



6 German with 1,800 cows allowed to stay in India



8 3 migrants hidden in cars at Spain-Morocco border



28 Finland thump Canada to win NHL world title



Ramadan KAREEM

IMSAK	03:07
Fajr	03:17
Dhur	11:45
Asr	15:20
Magrib	18:40
Isha	20:10

Amir calls for national unity and vigilance amid tensions

Media urged to play conscious and responsible role



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday underlined that the delicate situation in the region requires cautiousness and social unity to retain the state's security and people's safety.

The bitter reality of the region, its dangerous dimensions and consequences, and the developments taking place in the region calls upon us to realize the current situations and circumstances. We should be cautious and ready to confront them in order to protect the safety and security of our dear country," His Highness the Amir said in a speech on the occasion of the last ten days of the holy month of Ramadan.

His Highness the Amir emphasized the importance of national unity in protecting the country in this turbulent time. "This will not be achieved but through cohesion and adherence to our national unity. We will never allow prejudice. National unity is the protective wall after God for the homeland, that protects us from the woes that plague other countries," he stated.

His Highness the Amir stressed the need to strengthen the internal front and stand up against anyone who tries to stir up strife, or tamper social coherence. He pointed to the pivotal role of the GCC in countering dangers and overcoming regional challenges. "We assure that sticking to our Gulf community and keeping the privileges we have achieved within the frame of the

GCC is the security that enable us to face such dangers and challenges."

His Highness the Amir reminded all Kuwaitis that "Our homeland is entrusted to us all, and this requires everyone to be faithful and loyal, and to work diligently, earnestly and sincerely to advance it and push its development process towards its desired goals". He stated that every Kuwaiti has to be proud of Kuwait's internationally-appreciated stances and efforts to enhance international peace and security."

You should be proud, brothers and sons, with the elite position of Kuwait - thank God - in the International Community, with its achievements in humanitarian, relief and community work and its active participation in the efforts aimed at keeping international peace and security, and spreading the culture of tolerance and peace. These achievements were, and still are, subject of praise and well-acceptance, and even honor, which I consider as an honor to the entire people of Kuwait," he said.

His Highness the Amir affirmed the need to abide by the democratic approach to guarantee the state stability and security. "We have to adhere to our national achievements, our firm democratic approach, which we have chosen and which is inherited by the people of Kuwait, and to our comprehensive and complementary

Continued on Page 24

Ramadan Kareem

Ramadan develops love

By Dr Teresa Leshar

Ramadan is a month of intensified charity, community relations, forgiveness and compassion. The Quran encourages the reader to spend in charity, saying, "You will never attain virtue until you spend something of what you love..." (3:92) This means that you should give to others what you love for yourself, and in Ramadan we realize how much all people love and need food and water.

By experiencing hunger and thirst, the faster is reminded of the importance of providing for the poor's basic needs. The Quran never explicitly commands us to "Love one another," but it does have many commands to behave as though we love one another, regardless of our feelings.

"Say kind words to people..." (2:83) "Pardon and overlook their misdeeds" (5:13) "Do not spy on one another, nor let any of you backbite others..." (49:12) and to "...judge with justice..." (5:42). It says that "A good deed and an evil deed are not alike; repay [evil] with something that is finer, and see how someone who is separated from you by enmity will become a bosom friend." (41:33)

Other verses are even more specific in telling us in specific detail how to treat others: "Your Lord has decreed that you should worship nothing except Him and show kindness to your parents; whether either or both of them attain old age, never say to them "Uf!" nor scold either of them. Speak to them in a generous fashion. Serve them with tenderness and humility..." (17:23).

Continued on Page 24

MPs threaten more grillings

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Two lawmakers said yesterday they will file to grill Interior and Health ministers if they did not take necessary actions over suspicion of corruption in their ministries. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said yesterday he has informed Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah that a businessman has left the country and returned illegally because he has a travel ban against his name.

The lawmaker said that the action is an indication of negligence at border points especially in Salmi where some people

banned from travel were allowed to leave. Adasani called on the minister to launch an investigation to identify those who smuggle people with travel ban out of the country, adding that if the minister does not take the necessary actions, he will file to grill him.

MP Omar Al-Tabtabai also warned that he will file to grill Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah over reports of corruption at the new Sabah hospital mega project. He said that he was informed by authorities which supervise projects that a contractor at the project, costing over KD 190 million, has demanded strange changes to the contract that would save him millions of dinars.

Tabtabai said that based on the information, the contractor demanded that medical equipment worth some KD 7 mil-

lion be changed with bathrooms - costing much less. He said that the contractor's request was approved by officials at the Health Ministry within just five days, which raises questions of corruption in the vital project. The lawmaker said he will first send questions to the Health Minister to enquire about the information he has and then if the minister does not take the necessary measures, he will file to grill him.

In the meantime, MP Mohammad Al-Hadiya yesterday criticized a decision by the Civil Service Commission banning Kuwaiti employees who resign or are dismissed from work to apply for employment before the lapse of one year. The lawmaker described the decision as oppressive and against the basic rights of Kuwaitis, and demanded that the Commission scrap the decision.



MP Omar Al-Tabtabai

US not targeting regime change in Iran, Trump says

TOKYO: The United States does not seek "regime change" in longtime foe Iran, President Donald Trump said yesterday, also praising North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un in comments made during a historic visit to meet Japan's new emperor. Speaking at a joint press conference in Tokyo with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Trump seemed at pains to dial down tensions in the world's two most pressing flash-points as the US faces off against Tehran and Pyongyang.

Iran "has a chance to be a great country, with the same leadership. We're not looking for regime change, I want to make that clear. We're looking for no nuclear weapons," said the president, who became the first foreign leader invited to meet freshly crowned Emperor Naruhito, with a state visit and banquet. "I really believe that Iran would like to make a deal. I think that's very smart of them and I think there's a possibility for that to happen also."

Continued on Page 24

Qatar invited to emergency Arab summits

CAIRO: Qatar has been invited by Saudi Arabia to attend two emergency Arab summits being convened in the Saudi city of Makkah on May 30. Qatar's foreign ministry said, after previously saying it had not been. Last week Qatar said it had not been invited to the two summits Saudi is planning in Islam's holiest site to discuss the implications of drone strikes on oil installations in the kingdom and attacks on four vessels, including two Saudi oil tankers, off the UAE coast earlier this month.

Saudi, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt have imposed an economic and diplomatic boycott on Qatar since June 2017 over allegations that Doha supports terrorism and is cosying up to regional foe Iran. Qatar denies the charges. Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani received an invitation from

Continued on Page 24

Dubai Sikh temple offers iftar meals

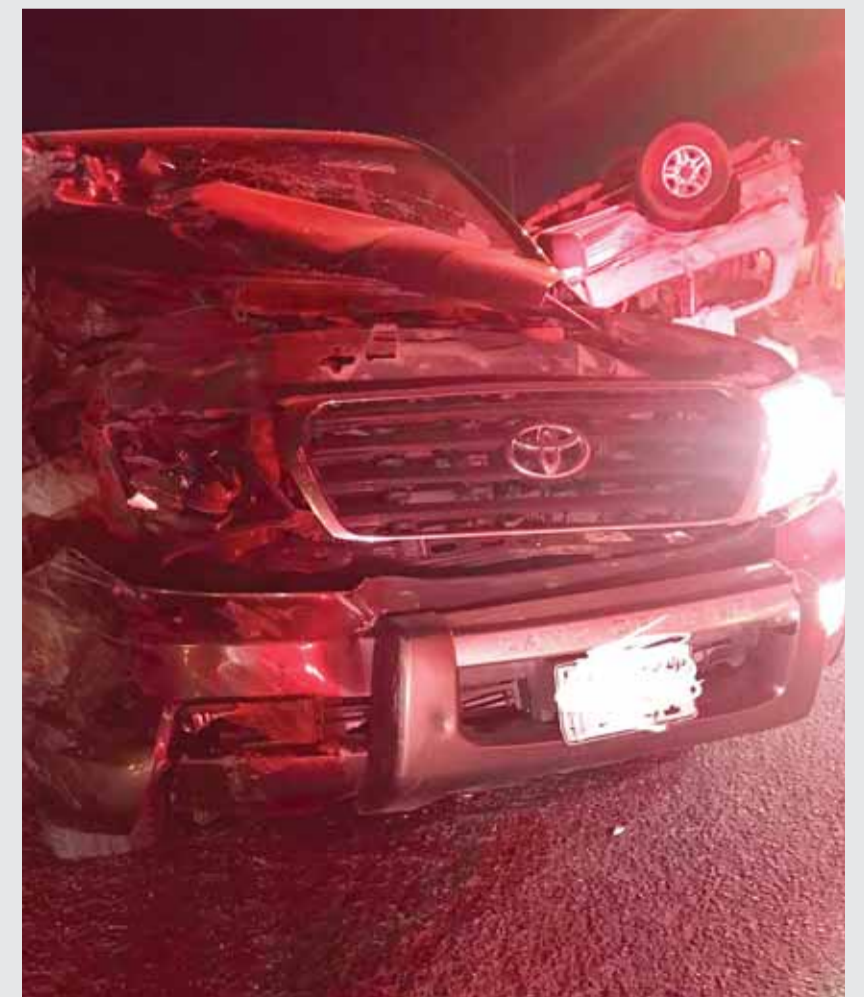
DUBAI: A Sikh temple in Dubai has opened its doors to Muslims during Islam's fasting month of Ramadan, offering them room to pray and a free meal to break their daily fast. The Guru Nanak Darbar gurdwara - a place of worship in the Sikh religion - is building on Sikhism's core principles of giving and eating together, which sees temples all over the world cook free meals, known as langar, for whoever wants them every day of the year.

"This is the best way to show to the world that we are all one. Whether you are Hindu, Muslim or Christian it doesn't matter, you are first a human being," said

Bubbles Kandhari, vice chairperson of the gurdwara. In previous years the gurdwara had offered the Muslim iftar meal on just one day during Ramadan, but as 2019 has been designated the Year of Tolerance by the United Arab Emirates government, the temple is offering the meal for Muslims breaking their fast every evening.

Muslim cousins Shuaib and Akil, both Indian nationals living in the UAE, brought their families to the gurdwara for iftar after seeing a video on social media. "Normally we go to our mosque every day, but it is only for our community," said Akil. "I was very interested to see where all the people come together and to show my kids." While Sikhs and other attendees ate their langar meals on the floor on one side of the room after a worship session, Muslims broke their fast at tables on the other side after their own prayer session inside the temple. — Reuters

Horrific accident kills 8



KUWAIT: Eight people were killed and one injured in an unfortunate accident in Kabd area, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement late Sunday. The accident occurred when a speeding car plowed into people who gathered around another minor accident that took place a short while before. — KUNA

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Later, MoH clarified in a statement that the cases of infectious diseases mentioned by Sheikh Basel in his response to Damkhi's inquiry were detected in 2017-2019, and not 2019. The ministry also stressed none of the cases the minister mentioned were still in Kuwait, as those diseases had been detected prior to issuing their residency visas and they were immediately deported.

Sheikh Basel had indicated that MoH plans to adopt new medical tests for those workers and demand medical reports from visitors from countries connected to the e-system, adding that

centers violating the conditions will be fined dearly and removed from the lists of accredited centers.

In addition, Sheikh Basel disclosed some classified information on Damkhi's request, noting that there was a rise in various infectious diseases in 2017 including 838 cases of AIDS, malaria and hepatitis C & B. "We detected 222 tuberculosis, 145 hepatitis and one AIDS case from Bangladesh; 173 TB, 58 malaria, 32 hepatitis C, 26 hepatitis B and eight AIDS cases from India; 52 TB, 29 hepatitis B and 21 hepatitis C cases from the Philippines; 20 TB and two hepatitis B cases from Sri Lanka; nine TB, four hepatitis C, three hepatitis B and one AIDS case from Egypt and finally two TB, one hepatitis B and one hepatitis C case from Pakistan," he explained.

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Local

Kuwaiti Cabinet underlines OIC conference's significance

Ministers informed about Iraqi Prime Minister's visit's outcomes

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Cabinet yesterday stressed the importance of the coming conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) due in Makkah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on May 31. The OIC gathering will be an opportunity for the conferees to share views on an array of issues that concern the Muslim world, the Cabinet said in a statement issued following its customary weekly meeting presided over by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

At the onset of the meeting, the Cabinet was notified of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's accompanying delegation while attending the Islamic conference, which comprises Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahad Al-

Shualah and several other state officials.

Then, the ministers were informed about the outcomes of a recent visit by Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi to Kuwait, during which ways of promoting bilateral ties in various fields and regional challenges were tackled. In this context, the Cabinet listened to a briefing from Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled on how to put bilateral agreements in place for the common interest of both neighbors.

The Cabinet, further, congratulated newly re-elected Indonesian President Joko Widodo and newly re-elected Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, wishing them the best of luck and more progress and prosperity to their people. The Cabinet condemned recent mosque attacks in Kabul in Afghanistan and Quetta in Pakistan, which left a number of people dead or injured. In this regard, the ministers echoed Kuwait's unwavering position that rejects all violent and terrorist acts irrespective of motives. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

Ministry storeroom fire doused



KUWAIT: A fire at a storage facility belonging to the Ministry of Social Affairs was extinguished by firefighters late on Sunday, without any casualties, an official said. Despite being located within the ministry's social welfare homes complex, the storeroom is far from the homes themselves, and presented no danger to occupants, a ministry spokesman said. The ministry along with the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate plan to investigate the causes behind the incident, added the assistant undersecretary for cooperation Abdulaziz Shuaib. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi. — KUNA

Kuwait FM meets Iran Deputy FM

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received the visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi yesterday. During the meeting, the Iranian official delivered Sheikh Sabah Khaled a message from Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif. The meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-

Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Ambassador Ali Al-Said, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar and several other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A power transformer at Kuwait University's Khaldiya campus caught fire Sunday night. Industrial Shuwaikh and Shuhada fire station responded and put out the blaze. No injuries were reported. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

1,271 expat laborers detected with infectious diseases in 2017-2018

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said the Ministry of Health (MoH) is working on making medical centers examine expatriate workers - namely Africans and Asians - in their respective countries, especially after detecting 1,271 cases of infectious diseases from seven of those countries after laborers arriving in 2017-2018 were re-examined in Kuwait.

Responding to a parliamentary inquiry filed by MP Adel Al-Damkhi concerning licensing centers to examine expats before coming to work in Kuwait, Sheikh Basel said MoH urged Kuwaiti embassies abroad to use the unified GCC e-medical test system as well as re-examine expats prior to granting them residency visas in Kuwait.

Later, MoH clarified in a statement that the cases of infectious diseases mentioned by Sheikh Basel in his response to Damkhi's inquiry were detected in 2017-2019, and not 2019. The ministry also stressed none of the cases the minister mentioned were still in Kuwait, as those diseases had been detected prior to issuing their residency visas and they were immediately deported.

Sheikh Basel had indicated that MoH plans to adopt new medical tests for those workers and demand medical reports from visitors from countries connected to the e-system, adding that

centers violating the conditions will be fined dearly and removed from the lists of accredited centers.

In addition, Sheikh Basel disclosed some classified information on Damkhi's request, noting that there was a rise in various infectious diseases in 2017 including 838 cases of AIDS, malaria and hepatitis C & B. "We detected 222 tuberculosis, 145 hepatitis and one AIDS case from Bangladesh; 173 TB, 58 malaria, 32 hepatitis C, 26 hepatitis B and eight AIDS cases from India; 52 TB, 29 hepatitis B and 21 hepatitis C cases from the Philippines; 20 TB and two hepatitis B cases from Sri Lanka; nine TB, four hepatitis C, three hepatitis B and one AIDS case from Egypt and finally two TB, one hepatitis B and one hepatitis C case from Pakistan," he explained.

Degrees' examined

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is currently scrutinizing the degrees of 13,498 of its employees including 422 citizens and 86 expats holding university degrees from various countries such as Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan, UK, the Philippines, Lebanon, Sudan and India, said informed sources. The sources explained that the country from which the degrees of 6,344 employees at MoE headquarters were issued is not recorded in the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) integrated system. Further, the sources said statistics

showed 105 Kuwaiti employees hold PhD degrees.

Over 30 years

Recent statistics issued by the CSC showed 11,000 government employees, including 8,000 Kuwaiti and around 3,000 expats, have been in service for over 30 years. Statistics also showed that 116,000 government employees, including 88,000 citizens, have 10-19 years of experience; 99,000 have less than five years of experience, 82,000 have 5-9 years of experience and 50,000 employees, including 40,000 citizens, have 20-29 years of experience.

NGOs' activities abroad

Following a large number of applications from non-active NGOs to take part in activities abroad, the Ministry of Social Affairs' NGOs department set new regulations for NGO members to take part in conferences, lectures and seminars held outside Kuwait, said informed sources, noting that the conditions include limiting the maximum number of participants to two per NGO, that the conference theme is part of the goals of the concerned organization's establishment, that the society has effective social contributions, is cooperative with the ministry and notifies the ministry at least one month in advance.

Councilmembers propose temporary licenses to vendors

By Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Responding to the growing number of street vendors, namely children displaying goods for sale on a number of streets, municipal councilmembers Ahmad Al-Enezi and Humoud Al-Enezi demanded issuing temporary licenses to vendors to legalize their status. "It is unacceptable to fight them, confiscate their goods and show inappropriate photos of them during the holy month," said Ahmad Al-Enezi, stressing that it was their suffering that made them resort to such illegal trade. Humoud Al-

Enezi described some officials as 'merciless' and stressed that the municipality will not tolerate chasing children around and detaining them in a most humiliating manner.

Separately, Municipal Council Chairman Osama Al-Otaibi yesterday adjourned the council's session due to a lack of quorum and scheduled a new session to be held after Eid Al-Fitr. In other news, Capital municipal teams conducted field visits to remove violations, said acting cleaning manager Jamal Al-Fadhli, noting that the campaign resulted in filing 25 cleaning and 17 road blockage citations.

Amir receives urgent GCC summit invitation from Saudi King



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah reads an invitation from Saudi Arabia's King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to attend the urgent GCC summit, delivered by GCC Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayani. — Amiri Diwan photo

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has received yesterday an invitation from Saudi Arabia's King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to attend the urgent Gulf Cooperation Council summit, scheduled for Thursday. GCC Secretary

General Abdullatif Al-Zayani delivered the invitation for the event, scheduled to be held in Makkah, to His Highness the Amir. Zayani was escorted by Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Kuwaiti Ambassador to Cuba Mohammad Khalaf at Bayan Palace yesterday.



Kuwait distribute aid for Comoros' cyclone victims

MORONI: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) said Sunday it distributed 210 food baskets in five villages in the north of Moroni, capital of Comoros, affected by cyclone Kenneth. KRSC dispatched the aid at the request of the Comoros Red Crescent after many villages were damaged by cyclone Kenneth forcing many people to flee their homes, said Khaled Al-Zaid, head of KRSC mission to Comoros. "We will provide aid for the rest of villages and islands in cooperation with Comoros Red Crescent in order to reach the largest possible number of displaced," he said. Zaid hoped the two organizations would sign a one-year partnership to enable KRSC drill water wells, provide meals, build health clinics and help the needy. President of Comoros Red Crescent Moustadrane Boinaidi said KRSC was the first red crescent to help Comoros. He said KRSC and his organization were joining hands to help as many people as possible. — KUNA



JEDDAH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz meets with Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. — KUNA photos

Saudi King receives Kuwait parliament speaker in Makkah

JEDDAH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz received Kuwait National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Al-Safa Palace in Makkah on Sunday. Ghanem had an iftar meal with King Salman alongside Crown Prince of Dubai Sheikh Hamdan Al-Maktoum, President of the holy mosques in Makkah and Madinah Dr Abdulrahman Al-Sudais and senior officials in the presidency, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. The iftar was attended by King Salman Advisor and Governor of Makkah, Prince Khaled Al-Faisal. — KUNA



Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz receives Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

Kuwait Deputy FM meets UK ambassador

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met with the UK Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport yesterday. During the meeting, they tackled Kuwait-UK relations and ongoing preparations for the 14th session of the Kuwait-UK Joint Steering Group due in London early July as well as the latest regional and international developments. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the UK Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport yesterday. — KUNA



Zain concludes strategic partnership of Ramadan's Rijeemy health program

Company's volunteers supported event for 20 days during the holy month



KUWAIT: Dr Abdullah Al-Mutawa honors Zain's Waleed Al-Khashti in recognition of Zain's strategic partnership.



Zain volunteers took part in Rijeemy activities on a daily basis.

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, concluded its strategic partnership of the seventh edition of Rijeemy, Kuwait's biggest health and sports challenge during the holy month of Ramadan. The event, organized by Rijeemy Center and supported by Zain for the third year, featured the participation of Zain volunteers throughout the first 20 days of Ramadan at 360 Mall with aim of promoting a healthier and more active lifestyle during fasting.

Zain's strategic partnership of this health program came as an extension of a series of partnerships the

company continuously adopts to serve its strategic and sustainable goals with the aim of contributing to the wellbeing and health of the community. Zain's contribution fell under the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, and showed its keenness in having a productive role in social and health activities, especially during the holy month of Ramadan.

Zain presented many special activities for Rijeemy participants, including the 'Challenge Zain' activity that witnessed the participation of Kuwait National

Football team Captain Bader Al-Mutawa. In addition, the daily Walkathon, one of the event's most exciting main activities, offered participants a chance to speed walk in 360 Mall alongside renowned Clinical and Sport Nutrition consultant Dr Abdullah Al-Mutawa, who offered daily live health and sports tips related to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle during fasting.

This year's edition of Rijeemy witnessed the participation of many certified experts from Rijeemy Center, who provided health and nutrition advice to

participants as they join the daily activities. In addition, Zain was keen on inviting its own employees to participate and volunteer in the program's activities to further affirm its commitment towards its own human resources.

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

KFH hailed for efforts in organizing Qiyam prayer in Grand Mosque

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) received praise and recognition for its efforts in organizing Al-Qiyam prayer and providing hospitality service to worshippers and the personnel in the state's Grand Mosque and several mosques across Kuwait.

This comes as part of its Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 5,' that reflects the commitment in the corporate social responsibility and efforts to strengthen ties with the all segments of the society, especially in the month of Ramadan. KFH voluntary team worked in collaboration with the concerned parties

to organize Al-Qiyam prayer at these Mosques. KFH continues this efforts until last day of Ramadan.

Moreover, it continues "Feed the Fasting" campaign in distributing daily 1,000 iftar meals in different locations in Kuwait. KFH voluntary team prepares and distributes iftar meals daily at 6 locations, in addition to the participation with Ramadan Aman campaign for distributing iftar meals.

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

KFH's efforts in Ramadan underline the bank's pioneering role in the social responsibility, while contributing in strengthening the social ties. KFH voluntary team prepares and distributes iftar meals daily on different locations until end of Ramadan.



KUWAIT: KFH voluntary team with Interior Ministry personnel at the state's Grand Mosque.

Holiday Inn announces Ramadan draw winners



KUWAIT: Holiday Inn Kuwait Salmiya announced winners of the raffle draw from the 'Dine and Win' Ramadan promotion. The draw was organized by the hotel's man-

agement in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry's representative, as well as KLM and Air France representatives. The lucky guests have won one ticket to



Amsterdam, Vienna and Paris sponsored by Kuwait International Bank and KLM Airlines. With one more raffle draw remaining, guests dining at Holiday Inn

Salmiya restaurants and Ramadan tent still have the chance to enter the raffle draw on four airline tickets to various destinations in Europe for every KD 10 spent





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Modi praises party workers amid violence, killings

Myanmar soldiers jailed for Rohingya killings freed after less than a year



ATME, Syria: Displaced Syrian children are pictured in a field near a camp for displaced people in this village in northern Idlib province on May 23, 2019. —AFP

Syrians spend first homeless Ramadan

Many displaced live in the open after failing to find shelter in formal camps

ATME, Syria: Outside her makeshift tent, Syrian mother Mona Mutayr lays out a frugal meal of potatoes and cucumber as her family marks their first Ramadan since being displaced by war. The holy Islamic month is usually one of celebration, with Muslims fasting from dawn to dusk and gathering around a family meal after sunset. But regime bombardment forced Mutayr and her family to flee their home earlier this month and set up camp in an olive grove near the Turkish border.

"The days are long and hard," said 31-year-old Mutayr, wearing a long red and black dress and matching headscarf as she prepared the evening meal. "We're spending Ramadan here against our will," she said, as small bare-foot children waited for their food under a canvas tent strung up around a tree trunk.

The Damascus regime and its Russian ally have upped their deadly bombardment in recent weeks on Syria's northwestern region of Idlib held by the country's former

Al-Qaeda affiliate, causing more than 200,000 people to flee their homes, according to the United Nations. More than a third now live outside in the open after failing to find shelter in formal camps for the displaced.

'We have nothing'

Under her tent in the area of Atme, Mutayr sits cross-legged on the dry red earth, stooped over a potato she peeled with a small knife. "I made a little less potatoes for them today," she said, before laying out a plate of fries and two others of diced cucumber in what appeared to be thinned down yoghurt. It's a far cry from Ramadans past in their hometown of Humayrat in the north of Hama province, she said, when she and her family would break their fasts with a feast in the garden under a canopy of grapevines. "There was plenty of water and electricity. It was a good life," she said. "Look what's become of us now... Sometimes there's not enough food."

Charities sometimes donate Ramadan meals of rice and chicken to those at the makeshift camp, but Mutayr says her family has not received such aid in four days. "Our life has become heat and dust," she said. All around her, families have pitched shelters made of canvas strung between trees, their tops tied to branches and bottoms weighed down with clumps of earth. A lone goat rummages for food as a woman hangs clothes out to dry on a line.

Not far off, 42-year-old Hussein Al-Nahar, his pregnant wife and their six children are also spending their first Ramadan homeless. "How is someone supposed to feel when they're forced from their home during Ramadan?" said the agricultural worker. "It's so tragic. We have nothing."

No clothes for Eid

Nahar arrived in Atme a little more than two weeks ago after fleeing regime barrel bombs being pelted down

on his hometown of Kafr Nabuda, in the north of Hama province. Surrounded by her children, Nahar's wife, 30-year-old Rihab, strokes the hair of a small boy resting his head in her lap. Pregnant with a seventh child, she has no idea how the family will celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the holiday marking the end of Ramadan when many children receive new clothing. "The children want new clothes for Eid, but we don't have the money," she said, dressed in a long grey robe and beige headscarf. "We don't even have enough blankets."

