jury Prize (tie): "Les Misérables" (Ladj Ly) and "Bacurau" (Kleber Mendonça Filho, Juliano Dornelles)
Best Actress: Emily Beecham, "Little Joe"
Best Actor: Antonio Banderas, "Pain & Glory"
Best Director: Jean-Pierre & Luc Dardenne, "The Young Ahmed"
Best Screenplay: "Portrait of a Lady on Fire," Celine Sciamma
Special Mention of the Jury: "It Must Be Heaven," Elia Suleiman
Camera d'Or: "Our Mothers," Cesar Diaz
Short Film Palme d'Or: "The Distance Between Us And The Sky," Vasilis Kekatos
Special Mention of the Jury: "Monstruo Dios," Agustina San
Queer Palm (Feature): "Portrait of a Lady on Fire," Celine Sciamma
Queer Palm (Short): "The Distance Between Us And The Sky," Vasilis Kekatos



(From left) Belgian director and member of the Un Certain Regard Jury Lukas Dhont, Lebanese director and President of the Un Certain Regard Jury Nadine Labaki, French actress and member of the Un Certain Regard Jury Marina Fois, German producer and member of the Un Certain Regard Jury Nurhan Sekerci-Porst and Argentinian director and member of the Un Certain Regard Jury Lisandro Alonso arrive for the screening of the film "Sibyl".



Brazilian film director Kleber Mendonça Filho (left) delivers a speech next to French director Ladj Ly (right) after Ly, Filho and Dornelles shared the Jury Prize respectively for their films "Les Misérables" and "Bacurau".



British actress Emily Beecham poses during a photocall with her trophy after she won the Best Actress Prize for her part in "Little Joe".



French director Ladj Ly (center) poses with Brazilian director Juliano Dornelles (right) and Brazilian film director Kleber Mendonça Filho (left) after they shared the Jury Prize for their respective film "Les Misérables" and "Bacurau".

DIOP MAKES HISTORY AS FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO WIN BIG AT CANNES

The first black women director ever to compete for the top prize at Cannes in its 72-year history took its second prize Grand Prix Saturday for her haunting ghost story about African migrants. Mati Diop, 36, grew up in France and belongs to a Senegalese artistic dynasty that includes her uncle, acclaimed director Djibril Diop Mambety, and her father, musician Wasis Diop. She told AFP after the red-carpet premiere of “Atlantics” that it was while she was making a short film in Senegal a decade ago that she began to wrestle with the tragic push-and-pull factors leading Africans to flee the continent. “I was spending time in Dakar at the time and was struck by the complex and sensitive realities of the phenomenon we called at the time ‘illegal emigration,’” she said.

“Once I had finished my (short) film, I felt I still had a lot of dimensions and issues to explore. I had the desire and the idea to tell the story of youth disappearing into the sea, through the perspective of a young woman.” She chose a Romeo and Juliet story of star-crossed young lovers, but with a supernatural twist. Critics adored her poetic approach, with the BBC calling the film “dreamy yet sensual, fantastical yet rooted in uncomfortable facts. Diop’s beguiling film may even have reinvented a genre.” The heroine of the film is Ada, growing up in a poor district of Dakar.

Although her parents have arranged her marriage to a wealthy young man, Ada has already fallen in love with Souleiman, a builder who’s been cheated out of his salary by a corrupt developer. He and a group of fellow workers decide their only future lies in Europe and set off in a



French actress and film director Mati Diop poses during a photocall with her trophy after she won the Grand Prix for her film “Atlantics (Atlantique)”. — AFP photos



French actress and film director Mati Diop (right) poses on stage with US actor Sylvester Stallone after she was awarded with the Grand Prix for her film “Atlantics (Atlantique)”. — AFP photos

character of Ada, a young women who “wakes up to a new dimension of herself”, as a ray of light. Asked about her own role as a trailblazer at Cannes, Diop told reporters the news had “quite honestly made me sad at first because we had to wait this long”.

‘Black people in the room’

Just four of the 21 directors who had been vying for the Palme d’Or were women. She said she had had an “urgent need” to feel more represented on screen and see more people who look like her behind the camera, telling fresh stories. “As a black woman I really missed black figures and black characters cruelly. And that’s also why I made this film: I needed to see black people on screen-huge, everywhere,” she laughed. “It’s also something new. I can’t believe when I go to see a Jordan Peele movie... I can’t even believe what I’m feeling,” she said, referring to the Oscar-winning African-American film-maker behind “Get Out” and “Us”.

“I’m so excited, I’m looking at how many black people are in the room-I almost count them... it’s a little hysterical.” Diop said Cannes as the world’s biggest film festival had the power to help transform the industry by knocking down barriers for previously excluded groups. “Hopefully it will be more and more common that black people are in front of characters of the same color. Inshallah (God willing),” she said.—AFP

motorized boat known as a pirogue for the Atlantic.

African trailblazer

News of the boat’s sinking and the death of its passengers reaches home but Ada can’t quite believe Souleiman is gone. Suddenly her friends start seeing him everywhere around town and Ada receives mysterious text messages on her mobile, while more and more people come down with an inexplicable fever. Their affliction, which also leads the victims’ irises to turn white, turns out to be a visitation of

the souls of the dead, with Souleiman entering the body of a policeman. The supernatural tale of love beyond death, which garnered strong reviews, drew comparisons to “Personal Shopper”, the arthouse hit starring Kristen Stewart, and even the 1990 blockbuster “Ghost”.

But the migrant crisis, in which nearly 2,300 people died trying to reach the shores of European countries last year according to the UN, adds political heft and moral urgency to the film. Diop said that while the weight of the tragic situation was difficult to bear, she seized on the

Who’s who on the Cannes film festival jury

After a female-majority jury last year when the festival was dominated by the #MeToo movement, five men and four women decided this year’s winner of Cannes’ top Palme d’Or prize on Saturday.

Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu

He may now have five Oscars under his belt for the likes of “Birdman” and “The Revenant”, but it all began for the Mexican director at Cannes way back in 2000 with “Amores Perros”. A regular on the Croisette since that staggering debut-although he has never picked up the Palme — this year he returns as the head of the jury.

Now 55, Inarritu is one of the “three amigos” of Mexican auteurs with Alfonso Cuaron of “Roma” fame and Guillermo del Toro (“The Shape of Water”) who have been lordling it over arthouse cinema lately. Like them, he is a director with a strong social conscience, bringing a virtual reality installation on the migrant crisis to Cannes in 2017 that went on to win a special Oscar.

Elle Fanning

At 21 the American actress may be the baby of the jury, but the sometime model has a long career behind her. She made her Cannes debut at just eight in Inarritu’s “Babel”, six years after making her screen debut as a toddler in the Oscar-nominated “I Am Sam” alongside Sean Penn and her older sister, Dakota Fanning.

A regular for Cannes favorite Sofia Coppola, appearing in “Somewhere” and “The Beguiled” in 2017, she turned up on the Riviera again the following year in Nicolas Winding Refn’s “The Neon Demon” as a teenage model whose beauty sparks not just jealousy among her peers but a veritable bloodbath. Despite her status as a screen and catwalk queen, the young star has been spotted queuing up with the hoi-polloi for an ice cream at Cannes when not on red carpet duty.

Maimouna N'Diaye

Best known to millions of children as the voice of the mother of the heroic little boy from the animated classic “Kirikou and the Sorceress”, N’Diaye is one of west Africa’s biggest stars. A documentary maker and activist as well as actress, she grew up in Guinea, but her parents hail from Senegal and Nigeria. She has also has spent large parts of her life working in neighboring Ivory Coast and in Burkina Faso after studying in France.

She first came to notice in Georgian Otar Iosseliani’s “Chasing Butterflies” in 1992 and won the African Academy best actress award in 2015 for “Eye of the Storm”, where she played a lawyer defending a former child soldier on war crimes charges.

Kelly Reichardt

The queen of US indie “slow cinema” made a big critical splash-ever so quietly-with her last film, “Certain Women”, a restrained but heartfelt portrait of women in small-town Montana with Michelle Williams, Laura Dern and Kristen Stewart. It won the top prize at the London film festival with The Guardian’s Peter Bradshaw marveling at how even an opening hostage drama never ruffled its quiet force.

