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Op-Ed

Why did Turkey launch 'Operation Peace Spring'?



By Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak
Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait

Turkey attaches utmost importance to the developments in Syria, with which Turkey has a 911-kilometer-long border. Our national security is closely linked to peace and stability in Syria. On the other hand, we spare no effort to end the humanitarian tragedy in Syria in accordance with the legitimate demands of Syrian people. We are thankful for the generous humanitarian and other forms of aid given by Kuwait to the Syrian people who took shelter in Turkey. They are instrumental to alleviate the sufferings of Syrian people.

On October 9, Turkey launched "Operation Peace Spring" east of the Euphrates River in northern Syria to secure its borders by eliminating terrorist elements. I want to share with our friends in Kuwait some insight about the background and the framework of this operation.

Turkey's ongoing fight against terrorism

Turkey is firmly committed to fighting against terrorism originating from Syria. We have a proven track record in contributing to counter-terrorism efforts in Syria. Turkey has suffered greatly from DAESH attacks inside the country. More than 300 people have been killed in attacks claimed by DAESH in Turkey, where the terrorist group has targeted civilians in suicide bombings and armed attacks in recent years.

We are a committed member of the Global Coalition against DAESH. Turkey is the only country to put up a chest-to-chest combat against DAESH with boots on the ground. We have neutralized more than 4,000 DAESH terrorists on our own.

Turkey has already conducted two major counter-terrorism operations (Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch) in northwest Syria. The two operations were in line with the country's right to self-defense borne out of international law, UN Security Council resolutions, especially no. 1624 (2005), 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014), and under the right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, while being respectful of Syria's territorial integrity.

Turkey has rid an area of 4,000 square kilometers in Syria of terrorist groups in these two separate cross-border operations. During Operation Euphrates Shield, Turkish forces neutralized 3,060 DAESH terrorists.

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WASHINGTON: The Pentagon announced Friday it was bolstering US forces in Saudi Arabia after Riyadh asked for reinforcements following the September 14 drone-and-missile attack on Saudi oil plants which Washington blames on Iran. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said that two fighter squadrons and additional missile defense batteries were being sent to Saudi Arabia, for a total of about 3,000 new troops from September this year.

The move comes as tensions jumped Friday after Tehran said that suspected missiles had struck an Iranian tanker in the Red Sea off the coast of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Tehran did not blame archrival Riyadh for the attack, and US defense officials said they were still looking into it and had no immediate explanation.

Esper said he had spoken with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Friday to discuss adding US firepower to the oil giant's defenses against Iranian attacks. "It is clear that the Iranians are responsible for the recent attacks on Saudi Arabian oil facilities," he

said. "Despite Iran's attempts to deny their involvement, the evidence recovered so far proves that Tehran is responsible for these attacks."

The Sept 14 attack knocked out two major processing facilities of state oil giant Aramco in Khurais and Abqaiq, roughly halving Saudi Arabia's oil production. Washington condemned the attacks as a "act of war" but neither the Saudis nor the United States have undertaken overt retaliation. But the incident added to tensions already soaring since early this year when Iran was accused of attaching mines to several tankers moored off Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and then attacking or seizing others near the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

Esper said that since May the United States has increased its 70,000-strong presence in the Middle East by 14,000 personnel, most of those deployed to the Gulf region in response to Iran's actions. "The US military has on alert additional army, navy, marine and air force units to quickly provide increased capability in the region if necessary," he said Friday. He also urged

US allies in Europe to follow America's lead with their own defensive assets "for regional stability". The deployments authorized Friday include two additional fighter squadrons, and supporting personnel, along with additional Patriot and THAAD missile defense batteries.

The explosion on the Iranian tanker in the Red Sea Friday remained a mystery. The National Iranian Tanker Company said the hull of the Sabiti was hit by two separate explosions off of Jeddah, saying they were "probably caused by missile strikes". It initially blamed Saudi Arabia but then recanted the allegation, and no one claimed responsibility.

Oil prices surged about two percent on the news, which raised fresh concerns about a possible clash between the Iranians and Saudis. "This clearly puts fuel on the Mideast fire," SEB commodities analyst Bjarne Schieldrop told AFP. "After the attack on Saudi a few weeks ago... it's not a matter of if we get new comparable events - but when, and how much."

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Turkey steps up assault in Syria, defying threats

RAS AL-AIN, Syria: Ankara stepped up its assault on Kurdish-held border towns in northeastern Syria yesterday, defying mounting threats of international sanctions, even from Washington. Buoyed by a night of steady advances in the countryside, Turkish troops and their Syrian allies entered the battleground town of Ras al-Ain, sources on both sides said. The Turkish defense ministry hailed its forces' capture of the first Kurdish-held town of the offensive so far.