As the sun sets, Rihab's family gathers around a small portion of chicken and rice donated by a charity, and a second plate of fried potatoes she has prepared. In previous Ramadans, "we wouldn't want for anything", she said. But today, "we sit around waiting for meals from charities, though sometimes we don't get any", she said. The day before there was nothing to cook, she said. "We had bread and tea." —AFP

German with 1,800 cows allowed to stay in India



RADHAKUND, India: German citizen Friederike Irina Bruening, 61, also known as Sudevi Mataji, touches a cow's nose at a cowshed in this village in the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh yesterday. —AFP

MATHURA, India: It's a long way from Berlin to India, where Friederike Irina Bruening devotes her life to sick and abandoned cows. Now, after intervention from the Hindu nationalist government, she has been allowed to stay. "Currently we have around 1,800 cows," Bruening told AFP from outside the holy city of Mathura in northern India where she keeps the animals. "Between five and 15 are brought in every day."

Bruening, 61, had threatened last week to return a top civilian award for cow protection that she won - the Padma Shri award - after her request for a visa extension was denied. This prompted Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj to take to Twitter and announce she had "asked for a report", and yesterday Bruening said she had been issued with a new visa allowing her to remain in India.

Bruening came to India around 25 years ago and says she has since spent around \$200,000 (\$225,000) of her own money over the years on her cow shelter, which costs around \$45,000 per month to run. Many of the cows that arrive are blind or have been injured in road accidents, while others are sick from eating the vast amounts of plastic waste littering India. Around half of the new arrivals die.

Since coming to power in 2014 one of the signature policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, newly re-elected, has been the protection of cows, which for many Hindus are sacred. Laws against the slaughter and consumption of beef have been strengthened, and lynchings of Muslims and low-caste Dalits - who have traditionally been involved in the sector - have risen.

This has prompted many people to abandon old and infirm cows instead of selling them for slaughter, resulting in more of the animals on the loose, including in cities like Delhi where they are a common sight. But Bruening, who has become a Hindu and is known as Sudevi Dasi, said that allowing the slaughter of old or sick cows is not the answer. "Killing a cow is the worst thing you can do," she said. —AFP

Muslims seek voice in changing Uzbekistan

TASHKENT: Uzbek student Luiza Muminjonova wanted to work in the country's booming Islamic tourism sphere but last year she was expelled from a university in the capital Tashkent. The 19-year-old's only fault was being a pious Muslim and wearing the hijab, a staple of female Islamic dress. "How dare they discriminate (against) me and stop me from getting the education I want because of my religion?" she fumed in an interview with AFP. Instead of giving up, the student took a stand that has placed her at the centre of Uzbekistan's religious freedom debate.

Her family has sued the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, taking its legal battle all the way to the country's top court. Muminjonova's case points to the Uzbeks' increasing readiness to openly practice their faith as believers become emboldened by political change under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The formerly communist country's repression of the religion persisted long after it gained independence from Moscow in 1991.

The first president Islam Karimov frowned upon religious adherence and was criticized by rights groups for conflating piety with radicalism. Islamists mounted a challenge to Karimov's rule in the 1990s and were blamed for a spate of car bombings in 1999. More recently, hundreds of Uzbeks are believed to have joined militants fighting in Iraq and Syria including the Islamic State group.

Changing times

Karimov's death and the coming to power of Mirziyoyev in 2016 has seen the government offer an olive branch to believers. Last year mosques were allowed to call Uzbeks to prayer over loudspeakers for the first time in over a decade. During a visit to a shrine in the historic town of Termez last month, Mirziyoyev called the past approach of authorities to the religion "our

Sudan Islamists back army in push to preserve sharia

KHARTOUM: With talks suspended between protest leaders and Sudan's military over a transfer of power to civilian rule, Islamist movements are backing the army in the hope it will keep sharia law in place. Islamist parties stayed on the sidelines during the months of nationwide protests that led to the April ouster of long-time ruler Omar Al-Bashir. They have since not joined the protest alliance at loggerheads with the generals over the makeup of a new governing body, which would rule the country for a three-year transitional period.

But hundreds of Islamists have rallied in the capital in recent days, warning they would reject any deal that would exclude sharia - Islamic law - from the country's political roadmap. They have also backed the army's demands that the head of Sudan's new governing body

tragedy" and said Islam symbolised "light".

Over 90 percent of Uzbekistan's 33 million population is Muslim and social conservatism runs deep, especially in the provinces. Amid an Islamic revival, school uniforms have recently become a cultural battleground between conservatives and supporters of secularism. A universal school uniform insisting on below knee-length skirts for female students was rolled out last year. A television report that criticized teachers and students for wearing short skirts immediately followed. The September report set the tone for an explosive debate that played out on social media and saw the channel's director demoted. Conservative bloggers were reportedly detained the same month for calling for the right for girls to wear the hijab in schools.

Kicked out of school

Muminjonova said the university that expelled her and nine other students last September "set a condition" to around a hundred freshmen students. "(They said) either you take off a headscarf, or you will be expelled," Muminjonova recalled, smoothing her fingers over the rose-colored cotton head covering. After she refused to comply, Muminjonova was kicked out of the dormitory and was not allowed to attend classes. She said that being asked to take off the hijab was "like being forced to give up on my faith".

Ironically, the school focuses on religious learning. What happened next was remarkable for a country where nationals have for decades toed the government line. Muminjonova's family took legal action against the academy in order to reinstate the student and affirm her right to attend university wearing the head covering. Even more surprisingly, a local court agreed to hear the case, which saw over a dozen hijab-wearing girls and their mothers stand near the courtroom during hearings in a show of solidarity. After failing to secure a university climb down in both district and city courts, Muminjonova's family has taken the case to the Supreme Court.

'Many still in jail'

Seemingly in recognition of more breathing space for religion, the US State Department last year removed Uzbekistan's sanction-carrying designation as a "country of particular con-

cern" for religious freedom. But in April the US Commission on International Religious Freedom said that "severe violations of religious freedom persisted" and recommended the State Department put Uzbekistan back on the watchlist that includes North Korea and Saudi Arabia.

International rights groups have used a newfound dialogue with the new administration to push for more religious freedom, both for Muslims and other groups. Steve Swerdlow, Central Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch, cited anecdotal evidence "that perhaps hundreds of religious prisoners have been released" since Mirziyoyev came to power. Campaigners believe the extremism charges the people were jailed on were brought without due process and that torture was used during the investigations. "There are many, many more (religious prisoners) still in jail," Swerdlow told AFP.

Almost an entire academic year on from her expulsion, the family's lawyer Abduvahob Yakubov - whose own daughter was also expelled for the same reason - fears the judiciary is stalling the case. "The Supreme Court should have responded to our appeal within 30 days," said Yakubov, adding they lodged an appeal in late March. A defiant Muminjonova said she would turn to international courts if the justice system at home failed her. "We cannot keep silent anymore," she said. —AFP



TASHKENT: A picture taken on March 13, 2019 shows 19-year-old Uzbek student Luiza Muminjonova as she stands near a court building. —AFP

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ruled by the forces of the left," they chanted.

Nusrat Al-Sharia chief Mohamed Ali Jazuli justified the rejection by Islamists, saying the negotiations between the protesters and the generals were for an agreement that was "purely bilateral and excluding" the Islamists and other political forces. While the protest alliance could be a "partner in change", he said, it was not "the only leader of the revolution". "The revolution was not against ideology but against corruption and tyranny," he said.

Tayeb Mustafa, who heads a coalition of conservative parties, said Islamists were opposed to the transition plan because it "ignored the application of Islamic law". The protest alliance "stole the revolution in broad daylight", said Mustafa, whose 2020 coalition brings together Islamist groups, including the Popular Congress Party, a long-time ally of Bashir. —AFP



Abdelhay Yousef

International

Liberal and Green gains upset EU parliament power balance

Mainstream groups still control lion's share of 751-seat assembly

BRUSSELS: Liberals and Greens say they have broken the two centrist blocs' grip on power in the European Parliament based on a projected shift in the electoral fortunes of the four. Liberals and Greens are now pushing harder to snag the head of the European Commission, the 28-nation EU executive, and shape key laws, such as on climate change and taxation. The centre-right EPP (European People's Party) still has the most seats, followed by the centre-left Socialists, but the pair no longer control a majority, according to partial and projected results.

"The monopoly of power is broken," said Margrethe Vestager, whose Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE) wants her to head the new commission. ALDE is projected to have around 100 seats, making it third in the assembly behind some 180 seats for the EPP and 152 for the Socialists and Democrats. But ALDE and the Greens also hope to work with the EPP and the Socialists to check big gains by Eurosceptics, populist and right-wing parties who could have around 150 seats.

Though power is set to be fragmented, the mainstream, pro-European Union groups still control the lion's share of the 751-seat assembly. Vestager alluded to her own credentials for the top job on the Commission, where she served as the anti-trust commissioner and gained a reputation for toughness. She said EU voters have broken the EPP and Socialist monopoly the way she stopped US hi-tech firms and other multinationals from undermining market competition.

Vestager hailed signals from both the Socialists and the Greens to forge a new kind of coalition "of those who want to take actions progressively to change things". The Danish politician said that meant a "different composition of leadership" of the main institutions, long dominated by the EPP and

the Socialists. Manfred Weber, leader of the EPP in parliament, is aiming to succeed fellow group member Jean-Claude Juncker as head of the European Commission. Debate over the position begins in the next few days.

'Shrinking centre'

The commission is powerful because it plays a key role drafting laws and rules on the economy, the environment, counter-terrorism, personal data protection, and telecommunications. Other top positions to be decided following the elections are the head of the European Central Bank and the foreign policy chief. Vestager also stressed the need for gender balance in the top jobs. Weber, a German, was subdued when he spoke to journalists in the European Parliament, backed by giant screens where the results were being projected.

"I don't feel a real powerful victory today," Weber said after the EPP saw its projected number of seats decrease by around 36 from 216 in the outgoing assembly. "We are facing a shrinking centre," he added, alluding to both his party's results and those of the Socialists which held 185 seats in the outgoing parliament. Esther de Lange, a Dutch EPP member, said her group could still take the lead in negotiations because it remained the biggest group. But the projected results mark the end of decades of domination by two parties and could lead to more wrangling over jobs and legislation. Ska Keller, a Greens candidate for the top commission job, told journalists her party's surge to a projected 70 seats from 51 would usher in a new dynamic. When asked whether the results could allow the Greens to play kingmaker, Keller replied it could be kingmaker or "queenmaker" given her party's stand on gender equality. Her party said it "aimed to deliver on green action, social Europe and democracy."



BRUSSELS: People holds letters forming the words "Europe Resists" during an action of activist group Avaaz outside the European Parliament after the announcement of results for European parliamentary elections on Sunday. — AFP

ALDE leader Guy Verhofstadt proclaimed his party the real pro-European winner of the elections, with it holding the key to success for the next parliament. "That means no solid pro-European majority is possible without the participation of our new centrist group," the former Belgian premier added. The group will be composed of

ALDE, French President Emmanuel Macron's Renaissance Movement and other "reform-driven, like-minded parties," Verhofstadt said. "We will find a majority for the fight against climate change, fairer taxation, completion of the internal market and European solutions for the migration crisis," he added. — AFP

Gathering storm: Merkel govt feels heat of climate vote

BERLIN: A European election drubbing has served as a harsh wake-up call for Germany's leaders that young voters fear climate change and are furious about the government's glacial response to it. A surge of support, helped by the Fridays for Future protest movement, propelled Germany's Greens to second place in Sunday's European Parliament elections, at the expense of the mainstream parties. Chancellor Angela Merkel's centre-right CDU/CSU bloc and their ailing junior coalition partners the Social Democrats (SPD) both suffered historic losses after being caught flat-footed on environmental policy.

The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which denies man-made climate change and defends coal mines and diesel cars, pointed to the Greens - who won 20 percent, double the AfD's score - as their new "main competitors". For Merkel's government, the resounding ballot-box slap piles on the pressure to quickly phase out dirty coal, boost renewables and put clean cars on the road, among other issues her cabinet is due to discuss tomorrow.

"The young generation is demanding a new inter-generational contract from the EU and the German government to protect them from the climate crisis," said Christoph Bals, head of activist group Germanwatch. The World Wide Fund for Nature charged that Merkel's "grand coalition has failed to find answers for the greatest crises of our time ... global warming and mass species extinction. The voters have clearly rejected this ignorance."

Missed targets

The trained scientist Merkel - once dubbed the "climate chancellor" - is now seen by many as having dropped the ball on Germany's ambitious energy transition as the top EU economy is on course to miss its own carbon reduction targets. Long a green energy pioneer committed to phasing out nuclear power by 2022, Germany is now meeting one third of its electricity needs with clean renewables such as wind, solar and biogas. However, it is also still generating another third with coal, a climate killer with huge CO2 emissions, and has made little headway in reducing emissions from its transport and agriculture sectors.

Merkel's government has also been widely criticized for coddling the powerful auto sector, a relative late-comer to electric vehicles. Similarly, both the CDU and SPD have been seen to drag their feet on shuttering Germany's coal mines, with the deadline currently set for 2038, as they worry about the electoral backlash from job losses. But while the big parties have cast a fearful eye on the AfD, they have now been blindsided by the greater electoral muscle of young people who fear inheriting an over-heating planet.

YouTube revolt

A generation of young people has grown up with dire predictions of melting ice caps, rising seas, more extreme weather events and resulting refugee flows and unrest. Many no longer believe that the politicians currently in power are truly committed to averting the climate crisis that may fully strike only after they leave office, or after they die. Last Friday, more than 320,000 children and youths rallied in Germany in the latest global wave of the demonstrations initiated by 16-year-old Swedish activist Greta Thunberg. "You're running out of excuses, we're running out of time," read one protest banner.

Days earlier a 26-year-old blue-haired YouTube star called Rezo had become an overnight household name with a blistering hour-long attack on the coalition parties, much of it centered on climate change. CDU efforts to dismiss the video as a youthful rant appeared befuddled and patronizing, as the viral clip was viewed more than 12 million times and Rezo received the backing of more than 70 other YouTube stars. —AFP

Far-right League victory in EU vote strains Italy coalition

ROME: The triumph of Matteo Salvini and his anti-migrant League party at the European elections raised questions in Italy yesterday over the populist government's future. The League won over 34 percent, compared to just six percent in the 2014 EU elections and 17 percent in the Italian general election last year. The results confirm the reversal of fortunes of the League and its coalition partner, the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S), which pocketed 32.5 percent at the general election but took home just 17 percent on Sunday.

"We can expect a week of frenetic negotiations to see how everyone will reposition themselves," said Giovanni Orsina, politics professor at Rome's LUISS University. The League victory and M5S collapse in popularity "is explosive in terms of the consequences for government stability," political analyst Stefano Folli wrote in the Repubblica daily. "We're not talking tomorrow, or the day after, but the fuse which will lead to the government's collapse has been lit," he said.

The League snapped up votes from both the M5S and the opposition thanks to a hardline stance on migration and a savvy multimedia team bombarding Italians with selfies of Salvini. The party did particularly well in centres seen as migrants "hot spots", including a town held up as a model of integration.

Salvini - who celebrated by tweeting a photo of himself grinning and holding a sign saying "top party in Italy" - is now likely to try to force the M5S's hand on every plan it has contested since the coalition formed in June 2018. "I ask for an acceleration on the government program," the 46-year-old said, brandishing Roman Catholic rosary beads. The main questions at stake are a high-speed rail line between the cities of Turin and Lyon in France, and a flat tax proposal.

M5S head Luigi Di Maio suggested the League had got one over on it because of political attacks which initially went unchallenged. "Perhaps we were too silent, too pure at



MILAN: Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini gives a "thumbs up" during a press conference at the Lega headquarters yesterday. — AFP

the beginning, and if that was our mistake I take responsibility," he said yesterday. The results place Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in an increasingly difficult position. The leader agreed upon by Salvini and Di Maio is purportedly independent but was a M5S pick.

Analysts say Salvini may be tempted to break up the coalition and join forces with others on the right. "I'd say the possibility of autumn elections is over 50 percent, unless there's a very strong alignment of the M5S with the Salvini leadership, which would create enormous tensions within the Movement," Orsina said. Italy's small far-right Brothers of Italy (FdI) party took home 6.4 percent of the vote, while billionaire Silvio Berlusconi's centre-right Forza Italia party, a historic ally of the League, pocketed 8.8 percent.

"Salvini may pull the plug if he feels confident enough in getting an outright majority by siding with Brothers of Italy and part of Forza Italia (without Berlusconi)," said Lorenzo Codogno, former chief economist at the Italian Treasury Department. The centre-left Democratic Party (PD), which won just 18 percent at the general election, took home 22.7 percent of the vote, clawing back some votes from M5S.

The Green party, which recorded significant gains in many other European countries, took just 2.29 percent. Salvini's victory had been widely expected, despite the M5S taking advantage of embarrassing corruption scandals involving the far-right party. —AFP



SOUTHAMPTON: Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage reacts after the European Parliament election results for the UK South East Region are announced at the Civic Centre Southampton early yesterday. — AFP

figures said it was time for their party to decisively back a public vote.

'Big, simple message'

Farage only registered the Brexit party in February but built on his support as a leading campaigner in the 2016 referendum, when he led the now largely defunct UK Independence Party (UKIP). He said his party won with "a big, simple message, which is: we've been badly let down by two parties who have broken their promises." He said his party should now have a say in any new Brexit negotiations with Brussels. The EU has said it will not re-open the withdrawal deal already agreed with May, but many of her would-be successors are still likely to try.

Farage also warned that failure to leave the EU on Oct 31 would see his party replicate its victory in a general election. "History has been made. This is just the beginning," he declared. However, analysts warned that European election results cannot be easily translated into success at British parliamentary elections, not least because a different voting system is used. Anti-Brexit campaigners also hailed the success of parties who want to keep Britain in the EU, suggesting voters are as split as they were when they voted 52 to 48 percent to leave in 2016. —AFP

Beaten Macron seeks to shake up EU parliament

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron tasted defeat in European elections, but not disaster, and is set to continue pushing both his pro-EU agenda and a realignment of parties in the EU parliament. Macron's Republic on the Move (LREM) party finished second behind the far-right National Rally of his arch-rival Marine Le Pen, but the two parties ended with less than 1.0 percentage point separating them - on 22.41 percent and 23.31 percent respectively. The vote was seen as a test for Macron domestically after months of anti-government protests, while his credibility in Europe as a champion of deeper integration was also judged to be on the line.

"A disappointment, but not a defeat for the Elysee," headlined Le Parisien newspaper yesterday, while an editorial in the Les Echos business daily said Macron's party was "resisting well" two years after his election. The 41-year-old's priority will now be trying to increase his influence in the European parliament where LREM and its centrist allies will send 23 MEPs, the same number as Le Pen's RN. His long-standing objective is to redraw the political map of the European parliament, long dominated by the centre-right EPP grouping and the centre-left S&D - in the same way as he broke the stranglehold of France's traditional parties.

Macron's EU-level partners, who form the ALDE group, finished third in Sunday night's vote, but the French leader is now aiming to broaden the coalition to include new partners, particularly Greens who made major gains. "The group that we are going to join is going to be a swing group which will try to be a driver in the creation of a progressive alliance. —AFP

'Green wave' in EU vote amid climate crisis

BERLIN: With double-digit scores across Europe's biggest countries including a stunning 20 percent in Germany, the Greens bagged record gains in EU elections on Sunday with younger voters leading calls for action to halt global warming. The environmental party doubled its score in Germany from the last EU elections in 2014, knocking the Social Democrats off their traditional second place. In France, the Greens were number three with 12 percent, while in Austria, Ireland and the Netherlands, they garnered double-digits.

In Britain, they were on 12.4 percent, nearly double their previous score, and beating the ruling Conservatives into fifth place. "To see The Green Party beating the Conservatives so far in these elections is truly amazing. Something seismic is happening in British and European politics," said Alexandra Phillips, Green Party candidate for South East England. With the two main traditional EU blocs - the conservative EPP and the centre-left Social Democrats projected to lose ground, the Greens could end up as kingmakers in the European Parliament.

"This is a Sunday for Future," said the Greens' lead candidate in Germany Sven Giegold, in a nod to the "Fridays for Future" school strikes by students sounding the alarm on the climate crisis. His counterpart in France, Yannick Jadot, also hailed it as a "green wave in which we are the main players". France's Prime Minister Edouard Philippe acknowledged the "message about the ecological emergency". "Everywhere in Europe, our citizens and in particular the youngest are asking us to act with determination and that's what we'll do in France and in Europe," he said.

In Ireland, Green Party candidate Cian Cuffe was on course to top the first preference tally in Dublin on 23 percent of the vote, with the Greens also seen in contention in the country's two other constituencies. —AFP

International

Myanmar soldiers jailed for Rohingya killings freed after less than a year

Officials say punishment was reduced by military

YANGON: Myanmar has granted early release to seven soldiers jailed for the killing of 10 Rohingya Muslim men and boys during a 2017 military crackdown in the western state of Rakhine, two prison officials, two former fellow inmates and one of the soldiers told Reuters. The soldiers were freed in November last year, the two inmates said, meaning they served less than one year of their 10-year prison terms for the killings at Inn Din village.

They also served less jail time than two Reuters reporters who uncovered the killings. The journalists, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, spent more than 16 months behind bars on charges of obtaining state secrets. The two were released in an amnesty on May 6. Win Naing, the chief warden at Rakhine's Sittwe Prison, and a senior prison official in the capital, Naypyitaw, confirmed that the convicted soldiers had not been in prison for some months. "Their punishment was reduced by the military," said the senior Naypyitaw official, who declined to be named.

Both prison officials declined to provide further details and said they did not know the exact date of the release, which was not announced publicly. Military spokesmen Zaw Min Tun and Tun Tun Nyi declined to comment.

The seven soldiers were the only security personnel the military has said it has punished over the 2017 operation in Rakhine, which drove more than 730,000 Rohingya Muslims to flee to Bangladesh. UN investigators said the crackdown was executed with "genocidal intent" and included mass killings, gang rapes and widespread arson.

Myanmar denies widespread wrongdoing and officials have pointed to the jailing of the seven soldiers in the Inn Din case as evidence Myanmar security forces do not enjoy impunity. "I would say that we took action against every case we could investigate," the military's commander in chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, told officials from the UN Security Council in April last year, according to an account posted on his personal website.

The army chief cited the Inn Din case specifically. "The latest crime we punished was a killing, and ten years' imprisonment was given to seven perpetrators," he said. "We will not forgive anyone if they commit (a) crime." Reached by phone on Thursday, a man named Zin Paing Soe confirmed that he was one of the seven soldiers and that he was now free, but declined to comment further. "We were told to shut up," he said.

'First step'
The 2017 campaign was launched across hundreds of villages in northern Rakhine in response to attacks by Rohingya insurgents. Reuters exposed the killings in a report published in Feb 2018. Troops from the 33rd Light Infantry Division, a mobile force known for its brutal counter-insurgency campaigns, worked with members of a paramilitary police force and Buddhist vigilantes to drive out the entire Muslim population of Inn Din, burning and looting Rohingya homes and property, according to Buddhist and Muslim villagers and members of the security forces.

On Sept 1, 2017, soldiers and some villagers detained a group of 10 Rohingya. The military members said they were farmers, high school students and an Islamic teacher. The next morning, witnesses said, Buddhist villagers hacked some of the Rohingya men with swords. The rest were shot by Myanmar troops and buried in a shallow grave.

The two Reuters reporters, Wa Lone, 33, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 29, discovered the grave and obtained pictures of the 10 men before and after they were killed. The journalists were arrested in Dec 2017 while investigating the killings and

later sentenced to seven years in prison under the Official Secrets Act. Defense lawyers argued their arrest and prosecution were aimed at blocking their reporting, and one police officer testified that a senior police official had ordered that the reporters be set up and arrested.

In April 2018, after launching an investigation into the killings, the military announced that four officers and three soldiers of other ranks had been dismissed from the military and sentenced to 10 years with hard labor for "contributing and participating in murder". Neither their names nor details of their roles in the killing were disclosed. Civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi welcomed the convictions, telling reporters at the time the sentencing was Myanmar's "first step on the road of taking responsibility". Suu Kyi's spokesman, Zaw Htay, did not pick up a call seeking comment on the release of the seven soldiers.

'Year that changed my life'

Two men who recently spent time in Sittwe Prison told Reuters the seven soldiers were well-known among prisoners there. "We were in the same building but different cells," said one of the men, Aung Than Wai, a political activist from Sittwe, who spent nearly six months in

prison under a privacy law after he criticized a state official and posted an image of the official online. Aung Than Wai, who was released from Sittwe in December, said he wanted to speak publicly about the soldiers' early release because an ethnic Rakhine Buddhist villager also jailed over the Inn Din killings was still in prison. The villager, school teacher Tun Aye, is serving a five-year sentence for murder at Buthidaung Prison in northern Rakhine, said his lawyer, Khin Win.

The convicted soldiers in Sittwe were given beer and cigarettes even though such indulgences were off-limits to other prisoners, Aung Than Wai said. The soldiers were also visited by army officials, said the second man who was in the prison at the time and asked not to be named. In November, the seven men were taken away in a military vehicle, he said. The same month, Zin Paing Soe, one of the convicted soldiers, set up a new Facebook account, noting in his biography that he attended the military's elite Defense Services Academy. In one of the account's first public posts, he said he was looking forward to the end of a year spent mostly in prison. "When will these unfortunate things end for me?" the post reads. "The year that totally changed my life: F*** 2018." — Reuters

Political novice wins Lithuania presidential race

VILNIUS: Gitanas Nausėda, a centre-right independent and political novice, won Lithuania's presidential runoff in a race marked by low populist sentiment and concerns over inequality in the Baltic eurozone state. Although Lithuanian presidents do not directly craft economic policy, bread-and-butter issues have dominated the race. Experts also noted that by choosing between two pro-EU, centre-right candidates in the runoff, Lithuanians who see the European Union as a source of prosperity and security bucked growing eurosceptic and populist sentiment in the bloc.



Gitanas Nausėda

Vowing to build a "welfare state", Nausėda said he would bridge the gap between rich and poor in Lithuania, which is among the most pronounced in the 28-member EU, adding that he would also seek to bring urban and rural Lithuanians closer together. "All people can live with dignity in this small country," the 55-year-old former bank advisor and economist told reporters as he claimed victory at his campaign headquarters in the capital Vilnius following Sunday's vote.

