

Friday Times

ISSUE NO: 17847

RAMADAN 26, 1440 AH | FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2019

6 Fast and furious: Delivery boys racing against time



13 New election as Israeli PM fails to form government



Ramadan KAREEM

IMSAK	03:06
Fajr	03:16
Dhur	11:46
Asr	15:20
Magrib	18:42
Isha	20:13



MAKKAH: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation arrived to Saudi Arabia yesterday for the GCC, Arab League summits and the 14th session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit in Makkah. — AFP

Arab, Muslim leaders gather in Saudi Arabia

See Page 10

Local

The final Friday



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

The Civil Service Bureau announced that all ministries, government agencies and public institutions will stop all their work, in all cases, next Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (4, 5 and 6 June 2019) on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr holiday. (Eid may be either Tuesday or Wednesday, depending on the sighting of the new moon.)

The holiday is a welcome and much needed break and provides some an ideal opportunity to travel abroad or stay in the country and follow the events of the hour, especially the fiery political ones. The phenomenon of travel on such occasions and holidays is a relatively new one. Before we didn't travel for such short periods but now tourism around the region is possible and we all enjoy a short break when we can get it.

The offices of travel and tourism companies in the country, are witnessing an active movement as families flock to tourist offices to ensure a 'holiday trip'. While many travelers go to tourism offices for travel reservations because they are less expensive than the self-booking, others are browsing social networking



The phenomenon of travel on such occasions and holidays is a relatively new one

sites to find the most suitable prices and features for the travel planning.

Clearly, travel agencies compete to offer the best deals for different destinations either to neighboring countries like Lebanon, Oman, UAE or Turkey. Some prefer to travel to Europe and the UK, taking an extra few days or starting their summer breaks along with the Eid.

I have been frequent traveler in recent years but, I have found out that a comparison of the prices of food, drink and entertainment in Europe, especially when comparing the euro with counterparts in distant countries in Asia, for example like a week in Thailand, is much cheaper than the shores of the Mediterranean.

I think that Eid Al-Fitr has a special impact on the soul and everyone is waiting to renew and reaffirm their familial and social relations. But the rapid pace of life and the ease with which we can travel frequently and far encourages less traditional celebration and more travel abroad.

As for the many fasting Muslims the Eid prayer is a joyful ritual, especially when shared with family and gatherings afterwards. To all citizens and expats I wish you all a happy holiday.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



An owl spotted in one of Kuwait's nature reserves. — Photo by Jassem Almotar/KUNA

Discrimination against women in billiard halls



IN MY VIEW

By Nawara Fattahova

nawara@kuwaittimes.net

I was surprised and even shocked when I wasn't allowed to enter a billiard hall in Salmiya recently. I've been playing pool at this place for more than 10 years, my friend and I were barred, and were told that from now on, women are not allowed to enter. When we asked why, an employee showed us a memo issued by the owner banning women from entering the hall. The employee told us the owner received a fine from inspectors of the ministry of social affairs and labor for allowing mixed-gender gatherings in the hall.

"The decision caused me financial losses. Our place is for family entertainment and many of our visitors were families and even youngsters, but now we have lost those clients. My license for this hall was not renewed because of the fine I got for the violation, so I had to issue a memo and ban women from playing in the hall," the owner told Kuwait Times.

In Kuwait, it is usually men who are discriminated against compared to women when it comes to entering various entertainment places. Most places are only for women or families, and "bachelors" are not allowed there.

But women have never been banned from entering any place. These rules were set to avoid sexual harassment and fights. In the 1990s, single men were not even allowed inside shopping malls during the weekends, and even a popular supermarket applied this rule.

It is not fair as there are no billiard halls for women, so women won't be able to play this game, as the ministry decree on which this ban is based conditions that entertainment halls should be either for men or women only and not mixed. So women should wait till a women-only billiard hall opens. Although the number of women playing pool is not so high, there are many women who love this game. Also, many of the main entertainment places in Kuwait have been closed or demolished, so leisure options for adults has become more limited.

Instead of banning women from playing pool due to the fear of causing problems or fights, the ministry should set rules to force billiard halls to hire security guards to ensure security and control any conflicts. But this decree is not applied in all pool halls. When visiting another billiard hall in Hawally, they let me in. When I asked if they were informed about the decree, the supervisor confirmed they had received it, but they make exceptions depending on the visitor. "For instance, if a group of teenage girls come to play, we won't let them in, or if women are not wearing decent outfits, we also won't let them in. Such visitors have the potential of causing problems, as the majority of our patrons are young guys. So we prefer to avoid problems," the supervisor explained.



Kuwait Times

ESTABLISHED 1961
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED



- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait

Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621

E: info@kuwaittimes.net

Local



Photo Essay



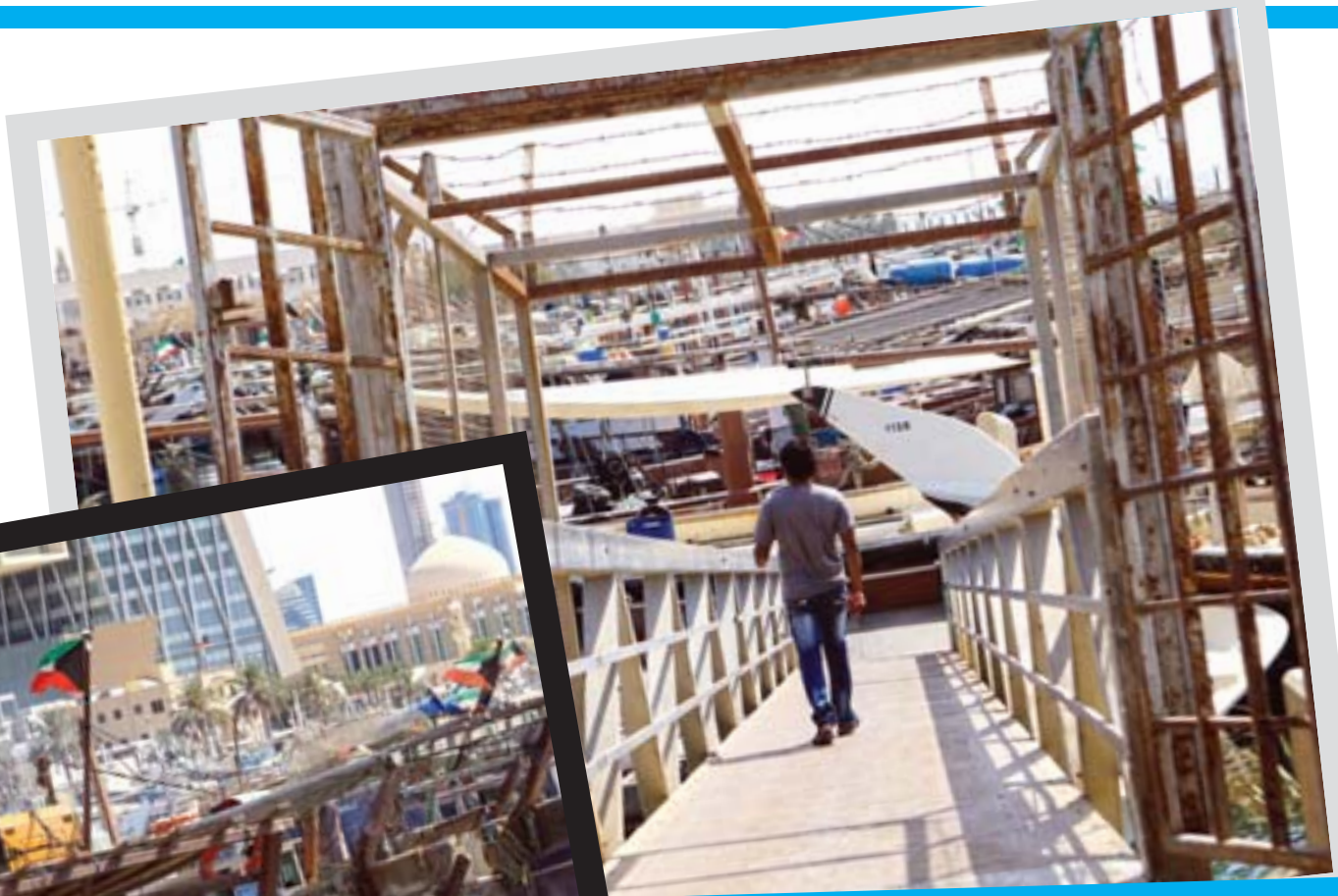
Kuwait's traditional fishing

Fishing for business and pleasure is a time honored tradition in Kuwait and even during the hottest summer months, fishermen still head out into the sea in hopes of an early morning catch. Al-Shamlan harbor (called Negah Al-Shamlan in Kuwaiti Arabic) in Sharq is one of the country's oldest and most traditional fishing harbors and remains active today as a destination for local fishermen.

— All photos by Joseph Shagra



Local



Local



Delivery boys race against time

Photos By Yasser Al-Zayyat



By Shreya Sajeev

Saleem is running 20 minutes late. He speeds up his bike as he has to deliver his order in 10 minutes. As he races against time, he gets hit by a speeding car from behind and is injured severely. Saleem recovers after a month-long treatment, though a permanent disability costs him his job.

Saleem is only an example of many who encounter similar fates in Kuwait while riding motorcycles to deliver food. A delivery boy on a bike on Kuwait streets is a common spectacle. The way they negotiate through the labyrinth of vehicles on Kuwait's busy streets and thoroughfares is awe-inspiring. They ride fast and at times furiously to deliver the food 'hot and spicy.' But delivery boys are prone to accidents not only due to their rash driving or poor lane discipline but because other motorists tend to ignore the motorbikes on highways.

There are no specific statistics available on accidents involving food delivery boys in Kuwait. According to official statistics, there is

a sharp rise in registered motorcycles in Kuwait from 6,373 in 2008 to 20,489 in 2017. Many restaurants and fast-food chains however, albeit discreetly, admit that the accident rates among delivery staff are high. Hospital sources confirm that frequency of accidents involving motorcycle riders remains high in Kuwait. They also said that at least one such case is reported to their casualty departments every week. Consequently, many big players are now providing cars to their delivery staff, phasing out bikes from service.

The advent of new food delivery services and apps has transformed the fast-food scene in Kuwait. Talabat has reinvented the way food is delivered in the Gulf region with its one-stop online shop. More than 2,200 restaurants in Kuwait have registered with Talabat today. Carriage is another such platform that offers even faster food delivery service. But the global food delivery player Deliveroo's entry into the Kuwait market has both intensified the race and the life of delivery boys as well. Keeping pace to deliver your favorite food to your door-step, delivery boys on their bikes ride a risky life.

"Unlike other jobs, we're time-bound. It is important that we deliver on-time. We can delay the order only at a cost. We may even lose our jobs," Rodrigues, who works for KFC said. Usually restaurants need a delivery time of 30 minutes. But, as the competition intensifies, many claim to deliver in under 25 minutes time, further turning the heat on the delivery boys.

Although restaurants and fast-food chains who hire delivery boys as full-timers provide monthly pay, commissions and other perks, their salaries are not often very attractive. Most of the companies provide insurance cover to their delivery staff that could protect them in the event of an accident. But a large number of delivery boys are part-timers and as such are

not eligible for insurance protection, nor for benefits like full-timers. This makes their case more complicated in case they are involved in accidents.

Generally, salaries vary depending on the size of the company. While big players pay a monthly salary ranging from KD 100 to 250 in addition to commission, the small restaurants offer KD 75 to 150 with commission based on the number of deliveries. On an average, a person makes 15 to 20 deliveries a day.

"For part-timers in the food delivery service, it is even more risky. Recently, an Indian boy had to pay a penalty of KD 3,000 to settle an accident case," said Biju Emmanuel, who is in-charge of a delivery service for several fast-food restaurants in Kuwait. "Delivery boys need to keep their customers happy at all times. Being punctual is one way of attaining it. But the extreme hot weather during most parts of

the year and heavily congested roads make their job increasingly difficult," Emmanuel pointed out.

Many who spoke to Friday Times confirm that on-time delivery is often made difficult because customers often give the wrong address. "Customers often give wrong block numbers or street numbers. This will make our job tough and delay the delivery," said Hassan, who works for a fast-food chain in Salmiya. On-time delivery is very important, especially when customers can track their order on their smartphones", he added. There are systems where the delivery boys get rated on their deliveries. Many a time, customers who are not pleased with the service give bad ratings and even report them even if there is no fault on the part of the delivery boys. "This leaves a bad mark and affects their reputation," said Emmanuel.



Car accident insurance procedures: What you need to know



By Ben Garcia

No one wants to be involved in a traffic accident, regardless whether it is minor or significant. As a driver, you always exercise caution to avoid accidents as much as possible. But you can never tell when an accident will happen, and when it does, you have to calm down and face the situation.

After being involved in an accident, I found it difficult to deal with the police, the insurance company, and finally the car repair garage. The process from the time of the accident to the return of the car normally can take days or weeks depending on the damages done.

Probably your insurance company allows a replacement, depending on your insurance policy. In Kuwait, there are two distinct types of auto insurance policies - full car insurance worth around KD 200 or KD 250, and regular insurance worth KD 17 or KD 19, depending on the type of your car.

But first you'll have to deal with the tedious wait for the traffic police to come to the site of the accident. After the police arrive, they will take the documents of both parties involved and tell to follow the patrol car to the nearest police station, which is the last place you would want to visit. The traffic accident I was involved in was a multiple collision involving three cars. My car was big, so it wasn't as badly damaged compared to the other cars. But there was no way to let it go and forget about the accident.

The accident took place at about 5 pm, but I was able to complete the paperwork at the police station only by 10:30 pm, since the police investigator was out of his office. After

hours of waiting, he arrived, but our case could not be processed since I needed an interpreter. The police investigator told me to call an Arabic-speaking colleague. Thankfully, an Arab friend arrived in a few minutes.

After the settlement at the police station, I decided to leave the car for one day in the parking space, and on the second day, I started the insurance claim process. I brought with me the police report as required by the company. They



After being involved in an accident, I found it difficult to deal with the police, the insurance company, and finally the car repair garage.

also took copies of my civil ID and car registration. It was quick and easy at first, but the succeeding days were tedious. I agreed to get repair work done at my original car dealer, but the approval took about 15 days. I thought that it would take only three days for the repairs considering the damage was minor, but the company told me it will take around 15 days as well. If you sum it up, the whole process

takes at least 30 days or more before you can ever have your car back again.

The rollup banner inside the office of the insurance company seems too good to be true. Based on the step by step instructions posted there, it says a call or a visit from the insurance company starts the process for the claim. It says it only takes a maximum of eight days for a relatively small accident (depending on the damage). For those with full insurance, they are ready to dispatch a tow truck if needed (step 1), and a replacement car will be provided if mentioned in the insurance policy (step 2).

You are required to photograph the damage to the car (step 3), then the insurance company will assign a company to repair your car (step 4). It says it will take two working days to assess the damage to your car by the company assigned to repair your car (step 5), then assessors will recommend/determine the amount to be shouldered by the company (by a higher authority in the insurance company) for final approval (step 6). If the higher official signs the repair order, the repair will go through.

In step 7, initial customer feedback is taken into consideration, then the officer at the insurance company will have to update the owner of the car with regards to the status of their vehicle through live video via smartphone camera (step 8) and repair the car (step 9). Step 10 is the most important - here they will determine whether the repair is done accordingly, and will pass through strict quality controls. The car will be checked out (step 11), and finally (step 12), the customer will participate in a survey on their experience throughout the repair period.

Local

Kuwait's Defense Minister lauds former environment council members' efforts

Meeting discussed sewage problems in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Chairman of the Supreme Council for the Environmental Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah chairs a council's session on Wednesday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Chairman of the Supreme Council for the Environmental Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Wednesday lauded efforts of the former members and welcomed the newly-assigned members of the body. The Ministry of Defense, in a statement released following a council's session, quoted Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Director General and Chairman of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) and the council rapporteur,

as saying that the participants in the meeting discussed sewage problems in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. The council decided to speed up installing sewage water treatment devices; once the EPA budget has been endorsed. The council also examined EPA's strategy, decided to coordinate with the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, provided that a national plan that complements with Kuwait Vision 2035 be worked out. The conferees also discussed environmental conditions in the south and other topics. — KUNA

Ban African natural resources' illegal trade: Kuwait

NEW YORK: Kuwait yesterday called for the creation of national and international similar legal frameworks to ban illegal trafficking in natural resources, stressing that this would stop this phenomenon and put an end to exploitation in Africa. This was brought up by Kuwait's First Secretary to the UN Sheikha Jawahar Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah at the meeting of the UN Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, addressing the root causes of conflict in Africa. Legal legislation and accountability should be a deterrent and a tool for conflict prevention, improving the development and economic situations in Africa, she said.

The Security Council confirmed that there is a link between the illegal exploitation of Africa's natural resources and the outbreak and root of conflicts, she said. The Security Council discussed this issue three times in the years



Sheikha Jawahar Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah

2007, 2013 and 2018, hoping that this time around they will reach concrete solutions, Sabah pointed out. Concerted international and national efforts involving cooperation between the UN, regional, sub-regional organizations and concerned States will help reach more effective and realistic policies aimed at countering this issue. Reports show that 40 percent of the world's conflicts over the past 60 years were due to natural resources, most of them due to the weakness of national institutions. In 1990, 75 percent of the funding of civil wars in Africa came from natural resources, the international community must provide support to national governments to enable them to destroy this phenomenon, Sabah explained. — KUNA

Tobacco's health, environment hazards need collective response

KUWAIT: As UN member states observe the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) today, policies and awareness programs on the health and environment hazards of tobacco consumption come to the fore as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The WNTD is an annual occasion to highlight the risks associated with tobacco and advocate effective policies to reduce its consumption. The health risks of tobacco smoking stem from inhalation of poisonous chemicals in tobacco smoke such as carbon monoxide, cyanide, and carcinogens, which have been proven to cause fatal heart and lung diseases, including cancer.

These diseases include heart attacks, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (emphysema), and cancer - particularly lung cancer, cancers of the larynx and mouth, and pancreatic cancers, according to statistics of World Health Organization (WHO), which spearheads the WNTD campaign. The harmful impacts of tobacco expands to environment and affect the quality of air particularly indoors. Tobacco smoke includes more than 7,000 harmful chemicals and remains in the air for nearly five hours, thus posing risk to children and adults as well. Inhaling second-hand tobacco smoke could cause lung cancer in nonsmoking persons.

Director of Information and Public Relations Department of Kuwait Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikha Al-Ibrahim



Sheikha Al-Ibrahim



KUWAIT: Environment police on duty at a local mall. — KUNA photos

said the theme of this year WNTD is "tobacco and lung health." Speaking to the press yesterday, she said, "This is an occasion to remind everybody of the adverse impacts of tobacco inhalation on public health and environment as well as the economic hazards to the means of livelihood."

"EPA has made headway in preventing smoking at means of transportation and closed public places. Smoking is permissible only at specific places indoors," she said, highlighting the importance of cooperation of individuals in this regard. Ibrahim noted that Article 56 of Act 42/2014 on environment protection bans smoking at means of transportation and closed areas except in



designated places indoors. EPA embarked on an ambitious awareness plan, involving the audiovisual mass media and social media, to educate the public on the provisions of the law and the importance of curbing air pollution and combating smoking. It was able to collaborate other state institutions and the private sector in implementing the law and booking the law violators, she went on.

Since the issuance of the law in 2014, nearly 3,600 individuals and institutions, including government bodies and shopping malls, have been fined for breaching the law, she said. Under the law, the value of fine ranges between KD 50 and KD 100 that should be paid to the EPA within a couple of weeks, otherwise the person in question should face interrogation by the public prosecution. Ibrahim added that the EPA continues organizing awareness programs on the risks of smoking in parallel with the campaigns against low violators. — KUNA

Maid recruitment fee not more than KD 990: Union chief

Indians urged to avoid 92 Kuwaiti companies, 18 Indian employment agencies

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Union for Domestic Labor Recruitment Offices Khaled Al-Dakhnan said that it is a top priority for the union to provide domestic helpers at reasonable rates, adding that the recruitment fee is KD 990 at max. Dakhnan stressed the death of a Filipina maid recently was of natural causes, and urged everybody to be careful and not take part in spreading rumors.

A few days after the discovery of a Filipina housemaid in Kuwait and claims by the Philippine government that she had been sexually abused and murdered, several reports in Kuwait suggested that initial examination of the deceased's body showed that she died of natural causes and that there was no evidence of a crime.

In a related development and following complaints filed by 200 Indian laborers working in Kuwait, the Indian embassy in Kuwait warned its nationals seeking employment in Kuwait not to deal with 92 Kuwaiti companies and 18 Indian employment agencies. The embassy urged Indians to carefully read the instructions on its website, double-check any job proposals they get and make sure they get valid entry visas issued by the companies themselves. The embassy also urged Indians to contact it through the following e-mail: attachelabour@indembkwt.gov.in so that they can check the offers they get.

High school finals

Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi congratulated all grade 12

students on concluding their final exams and wished them success, adding that once the final results are checked, they will be uploaded to the education ministry's website (www.moe.edu.kw) and smart-phone application.

Al-Shaheed Park

Kuwait Municipality recently finished preparing a study for the design, construction and development of the third phase of Al-Shaheed Park project. A report made by Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi will be referred to the Municipal Council soon for approval, along with requests to allocate locations for Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC) projects within the Green Belt area.



KUWAIT: A large number of worshippers packed Bilal bin Rabah Mosque in Al-Siddeeq Wednesday night, performing the qiyam prayers. The mosque management had expanded it with six new ornamented halls to accommodate

the large number of people during the fasting month of Ramadan. It is distinguished with vast yards, parking lots, various services and small electric vehicles to help transport the elderly and sick. — KUNA

Very hot weather during weekend

KUWAIT: Kuwait during the next 48 hours will have a stable weather; which is very hot during the day and relatively hot at night, said official at Kuwait Meteorological Center Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi yesterday. Winds will be northwesterly with light to moderate speed, sometimes active,

causing dust to rise, especially on open areas, Qarawi said. The country is affected by high temperatures recorded on Wednesday at Kuwait Airport, Al-Jahra and Abdali of about 48 degrees Celsius, he added. The maximum temperatures expected are between 46-48 degrees and sea state is light to moderate with wave between 2-5 feet high, he said.

Today, the weather would be very hot with northwesterly light to moderate wind, activated in intervals in speed of between 15-45 km/h, with an opportunity of dust especially on open areas. Some sporadic clouds will appear later. The maximum temperatures expected are between 45-47 degrees. The sea is light to mod-

erate wave between 1-4 feet. This evening will be relatively hot with minimum temperature expected is between 27-29 degrees. Sea state would be light to moderate waves between 2-4 feet, he said.

As for tomorrow, it will be very hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind, activated in intervals in between 15-40 km/h. Maximum temperatures between 45-47 degrees, while sea state is light to moderate with waves between 2-4 feet high. Tomorrow evening will be relatively hot with minimum temperature expected between 27-29 degrees. The sea state would be light to moderate with wave between 2-4 feet high. — KUNA

Crimes

Pedestrian killed on Fahaheel Road

KUWAIT: An Egyptian man was killed after he was run over on Fahaheel Road. The driver, Kuwaiti, handed himself in and told police that the victim crossed the road suddenly and he could not avoid hitting him. The coroner recovered the body.

Family reunited

A Kuwaiti woman who went missing for two months in Makkah after suffering memory loss was returned to her family. The 66-year-old woman, who was found without documents, was issued an emergency travel document and handed over to her family, following questioning by state security.

RPG found

A Kuwaiti man found an RPG while carrying out some digging work in his farm. Investigations are being made to find the source of the rocket.

Assault at work

An Egyptian woman accused her former brother-in-law of assaulting her at her work. After he was arrested, he said there is a financial dispute between them. The woman submitted a medical report stating she suffered bruises and grazes.

Blackmail

Two friends broke into the mobile phone of a Kuwaiti woman, got her "secrets" and photos, then attempted to blackmail her. The victim told police she was surprised two girls she considered her friends had her information. She said one of the girls sent her a link a week ago, but when she clicked on it, it closed. She did not care much about it, only to find later her information was with them. The two are being sought for questioning. — *Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai*

Friday Times International

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2019



India's Modi sworn in, set to name new government

Stressed pregnant mothers may mean lower sperm counts

Page 14

Page 17



JEDDAH: Arab and Islamic states' Foreign Ministers pose for a family picture during a meeting held in Jeddah ahead of the Gulf, Arab, and Islamic summit to be held in Makkah yesterday. — AFP

Arab, Muslim leaders gather in Makkah

Qatar PM in Saudi on first visit since Gulf crisis

MAKKAH: Arab and Muslim leaders began gathering in the holy city of Makkah yesterday for three summits, as host Saudi Arabia seeks to rally support against Iran after a series of attacks that have sparked fears of a regional conflagration. On the eve of the talks, Riyadh blasted what it called Iranian “interference” across the region and demanded “firmness” over attacks on Gulf oil tankers and pipelines.

That call came just hours after hawkish US National Security Advisor John Bolton said Iran was almost certainly behind the sabotage of four ships, including two Saudi oil tankers, off the UAE coast. Iran-aligned Yemeni rebels meanwhile have stepped up drone attacks on the kingdom - one of which resulted in the temporary shutdown of a major oil pipeline.

Saudi Arabia, a staunch US ally, geared up to host leaders from across the Arab and Muslim world for emergency Gulf and Arab summits and a meeting of heads of state from Islamic nations. Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Sudan's new military council chief General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan were among the leaders arriving in the kingdom yesterday, Saudi state media reported.

Riyadh called the talks to discuss the

standoff with Iran and ways of isolating Tehran amid fears of a military confrontation. “Tehran's support for Huthi rebels in Yemen is proof of Iranian interference in other nations' affairs and this is something that... Islamic countries should reject,” Saudi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Assaf told foreign ministers from the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Jeddah overnight. Assaf said attacks on oil installations must be addressed with “firmness and determination”.

‘Firmness and determination’

Contrary to expectations, Iran was represented at the meeting, with a delegation headed by Reza Najafi, director general for international peace and security affairs at the Islamic republic's foreign ministry. Tensions in the region spiked after the four ships were damaged in a mysterious sabotage attack off the coast of the emirate of Fujairah on May 12. The vessels were attacked using “naval mines almost certainly from Iran”, Bolton told a news conference in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday.

“There's no doubt in anybody's mind in Washington who's responsible for this,” he said in a clear reference to Iran. Iran rejected the accusation. “Making such laughable claims... is not strange” coming from the US,

foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said. US experts are part of a five-nation team investigating the ship attacks. The new war of words between Tehran and Washington follows a US military buildup that includes the deployment of an aircraft carrier, B-52 bombers and 1,500 more troops to the region. Bolton however said the additional US forces were sent to the Middle East as a “deterrent” and that Washington's response would be prudent.

“We definitely desire a change in the (Iranian) regime's behavior,” Brian Hook, US Special Representative for Iran, said yesterday. Regional tensions have grown since US President Donald Trump's administration reimposed sanctions against Iran after Washington unilaterally pulled out of a multilateral 2015 nuclear accord signed with the Islamic republic. But Trump appeared to soften his hawkish tone towards Tehran, saying during a visit to Japan on Monday that his government does not seek “regime change”.

Qatar invited

Saudi Arabia is hosting the three summits in an apparent bid to present a unified front against Tehran. Qatar's state media reported that its Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin

Nasser Al-Thani also arrived in Jeddah yesterday, Doha's highest-ranking official to visit the kingdom since the start of a two-year-old Saudi-led boycott. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have enforced the economic and diplomatic boycott of Qatar since June 2017, including bans on shipping, trade, direct flights, overflight and land crossings.

The alliance accuses Doha of supporting Islamist movements and backing Iran - claims Qatar rejects. Large banners and flags decorated the streets of Makkah, Islam's holiest city, to welcome the leaders. The summits coincide with the last few days of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when Makkah throngs with hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. The summits will take place at night, as Muslims break their day-long fasting at sunset and then go into several hours of special prayers known as Taraweeh.

Dressed in seamless all-white uniforms, worshippers walked under lampposts decorated with flags of participating nations, while heading to the Grand Mosque to perform umrah, the minor Islamic pilgrimage. The large crowds pose a logistical headache for organizers, who have sealed off six major roads for the leaders and advised pilgrims to use alternative streets — AFP

Sudanese in suits and ties rally against Omar Bashir's blunders

Protests rock northeast African country

KHARTOUM: In unprecedented scenes in Khartoum, hundreds of workers in suits and ties alongside their neatly dressed women colleagues have gone on strike to protest what they call Sudan's "total economic collapse". The popular protests that have rocked the northeast African country for more than five months broke out over a decision to triple the price of bread before quickly turning political against the regime of Omar Al-Bashir.