But Ras al-Ain's Kurdish defenders denied the town had fallen and an AFP correspondent near the town said Turkish troops and their Syrian allies had entered but had yet to capture it. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, who were the main ground partner in the US-led campaign against the Islamic State group, called on the United States to assume its "moral obligations" and protect them.

Continued on Page 24



RAS AL-AIN, Syria: Turkish troops and Turkish-backed Syrian rebels gather outside this border town during their assault on Kurdish-held border towns in northeastern Syria. — AFP

Kipchoge runs sub-two hour marathon

VIENNA: Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge yesterday made history, smashing the mythical two-hour barrier for the marathon in the "best moment" of his life on a specially prepared course in a vast Vienna park. With a time of 1hr 59min 40.2sec, the Olympic champion became the first ever to run a marathon in under two hours in the Prater park with the course readied to make it as even as possible.

"I'm the happiest man today. The message that no human is limited is now in

everybody's mind," an elated Kipchoge told reporters after the run, adding he expected more athletes to match his feat in the future. "From the first kilometers I was really comfortable. I have been training for it for the last four and a half months, and above all I have been putting in my heart and in my mind that I'll run an under-two-hour marathon."

The 34-year-old already holds the world record for the distance with a time of 2hr 01min 39sec, which he set in the flat Berlin marathon on Sept 16, 2018. But accompanied by a posse of 41 pacemakers, who took turns to support him, and a car in front of them setting the pace, Kipchoge bested his mark, making good on a failed attempt two years ago in Monza, Italy.

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VIENNA: Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge celebrates after busting the mythical two-hour barrier for the marathon yesterday. — AFP

BTS rocks out in Saudi

RIYADH: The Saudi capital burst into life with the cheers of young fans of Korean pop group BTS as they performed in the kingdom seeking to transform its ultra-conservative image. The seven members of the wildly popular K-pop band were sweating it out as they danced and sang Friday night in front of thousands of Saudis and expatriates in Riyadh's 70,000-capacity King Fahd International Stadium.

"I am very happy that they are here in Saudi Arabia for the first time," said a young girl, Amira, who wore a veil loosely over her head. "I hope that there will more of these kinds of concerts," she told AFP. Another young Saudi, who asked not to be named, said she was happy that her country was "opening up to pop music". She added that she was a big fan of BTS songs and that they had "personally touched" her.

Many welcomed the group's decision to perform in Saudi Arabia, which has loosened decades-old restrictions on entertainment as part of a push to improve its image and attract tourists in a broader plan to diversify

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UAE astronaut returns home to hero's welcome

ABU DHABI: An Emirati astronaut who became the first Arab to reach the International Space Station received a hero's welcome home yesterday. Hazza Al-Mansoori of the United Arab Emirates was greeted by Abu Dhabi's powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan at the capital's airport. Men, women and children lined a red carpet to welcome back Mansoori and his colleague Sultan Al-Neyadi - who underwent the same training and served as a backup astronaut.

Children rushed towards the first Emirati spaceman to present him with flowers and hugs, as a group of men performed the traditional Yola dance. Although Mansoori's mission was short-

eight days in total - it has been the source of great pride in the UAE, a newcomer to the world of space with ambitions to send an unmanned probe to orbit Mars by 2021. The 35-year-old former military pilot's whirlwind mission had had wall-to-wall coverage in Arab media. He returned to Earth on Oct 3.

Mansoori arrived home yesterday following a stopover at the Roscosmos training base in Star City outside Moscow. "This truly has been an international collaboration and I am humbled to have been part of this," Mansoori tweeted shortly before his arrival. Mansoori flew to the ISS after the UAE signed a contract with Roscosmos to allow him to become a "spaceflight participant", a term used for people from outside the main space agencies who take short trips to the station. While on board, Mansoori donned Emirati dress, treated crew members to local snacks and participated in scientific experiments including a time-perception study that saw him sport a blindfold. — AFP



ABU DHABI: Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan yesterday welcomes Hazza Al-Mansoori, the UAE's first astronaut, on his return. — WAM

Local

Kuwait's Amir receives calls from US President Trump, Jordan's King Abdullah

President Trump welcomes meeting with Amir at 'appropriate time'