Nausėda also hinted he wanted to soften Lithuania's often sharp rhetoric towards Russia, but insisted that relations could only be improved if Moscow changes its policy towards Ukraine. Challenger Ingrida Simonyte, a conservative-backed independent MP conceded defeat, telling public broadcaster LRT she had wished Nausėda "success in uniting Lithuanian people." Nausėda scored 65.86 percent of the vote ahead of 32.86 percent for Simonyte based on full official results from all 1972 polling stations.

Vilnius voter Jonas Jovaiša, 25, said that Nausėda's lack of party affiliation made him the most suitable to lead the nation. "He doesn't depend on any political party and that will help him to work with any parliament or government," he told AFP after casting a ballot for Nausėda. He 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 for European Council president.

Rich-poor divide

Lithuania is struggling with a sharp population decline owing to mass emigration to Western Europe by people seeking better opportunities. The rivals 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, higher than 1.1 percent average in the 19-member eurozone, but income inequality is still among the highest in the EU.

Decades of TV appearances as an economic expert have made the married father-of-two a household name reputed for his intelligence, calm and moderation. Critics, however, had argued his platform is too vague and see his political inexperience and business links as liabilities. Simonyte, 44, was finance minister during the global financial crisis and saw the economy shrink by nearly 15 percent, a decline that took a high toll on low-income earners. Socially liberal, she supports same-sex partnerships, a position which has stirred controversy in the predominantly Catholic country. Lithuanian presidents steer defense and foreign policy, attending EU and NATO summits, but while they have veto powers they must agree senior appointments with the prime minister. Nausėda firmly supports EU and NATO membership as bulwarks against neighboring Russia, especially since Moscow's 2014 military intervention in Ukraine. Grybauskaitė had called Russia a "terrorist state" in 2014 after it annexed Crimea from Ukraine but Nausėda said on Sunday that he "would like to be diplomatic and to use wording which could be slightly different from what we used previously." But he added that "it will be very difficult to improve relations" with Russia if it continues its current policy on Ukraine. — AFP

Everest 'traffic jam' survivor calls for tougher rules

KATHMANDU: Ameesha Chauhan, a survivor of the Everest "traffic jam" who is in hospital recovering from frostbite, said climbers without basic skills should be barred to prevent a recurrence of this year's deadly season on the world's highest peak. Ten people have died in little more than two weeks after poor weather cut the climbing window, leaving mountaineers waiting in long queues to the summit, risking exhaustion and running out of oxygen.

Nepal issued a record 381 Everest permits this season, and several hundred of the summiteers are not properly trained, take poor decisions and "put their own life in risk and also the Sherpa guides", Chauhan said. The 29-year-old Indian had to wait 20 minutes to come down from the 8,848-m peak, but others were held up for hours. "I saw some climbers without basic skills fully relying on their Sherpa guides. The government should fix the qualification criteria," she told AFP in Kathmandu's general hospital, all the toes on her left foot black and blue and her face weather-worn. "Only trained climbers should be granted the permit to climb Everest."

As well as the Everest deaths, nine climbers have died on other 8,000-m Himalayan peaks, while one is missing. At least four deaths on the world's highest mountain have been blamed on over-crowding with teams waiting sometimes for hours in the "death zone" where the cold is bitter, the air dangerously thin and the terrain treacherous. This year's Everest toll is the highest since 2014-15 when huge earthquakes triggered devastating avalanches.

Vanquished Aussie opposition shifts left with new leader

SYDNEY: Australia's opposition is set to anoint Anthony Albanese as its new leader, hoping to win back the working class after a shock election defeat to the conservative government. The Australian Labor Party unexpectedly lost to incumbent leader Scott Morrison on May 18, despite leading in the polls running up to the election. Albanese, from Labor's left faction, replaced Bill Shorten when the former union chief stepped down hours after losing the vote.

The 56-year-old will be officially confirmed by the Labor caucus on Thursday after the uncontested leadership ballot. Albanese vowed to create a "larger, more inclusive party" amid soul-searching within the ranks over the defeat. "I understand that it is a big mountain that we have to climb," Albanese told reporters in Sydney, where he holds his lower house seat, yesterday. "I want to build relationships between the Labor Party and those people who voted for us, but also those people who wanted to vote for us, who were open to vote for us, but who felt like they couldn't." Labor's large and progressive policy

3 migrants hidden in cars at Spain border

MADRID: Three African migrants, including one who is 15, were discovered squeezed inside compartments under car dashboards and behind seats at a border crossing from Morocco to Spain, police said yesterday. Spanish police found a 15-year-old girl and two men aged 20 and 21, Friday morning when they searched three cars at the border between Morocco and the Spanish territory of Melilla, a spokesman for the Guardia Civil police force said.

Two migrants were found crammed inside tiny spaces installed under car dashboards while a third was hidden in a compartment behind the rear seat of one vehicle, a Guardia Civil statement said. Two of the migrants required medical attention because they showed "symptoms of asphyxia, disorientation and generalized pain in the joints due to horrible way in which they were traveling," the statement added. Police arrested the three drivers, all Moroccan men aged 19-31, on suspicion of people smuggling.

Border police also found a 20-year-old migrant on Friday hanging from the undercarriage of a truck at the border crossing. Spain's two North African enclaves, Melilla and Ceuta, have the European Union's only land borders with Africa. They are often used as entry points into Europe for African migrants, who usually either climb over border fences or try to swim along the coast. — AFP



EVEREST, Nepal: This handout photo taken on May 22, 2019 shows heavy traffic of mountain climbers lining up to stand on the summit of Mount Everest. — AFP

The crowding was laid bare in a photo taken last week by Nirmal Purja, a former Gurkha soldier, of a long queue of climbers snaking up to the summit. The photo by the head of the Project Possible charity aiming to climb the 14 8,000 m-plus peaks in the world in seven months has gone viral from his @nimsdai Twitter handle and highlighted the dangers amidst the mania to climb Everest. "Many climbers' oxygen was running out," Chauhan said. "Some climbers died due to their own negligence. They insisted on reaching the top even if their oxygen is running out, which risks their life," she said.

Another climber, the "adventure filmmaker" Elia Saikaly, posted on Instagram on Sunday that he had reached the summit of Everest and "cannot believe what I saw up there". "Death, Carnage, Chaos, Lineups. Dead bodies on the route and in tents at camp 4. People who I tried to turn back who ended up dying. People being dragged down. Walking over



Anthony Albanese

reform agenda, which it campaigned heavily on, as well as Shorten's unpopularity with voters, have been blamed for the election upset. Morrison successfully cast Labor's proposals, including tackling climate change, as too risky and damaging to household finances at a time when the national economy is slowing down. The Labor party performed particularly poorly in Queensland state, where Shorten was perceived to be lukewarm about a potential large

India-backed mine that promises to create thousands of jobs. But Albanese argued it was possible to grow the economy, and create jobs while still pursuing a progressive agenda. "The economy must work for people, not the other way around. I view unions and business as having common interests," he said. "But... we can't judge the economy separate from the people it's meant to serve. I believe in an inclusive society, one that looks after the most vulnerable." Albanese was raised by a single mother in public housing in Sydney and has previously touted his roots as helping him connect with lower-income voters, who deserted Labor in droves at the last election. — AFP



MELILLA, Spain: Handout pictures made available yesterday show members of the Spanish Guardia Civil checking inside a compartment built behind a car dashboard, where African migrants were squeezed. — AFP



KATHMANDU: Indian Everest climber Ameesha Chauhan dips her fingers in a warm solution at a hospital yesterday. — AFP

bodies," Saikaly wrote. "Everything you read in the sensational headlines all played out on our summit night."

Mountaineering has become big business since Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay made the first ascent of Everest in 1953, with the mountain becoming a favorite "bucket list" feat. Nepal's permits this season cost \$11,000 each, providing the impoverished Himalayan country with much-needed foreign currency. At least 140 others were granted permits to climb from the northern flank in Tibet. Although final numbers are yet to be released with the season set to wrap up this week, this could take the total past last year's record of 807 people reaching the summit. The dead included four climbers from India and one each from the United States, Britain and Nepal. An Irish mountaineer is presumed dead after he slipped and fell close to the summit. — AFP

US Army Twitter question highlights toll of America's wars

WASHINGTON: Days ahead of an annual holiday when Americans remember those who died while serving in the armed forces, the US Army's Twitter account asked people how their time in the military affected them and received an outpouring of grief. The question drew some 10,000 replies since it was posted late last week - many of which were anonymous or included details that could not be independently confirmed, but which paint a harrowing picture of the toll America's wars have taken on those who fought them.

"OEF, OIF PTSD with chronic pain," one Twitter user wrote, using the US military's acronyms for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the abbreviation for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The US launched the war in Afghanistan in 2001 and the Iraq war in 2003. The conflicts left thousands of American service members dead and many more wounded. US troops are still deployed in both countries to this day.

"My dad came back from fighting in Iraq and was abusive, constantly angry, paranoid, and following that went through a lot of therapy but his mental and physical health are still off and he was definitely changed through all he had been through," another user wrote. "My son served and did one tour of OEF, he made it back, re-enlisted, and shot himself in the head," said another. "The 'Combat Cocktail': PTSD, severe depression, anxiety. Isolation. Suicide attempts. Never ending rage. It cost me my relationship with my eldest son and my grandson. It cost some of my men so much more," another Twitter user wrote. "How did serving impact me? Ask my family."

Not all the replies were about the toll taken by combat. "I was forced to resign my commission while serving in Kuwait during the first Gulf War because I am gay. I received an other than honorable discharge despite excellent performance reviews," one man wrote. An other than honorable discharge is the most severe military administrative dismissal. It can follow a former soldier well into civilian life, leaving them ineligible for benefits and making it difficult to find work.

The Army thanked those who replied to its official account, saying: "Your stories are real, they matter, and they may help others in similar situations. As we honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice this weekend by remembering their service, we are also mindful of the fact that we have to take care of those who came back home with scars we can't see." — AFP

International

In Japan, Trump leaves allies, enemies and staff guessing

Trump dials down trade tensions after Abe flattery

TOKYO: Trump came to meet Japan's emperor but it was the US president who played the monarch in Tokyo as he pushed a personal brand of foreign policy leaving allies, foes and staff alike wondering what on Earth to expect next. A master of self-promotion, Trump has for decades made sure that everything he does - from building skyscrapers to running the White House - is all about him. His diplomatic style in Japan, where he was given the honor of being the first foreign leader to meet new Emperor Naruhito, was no different.

At a joint press conference with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday, Trump took questions on some of the biggest challenges facing the United States and its close ally Japan. Then he freewheeled. On North Korea, he breezily dismissed worries about recent testing of short-range missiles, which both Abe and Trump's own advisors say violated UN Security Council resolutions. "My people think it could have been a violation... I view it as a man who perhaps wants to get attention," Trump said of North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un.

US intelligence agencies also state emphatically that Kim intends to hang on to his nuclear weapons, but Trump signalled he believes his own instincts better. He talks to Kim "a lot" about his preference for opening up North Korea to investment over amassing

nuclear weapons, he said, and he finds Kim "a very smart man." Trump will be criticized yet again in Washington for praising a dictator but he doesn't seem to care.

And on Iran, Trump induced even more diplomatic whiplash. Before Trump flew to Japan, the United States had announced it was sending 1,500 extra troops to the region, adding to the aircraft carrier group and nuclear-capable bomber planes already dispatched. Trump himself threatened "the official end" of the country if Tehran ever attacked US interests. Yesterday, Trump offered assurances that he can live with the Islamic republic's government, whose toppling has long been a dream for Washington hardliners.

"We're not looking for regime change," Trump said, explaining that he only cared about Iran not achieving nuclear power status. In fact, there was only one clear target in the president's sights yesterday: His own hawkish national security advisor John Bolton, whom Trump has repeatedly contradicted over North Korea and Iran, sitting a few feet away.

Japan tries charm

As Trump goes around the world tearing up treaties, slapping on trade tariffs and blowing hot and cold over what to do in places like Iran, different countries try different strate-

gies. European Union countries are divided and often confused over the upheaval in what had long been a cozy, almost family relationship with the United States. China, with ambitions of becoming the world's main superpower, has pushed back, triggering a trade war that shows no sign of quick resolution.

Japan has taken a different tack: Flattering and befriending the unpredictable American. Abe bent over backwards to make sure "Donald", as he called him at their press conference, was happy throughout the visit starting Saturday. "Because of the very close personal relationship with Donald, the bond of the US-Japan alliance has become unshakable, the closest in the whole world," Abe said.

He chose Trump to be the first world leader to get an audience with Naruhito, sated the US president's famous appetite for well-cooked meat, took a joint selfie on the golf course, and promised to buy 105 F-35 warplanes. Abe even arranged for Trump to enter Japan's most hallowed sumo ring and present a trophy to the champion wrestler. The trophy was meant to be from the United States, but, as Trump emphasized, it was really from him. "We did it personally. We bought that beautiful trophy, which they'll have, hopefully, for many hundreds of years," Trump said.



TOKYO: US First Lady Melania Trump and US President Donald Trump meet Japan Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako during a welcome ceremony at the Imperial Palace yesterday. — AFP

What did Abe get in return? Trump dialled down trade tensions, for one, announcing that any serious discussions in negotiations on his

insistence that Japan open to more US products will be put off until after Abe gets through elections here in July. — AFP

Modi praises party workers amid violence, killings

VARANASI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised his nationalist party's courage yesterday amid political clashes and killings after his latest landslide election triumph. Three workers from Modi's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have been killed and there have been pitched battles between BJP activists and a rival regional party in West Bengal state since Modi secured a new five-year term last week. Thousands of supporters lined the streets of his political bastion of Varanasi, waving flags, chanting his name and throwing flower petals at his cavalcade, despite the 40 degree Celsius heat.

"Why are our workers being killed and attacked in Kashmir, Kerala or Bengal," Modi said. "It is shameful and anti-democratic," he added. A close aide of former BJP minister Smriti Irani was shot dead by gunmen on a motorbike in the Amethi district of Uttar Pradesh state on Saturday night. Irani won the Amethi seat from opposition Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Another BJP worker was shot dead in West Bengal on Sunday night, triggering fresh clashes with supporters of the rival Trinamool Congress party, officials said. The two sides hurled home-made bombs at each other and about a dozen people were injured. A BJP activist was shot dead in West Bengal a day after election results were announced on Thursday. Other politicians from the ruling party and opposition were killed during the campaign in several states.

Varanasi, where many Hindus are cremated on wooden pyres beside the sacred Ganges river, is considered one of the religion's most holy cities. Modi offered prayers to Hindu god Shiva at the renowned Kashi Vishwanath temple where priests in saffron robes chanted hymns and blew conch shells.

Saffron balloons, flags and large Modi cut-outs lined the access road to the temple where police and commandos secured the district, packed with old houses and businesses. "We have come to see Modi and support him. Varanasi is blessed to have Modi as its MP," Deep Chand, a resident of the city, told AFP. "In just five years the city has seen so much development which was unheard of in the last 60 years. He has the support of every Indian and he's going to take the country to new heights." Modi is due to take the oath of office in New Delhi on Thursday. — AFP



VARANASI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to supporters at the Trade Facilitation Centre and Crafts Museum after offering prayers at the Kashi Vishwanath temple yesterday. — AFP

Lanka to relax emergency in a month: President

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's President announced yesterday he will allow tough emergency laws to lapse within a month because the security situation was "99 percent back to normal" following the Easter bombings. Maithripala Sirisena told Colombo-based diplomats from Australia, Canada, Japan, the US and European states that security forces were successful in getting at all those responsible for the April 21 bombings.

Trump meets kin of Japanese abducted by North Korea

TOKYO: US President Donald Trump yesterday told relatives of Japanese abducted by North Korea that their loved ones were "very much on my mind" and promised to work to bring them home. The US leader made the comments during a brief meeting with around a dozen relatives as part of a state visit to Japan, the second time he has met with the families of the missing. "The stories are very sad," he said at the somber gathering, surrounded by family members, some clutching framed photographs of their missing loved ones.

Japan suspects dozens of its citizens were abducted in the 1970s and 1980s by North Korean agents to train their spies in Japanese language and culture. The abductions are a potent and emotional issue in Japan, with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe even promising to meet North Korea's Kim Jong Un if it would help resolve the long-running question. "I can see why your great prime minister feels so strongly about it," Trump told the gathered family



TOKYO: US President Donald Trump meets family members of Japanese abductees by North Korea, with First Lady Melania Trump, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie Abe at Akasaka State Guesthouse yesterday. — AFP

members. "I can tell you that it is very much on my mind," he added. "And we will be working together to bring the relatives, children, sons, your mothers, home."

Relatives of the missing thanked Trump for raising the issue in two rounds of talks with Kim, including a summit in Hanoi in February that broke down without an agreement. Trump's efforts were producing "concrete progress towards the resolution of the abduction issue," said Sakie Yokota, whose daughter Megumi is among the

missing. Megumi was kidnapped on her way home from school in 1977 aged only 13, and is the youngest among the 17 officially listed as abductees by the Japanese government.

In 2004, North Korea handed over cremated remains it claimed were Megumi's. However, Tokyo said DNA tests conducted in Japan proved the claim to be untrue. Her brother sat next to their mother during the meeting, holding a photo of his sister dressed in a pink and white

checked kimono. "We have the greatest trust in you and also in Prime Minister Abe," Yokota told Trump, who was sitting next to his wife Melania, along with Abe and his wife Akie.

'Break this deadlock'

Koichiro Iizuka, whose mother Yaeko Taguchi was kidnapped in 1978, urged Trump and Abe to "break this deadlock". "My mother has been separated from her son, as well as her family members, for the past 41 years," he said. "I sincerely hope Mr Prime Minister and President will break this deadlock... so as to bring about the return of my mother as soon as possible." In 2002, North Korea admitted to kidnapping 13 Japanese civilians, but the government in Tokyo believes at least 17 were taken to train Pyongyang's agents.

A month later, five were allowed to return to Japan. Pyongyang insists the other eight are dead but has not produced cast-iron evidence. Taguchi is among those Pyongyang says died, in a traffic accident, but a North Korean defector has cast doubt on that account. Under an agreement brokered in Stockholm in May 2014, North Korea undertook to reinvestigate all abductions of Japanese citizens in what appeared to be a significant breakthrough on an issue that has long hampered Tokyo's relations with Pyongyang. But there has been little progress since then, despite new diplomatic momentum towards peace on the Korean peninsula. — AFP



KATHMANDU: Nepali security personnel carry the body of a victim killed in a blast on Sunday. — AFP

Maoists targeted by police over blasts amid strike

KATHMANDU: Nepalese police arrested suspected Maoist activists after three deadly bomb blasts in Kathmandu as a general strike disrupted daily life in much of the South Asian nation yesterday, police said. Amid a high alert after Sunday's attacks, which were blamed on an outlawed Maoist group, police blew up several suspicious packages. The group broke away from the country's main communist party, which is now in power, and called the general strike to protest against the death of one of its leaders in police custody.

Police said at least 13 officials from the Maoist group had been arrested on Sunday night and early yesterday in differ-

ent parts of the country. "Security agencies dealt with suspicious objects found in different areas, mostly outside the capital," said police spokesman Bishwa Raj Pokharel. While some schools and offices remained closed in Kathmandu, "the effect of the general strike is nominal in the Kathmandu valley but very few vehicles are working outside the capital," the spokesman added. Four men were killed and seven people injured in three explosions in Kathmandu on Sunday.

A blast inside a shop killed three people, one died in an explosion at a nearby house, whilst two men carrying explosives on a motorbike were among those injured. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but police said they suspected the Maoist group whose pamphlets were found in a house where one of the explosions took place. Nepal has enjoyed relative calm since the end of a decade-long civil war in 2006. But some former guerrillas have formed a new group accusing their former leaders of betraying their revolutionary cause. The group was banned after it was implicated in an explosion that killed one person outside a telecom company office in February. — AFP

that shattered a decade-long peace in the country. The attacks exposed serious security failures. Sirisena has ordered an investigation into why local authorities failed to act on precise intelligence from neighboring India that jihadists were about to hit Christian churches and other targets in Sri Lanka. The mainly Buddhist nation of 21 million people was about to mark a decade since ending a 37-year-long Tamil separatist war when Islamic extremists struck.

Sirisena reiterated to foreign envoys that Sri Lankan security forces have either arrested or killed all those directly involved in the Easter Sunday bombings. Police say just over 100 people, including 10 women are in custody in connection with the attacks. Security forces also detained a further 100 suspects in four days of cordon-and-search operations since Thursday, according to military officials. — AFP

Jakarta steamrolls bootleg alcohol during Ramadan

JAKARTA: About 18,000 bottles of bootleg alcohol were crushed by a steamroller in Muslim-majority Indonesia's capital yesterday as police warned tippers off booze during the Ramadan fasting month. Nearly 90 percent of Indonesia's 260 million people are Muslims who are advised to abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and sex between sunrise and sunset during Ramadan. Police laid out thousands of bottles collected in raids over the past few months in the capital Jakarta and then drove a steamroller over them in a messy annual display.

Jakarta governor Anies Baswedan called on residents to avoid circulating illegal liquor. "The job of the community is to reduce demand," he said at the booze-crushing event near the city's national monument. "But no matter how much supply is reduced, it's tough if there is still demand." Indonesian authorities typically make a show out of seizing and destroying large quantities of illegal alcohol to remind Muslims to abstain from boozing during Ramadan. Alcohol is typically forbidden for Muslims at any time of the year. But most Indonesians practice a moderate form of Islam and alcohol is available at bars and nightclubs in major cities and holiday destinations such as Bali. Many entertainment spots are closed during Ramadan, including in Jakarta. — AFP



JAKARTA: Indonesian workers destroy bottles of liquors seized in recent raids yesterday. — AFP

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

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

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

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

After EU's Juncker: Three candidates and a dark horse

More than 200 million Europeans voted across 28 countries, and a new European Parliament is taking shape, but are we any closer to knowing who will lead the EU executive? Jean-Claude Juncker steps down as president of the European Commission this year, and EU leaders want a full new team in place by the end of this year to take charge.

They will meet for dinner Tuesday to launch their summer top jobs fair, but so far there is no agreement on a name, nor on a method for finding one. Senior members of the European Parliament will try to insist someone who took part in the campaign as one of their lead candidates should get the job. But the European Council of national leaders will be loathe to cede their right, encoded in the European Treaty, to choose a nominee to be ratified by lawmakers.

Weber: The right's quiet champion?

Manfred Weber thinks of himself as the favorite, and the centre-right EPP parliamentary group says it is determined that he will get the nod when the leaders meet. But the 46-year-old Bavarian conservative, an engineer by training, will struggle to convince sceptics like French president Emmanuel Macron. Unlike Juncker, the former premier of Luxembourg, and other Commission presidents before him, Weber has no executive experience at national or EU level.

Germany's Angela Merkel has promised to back Weber, and EPP leader Joseph Daul insisted after the vote that the party won and that its candidate must get the job. But does he have the authority? The EPP is still the biggest group, but lost seats and Weber admitted: "I don't feel a real powerful victory today."

Vestager: The Liberal's tax lady

Along among the candidates, EU competition commissioner Margarete Vestager had star power before the race—the Danish political soap Borgen was based on her career. She has also been a star of the outgoing EU administration, a scourge of the US internet giants that prompted President Donald Trump to complain about Europe's "tax lady". But she has the backing of the liberal bloc, which seems to have secured only around 100 seats in the new parliament, weakening any claim to an electoral mandate.

Macron may end up backing her as an alternative to Weber, and EU Council president Donald Tusk has made it clear that a woman should get at least one of Europe's top jobs. And she made it clear Sunday that she wants the job. Asked about the EPP's stronger election score, Vestager made reference to her record of anti-trust actions: "The monopoly of power is broken."

Does Timmermans have Timmermentum? -

The 58-year-old former Dutch foreign minister Frans Timmermans served as Juncker's deputy and launched EU legal challenges against Poland and Hungary's governments. So his executive credentials check out, even if the bearded centrist has also made some enemies on the Council, where there are only five socialist leaders to back him. Any hope he has would rely on the Greens, liberals and socialists unite behind progressive agenda, trusting Weber to fall in line rather than dealing with the far right.

"I am not putting any claims at all," he said, perhaps with false modesty after his S&D group lost seats. "I hope I can bring together a coalition with a program we need for the next five years," he said. "On the basis of a program and a coalition than we can start playing the game of thrones, of who gets which job, but that is the right order."

Barrier, the impatient understudy

Former foreign minister and now EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier, a suave 68-year-old Frenchman, is nobody's top choice for the Commission—but also nobody's last. He's a veteran Brussels operator, a Gaullist with many close allies in the parliament, even if he did not go to the bother of joining the Spitzenkandidat process. Like Weber and a good number of EU leaders including Merkel, he is from the centre-right EPP group. And like Macron, he's at least French, at a point when many in Paris this it's their turn to lead the Commission or at least something big, like the European Central Bank. But MEPs seem determined to honor their process, and if Macron blocks Merkel's man she's unlikely to approve his. — AFP



A combination of pictures shows the eight contenders declared as of May 26 to replace Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May when she resigns on June 7: (Top left to right) Britain's Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, former foreign secretary Boris Johnson, Britain's Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Secretary Michael Gove, former Brexit secretary Dominic Raab, (bottom left to right) Britain's International Development Secretary Rory Stewart, former works and pensions secretary Esther McVey, former leader of the House of Commons Andrea Leadsom, and Britain's Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock, all pictured in Downing Street, central London. — AFP

Who wants to be UK's next prime minister?

British Prime Minister Theresa May has announced she will quit next month, triggering a contest that will bring a new leader to power who is likely to push for a cleaner break with the European Union. Below are Conservatives who have either said they are putting themselves forward or are widely expected to run for the leadership, and what they have said about Brexit: Announced they are running:

Boris Johnson, 54

The face of the official campaign to leave the European Union, Johnson resigned as foreign minister in July in protest at May's handling of the exit negotiations. Johnson set out his pitch to the membership in a speech at the party's annual conference in October – some members queued for hours to get a seat. He called on the party to return to its traditional values of low tax and strong policing.

On Brexit, Johnson used a newspaper column in April to argue for a "standstill arrangement – a managed no deal – that would give us time to negotiate an FTA (Free Trade Arrangement) and to solve the issues raised in Northern Ireland." On Friday he said: "We will leave the EU on October 31, deal or no deal" adding that a second referendum on EU membership would be a "very bad idea" and divisive. He is the bookmakers' favorite to succeed May.

Dominic Raab, 45

Raab quit as May's Brexit minister last year in protest at her draft exit agreement saying it did not match the promises the Conservative Party made in the 2017 election. Raab served only five months as head of the Brexit department. He had held junior ministerial roles since being elected in 2010. Raab, a black belt in karate, campaigned for Brexit.