“It’s directed so calmly it feels as if we’re watching a mild disagreement at a church coffee morning,” he wrote. Williams was also the lead in Reichardt’s first film at

Cannes, “Wendy and Lucy”, which was also widely acclaimed, and her next movies, “Meek’s Cutoff” and “Night Moves” were both premiered at the rival Venice film festival. Many had predicted that her latest film, “First Cow”, might make the Cannes’ line-up this year, but it is still in post-production.

Yorgos Lanthimos

The Greek director who scored a huge hit this year with his Oscar-winning “The Favorite”, scored his first big international success with “Dogtooth” at Cannes in 2009. He was back to win the jury prize in 2015 with another original off-kilter look at the world in “The Lobster”, his first film with Rachel Weisz and Colin Farrell.

He teamed the Irish actor with Nicole Kidman in his even freakier “The Killing of a Sacred Deer”, which also made its bow at the festival, where he explored family and

and which made a star of actress Joanna Kulig.

Alice Rohrwacher

The great female hope of Italian arthouse cinema won best screenplay at Cannes last year for “Happy as Lazzaro” having won the grand prix (second prize) three years earlier for “The Wonders” starring her sister Alba Rohrwacher and Monica Bellucci. The 36-year-old philosophy graduate made her Cannes debut in 2011 with “Heavenly Body” about a teenage girl going through a religious crisis.

Robin Campillo

The writer of the Oscar-nominated “The Class”, which also won the Palme d’Or in 2008, created something of a sensation at the festival two years ago with “120 BPM (Beats per Minute)”, his sweeping portrayal of AIDS



Spanish actor Antonio Banderas poses during a photocall with his trophy after he won the Best Actor Prize for his part in “Dolor Y Gloria (Pain and Glory)”.



French director and screenwriter Celine Sciamma poses with her trophy during a photocall after she won the Best Screenplay prize for the film “Portrait Of A Lady On Fire (Portrait de la Jeune Fille en Feu)”.



Palestinian film director and actor Elia Suleiman poses during a photocall after he won the Special Jury Prize for his film “It Must Be Heaven”.



Guatemalan director Cesar Diaz poses during a photocall with his trophy after he won the Camera d’Or for his film “Our Mothers (Nuestra Madres)”.



Mexican director and President of the Jury of the Cannes Film Festival Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu (Bottom left) speaks on stage during the closing ceremony of the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos

power relationships with an unforgettable twist.

Pawel Pawlikowski

The passionate Polish director, who won best director last year for his black-and-white love story “Cold War” which went on to get three Oscar nominations, made his name with a string of brilliant documentaries for the BBC about post-Soviet Russia and the war in the former Yugoslavia. He switched to fiction in 2001 with the acclaimed “Last Resort” which he followed up with “My Summer of Love”.

He made his dark masterpiece “Ida” after moving back from Britain to his native Poland. His story of a nun who discovers she was born Jewish during World War II won him the best foreign language film Oscar but few even hardened hearts-could resist the romantic force of “Cold War”, which was based on his own parent’s stormy relationship,

activism during the darkest years of the crisis in Paris.

It was a huge hit and France and proved a big international break-out for the screenwriter, who came to directing rather late. Campillo, 56, also wrote and directed “Les Revenants” which was later turned into an acclaimed television series, “The Returned”.

Enki Bilal

The Belgrade-born author of futuristic and apocalyptic graphic novels is something of a legend in his adopted home of France, where his books are often instant best-sellers. At 67, he has also directed three feature films including “Bunker Palace Hotel” (1989) with Jean-Louis Trintignant and Carole Bouquet and “Tykho Moon” (1996). — AFP



(From left) Polish director and member of the jury of the Cannes Film Festival Pawel Pawlikowski, US actress and member of the jury of the Cannes Film Festival Elle Fanning, Mexican director and President of the Jury of the Cannes Film Festival Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, Burkinabe director and member of the jury of the Cannes Film Festival Maimouna N’Diaye, Greek director and member of the jury of the Cannes Film Festival Yorgos Lanthimos, US director and member of the jury of the Cannes Film Festival Kelly Reichardt, French director and member of the jury of the Cannes Film Festival Robin Campillo, Italian director and member of the jury of the Cannes Film Festival Alice Rohrwacher and French director and member of the jury of the Cannes Film Festival Enki Bilal pose as they arrive for the screening of the film “The Specialists (Hors Normes)” at the 72nd edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



The town was carved out of an ancient forest in 2011 at a cost of 600 million euros.



The three-lane highway leading from Malabo to Sipopo was mostly empty of traffic. — AFP photos



A conference hall is one of the attractions, but there is little activity.

Equatorial Guinea struggles for place in world tourism

Gleaming but eerily empty, the luxurious Sipopo resort with its five-star hotel and exclusive facilities rises from a tropical beach, symbolizing the dilemma of Equatorial Guinea—a notoriously closed country that has turned to tourism to help fill its coffers. The purpose-built town was carved out of an ancient forest in 2011 at a cost of 600 million euros (\$670 million), initially to host a week-long African Union summit and showcase the rise of the tiny oil-rich state.

A 16-kilometre (10-mile) drive from Equatorial Guinea’s capital Malabo, the resort boasts a vast conference center, the Sofitel Malabo Sipopo Le Golf hotel, as well as 52 luxury villas—one for every head of state to attend the summit—each with its own swimming pool. There is also an 18-hole golf course, several restaurants and exclusive beaches guarded by police. For almost a decade, Sipopo has been the crown jewel in a strategy to lure high-end visitors to Equatorial Guinea to diversify an economy badly hit by a slump in oil revenue. But the town, visited by an AFP reporter two months ago, seemed quite empty—an impression strengthened by conversations with people who live or who work there.

“It’s depressing, there’s no-one,” said a visiting Gabonese consultant. A worker, who asked not to be named, said the complex was quiet year-round: “You can hear the sound of your own footsteps.” The occasional visitors tend to be well connected, rich and in search of privacy, the sources said.

Many are guests of a government described by Human Rights Watch as corrupt and repressive. One of the villas, according to the sources, was occupied by former Gambian dictator Yahya Jammeh after he fled his country in 2017.

Empty lobby

At Easter, the 200-room hotel’s guests included a Spanish couple on honeymoon, a few families and some businessmen, who were all foreigners. In the echoing lobby, a huge black and white portrait of the country’s 76-year-old authoritarian president, Teodoro Obiang Nguema-Africa’s longest-serving ruler—hung on the wall, watching over the vacant reception area. A 1.5-kilometre (nearly mile-long) beach—an artificial shore secluded from curious eyes—was virtually deserted, in contrast to a public beach near the capital. The three-lane highway leading from Malabo to Sipopo was mostly empty of traffic.

A hospital was added after the villas were built, but is unused, the sources said. In 2014, a mall was built at the resort to house 50 shops, a bowling alley, two cinemas and a children’s play area. But a hotel receptionist said the complex was not open yet, adding: “If you want to buy a souvenir, you will have to go to Malabo.” At night-time, shiny limousines arrived at a luxury restaurant to drop off diners.

Tourism hopes

Located on the mid-Atlantic coast of central

Africa, Equatorial Guinea has flooded social media with messages of its allure as a holiday destination. Plans to build a new passenger terminal at the airport in Bata city have also just received a 120-million-euro (\$133-million) injection from the Development Bank of Central African States. Figures for visitors are unavailable, and the tourism ministry in Malabo did not respond to AFP’s requests for information. In the latest global compilation of figures posted by the World Bank, the number of tourists for Equatorial Guinea has been left blank.

But much of the tourism in evidence are business people, such as oil company workers, relaxing for a few days, or attending energy or economic conferences. A few travel firms offer trips tailor-made for both luxury and adventure, but they also allude to the difficulties, notably of being allowed to enter the country. “The country has been a mystery to outsiders, who were discouraged from entering by a difficult visa process and a lack of tourism infrastructure,” says the website of British tour operator Undiscovered Destinations.