They led to the army toppling the autocratic president on April 11 after 30 years in power. This week saw doctors, lawyers as well as civil aviation and public transport workers respond to the call for a strike from the leaders of the protest movement still pressing for the military to hand over power to civilians.

For two days, these white-collar workers were on the front line of the protests, and they were among the loudest to be heard on the streets of the Sudanese capital. In Al-Mogran, the business district in the western part of the city, workers from various companies gathered on Wednesday outside the central bank following allegations that the army had "attacked" its employees. The ruling military council is still led by men close to the deposed president, whose economic record has been criticized by the demonstrators.

'Total economic collapse'

"It's a total economic collapse," said Youssef Abdelrahim, an official at the ministry of finance and economic planning. "The state was no longer able to provide liquidity and fuel. This was the first reason" for the revolt.

"This crisis has exposed the regime's inability in the economic field and its policy of tinkering," he told AFP. "Citizens have completely lost confidence in the state," Abdelrahim said, as protesters behind him chanted and motorists honked their horns in support as they drove by.

Abdelrazek Amanallah, a banker, was also strongly critical. "They destroyed the country through corruption, they stole its wealth: oil, gas, gold, everything," said the 27-year-old who was wearing a neat tie and white shirt despite the stifling heat. "There is no more money in the banks. Everything went into the pockets of the 'kizan'," he said, referring to Islamists accused of seizing the country's wealth in the aftermath of the 1989 coup that brought Bashir to power.

'Where did it go?'

In 2011, after years of civil war, the secession of the south of the country deprived Sudan of three quarters of its oil wealth and most of its income from gold. Since then, the country has suffered from a lack of foreign exchange and liquidity that has caused its currency to slide. A hoped-for economic recovery after the lifting of US sanctions in 2017 never materialized. Following Bashir's overthrow, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates pledged three billion dollars (2.7 billion euros) in financial support for Sudan.

That included a \$500 million injection in the central bank aimed at shoring up the feeble pound. "Under the old regime, oil revenues did not benefit the economy," said

Ali Ibrahim, a 49-year-old geologist who works for an oil consortium. "Where did it go? That's the big question. It must be asked of those in charge, the government," he said, beads of sweat rolling down his forehead as he clutched a banner together with workmates.

Salwa Mohamed, 56, denounced the military for wasting money on "tribal wars". "The money has gone into conflicts in the south or in Darfur. It has never been used to develop the country, hospitals, education," said the civil servant at the ministry of finance and economic planning. "For 30 years our economy has suffered. We have never really made any progress. Bashir was a soldier and those who lead us are still soldiers," she said, adjusting her sunglasses. "We want competent civilians to take over this country." — AFP

South Africa told the council that while progress in implementing the peace deal had been slow, sanctions would not be useful to push the sides toward agreement. Ambassador Jerry Matjila said South Africa held the "firm view that sanctions imposed on South Sudan at this time are not helpful to the current complex political process." — AFP



KHARTOUM: Sudanese protesters gather during a demonstration outside the Central Bank in Khartoum. —AFP

Divided UN renews South Sudan arms embargo

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council yesterday extended for a year an arms embargo and sanctions on South Sudan despite resistance from African countries, Russia and China. A US-drafted resolution was adopted by a vote of 10 in favor with five abstentions. Resolutions in the 15-member council require a minimum of nine votes for adoption.

The measure renews until May 31, 2020 an arms embargo on South Sudan along with an assets freeze and global travel ban slapped on eight South Sudanese nationals for their role in fueling the war. The United States sharply criticized the three African countries on the council — Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast and South Africa — for refusing to support continued sanctions on South Sudan. US acting Ambassador Jonathan Cohen expressed regret that the African countries had shown "an unwillingness to stop the flow of weapons to one of the conti-

US-UAE defense agreement comes into force

ABU DHABI: The United States and the United Arab Emirates announced Wednesday that mutual defense cooperation agreement had come into force, amid increasing tensions between Washington and Tehran. "The DCA (Defense Cooperation Agreement) will enhance military coordination between the United States and the United Arab Emirates, further advancing an already robust military, political, and economic partnership at a critical time," a joint statement said. "The United States and the United Arab Emirates share a deep interest in promoting prosperity and stability in the region.

"The DCA will advance that interest by fostering closer collaboration on defense and security matters and supporting efforts by both

nations to maintain security in the Gulf region." US national security advisor John Bolton was in Abu Dhabi Wednesday, meeting his Emirati counterpart, Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Bolton said Iran was almost certainly behind recent oil tanker attacks that sent Gulf tensions soaring. Riyadh's regional rival Tehran dismissed the accusation as "laughable".

This came on the eve of emergency Arab and Gulf summits called by Saudi Arabia to discuss the stand-off and ways to isolate Tehran. Two Saudi oil tankers, among four vessels, were the targets of mysterious acts of sabotage off the UAE this month, and Iran-aligned Yemeni rebels have stepped up drone attacks on the kingdom — one of which resulted in the temporary shutdown of a major oil pipeline.

Saudi Arabia and the US have accused Iran of being the mastermind behind the Yemeni rebels' attack on the pipeline, while an investigation has been launched into the attacks on ships off the UAE. On Friday, US President Donald Trump bypassed Congress to sell \$8.1 billion in arms to Saudi Arabia and other Arab allies, citing the alleged threat from Iran. — AFP

International

How US sanctions over Russia weapon could rattle Turkey

Lira, economy vulnerable to worsening US ties

ISTANBUL: Turkey is on the cusp of facing US sanctions over its decision to buy a Russian S-400 missile defense system, leaving its already soft currency and economy vulnerable and raising questions over its position within NATO and the region. If no solution is found in coming weeks and US-Turkish tensions continue to worsen, tit-for-tat sanctions could hit trade between the allies and prolong a recession in Turkey that has already tested President Tayyip Erdogan's grip on power.

Turkey also risks being rapidly cut out of the production and use of American F-35 fighter jets, which could mark a step toward a re-evaluation of its 67-year membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "It's very complex to resolve because both US and Turkish officials see this as a reflection of a larger geo-political balancing," said Galip Dalay, visiting scholar at the University of Oxford's politics and international relations department.

"Sanctions would have a very consequential effect on Turkey, but probably not mark a breaking point in its US relationship," he said. Ankara and Washington have squabbled for months over the Turkish plan to buy the S-400s, which the United States says is incompatible with the Western alliance's defense network and poses a threat to the F-35s that Turkey also plans to buy. Turkey says defending its territory poses no threat to allies, and stresses it has met all NATO obligations.

Both sides are entrenched even while they have repeated a desire to avoid so-called CAATSA sanctions, which by US law would be triggered when the Russian anti-aircraft weapon arrives on Turkish soil, possibly as soon as July. An agreement to delay shipment of the S-400s could still open the door to US President Donald Trump convincing Erdogan to turn his back on what the Turkish leader has repeatedly called a "done deal" with Russia.

The pair agreed on Wednesday to meet on the sidelines of a G-20 conference on June 28-29. Yet Ankara's ties with Moscow have been strengthening, and Turkey's defence minister said last week Turkish military personnel were in Russia for S-400 training. In response, the United States is considering halting the training of Turkish pilots on F-35 stealth fighters in Arizona.

The showdown comes as the Russia-backed Syrian army escalates an assault on some Turkish-backed rebels near Turkey's border. More broadly in the Middle East, the United States is ramping up pressure on Turkey and other nations to isolate Iran including blocking all Iranian oil exports. "If the US sanctions are bad, Turkey could reconsider its decision to comply with US sanctions on Iran," said Dalay.

Washington wants Ankara to buy its alternative Patriot surface-to-air missile batteries and has



VOLGOGRAD: In this file photo people walk past Russian S-400 missile air defense systems before the military parade to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the battle of Stalingrad in World War Two, in the city of Volgograd, Russia.—Reuters

made an offer that expires on June 4, according to a person familiar with the matter. If Ankara accepts delivery of the S-400s as planned, the US Congress has moved to block delivery of F-35s to Turkey and remove it from the list of nations working together to build them. The delivery would also force Trump to select five of 12 possible sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, or CAATSA, which targets purchases of military equipment from NATO foe

Russia. The sanctions range from banning visas and denying access to the US-based Export-Import Bank, to the harsher options of blocking any transactions with the US financial system and denying export licenses. Trump may initially choose milder options targeting individual Turks rather than the government, a decision that could buy time for more diplomacy even while it may prompt Congress to separately impose tougher sanctions.—Reuters

Taleban and Afghan opposition officials meet in Moscow

MOSCOW: Taleban officials and Afghan opposition figures claimed yesterday to have made "tremendous progress" at Moscow talks, but the announcement rang hollow as discussions yet again excluded the Afghan government and no ceasefire was announced. The ultra-conservative Islamist insurgents spent more than two days at a plush hotel in central Moscow, where they met several leading Afghan politicians—including past president Hamid Karzai and former warlord Atta Muhammad Nur.

In a joint statement, the parties said they'd had "productive and constructive" discussions focusing on issues including a possible ceasefire, the "strengthening of the Islamic system" and "women's rights". "Both sides have had tremendous progress, but some issues require further discussions," the statement read. But with the Kabul administration—viewed by the Taleban as a US-backed puppet regime—once more sidelined from the conversation, it was difficult to see what tangible results could come from the talks.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had proposed a nationwide ceasefire at the start of the holy month of Ramadan, but the Taleban rejected the offer. The Taleban have also balked at repeated US calls to reduce violence while negotiations between the insurgents and Washington are ongoing. The meeting in Moscow was the second such summit in the Russian capital.

The bearded, turban-wearing Taleban were photographed looking uncomfortable as female reporters in figure-hugging Western clothing approached them for interviews. The meeting came weeks after a sixth round of talks between the US and Taleban wrapped up in Qatar with no tangible progress cited by the negotiating teams.

Those talks, led by US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, appear to have stalled over the fundamental question of when foreign forces would depart Afghanistan in the event of a peace deal. The US has refused to agree to a withdrawal until the Taleban put in place security guarantees, a ceasefire, and other commitments including an "intra-Afghan" dialogue with the Kabul government and other Afghan representatives. But the Taleban insist foreign forces leave first.

Women's 'rights'

While parties claimed the Moscow summit was an "intra-Afghan" meeting, representatives from Ghani's government—as well as anyone from the US—were conspicuous in their absence. At the start of the summit, initially convened by Moscow to mark 100 years of Russian-Afghan ties, the Afghan ambassador to Russia was allowed to give a speech. But he was barred from subsequent events, so ended up sitting in the lobby of the swish hotel. Still, Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai—the Taleban's chief negotiator and former deputy minister of foreign affairs—insisted the insurgents were seeking peace "with all sincerity". "But we want a reasonable peace in Afghanistan... the occupation has to end," he said.

Taleban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said the group envisions a future government in which "all Afghans would see themselves". Since peace talks began last autumn between the Taleban and the US, the insurgents have insisted they have moderated some of their views—including the rights of women, who were brutally repressed under their 1996-2001 totalitarian regime. The Taleban want an "Afghanistan where the rights of women, men and children, old and young are ensured," Stanikzai said.

However, those rights would be framed through Sharia law and tribal tradition, and so open to broad interpretation by men. Meanwhile, violence continued apace in Kabul and across Afghanistan. Yesterday, a suicide bomber attacked a military academy in the capital, killing six. And Afghan intelligence officials said 62 Taleban fighters were killed Wednesday night in the central province of Wardak.—AFP

Turkey frees US scientist but tensions remain

WASHINGTON: Turkey on Wednesday released a NASA scientist with dual US-Turkish citizenship whose nearly three-year detention had soured relations, but the NATO allies remained divided over issues including Ankara's purchase of a Russian missile system. Serkan Golge, a naturalized US citizen working for the US space agency in Houston, was arrested in July 2016 on a visit back to Turkey in the aftermath of a failed coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Turkish authorities charged Golge with ties to self-exiled cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom Erdogan accused of orchestrating the mutiny. Golge was sentenced in 2018 to seven and a half years in prison despite US State Department protests that there was no credible evidence. His wife, Kubra Golge, expressed joy at his release but said that he remained banned from traveling outside Turkey. "We are happy but he still rejects the charges against him," she told AFP by email. "Hope we can come back soon to the US."

State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said that the United States would press for Golge to be able to return to the United States "as soon as possible." "We want to commend them for doing the right thing today by releasing him," Ortagus told reporters. "We think it's welcome news." Ortagus said that the United States was still seeking the release of detained local employees of US diplomatic missions in Turkey.—AFP

New election as Israeli PM fails to form government

Knesset votes to dissolve itself; New vote Sept 17, 2nd this year

JERUSALEM: Israeli lawmakers voted to dissolve parliament yesterday, paving the way for a new election after veteran Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to form a coalition government before a midnight deadline. Netanyahu preferred a new ballot, set for Sept 17, to the alternative, under which President Reuven Rivlin could have asked another politician to try and form a ruling coalition.

But the need to go the polls again so soon after a closely contested April 9 election in which Netanyahu had claimed victory, showed a new measure of weakness by a leader in power for the past decade who has for many become the face of Israel. Potential indictments in three corruption cases have only deepened questions about his political survival. "We will win," Netanyahu, 69, head of the right-wing Likud party, vowed after parliament voted when the deadline expired for him to assemble his fifth government.

However, he was looking over his shoulder at the Likud benches during the vote in what some commentators interpreted as concern about any last-minute revolt. Not a single Likud lawmaker wavered in voting for an election. With coalition-building potentially stretching into November after the new ballot, the uncertainty seems likely to delay further US President Donald Trump's forthcoming plan to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The crisis arose - officially, at least - from a feud over military conscription between Netanyahu's presumed allies: ex-defense minister and far-right secularist Avigdor Lieberman, and ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties. Those parties want young religious scholars exempted en masse from mandatory national service. But Lieberman and many other Israelis say they should share the burden. Faced with the prospect of having to step aside at the end of a 42-day period to put together a government, Netanyahu instead drummed up support to dissolve the

Knesset. Netanyahu cast Lieberman, a settler in the occupied West Bank, as leftist for effectively blocking creation of a right-wing administration and said his erstwhile ally had been out to topple him. "The man from Caesarea is accusing the man from Nokdim of being left-wing?" Lieberman, head of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, asked at a news conference, naming the beachside suburb in where Netanyahu has a home and the settlement where he lives.

Deal of the next century?

In Jerusalem, the White House team behind the Trump proposal, including his son-in-law Jared Kushner, held talks with Netanyahu but made no public comment about any timeframe for release of the plan. "Even though we had a little event last night," Netanyahu said, referring to the vote in parliament, "that's not going to stop us - we're going to keep working together." The group is in the Middle East to drum up support for what Kushner styles as an economic workshop in Bahrain next month to encourage investment in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Even before it has been announced, Palestinians have spurned the plan - described by Trump as "the deal of the century" - as a blow to their statehood hopes. "Now it is the deal of the next century," Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat told Israel Radio. As the coalition deadline neared, public attention had been focused on moves by Netanyahu loyalists to grant him immunity as from criminal prosecution and to pass a law ensuring such protection could not be withdrawn by the Supreme Court.

Many opponents and political commentators saw Netanyahu's push for a new election, before the poll in April and now, as being largely motivated by his legal woes. "It's astounding how easily one man is taking the entire State of Israel hostage for his own personal gains. We are heading to another



JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talks to the press following a vote on a bill to dissolve the Knesset at the Knesset in Jerusalem.—AFP

election just so that he can escape prosecution," Gabi Ashkenazi, a member of the centrist Blue and White party and former armed forces head, told Army Radio.

Dubbed "crime minister" by foes, Netanyahu denies any wrongdoing in the graft investigations he faces, and has said he aims only to ensure the Supreme Court does not overstep in judging decisions by popularly elected lawmakers. Israel's attorney general has said he intends to charge Netanyahu with bribery and fraud, pending a pre-trial hearing, which is scheduled for October. First

elected in the late 1990s, Netanyahu will in July overtake Israel's founding father, David Ben-Gurion, as Israel's longest-serving premier.

The last election, in which Netanyahu showcased his warm relations with Trump and frequent contacts with Russian President Vladimir Putin, ended with him neck-and-neck with Benny Gantz, a politically untested ex-armed forces chief and head of Blue and White. But Netanyahu was given the nod to form a government after ultranationalist, right-wing and religious party leaders voiced their support.—Reuters

In a troubled Central African city, Muslims return after flight

BANGASSOU: Four walls are all that remain of his house. Around it are piles of rubble, where opportunistic weeds grow. Even so, Muhammad Abdullahye is contented. He sips from a steaming glass of tea to mark the end of the Ramadan fast. He is home. Two years ago, Abdullahye, a Muslim in his 50s, fled his house in Bangassou, a city in southeastern Central African Republic (CAR), ahead of an onslaught by the "anti-balaka," a militia mainly composed of Christians and animists. According to UN figures, 76 people were murdered.

He and around 1,500 other terrified Muslims found shelter in the city's Catholic seminary, where they survived, despite frequent attacks by the gunmen. "We fled around 3am," recalls Abdullahye, whose nickname in his home district of Tokoyo is Baba Kete, or "Little Daddy" in the Sango language. "We first took refuge in the mosque, but when they killed the imam, we all got into a truck and headed towards the cathedral," which is next door to the seminary.

In the months-long siege that followed, the fate of the seminary and those inside became emblematic of CAR's quest

for peace. One of the world's poorest and most troubled countries, CAR began its spiral into violence when former president Francois Bozize, a Christian, was overthrown in 2013 by mainly Muslim Seleka rebels. Armed groups claiming to represent the Christian community then arose, raising the spectre of sectarian war.

A French-led military intervention and the deployment of a large UN peacekeeping force helped to stabilise the country and stage presidential elections. But around 80 percent of the territory remained in the hands of militia groups, who typically claimed to defend religious or ethnic group and often fought with rivals over CAR's mineral wealth. In a population of 4.5 million, thousands have lost their lives, nearly 650,000 have fled their homes and another 575,000 have left the country, according to UN figures as of December last year.

Abdullahye returned home in late April. Ten other families have followed suit. "The people are glad to see us. Tokoyo is our home," he said. How he was able to leave the seminary - and the uncertain future that lies ahead for this neighborhood - speaks amply of CAR's anguished search for peace.

Fighting between the anti-balaka and self-defense groups in the Bangassou seminary began to ease in mid-2018 for a variety of local factors, says Richard Thienou of the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Bangassou. Pushed by the UN peacekeeping mission MINUSCA, the anti-balaka agreed to a non-aggression deal, and this was followed by the return of the national armed forces.—AFP

Kushner meets Netanyahu in Jerusalem visit

JERUSALEM: US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem yesterday as part of a Middle East tour before Washington unveils its long-awaited plan for Israel-Palestinian peace. Kushner, accompanied by Trump envoy Jason Greenblatt and Brian Hook, the US special representative for Iran, arrived in Jerusalem after earlier stops in Morocco and Jordan. He is a key architect of the peace plan the White House says it intends to present in the coming weeks.

But the plan, previously delayed for an Israeli general election on April 9, could face further postponements due to Israeli politics. Israel is set to hold another general election in September after Netanyahu failed to form a coalition government, and the plan is widely seen as too sensitive an issue to introduce during a political campaign. Netanyahu, who has formed a close bond with Trump, made reference to parliament's vote just after midnight to schedule new elections when meeting Kushner.

"Even though we had a little event last night, that's not going to stop us," Netanyahu said after their meeting at his residence. "We're going to continue working together. We had a great productive meeting which reaffirms the alliance" between the United States and Israel," he said in a statement. Kushner told Netanyahu "we appreciate all of your efforts to strengthen the relationship between our two countries."—AFP

International

Stressed pregnant mothers may mean lower sperm counts: Study

Stress has important life-long adverse effects on men's fertility

PARIS: Men whose mothers suffered stressful events such as divorce or job loss in early pregnancy are more likely to have fewer and less active sperm, researchers said yesterday. Among Australian 20-year-olds born of women who experienced at least three such events during the first 18 weeks of foetal growth, sperm count was a third lower and mobility down by 12 percent compared to other men their age, they reported in the journal *Human Reproduction*.

Testosterone levels were also lower, by about ten percent. "Maternal exposure to stressful life events during early pregnancy, a vulnerable period for the development organs, may have important life-long adverse effects on men's fertility," concluded senior author Roger Hart, a professor of reproductive medicine at the University of Western Australia.

The link between stress and sperm count disappeared when the challenging events - the death of a close relative or friend, marital problems, severe money woes - occurred only during the final trimester of pregnancy. Mice experiments have suggested that early gestation - between eight to 14 weeks in humans - is a

critical period for male reproductive development.

The new findings, the authors note, establish a clear link between stress and sperm health, but not necessarily a cause-and-effect relationship. Other factors that can accompany stress such as drug use and smoking may turn out to play equally or more important roles. But the rodent experiments bolster the theory that stress leads to reduced testosterone production in foetal testes, said Richard Sharpe, an honorary professor at the Centre for Reproductive Health at the University of Edinburgh not involved in the study.

Still within 'normal' range

"That would support the view that too much stress in early pregnancy might be detrimental to optimal male reproductive development," he wrote in a comment. Even the lowest sperm count reported among the men whose mothers had experience repeated stress would not on its own result in infertility, though it might be a contributing factor, the researchers said. Other factors that impact male fertility included obesity, drinking alcohol, smoking to-

bacco, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, and possibly exposure to chemicals.

To tease out the impact of maternal stress, Hart's team combed through data from an ongoing, multi-generational study in Western Australia that recruited some 3,000 women in their 18th week of pregnancy between 1989 and 1991. The mothers completed questionnaires at Week 18 and Week 34, answering questions about stressful life events during the previous months. A total of 1,454 boys born from this cohort were monitored by researchers over the next two decades as they grew up. When then turned 20, 643 had testicular ultrasound exams, and provided both semen and blood samples for analysis.

There is a growing evidence that sperm counts among men of European ancestry have, in general, declined over the last 40 years. A review study in 2017 covering 43,000 men found that sperm concentration had gone down by nearly 50 percent over that period, while still remaining within the "normal" range established by the World Health Organization. At the same time, there was no significant decline in South America, Asia, and Africa. — AFP

Estonians hold 'funeral march' for science

TALLINN: Estonian scientists yesterday held a funeral march for research after the tech-savvy Baltic state's government reneged on a promise to increase science funding in next year's budget. Several hundred protesters carried funeral wreaths, flowers and candles to the seat of government in the capital Tallinn and the ministry of education and science in the second city of Tartu.

"Abandoning Estonian science and research is something that will affect the future of each and every one of us directly," read a statement on the Facebook page for the march, which was created by research scientist Mario Kadastik. "If Prime Minister Juri Ratas and his cabinet don't honor the pledge, they should resign," said the page for the "funeral march for a research-led Estonia."

Academic unions have announced warning strikes in the two cities for June 5, while student unions urged graduation ceremony attendees to wear black ribbons as a symbol of mourning for Estonian science. Since last month, Ratas has led a three-party coalition government consisting of his left-leaning Centre Party, the conservative Isamaa and the far-right EKRE. In December, an agreement to raise science funding from 0.71 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) to 1 percent was signed by scientists, businesses and most parties - with the exception of the EKRE, which claimed the goal was not ambitious enough.

According to data released this year by the EU's statistics office Eurostat, Estonia spends less than the bloc's average on research and development. The three parties in power made the pledge again when they were forming their coalition government earlier this year. But on Monday the government announced it would make cuts in the next budget, postponing a number of investments and maintaining the current level of science funding. It decided at the same time to raise pensions and cut the excise tax on alcohol by 25 percent. — AFP

World's tiniest baby born in California

LOS ANGELES: A California hospital on Wednesday disclosed the birth of the world's smallest baby ever to survive, weighing a mere 245 grams - the same as a large apple - when she was born. The girl, nicknamed Saybie by hospital staff, was born 23 weeks and three days into her mother's pregnancy at Sharp Mary Birch Hospital for Women and Newborns in San Diego.

The father was told by doctors that he would have about an hour with his daughter before she passed away. "But that hour turned into two hours which turned into a day, which turned into a week," the mother said in a video released by the hospital. Doctors said Saybie was delivered via emergency cesarean section in December at 23 weeks and three days gestation in the womb after severe pregnancy complications that put her mother's life at risk.

A typical pregnancy lasts 40 weeks. After nearly five months at the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit, Saybie was discharged home earlier this month weighing a healthy five pounds (2.2 kilograms) and sporting a graduation cap. "She is a miracle, that's for sure," said Kim Norby, one of the nurses who cared for Saybie as she fought to survive - with a sign by her crib that read "tiny but mighty" cheering her on.

Emma Wiest, another nurse featured in the video, said Saybie was so small at birth that "you could barely see her on the bed." At birth, she weighed as much as a child's juice box or two sticks of butter and could fit in the palm of the hands of her caretak-



CALIFORNIA: A nurse holds baby Saybie, the world's smallest surviving newborn, on the day she was released from the NICU in San Diego, California. — AFP

ers. "I'd heard that we had such a tiny baby and it sounded unbelievable because I mean she's about half of the weight as a normal 23-weeker," Wiest said.

Defied the odds

Doctors said that apart from Saybie's fighting spirit, her survival as a micro-preemie - a baby born before 28 weeks' gestation - could be attributed to the fact that she suffered no serious complications after birth. "Saybie experienced virtually none of the medical challenges typically associated with micro-preemies, which can include brain bleeds, and lung and heart issues," the hospital said.

Saybie's ranking as the world's tiniest baby ever to survive is according to the Tiniest Babies Registry, maintained by the University of Iowa. The previous record was held by a baby born in Germany in

2015 who weighed seven grams more than Saybie. "Every life is a miracle - those that defy the odds even more so," Edward Bell, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Iowa who oversees the registry said. In the video released by the hospital, Saybie's mother said the birth was the scariest day of her life.

She said she was rushed to hospital after feeling ill and was told she had preeclampsia - a condition marked by very high blood pressure that puts both the mother and baby's lives at risk. "They had to deliver her really quickly and I kept telling them that she's not going to survive, she's only 23 weeks," the mother, who did not want to be identified, said. But against all odds, Saybie did survive. She nonetheless will still face enormous challenges as a micro-preemie, including possible respiratory, hearing and vision problems. — AFP

Turkey warplanes strike targets in Iraq; 19 militants 'neutralized'

Commandos air-dropped into northern Iraq

ISTANBUL: Turkish warplanes and attack helicopters struck targets in the mountains of northern Iraq, Turkey's defense ministry said yesterday, adding that the military had "neutralized" 19 Kurdish militants as its operation there entered a fourth day. The ministry said two Turkish soldiers died on Wednesday from wounds sustained in a bomb blast during what it dubbed "Operation Claw", targeting Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants in the Hakurk region, near Turkey's southeastern tip. Smoke rose from a hilltop and gunfire rang out as attack helicopters circled in the sky in a video published by the ministry, which it said showed the destruction of a PKK heavy machine gun position.

The ministry said yesterday the military had "neutralised" four militants in the latest action, bringing the total to 19, using a term that commonly refers to deaths, but can also refer to those wounded or captured. Warplanes also carried out strikes in border regions of northern Iraq west of Hakurk, destroying PKK gun positions, shelters and ammunition stores, the ministry said.



Two Turkish soldiers die

The cross-border push began with artillery and air strikes on Monday before helicopters landed commandos in the region. The PKK is based in Iraq's Qandil area, south of Hakurk. The PKK launched an insurgency in mainly Kurdish southeast Turkey in 1984 and more than 40,000 people have been killed in the conflict. It is designated a terrorist group by Ankara, the European Union and United States.

The PKK said on Wednesday three of its militants had been killed in Turkish air strikes in the Qandil region. Turkey's pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the third largest in parliament, said such operations created crises and called on the opposition to oppose the military action. "At least 30 similar operations have been carried out with the same aim until now.

None have created a solution. They have done nothing but consume the country's resources and raise the death toll," it said in a written statement. PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, jailed on an island near Istanbul since 1999, was allowed to meet his lawyers this



ANKARA: In this handout photograph President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, right, shakes hands with President of Iraq Barham Salih at a meeting at Vahdettin Pavilion in Istanbul. — AFP

month for the first time in nearly eight years after a hunger strike by HDP lawmakers and thousands of inmates.