On Brexit, Raab told the BBC on Sunday that he plans to seek a "fairer deal" with Brussels, including renegotiating the customs and border plans relating to Northern Ireland. He also said he would not delay Brexit beyond October however, and was prepared to leave without a deal. Raab said he expected that if Britain left without a deal, it would likely get to keep around 25 billion pounds of its 39 billion pound exit payment, and the government could use that money to support businesses through Brexit.

Michael Gove, 51

Gove, one of the highest-profile Brexit campaigners during the 2016 referendum, has had to rebuild his cabinet career after falling early to May in the contest to replace David Cameron, who resigned the day after losing the referendum. Seen as one of the most effective members of cabinet in bringing forward new policies, the high-energy environment minister has become a surprise ally to May and has backed her Brexit strategy. He teamed up with Johnson during the 2016 Brexit campaign only to scupper Johnson's subsequent leadership bid by withdrawing his support at the last moment to run himself. Gove said he believed he could unite the party and deliver Brexit, but did not set out what his plans were.

Jeremy Hunt, 52

Hunt replaced Johnson as foreign minister in July and has urged the Conservative membership to set aside their differences over Brexit and unite against a common foe – the EU. Hunt voted to remain in the EU in the referendum. He served six years as Britain's health minister, a role that has made him unpopular with many voters who work in or rely on the state-run, financially stretched National Health Service. On Brexit, Hunt told the Sunday Times: "We can never take no deal off the table but the best way of avoiding it is to make sure you have someone who is capable of negotiating a deal."

At a lunch with journalists last month, he said: "I would always prefer to leave with a deal because I think there will be disruption without a deal ... it would potentially be

very significant and that is something I think anyone sensible would wish to avoid." But added: "If there was a binary choice between no deal or no Brexit, I would choose no deal because I think the democratic risk of no Brexit ultimately is higher than the economic risk of no deal."

Rory Stewart, 46

A former diplomat who once walked 6,000 miles across Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal, Stewart was promoted to International Development Secretary this month. Educated at the exclusive Eton College, Stewart was first elected to parliament in 2010 and backed remaining in the EU in the 2016 referendum. He opposes a "no deal" exit and has been a vocal advocate of May's deal with Brussels.

On Brexit, he told Sky News on Sunday that he favored a "pragmatic, moderate Brexit". He said he would not seek to change the Withdrawal Agreement which has been rejected by parliament three times and said anyone who said they could do so by October was "deluding themselves or deluding the country". "We have a deal negotiated with the European Union on the Withdrawal Agreement. What I would be doing in parliament and with the British people is sorting out that political declaration and landing it so we can get out and move on."

Andrea Leadsom, 56

A pro-Brexit campaigner, Leadsom made it to the last two in the 2016 contest to replace Cameron. She withdrew after a backlash to an interview in which she said being a mother gave her more of a stake in the future of the country than May. Leadsom quit as Leader of the House of Commons earlier this month, saying she did not believe the government's approach would deliver on the Brexit referendum result. On Brexit, she told the Sunday Times she would put significant effort into encouraging the EU to come up with a "deal that we can all live with" but also said Britain had to leave by the end of October, with or without a deal.

Matt Hancock, 40

Health minister Hancock, a former economist at the Bank of England, supported "Remain" in 2016. First elected to parliament in 2010, he has held several ministerial roles. On Brexit, he told BBC Radio that leaving without a deal was not an option as parliament would not allow it. He said he was open to renegotiate May's deal with the EU but would focus on getting a Brexit deal through parliament. "There is no point in becoming prime minister at this moment unless I am completely straight forward about the trade offs that exist and the realities of it. The trade offs between sovereignty and market access, the trade offs required to get a deal through this parliament," he said.

Esther McVey, 51

The pro-Brexit former television presenter, who resigned as work and pensions minister in November in protest at May's exit deal with the EU, said on Sunday Britain has to leave on Oct 31 and "if that means without a deal, then that is what it means." She told Sky News: "We won't be asking for any more extensions, that is part of the corrosive uncertainty that individuals, business and the country don't want." "We need to make sure we are ready to leave on that date. If the EU wants to come to us, the door is open, if they want to have a better deal that is fine, we have always wanted a free trade agreement but what we have got to do is not waste time, time is limited, we have to make sure that we are ready to leave."

Sajid Javid, 49

Javid, a former banker and a champion of free markets, has served a number of cabinet roles and scores consistently well in polls of party members. A second-generation immigrant of Pakistani heritage, he has a portrait of late Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on his

office wall. Javid voted "Remain" in the 2016 referendum but was previously considered to be eurosceptic.

Expected to run: Penny Mordaunt, 46

Mordaunt is one of the last remaining pro-Brexit members of May's cabinet. She became Britain's first female defence secretary this month. A Royal Navy reservist, Mordaunt was previously international development minister. Many had expected her to join the wave of resignations that followed the publication of May's draft withdrawal deal.

Graham Brady, 51

Brady resigned as chair of the influential 1922 Committee of Conservative lawmakers on Friday because he was considering running for the leadership, the BBC reported. The 1922 Committee oversees the leadership contest.

Kit Malthouse, 52

A former deputy mayor of London, Malthouse became a Member of Parliament in 2015. He is a junior housing minister and helped author the so-called Malthouse Compromise plan to replace the unpopular Irish backstop in Britain's EU exit deal with alternative arrangements to avoid a hard border. The Sun newspaper reported he was setting up a campaign team.

James Cleverly, 49

Cleverly became a junior Brexit minister last month, having previously been deputy chair of the Conservative Party. He worked in publishing before being elected to parliament in 2015. — Reuters



A pro-Brexit campaigner walks during the first leg of the March To Leave march in Sunderland. — AFP

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Business

TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2019

12 Nasdaq withdraws its offer to acquire Oslo stock exchange

13 India's economy major worry for Modi, needs stimulus: Trade body

14 Jazeera Airways celebrates one year of operations at Terminal 5



MILAN: Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) chairman John Elkann (right) speaks to journalists at the Bocconi University in southern Milan yesterday prior to a meeting called "Competition and Monopoly." —AFP

Fiat Chrysler, Renault pursue \$35bn merger

Merger of equals to create global No 3 auto group

MILAN/PARIS: Fiat Chrysler pitched a finely balanced merger of equals to Renault yesterday to confront the costs of far-reaching technological and regulatory changes by creating the world's third-biggest automaker. If it goes ahead, the \$35 billion-plus tie-up would alter the landscape for rivals including General Motors and Peugeot maker PSA Group, which recently held inconclusive talks with Fiat Chrysler (FCA), and could spur more deals.

French group Renault said it was studying the proposal from Italian-American FCA with interest, and considered it friendly. Shares in both companies jumped more than 10 percent as investors welcomed the potential creation of a company that would produce more than 8.7 million vehicles a year and aim for 5 billion euros (\$5.6 billion) in annual savings.

It would rank third in the global auto industry behind Japan's Toyota and Germany's Volkswagen. But analysts also warned of big complications, including Renault's existing alliance with Nissan, the French state's role as Renault's largest shareholder and potential opposition from politicians and workers to any cutbacks.

"The market will be careful with these synergy numbers as much has been promised before and there isn't a single merger of equals that has ever succeeded in autos," Evercore ISI analyst Arndt Ellinghorst said. With these sensitivities in mind, FCA proposed an all-share merger of equals under a listed Dutch holding company. After a 2.5 billion euro dividend for existing FCA shareholders - giving a big upfront boost to the Agnelli family that controls 29 percent of FCA - investors in

each firm would hold half of the new entity.

The merged group would be chaired by Agnelli family head John Elkann, sources familiar with the talks told Reuters, while Renault chairman Jean-Dominique Senard would likely become CEO.

Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini said the proposed merger could be good news for Italy if it helped FCA to grow, but it was crucial to preserve jobs. He did not comment on the French government's 15 percent stake in Renault, but an influential lawmaker from the ruling League party said Rome may seek a stake in the combined group to balance France's holding.

A deal could also have profound repercussions for Renault's 20-year-old alliance with Nissan, already weakened by the crisis surrounding the arrest and ouster of former chairman Carlos Ghosn late last year. The Japanese carmaker has yet to comment on FCA's proposal.

In a letter to employees seen by Reuters, FCA chief executive Mike Manley cautioned a merger with Renault could take more than a year to finalize.

'Bold decisions'

A deal could help both companies address some of the shortcomings that have led their market valuations to lag major rivals, as well as the challenges of switching to electric and self-driving technologies and tougher emissions regulations. FCA has a highly profitable business in North America with its RAM trucks and Jeep brand, but lost money

last quarter in Europe, where most of its plants are running below 50 percent capacity and it faces a struggle with new emissions curbs.

Renault, by contrast, was an early mover in electric cars, has relatively fuel-efficient engine technologies and a strong presence in emerging markets, but no US business.

A deal would do little, however, to address both firms' limited presence in China, the world's biggest auto market. FCA said the case for a merger was "strengthened by the need to take bold decisions to capture at scale the opportunities created by the transformation of the auto industry."

The huge cost of these changes, including meeting the threats posed by new market entrants such as Tesla in electric cars as well as Uber and Google in self-driving vehicles, has pushed other automakers to work more closely together, including Volkswagen and Ford. FCA-Renault, like almost every possible automotive pairing, has been studied intermittently for years by dealmakers. But the fractious relations between Ghosn and FCA's Sergio Marchionne made constructive merger talks impossible before the former CEO's sudden death last July, banking sources said.

Paris and Rome

The French government, Renault's biggest shareholder, supports a merger with FCA in principle but will need to see more details, its main spokeswoman said. France will be "particularly vigilant regarding employment and industrial footprint," another Paris official said. Any deal must safeguard

Renault's alliance with Nissan, which recently rebuffed a merger proposal from its partner, the official added. Seeking to soothe concerns, FCA stressed "new opportunities for employees of both companies".

"The benefits of the proposed transaction are not predicated on plant closures, but would be achieved through more capital-efficient investment in common global vehicle platforms, architectures, powertrains and technologies," it said. Industry bankers said most of the savings were likely to come from procurement, and FCA in particular would benefit from Renault's work on electric and self-driving vehicles where it had done little itself. However, they were skeptical the companies could avoid job losses in Europe.

One source familiar with the matter said FCA had proposed to guarantee industrial jobs and existing sites, leaving scope for white-collar and engineering layoffs as well as some plant downsizing. Appealing to Nissan, which is 43.4 percent owned by Renault, FCA said the Japanese carmaker would be invited to nominate a director to the 11-member board of the new company.

As alliance partners, Nissan and its affiliate Mitsubishi would benefit from an estimated 1 billion euros in annual savings from the merger, FCA added. But analysts said Nissan brought another layer of complexity. "We now have the French, the Italians, the Japanese and the Americans needing to find consensus on the board of a Dutch company, where the French state stands to lose its special status," Ellinghorst said. "This requires quite a bit of creativity." —Reuters

Cabinet approves Lebanon 2019 state budget

BEIRUT: The government of heavily indebted Lebanon formally approved a 2019 budget yesterday that includes deep spending cuts to narrow the projected deficit to 7.6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in a bid to stave off financial crisis. The budget reflected "a real government will to take a corrective path" in state finances and is based on a growth forecast of 1.2 percent this year. Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil said in a news conference broadcast live on television.

It is seen as an important test of Lebanon's will to enact reforms that could stabilize its debt trajectory in a state plagued by chronic corruption and waste. The cabinet had already agreed to the budget in principle on Friday, and it must still pass in parliament.

Lebanon's public debt burden, equivalent to about 150 percent of GDP, is one of the heaviest in the world. Last year's deficit

was equal to about 11.5 percent of GDP, and economic growth rates have been weak for years. Khalil said the budget had been well received by foreign states. Last year, international donors at the Paris Cedre conference pledged \$11 billion in spending on Lebanese infrastructure in return for its government implementing reforms.

"This is a national need, reducing the deficit, before being linked to Cedre ... For sure there is a positive view from all those concerned abroad to what has been achieved on this level: the reform steps and the level of deficit reduction," he said.

Khalil said Lebanon now expected the new investment projects to start, and that the Finance Ministry's efforts to keep the deficit in line with budget projections would show its seriousness.

Cuts

This would result in the "injection and launching of new investment projects that will have a big impact on moving the economy," he said. Khalil said the government had taken steps, which he did not spell out, to bring down Lebanon's huge trade deficit which he said was "putting pressure on the matter of the foreign currency reserve". He

said those steps had stirred some "reservations" in government. Cuts to benefits and pensions for state workers and the military led to protests and strikes as the coalition government spent weeks discussing the budget. Lebanon's public sector is its biggest expense, followed by the cost of servicing the public debt and subsidies to an inefficient electricity sector.

The budget includes a government plan to cut some \$660 million from debt-servicing costs by issuing treasury bonds at a 1 percent interest rate to the Lebanese banking sector, Khalil has previously said.

Central Bank Governor Riad Salameh said yesterday the bank was "keen to follow up on current efforts with a focus on respect for Lebanese law and global financial rules that do not permit any obligatory measures on banks", without elaborating. Salameh said that measures to reform the budget and the power sector were "positive signs" and that financial markets and the Lebanese pound remained stable. Approving the budget in parliament could take another month, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri was quoted saying in local newspapers. Lebanon's parliament is dominated by parties in the coalition. —Reuters



BEIRUT: Police use water cannon to disperse retired Lebanese security personnel during a demonstration over feared pension cuts near the government's headquarters in the capital Beirut. —AFP

Business

India's economy major worry for Modi, needs stimulus: Trade body

GDP grew 6.6%, slowest pace in five quarters

NEW DELHI: India's slowing economic growth is of serious concern and the country needs to urgently cut tax and interest rates to revive the economy, a top industrial body said yesterday ahead of the inauguration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second term.

The economy grew 6.6 percent in the three months to December - the slowest pace in five quarters - and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) said the bigger worry was that domestic consumption was not growing fast enough to offset a weakening global economic environment.

"The recent signs of slowdown in the economy stem not only from slow growth in investments and subdued exports but also from weakening growth in consumption demand," FICCI said in a statement suggesting various measures the government could adopt in the next budget expected in a month.

"This is a matter of serious concern and if not addressed urgently, the repercussions would be long term." Modi - who won a thumping majority in the general election despite the agricultural sector's economic woes, a shortage of jobs and the stuttering economy - takes oath of office on Thursday and will need a finance minister who can help navigate through the challenges facing the economy.

Some of the issues are slowing industrial output and manufacturing growth, slumping car and two-wheeler sales, and a drop in airline passenger traffic.

FICCI said the new government should cut corpo-

rate and individual taxes, expand a program of handing 6,000 rupees (\$86) a year to poor farmers to boost consumption demand and consider tax concessions for export-oriented manufacturers. The Confederation of Indian Industry, another industry body, said it was crucial to reduce the income tax burden and expand the scope of investment allowance to all sectors, while higher incentives should be given to exporters.

The FICCI also called for an interest rate cut from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as real interest rates have remained high for a long time with commercial banks reluctant to pass on the benefits of recent cuts. When Modi took power for the first time in 2014, global oil prices slumped. But as he gets set for a second term, rising oil prices could push the current account deficit higher.

The body also said the trade war between the United States and China could further slow down global trade and hurt India's already sluggish exports. "Amidst rising uncertainties and economic challenges on both the domestic and global front, there is an urgent need to re-energize the engines of growth and pump prime the economy," FICCI said. "The upcoming budget...is an opportunity for the government to boost consumption and investments through appropriate fiscal stimulus and policies."

Government bureaucrats have started consultations with industry bodies, such as the FICCI, before the budget. —Reuters



NEW DELHI: An Indian man looks on as he sells vegetables to a customer on a cart at a roadside in New Delhi on Sunday. —AFP

China's tech 'Long March' could be road to nowhere

SHANGHAI: China's president has called for technological self-reliance in the escalating rivalry with America, but experts believe Beijing's late start on tech and relatively backward capabilities could make that a mission impossible. China has no doubt made an amazing transformation, from a former basket case wracked by mass famine and political upheaval to a highly connected society marked by growing use of renewable energy, a space program, and bullet trains criss-crossing the country.

But a closer look reveals that while China is adept at assembling foreign technologies into commercially successful products at home, its ability to innovate remains deeply hampered, tech experts said.

Take semiconductors, the building blocks of the global digital architecture. China's government has poured money into an effort to develop its own semiconductors and chip designs but has not been able to close the gap with US, Japanese and South Korean rivals. "One way to look at (China's situation) is that someone may be able to make beautiful designs out of Legos, but they don't know how to make the Legos themselves," said Gabriel Chou, Asia chair for World Semiconductor Trade Statistics, a grouping of semiconductor-product companies.

"(China) is aggressively attacking the end-market, such as mobile phones or other consumer products. But semiconductors require many very fundamental

science skills" that China struggles with, Chou added.

The risks are now clear following last week's move by Washington to ban Chinese telecom and smartphone giant Huawei's access to critical American chips and other technology.

The ban has thrown the company's future into doubt, causing a number of Huawei partners around the world to bail on the company and emphatically illustrating US tech clout.

Long March

President Xi Jinping this week telegraphed his alarm, calling for self-reliance in "key core technologies" while saying China faced a "Long March" against foreign challengers — a reference to a now-legendary 1934-35 strategic retreat by Communist revolutionaries. But a state-directed approach is a bad idea, said Paul Triolo, head of geotechnology at the Eurasia Group. Triolo said the world's top tech companies got where they are because open competition with rivals forced them to develop better products and attract the best human capital.

And being plugged into the world tech ecosystem encouraged them to constantly tailor products to evolving market needs to stay ahead of the pack — or die.

"It's incredibly hard to wean yourself off foreign suppliers in such a highly market-driven sector where you must be on the cutting edge, and that edge is constantly changing and moving outward," Triolo said.

The very idea of national self-reliance flies in the face of reality, he adds. Different countries have excelled in different areas and focused on their core competencies to survive, leading to a complex and interconnected global supply chain. "The US has a lot of dominance, but there are other big players too. China simply can't be an island and



SHANGHAI: An employee shows a Phantom DJI drone at a store in Shanghai yesterday. —AFP

recreate a whole globalized technology ecosystem at home," Triolo said.

"To reduce dependence they will have to take a different paradigm from the rest of world and that's tough. It's not something money is going to solve over the short-term." On Friday, a Chinese vice minister told reporters in Beijing the government would increase support for innovation, investment in technology, and "letting the market play a decisive role." But the comments also stressed a more active state role as well.

Software glitch

Software is another glaring weak spot. As in the rest of the world, there is no viable alternative in China to Microsoft and Apple on personal computing systems — or to Google's Android or Apple's iOS on mobile phones. US companies also dominate the Chinese landscape for enterprise software. The United States suspects Huawei

has ties to China's military and fears the company's installation of telecom networks worldwide could put sensitive data at risk. Huawei denies the charges.

But Chinese software shortcomings leave Huawei vulnerable even on these global networks — the company relies heavily on US software to power them, Triolo said. "A database has to be really robust and no company in China can do that database software," he said. China could nonetheless be a formidable player in next-generation technologies like artificial intelligence, driverless cars and automated manufacturing.

Xi's government has singled out such futuristic technologies for state development — a program partly responsible for triggering US pushback on tech. "We believe China is in a commanding position to become a far more influential player in disruptive technologies globally," said Kenny Liew, a tech analyst with Fitch Solutions. —AFP

Nigerian president signs \$29bn 2019 budget into law

ABUJA: Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari signed an 8.9 trillion naira (\$29 billion) budget for 2019 into law yesterday. Approved by lawmakers last month, the budget is based on estimated oil production of 2.3 million barrels a day, an assumed crude price of \$60 per barrel and an exchange rate of 305 naira to the dollar.

Nigeria's economy, the largest in Africa, grew by 1.93 percent last year, its fastest pace since a recession two years earlier which was caused by the impact of low oil prices. The continent's top oil producer relies on crude sales for about 90 percent of its foreign exchange.

The planned deficit of 1.9 trillion naira represents 1.37 percent of GDP. Buhari is due to be inaugurated for a second four-year term on Wednesday. He won re-election in February after pledging to revive the economy, improve security and tackle corruption. Last month the upper house of parliament increased the budget by 80 billion naira to 8.9 trillion naira, up from the 8.83 trillion naira presented by Buhari to lawmakers last year. —Reuters

China says any US trade talks must be based on 'mutual respect'

BEIJING: China yesterday said any US trade talks must be based on "mutual respect" and equality after President Donald Trump said there was a good chance of clinching a deal.

"We always believe that any differences between any two countries should of course be resolved through friendly negotiations and consultations," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said at a regular press briefing. Trump said yesterday said there was a "very good" chance of clinching a trade deal with China as the world's top two economies clash over their trade relationship.

"I think sometime in the future, China and the US will have a great trade deal and we look forward to that," Trump said after talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo.

His remarks came just two weeks after trade tensions reignited when Trump more than doubled tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese merchandise-sparking retaliation from Beijing—and threatened further levies that could affect nearly all of China's remaining exports to the US. "We have seen different statements being made about the Sino-US economic and trade consultations by (different entities) including high-level people in the US," Lu said.

"Sometimes it is said that an agreement will be reached soon, and sometimes it is said it's difficult to reach an agreement," he said. The spokesman said that China's position has "remained consistent".

"We have also always insisted on consultations between China and the United States, including economic and trade consultations, which must be based on mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit." —AFP

Renault-Fiat merger a tempting match as challenges mount: Experts

PARIS: The prospect of a merger between French carmaker Renault and Italian-US auto giant Fiat Chrysler received a warm welcome yesterday, with analysts hailing the idea as an ideal fit for two companies who must keep up in the highly competitive industry.

The 50-50 combination offered by Fiat, which sells 4.8 million vehicles a year, would create the world's third-biggest automaker by adding Renault's sales of 3.8 million. And with the sales by Renault's Japanese partners Nissan (5.6 million) and Mitsubishi (1.2 million), the group would become a globe-spanning powerhouse selling nearly 16 million cars a year—or one out of six sold worldwide.

That would offer huge economies of scale as the companies grapple with the shift to electric and hybrid vehicles amid a crackdown on carbon emissions in their core European markets.

"Obviously the race for size is one of the essential features of this merger project," a source close to the talks told AFP. The industry is spending billions to develop new technologies, but analysts expect further efforts will be needed as more governments pledge to tackle pollution.

"Carmakers have invested 25 billion euros (\$28 billion) on electrifying their fleets over the past eight years, and it's going to be 10 times that amount, 250 billion euros, over the next eight years," said Laurent

Petizon, an analyst at Alix Partners.

That compares with Renault's sales of 57.4 billion euros last year, and Fiat's revenue of 110 billion euros.

Little overlap

But Fiat Chrysler has lagged far behind on e-vehicles and is facing heavy fines from the European Commission if it cannot reduce its cars' emissions in line with tougher standards being imposed on the continent. "Fiat hasn't invested anything in this sector," said Ferdinand Dudenhofer, director of the Centre for Automotive Research based in Germany.

In a tacit admission of the problem, Fiat announced last month a deal with US-based Tesla to buy carbon dioxide credits, allowing it to escape the EU fines.

Renault by contrast has long been a leader in electric cars, with its Zoe hatchback one of the industry's best sellers. And this year Renault introduced a hybrid version of its popular Clio sedans.

Yet Renault has long been absent from the North American market, the world's second largest after China, where Fiat has built up a strong position since the purchase of Chrysler.

Fiat now generates roughly half of its sales across the Atlantic, and has benefited from Chrysler's expertise in trucks and SUVs with the Dodge, Ram and Jeep brands.

But Renault offers Fiat the chance to expand into Russia, where it now generates around a fifth of its sales.

Global reach

Renault's long partnership with Japan's Nissan and Mitsubishi would also help cut Fiat's reliance on Europe, where its overall market share has fallen to just 4.6 percent as of last year, from six percent in 2010. Together, Renault and Fiat Chrysler would be the second-biggest player in the Europe, Middle East and



TURIN: The Lingotto building, headquarters of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) company is pictured yesterday in Turin, northern Italy. 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. —AFP

Africa segment, number four in North America, and the leader in Latin America.

A merger could also provide Renault with a solid partner in case of further turbulence with Nissan, whose executives have resisted the deeper integration sought by former Renault chief Carlos Ghosn.

Ghosn's shock arrest in Tokyo last November threw the alliance into turmoil despite public displays of support from both sides, raising questions about whether the two companies would maintain their cross-shareholdings. A deal with Fiat could give Renault more weight in any discussions with Nissan, which has grown into the bigger and more profitable player in their alliance, even when Ghosn remained firmly in the driver's seat. But for now the Renault-Fiat project "leaves the door open for Nissan," a source close to the talks said. —AFP

Business

Jazeera Airways celebrates one year of operations at Terminal 5

Continued network expansion in 2019 and delivery of new A320neo aircraft



KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways Chairman, Marwan Boodai, Kuwait's Directorate of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Customs, KAFCO, National Aviation Services (NAS), Kuwait Airways and other local service providers and partners during the cake-cutting ceremony to mark the anniversary.



KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, celebrated one year of operations from its dedicated Terminal 5 (T5) at the Kuwait International Airport, marking one of the few commercial terminals to be operated by a private airline in the world.

The airline marked the milestone in a closed event attended by officials from Kuwait's Directorate of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Customs, KAFCO, National Aviation Services (NAS), Kuwait Airways and other local service providers and partners.

Speaking about the event, Jazeera Airways Chairman, Marwan Boodai, said: "In May last year, the inauguration of T5 emerged as significant game-changer for our operations and customer experience. T5 enabled us to serve our growing number of passengers, which saw a record growth of 46.4% in 2018 as our airline continued to expand its operations in the Middle East, Europe and Indian Subcontinent.

"I take this opportunity to thank Kuwait's DGCA and Ministry of Interior for their valuable support in turning T5 a reality and supporting the advancement of the aviation industry in Kuwait to better serve travelers. I also thank our partners and service providers, Kuwait's Customs, KAFCO, NAS and Jazeera Airways the strong partnership we've built together over the past 14 years."

Terminal 5 was designed to facilitate the journey of our customers and provide them with a fast and efficient travel experience with state-of-the-art facilities that offer passengers advanced self-service check-in options, a modern design to ease the flow of passengers, retail offerings, ample parking spaces, and most importantly, a quick and simple journey from parking to boarding. Today, T5 provides passengers with the ease and comfort of traveling with 11 check-in counters, six self-check-in kiosks, dedicated passport and security control procedures, duty free shops and restaurants, the Pearl Lounge, as well as free WiFi internet service available for passengers when boarding at the T5 gates. T5 also has a dedicated number at 176 and Help Team on-ground to respond to passengers' queries and guide them through the Terminal.