The firm claimed, however, that “things are changing fast... with an excellent road network and numerous hotels springing up seemingly overnight.” Few Equatoguineans have the chance of staying in such places. At Sipopo’s hotel, a basic room costs the equivalent of more than 200 euros (\$224) a night, while exclusive accommodation tops 850 euros.

The discovery of vast oil reserves off the coast



The swimming pool and the garden of the near-empty Sofitel Hotel in Sipopo.

in the mid-1990s has boosted the country’s gross national income to a theoretical annual \$19,500 per person per year, according to the UN Development Program. But that wealth benefits a small elite among the country’s 1.2 million inhabitants. More than two-thirds of Equatoguineans live below the poverty line, and 55 percent of the population aged over 15 are unemployed. — AFP



Statue of reggae legend Bob Marley seen on the grounds of the Bob Marley Museum in Kingston, Jamaica. — AFP photos



A mural depicting Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I, Jamaican Reggae legend Bob Marley and his seven sons is seen on the grounds of the Bob Marley Museum in Kingston, Jamaica.

Enjoy the sights and sounds of Marley at the Bob Marley Museum

The museum is situated on the site of the legendary musician’s home, which he purchased in 1975. This house, featuring 19th-century architecture, was Marley’s home until his transition in 1981. It was converted into a museum six years later by his wife, Mrs Rita Marley. The main museum displays Marley’s personal treasures.

The property also features a well-equipped 80-seat theatre, a photographic gallery, a record shop and a gift shop filled with a wide array of Bob Marley memorabilia. Relax and enjoy a sumptuous meal from the One Love Café after you’ve completed your tour which offers a peek into every aspect of Bob Marley’s life. — www.bobmarleymuseum.com



The home of Jamaican reggae legend Bob Marley on the grounds of the Bob Marley Museum in Kingston, Jamaica.



Entrance to the home of Bob Marley is seen on the grounds of the Bob Marley Museum in Kingston, Jamaica.



A mural shows reggae legend Bob Marley and his family on the grounds of the Bob Marley Museum.

Classifieds

Monday, May 27, 2019



STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind later on, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div>SFC. CHART26/05/2019 0000 UTC</div>	
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	31 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	26 °C		
ABDALY	46 °C	26 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	46 °C	30 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	40 °C	28 °C		
SALMIYAH	36 °C	29 °C		
AHMADI	36 °C	31 °C		
NUWAISIB	43 °C	27 °C		
WAFRA	44 °C	24 °C		
SALMY	45 °C	28 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	05/27	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	42 °C	24 °C	NW-S	06 - 28 km/h
Tuesday	05/28	Hot and some high clouds will appear	45 °C	27 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Wednesday	05/29	Hot and Partly cloudy	45 °C	28 °C	VRB-SW	06 - 26 km/h
Thursday	05/30	Hot and some high clouds will appear	44 °C	29 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:19
Sunrise	04:51
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:39
Isha	20:08

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	44 °C
MIN. Temp.	23 °C
MAX. RH	53 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	S 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

MATRIMONIAL

Proposals are invited for a Keralite boy, RCSC, 32/172, B.Sc very fair, working in Kuwait, upper middle class, from parents of suitable girls, preferably working in Kuwait. Interested please contact email: joekarintholi36@hotmail.com (C 5539) 27-5-2019

CHANGE OF NAME

I, HUSAIN KAKUMAMA HUZA-IFA SHABBIR, holder of Indian Passport No. Z2814333, Permanent R/O Najampura Sagwara, Rajasthan 314025, have changed my Given Name to HUZAIFA SHABBIR HUSAIN Surname to KAKUMAMA. (C 5538)

I, CANDELINA FERNANDES Residing at H.No: 192/3, Near Ganapati Temple Central Horta Aquem-Baixo, Salcete Goa, has changed my name from MARIA CONCEICAO FERNANDES to CANDELINA FERNANDES. Hereafter, in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by the name CANDELINA FERNANDES. (5537)

I, MELBA FERNANDES Residing at H.No. 192/3, Near Ganapati Temple Central Horta Aquem-Baixo, Salcete Goa, has changed my name from MELBA DOMINGOS VAS to MELBA FERNANDES. Hereafter, in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by the name MELBA FERNANDES. (C 5537)

I, DOMINGOS VAS, S/o Francisco Vas Residing at H.No: 192/3, Near Ganapati Temple Central Horta Aquem-Baixo, Salcete Goa, has changed my name from DOMINGOS FRANCISCO VAS to DOMINGOS VAS. Hereafter, in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by the name DOMINGOS VAS. (5536) 24-5-2019

URGENT HIRING

Reputed Security Company in Doha is looking for the following category;

- Ops/ Control room Manager - Any National, High School Diploma or Bachelor, 3 years Security companies experience preferred.
- Sectors/Branch Manager - Any National, must have Kuwait Driving License, Associate Degree or business management course. 3 years Security companies experience preferred.

Only shortlisted candidate will be notified.

recruitmentcareer.qa@gmail.com

MOHAMMED ANAS KAYUM AHMED (new name) S/o KAYUM AHMED previously called MOHAMMED ANAS (old name) S/o KAYUM AHMED resident near chuna bhatti, rajtal-ab, banswara (Raj.) solemnly declare. (C 5534)

LOST

It is notified for the information that my original (qualifying certificate/mark statement and migration certificate) senior secondary examination of year 2015 and Rollno. 9103562 issued by CBSE had been actually lost. Name of the candidate - Jawaheer Junaidd. Tel: 67799330. (C 5535) 23-5-2019

EMERGENCY



112

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



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 27/5/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 27/5/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	713	Sohag	00:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	MSC	412	Asyut	00:15
KAC	102	London	00:50	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KAC	677	Dubai	01:40
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	JZR	701	Asyut	02:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:00
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	JZR	111	Doha	02:10
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR	305	Istanbul	03:15
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	JZR	1735	Cairo	04:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
KAC	382	Delhi	05:15	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:15
BAW	157	London	06:10	BAW	156	London	07:40
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	211	Jeddah	08:00
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	RBG	1162	Alexandria	08:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	IGO	1756	CNN	08:10
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	RBG	214	Sohag	08:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	163	MXF	08:35
RBG	1161	Alexandria	07:10	KAC	501	Beirut	08:50
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50
RBG	211	Luxor	07:25	KAC	561	Amman	08:55
UAE	855	Dubai	07:35	MSC	402	Alexandria	09:00
MSC	401	Alexandria	08:00	UAE	856	Dubai	09:05
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	KAC	117	New York	09:05
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	IRA	666	Esfahan	09:10
JZR	702	Asyut	08:25	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40
FDB	5055	Dubai	09:20	KAC	741	Dammam	09:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	JZR	731	Cairo	09:45
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
KAC	384	Delhi	09:55	KAC	101	London	10:05
SAW	703	Damascus	10:00	FDB	5056	Dubai	10:15
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	QTR	1071	Doha	10:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	515	Tehran	10:35
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:40	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	SAW	704	Damascus	11:00
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	12:10	JZR	221	Riyadh	11:20
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	AXB	396	Kozhikode	11:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05
KAC	742	Dammam	12:55	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
IRA	667	Esfahan	13:10	JZR	123	Dubai	12:45
				AXB	790	CNN	13:10
				RBG	554	Alexandria	13:10



KUWAIT: Kuwaitis buy prayer beads at a market in Kuwait City during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Modi, Khan speak for the first time...

Continued from Page 1

Kashmir-divided between India and Pakistan since partition in 1947 - claimed by a militant group based in Pakistan killed 40 Indian troops.

India and Pakistan then carried out tit-for-tat air strikes, but to the great relief of the international com-

munity the two countries retreated from the brink of further action. Earlier this month, in a diplomatic victory for India, the UN added Masood Azhar, the leader of the group that claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing, to its terrorist blacklist.