They ended their protest on Sunday in response to a call from Ocalan. The move, a month before a re-run of the Istanbul mayoral election, had prompted speculation about steps towards

a new peace process. Ankara's previous talks with Ocalan on ending the conflict fell apart in 2015, triggering fierce fighting. Justice Minister Abdulhamit Gul has denied the decision to allow Ocalan lawyers' had any connection with the election or with any effort to launch a new peace process. — Reuters

Enslaved for decades, indigenous Indians freed by land titles

CHERUVUGUEDEM: A man of few words, Chinnaguruviyai Dasari struggled to express the joy he felt when he was given ownership of a two-hectare piece of land on the edge of the Nallamala forest in southern India. After 25 years of working as a bonded laborer in the fields of other farmers, Dasari recalled standing at the edge of his own land feeling unsure about what his next move should be.

A member of the Chenchu indigenous tribe, he considers himself lucky to be one of only 20 people in his village who have so far been allotted land by the local government. "We had been fighting for our land for nearly 15 years," he said, sitting in the one-room school of his village in Prakasam district. "We have participated in protests, submitted numerous petitions to stake claim to land that has traditionally always been ours."

The Chenchu are among India's 104 million indigenous people who are fighting for land ownership, a right that would protect them from getting trapped in debt bondage, one of the most common forms of slavery in India, say human rights campaigners. Banned in 1976, bonded labor continues in many parts of India where people from poor, marginalized families are duped into offering themselves for work as security against a loan they have taken or debt inherited from a relative.

Indigenous people bear the brunt of exploitation as they are often unaware of their illegal recruitment and spend the next six months - or more - working to repay small loans taken during a medical emergency or festival, rights activists said. "It is very common for contractors to come into these villages, give some advance (payment) and then take people to work as cheap farm labor," said Ram Prathap Reddy, field coordinator of the charity

Rural Development Trust.

Under the 2006 Forest Rights Act, at least 150 million people could have their rights recognized to about 40 million hectares of forest land, once the Supreme Court gives a final verdict on an ongoing case. Meanwhile, across India, tens of thousands of indigenous people - also known as Adivasis or "original inhabitants" - continue waging individual battles for small patches of land to which they have an ancestral claim.

'My children will get land'

School teacher Bhumani Manthana is on a mission to help fellow Chenchus living in southern India's Nagarkurnool district apply for land titles and stop them being exploited as cheap labor. The Forest Rights Act guarantees indigenous Indians the right to inhabit and live off forests where their ancestors had settled. But gaining that right is an arduous process, said Manthana. "Each application goes through six committees before the government hands over land to a tribal," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. V Sarveshwar Reddy, a director in the tribal welfare department for Telangana state, where Nagarkurnool is located, said the law gives indigenous tribes "enjoyment rights" in forest areas.

They are allowed to cultivate the land but have to adhere to certain restrictions on digging borewells and cutting down trees. "Problems only crop up if they are in the core forest area or in the tiger reserve zones," he said. According to Reddy, over 300 people in Nagarkurnool district have been given land under the Forest Rights Act so far. Chavadi Shankaraiyya is not one of them. For him, the process which started nearly 15 years ago has been tedious and frustrating.

"I have lost track of the applications I have written and the number of times I have stood, hands folded, in front of officials," Shankaraiyya said. The only graduate from his village, Shankaraiyya said all Chenchus traditionally had plots in the forest, but many have now lost access to them after their families were evicted from the land and relocated elsewhere. "We don't have pattas (land titles) to prove ownership and getting them is not easy," he said. — Reuters

Millions at risk of child labor in manufacturing hubs

LONDON: Child labor is an "extreme risk" in one in 10 countries globally, found an index yesterday, urging businesses to be more vigilant about abuses in their global supply chains. Little progress was recorded in key manufacturing hubs India and China, which ranked 47th and 98th out of 198 countries in the Child Labor Index, with North Korea in first place with the highest risk, said research consultancy Verisk Maplecroft.

"The economic momentum of many countries is yet to trickle down to the poorest in society," said Oscar Larsson, a human rights data analyst at the UK-based company. "Child labor is still prevalent across many sectors and if countries aren't taking action it is up to companies to see they have the tools to ensure it's not happening under their watch." There are about 150 million child laborers around the world, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the majority working on farms in Africa and Asia.

The ILO has said the world is unlikely to meet a target of ending child labor by 2025, which is part of 17 global development goals agreed in 2015 at the United Nations. The Child Labor Index aims to help businesses identify and root out child labor in their often complex international supply chains, where a lack of direct oversight and many layers of subcontracting can conceal workplace abuses. The scores were calculated by assessing laws against child labor, the extent to which regulations are enforced, and the frequency and severity of known child labor incidents. A total of 27 countries - which account for more than 10% of the world's population - were found to have an "extreme risk" of child labor, with Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea and the Central African Republic completing the top five on the index. — Reuters

International

Seven South Koreans killed in Budapest tourist boat tragedy

21 still missing; Country's worst boat disasters

BUDAPEST: Hungarian police yesterday launched a criminal probe into one of the country's worst boat disasters that left seven South Korean tourists dead and 21 others still missing. The Mermaid sightseeing boat collided with a much larger passenger river cruise vessel on the Danube in the heart of Budapest on Wednesday evening and went down in just seven seconds, police said.

Army boats were scouring the murky Danube yesterday as dozens of people looked on from a bridge. Thirty-five people were on board the 26-metre Mermaid when it sank near the parliament building, most of them South Korean tourists including a six-year-old girl. Army divers have joined police in the search, but the operation has been complicated by high water levels and a fast-moving current after weeks of heavy rainfall.

Three bodies have already been found several kilometers south of the disaster site, police said. A captain of a boat that was near the accident told online daily 24.hu he saw two elderly women being pulled out of the water. "I am still in shock. I have never seen such horror in my life," the unnamed man was quoted as saying. "We were at the parliament when we heard that people were in the water - everyone stopped right away and started helping out."

'Criminal negligence'

Police showed journalists security camera footage from a bridge in which the Mermaid is

seen colliding with the Viking Sigyn river cruise boat. "The footage shows that before the collision the Mermaid turned towards the Viking Sigyn cruise boat, for some reason, the Viking then turned the small boat over, and it sank within seven seconds," police colonel Adrian Pal told a press conference.

He said a criminal investigation has been launched for "criminal negligence on public waterways," adding that police were questioning the Ukrainian captain of the Sigyn. Viking Cruises confirmed the Sigyn was "involved in an incident" on the Danube but there were no injuries to its crew or guests. "We are cooperating with the authorities as required," it said. The Mermaid was regularly serviced and had no apparent technical faults, Mihaly Toth, a spokesman for its owner Panorama Deck told Hungarian news agency MTI, adding that it was on "a routine sightseeing trip".

Wreckage found

Hungary's emergency services spokesman Pal Györfi said that seven rescued people were taken to hospital with symptoms of hypothermia and shock. Fifteen boats are involved in the search for those still unaccounted for - including the Hungarian captain and crew member - about 17 hours after the Mermaid went down. Wreckage was found on the riverbed after several hours of searching near the Margaret Bridge, one of the main links between the two parts of the Hungarian capital,



BUDAPEST: Police and rescue boats are seen on the Danube river near the zone where the 'Mermaid' sightseeing boat sank overnight after colliding with a larger vessel in pouring rain. — AFP

local media said. Zsolt Gabor Pataki, a colonel with the fire department, said the operation had been extended the entire length of the Danube in Hungary south of Budapest and that the authorities in neighboring Serbia had been contacted.

South Korea's Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha is due in Budapest on Friday, and the country is also

sending an emergency relief team, officials in Seoul said. In a phone call with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, South Korean President Moon Jae-in called for "active support" from the Hungarian government in the rescue efforts. South Korean embassy staff have also been assisting the emergency services in the identification of victims. — AFP

South Africa slashes cabinet size, appoints 50 percent women

JOHANNESBURG: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on Wednesday cut the number of cabinet ministers from 36 to 28, in a move he said would tackle the country's "bloated" government and improve efficiency. Half the new ministers are women, making South Africa one of the world's few gender-balanced governments. Ramaphosa announced the new line-up after he led the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party to victory in elections earlier this month.

He took office last year after the ousting of graft-tainted Jacob Zuma, who had expanded the number of ministerial posts in an alleged attempt to strengthen his patronage network. "To promote greater coherence, better coordination and improved efficiency, we (are) reducing the number of ministers from 36 to 28," Ramaphosa said in televised address to the nation. "This is a significant move of downscaling our state. Many people believed our government... was bloated and this was agreed right across the board."

In another dig at his predecessor, Ramaphosa said that the ANC had been re-elected with a mandate to end "state capture" - the term used to describe government corruption under Zuma. "All South Africans are acutely aware of the great economic difficulties our country has been experiencing," Ramaphosa said. "It is therefore imperative... we place priority on revitalizing our economy while exercising the greatest care in the use of public funds." "For the first time in the history of our country, half of all ministers are women," he added. — AFP

Living off trash: South Africa's waste pickers reclaim the streets

JOHANNESBURG: In the shadows of the high-rise offices in Johannesburg's wealthy Sandton district, Thembekile Mokoena concealed her recycling bag bulging with paper, plastic and tins under a tree. Such strategies are a necessity for informal recyclers across the city, like Mokoena, who are often forcibly moved by private security guards paid to "clean up" urban spaces.

"If we go near the Sandton shopping centre to use the toilets, we are chased out and told we are disturbing the people who have come to shop," said 34-year-old Mokoena, sitting on a bench as office workers in suits streamed past. "Once I was beaten by security who told me he would lose his job if he let me inside."

Mokoena is one of an estimated 200,000 waste pickers or reclaimers who navigate the racial, economic and physical divides of South Africa's largest and wealthiest city to sell tins, plastic and paper to recycling depots. Across Africa, governments keen to modernize booming cities often view poor people making a living sifting through rubbish or hawking on the streets as a hindrance, and as usurpers of public spaces meant for formal businesses and wealthy residents.

Cities worldwide generated more than 1.3 billion tons of solid waste in 2010, which is predicted to reach 2.2 billion tons a year by 2025 - equal to the weight of the Great Pyramid of Giza, each day, according to UN Habitat. Increasing recycling would reduce deaths from pollution, flooding and planet-heating emissions, it said, calling for waste picking to be regulated to better protect workers.

Reclaimers recycle 80 to 90% of plastic and packaging in South Africa, saving authorities up to 750 million Rand (\$53 mil-

lion) in landfill costs, the Pretoria-based Council for Scientific and Industrial Research estimates. Despite the valuable service reclaimers provide, they are stigmatized - on the street and at home. "People assume that because we are dirty, we are drug addicts, but it's not true. We are hard workers. We are entitled to move through the city too," said Mokoena.

"I used to sell my body for food. My family said nothing. Now that I earn an honest living recycling, they are ashamed of me for working with trash. They have disowned me so I am forced to live on the streets." The Thomson Reuters Foundation interviewed more than 10 reclaimers across Johannesburg who said they have been beaten or arrested by private security and police for sorting their waste in public spaces or for not carrying valid work permits.

A spokesman for the city's metropolitan police department, Wayne Minnaar, said he was not aware of any beatings, but recycling materials have been confiscated in public parks. "We are aware of the immense contribution of the recyclers but we have to make arrests if they create a health hazard, or if they are undocumented," he said, referring to the fact that many reclaimers from neighboring Lesotho lack work permits.

Stigma

Often hiding their faces in balaclavas to avoid being identified, reclaimers ride between the city's traffic on metal trolleys, piled high with household waste. They can pull the trolleys, weighing up to 200 kilograms for kilometres across the city, said Eli Kodisang of Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). WIEGO - a global network campaigning for informal worker rights - has launched what it calls "counter patrols" where they accompany reclaimers through gated communities to push back against private guards who sometimes demand bribes. "We photograph security guards who often carry guns and force the reclaimers to leave. We tell them that, legally, reclaimers are entitled to go through the bin placed outside a house," said Kodisang. — Reuters

International

India's Modi sworn in ahead of unveiling revamped govt

BJP makes history by increasing its majority

NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi was sworn in yesterday in front of cheering supporters ahead of unveiling a drastically revamped Hindu nationalist government for his historic second term. Modi was the first of more than 50 cabinet ministers and deputy ministers to take the oath of office at the presidential palace in front of 8,000 people including South Asian leaders, Bollywood stars and leading political figures.

Modi, whose right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party made history by increasing their majority in a second straight landslide election win, was to announce new finance and foreign ministers as well as find a top post for his trusted enforcer, BJP president Amit Shah.

Supporters in the crowd chanted "Modi, Modi" as he walked up to take his oath of office

in Hindi. Shah was also greeted with loud cheers. Modi was to announce his new cabinet in the hours after the ceremony in the gardens of the presidential palace. A new finance minister was guaranteed after the influential outgoing minister, Arun Jaitley, 66, announced Wednesday that he would not serve again because of poor health.

Outgoing foreign minister Sushma Swaraj was not among the group to take the oath meaning she would also be replaced. Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi, whose Congress party suffered a second straight humiliating defeat, was among the crowd with his mother Sonia, the former Congress leader. Media reports said Gandhi, the son, grandson, and great-grandson of Nehru-Gandhi dynasty prime ministers, has told party leaders he wants to stand down. — AFP



NEW DELHI: Narendra Modi, left, looks on as he sits next to Bharatiya Janata Party President Amit Shah, second right, and Minister of Home Affairs of India Rajnath Singh, second left, before Modi's swearing-in ceremony as Indian Prime Minister at the President house in New Delhi. — AFP

Bangladesh madrasas told to appoint women mentors after murder

DHAKA: Bangladesh has ordered state-funded Islamic seminaries to appoint female mentors to prevent violence against women and children, an official said yesterday, after at least 16 people were charged with the horrific murder of a teenage student. Activists say the killing of Nusrat Jahan Rafi exposed a "culture of impunity" surrounding sex crimes, and that those who report harassment often suffer a backlash.

Rafi, 19, was doused in kerosene and set alight on the order of the head teacher at her seminary after she accused him of sexual harassment, and died in hospital on April 10 after suffering 80 percent burns. At least 16 people - including the head of her seminary - have been charged in connection with the killing and could face death penalty if convicted.

The grisly murder sparked outrage across the South Asian nation of 165 million people, highlighting an alarming rise of rape and sexual assault cases in the country. Saif Ullah, head of the Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board, which controls nearly 10,000 seminaries, said they have ordered each madrasa to appoint a "woman mentor" as part of measures to prevent violence against women and children.

The measures will "create awareness among students and teachers," he said, adding the murder of Rafi prompted the authorities to issue the order. "All the female students will have to contact their head of institution through this female teacher," he said, adding seminaries have been told to step up monitoring on sexual harassment, gender issues and reproductive health.

Last week Dhaka's education authorities issued similar order to all of the country's schools and colleges as soul searching continued following the murder of Nusrat. The government earlier ordered more than 27,000 schools and colleges to form committees to prevent sexual violence. Maleka Banu, the head the Mahila Parishad women's rights group, said sexual violence had increased alarmingly across the country - including at schools and seminaries - but there were very few convictions. "Only three percent of rape cases end in convictions," she said. "In most cases no charges are pressed against the accused," she added, blaming pressure from perpetrators, political interference and a lack of will by the police to investigate. — AFP

Pakistan arrests MP linked to clash with military

PESHAWAR: A Pakistani parliamentarian and civil rights leader linked to a violent weekend clash between Pashtun activists and security forces was taken into custody yesterday, officials said. Moshin Dawar - an MP and leading member of the Pashtun Protection Movement (PTM) - had been in hiding for days following the fatal incident Sunday in a restive tribal region along the Afghan border where he was leading a protest against alleged abuses by the military. "He has been charged with murder, attempted murder, attacking law enforcement personnel, disturbing law and order, and terrorism," an official in Bannu told AFP on the condition of anonymity.

Provincial information minister Shaukat Yousafzai confirmed the arrest. Dawar is the second MP to be arrested in connection with the clash after PTM leader Ali Wazir was taken into custody Sunday. The military said at least three activists were shot dead in the incident after protesters attacked their checkpoint. The PTM leadership disputed that, saying

Indian celebrity jeweler Modi appears in court

LONDON: Nirav Modi, India's fugitive jeweler to the stars, appeared at a London court yesterday as his extradition battle focused on which prison India would send him to. Accused of involvement in a massive bank fraud that rocked India's corporate community, Modi, 48, appeared in custody at Westminster Magistrates Court and spoke only to confirm his name and date of birth.

Judge Emma Arbuthnot, England's chief magistrate, said she wanted to know within 14 days which prison the Indian authorities intended to hold Modi in. Arbuthnot also said she wanted to receive the opening note in the case within six weeks, after state prosecutors, acting on behalf of the Indian authorities, said

at least 13 people were killed after security forces fired into an unarmed crowd.

International rights groups have called for an independent probe into the incident, with Human Rights Watch on Thursday demanding a "prompt, transparent, and impartial investigation by Pakistani authorities". The clash follows months of rising tensions between the two sides, with the military publicly warning PTM leaders to end their criticism of Pakistan's armed forces conduct during their fight against militancy.

Since bursting onto the scene last year, the PTM has rattled Pakistan's powerful military establishment, but a far-reaching media blackout has kept news and images of their rallies off TV screens nationwide. Despite the pushback, the PTM has continued to demand action - including investigations into disappearances and extrajudicial killings and an end to what it says is undue harassment of Pashtuns at security checkpoints.

Sunday's incident occurred in North Waziristan, where the movement is believed to draw much of its support. The area was once plagued by militancy, and Washington pressured Pakistan for years to act against Islamist groups based there. The army has carried out multiple operations in North Waziristan and other tribal regions, and security - both there and across Pakistan - has dramatically improved in recent years. However, the PTM claims the operations came at a heavy price because of alleged abuses. — AFP

it would be difficult to provide it within four weeks. Modi fled India in February 2018 after being accused of having a central role in a \$1.8-billion (1.6-billion-euro) fraud involving Punjab National Bank (PNB), the country's second-largest public lender.

Forbes estimated Modi's wealth at \$1.73 billion before the alleged fraud, placing him 85th on India's rich list. Arbuthnot ordered Modi to reappear before the court via video-link on June 27. A further case management hearing was set for July 29, at which the judge said she would be expecting to set a date for the full extradition hearing. Modi's lawyers indicated that it would take them six months to prepare their defense case.

Modi owned luxury jewelry stores in several major cities across the world and boasted celebrity customers including actresses Naomi Watts, Kate Winslet and Priyanka Chopra-Jonas before his downfall. He was arrested in London on March 19. That month, his art collection was auctioned off, raising \$8 million for the Indian tax authorities. The Indian authorities also dynamited the billionaire's seafront mansion. The 33,000 square-foot (3,000 square metre) property near Mumbai, believed to be worth \$14 million, had been seized. — AFP

International

Mueller denies probe exonerates Trump, hands baton to Congress

Growing chorus clamor for impeachment

WASHINGTON: Robert Mueller said Wednesday his two-year Russia investigation had not exonerated Donald Trump, but that he had lacked the power to charge a sitting president - passing the baton to Congress where a growing chorus is clamoring for impeachment. Making his first public statement on the high-stakes probe into Moscow's interference in the 2016 election, the special counsel said longstanding Justice Department guidelines prevented him from charging Trump, despite at least 10 possible acts of criminal obstruction by the president.

But not indicting Trump was not equivalent to clearing him, Mueller said, suggesting Congress has both the constitutional powers and the responsibility to pursue the case. "If we had had confidence that the president clearly did not commit a crime, we would have said so," he said. Mueller's oblique allegation of serious wrongdoing sparked a new firestorm in Washington, with Trump again claiming vindication and a rising number of Democrats demanding to open impeachment proceedings.

"Nothing changes from the Mueller Report. There was insufficient evidence and therefore, in our Country, a person is innocent," the president tweeted minutes after Mueller finished speaking. "The case is closed! Thank you." But Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren was one of half a dozen White House hopefuls who seized upon Mueller's remarks, to urge Congress to impeach Trump. "Mueller leaves no doubt," she tweeted. "The Constitution leaves it up to Congress to act - and that's impeachment."

'No option' to charge president

The taciturn Mueller took to the podium to clarify his original conclusions more than two months after a summary of his report was first released by the Justice Department. "Russian intelligence officers who were part of the Russian military launched a concerted attack on our political system," forming the basis for the

investigation, said the 74-year-old, long one of the most respected members of the Washington justice establishment.

Mueller's 448-page report, finally released in redacted form on April 18, detailed multiple contacts between the Trump campaign and Russia, including efforts to take advantage of Moscow's claimed possession of dirt on Trump's Democratic rival Hillary Clinton. But in the end, Mueller said, "There was insufficient evidence to charge a broader conspiracy" of collusion. As for the obstruction side of the investigation, Mueller explained that from the outset, charging Trump with any federal crime "was not an option that we could consider." According to Justice Department policy, he said, "a president cannot be charged with a federal crime while he is in office. That is unconstitutional."

That left the public to parse the head-scratching, double-negative conclusion that Mueller's team could not say that the president did not commit a crime. Trump has assailed the Russia investigation as a "witch hunt" and a "hoax" that amounted to an "treasonous" attempt to overthrow him. "The report was clear - there was no collusion, no conspiracy - and the Department of Justice confirmed there was no obstruction," said White House Spokeswoman Sarah Sanders. "After two years, the special counsel is moving on with his life, and everyone else should do the same."

Pressure on Pelosi

Mueller made clear, though, that he thought it was up to Congress to pursue the case further. "The constitution requires a process other than the criminal justice system to formally accuse a sitting president of wrongdoing," Mueller said. Mueller's statement, and his announcement that he was resigning as special counsel to return to private life, piled heavy pressure on Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic leader in Congress, to seriously consider launching the impeachment effort against Trump.

Pelosi has fended off the idea, which would be fraught with po-



WASHINGTON: Special Counsel Robert Mueller speaks on the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential election, at the US Justice Department in Washington, DC.—AFP

litical risk for the party 18 months ahead of presidential elections. She said in a statement that Congress would step up investigations, while avoiding the word impeachment. "The Congress holds sacred its constitutional responsibility to investigate and hold the President accountable for his abuse of power," she said. "The American people must have the truth."

Democratic Congressman Jerry Nadler, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee which would take the lead in any impeachment effort, also avoided the "I" word while saying he would push ahead with a probe.—AFP

Roe v Wade at risk: Legal challenges to US abortion rights

WASHINGTON: In recent months, some conservative-leaning US states have taken action to curb abortion rights, the most recent being Missouri, where the state's only abortion clinic could close by the end of the week. But any attempt to restrict or ban abortion will ultimately face a final test at the conservative US Supreme Court. This is how that process will play out:

Constitutional right to abortion

There is an accelerating effort by some states and anti-abortion activists to get the Supreme Court to reconsider its landmark 1973 ruling in Roe v Wade, holding that a woman has a constitutional right to abortion. The high court reaffirmed Roe in a 1992 decision that said abortion restrictions cannot place an "undue burden" on the right and most recently in 2016, when the court threw out a Texas law that would have imposed difficult-to-meet requirements on abortion clinics and doctors. The retirement last year of Justice Anthony Kennedy, who co-authored the 1992 decision and joined the 2016 one, has given conservatives a new opening to challenge Roe. Kennedy was replaced by President Donald Trump's conservative appointee Brett Kavanaugh, who has a thin record on abortion. The court has a 5-4 conservative majority.

Recent court action

The Supreme Court sent mixed messages on its approach to abortion on May 28 when it upheld an Indiana measure that requires fetal remains to be buried or cremated, but stayed out of the fight over a second provision that would have barred abortions based on fetal disability or the sex or race of the fetus. By rejecting Indiana's attempt to reinstate the partial ban, the court indicated a reluctance to directly tackle the abortion issue, at least for now.

Pending cases

There are other cases pending at the high court aimed at weakening Roe v Wade. A case from Indiana challenges a law requiring women to undergo an ultrasound examination at least 18 hours before they undergo an abortion. It was struck down by lower courts. A separate case concerns an Alabama law that would effectively ban abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. The court is also set to act later this year on a bid by Louisiana to revive restrictions on doctors who perform abortions, requiring that they have hospital admitting privileges.

Other state laws

Alabama's governor on May 15 signed a law that would outlaw nearly all abortions in the state, the strictest such measure in the United States. It has already been challenged in court. Other conservative states have passed laws that will face legal challenges. Kentucky, Ohio, Mississippi, and Georgia this year passed bills that would ban abortions when a fetal heartbeat is detected after about six weeks. In January, a federal judge struck down a similar Iowa law and Louisiana is poised to pass its own version. Missouri's governor on May 24 signed into law a bill that would ban abortion after eight weeks. A number of states have passed laws that ban a method of abortion used during the second trimester of pregnancy, known as dilation and evacuation.—Reuters

'13 Reasons Why' linked to uptick in US adolescent suicides: Study

WASHINGTON: A new study about "13 Reasons Why," which follows the story of a high school girl who takes her own life, found that suicides among US youths rose significantly in the months following the popular Netflix show's release. The paper, which was published in JAMA Psychiatry on Wednesday, estimated a 13 percent spike in suicides among 10 to 19-year-olds between April and June of 2017, with a higher proportion among females.

The study was conducted by a team led by Thomas Niederkrotenthaler of the Medical University of Vienna's Center for Public Health and used suicide data from the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC). "The associations identified here must be interpreted with a substantial degree of caution, but they do appear to demonstrate an increase in suicides that is consistent with potential contagion by media," they wrote.

The team looked at suicides from 1999 to 2017 to establish a model that controlled for variables such as seasonal variations like known spring peaks in adolescent suicides. Since Netflix does not publicly share its viewership data, the researchers established a proxy to estimate its popularity via the buzz the show generated on social media platforms Twitter and Instagram, which is especially popular among US youths.—AFP

Lifestyle

Friday Times

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2019

www.kuwaittimes.net

An Iraqi child learns to read from the Quran at the shrine of the Sunni Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani in Baghdad during the holy Muslim month of Ramadan. — AFP

Choir helps Rio's homeless sing a different tune

See Page 24



Guns N' Roses start work on new album

Slash has confirmed Guns N' Roses have started work on their new album. The 'November Rain' rockers were planning to hit the studio to work on the original line-up's first record since 1993's 'The Spaghetti Incident?' after their tour ends in autumn, however, the guitarist has revealed that the band members have recently got together to bounce ideas off one another and what has been discussed so far has him hyped. Slash - who is joined by Axl Rose, Duff McKagan, Richard Fortus, Dizzy Reed and drummer Frank Ferrer in the band - told Detroit's 101 WRIF radio station: "The thing is, we haven't really done anything yet, and I don't like to say anything. You know how people used to promote shit and lie through their teeth? "So I just wanted to be honest about it, and so there was really no telling what we were going to do at that point. "But at this point, I do know that we are going to do this run of autumn shows, and we've already started working on stuff. So, there you go. "I'm excited about what we've got going on and everything, so it's going to be cool." Asked just

last month where they were at in regards to a new record, Slash replied: "I wouldn't say we've really sat down and had those sessions yet." The 53-year-old rock legend, who is also touring and planning to pen new material for his other band, Slash featuring Myles Kennedy and The Conspirators, continued: "The Conspirators are finishing up in mid-August and then Guns is going out in late September/October, so in the fall. "But at the same time, we're focused on working towards this new record that everybody's been asking about. So start focusing on that in earnest. And that's it. "I'm not thinking about anything else while that is going on. That's really the main focus. "By the time the Conspirators tour is done, I will have written enough material for the next Conspirators record that whenever that break comes up with Guns N' Roses we can go on to do that. "We'll just juggle all this stuff, schedules permitting." The 'Sweet Child O' Mine' hitmaker admitted that he is clueless when it comes to what the record will sound like. He confessed: "I have no idea. I really couldn't tell you.