NEW YORK: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Thursday received a telephone call from US President Donald Trump. During the call, Trump reassured about His Highness the Amir's health. His Highness the Amir and President Trump reviewed the distinguished ties between the two countries in light of the close strategic partnership. President Trump welcomed meeting with His Highness the Amir, who is now staying in the US for medical tests, at an appropriate time for His Highness the Amir. Trump wished His Highness the Amir everlasting well-being and good health and Kuwait further progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir expressed his great appreciation to



US President Donald Trump



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



King Abdullah II of Jordan

President Trump for reassuring about his health. His Highness the Amir lauded these

sentiments which embody the depth of historical relations between the two countries

and their nations. His Highness the Amir also renewed the call for President Trump to pay

an official visit to Kuwait, wishing Trump good health and well-being, and the US and its nation further improvement and success. In addition, His Highness the Amir wished further development and growth to the bilateral ties of the two countries.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday received a telephone call from King Abdullah II of Jordan during his stay in New York. King Abdullah made an enquiry into His Highness the Amir's health, wishing him health and prosperity, and Kuwait, growth and development under His Highness the Amir's wise leadership. In turn, His Highness the Amir expressed his gratitude over the warm sentiments, which he said reflect the depth of closely-knit relations between both countries. —KUNA

Kuwait ties with Jordan closely-knit, says Deputy FM

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah underlined that Kuwait's relations with Jordan are "closely-knit, solid, historic and deep," spurred on by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and King Abdullah. His remarks to a Jordanian TV channel came after Jordan football fans shouted slogans at a home match against Kuwait, which caused "deep hurt" to the people of Kuwait. The chants "glorified those who invaded Kuwait, killed its children and seized its belongings. He is not a national hero at all," said the official. Ties between both are too deep-rooted to be affected by these "cheap and pre-planned attempts," he added.

On the other hand, Jarallah praised responses made by public and official channels within Jordan to these "insulting and irresponsible" actions. Jordan's parliament was quick to "fiercely condemn" the incident, saying the actions were carried out by a "small few." Earlier, Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah phoned Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Al-Safadi conveying Kuwait's "resentment and rejection" of the incident. These chants "damage the spirit of sport, bearing no relation to it whatsoever," he said. Regretting the behavior, Safadi asserted that such acts do not reflect the nature of the sisterly relations between the countries and the Jordanian people's respect of the Kuwaiti people, added the statement. Safadi also stressed that his country will not condone such acts and will take necessary actions to identify perpetrators and hold them accountable.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom Aziz Al-Daihani stressed relations with Jordan are "sturdy and deep-seated", way above and beyond "cheap shots" and "irresponsible" chants. Commending statements by the Jordanian Senate, House of Representatives and football association (JFA) that vehemently rejected offensive chants by a "sliver" of Jordanian football fans during World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers against the Kuwaiti team Thursday evening, Ambassador Daihani said, "Kuwait was and will continue to be a beacon of tolerance and wisdom... An umbrella and incubator for all Arabs," pinning hope on "awareness" of both peoples to overcome this incident and its impacts due to, and stemming from the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and King Abdullah II of Jordan.

In separate statements, both chambers of the Jordanian parliament and the JFA disowned "the irresponsible acts" of the fans and promised to take action against offenders. Meanwhile, the Jordanian police earlier on Friday said it has apprehended two individuals who made the shameless chants, with a spokesperson of the security directorate telling reporters that investigation is underway on the matter in an attempt to apprehend more involved. In their away match, the Kuwaiti national football team drew with their Jordanians 0-0 in a group B qualifier for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, to be held in Qatar, and the Asian Cup, due in China in 2023. The game was attended by Jordanian Crown Prince and President of the West Asian Football Federation Ali bin Al-Hussein and saw the attendance of about 11,000 spectators. The 1,000 fans of the 'Blues' stole the spotlight twice throughout the match: first when they arrived in Amman International Stadium to show support for their national team, and the other when they went Japanese-style cleaning after themselves at their section of the stadium. —KUNA



Dr Ebaa Al-Ozairi



A group photo on the sidelines of the event.

Dasman Diabetes Institute participates in Muscat congress

MUSCAT: Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), took part in the Gulf Chapter of the Seventh Annual Clinical Congress by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists. The conference was held in Muscat, Oman from the period of 10th until 12th October 2019.