The group, Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), itself has been on the UN terror list since 2001. The last time that Modi and Khan spoke is believed to have been when Modi congratulated his counterpart on his election victory in July 2018. Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) last week sealed a landslide election win, thanks in part to Modi talking tough about Pakistan. — AFP

French IS members sentenced...

Continued from Page 1

One was later released as it was found he had travelled to Syria to support the Yazidi religious minority - the target of a particularly brutal IS campaign that rights groups say may have amounted to genocide. The remaining 12 were put on trial under Iraq's counterterrorism law, which can dole out the death penalty to anyone found guilty of joining a "terrorist" group, even if they were not explicitly fighting.

Gonot, who fought for IS before being arrest in Syria with his mother, wife, and half-brother, has also been sentenced in absentia by a French court to nine years in prison, according to the French Terrorism Analysis Center (CAT). Machou was a member of the infamous Tariq ibn Ziyad brigade, "a European foreign terrorist fighter cell" that carried out attacks in Iraq and Syria and planned others in Paris and Brussels, according to US officials.

Lopez, from Paris, travelled with his wife and two chil-

dren to IS-held Mosul in northern Iraq before entering Syria, French investigators say. Iraq declared victory over IS in late 2017 and began trying foreigners accused of joining the jihadists the following year. Rights groups including Human Rights Watch have criticized Iraq's anti-terror trials, which they say often rely on circumstantial evidence or confessions obtained under torture.

Baghdad has offered to try all foreign fighters in SDF custody - estimated at around 1,000 - in exchange for millions of dollars, Iraqi government sources have told AFP. Among those sentenced to life in prison are 58-year-old Frenchman Lahcen Ammar Gueboudji and two other French nationals. Iraq has also tried thousands of its own nationals arrested on home soil for joining IS, including women, and begun trial proceedings for nearly 900 Iraqis repatriated from Syria.

The country remains in the top five "executioner" nations in the world, according to an Amnesty International report in April. The number of death sentences issued by Iraqi courts more than quadrupled between 2017 and 2018, to at least 271. But only 52 were actually carried out in 2018, according to Amnesty, compared with 125 the year before. Analysts have also warned that prisons in Iraq have in the past acted as "academies" for future jihadists, including IS supremo Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. — AFP



BAGHDAD: Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Ali Al-Hakim (right) attends a press conference with Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Baghdad yesterday. — AFP

Iran vows to defend itself against...

Continued from Page 1

media quoted Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi as saying "there are no direct or indirect talks between Iran and the United States".

Washington has been seeking to tighten sanctions against Iran as relations worsen under US President Donald Trump, who last year pulled out of a nuclear agreement that predecessor Barack Obama had signed with Iran and other world powers in 2015. In Tehran, President Hassan Rouhani floated the idea of holding a referendum over Iran's nuclear program, Iranian media reported.

A referendum over the program could give Iran's leaders space to maneuver and a chance to resolve the stand-off with the United States. Top Iranian leaders have said they are not seeking war with the United States and officials speaking to Reuters from Tehran last week said that despite the sharpened rhetoric with Washington, authorities are trying to avoid open conflict.

"Article 59 of the Constitution (referendum) is a deadlock breaker ... and could be a problem-solver at any junction," the semi-official news agency ILNA quoted Rouhani as saying late on Saturday. Rouhani said that, when he was a top nuclear negotiator in 2004, he had proposed holding a referendum on the nuclear issue to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iran has held only three referendums since its 1979 Islamic revolution-to approve the setting up of an Islamic Republic and then to approve and amend the

constitution. Washington says it has built up the US military presence in the region, accusing Tehran of threats to US troops and interests. Tehran has described US moves as "psychological warfare" and a "political game". Separately, a deputy commander of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards said the US military presence in the Middle East was at its "weakest in history" despite talk of a build-up.

Meanwhile, Iraqi leaders have warned of the risks of war during a visit by Iranian Foreign Minister, whose country is locked in a tense standoff with the United States. "We are currently repelling all the efforts of war against Iran, whether economic or military," Zarif said at a joint press conference with his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Ali Al-Hakim. "We will face them with strength and we will resist," he added.

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi warned of the "danger of a war" during a meeting with Zarif, his office said. Abdel Mahdi pleaded for the "stability of the region and the upholding of the nuclear deal," it said, referring to a 2015 agreement between Tehran and major powers. Iraqi President Barham Saleh discussed with Zarif "the need to prevent all war or escalation," his office said.

On Saturday, Zarif called the deployment of extra US troops to the region "very dangerous and a threat to international peace and security." It follows a US decision in early May to send an aircraft carrier strike force and B-52 bombers in a show of force against what Washington's leaders believed was an imminent Iranian plan to attack US assets.

Washington says the latest reinforcements are in response to a "campaign" of recent attacks including a rocket launched into the Green Zone in Baghdad, explosive devices that damaged four tankers near the entrance to the Gulf, and drone strikes by Yemeni rebels on a key Saudi oil pipeline.— Agencies

The merits of supplication...

Continued from Page 1

heart and emotions should be engulfed with the feeling that you really need Him yet He doesn't need you. In spite of that, He is able to give you whatever you ask of Him. In your quest for Allah's assistance and unstinted grants, avoid associating partners with Him.

He says in Al-Hadith Al-Qudsi: "I am, self-sustainable and, indeed, independent of the partners they associate with Me. So whoever does an act of worship to please Me and someone else, I will definitely abandon him to those he associates with Me." What a loss! Who can reward and care about you more than Allah - your creator, cherisher and sustainer! Ramadan is the best training course in sincerity to God (Allah.)

Be confident that Allah (SWT) will give you whatever you ask for: It may take time but eventually you will get it. And if you don't get it as you wanted, He will give it to you in another way that will be more beneficial and meritorious. Abu Huraira (RA) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said what can be translated as: "Whenever one of you supplicates, let him avoid saying, "O Allah, give me such and such if You will.

Rather, he should be firm and confident, and that should make invoke Allah (God Almighty) for big things; for there is nothing so big that Allah can't give His servant." Therefore, you are encouraged to ask of Allah anything that comes to your mind so long as it doesn't go beyond the parameters of the Islamic teachings. Etiquette of supplication in Islam:

- (A) Avoid raising your voice whenever you supplicate to Allah (SWT). While we believe that Allah is very close to us, His nearness befits His majesty, grandeur and magnificence. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Indeed, Allah, the One you pray and supplicate to is closer to every one of you than the neck of his camel." Although God Almighty is closer to us than the necks of our camels or our jugular veins, He is over the heavens and there is nothing above Him.
- (B) Don't invoke a curse upon yourself or your wealth or your children in a fit of anger or else. Jaber bin Abdallah (RA) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said what can be translated as: "Never pray against yourselves nor your wealth nor your children. It may so happen that you supplicate invoking a curse on the aforementioned at a time when Allah directly answers prayers." (Reported by Muslim)
- (C) Do not be impatient to get your supplication answered by Allah. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Your supplications will be answered so long as you are not in hurry and desperate, saying, 'I have invoked my Lord enough but nothing has materialized.'" (Bukhari and Muslim)
- (D) Begin with praising Allah (SWT), thank Him for the bounties and blessings He has conferred upon you, then invoke Him to send His peace, mercy and blessings to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), then finally supplicate for what you want.

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

Turkey sends weapons to...

Continued from Page 1

Washington, which has criticized Russia's latest campaign and urged a ceasefire, also said it saw signs that Assad has used poison gas in the latest offensive and warned that it would respond "quickly and appropriately" if this were proven. Assad has denied such allegations throughout the war. A spokesman for the Turkey-backed National Liberation Front (NLF), Captain Naji Mustafa, did not confirm or deny any new supplies by Turkey, saying rebels had long had a big arsenal of weapons from anti-tank to armoured vehicles "alongside material and logistical support by our Turkish brothers".

The retreat from Kfar Nabouda was an upset to a Russian goal of a speedy military campaign to gain another slice of heavily populated Idlib province. In the last 24 hours, the Syrian army has been sending large troop reinforcements ahead of opening a new front, a source in touch with Syrian army commanders said. The Syrian army said it continued to intensify its attacks on what it called terrorist hideouts in the northwest.