Arthur says 'snobbery' has cost him Glastonbury slot

James Arthur claims he has to deal with "snobbery" in the music industry because he started out on 'The X Factor' and it's his talent show past that stops him from being booked for Glastonbury. The 31-year old singer is desperate to perform at this year's Glastonbury Festival, but fears that because he is a previous winner of Simon Cowell's talent show that he is "overlooked" by Michael and Emily Eavis. James actually thinks it's "amazing" that he's managed to "sustain a career" after being crowned the winner of the ninth series of the program in 2012. Speaking on UK TV show 'This Morning', he said: "It's amazing that I've managed to sustain a career. It's amazing what the likes of myself Olly Murs, Little Mix, have been able to do to be considered viable enough to come from a show like that and still be relevant. Because there's a little bit of snobbery attached to being from a reality TV show and maybe we get overlooked for things like that [Glastonbury] and for me it sucks because I believe I'm made for those kinds of things." The 'Say You Won't Let Go' hitmaker went on to say that he had no alternative route into the music business other than 'The X Factor', as he didn't have "people pumping finance" into him as a youngster from a modest background. He said: "I was in a position where I had to go for 'The X Factor' I didn't have any money, I didn't have people pumping finance into me which a lot of these guys have. You hear these guys on the radio who are billed as these kinds of home grown [artists] and they've worked their way up but really they come from some kind of money I think, and that's not me being bitter it's a fact."



Courtney Love says Hole reunion is on the cards

Courtney Love has teased there has been "talk" of a Hole reunion. The 54-year-old grunge rocker - who was married to late Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain, with whom she had 26-year-old daughter Frances Bean Cobain - has revealed she and her bandmates have discussed getting back together and admitted it's only recently that she has realized there is "nothing wrong" with "honoring your past". In an interview with The Guardian newspaper, she admitted: "We are definitely talking about it. There's nothing wrong with honoring your past: "I've just kind of discovered that. "If you don't, people will rewrite history and you will become an inconvenient woman." The 'Celebrity Skin' hitmakers classic line-up - comprised of Courtney, Patty Schemel, Eric Erlandson and Melissa Auf Der Maur - haven't performed a major show together since 1998. Although they hosted a mini reunion at an after-party for the documentary 'Schemel' in 2012, which saw the four-piece play 'Miss World' and 'Over the Edge'. And it's not just the frontwoman who is keen for a reunion, as bassist Melissa expressed her desire to get the band back together earlier this year, as she would love to have a "piece of their glory back". She said: "We're older, we're mellow. "I feel this would be the moment to do it. We did a few little gigs over the years but nothing substantial, which by the way I am quite happy about, to be honest. "Now it's been exactly 20 years since I've left the band, and I want a piece of our glory back. "Hole was a very good band, and I want to let everybody know it's important that women in rock music also get remembered, even if they were in the shadow of their husband." Hole released three albums between 1991 and 1998, before going their separate ways in 2002.



Adlon joins Apatow's Pete Davidson comedy



Pamela Adlon has joined Judd Apatow's latest comedy about Pete Davidson's life. The 52-year-old actress-and-screenwriter is set to star in an unknown role in the untitled semi-autobiographical film revolving around the 'Saturday Night Live' comic, which is set for release on June 19, 2020. The film's script has been penned by Apatow, Davidson and Dave Sirus and Apatow will produce the picture for his Apatow Productions alongside Barry Mendel. Pete, 25, grew up in Staten Island, New York, and lost his firefighter father in the September 11 Twin Towers terror attack, when he was just seven, and the comedian has previously admitted that the death of his parent has greatly influenced his stand-up routines - which he started at the age of 16. Pete was also previously engaged to Larry David's daughter, Cazzie David, 25, as well as pop superstar Ariana Grande, 25, who he popped the question to after just four weeks of dating. Pamela joins Maude Apatow - the daughter of director Judd and Leslie Mann - who will play Pete's on-screen sister in the movie. Maude has previously featured in her dad's early films including 'Knocked Up', 'Funny People' and 'This is 40'. Pamela is best known for the acclaimed FX comedy drama 'Better Things' - which she created, wrote, directed and starred in - which follows Adlon as a divorced actress who raises her three daughters on her own. The series and Adlon's performance have been praised, and Adlon was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series in 2017 and 2018. The show received a Peabody Award in April 2017.



Wilde 'absolutely' wants to direct a Marvel film

Olivia Wilde wants to direct a Marvel film. The 35-year-old actress recently made her directorial debut with teen-comedy 'Booksmart' and she admits she "absolutely" would want to take control of a Marvel Cinematic Universe film in the future, and follow in the footsteps of Chloë Zhao who is set to helm the upcoming MCU film 'The Eternals' and Ava DuVernay who will soon begin work on DC Extended Universe movie 'The New Gods'. In an interview with MTV International, she said: "Totally yeah, absolutely. I think that it's exciting that now women like Ava DuVernay and Chloë Zhao are directing [comic book] films and it's exciting to think about what that will do to the franchise. "I think it's a proud ... I'm a proud member of the movement of female directors, and I don't think there's any genre that should be off the table." Chloë and Ana aren't the only women working in the superhero genre with Anna Boden co-directing Marvel's first female-led stand-alone film 'Captain Marvel' and Cate Shortland set to helm the upcoming 'Black Widow' movie. Patty Jenkins helmed DC Comics box office smash 'Wonder Woman' and has helmed hotly-anticipated sequel 'Wonder Woman 1984'. Marvel Studios met with as many as 70 different directors before selecting Cate to helm the eagerly awaited superhero movie and Marvel previously revealed they had always wanted a female filmmaker to helm the picture.

Hudgens says Catwoman is her 'dream role'

Vanessa Hudgens wants to play Catwoman. The 30-year-old actress responded to rumours that she'll be cast as Selina Kyle in Matt Reeves' upcoming DC Comics film 'The Batman' and insisted that she'd love to "make this happen" as it's her "dream role". Sharing a fan made photo of herself as Catwoman on her Instagram stories, she wrote: "Okay. Who do I need to talk to make this happen lol #dream-role. (sic)" The 'High School Musical' star went on to repost a variety of fan-made art with her as the DC femme fatale with captions such as: "@dccomics JUST THROWING IT OUT THERE. Dream role lol. (sic)" The 'Spring Breakers' actress would be in good company if took on the role as the feline-eque villain with the last on-screen Catwoman played by Anne Hathaway in 'The Dark Knight Rises', preceded Michelle Pfeiffer in 'Batman Returns'. Vanessa could be acting opposite Robert Pattinson as he is one of the frontrunners to play 'The Caped Crusader' in the film. Pre-production on the Warner Bros. and DC Films collaboration is expected to kick off this summer ahead of a June 2021 release. Armie Hammer has also been reported to be in the running to take control of the Batmobile Reeves took over 'The Batman' directing duties from Ben Affleck - who also stepped down from the role as the titular character in January - and he will produce the motion picture with Dylan Clark. Should Pattinson land the coveted role he will be the latest in a long line of huge stars to take on the iconic part. Michael Keaton received critical acclaim for his outings in the cape and cowl in 1989's 'Batman' and 1992's 'Batman Returns' - both of which were directed by Tim Burton - and he was followed by Val Kilmer and George Clooney who played Bruce Wayne and his masked alter ego in 'Batman Forever' and 'Batman & Robin' respectively. Christian Bale took on the role for Christopher Nolan's 'The Dark Knight' trilogy.



Dastmalchian hails Villeneuve 'greatest filmmaker of our time'

David Dastmalchian has hailed Denis Villeneuve one of the "greatest filmmakers of our time" after working with him on 'Dune'. The 34-year-old actor stars in the sci-fi epic - a new adaptation of Frank Herbert's novel of the same name - and has revealed that the filmmaker just "brings so much" to the project and he is "grateful and excited" to be part of his "vision". Speaking to Cinema Blend, Dastmalchian said: "I'm so grateful and excited to be a part of Denis' vision. I think that he is one of the greatest filmmakers of our time and any time, and I believe what he's going to do here, it's just going to take people to a whole other place. "He brings so much. When you think about 'Arrival' and 'Blade Runner 2049' specifically, because those are the two science fiction films that he's crafted. You see his gift for telling stories that are visually stunning, but that are also rooted in really complex ideas and really fascinating characters." 'Dune' - which is considered a sci-fi literary classic - tells the complex story of a fallen noble family's attempt to control a desert planet named Arrakis and its export, a rare drug called melange - also known as "the spice" - which if taken can extend life, improve health and bestow limited pre-science. Melange is also vital to space travel and the most sought after commodity in the universe. 'Bird Box' star Dastmalchian plays Piter De Vries - played by Brad Dourif in David Lynch's 1984 film - a Mentat human who serves the Baron Vladimir Harkonnen (Stellan Skarsgard) and is addicted to the spice. De Vries is a human who is specially trained to perform mental functions rivalling the computers that are forbidden in this universe.

Kinnaman to return as Rick Flag in The Suicide Squad

Joel Kinnaman will return as Rick Flag in 'The Suicide Squad'. The 39-year-old actor is set to reprise his role as the US special operations forces specialist - whose relationship with June Moone/Enchantress (Cara Delevingne) in the first film was the driving force of the plot - in James Gunn's follow-up to the 2016 DC Comics ensemble movie 'Suicide Squad'. The 'Altered Carbon' star announced the news on his Instagram account where he shared an image of himself preparing for the role at a gun range. He wrote: "Easing into that squad preppppp (sic)" Joel will be joining returning cast members such as Margot Robbie (Harley Quinn), Jared Leto (The Joker), Jai Courtney (Captain Boomerang) and govern-

ment official Viola Davis (Captain Waller). Joel also joins Idris Elba, who will play a new character in the sequel, rather than replacing Will Smith as hitman character Deadshot as was first believed. Producers on the film - which is thought to be a reboot of sorts rather than a direct sequel - and director Gunn decided to move on from the Deadshot character and axe him from the movie, with Idris instead taking on a new character. As of the time of writing, it's not known what DC Comics villain Idris will take on instead, but reports claim that the decision was made as bosses didn't want to disrespect Will by replacing him. The film is planned to start shooting later this year and is slated for release for August 2021. — Bang Showbiz





Spaniard tries again to prove he is Julio Iglesias' son

A Spanish court yesterday started to examine a paternity suit against Julio Iglesias brought by a man who has already lost a case against the crooner but who now claims to have DNA proof. The 75-year-old Grammy award-winner was not at the trial that is being held behind closed doors. The session was quickly adjourned as the judge wanted to "assess a procedural issue" before examining the case in depth, a spokesman for the court in the eastern city of Valencia told AFP. The case was brought by Javier Sanchez Santos, 43, the son of Portuguese former ballerina Maria Edite. "I want to believe in the

justice system... I just have to wait now," Sanchez said as he left court.

His lawyer Fernando Osuna said Edite met Iglesias in Catalonia in Spain's northeast, that "they were together a week, in July 1975" and that "nine months later Javier was born." Osuna said Iglesias's defense team believes the trial should not take place as the case has already gone to court and was dismissed. But Osuna feels "a new trial" is justified as they have "DNA evidence" brought from the United States by a detective. — AFP

'Rocketman' team celebrates Elton John's legacy at New York Premiere



Welcome to the whimsical, sometimes tragic, wholly musical world of Sir Elton John. On Wednesday, fans lined up at Alice Tully Hall in Manhattan's Lincoln Center donning their "rock and roll" star-shaped sunglasses and colorful wigs to celebrate the US premiere of Elton John's musical biopic "Rocketman." Before the film, actors and filmmakers gathered on the red carpet to chat about the film and its impact on audiences. "[John] loves it," Taron Egerton, who stars as the music icon in the film, told Variety. "He's very passionate about it, and that's obviously very validating for us. Although Elton [John] gave us all his blessing and knew exactly the story we were telling, he kind of left us to it. It's also very risky because you don't know how he's going to respond. The overall feeling, I hope, is that it's joyous and it's a celebration of his legacy."

John and his husband, David Furnish, produced "Rocketman" and the star as well as his songwriting partner, Bernie Taupin, were involved in the progression of the film. The biopic follows John's life from early childhood to his American start at the Troubadour venue in West Hollywood, Ca. to his drug addiction and eventual sobriety. "I had input all the way through the produc-



tion. It's produced by Elton [John] and his husband. It's not like it was done independently," Taupin said. "We vetted the whole process all the way through."

Instead of a classical biopic, Furnish said that they took a fantasy filmmaking

direction which reflected the musician's colorful life. Ultimately, Furnish wants the takeaway to be filled with hope and forgiveness despite hardship. "I hope people take away a message of hope and redemption. I think that Elton is very honest about his struggles and his humanity and the idea that you can make mistakes in life and you can have challenging times, but if you have the support of other people you can pull through them and go on to do great things in your life," Furnish said. The original score, adapted by Matthew Margeson with a 40-piece choir and 80-piece orchestra, allowed the composer to bring John's songs to life on the big-screen. — variety.com



Mr Carson to recount "Downton Abbey" tales at Highclere concert

Mr Carson, the much-loved butler in hit period drama "Downton Abbey", has lived through the tales of love and tragedy that have beset the British household during its six series on television screens. Now he will recount his memories of serving the Crawley family in a concert next month at the Highclere Castle venue, where the award-winning series set in the early Twentieth Century and its upcoming movie adaptation were filmed.

With the show's composer John Lunn on piano, the Chamber Orchestra of London will perform music from the series in "Downton Abbey Live" on June 22, some three months before the highly-anticipated "Downton Abbey" film is released. Actor Jim Carter, who plays Carson, will host the concert in character. "The (concept) is that Lord Grantham has asked him to reminisce about his time at Downton Abbey," he told Reuters in an interview, referring to the series' patriarch, also known as Robert Crawley.

"So he goes back and we talk about the loves, the lives, the disasters, the tragedies, the fun of the whole six series, which is linked together by the music." Lady Carnarvon, who owns Highclere Castle with her husband, the 8th Earl of Carnarvon, said "perhaps a few others of the cast" could join Carter on the day.

She said the building and its countryside setting added to the show's appeal: "The sense of reassurance that this building gives us all because you can look back in time, and there's been a home here for thirteen hundred years, so we've got some sense of place and order." — Reuters

Mobile barber

cuts a dash with
Afro-Caribbean Londoners

Pedestrians walk past as full-time barber, Kris Robertson trims a client's hair in the customized van of mobile barbershop, Trim-It, on the streets of south London. — AFP photos



In a quiet street in south London's trendy Brixton district, known for its ethnic diversity, 25-year-old Kristian Robertson parks his trailblazing mobile salon. For a little over a year, he has worked for Trim-It—a start-up offering haircuts for people with Afro-Caribbean roots. Opening the customized van's sliding door reveals a silver barber's chair, a large mirror, a hair dryer and drawers overflowing with scissors, clippers and hair products.

As he carefully prepared his equipment for the day's first customer, the meticulously groomed Robertson said clients are "always amazed" when they see what is inside. "Appearance is important, whenever you wanna go somewhere or even if you just wanna feel better about yourself, you get a haircut and it changes your whole day, changes your whole week even," said Micah Henry, 24, one of Robertson's ten-odd daily customers.

Barber 'therapist'

Henry, who uses Trim-It about once a month, said it was the "most convenient" hairdresser he had come across. Appointments are made via a mobile phone app, summoning a van to where the client is. The start-up's founder, 24-year-old Darren Tenkorang, said the intimate setting of a van helped forge close relationships between hairdressers and their clients. "The relationship that you have with your barber is a very special one and I feel like this barber shop actually intensifies that because it's so one-on-one so you can use your barber as a therapist," he told AFP. "You can talk to him about everything from your girlfriend issues to football to business."

Born to Ghanaian parents, Tenkorang was accustomed as a boy to visiting Brixton's barber shops regularly with his father. He said the business idea came to him after enduring many long waits. Tenkorang now wants to offer a faster service more adapted to the lifestyles of young people.

'World domination!'

"We thought it was a good idea to put a barber shop in the back of a van and for an app to be able to book a barber shop to a location," he said. "For us, it's all about making sure that the service is completely convenient and we sprinkle a little bit of premium (treatment) as well." The first van launched in February 2018 and the start-up now employs nine people and boasts five mobile salons covering most of London.

"I am just really surprised at how much it has actually taken off," said the young entrepreneur. "We're definitely going to try to conquer London but our goal is to actually just take over the whole of the UK and thereafter, as everybody is saying, world domination!"—AFP

Full-time barber, Kris Robertson (right) trims a client's hair in the customized van of mobile barbershop, Trim-It, on the streets.



Full-time barber, Kris Robertson sits in his barber's chair as he poses in the customized van of mobile barbershop, Trim-It.



Full-time barber, Kris Robertson (left) trims a client's hair in the customized van of mobile barbershop, Trim-It, on the streets of south London.





Brazilian musician Ricardo 'Rico' Branco de Vasconcelos (left), leads the 'With One Voice' choir performance during the Good Actions Day Fair organized by the NGO Atados at Garota de Ipanema Park in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. — AFP photos

CHOIR HELPS RIO'S HOMELESS SING A DIFFERENT TUNE

For years, Edson Santos has slept in an abandoned taxi or on church steps in Rio de Janeiro. Now the 58-year-old is trying to sing a different tune in a choir for the homeless. Santos is a member of the "With One Voice" singing group originally created by British performing arts charity Streetwise Opera for the 2016 Rio Olympics, but kept going by the city's government to help some of its most vulnerable residents. Taking the stage to belt out tunes about love and hard knocks with his fellow choristers, Santos says his heart beat accelerates when he sings, and then a feeling of "victory, greatness and pride" washes over him.



Members of "With One Voice" choir perform during the Good Actions Day Fair organized by the NGO Atados at Garota de Ipanema park in Rio de Janeiro.

Lifestyle | Feature



Members of "With One Voice" choir prepare to perform during the Good Actions Day Fair.

"It has enabled me to go back to school and now my life is getting better," says Santos, who ended up on the street in 2015 after his son was killed. "I want to graduate from high school and then go to law school," he says, flicking through textbooks on history, geography, Portuguese and philosophy in front of the church where he sleeps on a piece of cardboard.

A voice

The driving force behind the choir is Ricardo Branco de Vasconcelos, a 42-year-old musician whose nickname "Rico" ironically means "rich" in Portuguese. "It's very necessary work for our country," Branco says at a performance inside the city's futuristic Museum of Tomorrow. "When you go through Central Station (in Rio), you see dozens of people who have been abandoned like they were nothing." After talking to various people living on the street, Branco realized singing could give them what they seemed to need most: a voice. "They said they would like to have a voice because sometimes when someone comes to offer food, they don't sit down to listen to what they have to say," he says.

Since taking on the project, Branco has found that his

biggest challenge is not recruiting singers, but keeping them in the choir. "Being there (in the choir) has to ignite pleasure in a person's heart," he explains. His efforts seem to be paying off. "It's like a family with marvelous teachers, and everyone respects each other," says Vera Lucia da Silva, 57, who joined the choir two years ago. "Living on the street is sad, but we have this outlet for happiness." Apart from developing their singing talents, the project has introduced the vocalists to Rio's famous sites, including the grand Municipal Theatre, the Copacabana fort and the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue.

'I feel light'

One of the group's recent shows was at a beachside park in Arpoador, a small peninsula between the tourist hotspots of Ipanema and Copacabana. Valeria Coelho, a 51-year-old grandmother, beamed as she stood shoulder to shoulder with her fellow choristers singing about friendship and overcoming obstacles. For Coelho, the choir is therapeutic. "When I arrive (at rehearsals), I feel heavy, but when I leave, I feel light with my mind and body relaxed," she tells AFP, adding that stepping on stage makes her feel like she's "in the clouds." People



Brazilian homeless singer Edson Santos, poses in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

end up on the streets for different reasons, says Branco, underscoring the importance of seeing each member of the choir as an individual.

Many singers have been able to get off the streets, marry or find work. "They start to recover their dignity, re-evaluate their life and realize that if they can sing, they can do a lot more by themselves," Branco says. "With One Voice" is also helping drug users and people living in city shelters. "The human life is the most valuable thing that exists," Branco says. "The life of a famous person is worth the same as that of a person sleeping on cardboard or under an awning." — AFP



Members of "With One Voice" choir perform during the Good Actions Day Fair.

Ilha da Paqueta: A guide to exploring Rio's island escape



Tired of the bustle of big city Rio? Head to tranquil Ilha da Paqueta



No cars allowed on Ilha da Paqueta - roll around on a different set of wheels instead

Nearly everyone who visits Rio has a favorite place to escape from the hectic pace of city life. Whether it's Pao de Acucar, Floresta da Tijuca or Morro Dois Irmãos, the city is surrounded by tranquil retreats and stunning views. However, there is one day trip getaway that seems to be more of a local secret than tourist staple, the mellow island of Paqueta.

Ilha da Paqueta is just over an hour's ferry-ride away from Praca XV in the city center; but once you step off the ferry, you might think you've stepped back in time. There are no cars, so visitors and locals alike traverse the island by bicycle or electric golf cart. Many of the buildings have retained their colonial facades, painted faded pastel pinks, blues, yellows and greens.

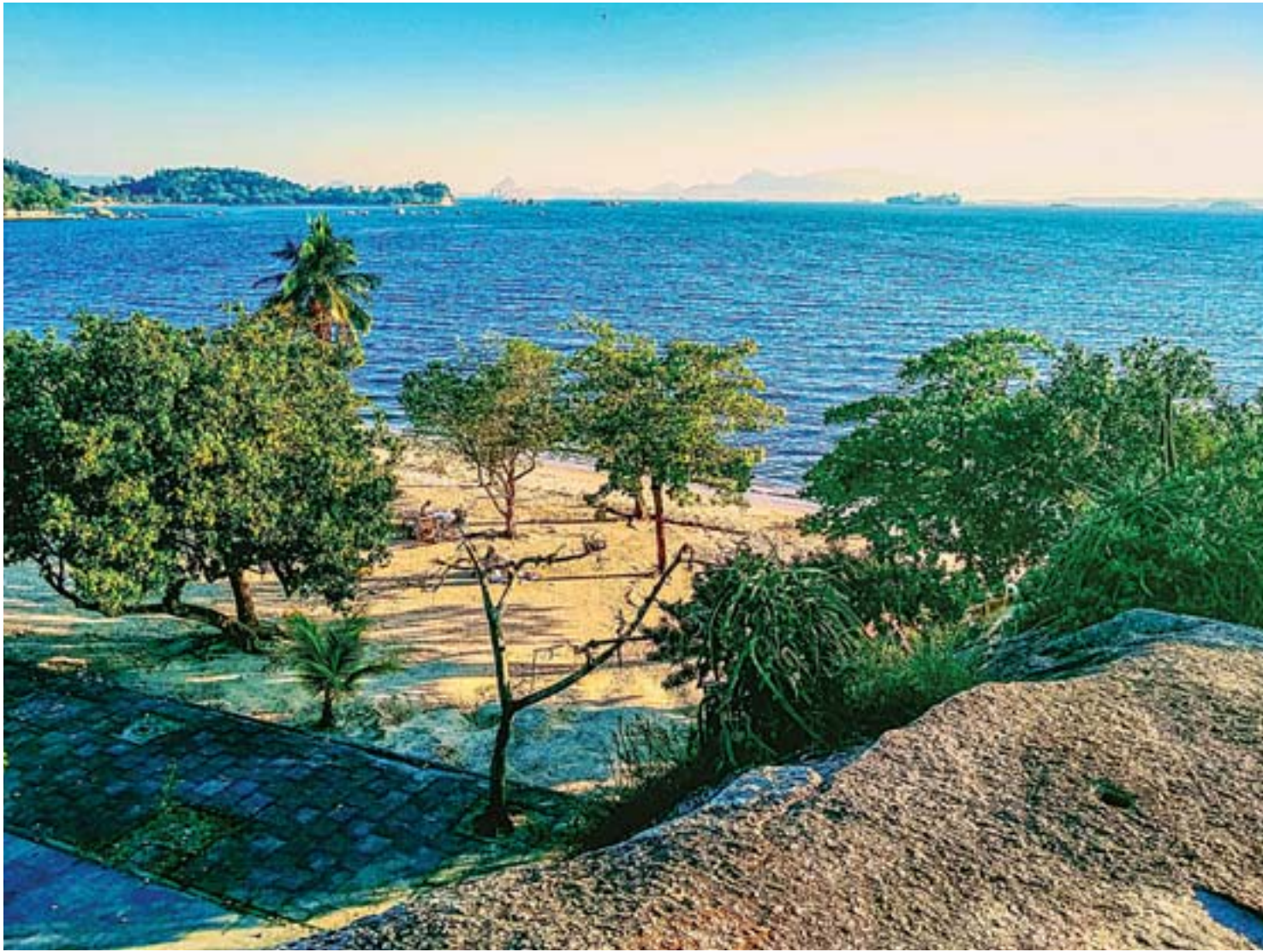
During its history, Paqueta has seen its fortunes rise and fall. Originally settled by indigenous Brazilians, it was claimed by the French in 1556. After the French abandoned their colonial interests in Brazil, rich Portuguese aristocrats and slave owners populated the island, with Emperor Dom Joao VI even reportedly holidaying on the island. Paqueta is now home to around 3-4000 permanent residents, with many cariocas visiting over the weekends for an almost-instant change of pace from the sprawling metropolis of Rio de Janeiro.

The island is small, around 1.2 sq km (0.46 sq miles) in size, but it has a lot to offer the curious day-tripper or weekend visitor besides its tranquil atmosphere and comparatively safe streets. The first thing to do is to get a bicycle. While tourist golf-cart taxis and other means of transport are available, the island is the perfect size for biking.

The main street directly in front of the ferry dock has excellent bike rental shops - like Paqueta Bike - that offer reasonable rentals by the hour or for the whole day. Many of the small hotels and Airbnb rentals will also offer a bike as part of your stay. Two women pedal a foot-powered cart through a street lined with pastel-colored buildings on Ilha da Paqueta, Brazil

Finding the culture of Paqueta

The island may be small in size but it boasts a lively cul-



Lounge on one of Paqueta's idyllic beaches



Ilha da Paqueta is a perfect place to watch the sun go down

tural scene, with a locally-printed magazine, a great website, cultural center, and regular food festivals and musical events. During Carnival, Paqueta is the destination for a special bloco (Carnival street party) while locals also throw their own parties, including one bloco just for dogs.

Casa de Artes Paqueta is well-worth a visit; the faded orange period house has been beautifully restored, and it now regularly hosts concert recitals, live Brazilian music and even a cineclube (film club). Their Arte & Gula Cafe is another quality locale where visitors can sample some delicious home-made food and take in the views of Guanabara bay.

Paqueta also comes to life for Festa de Sao Roque, held on the weekend following August 16 every year, with live music, fireworks and a religious procession through the streets. Another good date to visit is at the end of June, when the fishers of the island pay tribute to Saint Peter with a maritime procession and plenty of festivities.

Get outside and take in the view

Darke de Mattos, Paqueta's municipal park situated on the southern tip of the island, is a perfect place to start off any visit to the island. Unlike some of the public parks in Rio de Janeiro, Darke de Mattos is well-maintained and safe, with wonderful views of the entire Guanabara Bay. There are places to picnic, short trails leading to elevated viewpoints, tunnels, caves and even a beach. Plus, it's only a quick bike ride away from the ferry terminal.

Rio de Janeiro is famous for its beaches, but unfortunately the water in the bay that surrounds Paqueta is often polluted. While it is not recommended to swim after heavy rain or near any sewage pipes, the city of Rio currently advises that Praia da Imbuca, Praia da Moreninha and Praia de JosÈ Bonifacio on Paqueta are all suitable for bathers. Visitors can always consult the website Praia Limpa, which uses up-to-date data from INEA, the local environment agency, to check the cleanliness of the water. If you'd rather not take the chance in the water, the beaches themselves are idyllic and clean.

Best places to eat

Not widely known as a culinary hotspot, Paqueta has a surprising number of excellent restaurants and cafes. Confeitaria Bodega de Paqueta, on Pinheiro Freire, serves delicious cakes and sweets in its cozy shop. The nearby Zeca's Restaurante on PraÁa Bom Jesus is often rated the best restaurant on the island, competing in the city's culinary Comida Di Buteco competition, and serving traditional Brazilian barbecue and seafood. It also has live music from Friday to Sunday.

Perhaps the best kept secret of the island is Casa da Noca. Open from Friday to Sunday, the house doubles as a bed and breakfast, cafe and late-night live music spot. The drinks are delectable, made with artisanal ingredients, as are the snacks, such as the outstanding pizza arabe.

For those looking to stay the night, the previously mentioned Casa da Noca is an excellent option. Otherwise there is the charming pousada (bed and breakfast) Hospedaria Santa Barbara, which has three boutique suites and an intimate atmosphere, or the more traditional Hotel Lido Paqueta. There are also a number of short-term rentals across the island.