Facts and figures about T5:

- Around 2.0 million passengers flew from T5 since May 2018
- 11 check-in counters
- 6 self-check-in kiosks
- More than 350 parking spaces
- 4,750 square meters



- Annual capacity of 3.5 million passengers
- Three gates, two equipped with a boarding bridge
- Pearl Lounge for business travelers
- Duty Free, retail shops, restaurants and service providers' desks
- Compliant with the IATA Level of Service C

Security and safety standards:

Passport control and security are operated by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior for border control, aviation security and police. Kuwait International Airport man-

ages customs, while the Terminal is supervised by Kuwait's DGCA.

Boodai concluded: "As we move forward, we are investing in expansion plans to continue better serve our customers. We are planning a new route to London Gatwick, in addition to new routes in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Gulf. The expansion will be supported with the delivery of three new A320neo aircraft this year. "I take this opportunity to thank our team for milestones our airline has achieved over the past year and thank you customers for their continued trust in Jazeera Airways."

NBK's 2019 summer internship program starts its registration

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is launching its 2019 Summer Internship Program on the 16th of June, 2019. The two-week courses are specially designed for high school and college students, between the age of 14 and 21 years.

The online registration for the Summer Internship Program started through nbk.com and it will be providing information through NBK official page on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @NBKPage. Each session will include 30 students divided into two groups: A group for the ages 14 to 17 and a group for the ages 18 to 21.

"NBK views the Summer Internship Program as an extension to its educational initiatives and as part of its corporate social responsibility," said Yaqoub Al-Baqer, NBK Public Relations Team Leader. "This annual program demonstrates NBK's long-standing social involvement as well as its national commitment towards providing young generations with the suitable opportunities to experience how the actual professional banking concerns and transactions are handled and processed."

"It has been 18 years since the establishment of the program," added Al-Baqer. "At the core of NBK's corporate social responsibility is our commitment to developing the youth in Kuwait. NBK invests at every level in the training, professional development and the growth of the youth cadres, to contribute to trainees' basic and professional competencies and abilities in fields of practical life."

The Summer Internship Program is made up of four different sessions, five-hour daily over two weeks each. The first session starts on the 16th of June, while the following sessions start on 14th and 28th of July and 25th of August respectively. All trainees will receive a condensed training program about NBK products and services during the first week at the Training Center, and they will be exposed to different areas in the second week at selected departments. The trainees will have professional exams from HR department about the knowledge of NBK.



KIPCO continues its support of the Proteges

KUWAIT: Announcing for the ninth year, Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) (KIPCO) will be the strategic partner of The Proteges.

"The Proteges program has proven to present a unique and extraordinary category of youth to the community. We are excited to see what the Proteges ninth generation will come up with, and we proudly continue to empower Kuwait's youth in owning their own success," said Abeer Al-Omar Director of Corporate Social Responsibility.

"We created this program to provide life skills and leadership skills to future Arab generations, which is enhancing the welfare of the community and the leadership for the Arab world. We would like to thank His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, for their constant support, encouragement, and their strong faith in the organization and its objectives. Thank you as well to all the sponsors for contributing to the success of the program over the past nine years, led by the strategic part-



Shamlan Al-Bahar



Abeer Al-Omar

ner of the Proteges program KIPCO and its subsidiaries said Shamlan Al-Bahar, Founder of the Proteges.

Al-Bahar continued, "Our main goal is to look for talented youth, and give them a chance to shine, hoping that these young people, through participating in the program, will gain the knowledge and life experiences that will change their lives forever. So, we are here today to launch the 9th Generation Partnership of the Proteges program, and we encourage all young people, aged 16 to 24 years to learn more about the program, and register for the current year as soon as possible. KIPCO and its subsidiaries have participated to support the program over the past seven years. For example, the American University of Kuwait has offered the

campus to host training courses in Kuwait. OSN the regional satellite TV company have also set up advertising space to promote the program."

"The program is designed to enhance social skills, life skills, and the development of self-awareness, as well as focus on improving thinking and creativity. This is achieved through workshops, projects, guest speakers, and trips outside Kuwait. Thank you for the great support from KIPCO and its subsidiaries, we look forward to this great continued partnership," added Al-Bahar.

"KIPCO and its subsidiaries are keen to support and encourage talented youth to create a conscious generation of their future responsibilities. The company renews its strategic partnership with The Proteges program for its absolute confidence in the achievements of the program. KIPCO have harnessed all their capabilities to support the program and ensure sustainability and provide for their founders and mentors the services and products through its subsidiaries, which help to complete each season as required and provide the necessary requirements for students enrolled in the program. There are nine subsidiaries of KIPCO that sponsor this program annually: Burgan Bank, KAMCO, United Real Estate, Gulf Insurance Group, Al-Qurain Petrochemicals Company, American University of Kuwait, OSN Ad Company, Kuwait Hotels Company and United Networks," said by Abeer Al-Omar Director of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Zimbabwe exporters keeping \$900m in offshore banks: Treasury official

HARARE: A Zimbabwean treasury official accused exporters yesterday of keeping \$900 million of their earnings in offshore banks - money that he said should be repatriated to ease dollar shortages and help stabilize the exchange rate. The southern African nation is gripped by a severe dollar crunch which has triggered shortages of fuel and medicine. The local currency has fallen, sending prices of basic goods soaring.

George Guvamatanga, permanent secretary for ministry of finance told a parliamentary committee that \$500 million out of last year's \$4.3 billion export earnings was still being kept offshore. Another \$400 million was outstanding from the January to May 2019 exports, which earned \$1.4 billion, he said. Exporters were also keeping \$800 million in local foreign currency accounts, he added.

"There is \$1.7 billion that should be available in this economy to pay for the pharmaceuticals, to pay for the fuel and all the requirements we need as an economy," Guvamatanga said. "The

issue is how do we enhance the interbank market so that those export proceeds can be liquidated on the interbank market," said Guvamatanga, who appeared with Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube.

Exporters have 90 days to repatriate earnings to the country, but some of them take longer. Some, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they were reluctant to sell their money on the official market, where traders have said the central bank is influencing the exchange rate. They also said they were worried that once they had sold their money, there would be delays in getting dollars again on the local interbank market when they wanted to pay for imports.

Guvamatanga said the government "does not have the intention whatsoever to grab exporters' dollars. Yesterday, the local RTGS dollar was trading at 5 to the US dollar compared to 5.5 on Friday. On the black market, the unit was weaker at 7.50 versus 7 on Friday, traders said.

The central bank last week ended subsidies on fuel and directed oil companies to start to buy dollars on the official intermarket. It also told banks to ensure the exchange rate reflected market conditions.

The apex bank said it had also accessed a \$500 million loan from international banks that would be used to stabilize the interbank market. A first tranche of \$40 million had been injected into the market last week, the central bank said. — Reuters

Burgan Bank announces names of winners of Yawmi draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Majid Hilal Abdulhussein Altameemi
2. Salah Jassim Hasan Allanqawi
3. Tahera Asghar Ali
4. Mohammad Abdullah Ali
5. Abdulaziz Ibrahim Abdulaziz Alhasson

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws. Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.



What's On



Ooredoo gathers for its annual Ghabqa

Amidst a most familial Ramadan atmosphere, Ooredoo employees and its subsidiary companies recently met during its annual Ghabqa banquet. The theme for this year was "Ramadan Brings Us Closer, Our Ghabqa Gathers Us". The Ghabqa was held at the Four Seasons Hotel and was attended by Ooredoo Group board chairman, Sheikh Abdullah Bin Mohammed Al Thani, Ooredoo Kuwait's board chairman, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdullah Al Thani and Ooredoo board member and former minister of state for housing affairs, Bader Al-Humaidi. The Ghabqa also included many recreational activities and competitions.

Speaking on the occasion, Sheikh Abdullah Bin Mohammed stressed the significance of that annual gathering and expressed pride in the achievements made by Ooredoo Kuwait and its ability to cope with the numerous changes in the market. On his part, Ooredoo's corporate communication manager, Mejbel Al-Ayyoub said that the annual Ghabqa was a great occasion to meet and discuss the achievements made during the previous year, namely in terms of digitalization and innovation. The Ghabqa also included a showing of a video documenting all of Ooredoo achievements in digitalization in addition to competitions and valuable prizes before a performance from the talented Kuwaiti singer, Mubarak Al-Rashed, who is famous for his wonderful renditions of popular Indian and Bollywood songs.



Britain wakes up to growing student mental health plight

LONDON: Former business student Greg used to resort to drink and drugs to get to sleep—a common story at British universities struggling to adapt to growing concerns about student mental health problems. “I was super, super depressed,” Greg, now aged 26 said. Around half of the 37,500 students interviewed by The Insight Network, a therapy provider, used drugs and alcohol “as a means of coping with difficulties in their lives.” One in five reported suffering from mental health issues, mostly depression and anxiety, according to the survey conducted at 140 British universities.

In Greg's case, it was a combination of factors at play, including the disappointment of not liking his course and coping with having more time on his hands. The end of a five-year relationship, on top of the death of his grandparents, however, made things even worse, he said, asking not to be identified by his full name. Dominique Thompson, a doctor who has treated students for 20 years, said their anxiety could be debilitating and was “not about feeling a bit stressed about exams”.

“They would not be able to go out with friends, to go to their lectures, to study, to read... they stop socializing, leaving their room,” she said. And students with depression sometimes develop “suicidal thinking”, she warned. Over the last decade, the proportion of British students

reporting mental disorders has “significantly increased”, according to a study.

From 0.4 percent in 2008, the figure rose to 3.1 percent last year, the study of nearly 2.3 million students published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency indicated. However, “we do not know how much of this increase is due to increased awareness of mental health conditions, the willingness of students to report such conditions, or a genuine increase in the prevalence of mental health conditions,” the agency said in written comments to AFP.

‘Everything a competition’

Jolted into action, the government announced in March the creation of a new working group “to support students to deal with the challenges” of starting in higher education. “Our universities are world leading in so many areas and I want them to be the best for mental health support too,” Education Secretary Damian Hinds said at the time. Students often impose “extremely high, often unrealistic, expectations” on themselves and have difficulty coping with failure, said Andrew Hill, director of a wellbeing research group at York St John University.

There is also anxiety associated with “seeing mistakes in your work, or that others will spot mistakes you have made,” he said. Social media, with its visibility and reach, has also contributed to the

pressure on young people, said Thompson. “Cake baking is now a competition, putting on makeup is a competition, sewing, painting, sculpture...”

“You name almost anything that could have been fun and relaxing, it's now become a competition,” she said. “They're... 24/7 under the microscope because of their social media.” The doctor also said that the rise in student mental disorders was an international phenomenon. She said students also battled the feeling that it was “no longer enough” to have a university degree because they were now so common. Another factor can be “helicopter parents”, who micro-manage their children's busy activity-packed routines while they are still at school, leaving them at a loss once they have to manage on their own, she said.

The experts say that universities need to implement new strategies to help struggling students. Non-competitive activities just “for fun” should be introduced, as well as teaching students how to deal with failure, said Thompson. For his part, Hill urged tutors to receive “basic mental literacy training” to “recognize the signs and symptoms” of potential disorders. Greg remembers asking for help when he was a 20-year-old student at a top London university in 2013, but said that the process took “so long” he gave up. “They recommended books, numbers to call and asked if I wanted a chat,” he recalled. — AFP

Coal-hungry S Africa introduces carbon tax

JOHANNESBURG: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has signed into law a carbon tax to cut emissions in the continent's worst polluter, the treasury said yesterday, drawing cautious praise from environmentalists. The tax, a rare step for an emerging economy, will be levied from June 1 on greenhouse gases from fuel combustion and industrial processes and emissions.

“President Cyril Ramaphosa has communicated the urgent need for action around the climate crisis,” WWF said in a statement, describing it as a landmark moment for South Africa. “While there is still much to be done for the tax to become more effective, we recognize this is a significant first step.” The tax was first planned in 2010,

but has been delayed by opposition from business and industry in a country struggling with low growth and unemployment near 28 percent.

“Climate change represents one of the biggest challenges facing humankind, and the primary objective of the carbon tax is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a sustainable, cost effective and affordable manner,” the treasury said in a statement. It said the tax was part of South Africa's efforts to meet the global climate change agreement negotiated in Paris in 2015. Set at 120 rand (8.30 USD) per ton of carbon dioxide, the tax will be largely offset by allowances to lower it to an effective rate of between six and 46 rand per ton in the first three years. — AFP

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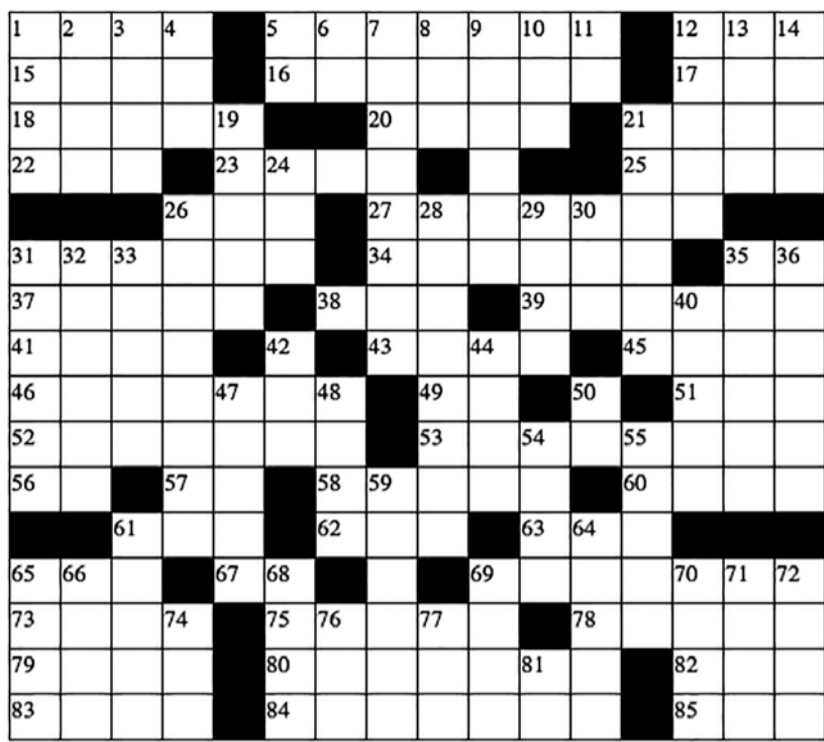
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2219



ACROSS

1. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
5. Folded into pleats.
12. A communist nation that covers a vast territory in eastern Asia.
15. God of death.
16. Relating to physical reality rather than with thoughts or the mind.
17. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
18. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
20. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
22. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
23. With no effort to conceal.
25. An association of people to promote the welfare of senior citizens.
27. Extinct tiny nocturnal lower primates that fed on fruit and insects.
31. In a cagey manner.
34. Of or relating to the corpus luteum.
37. Isolated from others.
38. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
39. The act of turning aside suddenly.
41. A projectile that is fired from a gun.
43. A South American shrub whose leaves are chewed by natives of the Andes.
45. Made of fir or pine.
46. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
49. Being nine more than forty.
51. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
52. A state in the southeastern United States on the Gulf of Mexico.
53. A monoamine neurotransmitter found in the brain and essential for the normal functioning of the central nervous system.
56. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
57. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
58. English monk and scholar (672-735).
60. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
62. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
63. An argument opposed to a proposal.
65. East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
67. A Russian river.
73. By bad luck.
75. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
78. A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
79. A sock with a separation for the big toe.
80. United States golfer who was first to win all four major golf tournaments (1902-1999).
82. A device for creating a current of air by movement of a surface or surfaces.
83. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
84. A festival featuring African-American culture.
85. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.

DOWN

1. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
2. An informal term for a father.
3. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
4. A diagrammatic representation of the earth's surface (or part of it).
5. A radioactive metallic element that is similar to tellurium and bismuth.
6. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
7. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Lodine).
8. A pointed tool for marking surfaces or for punching small holes.
9. English inventor who published the first book illustrated with photographs (1800-1877).
10. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
11. A doctor's degree in religion.
12. Appeal or request earnestly.
13. Located in or toward the back or rear.
14. The lean flesh of a fish that is often farmed.
19. A poplar that is widely cultivated in the United States.
21. Unable to meet financial obligations.
24. One or some or every or all without specification.
26. Tropical Asiatic and Polynesian perennial plants.
28. Essential equal to suborder Myomorpha with the Dipodidae excluded.
29. Flat tableland with steep edges.
30. An erratic deflection from an intended course.
32. One of two alternative forms of a genes that can have the same locus on homologous chromosomes and are responsible for alternative traits.
33. Mild cream-colored Dutch cheese shaped in balls.
35. A new embodiment of a familiar idea.
36. Remove or make invisible.
40. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
42. A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
44. A compact mass.
47. Tropical American tree producing cacao beans.
48. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
50. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
54. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
55. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
59. A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
61. Jordan's port.
64. Type genus of Ochnaceae.
66. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
68. Derive or receive pleasure from.
69. Empty rhetoric or insincere or exaggerated talk.
70. A state of irritation or annoyance.
71. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
72. Type genus of the Ranidae.
74. A person's brother or sister.
76. Common black-and-gray Eurasian bird noted for thievery.
77. (British) Your grandmother.
81. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You're longing for the new and unusual now. Friends give you a place to vent your emotions. They're counted on by you. You work hard today and meet with approval from higher ups, especially someone older than you, for which you have great respect. Keep your head down now because that's about all you can do except for the hard work. Giving your opinions might cause you trouble, Aries. Let your work speak for you. Later try to enjoy some time with your lover and maybe a pet. Walk for some exercise and to clear your head. Get an early meal and relax as much as possible.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Try to make the most of your work by putting your nose to the grindstone and not being seen around the water cooler. It can bring nothing but upset today, something you don't need now. You'd much rather be at home with special friends or family than being at work now anyway. People and especially coworkers get on your nerves at this time. This will get better but you don't need to worry about it today. Taurus. Friends mean more to you because they're always there for you no matter what. Plus, they're thankful for your time and effort. You know what that's worth. Take the time to celebrate them tonight.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Socializing is on your mind because of this special day or perhaps just because. At any rate you probably need to work today instead but you can play tonight when you celebrate. You've got a great sharp mind now. Because of this you are also a little irritable with what you consider ignorance on some other's part. Connections made on a grand scale include higher education and perhaps some travel too. Law could have something to do with you today. Make sure it isn't a ticket or worse, Gemini. Have a good evening to top off this productive day.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today is a very frustrating time. You're not good at being quiet while you covertly plan for your future now. Since you're a crab Zodiac Symbol, perhaps it's a good time to think about the actual live crab's way of getting ahead. He looks his problem (food) over to see how best to capture it, Cancer. That means being quiet and moving from side to side, sneaking up on what he wants and grabbing it. That's your way generally, meaning you quietly go about your business until you can grasp the new. Remember the lesson and try to enjoy your day. You may not be working much longer on that job. Besides you've got some work friends you'd like to keep. Smile. Others wonder what you're thinking.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Happy Memorial Day. Your psychic is showing now. Abstract ideas are being put to use by you again this work day. Do you have memories of your taking someone to task last week for this same thing that you thought illogical then? Now you're looking at the same thing being thrown your way by those working with you and at home if you used the same tactics. Think about the issues before you put them into play, Leo. Stay away from thinking the idea and telling others about it, then instantly giving it life by putting it into play. You're saying to others, "Do as I say, not as I do." You can see the issue here, can't you?



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You've got nervous energy but you're okay with it at this time. You seem to be smiling at a joke no one else is aware of but you like it. Others notice. You may even take a little abuse from someone who thinks you're laughing at them, Virgo. It doesn't seem to bother you much though. Clear headed thoughts don't seem to be a worry now either. You're just gliding through the day as if you're on vacation. Thinking about loved ones has you wishing you were with them today. Others love being near you now because of your communication skills as long as they are aware they're not the butt of your joke.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You've got a psychic hangover from yesterday into today which shows at work. Ideas are fruitful and can be put into action easily now with good results that show immediately. Coworkers are amazed at your abilities. They may also be afraid to comment because this is a side of you that they're not sure of unless you're a professional psychic. Libra. Others fear what they don't know. Right now, you know. If you find one of those good people who want to set you straight today, smile, shake your head as if you're intently listening and walk away. You're on a roll. Keep the good times coming. Make hay while the sun is shining.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

What you want, you want right now. Whether it's money, that diploma, love or whatever, you have no patience for the wait. Instant gratification provides a valuable lesson it's not too soon to learn. Patience is a quality most want to keep far away from now, Scorpio. Right now, you do too. You may be rethinking the efforts others have put in to help you achieve your goals because you're now wondering if that's truly what you desire. Friends and family are about the only thing you don't want to change in your life. Recognize this for what it is. It will pass and you'll be glad you kept on going.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Yesterday you could have done anything to make work better for you and looked very good doing it. Unfortunately, you weren't at work. Today, you feel emotionally blocked and can't seem to get your mind on your work either. Someone may call this to your attention before you know it, Sagittarius, not that you need it called. It would be best for both of you that no one takes it upon themselves to point out your little inadequacies now. Try to be patient and let today blow over. You know you're better than this. Tomorrow is always better after a day like this one. Enjoy being thoughtful with those you love tonight.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You're getting used to this psychic thing but alas, it's leaving today. Make it work for you now. Use your creative thinking and your manner of putting ideas into words to help you in your work projects. Your need to probe all issues coming into contact with you and looking into yourself as well, has you looking at all you touch differently. Taking issues apart, examining them, and seeing how to best put them together again in order to fine tune your work and home life makes it work well, Capricorn. The only complication is when you get too hard on yourself. Relax.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Work and you are on your mind big time now. Enjoying your career is part of the reason for your wanting to make your life healthier and better too. It goes hand in hand where you want to make sure you have no interference in your work life. Aquarius. Changes are being made to the way you live. You may even begin to think organic is the best manner in which to prepare your food after noting when more illness began some years ago when pesticides and other items became more prominent in the food source. Exercise may make you feel better and promote some muscle mass that works to keep you mobile for a lot longer. You may even take up a new sport. All of this seems to be so much on your mind that you start researching and try to live by some of these principles now.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Career decisions are easily made now through clear conclusions and thought. Being able to think, envision and create helps you communicate your ideas in a concrete manner making your higher ups understand and find the wealth in these ideas. Every choice you make today has to do with being in control and the power of that behavior. Sex with someone you care for greatly is another enjoyable part of your actions now. Being able to connect what you want and how you expect items to happen makes this bit of fun much more enjoyable especially when you convince your lover, Pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movie Musicals 1 - Word Search

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

A CHORUS LINE
ANNIE
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CAROUSEL
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FUNNY GIRL
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Yesterday's Solution

Musical Instruments 3 - Solution

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

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BAGPIPES
BASS
CASTANETS
CELLO
CORNET
CYMBAL
FIFE

GONG
HARMONICA
JAWS HARP
LAOUTA
LUTE
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T A C K E R E A S T G A R B
O L A A D C A S S I R E R
M A N D A R I N I C A D G E
T U T E L A R F A B A C E A E
O D O N A T A A H A B B I Z
M A A R C A B B E N E
A L B U G A N D A
A C T I F E D L A A E S I R
D A H I S O P O D B R I N E
I G A C O L L U D E L A T E
T Y R A P L Y S I A E N I D

Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2019



Russian Muslims pray in the Sobornaya mosque, Moscow Cathedral Mosque in the Russian capital, as Muslims worldwide take part in the month of Ramadan, where they fast between dawn and dusk. — AFP

DISNEY'S LIVE-ACTION 'ALADDIN' CASTS A BOX-OFFICE SPELL



“Aladdin” apparently still has the old magic, as the new Disney film took in an estimated \$86.1 million in the Friday-to-Sunday period in North America to lead all box-office offerings, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported. The film, released on the US’s four-day Memorial Day weekend, is expected to earn \$105 million when yesterday’s ticket sales are included, well beyond earlier estimates of around \$80 million, according to the Hollywood Reporter. The live-action

actor Scott Weinger as Aladdin). Last week’s box-office leader, Lionsgate’s “John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum,” slipped to second, taking in \$24.4 million for three days (\$30.5 million for four). Keanu Reeves again stars as retired hitman John Wick, this time being chased by an army of killers after a contract is put on his head. Also starring are Halle Berry, Laurence Fishburne, Ian McShane and Anjelica Huston.

In third was Disney blockbuster “Avengers: Endgame,” taking in an estimated \$16.8 million for three days (\$21.9 million for four). “Avengers,” with an all-star cast including Robert Downey Jr., Mark Ruffalo, Chris Evans, Chris Hemsworth, Bradley Cooper, Scarlett Johansson and Josh Brolin, has broken domestic records but, with a worldwide take of \$2.68 billion, is still shy of the \$2.79 billion earned by all-time leader “Avatar” in 2009. Fourth place went to Warner Bros.’ “Pokemon: Detective Pikachu,” at \$13.3 million (\$17 million). Its animated title character (voiced by Ryan Reynolds) teams up with a young boy (Justice Smith, in a live-action role) to seek the boy’s missing father.

And in fifth was new Sony horror thriller “Brightburn,” at \$7.5 million (\$9 million). Elizabeth Banks, David Denman and Jackson A. Dunn star in the story of an alien tot who arrives on Earth and realizes, as he grows up on a Kansas farm, that he has superpowers. Rounding out the week-end’s top 10 were:

- “Booksmart” (\$6.5 million for three days; \$8.0 million for four)
- “A Dog’s Journey” (\$4.1 million; \$5.8 million)
- “The Hustle” (\$3.8 million; \$4.8 million)
- “The Intruder” (\$2.3 million; \$2.9 million)
- “Long Shot” (\$1.6 million; \$2 million)—AFP



movie, directed by Guy Ritchie, stars Will Smith as the genie and the Egyptian-born Canadian actor Mena Massoud as the wily charmer who pretends to be a prince to catch the attention of the lovely Jasmine (Naomi Scott).

The new version is an adaptation of Disney’s 1992 “Aladdin,” which featured the unforgettable voice of Robin Williams as the fast-talking genie (and the less well-known

12th-century Afghan minaret saved, for now, after floods

The minaret of Jam, a revered Afghan historical treasure, has been saved from imminent danger after hundreds of workers diverted surging floodwaters that were gnawing at the 12th-century tower, officials said yesterday. Torrential rains last week sent churning water roaring down the narrow valley that is home to the minaret, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in a remote part of the western province of Ghor. Dramatic video footage showed brown torrents crashing up against the base of the brick minaret, which was built in about 1190 and is the pinnacle of a surrounding archaeological site. The Afghan government hired a local crew who worked for three days to channel water away from the minaret.