A Turkey backed-rebel grouping called the National Army, which operates in northwestern border areas near Turkey, has been allowed to join mainstream rebel factions along the frontlines. "Large numbers of our fighters have joined with all their weapons to repel the assault," said Major Youssef Hamoud, their spokesman. The rebels' readiness to put aside differences that once led to bloody internecine fighting has united jihadists and mainstream rebels for the first time in years. — Reuters

Sports

Blues march to first final since 1970, rested Bruins open at home

The two hardest, heaviest teams are in the final: DeBoer

LOS ANGELES: The St Louis Blues are enjoying a storybook turnaround, going from the worst team at the start of the season to facing Boston in their first Stanley Cup final since losing to the same Bruins in 1970. It has been 49 years since the Blues were swept by Boston in a series that culminated with Bobby Orr's iconic overtime game winning goal.

St. Louis won three straight games to eliminate the San Jose Sharks and reach the final which begins with game one on Monday night in Boston. They ousted a weary and banged up Sharks' team with a 5-1 victory in game six of the NHL's Western Conference final, part of an improbable run from last in the league on January 3 to the championship series.

The reversal came after Craig Berube replaced Mike Yeo as head coach in November and goaltender Jordan Binnington took over the starting role in January. St. Louis finished the regular season on a 28-8-5 run and carried that momentum through the Western Conference playoffs.

"We were trying to get on the right track," Berube said. "Once we got going in January and February, I knew we had a good hockey team. Once you get into the playoffs anything can happen, and it did." Said Blues general manager Doug Armstrong, "They turned it around and just haven't stopped going."

The Blues were 300-1 long shots to win the Stanley Cup early in the season and despite their turnaround they still enter the finals as underdogs against the Bruins. The Bruins will have had a 10-day break after sweeping Carolina in four straight in the Eastern Conference final. "It's the Stanley Cup final, game one," said Bruins defenceman Charlie McAvoy. "Just the emotion and the excitement in the city and the feeling in the building is going to be contagious."

HEAVY HITTERS

Sharks coach Peter DeBoer said it will be a hard-hitting, physical, grinding series. "The two hardest, heaviest teams are in the final," DeBoer said. "Everyone talks about skill and all the small players, and there is room for that, but I don't think it's an accident."

"They're (Blues) heavy, hard and organized. There wasn't any room out there for our guys." The Bruins are in the final for the third time in the past 10 years and the 20th time in their franchise history. Should they win, Boston will be the first city in 83 years to simultaneously hold the championships of Major League Baseball, the NFL and the NHL.

A statue outside the Boston Garden pays tribute to Orr's high-flying goal and while they don't have a defenceman of Orr's stature in their lineup they are expected to get back captain Zdeno Chara for game one.

Boston are led at forward by veteran Patrice Bergeron who helped lead the Bruins to a Stanley Cup title in 2011. The two-time all-star Bergeron has a strong all around game and has eight goals and 13 points in 17 playoff games.

For the Blues, forward Brayden Schenn is looking to play a bigger offensive role in the final. Schenn is one of the best two-way players in the league. He was in a playoff scoring slump up until he finally potted a goal in the series-clinching game six against the Sharks.

In order for Schenn to continue to capitalize on scoring chances, he is going to have to make that extra move around the net instead of just hammering away at the puck. "I'm a guy that gets put in offensive situations, whether it's power play or playing with the top players on this team," Schenn said. "I did it throughout the regular season but playoffs, it's tough."



LOS ANGELES: The victorious St Louis Blues will play in their first Stanley Cup Final since 1970.

Unheralded forward Jaden Schwartz has helped make up for Schenn's offensive struggles by scoring 12 goals in the playoffs so far, one more than he scored all regular season. One of the more interesting finals matchups is the goaltending battle between Boston's red-hot netminder Tuukka Rask and the Blues' Binnington.

Finland's Rask gives the Bruins the decided edge, leading all goalies in the playoffs with a 1.84 goals against average. The Bruins know Canada's Binnington better than any other team in the league as he spent last season on loan with their Providence farm team in the AHL after refusing the Blues request to go down to the lower division ECHL farm league. — AFP

Zain celebrates Girgian at Al Roudhan tournament



Al Roudhan fans.

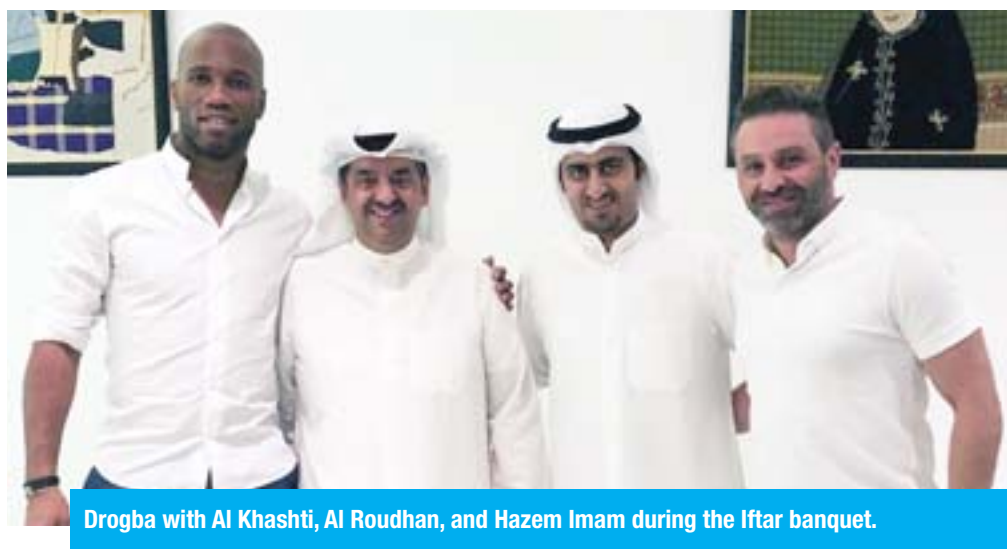
KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, celebrated Girgian at Martyr Fahad Al Ahmad Hall in Daiya Area as part of its daily presence at the 40th edition of Abdullah Meshari Al Roudhan Ramadan Football Tournament. The company is the Diamond Sponsor of the tournament for the fourth year running, which comes under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Zain's support to this unique event comes in line with the company's belief in the importance of supporting the youth and sports sectors in Kuwait, as well as encouraging the various sporting initiatives that cater to young people. The event witnesses impressive participation of football enthusiasts from across Kuwait and the GCC, and Zain will remain committed to supporting and sponsoring sports, emphasizing its dedication to the elevation of Kuwaiti youth and sports.

Zain and Al Roudhan's organizing committee, both being Kuwaiti organizations proud of their national identity, organized a Girgian celebration where candy was distributed to the attending crowds while hosting a traditional performance. The event also witnessed a special friendly match between ministers and members of the parliament, which was held under the patronage and attendance of HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem. The match ended with a 3-2 win for the parliament team.

This year, Al Roudhan tournament witnessed the participation of Italian legend Francesco Totti and Ivorian legend Didier Drogba, who both took part in a special Iftar banquet along with Zain customers who won a competition on the company's social media channels. The event will also host Croatian legend Luka Modric, who won the Ballon d'Or as world player of the year 2018, as well as Portuguese legend Luis Figo.

Al Roudhan Ramadan Football Tournament is considered the most prominent sporting event in Kuwait during the Holy Month of Ramadan of every year. Football fans in Kuwait and the GCC look forward to it with



Drogba with Al Khashti, Al Roudhan, and Hazem Imam during the Iftar banquet.



Zain volunteers offering Girgian to Al Roudhan fans.

great passion, given the fact that it witnesses high levels of professionalism through both the competing local teams as well as the international football stars hosted.

As it does every year, Zain will be present at Al Roudhan Tournament on a daily basis, where it will be interacting with the audiences through various competitions, activities, and entertainment programs. The company will also be distributing valuable prizes and hold-

ing daily challenges and competitions on its official social media channels, and more.