Shrimp, garlic and oil equals a tasty and quick dinner

In theory, garlic shrimp pasta has all the makings of an ideal weeknight meal. Toss a few quick-cooking ingredients like shrimp, garlic and oil with boiled dried pasta, and only the salad's left holding up dinner. But there are challenges. Delicate shrimp overcooks in a matter of seconds. Volatile garlic can easily become overbearing or bitter (or simply disappear). Add to that the feat of getting a brothy sauce to coat the pasta, and this simple recipe turns into a precarious balancing act. But we still wanted it all: al dente pasta and moist shrimp bound by a supple sauce infused with a deep garlic flavor.

GARLIC SHRIMP PASTA

Ingredients

Servings: 4-6

Start to finish: 45 minutes

1 pound large shrimp (26 to 30 per pound),
peeled, deveined, and each shrimp cut into 3 pieces

3 tablespoons olive oil

9 garlic cloves, peeled (5 cloves minced and 4
cloves smashed)

Salt and pepper

1 pound penne, ziti, or other short, tubular pasta

1/4-1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes

2 teaspoons all-purpose flour

3/4 cup bottled clam juice

1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 teaspoon lemon juice, plus lemon wedges for
serving

Preparation

Combine shrimp, 1 tablespoon oil, one-third of minced garlic, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in bowl. Let shrimp marinate at room temperature for 20 minutes. Heat smashed garlic and remaining 2 tablespoons oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-low heat, stirring often, until garlic turns golden but not brown, 4 to 7 minutes. Off heat, remove garlic with slotted spoon and discard. Set skillet with oil aside.

Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add pasta and 1 tablespoon salt and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking water, then drain pasta and return it to pot.

While pasta cooks, return skillet to medium heat. Add shrimp along with marinade, spread into even layer, and cook, without stirring, until oil starts to bubble gently, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir shrimp and continue to cook until almost cooked through, about 1 minute longer. Remove shrimp with slotted spoon and transfer to clean bowl. Add remaining minced garlic and pepper flakes to skillet and cook over medium heat until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Slowly whisk in vermouth and cook for 1 minute. Stir in clam juice and parsley and cook until mixture starts to thicken, 1 to 2 minutes. Off heat, whisk in butter until melted, then stir in lemon juice. Add shrimp and sauce to pasta and toss to combine. Add reserved cooking water as needed to adjust consistency. Season with pepper to taste. Serve immediately, passing lemon wedges separately.





Supersize your falafel into a uniquely delicious burger

Falafel are crispy on the outside, soft on the inside, packed with seasoning, and utterly irresistible. Here we essentially supersize these chickpea fritters to make a uniquely delicious burger. We started by soaking dried chickpeas overnight to soften before grinding them into coarse bits along with onion, herbs, garlic, and spices.

Traditional falafel recipes use flour and chickpeas for a dough-like texture, but uncooked flour yielded patties that were dry and bready; instead, we used a microwaved flour paste to add moisture and create a soft interior. To ensure burger-size falafel, we used a dry measuring cup and dropped scoops of the falafel mixture into a heated skillet and then used the back of a spoon to press each portion into a 3/4-inch-thick patty. To top off our burgers, we created a sauce featuring tahini, Greek yogurt, and lemon juice and also added sliced cucumber and quick pickled red onions for a burger so flavorful we may never go back to falafel wrapped in pita bread.

FALAFEL BURGERS WITH TAHINI-YOGURT SAUCE

Ingredients
 Servings: 4
 Start to finish: 45 minutes
 8 ounces dried chickpeas, picked over and rinsed
 1/3 cup tahini
 1/3 cup plain Greek yogurt
 3 tablespoons lemon juice, plus extra for seasoning
 3/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves and stems
 3/4 cup fresh parsley leaves
 1/2 onion, chopped fine
 2 garlic cloves, minced
 1 1/2 teaspoons ground coriander
 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 1 teaspoon table salt
 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, plus extra as needed

4 hamburger buns, toasted if desired
 1/4 English cucumber, sliced thin
 1/2 cup Quick Pickled Red Onions

Preparation

Place chickpeas in large container and cover with water by 2 to 3 inches. Soak at room temperature for at least 8 hours or up to 24 hours. Drain well. Whisk tahini, yogurt, and lemon juice in medium bowl until smooth. Season with salt and extra lemon juice to taste; set aside. (Sauce can be refrigerated for up to 4 days; let come to room temperature and stir to recombine before serving.)

Process cilantro, parsley, onion, garlic, coriander, cumin, salt, and cayenne in food processor until mixture is finely ground, about 30 seconds, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Add chickpeas and pulse 6 times. Continue to pulse until chickpeas are coarsely chopped and resemble sesame seeds, about 6 more pulses. Transfer mixture to large bowl and set aside.

Whisk flour and 1/3 cup water in bowl until no lumps remain. Microwave, whisking every 10 seconds, until mixture thickens to stiff, smooth, pudding-like consistency that forms mound when dropped from end of whisk into bowl, 40 to 80 seconds. Stir baking powder into flour paste. Add flour paste to chickpea mixture and, using rubber spatula, mix until fully incorporated. (Falafel mixture can be refrigerated for up to 2 hours.)

Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Using 1 cup measure, drop 4 even portions (about 3/4 cup each) into skillet, then press each portion into 3/4-inch-thick patty with back of spoon. Cook until golden brown and crisp on first side, 4 to 6 minutes. Using 2 spatulas, gently flip patties and cook until well browned and crisp on second side, 4 to 6 minutes, adding extra oil as needed if skillet looks dry. Serve burgers on buns, topped with cucumber, pickled onions, and tahini-yogurt sauce.



California fish tacos

are a light and fresh surfside treat

A surfside treat, California fish tacos feature battered and fried crispy white fish and sprightly pickled vegetables. When done right, they are light and fresh, with a lively mix of textures and flavors. This recipe may look involved, but the components come together quickly, so invite your friends to help. The frying uses a mere 3/4-inch layer of oil (no splattering vats).

We made an ultrathin batter by adding two sources of carbonation, beer and baking powder; they provided lift and their slight acidity limited gluten development. Frying in batches helped maintain the oil's temperature. For toppings, we quick-pickled onion and jalapeños and then used the brine to brighten shredded cabbage. Slice fish on the bias if your fillets are not 4 inches wide. Serve with green salsa if desired.

CALIFORNIA-STYLE FISH TACOS

Ingredients

Servings: 6

Start to finish: 1 hour

Pickled Onion and Cabbage:

1 small red onion, halved and sliced thin

2 jalapeño chilies, stemmed and sliced into thin rings

1 cup white wine vinegar

2 tablespoons lime juice

1 tablespoon sugar

Salt and pepper

3 cups shredded green cabbage

Tacos:

2 pounds skinless white fish fillets, such as cod, haddock, or halibut

Salt and pepper

3/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 cup cornstarch

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 quart peanut or vegetable oil

18 (6-inch) corn tortillas, warmed

1 cup fresh cilantro leaves

1 cup crema

Preparation

For the Pickled Onion and Cabbage: Combine onion and jalapeños in medium bowl. Bring vinegar, lime juice, sugar, and 1 teaspoon salt to boil in small saucepan. Pour vinegar

mixture over onion mixture and let sit for at least 30 minutes, or refrigerate for up to 2 days. Transfer 1/4 cup pickling liquid to second medium bowl, add cabbage, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper and toss to combine.

For the Tacos: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 200 F. Set wire rack in rimmed baking sheet. Cut fish crosswise into 4 by 1-inch strips. Pat dry with paper towels; season with salt and pepper. Whisk flour, cornstarch, baking powder, and 1 teaspoon salt together in large bowl. Add fish and toss to coat evenly. Add oil to large Dutch oven until 3/4 inch deep. Heat over medium-high heat to 350 F.

Remove 5 or 6 pieces of fish from batter, allowing excess to drip back into bowl, and add to hot oil, briefly dragging fish along surface of oil to prevent sticking. Adjust burner, if necessary, to maintain oil temperature between 325 F and 350 F. Fry fish, stirring gently to prevent pieces from sticking together and turning as needed, until golden brown and crisp, about 8 minutes. Using slotted spoon or spider skimmer, transfer fish to prepared wire rack and place in oven to keep warm. Return oil to 350 F and repeat with remaining fish. Serve fish and pickled onions and cabbage with tortillas, cilantro, and crema.

Comic

Word Search

Old TV Shows 2 - Word Search

SYLA EYCNEGREME PGM
 EHLIGHLANDERTZLACA
 CLWOWBYGOSNPINRPJ
 EHLETOHPYYRVOVTEO
 CYIELQHURORIBRYDR
 IETCNOGSFETRILOID
 VLQOAEUIYAMNAFFHA
 ILPOSGLGNBTOVHFW D
 MALICEONRISFGHIAR
 AVWHRYEHNAQOSLVRI
 IGAXOIOOTOFNACWEYV
 MICPLDIUJPMTREQVF
 XBTAAANCHEYENNEHDI
 EOSNOOPSRVLI SITY

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| ALICE | HARRY O | PROFILER |
| ALIEN NATION | HIGHLANDER | RAWHIDE |
| BIG VALLEY | HOTEL | RHODA |
| CHEYENNE | LOU GRANT | RIN TIN TIN |
| CHICAGO HOPE | MAJOR DAD | SILVER SPOONS |
| ELLEN | MASH | THE COSBY SHOW |
| EMERGENCY | MIAMI VICE | WISEGUY |
| GOMER PYLE | PARTY OF FIVE | |

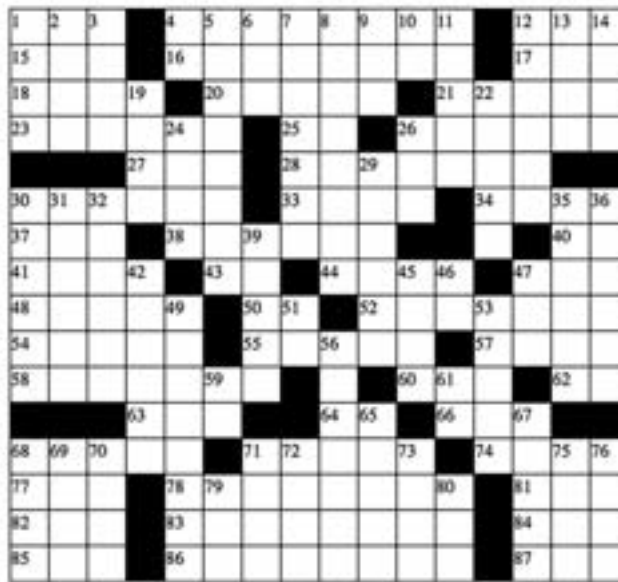
Yesterday's Solution

Old TV Shows 1 - Solution

HEEHAWYMPFODTDZOE
 RFSNWVPDRMTFEORTK
 STUNHRSEOHAKWAAO
 TWHLSOIAEOCVBRBZRM
 RIBGLSJWJTDOMEZS
 UNGPAHARILTYMRLAN
 OPZRVLOWACZXDBINU
 CEFHTEUOENXIWHCG
 TAWOXBGDSLDCCNOLK
 HKNQH HQYWETPOONHI
 GSYLIMAFSMADDAHAD
 IOGNTXCHINABEACHM
 NAMTABYLPLXILAPHN
 YNNANEHTOROSEANNE

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| ADDAMS FAMILY | GUNSMOKE | ROSEANNE |
| BATMAN | HAZEL | TARZAN |
| BEWITCHED | HEE HAW | THE NANNY |
| CHINA BEACH | HOWDY DOODY | THE WALTONS |
| COACH | I SPY | TWIN PEAKS |
| DEAR JOHN | LAUGH IN | |
| DOCTOR WHO | MANNIX | |
| FRASIER | MAVERICK | |

Crossword 2222



ACROSS

1. What you can repeat immediately after perceiving it.
4. Dry brandy distilled in the Armagnac district of France.
12. An honorary degree in science.
15. An associate degree in applied science.
16. The railing around the stern of a ship.
17. The quality of a color as determined by its dominant wavelength.
18. (pathology) An elevation of the skin filled with serous fluid.
20. The capacitance of a capacitor that has an equal and opposite charge of 1 coulomb on each plate and a voltage difference of 1 volt between the plates.
21. Jordan's port.
23. Consider or hold as true.
25. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
27. A potent estrogen used in medicine and in feed for livestock and poultry.
28. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
30. A deep bow.
33. Lie adjacent to another.
34. Type genus of the Anatidae.
37. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
38. Graceful and pleasing.
40. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
41. A youth subculture that began in London in the early 1960s.
43. A metric unit of length equal to one billionth of a meter.
44. A genus of Mustelidae.
48. The 18th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
50. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
52. Provide commentary for a film, for example.
54. A projecting bay window corbeled or cantilevered out from a wall.
55. Scandinavian punch made of claret and aquavit with spices and raisins and orange peel and sugar.
57. The sixth month of the civil year.
58. A Bantu language sometimes considered a dialect of Zulu.
60. Take in solid food.
62. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
63. How long something has existed.
64. (informal) Being satisfactory or in satisfactory condition.
66. The cry made by sheep.
68. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
74. A quantity of no importance.
77. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
78. Someone who tells a story.
81. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
82. A sharp projection on an edge or surface.
83. A living organism characterized by voluntary movement.
84. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
85. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
86. Trees or shrubs of the families Ebenaceae or Sapotaceae or Styracaceae or Symplocaceae.
87. A sign of assent or salutation or command.

DOWN

1. An island in the Netherlands Antilles that is the top of an extinct volcano.
2. A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
3. One thousandth of a second.
4. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
5. Someone who travels by raft.
6. A master's degree in fine arts.
7. Of or relating to the nations of Africa or their peoples.
8. Capable of being graded (for quality or rank or size etc.).
9. A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.
10. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
11. An assertion of a right (as to money or property).
12. In societies practicing shamanism.
13. A communist state in the Caribbean on the island of Cuba.
14. Made of fir or pine.
19. English monk and scholar (672-735).
22. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
24. Small beads made from polished shells and formerly used as money by native Americans.
26. Used of physical heat.
29. The act of buying.
31. On a ship, train, plane or other vehicle.
32. A male child (a familiar term of address to a boy).
35. Any organic compound formed by adding alcohol molecules to aldehyde molecules.
36. Whitish fibrous membrane (albuginea) that with the cornea forms the outer covering of the eyeball.
39. An iconic mental representation.
42. The fifth month of the civil year.
45. A feeling of intense anger.
46. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
47. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
49. A quality of refined gracefulness and good taste.
51. Being ten more than one hundred forty.
53. A switch made from the stems of the rattan palms.
56. Dragonflies and damselflies.
59. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
61. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
65. Fishtail palm of India to Malay Peninsula.
67. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
69. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
70. The villain in William Shakespeare's tragedy who tricked Othello into murdering his wife.
71. A member of an Algonquian people living in central Canada.
72. A port city in northwestern Algeria and the country's 2nd largest city.
73. The center of an object.
75. Herb of the Pacific islands grown throughout the tropics for its edible root and in temperate areas as an ornamental for its large glossy leaves.
76. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
79. Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
80. A widely distributed system consisting of all the cells able to ingest bacteria or colloidal particles etc, except for certain white blood cells.

Yesterday's Solution

TIME FLYLEAF BLT
 ADAM REAUMUR AAR
 CELERIAC F ANIMA
 TASSBT CI ICECAP
 INTRA A KAN
 ACADIAN TOSTADA
 TALENT PLAN SLAM
 TEG ADE X MICRO
 ELATE HAZY ODE
 SULINDAC KEFTAB
 TM ND VERSO ETNA
 GETA ORCA
 TAMED SHUA SCAM
 SCAD ASEAN TAKA
 ANI SPARERIB FHA
 RED BASILICA EAR

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

TV Listings



00:25 Scorched Earth 2018
02:10 Around The World In 80 Days
04:20 Boone: The Bounty Hunter
06:00 Mine
07:55 Around The World In 80 Days
10:05 Boone: The Bounty Hunter
11:45 A Knight's Tale
14:05 Chasing Gold
15:40 Overdrive
17:25 Captain America: The First Avenger
19:35 Bad Boys II
22:00 Transformers: The Last Knight

13:45 Live PD: Police Patrol
14:10 It Takes A Killer
14:40 It Takes A Killer
15:05 Homicide Hunter
16:00 The First 48
17:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
19:00 The First 48
20:00 Homicide Hunter
21:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
22:00 PD Cam
23:00 Live PD: Police Patrol



00:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
00:35 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
01:35 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
02:05 Friends
02:30 Are We There Yet?
02:55 House Of Food
03:45 Impractical Jokers
04:10 Police Interceptors
05:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
05:30 House Of Food
06:20 Catch A Contractor
07:10 Friends
07:35 Police Interceptors
08:30 House Of Food
09:20 Catch A Contractor
10:10 Takeshis Castle Thailand
11:00 Ridiculousness Arabia
11:50 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
12:50 Friends
13:15 Police Interceptors
14:10 Impractical Jokers
14:35 Friends
15:00 Takeshis Castle Thailand
15:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
16:40 Comedy Central Presents Comedy 3alwagef
17:40 Are We There Yet?
18:00 Friends
18:30 Are We There Yet?
19:00 Police Interceptors
20:00 Catch A Contractor
21:00 Friends
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
22:30 Impractical Jokers
22:55 Takeshis Castle Thailand
23:45 Ridiculousness Arabia



00:30 Storm Chasers
01:20 My Cat From Hell
02:10 Bad Dog
03:00 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
03:50 How It's Made
04:40 Weather Gone Viral
05:30 Storm Chasers
06:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things
07:00 Mysteries At The Museum
07:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
08:40 How It's Made
09:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
10:20 My Cat From Hell
11:10 Bad Dog
12:00 Mysteries At The Museum
12:50 Weather Gone Viral
13:40 Storm Chasers
14:30 How It's Made
15:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things
16:10 Xtreme Waterparks
17:00 My Cat From Hell
17:50 Bad Dog
18:40 Breaking Magic
19:30 The Next Great Magician
20:20 The Carbonaro Effect
21:10 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
22:00 How It's Made
22:50 Xtreme Waterparks
23:40 The Next Great Magician



01:00 To Catch A Killer
02:00 True Conviction
03:00 The Madeleine Mccann Mystery
04:30 To Catch A Killer
06:10 I'd Kill For You
07:00 Killer Unknown
07:55 Blood Relatives

08:50 Scott Peterson: Pregnant Wife Missing
10:40 I'd Kill For You
11:35 Your Worst Nightmare
13:25 American Monster
14:20 To Catch A Killer
15:15 Betrayed
16:10 I'd Kill For You
17:05 Love Kills
18:00 Natalie Wood: An American Murder Mystery
19:00 Shadow Of Doubt
20:00 To Catch A Killer
21:00 Steven Avery: Innocent Or Guilty?
22:00 Dead On Arrival
23:00 Bill Cosby: An American Scandal



00:00 Alex & Co.
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles
01:40 Alex & Co.
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:55 Hank Zipzer
03:45 Alex & Co.
04:35 Violetta
05:25 Binny And The Ghost
05:45 Rolling With The Ronks
06:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
06:25 Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
06:55 Bug Juice: My Adventures At Camp
07:20 Penny On M.A.R.S
07:45 K.C. Undercover
08:10 Bizaardvark
08:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
09:25 Tangled: The Series
10:15 Bizaardvark
11:05 Liv And Maddie
11:55 K.C. Undercover
12:45 Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
14:00 101 Dalmatian Street
14:15 Shake It Up
14:40 K.C. Undercover
15:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:10 A.N.T. Farm
15:35 Penny On M.A.R.S
16:00 101 Dalmatian Street
16:15 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
16:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
16:50 Raven's Home
17:15 Bug Juice: My Adventures At Camp
17:40 Bizaardvark
18:05 K.C. Undercover
18:30 Bunk'd
18:55 Descendants Wicked World
19:00 Raven's Home
19:25 Liv And Maddie
19:50 K.C. Undercover
20:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:20 A.N.T. Farm
20:45 Bizaardvark
21:10 Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure
21:35 Bug Juice: My Adventures At Camp
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
22:50 Lolirock
23:10 Evermoor Chronicles
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 The Lion Guard
00:25 PJ Masks Shorts
00:30 Trulli Tales
01:00 PJ Masks
01:50 The Hive
02:00 Zou
02:30 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 The Hive
03:40 Zou
04:25 The Hive
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster
05:35 The Hive
05:45 PJ Masks
06:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
07:00 Disney Muppet Babies
07:20 Paprika

07:30 Paprika
07:40 PJ Masks
08:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
08:15 Puppy Dog Pals
08:30 Vampirina
08:45 Fancy Nancy Splits
09:00 Sofia The First
09:30 Elena Of Avalor
10:00 Doc McStuffins
10:55 Cars Toons
11:00 PJ Masks
12:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
13:00 Fancy Nancy Splits
14:00 Vampirina
15:00 Gigantosaurus
16:00 The Lion Guard
16:30 Elena Of Avalor
17:00 Gigantosaurus
17:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
18:00 Fancy Nancy
18:30 Vampirina
19:00 PJ Masks
19:30 Puppy Dog Pals
20:00 The Lion Guard
20:25 Vampirina Ghoul Girls Rock!
20:30 Elena Of Avalor
21:00 Gigantosaurus
21:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
22:00 Fancy Nancy
22:30 Vampirina
23:00 PJ Masks
23:30 Puppy Dog Pals



00:15 Dual Survival
01:05 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
01:50 How Do They Do It?
02:35 What On Earth?
03:20 Diesel Brothers
04:50 How Do They Do It?
05:35 Container Wars
06:00 Shed And Buried
06:20 Container Wars
06:45 Dual Survival
07:35 Deadliest Catch
08:20 Gold Rush
09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
09:55 Outback Truckers
10:45 How Do They Do It?
11:30 Diesel Brothers
13:05 Shed And Buried
13:30 Container Wars
13:55 Outback Truckers
14:40 Railroad Alaska
15:30 Wild Australia
16:15 Diesel Brothers
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
17:50 Gold Rush
18:40 How Do They Do It?
19:25 Diesel Brothers
21:00 Wheeler Dealers
21:50 Diesel Brothers
22:40 Shifting Gears With Aaron Kaufman
23:30 Deadliest Catch



00:15 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
00:35 Boyster
01:25 Counterfeit Cat
02:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:00 Boyster
03:50 Dude That's My Ghost
04:40 Counterfeit Cat
05:00 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:35 Marvel's Avengers: Black Panther's Quest
07:00 Phineas And Ferb
08:00 Mech-X4: Let's Call It Mech-X4!
08:50 Milo Murphy's Law
09:40 Big City Greens
10:25 Kick Buttowski
10:50 Phineas And Ferb
11:00 Gravity Falls
11:25 Gravity Falls
11:50 Milo Murphy's Law
12:05 Space Chickens In Space
12:30 DuckTales
12:55 Big Hero 6 The Series

13:20 Lab Rats
14:10 Phineas And Ferb
15:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
15:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:30 Space Chickens In Space
15:55 Big City Greens
16:20 Big Hero 6 The Series
16:45 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
17:00 Milo Murphy's Law
17:31 DuckTales
17:55 Phineas And Ferb
19:00 Milo Murphy's Law: The Phineas & Ferb Effect
19:50 Marvel's Avengers: Black Panther's Quest
20:15 Lab Rats
21:05 Kick Buttowski
21:30 Big City Greens
21:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
22:00 Milo Murphy's Law
23:00 Dude That's My Ghost
23:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja



00:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
02:00 E! News
03:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
04:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop
08:55 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
11:40 E! News
12:35 Very Cavallari
15:20 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
19:00 E! News
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
22:00 Botched



00:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Inside Windsor Castle
03:25 Royal Babies Of Windsor
04:20 This Time Next Year
05:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
06:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
07:10 Inside Windsor Castle
08:05 Royal Babies Of Windsor
09:00 This Time Next Year
09:55 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
10:55 Couples Come Dine With Me
11:50 Inside Windsor Castle
12:45 Emmerdale
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Couples Come Dine With Me
15:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
16:00 Queen Victoria's Letters: A Monarch Unveiled
17:00 Cannonball
17:55 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
18:50 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
21:00 Queen Victoria's Letters: A Monarch Unveiled
22:00 Cannonball
22:50 Emmerdale
23:40 Coronation Street



00:15 Dogfights
01:00 In Search Of Aliens
01:45 Engineering Disasters
02:30 Modern Marvels
03:15 Ancient Aliens
04:45 Battles BC
05:30 Dogfights
06:15 The Human Calculator
07:00 In Search Of Aliens
07:45 Engineering Disasters

08:30 Modern Marvels
09:15 Ancient Aliens
10:45 The Greeks
11:30 Dogfights
12:15 The Human Calculator
13:00 In Search Of Aliens
13:45 Engineering Disasters
14:30 Modern Marvels
15:15 Ancient Aliens
16:45 The Greeks
17:30 Dogfights
18:15 In Search Of Aliens
19:00 Engineering Disasters
19:45 How 2 Win
20:30 Ancient Aliens
22:00 Search For The Lost Giants
22:45 The Human Calculator
23:30 Stan Lee's Superhumans



00:20 Mountain Men
01:05 Pawn Stars
01:50 American Pickers
02:35 Storage Wars: Barry's Best Buys
03:25 Ax Men
04:15 Duck Dynasty
05:05 Forged In Fire
06:00 Fifth Gear
06:45 Mountain Men
07:30 Pawn Stars
08:15 American Pickers
09:00 Storage Wars: Barry's Best Buys
09:45 Ax Men
10:30 Duck Dynasty
11:15 Forged In Fire
12:00 Fifth Gear
12:45 Ax Men
15:00 Detroit Steel
15:45 Truck Night In America
18:00 The Lost Evidence
18:45 Counting Cars
19:05 Counting Cars
19:30 Navy Seals: America's Secret Warriors
21:00 The Rise And Fall Of El Chapo
22:40 Football Godfathers
23:30 Truck Night In America



00:45 What's For Sale?
01:00 Nat Geo People HD
01:10 What's For Sale?
01:40 The Wine Show
02:35 Island Hunter
03:00 Nat Geo People HD
03:30 Fish Tank Kings
04:25 Confucius Was A Foodie
05:00 Nat Geo People HD
05:20 Eat: The Story Of Food
06:15 Eat Street
07:00 Nat Geo People HD
07:10 The Wine Show
08:05 Island Hunter
09:00 Fish Tank Kings
09:00 Nat Geo People HD
09:00 Fish Tank Kings
09:55 Confucius Was A Foodie
10:50 Eat: The Story Of Food
11:00 Nat Geo People HD
11:45 Eat Street
12:40 The Wine Show
13:00 Nat Geo People HD
13:35 Island Hunter
14:30 Fish Tank Kings
15:00 Nat Geo People HD
15:25 Confucius Was A Foodie
16:20 Eat: The Story Of Food
17:00 Nat Geo People HD
17:15 Eat Street
18:10 48 Hrs Destination
19:00 Nat Geo People HD
19:05 Island Hunter
20:00 Fish Tank Kings
21:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
21:00 Nat Geo People HD
21:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
22:00 The Game Chef
22:25 Peter Kuruvita Coastal Kitchen
22:55 Eat Street
23:00 Nat Geo People HD
23:20 Eat Street
23:50 48 Hrs Destination

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Finally you're finding peace today over an issue that's confounded you for the past weeks. Thank goodness for that. Understanding others helps you to understand yourself at this time. It's not often that you study you as you've been doing. The results are probably why you don't, Aries. It makes you take too much time on things you'd rather be racing towards rather than reviewing. Your love of adventure is showing. Gossip may be part of your more enjoyable times today. Finding out about another's misadventures seems to quench a little emotional thirst you have now. Get together with friends tonight.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You've got a lot of energy today but you're also emotionally frustrated by many things. Feeling good about life isn't one of your strong points this morning. Your feelings are going against much of what you believe. You really want to be alone with your thoughts though that may not be possible now. Digging into your life from ethics to money matters has you thinking back through your life and the conclusions you came to then, Taurus. This gives you the fodder to feed on about how to make your life better. Towards the end of the day you may find yourself feeling better about your life and having taken the time to look it over. You'll find the value in it that eluded you today.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Someone may challenge you on a very sensitive item on this your birthday. Instead of feeling he or she is wrong the first place you go is to psychoanalyzing your part in the situation. That's okay but don't lose confidence over someone else's confrontations. This may be on them, not you. Restrictions may make you feel closed in at the moment, Gemini. Break free with the peace you're also feeling now. Do things that make you feel better about yourself. Employ meditation or something else that brings you peace on this special day. Don't listen to people you know don't have your best interests at heart. Enjoy your day.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Like the little engine that could who kept trying to get up the mountain, slowly and surely, he was finally able to make it. That's your life now at work. Here's some don'ts with one especially important. Don't burn yourself out. Work intelligently and with focus. Don't come on too strong. Be there and be working. That's all you need. Don't make waves. That can hurt you before you even get started well, Cancer. Feel the lay of the land and find what you enjoy if on a new job or a change in position. If you follow these standards, you'll be at this job a long time to come and make the prosperity you desire. Woo Hoo for you!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Pushy, offsetting energy you may feel leaves you exhausted today even if you took off work yesterday. This is all about you. It's yours. Think of ways to exhaust the energy itself such as making love to your spouse or significant other. Ideas are hitting you in waves which bring better material gain, so this isn't a time of being at a standstill even if you're not at work, Leo. You're at your mental best with sharp ideas and knowledge of just how to put these thoughts to work to make the best for you and your workmates. Big money is showing up now. Higher ups are happy. Slow down and enjoy the process and the reward.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your charming barometer is high. People love you. If you want a new job, now is the time to interview. Tell your friends and they'll help. Material acquisition is here for the asking with now being the time to go for it, Virgo. Anything you start now will become prosperous soon making you feel better about yourself. This is a time of peace. The peace of knowing yourself and realizing you can do anything you want in this life. People approach you from all sides to get your thoughts on items they need. You've got it going on.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a good time to work with people partially because it's just being with others who have a common goal in mind. You can expect a sense of support and good will from those with whom you work. Your directional or managerial abilities are uppermost in your thoughts today, Libra. Enjoying your career is one of the best gifts you can have. This is a new cycle that brings a feeling of peace. But that's not all. Money is coming to you at a great pace and will be for some time. Make the most of it.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Humor might be seen and felt by you with glee but for the one you're using as an example, not so much. Good job-related ideas keep you on top of things at work. Your higher ups enjoy having you give them the weekly update because you don't sugarcoat anything. Instead your communication skills are highly appreciated by the powers that be. Don't think about selling your home now. Love isn't what it's cracked up to be either. It could be broken in a number of ways. Even with all this going on, you have a feeling of peace. That's because you've made up your mind. All you have to do now is put it into effect.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Material progress is yours at this time because your social habits and your love life is bringing you into contact with people who don't mind assisting you in making your life more prosperous. You're at peace with yourself too. Because of the pleasant life your leading without much stress, you have the ability to work harder and make it more profitable in doing so. Love is high on your list as well, Sagittarius. Looking for love tends to make you happier at this time. Troubles seem to be gone to the wayside for which you're quite excited. You have a need to be free of wishing for money and more. You're living your dream.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Frustration with not getting as much as you'd like done today may cause you consternation. Coworkers don't mind pitching in and helping you get what you want done but even that's not enough to make your day brighter. Something said or done may make you lose your temper which includes flying off the handle, Capricorn. Anyone who knows you knows they don't want that. The good part of this day is that you feel a sense of peace even though parts of the day can get your blood boiling. Before you allow that to happen, close your eyes, take a breath, breathe to the bottom of your lungs and let the air out between parted lips. Feel your peace after breathing like this about three to five times grow stronger.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

The day off yesterday helped if you took it. Today, you're feeling at peace and ready to take on the world. It may be a little more sedate than that but the intention is the same. You want stability in work and at home. The way to manage that is to keep on, keeping on. Being able to think quietly and put things into practice that will help your work mates as well as you, is easily done today as long as you don't discuss it with others until tomorrow. Some of your coworkers aren't having a very good day and can put a damper on yours if you're not careful.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

After a hot standoff between you and someone who really should have stayed away from you, returning to self-control may be what you really need. Then the both of you need to go to separate corners. Generally, you're more understanding but you're not as clear-headed now and this person hit you at the wrong time. Not thinking of the consequences, you may be ready to invite the idiot outside for an old-fashioned rumble in the streets. Truly it is better if you can get a handle on this situation and calm down. Turn on the music and try to enjoy a better time with the peace that comes over you.