“Now the flow of water has been diverted but the flood has destroyed some 15 meters (50 feet) of protection wall around the minaret,” Abdul Hai Khatebi, a spokesman for the governor of Ghor, told AFP. Fakhruddin Ariapur—the Ghor province director of information and culture—said a team of experts is urgently needed to clean the base of the minaret and construct proper defensive walls. “There is no danger to it now, but if it rains and floods again, the minaret has become too exposed and vulnerable,” he told AFP.

The Jam minaret, located in an area largely under Taliban control, is the world’s second tallest made of bricks, reaching a height of 65 meters (213 feet). It is situated on the frontier of Ghor and Herat provinces, at the heart of the former Ghoriid empire which dominated Afghanistan and parts of India in the 12th-13th centuries. In 2002, the minaret and its archaeological remains became the first site in Afghanistan to be added to UNESCO’s World Heritage List. UNESCO said it had not yet been able to access the minaret.

“As soon as the conditions on site allow, a mission will be organized... in order for experts to properly assess the



This handout photo released by the Information and Culture Department of Ghor province shows Afghan men working at a site near the Minaret of Jam following floodwaters in the Shahrak District of Ghor Province. — AFP photos

situation and the condition of the minaret,” UNESCO said in a statement. Built on an octagonal base, the minaret has a double staircase on the inside and is elaborately decorated. Afghanistan’s rich cultural heritage has faced decades of catastrophic neglect, mismanagement and looting, as well as deliberate destruction at the hands of the Taliban. Afghanistan chief executive Abdullah Abdullah said in a cabinet meeting that the government needs “to take more serious measures to prevent future threats to the minaret”. — AFP



Afghan men working at a site near the Minaret of Jam following floodwaters in the Shahrak District of Ghor Province.



Arthur 'struggles' to get noticed by award shows

James Arthur thinks it's "struggle" for him to get noticed by award shows. The 31-year-old singer has been in the spotlight since he was crowned champion of singing competition 'The X Factor' back in 2012, and although he's been nominated twice for Single of the Year at the annual BRIT Awards, he's never taken the accolade home. And now, James has said that while he knows winning the show and having a successful career are "huge achievements", he does think he gets overlooked at award shows. Speaking to The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column, he said: "I won 'The

X Factor' six years ago and to still be having hits, I have to remind myself what a huge achievement that is. When you look at the record of people from that show, especially males, I'm proud of how far I've come. "But then there's a real competitive side to me that wants to be up there and given the accolades that some of the other guys are, I feel like it's more of a struggle for me sometimes, maybe because of where I came from." Meanwhile, James could've had an award winning album on his hands when he created a record full of dance tracks, but revealed last year he was scrapping the songs because they were

"too carried away" from the sound people have come to know and love him for. He said at the time: "I made an album full of bangers. I put out You Deserve Better, which I thought was going to sit on the radio and everyone was going to love it. "It's a great song but I got too carried away from what people really like about me. So I went back to that and kind of evolved it and made it more interesting."

Charli XCX 'went all in' on new album

Charli XCX "really went all in" on her new album. The 26-year-old singer dropping her new single 'Blame It on Your Love' featuring Lizzo earlier this month, which marked her first new solo material since her stand-alone collaboration with Troye Sivan, '1999', which she released last year. And after having teased her third full-length LP following the release of two mixtapes - 'Number 1 Angel' and 'Pop 2' - in 2017, Charli has revealed what fans can expect from the new music. She said: "I didn't go small on this, I really went all in. Maybe too in, so I really wanna prep people. Since the mixtapes, I've really wanted to push my sound and push pop as far as it can go. I feel really proud of the music that I've made, so I really want the songs to have as much of a moment individually as possible." The 'Boys' hitmaker admits there are plenty of "experimental moments" on her new record, as she teamed up with some "really great producers". She added: "There are definitely lots of more experimental moments. I've been working with some really great producers from A. G. Cook to Nomack, who is really incredible at sound design. There are a lot of harder moments on the record compared to really stripped-back things." And Charli says she didn't take "a lot of time" on the new LP, because she believes she makes "better" music "under a time pressure". Speaking to NME magazine, she said: "The album [has] definitely been quite a [quick process]. I don't really like taking a lot of time. I spent a little bit more time but it is very rapid fire - I like to be very spontaneous with the decisions I make around my music. So for me, if I'm under a time pressure the music's better. First instinct only, always. I think that's the best."



Blunt says next album will be saddest yet

James Blunt says his next album is going to be his saddest yet because "misery sells". The 45-year-old musician is known for his melancholy tracks and he insists his sixth studio LP - the follow-up to 2017's album 'The Afterlove' - will have even more miserable music because some of his lyrics are inspired by bereavements he has suffered in his life. Speaking to BANG Showbiz, he said: "I am a musician and I'm writing songs, so watch this space. I've just come off 18 months on the road so I've just washed my clothes and I'm back in the studio. "Misery sells and I know a few people that have died, and a few have been born, so I'm writing about those." James - who has just bought a pub - has started the recording process and he's having a "really good time" recording as he has stuff things he wants to write about. He said: "I am in the studio. I'm having a really good time. I

have stuff to write about. I've just bought a pub as well. It's called The Fox & Pheasant, right by Chelsea Football Club." James released his debut album 'Back To Bedlam' in 2004. He then released 'All The Lost Souls' in 2007, 'Some Kind of Trouble' in 2010 and 'Moon Landing' in 2013 before having a four-year break. The 'Goodbye My Lover' hitmaker has previously said that being "locked away" from his family as a youngster at boarding school has been a source of inspiration for his songs. James - who was at boarding school from the age of seven - said: "Being sent away to boarding school at seven is as great an inspiration as any songwriter could have - to be taken away from one's family and locked away for 10 years. It does create an incredible intensity of emotion."



Wiley says Stormzy is an inspiration

Wiley considers Stormzy to be a "new inspiration". The 40-year-old rapper - who is widely known as the Godfather of Grime - has admitted to being inspired by the London-born MC, who is now one of the best-selling artists in the UK. The veteran star said: "Stormzy is my new inspiration. He's younger than me but he's the one who'll keep it going on. I've nothing but respect for him. "Maybe there was a time when I put out a project and earned a bit of extra money because he was bigging me up. I wasn't asking for that. It's not about money, but the way that he showed respect really helped me to go on." Wiley also revealed he's made a concerted effort to remain close to his roots, despite enjoying a lengthy and lucrative career in the music business. He told NME: "To keep grounded, I remember that I'm a youth club kid. "I came from there onto pirate radio. I didn't go straight into the music industry and 17 and become a child star. I don't know where they've all gone recently, but they



were good for us. I don't know how it goes with the youth club stuff for the generation today. "The ones I went to might have shut down, but the people who run youth clubs are great. They just want the best for you, and they're not your mum or dad. That's amazing."

Ashcroft will 'definitely' make music with Gallagher

Richard Ashcroft "definitely" plans to record music with his pal Liam Gallagher. The former Verve frontman supported the 'Wall of Glass' hitmaker at a string of concerts around the globe last year - including making a surprise appearance at Liam's mammoth gig in London's Finsbury Park in June - and has now said they "100 percent intend" to make music together. Speaking at the Ivor Novello Awards last Thursday he said: "I know sometime in the future we definitely 100 percent intend to do songs together. "I don't believe any songs on this record but I'm excited about it, I'm excited for him, he's a good friend of mine. We're one of the few people that's on that level as a frontman." Richard, 47, went on to insist that he has no plans to stop making music anytime soon as he "loves performing live" and said that it's only when he isn't "physically" able that he'll

stop putting on shows for his fans. The 'Bitter Sweet Symphony' hitmaker added: "It's only physicality that will stop me adding that desire to explore music to my fans and enjoy this gift I've been given. "I'm aware that just as many people who like me, don't like me and once you're comfortable with that you're never going to please the whole world musically. "That's just the ying and yang and the balance of life. That's a kick, to be negative gives people a kick now, from a younger person starting out, it's much easier to get someone else's work and say 'I'll sing that blame him!' "There's no one to blame so you take on that responsibility, you better believe you're taking on all that. "I love performing live. My voice is better, I have a much stronger voice now than I had, I sound like a child back then."



JADE BIRD 'POWER-DRESSES' ON STAGE

Jade Bird likes to "power-dress" when she is on stage. The 21-year-old singer is known for wearing a signature jumpsuit to complete her stage persona, and she has now revealed that she identifies with wearing the stylish all-in-one garment because it makes her feel "good" and she doesn't have to worry about "tucking anything in". Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, Jade said: "The jumpsuit was like power-dressing, I always wore skirts when I first played when I was 14 and it was cool but I never felt any identity with what I was wearing. "A jumpsuit for me was a way of feeling comfortable, I don't have to tuck anything in and I can just roll it in my suitcase, so it just became I really loved to wear and feel safe wearing and feel confident wearing. It doesn't matter what situation you're in, when you wear something you feel good in - you're fine. I never really associate with clothes or fashion but I'm learning!" And the 'My Motto' hitmaker - who released her eponymous debut album in April - opened up about her signature sound, and explained that she would "practice" endlessly to make her voice "stronger" and "grittier" after she was influenced by male blues singers at a local bar. She added: "I [can be] very shouty. I think I grew more

confident and I was listening to a lot of blues singers. "So when I moved to London at 16, I played at this bar called Number Four Ferdinand Street and it's a spiritual bar in Camden so I watched all these burly men sing with big gruffly voices and I thought, 'I want to be heard on a Saturday night and a Sunday night too.' "So I just practiced and practiced and started singing with my grit and it just stretched me and made my voice stronger." And Jade insisted that her own music is influenced by the riot grrrl movement - an underground feminist punk movement that began early on in the '90s - to help her "aggression" on stage. She added: "I'm not a calm human being, not 90 percent of the time, I'm calm usually, and I have a lot of anger as I think a lot of young women day when you figure out how you're treated on the norm in certain places. So that fuels that aggression, which I love - music with pure aggression. I'm inspired by the riot grrrl movement." Jade will take to the main stage at the All Points East festival at London's Victoria Park's on June 1, 2019 alongside headliners Mumford & Sons, Leon Bridges, Dizzee Rascal, The Vaccines and Sam Fender.

McKenna wants Musgraves duet

Megan McKenna is hoping to get a collaboration with Kacey Musgraves on her next record. The 26-year-old country singer has opened up about when she saw the Grammy-award winning songstress during her 'Oh, What A World: Tour' last year - which was in support of her fourth studio album 'Golden Hour' - and revealed that she would love to feature Musgraves on her next project because she has been a huge fan of hers "for years". Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, Megan said: "[My dream collaboration would be] Kacey Musgraves. I've listened to her for years and finally got to see her perform live at Wembley last year and got to meet her too!" And Megan "couldn't believe it" when she saw that her debut album 'Story Of Me' went straight to number one on the iTunes country chart back in December. She added: "When I saw it was no.1 on the iTunes country chart I couldn't believe it. To see my album cover next to so many other amazing country artists that I've looked up to for years was a dream come true." The 'Celebs Go Dating' star also revealed that the secret to songwriting is always speaking from her heart. She added: "It's gotta be from the heart whatever's on your mind at the time there's no point holding back so you might as well write it down." Megan also revealed the four items she can't live without when she is on the road and it includes "lemon, ginger and honey" to keep her throat in tip-top condition. She continued: "My throat steamer, manuca honey, lemon and ginger to keep my voice in good condition." Megan kicks off her 'Story of Me Tour' on May 30 at Chinnery's in Southend-on-Sea.





HARRISON FORD: NO-ONE WILL REPLACE ME AS INDIANA JONES

Harrison Ford says "nobody" will replace him as Indiana Jones. The 76-year-old actor has starred as the titular archaeologist in all four of the franchise's movies, as well as gearing up to reprise the role in the planned fifth installment. And although Disney CEO Bob Iger previously said the fifth film would not just be "a one-off" but added he couldn't guarantee Harrison would stay in the titular role, the actor has now insisted there will be no more Indiana Jones movies without him donning the iconic hat. Speaking on the 'Today' show, Harrison said: "Nobody else is gonna be

Indiana Jones! Don't you get it? I'm Indiana Jones. When I'm gone, he's gone. It's easy... This is a hell of a way to tell Chris Pine this." Harrison's reference to Chris Pine comes after there were rumors of 'Guardians of the Galaxy' star Chris Pratt taking over the role back in 2015, when talk of the fifth installment began. In the clip from the show, Harrison's smiling expression seems to show he made the error in muddling up the actors on purpose. Meanwhile, last year it was confirmed the fifth Indiana Jones movie would be delayed until 2021, so that more work could be done on the script. The movie was originally scheduled for

release in July this year before it was later pushed back to July 2020 and Disney issued an amended schedule in July 2018, which listed 'Indiana Jones 5' as coming out on July 9, 2021. The franchise, which started in 1981, follows the fictional archaeologist, who originally fought against the Nazis in their search for Biblical artefacts. However, in the 2008 movie 'Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull', fans of the franchise were disappointed that the movie took a different angle and dealt with alien origins rather than Biblical stories.

Millie Bobby Brown cast in Godzilla: King of the Monsters before it even began filming

Millie Bobby Brown was unofficially cast in 'Godzilla: King of the Monsters' before the movie even went into production. The 15-year-old actress is set to play Madison Russell in the follow-up film to Gareth Edwards' 2014 'Godzilla', and director Michael Dougherty has said it was always the plan to get her to star in the movie after he and his pre-visualization animators used her face as a reference for the character before the movie even began filming. Speaking about Millie - who rose to fame on Netflix show 'Stranger Things' - Michael told ScreenRant.com: "Millie's great. She was still ... Season 2 of 'Stranger Things' had just been shot. Not even aired yet. I was a huge fan of the show and my pre-viz animators and I used her face as reference, as a model for the pre-viz for the movie before we ever cast her. "We got so used to seeing her face that we just kind of said, 'Well ... why don't we make her the offer?' And we had a breakfast here at The London, years ago, and we actually spent more time talking about our mutual love of animals and pet reptiles and just a love of nature that I think she clicked with the themes of the film." 'Godzilla: King of the Monsters' is set to feature several giant Kaiju, known as Titans, including the likes of Mothra, King Ghidorah, Rodan, and the titular Godzilla itself. While the nature of Millie's role is not yet known, it's thought she could be one of Mothra's fairies, which the giant insect is known for using to communicate with mankind. Alongside Millie, the movie is also set to star Kyle Chandler, Vera Farmiga, Ken Watanabe, Charles Dance, and O'Shea Jackson Jr, and will hit cinema screens later this week.



O'Shea Jackson Jr: I want to make my own anime



O'Shea Jackson Jr dreams of making his own anime. The 28-year-old actor - who is the oldest son of rapper Ice Cube and even played his father in the 2015 movie 'Straight Outta Compton' - has revealed his ambition is to create his own computer-animated hit. Speaking to Screen Rant about his long-term plans, O'Shea explained: "I wanna make my own anime. I really want to do that. I feel that there's a lot of people in the culture that are fans of anime, but I think we really don't have that many anime's directed towards us. "We have 'Boondocks', 'Black Dynamite', 'Afro Samurai' ... and that's really it. I really want to do something cool with that. "And I wanna be the guy that gets video game movies right. I feel like video game movies are used as a cash grab, and they have loyal fans: a loyal fanbase that's untouched, and I wanna knock that out." Meanwhile, Ice Cube - whose real name is O'Shea Jackson Sr - previously revealed he is living his dream life as an actor. The Hollywood star - who first found fame as a rapper - admitted he's glad he jumped across to films, saying there's more "longevity" in the movie business. He said: "I'm going with acting, because of longevity. As an athlete, you got 10, maybe 12 years, then you're looking for something to do. So I will go with acting as a long shelf life."

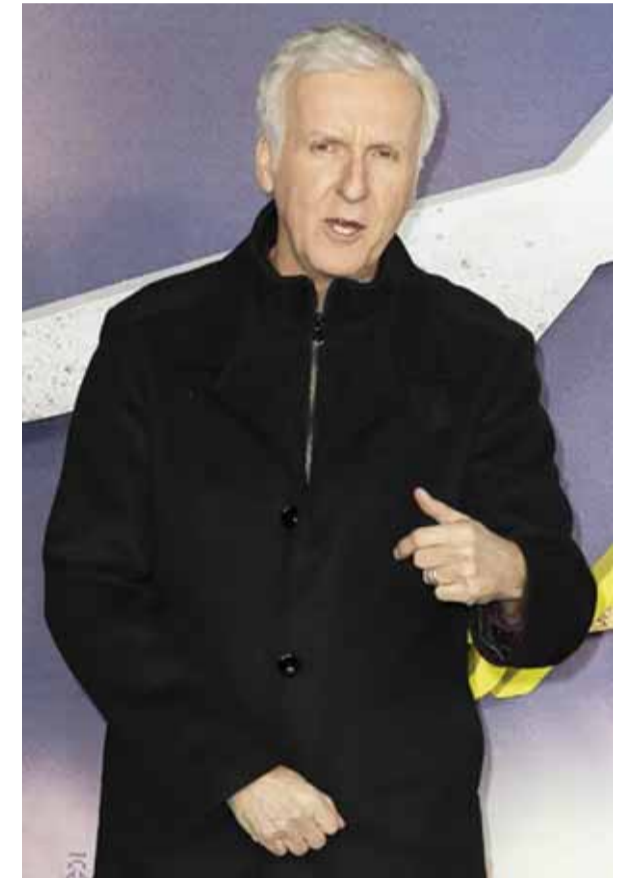
Stallone's idea for new Rocky movie

Sylvester Stallone wants to make a new 'Rocky' movie about immigration. The 72-year-old actor has revealed his idea for a new film in the franchise, explaining that he would like to put the focus on an immigrant living illegally in the US. Speaking at the Cannes Film Festival, he said: "I have a great idea for Rocky. He finds this fella who's in the country illegally and it becomes a whole thing. It would be really phenomenal, really different. "It's like a magician. Once you've seen how he does the tricks you're not impressed any more. It's the same thing with Rocky. You've seen everything, so you're like, 'How can it be different?' That would be different. When you take him and throw him out of the country and he's in another world. It could work. But I ain't gonna do it." However, Stallone insisted that he never intended for the 'Rocky' movies to be political. He said: "I never took it personally, people saying Rocky was really right wing. Rocky is a simple man who grew up in that kind of mentality. That's just the way it was back then. Everyone was super patriotic growing up. And that's just the way he is. He's not a political animal. So when he wraps the flag around him, he thinks he's doing a good thing. "Whenever boxers lift up the flag of their nation, it's just automatic. They're not saying, 'We're better than you.' It's what they were trained to do. So I never took it as a confrontational thing." — Bang Showbiz



Portman doesn't think Leon: The Professional could be made today

Natalie Portman doesn't think 'Leon: The Professional' could be made now. The 37-year-old actress made her acting debut at the age of 13 playing Mathilda in the assassin film, a street-wise girl who forms an unusual relationship with her much older neighbor, a professional hitman called Leon (Jean Reno) and becomes his protegee when her family is killed by a corrupt Drug Enforcement Administration agent Norman Stansfield (Gary Oldman). Now, the 'Black Swan' star - who has children Amalia, two and seven-year-old Aleph with husband Benjamin Millepied - has admitted that although making the movie was "100 percent a positive experience" she doesn't think it would be remade today as it's "largely inappropriate", and confessed she isn't keen on her kids watching the picture. She said: "It's as weird mix. It's still the thing people come up to me the most on the street, even more than 'Star Wars' or 'Black Swan'. "I appreciate it when something connects with an audience. It also gave me my career on a platter and was a 100 percent a positive experience. I loved doing it. But you watch and it's largely inappropriate. "There's a lot of stuff in there that's not amazing through today's eyes. I think because people are still connected to it and care about it and I personally did not have anything but positive feelings, I still feel more on the proud side. Even though I totally understand - I don't know how I'd show that to my kids. "When asked whether the film could be made today, she told Empire magazine: "I don't think it could. "There are so many things that [used to be acceptable that aren't anymore]. There are children's books I read and I think 'You Can't say that!'"



James Cameron: Terminator Dark Fate is a 'white knuckle ride'

James Cameron says 'Terminator: Dark Fate' is a "fast white-knuckle ride". The upcoming sci-fi movie is set to be a direct sequel to 'Terminator' and 'Terminator 2: Judgement Day' - despite it actually being the sixth film in the franchise - and producer James Cameron has confirmed the flick is going for an "grim, gritty, and fast" feel, with the team hoping to secure an R rating. Speaking to Flicks in the City, he said: "I think, tonally, what makes this a direct sequel to 'T1' and 'T2' is as much about the tone as it is about the narrative: It's R rated, it's grim, it's gritty, it's fast, it's intense, it's very linear. The whole story takes place in 36 hours. It's not this kind of grandiose, complex story. It's just very focused on the characters, it's very now, it's very present and it's just a fast white-knuckle ride." James also confirmed the movie - which is directed by Tim Miller - will continue with both Sarah Connor and John Connor's stories, whilst also introducing a "very different" version of the T-800 robot, played by Arnold Schwarzenegger. He added: "I think the best way to think about 'Terminator: Dark Fate' is to think about it as a direct sequel to 'Terminator 2', the third film in a series, if you will. We'll be continuing with Sarah's story, John's story, and the T-800 returns - a different T-800 with a very different role to play than what we've seen before." 'Terminator: Dark Fate' is set more than two decades after the events of 'Terminator 2: Judgement Day', and will hit cinema screens in November.

James thinks psychology helped her with acting

Lily James is "fascinated" by psychology and thinks her interest in the subject has helped her as an actress. The 30-year-old star credits her life-long interest in the subject with benefiting her career because she is "constantly trying to understand" her characters and their way of thinking. She told Psychologies: "I am fascinated by psychology and philosophy. My father was a great thinker and he had a very analytic mind, as well as being spiritual. "He always encouraged me to be curious and to discover things on my own and try to think matters through. "I'm curious about human psychology and acting requires you to be constantly trying to understand your character's personality, thinking and motivations." Lily was just 18 when her father passed away and she wants to honor his memory by compiling a book of the stories he told her when she was younger, which she believed ignited her passion for acting. She said: "My father was my everything. He was my greatest inspiration and I loved listening to the stories he would create for children with incredible characters - like a cloud that talks and disappears when the sun comes out, and a cow that goes to the market. "One day, I'm going to collect all his stories and have them published. He had an extraordinary imagination and helped me grow up in a world filled with joy and beautiful reams. "I'm sure my interest in acting comes from my father and his stories." The 'Yesterday' star is also interested in singing, and has "always" had a passion for music. She added: "Ever since I was a child, I was always singing and dancing. Even today, whenever I'm cooking or relaxing in the house, I love to sing. "Both my grandmother and my father were actors so I have it in my blood. I would love to play a singer."



Lifestyle | Features



An undated handout provided by Cinema DAL in Seoul shows a photograph of young North Korean film students who filed for political asylum in Moscow in the 1950s, featured in a South Korean documentary titled "Goodbye My Love North Korea". — AFP photos



A photograph of Ho Ung Pae featured in a South Korean documentary titled "Goodbye My Love North Korea".



A photograph of young Kim Chong Hun featured in a South Korean documentary titled "Goodbye My Love North Korea".

Moscow 8: The N Korean filmmakers who defied Pyongyang



Choe Kuk In in a scene from South Korean documentary titled "Goodbye My Love North Korea".

As the Korean War raged eight of Pyongyang's young heroes—all members of the North's new elite, destined for a life of privilege and power—left for Moscow to study at a prestigious film school. They never returned. Scattered to the corners of the Soviet Union after they chose asylum and exile to denounce the personality cult around the North's founder Kim Il Sung, they lived as authors and filmmakers, forever separated from friends and family. "We call the places we are born our homes," wrote one, Han Tae Yong, in a short story. "There should be a separate word for the places we die, a word that sounds as fond as the word 'home' does."

Now their lives have been made the subject of a documentary by South Korean scholar and filmmaker Kim So-young, "Goodbye My Love North Korea". In a peninsula defined by the split between North and South, it highlights the Korean diaspora and the impact of separation from a unique perspective. Known as the "Moscow 8", the group were chosen by Pyongyang to study at the Moscow Film

maker Kim said. Film was considered crucial in developing the loyalty of the masses. "The North was obviously heavily influenced by Lenin, who said cinema is the greatest art form that exists," she told AFP. "Among the eight exiles, one studied nuclear physics before being selected to study cinema in Moscow—he didn't even know what a movie was until then," she added.

Living in exile

Kim Il Sung's son and successor Kim Jong Il—father of the current leader Kim Jong Un—was an avid film fan who ordered the kidnapping of a South Korean film director and an actress in 1978 to help develop the North's cinema industry. Even now the impoverished country pours significant resources into movies, although many of its productions are propaganda works extolling its Juche ideology and the ruling Kim family, with titles such as "Under the Guidance of the Great Brilliant Commander" and "We Will Follow You to the End of the Earth".

In what is known as the August Faction Incident in 1956, Kim Il Sung purged party officials who had plotted against him, executing hundreds according to historians, months after Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had denounced Stalin's abuses of power in his "secret speech". The following year one of the eight, Ho Ung Pae, publicly condemned Kim Il Sung and announced he was seeking political asylum. He was later captured by North Korean diplomats and taken to the embassy, but escaped via a bathroom window.

The other seven filed for asylum themselves in 1958, giving up the prospect of privileges awaiting them back in Pyongyang. The Soviet Union granted their request, but on condition they lived apart from each other, to avoid any risk of them mounting a conspiracy themselves and angering the North, still an ally. They were sent to cities as far apart as Irkutsk and Stalingrad—now Volgograd—while Kim Chong Hun, the last survivor of the eight, went to Murmansk near the Arctic Circle, where he recalls eating deer meat for all his meals and seeing the sun for only six months of the year.

'The biggest heartache'

Later he and three others settled in Almaty, the biggest city in Kazakhstan, where many of the 172,000 ethnic Koreans Stalin deported from the Russian Far East in 1937 had been taken. "I was ecstatic to see so many ethnic Koreans in Almaty, and to see them selling kimchi, tofu and



A photograph of Han Tae Yong (right) featured in a South Korean documentary titled "Goodbye My Love North Korea".

Korean fermented soybean paste," Kim says in the film. The documentary is now showing in cinemas in the South, at a time when Pyongyang's nuclear talks with the US are deadlocked, leaving inter-Korean relations in limbo.