Zain believes in the support of the various initiatives that contribute to the development of the Kuwaiti sports and youth sectors. The company reflects this belief through its support to such distinguished sports events as well as through its support to Kuwaiti athletes in various sports who proudly represent Kuwait in local and international arenas.

Royal Enfield's 'OneRide 2019' in the streets of Kuwait

KUWAIT: Royal Enfield bikers from Kuwait were out riding on Friday, 26 April, for 'One Ride' the brand's flagship ride event across the globe.

Their global mission: To promote brotherhood and togetherness among bikers. The ride covered over 77,000 Km ridden across 305 cities through 500+ organized group rides.

Kuwait saw over 40 bikers decked out in riding finery assemble for the ride. The noise, the exhaust notes, the bikes, can all get pretty exhilarating. There were all models of Royal Enfield bikes on the ride - Classics, Himalayans, Interceptors, continental GTs. They rode about 40 km around different areas of Kuwait, celebrating the biking spirit - the feeling of freedom and independence.

Their start point was at the best place it can be, at KAICO. Kuwait Automotive Imports Company, Al Shaya & Al Sagar, are the proud authorized distributors of Royal Enfield in Kuwait since 2014 and their showroom in Al Rai served as the starting point for the bikers gathering. And just like previous years, Kaico was the main sponsor of OneRide 2019.

On this occasion, Ashish Tandon, General Manager of Kaico, stated "We at Kaico support & encourage events

that reflect the brotherhood image and make members of society closer. Such events, driven by a cause, can help increase community awareness and create a buzz among societies."

As well Nader Salmeh, senior divisional manager, added "Royal Enfield motor bike is considered as collective machinery. The craftsmanship and design is attractive to the naked eye. And with a competitive price amongst other bikes, everybody can own this piece of art"

While brotherhood is great, such a huge movement of bikers is always heading towards a great cause. And this year, their cause was a charity event in which they participated during RAJATHOTSAV 2019 (Harvest festival & mega carnival). Royal Enfield bikers joined other riders in the bikes & vintage cars motor show.

It was essential for bikers to turn up with safety gear. Such events help promote wearing of safety gear and following rules. Royal Enfield has various adventure rides that are planned through the year, where riding groups head out on different tours. It also has an annual event.

When you ride a Royal Enfield, you ride a piece of history. Royal Enfield enjoys cult status in the global motor biking world. People who own Royal Enfield swear by them, while those who don't, look forward to owning one. When you ride a Royal Enfield on the tour, take time to get to know the bike, admire the passion, the history and the people behind the machine. A tour on a Royal Enfield will make you want to come back and experience the thrill of motorcycling through the long streets.



Valencia stun Barcelona to win Copa del Rey

‘Beating Barcelona to win the cup is very special, we deserved to win’

SEVILLE: Barcelona wanted a trophy to ease their Champions League heartache but instead fell to another shock defeat as Valencia pulled off a thrilling 2-1 victory on Saturday to win the Copa del Rey.

Chasing a record fifth consecutive triumph, Barca were undone by a relentless and gutsy Valencia side, who hung on after Lionel Messi pulled a goal back to set up a dramatic finish in Seville. By then, Valencia were already two up, Kevin Gameiro and Rodrigo scoring twice in 13 frantic first-half minutes, after the latter spurned a golden early chance that could have spared them a nerve-shredding last 17 minutes.

Messi drove the comeback effort and Goncalo Guedes twice should have wrapped it up for Valencia, missing a one-on-one and then an open goal before the final whistle sparked pandemonium. Valencia's coach Marcelino, who might have been sacked when his team were four points off relegation in January, raced around the pitch in a frenzy. Barcelona's players sank to their knees.

"We always had faith," said Marcelino. "Beating Barcelona to win the cup is very special. We deserved to win." Messi admitted on Friday his team had still not recovered from the "hard blow" suffered against Liverpool and certainly they seemed too easily disheartened here, finding their fight only once it was too late. Messi also threw his support behind Barcelona's coach Ernesto Valverde but it remains to be seen whether the backing of the board remains after two dreadful defeats have now spoiled such a brilliant La Liga success.

"I'm fine," Valverde said. "When a coach loses you want to go again, to fight to overcome the next challenge. I know losing for this club is hard." "I do not think it's the coach's fault," said president Josep Maria

Bartomeu. "I think he has done a great job," added Gerard Pique. "But it does not depend on us."

They came here as favourites, but only just, their 1,457 consecutive days as Copa del Rey champions under threat, from their own sense of deflation, key players out injured and Valencia's recent surge.

If Barca's season all but ended three weeks ago, Valencia's arguably found life a few days later, as they moved into the top four for the first time and then held on to qualify for the Champions League.

Winning their first trophy since 2008, in the club's centenary year, completes a remarkable comeback campaign that, after 15 games, had them languishing in 15th. "We have made history," said captain Dani Parejo. Gameiro added: "In the difficult moments we stayed close. I don't have the words to describe it."

Some saw a metaphor in Barcelona's pre-match tifo, spelling out 'All Together' splitting down the middle, while there were key absentees from their starting line-up too, Marc-Andre ter Stegen, Luis Suarez and Ousmane Dembele all injured.

Valencia should have been ahead within five minutes, Clement Lenglet's error sending Rodrigo clear but his finish was brilliantly scooped off the line by the recovering Gerard Pique. Barca, with Sergio Busquets in the centre of a back three, settled but lacked zip and in the 23rd minute they were behind. Jose Gaya scuttled in behind Nelson Semedo and his pull-back wrong-footed everyone except Gameiro, who fired in.

Semedo had been beaten down the left and soon after Jordi Alba was outrun down the right, by Carlos Soler, whose cross needed only to be nodded down and in by Rodrigo for number two.

Barcelona stirred before the break. Ivan Rakitic volleyed and then headed wide, before Messi regis-



SEVILLA: Valencia players celebrate with their trophy after winning the 2019 Spanish Copa del Rey (King's Cup) final football match between Barcelona and Valencia at the Benito Villamarin stadium in Sevilla. — AFP

tered their first shot on target in the 43rd minute. Malcom and Arturo Vidal came on for Semedo and Arthur during the interval, as Barca turned the screw. Messi might have turned the match but after wriggling through his sumptuous flick towards the far corner

brushed the post.

Pique fired wide as Valencia dropped deeper. Finally, Messi broke through, the post this time his friend after Lenglet's header struck the woodwork and landed kindly at his feet. — AFP

Lewandowski fires Bayern Munich to domestic double

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski dedicated victory to departing team mates Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery after Bayern Munich wrapped up a domestic double with a 3-0 win over RB Leipzig in the German Cup final on Saturday.

Goals from Lewandowski and Kingsley Coman sealed victory for Bayern in an enthralling game at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin. Both Robben and Ribery came off the bench to make their final appearance in a Bayern shirt, and Lewandowski hailed the iconic duo after helping Bayern to victory with a goal either side of half time.

"These titles are for Franck and Arjen, they have done so much for the club and we have to thank them," the Polish striker told public broadcaster ARD. The win sees Bayern lift the golden German Cup trophy for the 19th time in their history, just a week after securing a seventh successive Bundesliga title last Saturday.

"It was a difficult season at times, but I think we can now say that in the end, it was a very good season," said Lewandowski. The campaign has been particularly tough for Bayern coach Niko Kovac, who has faced constant criticism both from inside and outside the club in his first year in charge.

Yet the fans chanted Kovac's name before and after the final whistle as Bayern ended their season on a high. "It will take a few days to sink in that it is now actually over, but it was good to go out with the double," Robben told ARD.



MUNICH: Bayern Munich players celebrate with the trophy after the German Cup (DFB Pokal) Final football match RB Leipzig v FC Bayern Munich at the Olympic Stadium in Berlin. —AFP

Both sides probed rather frantically for an opener in the first half, and Manuel Neuer denied Yussuf Poulsen with a reflex save on ten minutes. It was Bayern who broke the deadlock, though, Lewandowski flicking in a superb header in the 29th minute after a fine move on the left from Coman and David Alaba.