Country Codes

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antiga	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Malajorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Nigar	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Friday, May 31, 2019

DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- ◆ Diagnosis/ Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

@Malhajry

DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

- ◆ Dermatology board certified.
- ◆ Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- ◆ Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- ◆ Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

SPECIALIZED IN:

- ◆ Dermatology & Cosmetic Treatments.
- ◆ Laser Treatments.
- ◆ Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- ◆ Body & Face Contouring.
- ◆ Injectable Fillers & Botox.

RENOVA BEAUTY & BEYOND

SHARQ, Ahmad Alkhatir St., Building 16, Floor 11.
Tel: (+965) 22060777
@fshahmed, @fshahmed, @fshahmed
Email: dr.fahad@beautyandbeyond.com.kw

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

Telephone: 1830003 Ext: 2400
alsalam.int.hospital

Specialized in:

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

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

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

Specialized in:

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

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ YAAT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery

◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
◆ Transanal minimally Invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

daralshifa
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta
at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

daralshifa
Tele:1802 555

IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC

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

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

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant

http://www.international-clinic.com **Tel: 1886677** ic_kwt

To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617 or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

Health

Ophthalmology Services

Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally
Senior Registrar

Dr. Ahmed Hossni Abd Elhamid
Consultant

Dr. Abeer Khattab
Specialist

Cataract Surgery **Glaucoma** **Retina** **General Ophthalmology** **Follow-Up All Treatments**

Follow Us On Social Media @Haddadclinic

Tel: 1800092
Whatsapp Us
+905-8000 2184

Dr Sahar Ghannam

Dermatology consultant, skin treatment and laser

**Timing: Saturdays to Wednesdays from 9 am to 1 pm
and from 8 pm to 12 pm
Thursday from 9:30 am until 1 pm**

Friday is a holiday.

Address: Fourth Ring Road - Abdallah Fadalath Street, Meidan Hawally, opposite fire station - block 35, building 31.

Clinic Phones: 25610407/ 409/ 314 Fax: 25610465
Mobaile: 90974754/ 99166746

Facebook: Dr.saharghannsmclinic Email: drsgderma@gmail.com

WELCOME

Dr Tammam Abo Ali
Consultant ENT, Head Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon

- Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
- Septoplasty and turbinate reduction surgery by laser or RF
- Snoring and OSAP Surgery
- Rhinoplasty with open and closed techniques
- Microscopic Middle Ear Surgery and Tympanoplasty
- Salivary gland and parotid surgery
- Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
- Micro laryngeal surgery

1 888 883
www.qmc-kuwait.com

qmc Kuwait

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102

24835616 / 24835617

or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

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

Academic Certificates – Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228 Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

Dr. Husain Alenezi

-Board Certified Urologist.
-Endourology Society-Approved Fellowship In Endourology And Robotic Surgery At Western University, Ontario, Canada.

Expert in diagnosing and treating:

- 1- Urinary Stones (Kidney, Ureter & Bladder) By Endoscopy & Laser
- 2- Prostate Cancer And Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- 3- Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms In Males And Females
- 4- Tumors And Malignancies Of The Urinary Tract (Kidney, Adrenals, Ureter, Bladder And Testes)
- 5- Male Factor Infertility And Varicoceles (Microscopic Surgery)
- 6- Erectile Dysfunction

Contact Taiba Hospital: 1808088 94449452 Twitter: @DrHusain_Urol

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family

Book your appointments today!

EXIR اكسير

Dr. Kiran Turak (Gynaecologist) **Dr. Zareena Zahir** (Gynaecologist) **Dr. Masar Khan** (Senior Cardiologist) **Dr. P. Seshendra Nath** (Orthopedic Consultant (JOST) Specialized in Neck, Shoulder Hip and Knee)

50721507 / 24551555 **EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER** Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

Tel : 24568857 / 24568859 info@exircenterku.com www.exircenterku.com

Classifieds

FOR SALE

Running Indian Restaurant

Contact:
65607858
66578139

07/05/2017, permanent resident of Borli Panchatan Raigad Ms. Given name: Wasim Mohammed, surname: Khan. (C 5543) 29-5-2019

I, Mr. Omprakash Ramchandra Sasane changed my old surname Omprakas & given name Ramchandra Sasane to new Surname Sansane & given name Omprakash Ramchandra adhar No. 960505763436 (C 5540)

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **George Vishnu**, holder of Indian Passport No. S5764774 issued at Kuwait on 28-5-2019 permanent resident of George Vishnu Stanmore Estate OC. Valparai, Coimbatore Dist. Pin 642127, Tamil Nadu, India, and presently residing Salmiya block 10, my change name from George Vishnu to Viju George with immediate effect. (C 5542)

I, **Vaseem Mohammed Khan**, holder of Indian Passport No. R5459717, issued at Kuwait on

I, **Bishar Mohammed Kutty S/o Andipatil Eusoof Mohammed Kutty**, holder of Indian Passport No. Z3830803 hereby change my name to Bisher Mohammed Kutty for all official purposes. (C 5541) 28-5-2019

MATRIMONIAL

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

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines`	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	33 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	30 °C
ABDALY	48 °C	30 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	48 °C	34 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	46 °C	29 °C
SALMIYAH	40 °C	33 °C
AHMADI	43 °C	35 °C
NUWAISIB	47 °C	32 °C
WAFRA	47 °C	31 °C
SALMY	46 °C	31 °C

SFC. CHART	30/05/2019 0000 UTC

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	05/31	Very hot and some scattered clouds will appear	47 °C	30 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Saturday	06/01	Hot	46 °C	29 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Sunday	06/02	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	46 °C	30 °C	NW-SE	15 - 40 km/h
Monday	06/03	Very hot	47 °C	28 °C	NW-SE	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:16
Sunrise	04:49
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:42
Isha	20:12

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	48 °C
MIN. Temp.	27 °C
MAX. RH	31 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	S 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Business

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2019

39 China accuses US of 'naked economic terrorism' as Beijing ramps up rhetoric



40 Will Apple's roots in China hold fast amid rising political storm?



41 Trade gloom, rising oil, Boeing 737 MAX woes to cloud aviation summit



KUWAIT: A group picture of KIB senior management with the global coordinators and joint lead managers.

KIB issues \$300 million AT1 sukuk

DIB, First ADB, KFH Capital and KAMCO joint lead managers, Boubyan Bank co-manager

KUWAIT: The Chairman of KIB, Sheikh Mohamed Jarrah Al-Sabah stated that "as a result of Kuwait International Bank's ("KIB") outstanding achievements during the last few years, the solid financial position, its strong credit rating, in line with its well-planned expansionary strategy and its sustainability; and to maintain an appropriate capital adequacy ratio (CAR) level, the Bank decided on issuing an AT1 sukuk.

He mentioned that KIB, at the beginning of the year, considered issuing the AT1 sukuk, which was approved by its Annual General Assembly and all competent regulatory bodies.

On 29 May 2019, KIB has successfully priced a \$300 million AT1 perpetual Sukuk that classify under Tier 1 capital as per Basel III and CBK guidelines at an annual profit rate of 5.625 percent. KIB received an immense investor demand as evidenced by a peak orderbook of \$4.6 billion representing an oversubscription rate of over 15

times. This issuance of perpetual Non-Call 5-year Sukuk, is based on the Islamic sharia principle called "Mudarabah".

This issuance has been arranged with efforts made by a group of participating parties including Citi and Standard Chartered who acted as joint global coordinators. Dubai Islamic Bank, First Abu Dhabi Bank, KFH Capital and KAMCO acted as joint lead managers and bookrunners. Boubyan Bank acted as co-manager.

The weeklong roadshow launched by KIB attracted investors from 26 countries participated in the Sukuk, with final distribution of 51 percent to the international investors and 49 percent to the regional investors.

On this occasion, Raed Jawad Bukhamseen, Vice Chairman and CEO of KIB, stated: "This Sukuk transaction is a clear evidence that Kuwait possesses the components required to attract international investors to enter the Kuwaiti market. We are very

pleased with the outcome of this Sukuk transaction, which is the first time issued by KIB".

He also added: "I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the regulatory authorities represented by the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority for their continued support to the issuance of Sukuk by our bank, including extending their regulatory approvals and guidance in this regard. I would also like to appreciate the relentless efforts of the global coordinators, lead managers & book runners and co-manager. My gratitude is also extended to all local and international investors, and to the bank's teamwork, who helped in realizing this achievement in a record time.

Bukhamseen added: "This AT1 Sukuk has been issued as an advanced capital instrument under Basel III Capital Adequacy compliance and in line with the rules and regulations of the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital



Markets Authority, to be made available for trading in the secondary market once issued. The Sukuk will be listed on Euronext Dublin. This Sukuk adds a new source of capital to KIB, which will support diversification of its capital and funding as well as supporting the expansion strategy and enhancing the Bank's capital base in accordance with Basel III guidelines. He also added: "The demand for Sukuk issued by our bank reflects the confidence shown in the strength and solidity of the Kuwaiti-banking sector, in general, and the Islamic banking and KIB operations in particular."

He also commented: "The issuance of perpetual Non-Call 5Y Sukuk, which are in accordance with Islamic Sharia, will enable the Bank to maintain



Raed Jawad Bukhamseen

clear indication of the confidence shown by both international and regional investors in our strategy, as well as our consistent financial performance. This issuance of Sukuk will also support the Bank's planned growth and development plan for the coming years with a favorable cost of funds.

Business

US first-quarter GDP growth revised slightly down to 3.1%

Temporary boost from exports fading

WASHINGTON: US economic growth accelerated in the first quarter, the government confirmed on yesterday, but there are signs that the temporary boost from exports and inventory accumulation is already fading, with production at factories slowing.

Gross domestic product increased at a 3.1 percent annualized rate, the government said in its second reading of first-quarter GDP. That was slightly down from the 3.2 percent pace estimated last month.

The economy grew at a 2.2 percent pace in the October-December period. While the government trimmed its initial estimate for inventory investment, export growth was raised. These two volatile components were the key drivers of the rise in GDP in the first quarter. There was a small upward revision to consumer spending growth. Business spending on equipment actually contracted in the last quarter, while the housing market was weaker than initially thought.

Economists polled by Reuters had expected GDP growth for the first three months of the year would be trimmed to a 3.1 percent rate. Excluding trade, inventories and government spending, the economy grew at a 1.3 percent rate as reported last month. That was the slowest since the second quarter of 2013.

The economy will mark 10 years of expansion in July, the longest on record. Growth is, however, slowing. Industrial production and orders for long-lasting manufactured goods declined in April as businesses placed fewer orders at factories while working off the

inventory overhang. Retail sales were also weak last month and the housing market continues to struggle.

The moderation in growth largely reflects the fading stimulus from the Trump administration's hefty tax cuts and spending increases last year. A trade war between the United States and China is also seen hurting the economy. The Atlanta Federal Reserve is forecasting GDP rising at a 1.3 percent pace in the second quarter. The government also reported yesterday after tax profits without inventory valuation and capital consumption adjustment, which correspond to S&P 500 profits, fell at a 0.8 percent rate or \$15.9 billion in the first quarter after falling at a 1.7 percent pace or \$34.2 billion in the fourth quarter.

An alternative measure of economic growth, gross domestic income (GDI), increased at a rate of 1.4 percent in the first quarter, compared to fourth quarter's 0.5 percent pace.

The average of GDP and GDI, also referred to as gross domestic output and considered a better measure of economic activity, increased at a 2.2 percent rate in the January-March period, up from a 1.3 percent growth pace in the fourth quarter. Export growth in the first quarter was revised up to a 4.8 percent rate, outpacing an upgrade to imports. As a result, trade added 0.96 percentage point to GDP rather than the 1.03 percentage points estimated last month. Trade tensions between the United States and China have caused wild swings in the trade deficit, with exporters and importers trying to stay ahead of the tariff



WASHINGTON, DC: In this file photo, union workers demonstrate against the government shutdown in Washington, DC. US economic growth at the start of 2019 was slightly slower than originally reported but remained robust despite US President Donald Trump's extended government shutdown, according to new data released yesterday. —AFP

fight between the two economic giants.

The standoff has also had an impact on inventories. Growth in inventories was revised down to a \$125.5 billion rate in the first quarter from the previously estimated \$128.4 billion pace.

Part of the inventory build was because of weak demand, especially in the automotive sector, which is weighing on production at factories. Inventories

contributed 0.60 percentage point to first-quarter GDP, rather than the 0.65 percentage point reported last month.

Growth in consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, was revised up to a 1.3 percent rate. Consumer spending was previously reported to have increased at a 1.2 percent pace in the first quarter. —Reuters

African free trade zone takes effect: African Union

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia: An African free-trade zone came into force yesterday, a step toward creating what the African Union (AU) hopes will be a continent-wide market of 1.2 billion people worth \$2.5 trillion. "This is a historic milestone!" tweeted Albert Muchanga, AU commissioner for trade and industry. "We celebrate the triumph of bold, pragmatic and continent-wide commitment to economic integration." The African Continental Free Trade Area had been ratified by 22 countries by April 29, the requisite number for formally notifying the AU. That paved the way for it to take effect 30 days later as stipulated in its statutes.

The agreement's operational phase is to be launched on July 7 at an AU summit in Niger. There are still a number of outstanding issues to be resolved, including arbitration measures, certifying the origins of goods, tackling corruption and improving infrastructure. Fifty-two of the AU's 55 member states have signed the agreement to establish the free trade area since March 2018, with the notable exception of Nigeria, the largest economy on the continent. But some of Africa's other economic heavyweights—including Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt and South Africa—are among the 24 nations that have formally ratified it. In the last month, Zimbabwe and Burkina Faso joined the fold.

The AU envisions the free trade zone, once fully implemented, driving economic integration and spurring investment within the continent. It hopes the progressive elimination of tariffs will help boost intra-Africa trade by 60 percent within three years. At present, only 16 percent of trade by African nations is with continental neighbors. —AFP

Pakistan approves 20bn rupees fund to support stock market

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan yesterday approved a 20-billion rupees (\$134 million) fund to help boost its stock market after big losses over the past two years, the finance ministry said. Pakistan's stock market has been one of the world's worst

performing over the past two years, with its benchmark 100-Share Index losing almost a third of its value since hitting an all-time high of 53,127 points in May 2017. The market has been hammered because of political instability and a weakening economy that has seen growth slump amid a blow-out of the fiscal and current account deficits, leading to a provisional agreement with the International Monetary Fund for a \$6 billion bailout last month.

The finance ministry said the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, a top decision-making body headed by de facto finance minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, gave the green light for the fund. —Reuters



NEWBURY, California: A model of the working prototype Skai aircraft, which US parent company Alaka'i Technologies says is the world's first vertical takeoff and landing vehicle powered by hydrogen fuel cells, is unveiled at the BMW Designworks offices in Newbury Park, California on Wednesday. —AFP

Business

China accuses US of 'naked economic terrorism' as Beijing ramps up rhetoric

BEIJING: China accused the United States of "naked economic terrorism" yesterday as Beijing ramps up the rhetoric in their trade war.

The world's top two economies are at loggerheads as trade talks have apparently stalled, with US President Donald Trump hiking tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods earlier this month and blacklisting telecoms giant Huawei.

"We are against the trade war, but we are not afraid of it," vice foreign minister Zhang Hanhui said at a press briefing to preview President Xi Jinping's trip to Russia next week.

"This premeditated instigation of a trade conflict is naked economic terrorism, economic chauvinism, and economic bullying," Zhang said, stressing that China opposes the systematic use of sanctions, tariffs and protectionism.

"There is no winner in a trade war," he warned. China has hit back with its own tariff increase on \$60 billion in US products that will take effect Saturday, while state media has suggested that Beijing could stop exports of rare earths to the United States, depriving Washington of a key resource used to make hi-tech products.

Meanwhile, state media and officials have stepped up the rhetoric as the Communist Party digs in for what could be a long fight with the United States. An anchor for the English-language state broadcaster China Global Television Network (CGTN) even held a rare debate yesterday with a presenter from Fox Business Net-

work to discuss the trade war after jousting on social media. The debate between CGTN's Liu Xin and Fox Business's Trish Regan was civil, with the American journalist saying "I appreciate you being here" and the Chinese anchor inviting her to come to China, adding "I'll take you around". But China's propaganda apparatus has hardened the tone. The party's mouthpiece, The People's Daily, warned in an editorial on Wednesday that rare earths could be used as a counter-measure, adding that the US shouldn't "say we didn't warn you." China produces more than 95 percent of the world's rare earths, and the United States relies on the Asian superpower for upwards of 80 percent of its imports. "It is unacceptable for any country to use rare earth products exported by China to curb and suppress China's development," commerce ministry spokesman Gao Feng said yesterday. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, asked about the rare earths threat during an interview, said that Americans have already "lost and suffered for decades under the current rules" and that Trump's "singular focus is to push back" on China.

He renewed his attack on Huawei, saying there was a "deep connectivity" between the company and the Chinese state. "If it's the case that the Chinese Communist Party wanted to get information from technology that was in the possession of Huawei, it is almost certainly the case that Huawei would provide that to them," he told the Fox Busi-



The world's top two economies are at loggerheads as trade talks have apparently stalled.—AFP

ness Network.

Huawei has rejected the accusations and on Tuesday filed a motion for summary judgment in a US court, hoping it would swiftly win a lawsuit against US legislation that bars federal agencies from using the company's equipment.

"You have seen that for some time, the US government has tried very hard to fabricate various topics, misleading the public in the US or in other countries of the international community, in order to suppress Huawei," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang told reporters.—Reuters

Japan business lobby urges sales tax hike to go ahead as planned

TOKYO: The head of a Japanese business lobby said a planned sales tax hike should proceed in October to sustain the social security system for a rapidly ageing population, despite calls from elsewhere to postpone it given growing economic challenges. The intensifying Sino-US trade war and slowing Chinese economy threaten to derail Japan's export-reliant economy, keeping alive expectations that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe may forego a twice-delayed increase in the national sales tax.

"Economic uncertainties persist even now but I don't think they will morph into a crisis on the scale of a Lehman shock, so I want (the hike) to proceed," said Akio Mimura, head of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which represents Japanese small and medium-sized businesses.

"With just a few months left before October, it's impossible to delay it again." While a tax hike could hurt growth, it would also help Japan achieve fiscal reform in the long run, which will more than offset the near-term pain, Mimura told Reuters in an interview conducted on Wednesday. Japan needs revenue to pay for bulging welfare costs to support an ageing population and curb the industrial world's heaviest public debt burden, which is twice the size of its \$5 trillion economy. The government plans to spend 2 trillion yen (\$18.3 billion) in offsetting measures, which Mimura said should help ease the tax hike pain "to a con-

siderable degree".

Further delays could cause confusion to many Japanese firms that have made significant preparations to overcome the shift to the 10 percent sales tax, Mimura added. His view is shared by other Japanese corporations: more than 60 percent of firms called for the sales tax to rise as planned, a Reuters Corporate Survey showed last month, although they felt that additional stimulus was needed to cushion the blow on the economy. Michitaka Sawada, chief executive of Kao Corp, said recently the company was prepared for a rush in demand before the hike, working with suppliers and preparing its warehousing and transportation accordingly.

"We are so prepared for this. You need to be ready in advance. It would be too late if you weren't ready by now." Abe has repeatedly said he would proceed with an increase in the sales tax rate to 10 percent from 8 percent in October unless the economy was hit by a severe shock. But some lawmakers and close allies of the premier have suggested a postponement on concerns it could tip Japan into recession. The last sales tax hike in 2014 hit consumers hard and triggered a deep downturn.

Flexible monetary policy

On monetary policy, Mimura urged the Bank of Japan to make its policy more flexible over the long run, given the increasing side effects from prolonged easing, such as a hit to banks' profits. With inflation stubbornly subdued, the BOJ last month ditched the time frame for hitting its 2 percent goal, conceding that prices will fall short of the target at least until early 2022. Mimura said while the central bank was not in a position to tighten monetary policy any time soon, it should stop clinging to its 2 percent price target in the long run. "It's risky to loosen the grip on monetary easing at the moment as uncertainty around the global economy is high. It's unthinkable to move right now," he said. "Considering the future, however, flexible monetary policy that does not insist on the 2 percent target will be needed."—Reuters

Australia's minimum wage rises slowly as growth, inflation cool

SYDNEY: Australia's industrial relations umpire yesterday raised the national minimum wage by 3 percent from July 1, a smaller pay rise than the 3.5 percent increase enjoyed by workers last year, reflecting a weakening economy and cooling inflation. The pay hike, which is above the industry rate of 2.3 percent, will, however, be welcomed by the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), which believes annual wage increases of 3 percent and higher are needed to achieve average inflation of 2.5 percent, the mid-point of its target band. The new national minimum wage will now be A\$740.80 (\$512.86) per week, a weekly increase of A\$21.60 while the hourly rate will climb to A\$19.49, said Justice Iain Ross, president of the Fair Work Commission (FWC).

The annual review is conducted by a panel of experts who set the minimum pay every financial year. The proportion of all employees that are paid at the adult minimum wage rate is estimated to be 1.7 percent, or around 180,200. The FWC has also decided to increase all modern "award" wages, the minimum pay rates set for specific industries, by 3 percent. Award employment contracts cover about 2.2 million employees, or 21 percent, of Australia's workforce. "We have decided to award a lower increase this year than that awarded last year having regard to the changes in the economic environment," he said.

Australia's A\$1.9 trillion economy slowed sharply in the second half of last year and early indicators suggest the weaker momentum extended into 2019. The unemployment rate is at an eight-month high of 5.2 percent while headline inflation is notably weak at 1.3 percent. "We are satisfied that the level of increase we have decided upon will not lead to any adverse inflationary outcome nor will it have any measurable negative impact on employment," Ross added.—Reuters

Business

Will Apple's roots in China hold fast amid rising political storm?

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple is seen as a prime target for retaliation over US moves against the Chinese tech giant Huawei, but the roots planted by the company in China should help it weather the storm, analysts say.

While Beijing may take aim at Apple in the countries' high-stakes trade war, experts believe that the company's size, cachet, and years spent cultivating business relationships in China should protect it from any direct retaliation.

"As the US pounds on Huawei, Apple is the likely target for China to pound back," technology analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group said. "As the trade war accelerates, then Apple and Huawei are the two firms likely to get the damage," he said.

Huawei has been thrust to the center of escalating tensions between the world's two top economies, which have exchanged tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars in two-way trade.

President Donald Trump's administration has infuriated Beijing by blacklisting the smartphone and telecommunications company over worries that China uses it as a tool for espionage and allegations of breaking Iran-related sanctions—charges the company has denied.

Trump has said that Huawei's fate could be included in any deal to resolve their trade war, but such a deal has proved elusive, and in the interim, tensions remain high.

The company is considered a "national treasure" in China, and Apple has similar status in the US, said Enderle. "It is always difficult dealing with companies considered national treasures," he said.

"There is certainly a risk of this escalating

beyond reason."

Points in Apple's favor

But Apple has various factors in its favor. Increasing costs or crimping production for Apple directly in China could cause self-inflicted wounds, since much of the company's manufacturing is done there and jobs could be lost, analysts say. Playing into nationalist sentiment that shunning Apple is a sign of Chinese loyalty is something the government "could get away with," Enderle said. But boycotts of Apple products that began in China last year due to the US's treatment of Huawei had no meaningful impact on the American company, according to Creative Strategies analyst Carolina Milanesi.

And in a Bloomberg interview on Monday, the chief executive of Huawei said he was against the idea of calling for a boycott of Apple products in China.

"At the end of the day, there is a lot that Apple is doing in China from an economy perspective that helps China," Milanesi said. "I struggle to see China using Apple as a way to retaliate against the US."

On its website, Apple says it has created five million jobs in China, three million of which were related to contractors and investment. A million of those jobs were its staff, and about 1.8 million were through the App Store ecosystem for developers who make digital content or services for its mobile devices, the company said.

Targeting Trump's base?

And while hampering Apple product production in China would hurt that country's economy,



SHANGHAI: In this file photo, an Apple logo is displayed at store in Shanghai. —AFP

forcing up the price of iPhones exported to the US would not be much of a political blow against the Trump administration, according to Forrester analyst Frank Gillett.

"The Chinese government is more likely to target the Trump base," Gillett said. "Hitting a California-based company doesn't seem to give them a lot of leverage, it makes more sense to go after agriculture and everyday stuff." Analysts also noted that Apple chief Tim Cook ran supply chain logistics for the company before succeeding the late co-founder Steve Jobs at the helm in 2011. "Tim Cook knows the culture in China and has worked very closely understanding how to

tread carefully to make more of an impact there," Milanesi said.