"This movie shows the lives of North Koreans who formed multiple identities—as political exiles, ethnic Koreans and residents in the Soviet Union and Kazakhstan," said film critic Lee Seung-min, adding it "discovers what had been undiscovered in Korean cinema history". Among the group in Almaty was author Han, who led a renowned Korean-language theatre and wrote plays critiquing both North and South.

As well as Kim Il Sung's personality cult, his subjects included the South's participation in the Vietnam War, and its 1980 Gwangju Uprising against military rule — a legacy that saw South Korean president and former human rights activist Moon Jae-in visit the theatre on a Central Asia trip last month. Han's father was also a writer and a close ally of Kim Il Sung, and his family kept sending letters asking him to return, but he remained in exile and died in Kazakhstan in 1993. "Han was very much torn between his family and his political beliefs," Kim says in the movie. "He had the biggest heartache among us." Kim himself was "considered the best kind of Communist back in the North", he added. "I would've been able to work in Pyongyang until now if I went back home at the time. But I just could not betray and abandon my friends." — AFP



Kim Chong Hun in a scene from South Korean documentary titled "Goodbye My Love North Korea".

School, now known as the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography and the world's oldest institution of its kind, in 1952, as Kim Il Sung's forces-backed by Moscow and Beijing—fought against the US-led United Nations coalition.

At the time only the North's brightest minds, regardless of academic background, were allowed to study cinema.

'The Corgi Nationals' championship



Corgi dogs race during the heats of the Southern California "Corgi Nationals" championship.



Bradley Taylor (center) and Jessica Wick (right) hold their dog Emmett who won the SoCal 'Corgi Nationals' championship.



Corgi dogs race during the Southern California "Corgi Nationals" championship at the Santa Anita Horse Racetrack in Arcadia, California. The event saw hundreds of Corgi dogs compete for the coveted fastest corgi title at the 17 race event. — AFP photos



Corgi dogs race during the heats of the Southern California "Corgi Nationals" championship.



Corgi dog Roi prepares to race during the heats of the Southern California "Corgi Nationals" championship.



ATME, Syria: Displaced Syrian mother Mona Mutayr (4th-right) breaks her fast with her children in a field near a camp for displaced people at the village of Atme, in the jihadist-held northern Idlib province during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan. — AFP

'Burn-out' recognizes as medical condition

GENEVA: The World Health Organization has for the first time recognized "burn-out" in its International Classification of Diseases (ICD), which is widely used as a benchmark for diagnosis and health insurers. The decision, reached during the World Health Assembly in Geneva, which wraps up on Tuesday, could help put to rest decades of debate among experts over how to define burnout, and whether it should be considered a medical condition.

In the latest update of its catalogue of diseases and

injuries around the world, WHO defines burn-out as "a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed." It said the syndrome was characterized by three dimensions: "1) feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; 2) increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and 3) reduced professional efficacy."

"Burn-out refers specifically to phenomena in the occu-

pational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life," according to the classification. The updated ICD list, dubbed ICD-11, was drafted last year following recommendations from health experts around the world, and was approved on Saturday. "This is the first time" burnout has been included in the classification, WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told reporters.

The ICD-11, which is to take effect in January 2022, contains several other additions, including clas-

sification of "compulsive sexual behavior" as a mental disorder, although it stops short of lumping the condition together with addictive behaviors. It does however for the first time recognize video gaming as an addiction, listing it alongside gambling and drugs like cocaine. The updated list removes transgenderism from its list of mental disorders meanwhile, listing it instead under the chapter on "conditions related to sexual health". — AFP

UK interior minister Javid enters PM race

LONDON: UK interior minister Sajid Javid became the ninth candidate yesterday to enter the race to replace Theresa May as premier, promising to "deliver Brexit" after repeated delays. Referring to the drubbing May's Conservatives received in European Parliament elections, Javid said the new party leader had to restore voters' trust.

"As last night's results made all too clear, we must get on and deliver Brexit to make sure there is renewed trust in our democracy," Javid said in a video message posted on Twitter. "We must bridge divides to heal communities, reminding us of our shared values as a United Kingdom," said Javid, whose father emigrated from Pakistan and worked as a bus driver.

Javid did not join several other leadership hopefuls in saying that he would pull Britain out of the EU with

or without a deal when the new deadline arrives on October 31. Conservative Party leadership frontrunners, including former foreign minister Boris Johnson, have said they were ready for a so-called "no-deal Brexit," despite warnings that this may put Britain in economic peril.

May's party is being pushed further to the right by the strong European election performance of the Brexit Party of anti-European populist Nigel Farage. His success reflected Conservative voters' anger at May's inability to finish Brexit by its original March 28 deadline, with her deal with Brussels getting rejected by parliament three times.

The Conservatives picked up just nine percent of the vote, their worst election result since 1832. Farage's new party won almost 32 percent, and is now demanding a seat at the negotiating table with Brussels. Javid, 49, became the first candidate to declare his candidacy over social media. He is viewed as a relative long-shot in a field that is expected to grow further in the days to come. — AFP

Qatar invited to emergency...

Continued from Page 1

Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to attend the summit of Gulf Arab rulers and a wider meeting of Arab leaders, the Qatari Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The invitation and a letter was passed to Qatar by

Amir calls for national unity...

Continued from Page 1

constitution, which we always affirm and protect," he said. His Highness the Amir called for constructive cooperation between the state's legislative and executive powers. "I avail this opportunity to reassure the importance of fruitful and constructive cooperation between the legislative and the executive powers to strengthen the state of institutions, rule of law, completing the consideration of the submitted draft laws and implement the economic programs aimed at the diversification of national sources of income, and creating productive job opportunities for the young people to participate in pushing forward the wheel of development, and enhancing the non-oil revenues," he added.

His Highness also called on all those in charge of the media to play their role consciously and responsibly. "We do not want our media to divert from its national message to what threatens the unity of the homeland and its social security, especially under the critical circumstances in the region. We look forward to our media to be the light of civilization, a tool to advance construction and development efforts, a platform for responsible freedom and informed public opinion," he stated.

His Highness the Amir, however, lamented that some misuse social media to spread rumors and hatred,

the head of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the statement said, without saying whether Qatar would accept it. Saudi Arabia has accused Iran of ordering the drone strikes, for which Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis claimed responsibility. The kingdom said that while it did not want war in the region, it was ready to respond strongly.

The UAE has not blamed anyone for the sabotage of the tankers pending an investigation, and said it was committed to de-escalation. Iran has denied it carried out either attack. The UAE has said that the current "critical circumstances" in the region required a "unified Arab and Gulf stance". — Reuters

"Unfortunately, what we see and experience is the misuse of social media, which have often become tools of demolition and questioning of intentions, and spreading the spirit of hatred among members of society," he regretted.

His Highness the Amir highlighted the government's efforts to empower youth and increase their contributions to the state building and society development. He noted that he has repeatedly stressed, on several occasions, that youth is the true wealth of the nation, and that they have both his attention and the attention of the government, as "they are the most precious of our wealth, and the best investment."

"Since the first Youth Conference in 2013 under the slogan 'Kuwait hears,' the government has studied the important recommendations issued by it, accelerated their implementation, and took measures to develop youth capabilities and skills, address their issues, and overcome the obstacles they face." As a follow-up to these efforts, Al-Diwan Al-Amiri recently launched the Kuwaiti Youth Project under the title 'Kuwait is proud' - which is aimed at honoring and nurturing this promising generation to enable them contribute in the development process and to build the present and future Kuwait," he said.

His Highness the Amir also recalled his initiative to establish the National Center for Innovation - through which to develop the ideas and innovations of young people, and turn them into projects of economic feasibility for their benefit and the benefit of the country. "Young people, as I said in many occasions, are the source of hope," he concluded. — KUNA

US not targeting regime change...

Continued from Page 1

Trump had earlier opened the door to negotiations with Tehran, saying: "If they'd like to talk, we'd like to talk also."

The comments were in marked contrast to growing concerns in Washington about conflict after the administration dispatched an aircraft carrier, bomber planes and 1,500 extra troops to the region in response to alleged Iranian threats. Trump has sought to dismantle an international agreement meant to reward Iran for opening its nuclear program to outside controls, instead adding crippling new US sanctions seen by many as aimed at bringing down the government.

'Tremendous potential'

Addressing another hot-button issue, Trump doubled down on his backing for Kim despite two short-range missile tests that sparked renewed concern in the region after a period of relative calm. Asked about the missile tests, Trump said: "My people think it could have been a violation... I view it as a man who perhaps wants to get attention." This appeared to be a second put-down of his hawkish National Security Advisor John Bolton, who said Saturday the launches contravened UN Security Council resolutions.

Kim "is looking to create a nation that has great strength economically," said Trump, repeating his mantra there is "tremendous economic potential" in North Korea. "He knows that with nuclear, that's never going to happen. Only bad can happen. He is a very smart man, he gets it well," said the president, who even said he agreed with the North Korean leader's jibe about the intelligence of Joe Biden, who currently leads the pack to win the Democratic nomination to take on Trump in 2020.

Ramadan develops love...

Continued from Page 1

Aside from these Quranic verses, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised his followers in innumerable traditions to be good to others. For example, he said, "Do you know what the rights of a neighbor are? If a neighbor seeks your help, extend it to him. If a neighbor asks you for a loan, lend him. If your neighbor becomes poor, then help him financially and attend to his poverty if you can. If your neighbor becomes ill, then visit him. If your neighbor is happy on certain gain, then congratulate him.

If your neighbor is suffering a calamity, then offer him condolences. If your neighbor dies, then attend his funeral. Do not raise your building over his building, so that he would have no sun exposure or wind passage. Do not bother your neighbor with the smell of your cooking, unless you intend to offer him some" (Tabrani, 101). Detailing the behavior of a loving neighbor is more meaningful than a simple order to love them.

"Kim Jong Un made a statement that Joe Biden is a low IQ individual. He probably is, based on his record, I think I agree with him on that," said the president. For his part, Abe stated the launches were a violation of UN resolutions and reiterated Tokyo's stance that they were "very regrettable". Abe said he had won Trump's blessing to hold face-to-face talks "without preconditions" with Kim in a bid to resolve the issue of Japanese citizens kidnapped by North Korea decades ago—a burning domestic political issue.

'Great time'

Trump said it was a "great honor" to be the first foreign leader visiting Naruhito. In the morning, Trump and his wife Melania were greeted by the emperor and his wife Empress Masako at the palace in Tokyo, inspecting an honor guard and exchanging gifts. They returned in the evening with Abe and his wife for a lavish banquet featuring six courses, including Trump's favorite—beef—and a dessert described as Glace Mont Fuji. The emperor and Trump both made toasts praising their countries' friendship, the US president even sprinkling in a few Japanese words to his address, as he referenced ancient Japanese poetry.

Yesterday marked the start of the official program after a weekend in which Trump and Abe strengthened their personal friendship with sumo, golf and meals out. Trump said Sunday he was having a "great time." Abe was hoping that their diplomatic bromance would act to his advantage in delicate trade talks between the world's number-one and number-three economies.

This seemed to have had some effect, with Trump saying that "much" of that deal would wait until Abe faces upper house elections likely in July—as rumors swirl that the popular prime minister will combine that vote with a snap general election. On the even tougher trade negotiations with China, Trump suggested there was a "very good chance" for a "very good deal" with China. But he gave no timeline, saying it would come only "sometime" in the future. — AFP

The Quran and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not directly command us to "love one another" because love (the feeling) is a byproduct of positive actions and attitudes. Instead, we are commanded to treat one another with justice, respect, forgiveness, patience and kindness. By acting in this way, we can arouse the feeling of love for others in ourselves, and vice versa.

Islam insists on principle-driven love, a love that is proactive and action-based, not reactive and emotion-based. How important is love? Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said to his companions, "You will not enter Paradise until you have faith; and you will not complete your faith until you love one another" (Muslim). Ramadan is the perfect opportunity to show love for others by showing compassion and charity through sharing.

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.

Sports

World Cup organisers happy with security amid 'moderate' threat

No 'panic' for Tendulkar as India slump before World Cup

LONDON: Britain may be dealing with a national threat level of "severe" but officials are confident they have the security measures in place for a Cricket World Cup in England and Wales rated a "moderate" security risk.

Recent terror attacks in cricket playing nations have heightened safety concerns regarding the World Cup, which features 48 one-day international matches in 46 days starting with tournament hosts England against South Africa on Thursday.

In March, 51 worshippers were shot dead in mosque attacks in the New Zealand city of Christchurch while more than 250 people died in Sri Lanka as a result of suicide bombings on Easter Sunday.

"When those incidents happened so close to the tournament, quite understandably that did cause some nervousness," Jill McCracken, the World Cup safety and security director, told reporters at the Oval on Monday.

Public events in Britain have not been immune from terror incidents in recent years, with 23 people killed in a suicide bomb attack after a concert by the American singer Ariana Grande in Manchester two years ago.

McCracken, explaining the security position regarding the World Cup, added: "The UK national threat level sits at 'severe', which means an attack is likely.

"But we also work with security services

to assess the impact of the tournament itself and they have come to us with a bespoke threat for the event which is 'moderate'-the second lowest on the scale of risk.

"The threat in the UK is always around crowded places, they look for mass casualties, but when you look at the security measures that we have around the venues, around the teams, and the background work we do, that actually reduces threat."

Meanwhile the International Cricket Council said there had been 3.2 million applications for tickets-some four times the actual availability-with 110,000 women and 100,000 Under-16s expected to attend.

Officials are keen to attract family audiences to matches and players have been reminded of the need to set a good example while on the field.

"The definition of sledging (verbal abuse of an opponent) is always difficult," said ICC chief executive David Richardson.

"But one point we've emphasised in all team briefings is to uphold a good standard of behaviour.

"Any malicious or personal comments won't be tolerated. Over the last 12 months it's improved significantly, generally teams are pretty well behaved."

Richardson, a former South Africa wicket-keeper, added he hoped players and fans at this year's men's World Cup would follow the example of the 2017 Women's World Cup in England.

"The Women's World Cup was a good example of that family atmosphere," he said.

"Everyone is welcome, male and female, young and old. Any racism or homophobia, there's zero tolerance for that."

Meanwhile, India must not press the panic button despite losing badly to New Zealand in their first warm-up game for the World Cup, the country's batting legend Sachin Tendulkar said.

New Zealand thrashed India, one of the World Cup favourites, by six wickets at the Oval on Sunday with only Ravindra Jadeja and Hardik Pandya scoring more than 20 in India's total of 179.

India's batsmen were "blown away" on the green wicket, the Hindustan Times said, sounding the alarm for their World Cup hopes. But Tendulkar called for calm.

"I will not judge the team after each and every game. It's a tournament and things like these will happen," Tendulkar was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India news agency.

"The main tournament has not even started yet. I think, we need to settle down, one or two games may go here and there.

"India should make the most of the practice matches," added Tendulkar, the highest scorer in Test and one-day cricket.

"They should understand what kind of surfaces they might get. I won't panic at all as of now." New Zealand begin their World Cup against Sri Lanka in Cardiff on June 1,



Sachin Tendulkar

while India face South Africa in Southampton on June 5. Tendulkar also said teams used warm-up games to try different players, which was another reason not to read too much into the results.

"Teams are trying different combinations," he said. "Almost all teams are not

sure about their front-line playing 11. Several bowlers and batsmen are rested," he said. "All the teams are preparing and trying different combinations in those conditions which would work for them," said the former opener, who played in six World Cups. — AFP

Milestones beckons for Malinga in World Cup swansong

LONDON: Lasith Malinga's once-express pace has dropped as Father Time has caught up with the right-arm quick, but his guile should propel him to a few individual milestones at his fourth and final Cricket World Cup.

Malinga, who turns 36 in August, is on the cusp of breaking into the all-time top-10 one-day international wicket takers, with his tally of 322 just one behind former team mate Sanath Jayasuriya.

Muttiah Muralitharan heads the list with 534 wickets. Malinga has also taken three ODI hat-tricks and is the only player to have achieved the milestone twice during a World Cup. His first World Cup hat-trick was when he dismissed four South African batsmen in four balls in Guyana in 2007 — the only player to have achieved that feat in the tournament.

He then took another hat-trick against Kenya four years later in Colombo and while he said it would be nice to add a third in England and Wales, he was just keen on taking wickets when Sri Lanka start their campaign against New Zealand in Cardiff on June 1.

"I know I've got the skills to take wickets and (that) gives me confidence," Malinga told the International Cricket Council website. "One of the things I like about playing in England is you have to adapt to every condition.

"It could be really hot or quite cold and that is a real test of your skill as a bowler. "Why can't I get another hat-trick? I will be trying and that would be special." Malinga has already said that his fourth Cricket World Cup will be his last, with him targeting an international retirement after the World Twenty20 tournament in Australia next year.

He will however still anchor the pace attack with his



Lasith Malinga

ability to bowl fast swinging yorkers and well-directed bouncer and disguise changes in pace. The 1996 champions have struggled in the 50-over format this year, having lost eight of their nine completed matches, with their only victory against Scotland in Edinburgh.

Malinga, however, felt the side could surprise opposition teams in the round-robin format. "In pre-

vious years perhaps we had bigger names but these guys are very talented and they are looking forward to proving themselves and making people notice them," he said. "We have the best 15 players in Sri Lanka right now and we have a mix of more experienced players and some exciting young players, who just can't wait to get started." — Reuters

Fakhar Zaman: Pakistan's WCup weapon

KARACHI: Fakhar Zaman was still establishing himself in the Pakistan team when Jasprit Bumrah's no-ball in the Champions Trophy final triggered his unlikely rise from navy sailor to World Cup talisman.

India appeared to have made the perfect start in the 2017 Champions Trophy showpiece when Zaman edged to wicketkeeper MS Dhoni off Bumrah.

However, the Indian fast bowler had overstepped the crease and Zaman, who had scored just three at the time, was given a reprieve that he made the most of, reaching his first one-day international century.

Fakhar changed the game with a crisp 114 to help Pakistan beat their bitter rivals by a 180-run margin at the Oval to lift the trophy. Since then Fakhar has been the lynchpin of Pakistan's batting and will be expected to anchor the lineup when the World Cup gets under way in England on May 30. "That no-ball made me. I had a dream before the final that I will be dismissed off a no-ball and it proved to be true," Fakhar said. "Initially I was very sad as I had promised my parents to do well in that match."

Fakhar's role in that famous victory against India came in just his fourth ODI and made him a household name in Pakistan. But he said the recognition has not distracted him as he focuses on inspiring Pakistan's bid for a second World Cup win and first since 1992.

"I was very lucky and ever since that century I have become famous," he said. "But with that fame comes responsibility and I have become more mature and now I realise the importance of playing my part. That will be my top priority in the World Cup."

Luck has been on the unassuming left-hander's side since he defied his father's advice not to play cricket in his native Mardan. Fakhar joined the Pakistan Navy but cricket remained his dream.

He kept his hand in by playing for the navy team and crucially benefited from a stroke of good fortune to fulfil his wish of playing for the national side.

Pakistan opener Sharjeel Khan was banned in a spot-fixing case during the second edition of the Pakistan Super League in 2017, just three months before the Champions Trophy.

Fakhar's aggressive batting had impressed head coach Mickey Arthur and chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq. They instantly selected Fakhar as an attacking option and he has paid them back by averaging a stunning 51.31 in his 36 ODIs.

"I saw a game changer in Fakhar," recalled Inzamam. "We had to find someone to replace Sharjeel and after watching Fakhar we thought 'here is our man'. "He lived up to that promise and we see him as an anchor in the World Cup."

The 29-year-old, called "soldier" by his teammates for his navy connection, smashed Pakistan's first double century in a one-day match in Zimbabwe last year and knows what is required of him in his country's World Cup campaign. "My job is to score runs and I am doing that so I know that hard work will pay off," he said. —AFP

West Indies perfect opportunity to test death bowling: N Zealand coach

LONDON: A power-hitting West Indian side will provide the perfect opportunity to test bowling tactics in the final 'death' overs ahead of the Cricket World Cup, New Zealand bowling coach Shane Jurgensen has said.

While New Zealand's bowlers produced a superb performance at the top of the innings in Saturday's six-wicket win over India, Jurgensen said the warmup match against Jason Holder's side on Tuesday should give them the chance to work on finishing off an innings as well.

"They'll put us under pressure and I think that will be key for us, especially for the bowlers," Jurgensen said. "One key area for all teams in this tournament is how you bowl at the death and limiting those boundaries in the last 10 overs.

"Taking wickets at the top will be a key component but at the back end of the innings you want to not leak too many boundaries and keep scores to a modest total."

Jurgensen added that he was pleased with the way Trent Boult, who took three early wickets, bowled against India, with his performance also showing how vital it was to exploit what swing is available during the tournament.

The Oval pitch supported New Zealand's bowlers against India but Jurgensen did not expect the ball to swing or seam as much in the tournament, predicting that opening bowlers might only get assistance for their first two overs.

"It was a good start against India but we can't get too excited," Jurgensen said. "We need to keep trucking on and working our way through the tournament. "It's a long campaign. Every time we play we need to make sure that we execute in all departments."

Jurgensen added that Matt Henry, unused against India, was likely to play against West Indies in Bristol and all-rounder Jimmy Neesham said it was vital that the whole squad saw some action ahead of their tournament opener against Sri Lanka in Cardiff on June 1.

"Getting some overs into the legs of the guys that didn't bowl so much in the last game and hopefully getting a few runs as well," Neesham said of the goal for today's game. "From here on in it's about making the guys feel comfortable so that we can hit that first game knowing that we can do it."

"The World Cup is the pinnacle and the guys are really buzzing. We have to keep the excitement under wraps." — Reuters



KUWAIT: The doubles semi final of the Late Abed Ali Bahman Ramadhan Squash tournament was won by Qais Al-Mazidi and Ayman Al-Farra who defeated Hisham Ramadhan 2/1. The final will be Friday against Abdallah Maqseed and Adnan Dashti.

Sports

Kepler, Rosario each hit three HRs to lead Twins to 6th straight victory over White Sox

Suarez helps Reds pull away for 10-2 win over Cubs

MINNEAPOLIS: Max Kepler and Eddie Rosario each hit three-run home runs, and Jake Odorizzi allowed one hit over 5 1/3 innings to lead the Minnesota Twins to their sixth straight victory, a 7-0 win over the Chicago White Sox on Sunday afternoon in Minneapolis. Odorizzi (7-2) walked one and struck out nine, including the last four batters he faced, to pick up his seventh win in his past eight starts. It also marked the fifth time in his past six starts that he didn't allow a run. Kepler finished 2-for-4 with four RBIs for Minnesota, which won its seventh series of the season while improving to 19-6 in the month of May. The six-game winning streak is the longest of the season for the Twins, who have won 11 of their past 12 games while also increasing their AL Central lead to 10 games over the Cleveland Indians. Dylan Covey (0-4) suffered the loss for the White Sox. Covey allowed four runs on just three hits and two walks over six innings while striking out six.

A'S 7, MARINERS 1

Brett Anderson allowed one run in 6 1/3 innings as Oakland completed a three-game sweep of visiting Seattle and extended its winning streak to nine games. Josh Phegley went 2-for-3 with a double, home run and three RBIs for the A's, and Matt Chapman homered in the first inning for the second consecutive game. Seattle's only run came on Jay Bruce's solo homer off Anderson in the seventh inning. It was Bruce's 13th home run of the season, one shy of team leader Daniel Vogelbach.

REDS 10, CUBS 2

Eugenio Suarez went 2-for-3 with a double and three RBIs, and Cincinnati pulled away to win at Chicago. Curt Casali hit a two-run homer, and Joey Votto and Kyle Farmer drove in one run apiece for Cincinnati, which claimed the rubber match of the series. The Reds finished with 17 hits and had seven players notch multiple hits. Willson Contreras and Javier Baez each hit solo home runs for the Cubs, who lost Kris Bryant for the game after a scary outfield collision during the sixth inning. Bryant chased a fly ball toward the gap in right-center field, where he slammed into teammate Jason Heyward and stayed down on a knee until trainers arrived.

ROYALS 8, YANKEES 7 (10 INNINGS)

Whit Merrifield hit a scorcher past third baseman

Gio Urshela in the bottom of the 10th inning to lift Kansas City over visiting New York in the final game of a three-game series. The game-winning single came after the Royals blew a three-run lead in the ninth. The Yankees rallied against closer Ian Kennedy to tie the score, getting an RBI single from DJ LeMahieu and a two-run single from Aaron Hicks. The Royals hit four homers to avoid the sweep and end the Yankees' seven-game winning streak.

ROCKIES 8, ORIOLES 7

Tony Wolters had three hits and delivered a game-winning sacrifice fly in the bottom of the ninth inning, and Colorado rallied to beat Baltimore in Denver. Nolan Arenado homered, and starting pitcher German Marquez tripled and drove in three runs for Colorado. Ian Desmond's full-count walk in the ninth forced home the tying run, before Wolters' walk-off fly to left. Jonathan Villar and Trey Mancini had two hits each for Baltimore, which hasn't won two in a row since early May. The Orioles have lost 15 of their past 18 games.

BREWERS 9, PHILLIES 1

Brandon Woodruff retired the first 15 hitters, allowed one hit in eight dominant innings and Milwaukee averted a three-game sweep to visiting Philadelphia. Woodruff (7-1) won his sixth straight decision and picked up his league-leading seventh win. He lost his perfect game bid and shutout when Andrew Knapp opened the sixth with a homer. After allowing Knapp's first homer, Woodruff retired the next nine hitters and ended his outing by fanning Knapp on a 98-mph fastball. Woodruff struck out a career-high 10 hitters and finished every inning with a strikeout, fanning Bryce Harper and Odubel Herrera three times apiece. At the plate, he added an RBI double and RBI single.

BRAVES 4, CARDINALS 3 (10 INNINGS)

Visiting Atlanta erased a three-run deficit in the ninth and took the lead when Brian McCann drew a bases-loaded walk in the 10th to stun St. Louis. The Braves had runners on the corners against reliever Tyler Webb (0-1) with two out in the 10th, and the Cardinals opted to intentionally walk slugging rookie Austin Riley to face McCann. But the cagey veteran catcher drew a walk to give the Braves the lead. The winning pitcher was Jacob Webb (3-0), with Luke Jackson pitching a scoreless inning, striking out two, to earn his seventh



MINNEAPOLIS: Eddie Rosario #20 of the Minnesota Twins hits a three-run home run against the Chicago White Sox in the third inning of the game at Target Field in Minneapolis, Minnesota. — AFP

save. Atlanta won two of three games in the series and finished the season 4-2 against the Cardinals.