Coman had a free run at goal and rounded goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi shortly before half-time, but his shot was cleared on the line by Ibrahima Konate. Emil Forsberg had a similar chance for Leipzig just after the break, but came off second best in a one-on-one with Neuer. — AFP

Mets’ Nido hits walk-off in 13th to beat Tigers

DETROIT: Tomas Nido homered leading off the bottom of the 13th inning Saturday night as the New York Mets finally outlasted the Detroit Tigers, 5-4. The Mets are 5-1 on a seven-game homestand. The Tigers have dropped 10 of 11. The Mets loaded the bases with one out and failed to score in the bottom of the 11th before the Tigers did the same thing in the top of the 12th. Nido, who was the last player on the Mets' bench when he entered in the 11th inning, capped a four hour and 11-minute duel when he hit his first walk-off homer off Buck Farmer (3-4). Hector Santiago (1-0) tossed two innings for the Mets, who received two homers and four RBIs from catcher Wilson Ramos, who left for a pinch-runner in the 11th and was replaced by Nido. The two-homer game was the eighth of Ramos' career and his first since last June 25.

ASTROS 4, RED SOX 3

Carlos Correa capped a three-hit night with a walk-off single, as Houston answered Boston's ninth-inning rally with one of its own. Correa singled to right field with the bases loaded off Red Sox reliever Matt Barnes (2-1), who allowed a leadoff double to Aledmys Diaz before issuing walks to Alex Bregman and Michael Brantley to load the bases. The Red Sox had rallied against Astros closer Roberto Osuna (3-0) in a blur, loading

the bases in the ninth inning on just three pitches, before Christian Vazquez roped a two-run single into left field on the second pitch he saw.

ANGELS 3, RANGERS 2

After giving up two runs in the top of the ninth, Los Angeles rallied for two in the bottom of the inning to defeat Texas in Anaheim, Calif., and end a five-game losing streak. Angels pinch hitter Jared Walsh looped a single into shallow left with two outs, scoring Kole Calhoun from second with the winning run and giving Walsh his first major league RBI. Shawn Kelley (3-1) was aiming for his sixth save, but he gave up a one-out single to Luis Rengifo before Calhoun doubled to right-center, scoring Rengifo from first to tie the score at 2-2. Calhoun finished 3-for-3 with a walk, solo home run and the RBI double.

PADRES 19, BLUE JAYS 4

Austin Hedges hit his first career grand slam, Hunter Renfroe and Wil Myers each homered twice and visiting San Diego set a franchise record with seven homers while defeating Toronto. Ian Kinsler and Eric Hosmer also homered for the Padres. Hedges had five RBIs and Myers had four. Right-hander Cal Quantrill (1-2) struck out nine in six innings to earn his first career win for San Diego. Quantrill, who is from nearby Port Hope, Ont., and the son of former major league pitcher Paul Quantrill, allowed three runs on two hits, both home runs, and two walks in his fourth career start.

YANKEES 7, ROYALS 3 (GAME 1)

Luke Voit's two-run home run in the



NEW YORK: Pete Alonso #20 of the New York Mets is forced out as Josh Harrison #1 of the Detroit Tigers completes a double play in the eighth inning at Citi Field in New York City. — AFP

seventh inning helped lead New York past host Kansas City in the first game of a day-night doubleheader. J.A. Happ (4-3) picked up the win after giving up three runs on four hits in six innings. Relying mostly on his fastball, Happ struck out 10 Royals. Scott Barlow (1-1) took the loss. He gave up four runs on four hits in 1 1/3 innings. Starter Jakob Junis surrendered three runs over six innings.

YANKEES 6, ROYALS 5 (GAME 2)

New York scored five runs in the second inning, then held on for the vic-

tory and a doubleheader sweep over Kansas City. Cameron Maybin drove in three runs, and Austin Romine was 3-for-4 with two RBIs in the nightcap. The Yankees hit safely in five of their first seven opportunities with runners in scoring position and have now won seven straight and 11 of their last 12 games. They continued their dominance against the Royals in this century. Since 2000, the Yankees have won 16 season series, with three splits and just one Royals series win (2014). The Yankees are 100-43 in the 2000s against Kansas City. — Reuters

Kohli eyes WCup glory as captain

NEW DELHI: Virat Kohli's reputation as one of cricket's great entertainers is well-established, but the India star will not be completely satisfied until he leaves an indelible mark by winning the World Cup as captain.

Kohli has been instrumental in building on Indian cricket's rich legacy after taking over the captaincy from Mahendra Singh Dhoni. After helping India reclaim the number-one Test ranking, the 30-year-old led his team to a first-ever Test series triumph in Australia in January.

But it is the possibility of winning the World Cup as skipper that most inspires the flamboyant batsman, who has amassed 10,843 runs in 227 one-day international matches, including 41 centuries and 49 fifties.

Kohli still fondly remembers being part of the 2011 World Cup-winning team under Dhoni, who lifted the title on Indian soil, and would love to emulate his predecessor by leading his country to their third world title.

"I would put the win in Australia at a par with the World Cup. Look, you cannot place a World Cup win below anything else," Kohli told the Times of India newspaper before departing for the tournament in England and Wales.

"It is a global tournament and the significance and the charm of the tournament is something else. It is always going to be the most important tournament in world cricket." Kohli defied critics who had questioned his poor showing on the team's 2014 tour of England by hitting 593 runs, including two hundreds, in the five-Test series last year.

But India still crumbled to a 4-1 defeat, showing he cannot will the side to victory on his own. Kohli's captaincy has often been criticised, with former India opener Gautam Gambhir saying the batsman has "loads to learn" as a leader.

Kohli scored 464 runs in the recently concluded Indian Premier League Twenty20 tournament but his side Royal Challengers Bangalore ended last in the eight-team table. When captaining India, Kohli has never shied away from relying on the experience of Dhoni, who is often seen calling the shots from behind the stumps.

"It seems like he is happy to see Dhoni handle some aspects of his captaincy, especially in the last 10 overs when he can focus on his fielding and take important positions in the field," former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar told AFP.

"But he is not completely dependent on Dhoni, that would be wrong to suggest," Kohli, who became the fastest batsman to reach 10,000 ODI runs last year, is already tipped to overtake one of the many records held by Indian batting icon Sachin Tendulkar.

He has hit 66 centuries across all international formats since his ODI debut in 2008, with Tendulkar holding the record for 100 hundreds in his 24-year-old career. Kohli's aggressive on-field demeanour though has ruffled a few feathers.

His verbal duel with Australia skipper Tim Paine during the Perth Test in December was criticised by Manjrekar, who said the star should behave "responsibly". Regardless of his outspoken nature, Kohli's consistency, attacking style and supreme fitness levels make him the standout player in this edition of the 50-over World Cup. — AFP



Team Jayenkom outplays them all

KUWAIT: Team “Jayenkom” managed to secure the title of Kuwait National Champions at the Red Bull Neymar Junior’s Five National Final. After managing to knock out one team after the other, Jayenkom will be headed to the World Final of Red Bull Neymar Junior’s Five in Brazil on July 20th to battle it out against over 50 other countries and outplay them all.

It will be held at Neymar’s Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr. in Praia Grande, an organization aimed at providing extracurricular educational and sporting activities to the most socially disadvantaged children and their families in the area.

Neymar Junior’s Five Kuwait Final, held on May 23 at Marina Crescent, was held in partnership with Honda, Snapple, Acqua Eva Kuwait, Li3ib, and X-cite by Alghanim Electronics. Media partner, Kuwait Times, covered this popular event.

Following action-packed qualifiers held between May 14 and May 21, twelve teams qualified to the National Final with finesse and admirable sportsmanship.

The final kicked off with four groups of three teams, each playing against both other teams in the group. Only two teams made it from each group to begin the knock out phase. In this phase, each game was allocated ten minutes for a team to clinch the win, and move on to the semi-final.

Spectators waited anxiously as the final four, FCB Remuntada, Al Najjar, One Family, and Jayenkom, went head to head in the semi-final. Ultimately, the final game was between, Jayenkom and One Family.