Cook's supply chain expertise also makes him an ideal executive to figure out ways to move manufacturing out of China if the need arises. Apple's rise to one of the world's most valuable companies has involved cultivating strong relationships with Asian suppliers and manufacturers such as Taiwan-based Foxconn Technology Group and Pegatron. "Everybody and their brother is trying to find ways to ship manufacturing out of China," Enderle said.

"Tim Cook was a logistics guy, so if anyone can do this well it should be him." —AFP

General strike against inflation cripples Argentina

BUENOS AIRES: Opponents of Argentina's President Mauricio Macri launched a 24-hour strike on Wednesday to protest the government's inability to reduce inflation that has reached 55 percent over the past year. The strike has paralyzed public transport while all flights to and from the country's airports were canceled. Banks, schools and universities remained closed.

Hospitals were only attending to emergencies while many shops kept their shutters down due to the lack of buses and trains to bring employees to work. The strike came after a partial job action in late April when tens of thousands of Argentines demonstrated, and transport services and businesses were also affected.

Macri's popularity has fallen months before elections later this year, when he hopes to win a second term. In an effort to reduce the state deficit, his government last year launched an austerity plan that has cut services to low-income Argentines in exchange for a \$56 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund to help the South American country battle its currency crisis and soaring prices.

"The strike has been followed because there has been no response, no government reaction to our de-



BUENOS AIRES: Argentine trade union leader Hugo Moyano tastes 'locro' (stew) prepared in a soup kitchen during a 24-hour general strike called by workers' unions to demand the government of Argentine President Mauricio Macri to take measures against inflation and keep the campaign promises, in Buenos Aires, on Wednesday. —AFP

mands," said Hugo Moyano, one of Argentina's most influential union leaders.

With prices rising, Argentina's 44 million people have been hit with a drop in their spending power, and unions are demanding an increase in salaries to keep up. "There's a huge amount of unhappiness with the government. Many workers voted for this government because it was going to get rid of income tax. They trusted it but this time they won't make the same mistake," said Moyano, referring to the upcoming elections on October 27. But Transport Minister Guillermo Dietrich complained people have been left "hostages" to public transport during this strike. —AFP

Canada central bank maintains key lending rate at 1.75%

OTTAWA: Canada's central bank on Wednesday maintained its key lending rate at 1.75 percent, saying it expects the local economy to pick up after a recent slowdown despite heightened uncertainty over trade with China. The move was in line with the expectations of economists and the Bank of Canada's view that the slowdown in late 2018 and early 2019 was temporary. "For central bankers, like doctors, the paramount objective is to 'do no harm,' and there's still enough uncertainty for the Bank of Canada to stand pat on interest rates," CIBC analyst Avery Shenfeld said in research note. "Overall, the bank's statement doesn't explicitly warn of rate hikes to come (that remains data dependent), but has an optimistic tone about what lies ahead, leaving the impression that the bank sees the next move as a hike, if well down the road."

The bank pointed to strong job growth, consumer spending and exports, as well as signs the oil sector is beginning to recover. It added that core inflation re-

mains close to 2.0 percent—in line with its projections—and is expected to remain so over the coming months. But "the recent escalation of trade conflicts is heightening uncertainty about economic prospects," it said in a statement. "In addition, trade restrictions introduced by China are having direct effects on Canadian exports."

In contrast, the removal this month of US tariffs on Canadian and Mexican steel and aluminum imports as well as the prospect of soon ratifying a new continental trade deal is expected to have "positive implications for Canadian exports and investment," it added.

The USMCA treaty—which replaces the 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) — could be ratified by the end of July, Canada's ambassador to Washington David MacNaughton said this week. It was signed last year after months of trilateral negotiations, but Canada and Mexico had held up its ratification until the US removed the steel and aluminum tariffs. —AFP

Business

Trade gloom, rising oil, Boeing 737 MAX woes to cloud aviation summit

SEOUL: Global airlines are meeting under a storm pattern of trade tensions, rising oil prices and a two-month-old grounding of the Boeing Co 737 MAX jetliner - threatening to put a halt to five years of strong profits in the cut-throat air travel industry.

The sector's bosses converge on Seoul for a summit this weekend, but what might have been a celebration of growth in one of the world's most vibrant regions now risks being thrown off course by a crippling US-China trade spat and growing environmental pressures spreading from Europe.

"The last six months have been pretty tough for airlines," the head of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said ahead of the annual meeting of the body, which groups 290 airlines representing over 80 percent of air travel. "Rising costs, trade wars and other uncertainties are likely to have an impact on the bottom line," IATA Director General Alexandre de Juniac added.

The June 1-3 summit is a chance to examine passenger and cargo trends: key barometers of consumer confidence and trade amid a faltering global economy. IATA's most recent projection for \$35.5 billion in industry profits this year now looks unsustainable due to the falling cargo market and weaker passenger growth, and de Juniac has given a strong steer that the group would trim the forecast at the upcoming Seoul meeting.

The cargo slump, with volumes down 3.7 percent in April including a 7.4 percent fall in the Asia-Pacific, is a concern for big freight carriers like Cathay Pacific and the IATA summit host Korean Air Lines.

Boeing CEO on 737 MAX woes: 'We clearly fell short'

NEW YORK: The head of Boeing acknowledged Wednesday that the company "clearly fell short" in dealing with the accident-ridden 737 MAX and said that it had not adequately communicated with regulators. Chief Executive Dennis Muilenburg's remarks to CBS News-his first interview since the global grounding of the plane following two crashes that claimed 346 lives-came as a top airline representative signaled that the top-selling jets could be out of service at least through mid- to late-August.

Muilenburg was pressed by CBS about failing to notify the Federal Aviation Administration for more than a year that the company had deactivated a signal designed to advise the crew of a disagreement between the plane's "angle of attack" sensors, which measure its angle vis-a-vis oncoming air to warn of impending stalls.

The sensors provide data to the Maneuvering

"We have really since the end of last year seen quite a deterioration of cross-border trade following the earlier round of tariff increases," IATA Chief Economist Brian Pearce said.

The meeting of some 200 CEOs is the largest gathering since the industry was plunged into crisis over the grounding of the 737 MAX in March following two crashes. IATA members have invested hundreds of billions of dollars in the MAX and are anxious to contain any public or regulatory backlash. Aviation leaders maintain flying remains remarkably safe relative to other forms of transport. But the decision by China, the European Union and others to ground the MAX before the United States opened an unusual split in the regulatory system, worrying airlines and planemakers.

737 Max customer talks

IATA, which is taking an increasingly central role in the crisis by hosting talks of MAX customers, believes the aircraft could return to service in August. But that is too late to prevent significant disruption to summer schedules. Pressure on Boeing grew ahead of the IATA meeting as the China Air Transport Association estimated losses to Chinese airlines of some 4 billion yuan (\$579 million).

IATA began in 1945 as a quasi-regulator and price-setter. It is now mainly a lobbying group but retains a special role as a clearing house for financial transactions and common standards.

Its perennial list of concerns includes high airport charges and what IATA calls "scandalous" air traffic delays in Europe. But it is also wrestling with a rapid surge in anti-aviation sentiment in parts of Europe and calls in the

Characteristics Augmentation System, a flight handling system connected to the deadly crashes of Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines MAXs. The FAA did not learn of the issue until after the Lion Air crash, more than 13 months after Boeing first unearthed the problem. The design of the MCAS system has been criticized by aviation experts because it is tied to just one sensor at a time, making it susceptible to malfunction.

In both of the MAX crashes, the MCAS pointed the plane sharply downward based on a faulty sensor reading, hindering the pilots' effort to control the aircraft after takeoff, according to preliminary crash investigations. Muilenburg, who has repeatedly rejected suggestions of a design flaw in the 737 MAX, acknowledged implementation shortcomings.

"The implementation of this angle of attack alert was a mistake," he told CBS. "Our communication on that was not what it should have been." But Muilenburg, who also issued a sweeping apology to the families of flight victims during the interview, said he believes in the plane and would have no reservations putting his family aboard. "We're confident in the fundamental safety of the airplane," he said.

Lagging timeframe

The interview comes a week after the FAA led a meeting of international regulators de-



BREST: A Russian made Antonov An-124, one of the biggest cargo planes in the world, is pictured on Wednesday on the tarmac of the airport in Brest, Western France. — AFP

Netherlands and elsewhere for new taxes to curb airliner emissions.

The aviation industry says it has plans to contribute to climate efforts through a carbon-offset scheme called CORSIA, but critics say the initiative is too timid. Local airlines seem to encapsulate this year's subdued tone. Korean Air is mourning the death of long-time chairman Cho Yang-ho from a chronic illness in April, weeks after shareholders ousted the tycoon from the board of the country's largest airline.

The carrier, now led by his son Walter, has been receiving negative media attention since an

incident dubbed "nut rage" went viral in 2014, when Cho's eldest daughter Heather lost her temper over the way she was served nuts in first class and ordered the plane to return to its gate at a New York airport.

Rival Asiana's top shareholder Kumho Industrial Co said last month it was selling its stake in the debt-laden carrier which has been slashing routes to improve profitability.

"It seems there is not much of a celebratory mood given the circumstances at our major carriers," said Kim Ik-sang, a senior analyst at BNK Securities. — Reuters

signed to coordinate the process to approve the return of the 737 MAX into service.

Alexandre de Juniac, head of the International Air Transport Association, said Wednesday that the plane—which has been grounded since mid-March—will remain out of service "at least 10 to 12 weeks" while regulators review Boeing's proposed fix to the MCAS.

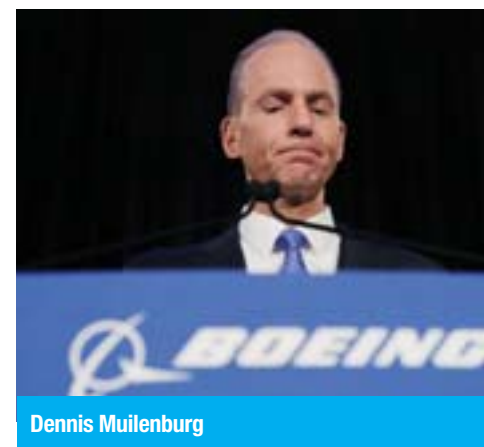
A note from CFRA Research characterized the timeframe for the 737 MAX resumption as "worse" than expected, but said Boeing was still well positioned once it exits the crisis.

"Our thesis on Boeing is based on long term commercial aerospace demand, a strong order book and the likelihood that Boeing will not lose significant orders as long as the plane resumes service safely," CFRA said. "We expect continued volatility in the shares until the issues hanging over Boeing move closer to being resolved," CFRA added.

Compensating customers

Earlier Wednesday, Muilenburg told an investor conference in New York that the company will tailor its compensation to airlines for the 737 MAX grounding around customer preference, and they could be paid back in services instead of cash. "We know we've impacted the summer schedules for many of them, and it's difficult, it's painful," he said.

"I don't see this as an additional material



Dennis Muilenburg

event for us, but it's something that's going to require individual attention customer by customer." Compensation could include tweaking plane delivery schedules, or offering additional training or services, as well as cash in some cases, he said. Muilenburg described last week's meeting of international regulators as a "key" event in returning the plane to service, but acknowledged that it may take more time before global regulators are ready to approve the plane's return. "Our hope is that we'll have a broad international alignment with the FAA," he said at the conference.—AFP

Sports

Semenya's absence overshadows Stockholm Diamond League

STOCKHOLM: Caster Semenya's shadow will hang over the Diamond League meeting in Stockholm yesterday even though the double Olympic 800 metres champion will be absent. The South African announced Wednesday she is launching a new appeal in the Swiss courts against new rules that would force her to take medication to lower her testosterone levels.

The issue of Semenya's hyperandrogenism and the rules put in place by the sport's governing body to try to create a "level playing field" seem likely to dominate the sport in a season that stretches until late September when the world championships take place in Doha.

"I am a woman and I am a world-class athlete. The IAAF will not drug me or stop me from being who I am," Semenya, 28, said on Wednesday in a statement confirming she is taking her appeal to Switzerland's top court.

Semenya lost her first appeal, to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in the Swiss city of Lausanne. This highly polarising issue will be

especially highlighted in Stockholm's venerable Olympic stadium as it hosts the first Diamond League 800m race since the new ruling came into force. Not only will Semenya be missing but the two women who finished behind her at the Rio Olympics, Burundi's Francine Niyonsaba and Margaret Wambui of Kenya will also be absent because they are all affected by the new rules. Wambui told AFP this month she is demoralised by the rule and is, for now, refusing to undergo the testosterone-lowering treatment. "I don't feel even like going on with the training because you don't know what you are training for," she said.

Away from the legal challenges, Semenya's answer on the track has been to shift up to distances not covered by the new regulations. She will run over 2,000m in Montreuil outside Paris on June 11 before attempting the 3,000m at the Prefontaine meeting in the US on June 30.

Some athletes admit they are disturbed by the Semenya case. "The idea is not to be the best

by default because victory just doesn't have the same meaning in that case," France's Olympic discus silver medallist Melina Robert-Michon said. "Asking someone to take medication is very intrusive for a woman but I can understand that (Semenya's) opponents wonder about her."

On the track, the Stockholm meeting features British sprinter Dina Asher-Smith, the fastest woman in the world this year over 200m after posting 22.26sec in the Doha Diamond League meeting. She faces Elaine Thompson, the Jamaican who completed an Olympic sprint double in Rio and who is gradually returning to top form after an injury-shortened 2018.

Michael Norman, the American 400m specialist who recorded a sensational 43.45sec in April, equalling the fourth-fastest time in history, goes over the one-lap distance. Jakob Ingebrigtsen of Norway, the darling of European middle-distance running, faces a high-quality field including his two brothers in the men's 1,500m. — AFP



Caster Semenya



KSC unveils extensive training plans for Olympics progression

By Abdellatif Sharaa and KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting Club (KSC) is focused on preparing the largest number possible of Kuwaiti shooters for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, chairman Duaij Al-Otaibi said on Wednesday. At an award ceremony for Mansour Al-Rashidi, who qualified for the global games, topped the skeet rankings in Asia and achieved second in world standings, Al-Otaibi said the club has outlined an extensive training plan ahead of the tournament.

Al-Otaibi said "we as, board members of Kuwait Shooting Federation welcome guests and thank you for our presence, as you continue your support to make those achievements". He said Kuwait shooting continued its achievements, with the efforts of shooters and officials in the name of Kuwait in Asia and the world.

He said Kuwait shooting was able to secure the first qualification in Asia and the Arab world for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics by shooter Abdulrahman Al-Faihan during the Asian games in Korea, then Mansour Al-Rashidi won the world championship and the

second qualification for the upcoming Olympics that was held in Al-Ain, UAE then won third place in Korea last month.

He said all this comes from the support of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the government, along with the Public Authority of Sport under the leadership of Dr Humoud Fulaiteh. Al-Otaibi thanked former shooters who had represented Kuwait and made outstanding achievements, and hope their successors will continue on the same path.

He said that "we are pleased to honor shooter Mansour Al-Torqi, as he strongly deserve it, as he represents Kuwait shooting, and will always get our trust, as we have youth who are able to represent Kuwait who uphold Kuwait's reputation and keep Kuwait in a distinguished place in the shooting sport, adding that Mansour is now no. 1 in Asia and no. 2 in the world.

Kuwait is the only country in Asia to have thus far been able to qualify two shooters for the Olympics, the chairman said applauding the world skeet number two, who joins his compatriot Abdulrahman Al-Faihan. The accomplishments were made possible thanks to the support of the Kuwaiti leadership and government, said the chairman, who also reserved special praise for past Kuwaiti legends in the international arena.

Meanwhile, shooter Mansour Al-Rashidi thanked all those who support the Kuwaiti shooting, and appreciated the club's gesture to honor him. The National Guard of which Mansour is a member granted him a special promotion to the rank of master sergeant for his achievement.

Wallabies to wear indigenous-themed jersey at World Cup

SYDNEY: The Wallabies will wear an indigenous-themed jersey for at least one World Cup match, it was revealed yesterday, as rugby chiefs warned against writing off the team despite poor recent form.

Australia have donned a shirt paying tribute to Aborigines' role in rugby twice before—at home against the All Blacks in 2017 and away to England last year. They will do so again by wearing their green, indigenous-themed alternate strip in the World Cup group game against Uruguay, and are also pressing to use it if they make the semi-finals.

"I'm extremely proud and honoured to hopefully have the opportunity to wear this in the World Cup," said Wallabies star Kurtley Beale, who is of Aboriginal heritage, in unveiling the shirt. "It's obviously a special moment, a pinnacle moment for Australian rugby to be able to recognise and acknowledge first nations peoples in such a beautiful jersey."

More than a dozen players of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent have represented Australia, including Mark Ella, Lloyd Walker, Wendell Sailor and Saia Faingaa. Indigenous Australian NBA star Patty Mills was quick to show his support, with the San Antonio Spurs point guard changing his Twitter profile picture to show Beale wearing the jersey.

Rugby Australia chief Raelene Castle, meanwhile, said the Wallabies will be "underdogs" when the tournament in Japan starts in September, but that the two-time champions were ready to prove the critics wrong.

"There are some doubters but there is nothing like a World Cup to bring out the best in our Wallabies," she told reporters. She said coach Michael Cheika, who took Australia to the 2015 final, "has proven it is never a wise move to write him off in a World Cup and don't we all love a good underdog story. "There is no greater challenge in our sport and it is a challenge our players are preparing to meet head-on." Australia won just four of 13 Tests last year, and they will be without influential fullback Israel Folau, who has been banned from Australian rugby for homophobic comments, while flanker David Pocock is struggling with injury. — AFP

Sports

Tiger feat! Superfan risks bribes, injury to see Bangladesh idols

DHAKA: Desperate times call for desperate measures and colourful cricket superfan Shoyab Ali has had to deploy a full arsenal as he follows his beloved Bangladesh around the globe. The 31-year-old Dhaka car mechanic, known at grounds worldwide for his distinctive tiger body and face paint, has injured himself, paid a bribe and spent his life savings to pursue his passion for the game.

But Ali insists there has been more gain than pain, and he is determined to become a fixture at the World Cup in England cheering on the South Asian nation, who begin their campaign against South Africa on Sunday.

Ali fixed the car of Bangladesh fast bowler Shahadat Hossain who gave him a ticket to his first game, which turned out to be a landmark. Bangladesh defeated India by five wickets in Dhaka even though Sachin Tendulkar ended his long wait for his 100th international century in the Asia Cup game.

"After Bangladesh won, I cried in the stand for a long time. I saw the famous Indian fan Sudhir Gautam," he said, referring to the India superfan who also dons body paint in national colours and has been seen around the world.

"I decided I will be like him and watch every game Bangladesh plays," Ali said. Since then Ali, who left school at 13, has missed just one home game and not many abroad. It has brought an in-ning of adventures. In his first match abroad in

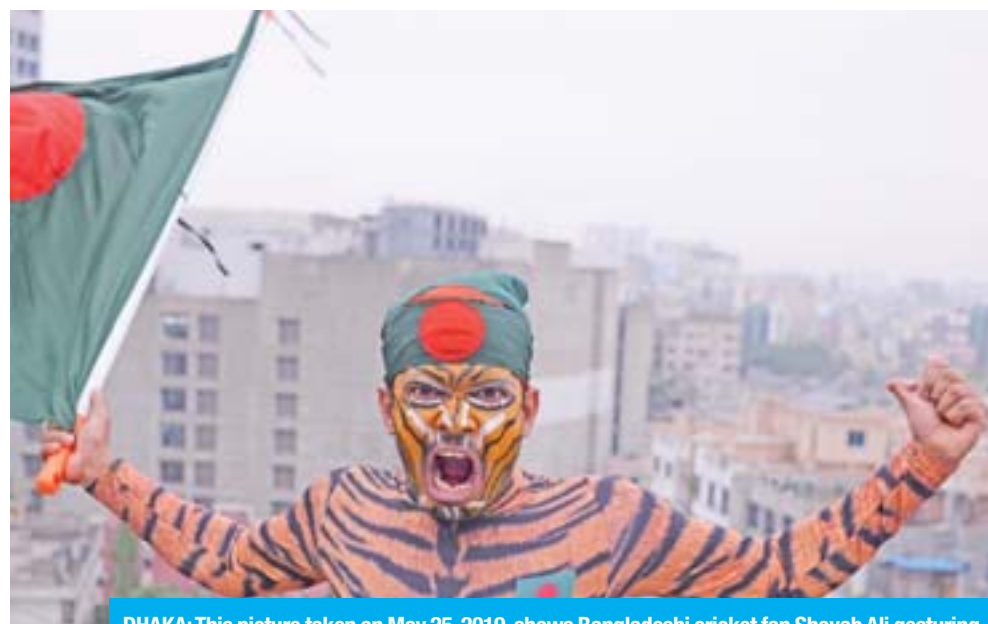
2013, Ali saw Bangladesh avoid defeat for the first time in a Test in Sri Lanka when they claimed a creditable draw. Before that match, Bangladesh had lost eight Tests in Sri Lanka—seven by an innings margin.

He arrived in Sri Lanka with just \$250 in his pocket and spent several nights sleeping in the garage of a Sri Lankan fan. Bangladesh players and officials gave him money for food throughout the tour. Travelling to Zimbabwe the same year, Ali left his visa support documents at Dhaka airport.

In Harare, the Zimbabwean immigration authorities decided to send him back. The tricks started. "I bribed an official \$10 just to let me make a call. Then I called the Bangladesh team officials to explain my situation.

"They were at the training ground and promised to see if they could help," he said. "Then I realised no immigration authority would send back a sick man. I hit a wall with my head to make myself collapse and acted as though I was unconscious to buy some time.

"After spending a night in airport, the Bangladesh officials brought my documents and took me to Harare." Australia would not give him a visa to go to the 2015 World Cup, but now Bangladesh businesses are happy to sponsor his trips and Ali hopes his presence will help the team in England. "Bangladesh have



DHAKA: This picture taken on May 25, 2019, shows Bangladeshi cricket fan Shoyab Ali gesturing while waving a Bangladeshi flag atop a building after an interview with AFP in Dhaka. — AFP

won most of the matches when I have watched them. I hope I can bring similar luck for them at the World Cup," he said. Ali said he would continue using his tiger face paint despite warnings

that it could damage his health. "Many people scare me with skin cancer stories... but I don't care. Nothing is more important to me than my country," he said. — AFP

Pakistan seek Champions Trophy inspiration as West Indies loom

NOTTINGHAM: Pakistan will seek inspiration from their dramatic Champions Trophy win in England two years ago when they take the field in their opening World Cup match against a resurgent West Indies today.

Pakistan have lost their past ten one-day internationals including a 5-0 whitewash by Australia and 4-0 thumping by England, and their problems were further compounded when they went down to outsiders Afghanistan by three wickets in a warm-up match.

But skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed hopes his side will draw inspiration from when they were in a similar position in 2017. "We will seek inspiration from our Champions Trophy win because then also we were losing and then lifted ourselves at the right time to win the trophy," Sarfaraz told AFP ahead of the game in Nottingham.

Pakistan had lost 4-1 in Australia before the tournament and arch-rivals India whipped them by 124 runs in the opening game of the Trophy. But Pakistan then beat South Africa, Sri Lanka and England on their way to the final, where they thumped India by 180 runs.

"The boys are motivated and are eager to put these losses behind them and by playing in England for a month we are well prepared and you will hopefully see us doing well," said Sarfaraz, one of Pakistan's only two survivors from the 2015 World Cup, with left-handed batsman Haris Sohail the other. Sarfaraz will also hope his spearhead Mohammad Amir—playing his first World Cup after missing the 2011 and 2015 editions due to a spot-fixing ban—will dismantle the West Indies top order boasting hard-hitting opener Chris Gayle and the impressive Shai Hope.

"We know Amir is an impact bowler and he knows his responsibilities and I am sure he will lift his bowling and get us early wickets," said Sarfaraz of Amir, who recovered from chickenpox in time to get a World Cup call after being left out of the preliminary squad. His form will be crucial for Pakistan—he has taken just



NOTTINGHAM: Pakistan's captain Sarfaraz Ahmed smiles during a press conference at Trent Bridge Cricket Ground in Nottingham, central England yesterday, on the eve of their first match of the ICC Cricket World Cup against the West Indies. — AFP

five wickets in 15 matches since his match-winning three wickets against India in the Champions Trophy final.

Pakistan have only won three times in 10 World Cup matches against the two-time world champions, including a thumping 150-run loss at Christchurch in 2015. Andre Russell smashed a 13-ball 42 with four sixes and then took three wickets as Pakistan were blown away. Russell smashed 54 off 25 balls and Hope hit a century to propel the West Indies to 421 in their warm-up win against New Zealand on Tuesday. That prompted all-rounder Carlos Brathwaite to say his team can break the 500-barrier.

"If you are asking me if we are capable of it, definitely we are," Brathwaite said. "However, in a real game you probably won't have the depth in batting at 10 and 11 that we had today. So you need to be a little real about the target." West Indies are also returning to form after sneaking their way into the World Cup through a qualifying round in Zimbabwe last year. They squared a one-day series against top-ranked side and pre-tournament favourites England 2-2 at home earlier this year before losing the final of a tri-series to Bangladesh in Ireland. — AFP

Mohammad Amir fit for World Cup debut

NOTTINGHAM: Pace spearhead Mohammad Amir is fit and available for selection for Pakistan's opening World Cup match against the West Indies today, captain Sarfaraz Ahmed said. There was speculation that the 27-year-old, who missed the last four matches of the one-day international series against England earlier this month, might not be able to make his World Cup debut at Trent Bridge.

"Amir is fully fit and available for selection for tomorrow's game," Sarfaraz said in his pre-match press conference. Amir, who missed the 2011 and 2015 World Cups due to a five-year ban for spot-fixing, was seen bowling using his full run-up in the team's practice session.

Sarfaraz said he hoped the team could put behind them a streak of 10 straight ODI defeats. "Yes, we have lost 10 matches but we have to forget that and start the World Cup journey," he said. Asked if he was worried about the short boundaries and a flat pitch at Trent Bridge, Sarfaraz said: "When we came here on the first day and asked the groundsman what is the par score he told us that it's 480."

Top-ranked England have scored 400-plus twice at this ground, 444-3 against Pakistan in 2016 and a world record of 481-6 against Australia last year. "Cricket has changed. People used to think that 300 was a par score but it has changed. We will have different pitches in the World Cup so if a team scores 300-plus then the other team will also go for that," he said.

Sarfaraz said both Pakistan and the West Indies were unpredictable teams. "It's good to be unpredictable so all teams are scared of you. Yes, we are unpredictable and we will take that tag, so are the West Indies," said the skipper. West Indies, who sneaked through last year's qualifying round to feature in this year's event, piled up 421 against New Zealand in a warm-up match on Tuesday. — AFP

Sports

Cubs' win over Astros marred by fan's injury, Rangers claim series win

HOUSTON: Kyle Hendricks pitched eight effective innings, Kyle Schwarber and Kris Bryant homered, and the visiting Chicago Cubs averted a series sweep at the hands of the Houston Astros with a 2-1 interleague victory Wednesday. The game was briefly delayed in the fourth inning when Chicago's Albert Almora Jr. hit a foul ball that struck a young fan in the stands. The Astros confirmed after the game that the child was taken to a hospital, but according to Houston radio station KBME 790 AM (SportsTalk790), the fan was expected to be all right. The incident shook up Almora, who struck out to finish the at-bat. After the half-inning, he was seen sobbing after talking to a security guard stationed near where the child was seated. Hendricks (5-4) allowed one run on four hits and one walk with seven strikeouts while throwing a season-high 108 pitches.

RANGERS 8, MARINERS 7

Asdrubal Cabrera's run-scoring double in the ninth inning snapped a tie and gave Texas a win over host Seattle. Jesse Chavez (1-1), who served as the opener in Tuesday's game, pitched two innings of scoreless relief for the victory. Shawn Kelley worked out of a jam in the ninth, getting a game-ending double play for his sixth save of the season. With two outs in the top of the ninth, Nomar Mazara and Cabrera hit back-to-back doubles to left off Seattle right-hander Anthony Bass (0-1). Mazara finished with three hits and three runs for the Rangers, who took the final two games of the three-game series.