Dr Ebaa Al-Ozairi, Chief Medical Officer of DDI, who was elected to be the first female president of the Annual

Clinical Congress for this year, inaugurated, chaired and presented many sessions and lectures at the conference. Many other healthcare professionals and specialists from the Institute and the region attended this conference and presented as well. There were more than 1,000 delegates and high-profile international speakers. Dr Ozairi also chaired the diabetes educator course, an innovative addition to the Annual Congress with speakers from Dasman Diabetes Institute. The Institute also had posters and abstracts highlighting the importance of Remission Clinic at the Institute.

Furthermore, Dasman Diabetes Institute participated in this conference by setting-up their own booth. The Public Relations and Media team was present to provide booklets, brochures and giveaways to the conference participants, as well as answer any queries, and showcasing the new research and innovative clinics like the Diabetes Remission and others. Dasman Diabetes Institute continues to direct its efforts to address the diabetes epidemic

through focused diabetes research, integrated prevention, training and education.

Dr Ozairi has completed her intercalated BMSc(hons) in molecular pathology at Dundee University (UK) and graduated from Aberdeen University (UK) for her medical undergraduate studies. Dr Ozairi then joined Newcastle University (UK) for her specialist training in Diabetes and Endocrinology. During her postgraduate studies in UK, Dr Ozairi was awarded The Fulbright fellowship to Joslin Diabetes Institute, affiliates of Harvard medical school, Boston, USA. Her research interest includes diabetes education, technology and metabolic surgery. Dr Ozairi has been accredited by the Royal College of physician (UK) as a medical educator, and is an associate practitioner at the UK Higher Education National Academy having completed teaching fellowship. Dr Ozairi has completed her Rabkin Fellowship in medical Education at Harvard Medical school.



KUWAIT: Guillermo Robollo Diez, Deputy Chief of Mission of Spain in Kuwait, and Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, cut the cake during the ceremony. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Spanish Embassy hosts national day reception

KUWAIT: Guillermo Robollo Diez, Deputy Chief of Mission of Spain in Kuwait, hosted a reception on the occasion of his country's national day at Symphony Hotel over the weekend. Senior officials, including Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, diplomats and media persons attended the ceremony.

During the event, Diez delivered a speech in which he welcomed guests who joined the Spanish Embassy's staff in celebrating Spain's National Day. "As the current charge d'affaires and interim of the Spanish Embassy, I am very proud to host this reception, which might be a simple one, but at the same time, it has a deep sense and importance for the Spanish people. The 12th October anniversary embodies all the historic events which took place centuries ago, at a time Spain was born as a modern state and its language and its culture began to spread beyond its borders."

"Consequently, we are very pleased and proud for counting, from now on, with a full-fledged delegation of the European Union with which we hope to work very closely," he said. "Moreover, Spain will

keep committed to foster, as it has always done, the strengthening and consolidation of the relations between the EU and Kuwait."

Spain and Kuwait are connected by strong human, economic and cultural bonds, said the Spanish diplomat. "Both countries share and defend common values and principles in the international community in order to grant security and peace for all nations," Diez said. "As an example of these close ties, let me remind you that Spain and Kuwait held political consultations last October 7th with the attendance in Madrid of the Assistant Minister for Europe Ambassador Walid Alkhobeizi, with very positive results. On the top of this close relation I would like also to highlight the personal friendship between our two Royal Families, between His Majesty King Felipe VI and the previous King, His Majesty King D Juan Carlos, with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. We wish to all of them good health and wisdom in their high responsibilities."

"Like 500 years ago, Spain, currently a full democracy with a strong rule of law and a proud member State of the European Union, is prepared to face the challenges of our times," Diez stressed. "Kuwait, as well as the rest of our allies and friends, can always count on us in the search of the common good."



Local

Most expat private sector workers 'regular laborers'; Kuwaitis 'managers'

National Democratic Alliance calls for ending 'political chaos' in Kuwait

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) revealed that the 'regular laborer' category is the top line of work in the private sector compared to any other job categories in terms of the number of expatriate laborers hired in Kuwait. Meanwhile, Kuwaitis are mainly appointed as managers in the private sector. A recent report issued by the CSC explained that citizens mostly refrained from private sector jobs related to agriculture or fishing - only 16 citizens worked in such jobs in 2015 and 12 in 2019.

The report also showed that expat laborers working in the private sector totaled 406,783 in 2015 compared to 451,885 in 2019, which makes the total number of expats working for the private sector 1,663,000, while Kuwaitis make up only 71,013 with a limited increase of 4,506 workers in the same period. The report added that 1,486,809 people were appointed in the private sector in 2015, including 1,420,302 expats and 66,507 citizens.