Newcomers, Jayenkom managed to surprise participants and spectators alike, as they secured the winning goal, crowning them the national champions.



ABOUT NEYMAR JR’S FIVE

Outplay them all - Neymar Jr’s Five is the Brazilian star’s signature five-a-side tournament bringing players from all corners of the world together to celebrate their shared passion: football. It is a fast, technical and fun competition, played in more than 60 countries around the world, including Neymar Jr’s home country Brazil, and France, where he plays with Paris Saint-Germain.

The rules? Simple. Each match lasts 10 intense minutes, there’s no goalkeeper and whenever a team scores, the opposition loses a player. You need to outplay them all! The tournament is open to teams of five to seven players aged 16 to 25. In each team two players over 25 are allowed in the squad as well.

In 2018, over 125,000 players from 60 countries battled it out to be crowned World Champions, with Mexico, coming out victorious. Neymar Jr’s Five 2019 is set to be even bigger and more players than ever will get the chance to experience this beautiful game, as there’ll also be women’s compe-

titions in addition to the mixed competition in some countries.

More than 50 countries from six continents will be hosting tournament qualifiers, where players will compete with the same dream of making it through the qualifiers, to their national final to book a ticket to the World Final, which will be celebrated for the third time at Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr in Praia Grande, Brazil.

The 2019 World Champions will win the experience of a lifetime, with the chance to play against Neymar Jr himself in Brazil.

ABOUT INSTITUTO PROJETO NEYMAR JR.

The location of the World Final, Instituto Projeto Neymar Jr, is a private, non-profit association dedicated to social causes, set up by Neymar Jr. and his family. It is located in Jardim Gloria, in Praia Grande, where Neymar Jr spent much of his childhood. The Institute is an 8,400m2 education and sporting complex catering to 2,470 underprivileged children aged 7-14 and their families.



25 Blues march to first final since 1970, rested Bruins open at home



26 Valencia stun Barcelona to win Copa del Rey



26 Lewandowski fires Bayern Munich to domestic double



PARIS: Russia's Anastasia Potapova returns the ball to Germany's Angelique Kerber during their women's singles first round match on day 1 of The Roland Garros 2019 French Open tennis tournament in Paris yesterday. —AFP

Kerber crashes to Russian teen

Federer returns at Roland Garros after a four-year absence

PARIS: German fifth seed and reigning Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber saw her hopes of a career Grand Slam ended by Russian teenager Anastasia Potapova at Roland Garros yesterday as Roger Federer prepared to make his Paris return after a four-year absence.

Fifth-seeded Wimbledon champion Kerber slumped to a 6-4, 6-2 defeat to 18-year-old Potapova who was making her French Open debut. "I had a lot of confidence and I have to thank my coach for that," said 81st-ranked Potapova who hit 28 winners past her German opponent.

Kerber, 31, has now lost six times in the French Open first round. The German left-hander had come into Roland Garros carrying a right ankle injury which forced her to pull out of the Italian Open and retire from her second round tie in Madrid.

"She played really good, I tried my best," said Kerber who was broken six times in the match which brought the curtain up on a rebuilt Court Philippe

Chatrier. "I didn't really have great preparation and I was just happy to get on court to play the match.

"I didn't have many expectations coming in." Potapova's first win over a top 10 player gives her a second round clash against either China's Wang Yafan or Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic.

Later yesterday, Federer returns to the new look Roland Garros, admitting he'll be an underdog in his attempt to claim a 21st Grand Slam title. The 37-year-old Swiss star is the headline act on opening day, 10 years after his one triumph in Paris and two decades since his tournament debut.

Federer, who played his last French Open in 2015, preferring to concentrate his powers on Wimbledon, starts against Lorenzo Sonego, the world number 73 from Italy. Third-seeded Federer insists that it would be a shock even to him should he manage to prevent either Rafael Nadal from sweeping to a 12th title or Novak Djokovic becoming just the second man to hold all four Slams at the same time twice.

"I feel like I'm playing good tennis, but is it enough against the absolute top guys when it really comes to the crunch? I'm not sure if it's in my racket," said Federer. Greek sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas faces German left-hander Maximilian Marterer, the world 110. Tsitsipas made the Australian Open semi-finals in January, beating Federer on the way.

NEW COURT SET FOR UNVEILING

The 20-year-old also defeated Nadal in the Madrid semi-finals before falling to the Spaniard at the same stage in Rome last week. Second seed Karolina Pliskova closes play on Chatrier against Madison Brengle of the United States.

The centrepiece court of Roland Garros has been demolished and 90% rebuilt since 2018 as part of the 350 million euro refurbishment of the French Open's historic home. Fans and players will have to wait to until 2020 to see the retractable roof in oper-

ation over the court.

However, this year sees the tournament bow of Court Simonne Mathieu, a 5,000-capacity semi-sunken arena enclosed by greenhouses. Spain's Garbine Muguruza, the 2016 champion, had the honour of opening proceedings on the new court against America's Taylor Townsend.

The 19th seed marked the occasion with a 5-7, 6-2, 6-2 win. Venus Williams, the 38-year-old American, faces Ukraine ninth seed Elina Svitolina on the same court later in the day. Williams, runner-up to sister Serena in 2002, made her debut in Paris in 1997.

Also in action on the first day is Italian 16th seed Marco Cecchinato who shocked Djokovic in the quarter-finals in 2018. Japan's Kei Nishikori, seeded seven, faces France's Quentin Halys on the 30th anniversary of his coach Michael Chang winning the title in Paris. American seventh seed Sloane Stephens, the 2018 runner-up to Simona Halep, begins against Japan's Misaki Doi. —AFP

Raptors rally past Bucks to reach first NBA final

LOS ANGELES: Kawhi Leonard finished with 27 points and a career high 17 rebounds as the Toronto Raptors advanced to their first NBA final with a 100-94 win over the top-seeded Milwaukee Bucks.

The Raptors won the series 4-2 as Saturday's contest at Scotiabank Arena was a mirror image of game five, featuring a strong start by Milwaukee before Toronto came back in the fourth quarter to close it out

with several clutch plays down the stretch.

The Raptors reached their first finals in their 24-year history where they will face the two-time defending champion Golden State Warriors. Game one of the best-of-seven final is Thursday in Toronto.

"I just took it one possession at a time," Leonard said. "We kept fighting all game. The calls were not going our way, but we kept striving and striving." The victory has galvanized the Canadian city's sports fans and touched off a wild celebration among the crowd of 19,800 in the arena and tens of thousands more in the downtown "Jurassic Park", who watched the game on a giant screen.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he will be cheering on the Raptors. "History made! @Raptors, it's time to bring that championship to Canada! #WeTheNorth," Trudeau tweeted Saturday.

Leonard won the head-to-head battle against Giannis Antetokounmpo, even dunking over the mighty "Greek Freak" with six minutes left in the fourth to give Toronto a 87-79 lead. Leonard also hit another dynamic three-point shot from his favourite corner spot on the floor with three minutes left to make it 95-90.

He shot nine of 22 from the field and had seven assists for the Raptors, who roared back to win four straight games after falling into an 0-2 hole to begin the series. Pascal Siakam tallied 18 points, Kyle Lowry finished with 17 and Fred VanVleet came off the bench to score 14 points in the win.

"I've been here seven years and this means a lot," said Lowry. "This group is so special." Toronto was down by 15 points at one stage in the third quarter before Leonard and his supporting cast cut the deficit

to five entering the fourth.

"We thrive at it. We enjoy the moment," Leonard said. "My teammates have my back. I was on the bench to start the fourth quarter and they came back. It was a collective effort." Antetokounmpo tallied a double double with 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Bucks, who lost in the NBA playoff semi-finals after finishing with the best record in the regular season.

"The game plan was to double-team me and not allow me to get into a rhythm," Antetokounmpo said. "We weren't able to rebound the ball and get easy points in transition and that's why we lost the lead."

Leonard said they were looking forward to putting their winning streak on the line and hosting the Warriors for the first two games of the final. "Man, they are the champions. We got to go in there with mental focus and enjoy the moment," he said. —AFP