RAYS 4, BLUE JAYS 3 (11 INNINGS)

Willy Adames singled home the winning run with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 11th inning as Tampa Bay defeated Toronto in St. Petersburg, Fla. Justin Shafer (0-1) walked Ji-Man Choi to start the bottom of the 11th. Choi took third on Avisail Garcia's one-out single. Andrew Velazquez ran for Choi, and Kevin Kiermaier was walked intentionally to bring up Adames. Diego Castillo (1-3) overcame a double and walk in the top of the 11th to pick up the win. The Rays swept the three-game series and lead the season series with the Blue Jays 5-1.

DODGERS 9, METS 8

Alex Verdugo hit a game-ending sacrifice fly in the ninth inning as Los Angeles rallied from what was once a five-run deficit for a comeback victory over visiting New York. The Dodgers finished off the Mets with four runs in the ninth inning, a comeback that was started with back-to-back home runs from Joc Pederson and Max Muncy against Mets closer Edwin Diaz. The home runs reduced the deficit to 8-7 before Justin Turner doubled, and then Cody Bellinger tied the game with an RBI double. The Dodgers victory spoiled a two-homer night from Mets rookie Pete Alonso, the third multi-homer game in his two months in the major leagues. His 19 home runs on the season are just seven behind Darryl Strawberry's Mets rookie record set in 1983.

INDIANS 14, RED SOX 9

Carlos Santana homered among his three extra-base hits and drove in five runs as Cleveland won at Boston. Santana legged out an RBI triple to open the scoring in the first inning, launched a solo homer in fourth and had a

bases-clearing double in the seventh. He fell short in his bid to become the ninth Cleveland player to hit for the cycle after striking out in the ninth inning. Andrew Benintendi and Xander Bogaerts launched two-run homers while Mookie Betts and Jackie Bradley Jr. added solo shots for the Red Sox, who have lost four of their past six. Christian Vazquez and Brock Holt each had an RBI double, but Boston's attempt at a rally fell short as Brad Hand retired the two batters he faced for his 15th save.

ANGELS 12, ATHLETICS 7 (11 INNINGS)

Cesar Puello capped a huge day by scoring the go-ahead run in a five-run 11th inning as Los Angeles made it two straight over host Oakland in the finale of a three-game series. The uprising allowed Los Angeles to finally put the game away after the A's twice rallied from two-run deficits in the last two innings of regulation, using home runs by Matt Olson in the eighth and Mark Canha in the ninth as the driving forces in the comeback. Puello led off the 11th by getting hit on the wrist by a pitch from Oakland's seventh pitcher, Lou Trivino (2-1). A walk, sacrifice bunt, error, intentional walk and passed ball plated the Angels' first two runs of the inning before Tommy La Stella contributed an RBI single and Jonathan Lucroy a two-run single to extend the lead to five.

WHITE SOX 8, ROYALS 7

Tim Anderson hit a go-ahead, eighth-inning double in his return to the lineup, and Yoan Moncada and Jose Abreu homered as host Chicago defeated Kansas City to complete a three-game series sweep. Moncada smacked a solo home run in the first inning, setting the stage for an early flurry of action that included the second-inning ejection of Royals starter Glenn Sparkman, who was tossed after hitting Anderson on the bill of his batting helmet with a pitch. Kansas City tied the game at 7-all in the eighth on a two-run single by Nicky Lopez before Anderson answered in the bottom half. Anderson was making his first start since sustaining a right wrist injury on Friday.

PHILLIES 11, CARDINALS 4

Bryce Harper homered, doubled, singled and had four RBIs to lift host Philadelphia past St. Louis. Andrew McCutchen hit a home run and scored four runs while Scott Kingery and Maikel Franco each added a homer for the Phillies, who earned their second straight win and fifth in six games. Phillies starter Aaron Nola (6-0) was very effective in seven innings, giving up four hits and one run. Nola, who struck out eight and walked three, threw 102 pitches, 68 for strikes. Matt Wieters had a home run, a double and two RBIs, and Marcell Ozuna also had two hits for St. Louis.

PIRATES 7, REDS 2

Colin Moran and Josh Bell hit opposite-field, three-run homers to lift visiting Pittsburgh past Cincinnati. Pirates starter Steven Brault (2-1) threw 5 1/3 shutout innings, allowing three hits, striking out five and walking two. Bell went 3-for-5 with two runs. Elias Diaz, Bryan Reynolds, Starling Marte, Cole Tucker and Kevin Newman had two hits each for the Pirates, who earned a split of the four-game series. Reds starter An-



HOUSTON: Kris Bryant #17 of the Chicago Cubs hits a home run in the third inning against the Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas. — AFP

thony DeSclafani (2-3) went 5 2/3 innings, allowing three runs and eight hits. He struck out three and walked one.

YANKEES 7, PADRES 0

DJ LeMahieu and Luke Voit opened with consecutive homers in the first inning, James Paxton pitched four hitless innings in his return from the injured list, and host New York beat San Diego. LeMahieu hit his third career leadoff homer, hammering an 0-2 changeup by rookie Chris Paddack (4-3) into the left field seats. Two pitches later, Voit slugged a fastball over the left-center-field fence. It was the 10th time the Yankees hit consecutive homers at the start of the first inning. The last time was July 7 of last season at Toronto when Brett Gardner and Aaron Judge went deep against J.A. Happ.

ROCKIES 5, DIAMONDBACKS 4

Brendan Rodgers had a two-run single in a three-run fourth inning, and Jeff Hoffman earned his first win in almost two years as Colorado extended its winning streak to four games with a win over Arizona in Denver. Trevor Story had three hits and a stolen base, and Hoffman went five innings for his first victory since July 16, 2017. The Rockies (27-27) reached .500 for the first time since March 31, after the fourth game of the season. Carson Kelly had three hits including a homer and two RBIs, Adam Jones homered, and Ildemaro Vargas had two singles and three walks for the Diamondbacks, who have lost three in a row and eight of 11.

NATIONALS 14, BRAVES 4

Washington sent nine batters to the plate in each of the first two innings, and Anibal Sanchez came off the injured list to throw six scoreless innings in a road rout of Atlanta. Trea

Turner collected three hits for the Nationals while Anthony Rendon, Juan Soto, Howie Kendrick and Matt Adams had two apiece. Soto homered and extended his career-best hitting streak to 13 games, and Kendrick drove in four runs, tying his season high. Sanchez (1-6) pitched for the first time since May 16 after being sidelined with a left hamstring strain. He retired the first 16 batters he faced until Ozzie Albies lined a single to center with one out in the sixth. Sanchez allowed only one hit and one walk, and he struck out seven.

MARLINS 4, GIANTS 2

Pinch hitter Neil Walker pulled a seventh-inning, go-ahead RBI double down the right field line, leading host Miami over San Francisco. The Marlins, who own the National League's worst record, have won nine of their past 12 games. The Giants have dropped seven straight contests. Jorge Alfaro, who scored the go-ahead run on Walker's double, went 4-for-4 to lead Miami's offense. It was the first four-hit game of his career. Reliever Nick Anderson (2-2) earned the win with one scoreless inning. Sergio Romo pitched the ninth, allowing one run, to post his 11th save.

TIGERS 4, ORIOLES 2

Brandon Dixon hit a two-run homer in the top of the ninth inning to give visiting Detroit a victory over Baltimore in the rubber game of a three-game series. Baltimore led 2-1 after seven innings, but the Tigers tied it on a John Hicks homer to lead off the eighth against Mychal Givens. Dixon then got the game-winning blast off Branden Kline (1-2) with one out in the ninth to give the struggling Tigers their second consecutive victory. Shane Greene closed it in the ninth for his 18th save. — Reuters

Sports

Osaka stages second great escape at Roland Garros

PARIS: Top seed Naomi Osaka staged a second successive Roland Garros great escape yesterday when she battled back from a set and a break down to defeat Victoria Azarenka 4-6, 7-5, 6-3. World number one Osaka, bidding to add the French Open to her US and Australian Open titles, had been two points from defeat in her opener against Anna Karolina Schmiedlova.

Against former number one and two-time major winner Azarenka she was staring down the barrel yet again at 2-4 down in the second set. However, the 21-year-old held her nerve, despite squandering two match points, to secure her place in the third round and a clash against either Greek 29th seed Maria Sakkari or Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic.

"I was lucky to have played her twice before. I knew she had been playing well coming into the tournament," said Osaka. "It was an unfortunate second round for me so I am happy to win." Osaka finished the two-hour 50-minute encounter on Court Suzanne Lenglen with 52 winners and 43 unforced errors. She becomes the first top seed to win her two opening matches at Roland Garros after losing the first set since Lindsay Davenport in 2005. Azarenka,

now at 43 in the world, claimed the 40-minute first set having stretched out to a 5-1 lead on the back of two breaks of serve. Osaka was undone by 15 unforced errors. The Japanese star appeared doomed when she slipped 4-2 down in the second set having failed to convert three break points in the fourth game.

But she rallied to level at 4-4 after a 10-minute eighth game, secured on an Azarenka double fault. The Belarusian, who had knocked out 2017 champion Jelena Ostapenko in the first round, then saved three set points in the 12th game before Osaka levelled the contest with a pinpoint, down the line winner.

After an 85-minute set, Azarenka stretched a toilet break to 10 minutes before squandering three break points in the first game of the decider. Osaka made her pay, breaking twice for a 5-1 lead.

However, in a rollercoaster of a match, Azarenka cut the deficit to 5-3, saving two match points in the process. "I choked on this side and almost choked there too. I am a very emotional person," said the Japanese as she explained how she almost allowed Azarenka back into the tie. — AFP



PARIS: Japan's Naomi Osaka plays a backhand return to Belarus' Victoria Azarenka during their women's singles second round match on day five of The Roland Garros 2019 French Open tennis tournament in Paris yesterday. — AFP

Gunnarsson winner sinks Boston as Blues tie series

LOS ANGELES: Carl Gunnarsson smashed home an overtime winner as the St. Louis Blues roared back into Stanley Cup final contention on Wednesday with a series-levelling 3-2 defeat over the Boston Bruins.

Gunnarsson's stunning long-range effort flew past Bruins goalie Tuukka Rask after 3min 51sec of overtime to silence the home crowd at Boston's TD Garden and tie the best-of-seven series at 1-1. Gunnarsson had only narrowly been denied a winning goal at the end of the third period when his shot struck a post with the game tied.

"It feels great taking this home and we go to work again," Gunnarsson said afterwards as the Blues looked ahead to game three in St. Louis on Saturday. "Would have loved to have it in the third, but who cares, we got it this way, and that's all that matters," Gunnarsson added. "Great feeling right now."

Boston shot-stopper Rask, who finished with 34 saves, admitted the Bruins had been outplayed. "They were the better team," said Rask. "They were hard on us, so we didn't have any room. It was a hard, hard game." Gunnarsson's decisive strike had settled an absorbing contest which saw the Blues twice claw their way back to level after falling behind as the Bruins looked to take a commanding 2-0 lead in the series.

Boston went in front in the first period, scoring on a power play through forward Charlie Coyle after a Sammy Blais penalty. Good work from David Pastrnak released Jake DeBrusk down the left and the Canadian winger pulled back into the slot to find a wide open Coyle.

The 27-year-old forward made no mistake with the finish, rifling home to beat Blues goalie Jordan Binnington. St. Louis responded superbly and quieted the raucous home fans five minutes later through Robert



BOSTON: Jaden Schwartz #17 of the St. Louis Blues is called for goalie-interference on Tuukka Rask #40 of the Boston Bruins during the second period in Game Two of the 2019 NHL Stanley Cup Final at TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

Bortuzzo. Bortuzzo appeared to be covered as he drifted to the right of the Boston goal, but his whipped shot from a tight angle took a wicked deflection off Matt Grzelcyk to beat Rask at the near post.

Boston were back in front in less than a minute however, when Swedish international center Joakim Nordstrom gathered from Sean Kuraly to finish from close range. Again though, the Blues responded strongly, and tied the game with just over five minutes left in the period through Vladimir Tarasenko, when a positional error from Bruins forward Brad Marchand allowed Tarasenko to burst out of defense.

Tarasenko picked out Jaden Schwartz who bore down on goal, and although his shot was blocked, Russian ace Tarasenko was on hand to bundle in the rebound at the second attempt. "We got our game tonight," Gunnarsson said. "We never give up. First game, we weren't happy with that one, so tonight I think we played a full 60. It was good, a little extra time here, good game overall." — AFP

Anisimova, Swiatek future tennis queens, only 17

PARIS: Seventeen-year-olds Amanda Anisimova and Iga Swiatek both romped into the third round of the French Open yesterday with comprehensive victories over seeded players to firmly mark themselves out as future stars.

The United States' Anisimova followed up her shock Australian Open third-round victory over Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka by dismantling the 11th seed again, 6-4, 6-2. Polish hope Swiatek, who turns 18 on Friday, thrashed Chinese 16th seed Wang Qiang 6-3, 6-0 in under an hour to reach the last 32 of a Grand Slam tournament for the first time.

World number 51 Anisimova has seen her section of the draw open up to the extent that she cannot even face a higher-ranked player than her until at least the quarter-finals. "I'd never passed a round at the French Open, so obviously it's super special. It feels great," she said.

Anisimova is the youngest American woman to get this far at Roland Garros since 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams in 1999, and she revealed the three-time French Open winner helped her after a difficult recent defeat.

"I mean, she's done so much for the sport. She's a huge inspiration to me. I

really look up to her. That's just great to be achieving stuff similar to her," she added. "Actually when I had a tough loss at Miami Open, it was a really long match and I was super upset in the locker room, Serena actually came up to me and we shared a little bit of a chat.

"That was really nice of her, and I'll remember it forever." Only two teenage men reached the second round in Paris this week, but six women made it that far, with three going another step further after 19-year-old Marketa Vondrousova's victory over Anastasia Potapova, 18, on Wednesday.

"There are a lot of great players close to my age that are doing really well," said Anisimova, who will play either Romania's Irina Camelia Begu or Czech Karolina Muchova in round three. "I think it's just the NextGen on the rise. They are doing really well, so it's good to see."

Swiatek, who also reached the second round in Melbourne in January, was simply far too good for Wang. "I don't think I have a chance with her," admitted world number 16 Wang. "She played really aggressive, Yeah, if she plays like that, she can be top 10."

The continued strong form of older players like 37-year-old Williams has made it more difficult for youngsters to break through in recent years, but 21-year-old world number one Naomi Osaka has won back-to-back Grand Slam titles and now teenagers are starting to prove themselves on the biggest stages.

Canadian star Bianca Andreescu, 18, even lifted the prestigious Indian Wells title this year, although was forced to withdraw in Paris with a shoulder injury before the second round. — AFP

Sports

Canada unites in 'Jurassic Park' as Raptors hunt for first NBA title

TORONTO: Thousands of passionate supporters will be roaring and dancing in "Jurassic Park" outside Scotiabank Arena during the NBA Finals while the Toronto Raptors hunt for Canada's first NBA title.

The special atmosphere for devoted fans watching on a giant television screen on the west side of the arena has become a gathering place as Raptors backers from across Canada line up for six or seven hours just for the chance to watch games on TV with thousands of fellow supporters. "These are the passionate fans," said Jay Prateek, who lives in a condo in a nearby high-rise. "It's crazy. It's a lot of fun just because the atmosphere is so much fun. You have the chance to be part of it."

"People are coming from all over, from London and Hamilton and other cities. You can watch at a restaurant with a dozen people or so or you can be out here with hundreds of people." It's a sea of red-clad people waiting to be thrilled by Kawhi Leonard and Kyle Lowry as they lead the Raptors in their first NBA Finals and looking to boo the defending champion Golden State Warriors.

People queue for hours-around the arena and through a tunnel to beyond the train station bringing people from all over to Toronto-just to make sure they have a place to stand in the area, usually a parking garage exit area with a few adjacent shops. The Raptors call it tailgating, though it lacks autos or tailgates, but their slogan says it all—"Where The Loyal Get Loud." Once security opens the area, fans rush for the nearest spots to the big screen and the pre-game television booths constructed Wednesday,

where shows will use the crowd as a backdrop for their analysis of events. Those who don't make zone one have a chance at zone two, which takes up the full block beyond the main staging area, or zone three, with the city closing another block further back to handle the masses looking cheer with their friends and neighbors.

"Usually you come in groups and yeah you will see people you know or old friends," Prateek said. "Some people are planning to get here at 12 (noon) and the game is at 9. Nobody knows for sure. We've never made it this far."

There are drink and hot dog vendors in the area to feed even the most carnivorous hungers and thirsts. There was a line waiting Wednesday when the adjacent Real Sports souvenir shop opened-good luck getting any of the soldout "We The North" selections-and the next-door restaurant was packed ahead of a special event.

Greeters and sales clerks were happy to talk about the event atmosphere, offering an "It's amazing" and "It's incredible" before their managers told them they can't give interviews.

But Canada's first fan, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, tweets his support, saying: "History made! @Raptors, it's time to bring that championship to Canada!"

And the Raptors recognize how solid their support is when they see not only rap singer Drake at courtside but the devoted who couldn't get tickets but showed up anyway, their celebration lasting all night when the Raptors advanced to the finals but not resulting in any arrests.

"What you saw the other night, it's only going to get crazier from here," Toronto's Fred Van-



TORONTO: Fred Vanvleet #23 of the Toronto Raptors speaks to the media during practice and media availability as part of the 2019 NBA Finals at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. — AFP

Vleet said. "It's a city that's very supportive," Raptors Spanish center Marc Gasol said. For Raptors president Masai Ujiri, it's a special thrill to host the first NBA Finals games outside the United States and to show off their faithful fans while the world watches. "Unbelievable fans, the support they have given us around the country," said Ujiri, who is from Nigeria. "There's so much

excitement, passion, energy. "It's going to be crazy here for a few days because that's the mentality of our fan base. We know it's across the world. That's something special about here. We can reach the world easy from Canada and we're happy to be the global team that represents the NBA. It's a really exciting time for us and the city." — AFP

Southgate urges England fans to behave at Nations League Finals

LONDON: England manager Gareth Southgate has urged fans to behave ahead of the Nations League Finals in Portugal, saying the supporters are "part of our team". Southgate, whose side face the Netherlands in the semi-finals, with the winner playing Switzerland or Portugal in the final, was speaking as part of the Football Association's "Don't Be That Idiot" campaign, aimed at highlighting the issue of anti-social behaviour across English football.

A video shows extreme examples of unacceptable behaviour. Each incident is a re-creation of football-related scenes witnessed in recent years both domestically and in Europe. Southgate, who took England to the World Cup semi-finals in Russia last year, asks supporters to be mindful of their behaviour. "You are part of our team," says Southgate in the video. "Make the country proud." About 18,000 England fans are reportedly expected to travel to Portugal, which is popular with British tourists.

Football Association chief executive Martin Glenn said: "It has been a great season for English football and England but we can't ignore some of the anti-social and embarrassing behaviour that has crept back into the game."

"There are thousands of brilliant supporters wherever our teams go, but there is an increasing problem that must be called out. We all have a responsibility to represent the country in the right way and that is what we are trying to highlight."

Britain's most senior police officer with responsibility for football, Mark Roberts, said he supported the FA initiative. "The



Gareth South

reputation of English football fans has been damaged over the years as we often see a stag-do mentality where too much alcohol is consumed, which results in offensive behaviour and disorder," he said. — AFP

Spalletti leaves Inter Milan

MILAN: Luciano Spalletti has left Inter Milan, the Serie A club announced yesterday, with former Italy manager Antonio Conte set to be announced as the club's new coach. "Luciano Spalletti is no longer head coach of the first team," Inter said in a statement. "The club wishes to thank Spalletti for his work and the results achieved together."

Spalletti's exit comes despite sealing Inter's Champions League berth for a second consecutive year on the final day of the Serie A season last Sunday. But he paid with his job for failing to win any silverware during his two-year spell with the Chinese-owned club, as the 18-time Serie A champions search for a first trophy since the Coppa Italia in 2011.

Inter Milan chairman Steven Zhang paid tribute to the 60-year-old who returned the three-time European winners to the Champions League after a seven-year absence this season. "A coach, a teacher, a friend," Zhang wrote on Instagram with a photo of himself alongside Spalletti. "You have always given your best, either rain or shine. This 2 years of adventure means so much for Inter and for me personally. "We will never forget your dedication to this team, and we all thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Once you are the coach of Inter, you would be always my coach. Grazie Mister Spalletti."

Former Italy and Chelsea coach Conte is reported to have already agreed a three-year deal reportedly worth nine million euros (\$10 million) plus bonuses per season to replace Spalletti. The 49-year-old Conte will be officially announced as the new coach on Friday, Gazzetta Dello Sport reported.

Conte won the first three of Juventus' eight straight Serie A titles and the Premier League and FA Cup with Chelsea. Spalletti took over at Inter in mid-2017 having previously coached Zenit Saint Petersburg and Roma. — AFP

Chelsea thrash Arsenal 4-1 to win Europa League

Farewell gift? Hazard scores twice in Europa League final

BAKU: Eden Hazard scored twice and then admitted it was his parting gift as the Belgian's brace helped Chelsea sweep away Arsenal to win 4-1 in the Europa League final in Baku. This match started at 11pm local time on Wednesday in Azerbaijan, but it was Thursday by the time it came to life with a flood of second-half goals started by Olivier Giroud's 49th-minute opener against his old club.

Hazard then set up Pedro Rodriguez for Chelsea's second before grabbing a double of his own—including a penalty—either side of Alex Iwobi's consolation for Arsenal. The Belgian is widely expected to leave Chelsea for Real Madrid after seven years in England, and this was the perfect way for him to bow out.

"I think it is a goodbye, but in football you never know," the 28 year-old told BT Sport. "My dream was to play in the Premier League and I have done that for one of the biggest clubs so maybe now it is the time for a new challenge."

It is his, and Chelsea's, second Europa League this decade, while it is Maurizio Sarri's first major trophy as a coach. "I am really very happy but the trophy is very important for the club," Sarri said.

"In the Europa League we played 15 matches, won 12 and drew three, so I think we deserved to win it." Chelsea will be back in the Champions League next season, but there will be no return to Europe's top table for Arsenal. Unai Emery's side had to win here to qualify, yet they were not good enough on a bizarre night.

Emery was hoping to win this competition for the fourth time. He will get another chance next season, but for now Arsenal's 25-year wait to bring back a European trophy to north London goes on. "We tried and we worked but Chelsea were better than us and congratulations to

them," Emery said.

Chelsea will remember their evening with fondness, as will Sarri, who 24 hours earlier had stolen the headlines when he angrily stormed off the pitch here during a training session in front of the television cameras. "Sarri is a great guy, a great coach and he deserves this," said David Luiz of his coach. The few Chelsea supporters who came will not forget their night, but the fact there were reportedly only around 1,300 in Azerbaijan will be a source of regret for the club. UEFA's decision to play the game here had been heavily criticised, with the difficulty and cost of coming to the shores of the Caspian Sea preventing many fans from travelling and meaning Arsenal's Armenian midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan was controversially absent.

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev was in the crowd, but there were thousands of empty seats in a stadium which holds almost 70,000. That meant that, far away from the blood and thunder of a typical derby fixture, this had the feel of an end-of-season exhibition match on a foreign tour, for much of the first half anyway.

The players seemed short of rhythm in a match played two and a half weeks after the Premier League season ended. It came to life though, with a moment of controversy when referee Gianluca Rocchi dismissed Arsenal appeals for a penalty as Alexandre Lacazette went down under goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga's challenge.

Granit Xhaka then saw his powerful strike from 25 yards graze the crossbar as the half-hour approached. Only after that did Chelsea stir, but Petr Cech in his final match before retiring-blocked Emerson Palmieri's shot and denied Giroud at the end of a fine move. However, as the clock ticked past midnight after a goalless first half, Chelsea went ahead when Giroud stole



BAKU: Chelsea's players celebrate with the trophy after winning the UEFA Europa League final football match between Chelsea FC and Arsenal FC at the Baku Olympic Stadium in Baku, Azerbaijan. — AFP

in front of Laurent Koscielny and stooped to head home Emerson's cross. It was his 11th goal in this season's competition, and there was to be no comeback from Arsenal, with Chelsea quickly putting this final beyond their opponents' reach as Hazard took over.

He set up Pedro for a clipped finish beyond Cech and into the far corner on the hour mark,

and five minutes later Hazard calmly rolled in a penalty awarded after Ainsley Maitland-Niles barged into Giroud.

Substitute Iwobi's sublime volleyed reply followed, but Arsenal had left themselves with too much to do, and Giroud and Hazard combined brilliantly for the latter to get his second and Chelsea's fourth in the 72nd minute.— AFP

Time for Tottenham to be brave to sustain Champions League success

MADRID: Mauricio Pochettino used to wince when his pressing game was compared with Jurgen Klopp's but Tottenham and Liverpool share more than just a love of the chase in their recent fight to join Europe's elite.

With star players sold and the proceeds, largely, squandered, Pochettino and Klopp were each tasked with restoring a sense of direction to clubs clearly wandering off course.

Only this year have Liverpool soared ahead, their 26-point advantage over Spurs in the Premier League testament to a team that turned last year's Champions League run into a start not a finish. Now it is up to Tottenham to do the same. When Pochettino was installed as head coach in the summer of 2014, to little excitement after the more illustrious Louis van Gaal chose Manchester United, he owed some gratitude to Liverpool.

Spurs had been humiliated by them 5-0 at White Hart Lane, which spelt the end for Andre Villas-Boas, and then thrashed 4-0 at Anfield, which all but ensured Tim Sherwood would not be a

permanent successor to the Portuguese manager. By the time Pochettino arrived, Gareth Bale had gone, and so had his 100 million euro transfer fee, splashed on seven new signings, four of whom would be out by the end of Pochettino's second summer.

"When I arrived at Tottenham I knew very well the challenge would be tough," Pochettino said in January. "The club was in a different level. No one believed in us, no one believed the way we operated would bring success."

Liverpool, a year behind, were mourning the loss of their star player too as Luis Suarez left for Spain and the 81 million euros earned was frittered away, leaving Klopp with his own clear-out job in 2015.

Fabio Borini, Sebastian Coates, Iago Aspas, Christian Benteke and Mario Balotelli were discarded by Liverpool. Paulinho, Nacer Chadli, Roberto Soldado, Etienne Capoue, Vlad Chiriches and Emmanuel Adebayor ditched by Tottenham. After the demolition, came the rebuild. Pochettino brought in Dele Alli, Eric Dier, Toby Alderweireld and Son Heung-min. Klopp added Sadio Mane, Mohamed Salah and Georginio Wijnaldum.

Piece-by-piece, each club's identity sharpened again and Champions League qualification became not just a target, but the norm. Yet while Tottenham briefly threatened to win the title in 2017, finishing closest to Chelsea on 86 points, they then dropped back, ending the last two seasons 23 and 27 behind Manchester City.

"We need to make that step," Pochettino said this week. "We realise we can continue in this process, we can put Tottenham with the best teams in the world."

Liverpool have pushed on. Aided by bigger budgets and free

of the strains imposed on Spurs as a result of their new stadium, Klopp saw the moment after last year's loss to Real Madrid and grabbed it.

In January 2018, they sold Philippe Coutinho for 160 million euros and used the money to strengthen a weak defence by signing Southampton's Virgil van Dijk.

In the summer, they acquired an outstanding goalkeeper in Alisson Becker as well as greater strength in midfield with Fabinho and Naby Keita. In Coutinho, they sold a star but this time made it pay. "When I first heard he wanted to go to Barcelona, I didn't imagine we could be that good [without him]," Klopp said this month. "But we did it, it was good for both sides."

Even winning the Champions League might not guarantee the futures of Tottenham's own dithering gems, with Christian Eriksen and Toby Alderweireld still to commit and on contracts that are running out.

But if either, or both, decide to go, perhaps Spurs can take encouragement from Liverpool, by addressing problem areas at full-back, in central midfield and up front.

The club's chairman Daniel Levy will need to answer Pochettino's repeated calls for a show of faith, one that reflects the unwavering belief Pochettino enjoys from his players.

In that sense, a Champions League final could prove cathartic too, offering Spurs the chance to shake off their nearly-men tag, and assume fully the bold, brave, uncompromising mentality of their coach. "It's not that I didn't believe him," said defender Danny Rose this week. "I just didn't understand." For Tottenham, it could be a match that makes everything clearer.— AFP



PARIS: Japan's Naomi Osaka celebrates after winning against Belarus' Victoria Azarenka at the end of their women's match of The Roland Garros 2019 French Open tennis tournament in Paris. —AFP

Osaka stages second great escape at Roland Garros

See Page 45