DODGERS 11, PIRATES 7

Corey Seager and Joc Pederson homered, and Matt Beatty drove in four runs for visiting Los Angeles, who outslugged Pittsburgh to complete a three-game series sweep. Justin Turner was 5-for-5 with a walk and three runs scored during his first career five-hit game for the Dodgers, who over the past three seasons are 17-2 against Pittsburgh and have won 10 straight. Los Angeles finished its road trip with a 6-2 mark. Bryan Reynolds and Adam Frazier homered for Pittsburgh, which concluded a 1-5 homestand.

RED SOX 4, ASTROS 1

Eduardo Rodriguez worked six strong innings, and visiting Boston averted a series sweep by parlaying some assertive baserunning into a win over Houston. The Red Sox won the series finale against the Astros

for a second consecutive weekend, with Houston claiming the season series 4-2. Rodriguez (5-3) was instrumental in keeping the Houston lineup shackled, allowing four hits while issuing only one walk against five strikeouts. Rafael Devers homered, and he and Eduardo Nunez each had two hits as Boston handed Justin Verlander (8-2) his second loss.

ANGELS 7, RANGERS 6

Mike Trout homered, doubled, scored twice, drove in two and walked once to help lift Los Angeles over Texas in Anaheim, Calif. Trout's RBI double in the seventh was part of a six-run inning that turned a 5-1 deficit into a 7-5 lead, and eventually the Angels' second win in the three-game series. David Fletcher chipped in with three hits, a run scored and a stolen base as the Angels finished with 11 hits in all. Los Angeles reliever Justin Anderson gave up an RBI double to Shin-Soo Choo in the ninth, but closed it out for his first save of the season. — Reuters

Na claims third US PGA Tour title at Colonial

LOS ANGELES: Kevin Na fired a final-round 66 at Colonial Country Club on Sunday to win the US PGA Tour's Charles Schwab Challenge by four strokes over fellow American Tony Finau.

Na continued his mastery of the classic course in Fort Worth, Texas, starting the day with a two-shot advantage that was never really challenged. Na's six birdies included a 33-footer at the fourth and a 20-footer at the eighth.

He rolled in a 12-footer at the 72nd hole to cap his four-under par round with a birdie for a 13-under total of 267. "It feels great," said Na, who celebrated with his toddler daughter, Sophia, in his arms.

Na, 35, boasts an impressive record at Colonial, where he thrust himself into contention with a second-round 62. That was his third score of 62 or better on the course, where he matched the record of 61 on the way to a fourth-place finish last year.

Na said he eyed the club's "wall of champions" on the first tee Sunday, "and in my head I engraved my name on it. 'Every year I come here I know I had a chance to win and I knew before my career was over I was going to definitely win here,'" added Na, who believes the compact course is one of "seven or eight" that offer him a chance to win on the US tour without a big-hitting game.

It was the second win in less than a year for the 35-year-old Na, a Las Vegas resident who was born in South Korea but came to America when he was just 8 years old.

He last won at the 2018 Greenbrier event in July, and his best finish this season prior to Fort Worth was a tie



FORT WORTH: Kevin Na of the United States poses for a photo with his wife, Julianne Na, and daughter, Sophie Na, after winning the 2019 Charles Schwab Challenge at Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth, Texas. — AFP

for fifth at the WGC Match Play in March. Na was also given a 1973 fully restored blue Dodge Challenger as one of his perks for winning the tournament which he quickly turned over to his caddie Kenny Harms.

Today before the tournament started, Harms asked Na if he could have the car if they won the tournament. Na agreed. "I don't know how my caddie convinced me to give him the car, but he's a good salesman, I guess. He sold me into it. But I'm more than happy to give it to him. He deserves it."

"I got something cooler right here," said Na holding his trophy. Finau, who was among a group of five players to start the round two shots behind Na, moved with-

in one shot of the leader with his birdie at the second.

He was two adrift on the back nine but the gap widened when Na birdied 14 and Finau bogeyed 16. Finau finished with four birdies and two-bogeys in a two-under 68 for 271. It was a further stroke back to American Andrew Putnam (66) and Taiwan's Pan Cheng-tsung (69).

Local favorite Jordan Spieth, who also started the day two off the lead, couldn't maintain his hot streak on the greens. He closed with a two-over par 72 that left him eight back and still in search of his first victory since he captured his third major championship at the British Open in 2017. — AFP

Hamilton talent saved us from defeats says Mercedes boss

MONACO: Lewis Hamilton's individual ability 'saved' Mercedes and delivered the team's emotional tribute victory to Niki Lauda at Sunday's dramatic Monaco Grand Prix, according to team chief Toto Wolff.

Without his "performance of a champion" drive on badly-worn and incorrectly-chosen medium compound tyres, in which he resisted near-incessant pressure from Max Verstappen's Red Bull, the Silver Arrows' season-opening winning streak may have been over.

"Obviously, it was the wrong call," admitted Wolff, referring to the decision to fit 'mediums' instead of 'hards' at Hamilton's pit-stop after only 10 laps. "We thought the tyre would make it to the end."

"But, of course, it didn't. He saved us. His driving saved us. It is something that we really need to analyse now. "We calculated that the medium would make it, if we changed on lap 15 or 16, with the right management. It seemed a straightforward strategy."

"It didn't seem like a huge stretch, but then we realised 20 laps into it that some graining was appearing on the front left - and he started to complain. "Under-steer resulted from the graining and it was clear it would be very, very difficult to make it to the end..."

"Everybody knew it would be a huge stretch and, probably 20 laps from the end, he had nought percent rubber left and with massive under-steer at slow speeds. "You could see that around the Loews hairpin - the car wouldn't turn anymore... We were close to losing and if it was a normal track - like in Montreal - you lose that race."

Hamilton secured his third Monaco victory career 77th by resisting every attack from Verstappen, behind him on hard tyres, with one of the greatest stunts of defensive racing ever seen on the unforgiving streets of the Mediterranean circuit.

His agitated radio exchanges with engineer Pete Bonnington punctuated the contest and allowed him relief from his concentration during what he later described as the hardest race of his life.

"It's just difficult when you're out on your own for so long and 'Bono' can't say anything," said Hamilton. "Nothing he can say, or anyone can say, or do to help - it was all down to me to bring it home for the team and for Niki. The just felt immense."

Three-time world champion Austrian Lauda, Mercedes non-executive chairman, died last Monday, aged 70. It was a measure of his achievement that Hamilton's former team-mate and rival Nico Rosberg gave him unstinting praise. — AFP

Sugar Ray says boxing not dead, rival Duran not so sure

LOS ANGELES: American boxing great Sugar Ray Leonard says that while the sport may not be the national obsession it was during his prime, it is still healthy, an assertion disputed by longtime rival-turned-friend Roberto Duran.

In a joint interview to promote a new film on the Panamanian's career, entitled "I Am Duran", the former enemies traded barbs - and laughs - about the state of the sport as well as the nature of their historic battles which captivated the sporting world in the 1980s.

"Boxing is not dead like some say it is," said Leonard, who lost his WBC Welterweight title to Duran in the "Brawl in Montreal" in 1980 before winning it

back in an infamous rematch later that same year.

"But the sport itself has to fix itself. Don't just say you're the best - show the people or the fans that you are the best by fighting the best and let them be the judge," he told Reuters.

Duran, 67, made it clear he did not think much of the current crop of fighters. "No respect," he said through an interpreter when asked about the personalities who populate the ring today, such as heavyweight world champion Anthony Joshua and WBC heavyweight titleholder Deontay Wilder. "We were born in the time period of the real fighters," he said.

"If you compare today's boxers to the boxers like us from back to those days, these guys would have never won."

Duran, who fought his way out of poverty to become an icon in his native Panama, said he did, however, like Mexican Saul "Canelo" Alvarez, who currently holds three of the four mid-dleweight titles.

"I admire the Mexican kid who obviously is doing very well. I always think

that Americans are the ones making the big bucks here in this sport," he said.

"However, we have Canelo now. He's not only a Mexican but he's also a Latino who's doing really well and making a lot of money."

'WHO HIT THE HARDEST?'

Leonard said Duran, whose relentless, aggressive fighting style and punishing punches earned him an astounding 103-16 career record, is among the best he ever faced. "People ask me that all the time, who hit you the hardest?" Leonard said.

"And a lot of times I say Roberto Duran because Duran hit me so hard-and so many times in so many illegal places-that it felt like a few people in the ring," he said, flashing his trademark smile.

"He was so quick and so elusive. Just an amazing, amazing champion."

Leonard, who won 36 and drew one of his 40 fights, said he lost the first meeting with Duran, a 15-round unanimous decision, in part because he chose to stand toe to toe with Duran instead of relying on his superior speed.

Leonard has said he wanted to hurt Duran after he made disparaging remarks about Leonard's wife in the lead up to the fight, the only fight Leonard said he ever went into angry.

The two would face off in a rematch later that year in a fight dubbed "No Mas" after Duran shocked the world by quitting midway through the eighth round.

Leonard successfully changed his tactics in the rematch, moving constantly and taunting Duran in ways that unnerved the champion. Duran said he was forced to stop fighting due to overwhelming muscle pain that he said was connected to the rapid weight loss he went through to make the weight for the rematch.

Duran, who is known for his acerbic wit and love of a good time, had packed on the pounds while celebrating his win over Leonard.

But time heals all wounds and Leonard says he is happy to call him a friend, even if it took some getting used to. "It seems so surreal when I see him because the first thing I want to do is do this," said Leonard, putting up his fists. — Reuters

Sports

Atalanta qualify for Champions League as Milan miss out

Fans bid farewell to captain and local hero Daniele De Rossi

ROME: Atalanta won at Sassuolo on Sunday to secure their first ever Champions League spot and Inter Milan joined them while ensuring Empoli were relegated after a frantic second half in the San Siro.

AC Milan ended up fifth despite winning at SPAL. Genoa and Fiorentina stayed in Serie A after a nerve-racked goalless draw. The evening started with Inter, Atalanta, AC Milan and Roma battling for the two remaining Champions League spots and Empoli knowing that if they won they would survive.

Because their ground is being redeveloped, Atalanta had to cede home advantage and play at Sassuolo where they quickly fell behind. Duvan Zapata levelled before half-time. After Sassuolo lost their scorer Domenico Berardi, who received a red card for his part in the mass brawl that ended the first half, Atalanta comfortably sealed third as goals by Alejandro Gomez and Mario Pasalic completed a 3-1 win.

"It's been an extraordinary season," Atalanta president Antonio Percassi told Sky Sport. "My first hug was for (coach Gian Piero) Gasperini, for a lifetime. It's already a given that he'll still be here next season."

Milan took a two-goal lead at SPAL, with goals by Hakan Calhanoglu and Franck Kessie, but Francesco Vicari and Mohamed Fares replied. Meanwhile at the San Siro, after a goal-less first half, Inter brought on Keita Balde. The striker broke the deadlock with a solo goal six minutes later, earning a yellow card for ripping off his shirt in celebration.

The home team had a chance to increase their lead when Mauro Icardi tumbled over Empoli goalkeeper Bartlomiej Dragowski. After a delay for video review, Icardi missed the penalty.

A few minutes later in Ferrara, Kessie rolled in a

penalty to put AC Milan back in the lead against SPAL. They held on to win 3-2. Back at the San Siro, Salih Ucan's low cross from the right reached Hamed Traore unmarked in front of goal and he levelled to lift Empoli out of the relegation places and push Inter out of the top four.

Five minutes later, Radja Nainggolan changed that when he pounced on a rebound to put Inter ahead. In a frantic finish, Empoli came close several times with Inter centre-back Stefan de Vrij deflecting one shot onto his own bar.

In added time, with Dragowski in the Empoli attack, Inter rolled the ball into the empty net, but Balde had pulled Dragowski back in the build-up. The goal was disallowed and Balde earned a second yellow card. Yet the 2-1 win was enough to save Inter and doom Empoli.

The wins of the three teams above them meant Roma finished sixth despite beating visiting Parma 2-1. They also bid farewell to captain and local hero Daniele De Rossi who came off to rapturous applause with nine minutes to play.

Earlier on Sunday, Massimiliano Allegri ended his Juventus career in disappointing fashion as the champions were undone by two late strikes at Sampdoria to finish the Serie A season with a five-match winless streak. Despite a poor final few weeks they still finished 11 points ahead of second-placed Napoli, who ended their underwhelming campaign beaten 3-2 at Bologna on Saturday.

"I feel good because I ended five incredible years by winning the title ... tomorrow a new era begins," Allegri told broadcaster DAZN after the 2-0 defeat. He leaves having also won four Italian Cups and re-established the Old Lady as a force in Europe, reaching two



MILAN: Inter's Senegalese forward Keita Balde vies with Empoli's Ghanaian midfielder Afriyie Acquah (C) during the first goal of the Italian Serie A football match Inter Milan vs Empoli at the San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

Champions League finals and signing Cristiano Ronaldo last summer.

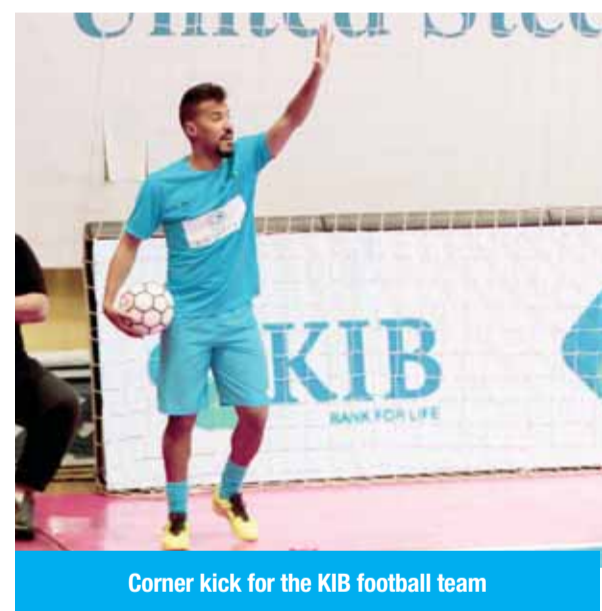
"I'll come back to work when I have the opportunity ... I need to find a team with which I can enjoy myself and do a good job," he added. Sampdoria's 36-year-old

striker Fabio Quagliarella failed to add to his 26 goals but still finished as the Serie A top scorer, three ahead of Zapata. Torino finished their exciting campaign in seventh place, level on points with Roma, following a 3-1 win over Lazio. — AFP

KIB continues to shine at Al-Roudan's football tournament



The KIB football team at Al-Roudan's Football Tournament



Corner kick for the KIB football team



Some entertainment activities organized by KIB during the tournament

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently participated in the 2019 Late Abdullah Mishari Al-Roudan's Ramadan Indoor Football Tournament with a team of professional football players, working together to compete for the winning title. In its latest match, KIB's football team managed to score 2:1 against Al-Mudmar team and defeat Al-Barq after a 4:1 victory.

KIB's football team displayed a great show of sportsmanship and athleticism on the field, forging ahead in one of the most popular sporting events across the country. Long preparations and trainings

preceded the tournament, ensuring that the Bank's football team gives their best performance on the field during every match.

On this occasion, Senior Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "We are very proud of our team and the discipline, sportsmanship and team spirit they have shown throughout the tournament. Sports has always been at the heart of our social responsibility program, encouraging the community in all ways so they can shine in sporting events - locally and internation-

ally. For this reason, we have included a number of sports activities and events in this year's Ramadan program; thereby promoting sports across diverse segments of the local community."

KIB's football team has managed to achieve great achievements over the years, as a result of its focus on teamwork, sportsmanship, and fair competition. As part of its comprehensive Ramadan program, the Bank remains committed to supporting sports events and activities that encourage the local sports scene and cater to local youth.

Sarri on shaky ground as Chelsea challenge Arsenal for Euro glory

BAKU: When Chelsea meet Arsenal in the Europa League final on the shores of the Caspian Sea on Wednesday, it might be coach Maurizio Sarri's last match in charge despite what appears as a solid first year at Stamford Bridge.

Under the Italian, Chelsea have qualified for the Champions League next season and reached the final of the domestic League Cup before losing in a penalty shootout against Manchester City.

By contrast Arsenal, under Unai Emery in his first season in London, missed out on the four Champions

League spots on offer in the Premier League after a late slump in form.

The Gunners must now beat their city rivals in the Olympic Stadium in Azerbaijan's capital Baku to squeeze into Europe's premier competition.

Yet it is Sarri who seems to be on the shakier ground, not least because of Chelsea's record of hiring and firing managers - a dozen, including interim coaches, have come and gone since Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich bought the club in 2003.

Arsenal, by contrast, gave former manager Arsene Wenger 22 years in the job before he made way for Emery. Furthermore, Chelsea's third-place in the Premier league table might look impressive, but they finished 25 points behind runners-up Liverpool and were thankful that Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United, along with Arsenal, stumbled badly.

Some Chelsea fans have been very direct in their criticisms of Sarri's tactics and have made it clear to the club's hierarchy who they would prefer in the dugout next season by chanting the name of former midfield

hero Frank Lampard.

In his first season as a coach, Lampard has steered Derby County to Monday's second-tier playoff final against Aston Villa for a place in the Premier League.

'ARE THEY HAPPY WITH ME?'

Sarri, who has been linked with the vacant coach's position at Juventus, acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding his future in the run-up to the trip to Baku. "I have to speak with my club after the final. I want to know if they are happy with me or not," he said.

"I think we had a good season with a lot of problems, of course. We lost two or three matches very badly but we had a good season in the end."

Sarri appeared to be on the ropes in February when Chelsea were thrashed 6-0 in the Premier League by Manchester City, not long after a 4-0 drubbing by Bournemouth. But Chelsea stabilised while Arsenal went on a miserable run of form late in the season, costing them the chance of leap-frogging bitter rivals Spurs into fourth place. — Reuters

Zamalek use penalty power to end 16-year African trophy drought

JOHANNESBURG: Brilliant penalties enabled Zamalek Sporting Club of Egypt to win the CAF Confederation Cup final near Alexandria yesterday and end a 16-year African trophy drought.

Mahmoud Alaa converted a 55th-minute VAR spot-kick to give Zamalek a 1-0 second-leg win over Renaissance Sportive Berkane of Morocco and leave the teams tied at 1-1 on aggregate.

With no extra-time in CAF club matches, the final went to a shootout and Zamalek converted all five penalties to win 5-3 before a near-capacity crowd in the 86,000-seat stadium. The regular-time penalty and those in the shootout were all expertly taken, with their power and placement giving Berkane goalkeeper Abdelali Mhamdi no chance.

Success came as a massive relief to the Cairo-based club, who play some fixtures at the Borg el Arab Stadium almost 200 kilometres (114 miles) north-west of the capital for security reasons. After winning nine CAF titles between 1984 and 2003, Zamalek failed to add another until the victory over Berkane in a match that kicked off late Sunday and stretched into Monday.

There was a mix of relief and joy for the predominantly Zamalek-supporting crowd after the shootout as they became the third most successful club in CAF competitions with 10 titles. Al Ahly, Cairo neighbours of Zamalek and their greatest rivals for more than a century, have won 19 African titles and TP Mazembe from the Democratic Republic of Congo 11.

It was the fourth time in 16 finals that a shootout decided the outcome with Hearts of Oak of Ghana, Stade Malien of Mali and MAS Fes of Morocco winning finals on penalties.

Zamalek coach and former Tottenham Hotspur manager Christian Gross became the second Swiss handler to lift the Confederation Cup after Michel Decastel in 2007 with a Tunisian club. The second leg result in Alexandria could have been different had Hamdi Laachir not squandered a clearcut early chance for Berkane, blazing over from close range.

Soon after, Zamalek came close to cancelling the 1-0 lead the Moroccans took into the return match when a Youssef 'Obama' Ibrahim lob beat the goalkeeper but went over the bar. The Ethiopian referee initially ignored Zamalek penalty appeals early in the second half, but was persuaded by players to review a goalmouth incident and ruled that Najji Larbi handled.

Alaa blasted the penalty into the net, setting up a tense second half with Berkane sensing that if they scored an away goal, they would almost certainly win their first CAF final. But an experienced Zamalek defence, backed by 31-year-old goalkeeper Mahmoud 'Gennesh' Abdel Rahim, held firm to force the penalty shootout.

Substitute Khalid Boutaib scored from the first spot-kick for Zamalek, then Laachir fired embarrassingly wide to immediately put Berkane on the back foot. It proved a crucial miss as Alaa, Abdallah Gomaa, Youssef Ibrahim, and substitute Ayman Sayed scored for the Egyptian White Knights to finally end their African title jinx.

Success for Zamalek confirmed the north African dominance of the Confederation Cup-the African equivalent of the UEFA Europa League-with 11 winning club coming from the region. — AFP

25 Milestones beckons for Malinga in World Cup swansong



26 Na claims third US PGA Tour title at Colonial



27 Atalanta qualify for Champions League as Milan miss out



BRATISLAVA: Finland's players celebrate with the trophy after the IIHF Men's Ice Hockey World Championships final between Canada and Finland in Bratislava. — AFP

Finland stun Canada to win world title

Russia win bronze with a penalty shootout win over Czech Republic

BRATISLAVA: Finland completed a fairytale world championship after they came from behind to beat favourites Canada 3-1 and clinch their third gold medal in an absorbing final on Sunday.

The Finns, who beat the Canadians by the same score in their opening group-stage match, were underdogs in all three knockout stage games but they defied the odds to shock 2018 champions Sweden, Russia and Canada en route to the title.

It was a case of history repeating itself for the battling Finns, who won their previous title at the same venue in 2011.

"It's awesome," said Finland forward Toni Rajala. "It's something that you know might only happen once

in your life, but even before the game it felt great. I wasn't too nervous about it, I was enjoying it."

Canada, who were aiming for a record 27th title, dominated the opening period as Shea Theodor fired them ahead midway through with a brilliant solo effort.

The Vegas Golden Knights defenceman weaved his way through three Finnish players and found the top corner with a superb wrist-shot after Oliwer Kaski had missed a penalty for Finland.

Canada hit the crossbar twice and those misses, coupled with lapses in concentration early in the second and third periods, cost them dearly.

Finland captain Marko Anttila, who scored the win-

ner in the 1-0 semi-final win over Russia, was instrumental again as he levelled two minutes and 35 seconds into the second period when he beat goaltender Matt Murray with a fizzing low shot.

At exactly the same point in the third period, the towering Anttila punished the Canadians again as he popped up in front of goal and swept a fine Veli-Matti Savinainen assist into the roof of the net.

Harri Pesonen sealed Finland's memorable win in the closing stages and the Canadians failed to create much up front in the dying minutes although they threw men forward in the Ondrej Nepela Arena.

Canada defenceman Damon Severson had mixed emotions.

"It was a long tournament, a lot of fun, a lot of good guys," he said.

"It's unfortunate we got the wrong medal. Finland played a good game, the only team to beat us in this tournament was them, twice, and they played some good hockey."

"It's unfortunate we're not going home with gold."

Earlier on Sunday, Russia won the bronze medal with a penalty shootout win over the Czech Republic as the match finished 2-2 after regulation and overtime. Nikita Gusev and Ilya Kovalchuk netted Russia's goals in the shootout as the Czechs, who had led 2-1 in regular time after falling behind early on, missed all of their four attempts. —Reuters

'Frustrated' Wozniacki says opponent got 'lucky' in Roland Garros win

PARIS: Former world number one Caroline Wozniacki was left "frustrated" after collapsing to a 0-6, 6-3, 6-3 loss to Russian world number 68 Veronika Kudermetova in the French Open first round yesterday and told her opponent she "got lucky".

The Danish 13th seed had retired injured from her two previous matches in the lead-up to Roland Garros, but looked to have found form in a one-sided opening set. Last year's Australian Open champion lost her way in the second set, though, making 10

unforced errors, but said her opponent was fortunate to turn the match around.

"I think she got very lucky at the start of the second set and took advantage of the opportunities she got," said Wozniacki. "I ran out of steam in the end and made some unforced errors that I don't usually do, so that was very frustrating."

"She had a few net chords and good shots on some of the important points at the start of the second set. "It's definitely frustrating. You want to win, you work hard and you want to see results. "It hasn't been a great year for me so far, so I'm going to work hard and try and turn it around."

The 22-year-old Kudermetova cruised to victory in the decider on a sparsely-populated Court Philippe Chatrier to claim the biggest win of her career. She will face either Kazakhstan's Zarina Diyas or French wildcard Audrey Albie in the second round, having only made her main-draw debut at a Grand Slam event with a first-round Australian Open loss in January.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova said

she expects to be fit for the grass-court season despite pulling out of the French Open with a left arm injury yesterday. The Czech, who was seeded sixth at Roland Garros, will be out for "two to three weeks".

"It means no tennis, of course, as it's my left forearm," said the big-hitting left-hander. "Maybe I can play rightie. Two to three weeks, so I'll do some fitness and everything that I can do to prepare my body for the tennis on the grass."

Kvitova had been due to play Romania's Sorana Cirstea in her opening Roland Garros match on Court Suzanne Lenglen later in the day. "I am so disappointed to have to announce my withdrawal from Roland Garros," Kvitova wrote on Twitter.

"I have had pain in my left forearm for a few weeks and last night an MRI confirmed a Grade Two tear which unfortunately could get worse if I play today." The 29-year-old made her return from a horrific hand injury, sustained in a knife attack by an intruder at her home, at Roland Garros in 2017.

"Two years ago I made my comeback here at Roland Garros, so I'm truly sorry not to be able to

play this year," she added. Kvitova has been replaced in the draw by 18-year-old Slovenian lucky loser Kaja Juvan.

Novak Djokovic begins his bid for a fourth consecutive Grand Slam title against Poland's Hubert Hurkacz at Roland Garros, while Serena Williams and Rafael Nadal also open their campaigns.

Nadal starts his tilt at a record-extending 12th Roland Garros title against German qualifier Yannick Hanfmann in the second match on Chatrier. The 17-time Grand Slam champion comes into the tournament as the second seed, and having beaten old foe Djokovic in the Italian Open final. Nadal holds an incredible 86-2 win-loss record in the French Open, having only lost to Robin Soderling and Djokovic since making his tournament debut in 2005.

World number 184 Hanfmann has come through three rounds of qualifying to set up the once-in-a-lifetime clash in Paris, but thinks being partially deaf could be a slight advantage. "A centre court full of spectators doesn't affect me," he told German daily Bild in an interview. — AFP