Suicide

A 26-year-old Indian died after jumping from the sixth floor of a building he resided in in Fintas, said security sources, quoting an Egyptian eyewitness who reported the matter. Preliminary investigations indicate that the case was a suicide. Further investigations are ongoing in the case.

'Political chaos'

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) called for making bold decisions to end what it described as the 'political chaos' Kuwait is experiencing in the form of conflicts dominating the Cabinet and the absence of the parliament's role in monitoring executive performance. A press release issued by NDA yesterday alleged that the Cabinet has been neglecting running state affairs "due to internal conflicts, as ministers are too busy with attempts to politically topple each other rather than tending to their executive duties, and to do so, they have been using lawmakers and media platforms."



The Civil Service Commission.

"The government is no longer united and ministers are mainly preoccupied by keeping their positions regardless of the price - be it political stability or wasting public funds - to escape confronting parliamentary

deviations," NDA added. Further, NDA sees that the way out of this dilemma is through a radical Cabinet reshuffle to remove those calling for tension or have special agendas and hold snap parliamentary elections.

requires full attention, a Kuwaiti health ministry official said yesterday. Metabolic diseases are one of the reasons behind growth deficiencies in babies that cause physical and brain disabilities that can sometimes be fatal, Head of Sabah Hospital's pediatric department Dr Iman Al-Enezi said.

According to the physician, 55,210 newborns were examined in 2018 in Kuwait (both citizens and expats) and that 931 of them had metabolic diseases. Enezi was speaking on the sidelines of a workshop on metabolic diseases organized by Sabah Hospital in collaboration with Kuwait Pediatric League and Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). She stressed

the need to protect children from diseases by medical examination of newborns to be able to diagnose the disease and start treatment early before serious complications develop.

Further, Enezi said Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Health (MoH), adopted an early detection program for babies in 2014 through which all newborns are examined as early as 2-7 days after birth. Enezi said the workshop will be held over two days with the participation of metabolic consultants Dr Dina Ramadan, Dr Nawal Maqseed and Dr Rasha Al-Saffi, and hereditary disease and nutrition specialists Dr Sohad Al-Mo'eqel from Saudi Arabia and Dr Evona from Poland.

931 newborns with metabolic diseases in 2018

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Metabolic diseases are considered rare hereditary disorders that form a health burden that



KUWAIT: Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, which is based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, concluded its scientific symposium on the role of oversight and advanced inspection in the security apparatus. The event was held in cooperation with Kuwait's interior ministry from Oct 8 to 10, 2019.

— By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Kuwait committed to protecting children's rights

NEW YORK: Kuwait affirmed its commitment to protect children's rights and support countries and organizations' efforts to create a better world for children. The remarks were made by third secretary in Kuwait's permanent mission at the UN, Seba Al-Fuhaid, late Thursday, during a meeting of the third committee of the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) General Assembly. She noted that this year marks the 30th anniversary of signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Meanwhile, Fuhaid welcomed the UN Secretary General's report on about 100 countries that have strict policies on violence against children and about 60 other countries that have issued laws preventing violence against children of all forms, including in homes and schools. Although governments and UN organizations are exerting great efforts to protect children, the ongoing conflicts and wars are depriving children from education and healthcare services, she said. They are also prone to all kinds of violations and violence due to displacement in war-torn countries, the secretary added.

Fuhaid also noted Kuwait's stance on resolving conflicts through peaceful and political solutions, mainly in the Arab World. Moreover, she called on the international community to protect civilians, especially children, also calling on conflict parties to allow the deliv-

ery of food and humanitarian aid to children in need. Fuhaid spoke of Kuwait's role in aiding children around the world, noting that it had donated over \$230 million to the UNICEF since 2010, making it one of the top donating countries in the Middle East and North Africa. She added that the Kuwaiti constitution states that violence of any form against children is strictly prohibited, noting that the country had issued several laws to protect the rights of children and provide them with a decent life.

Further efforts

Separately, Kuwait called for ending conflicts peacefully around the world, also calling on the international community to exert further efforts to aid those in need in war-torn countries. The remarks were made by Kuwait's first secretary Saleh Al-Harran during the meeting of the sixth committee of the UN General Assembly late Friday to discuss the rule of the law on national and global level. He noted the importance of the rule of the law in achieving peace, security, economic development and equality. It also prevents violations of human rights especially in conflict zones.

Meanwhile, Harran said that the Kuwaiti constitution protects rights and equality among individuals, adding that Kuwait had issued a law on national unity, forbidding all forms of hate, extremism and racism. Kuwait also issued other laws on cybercrimes, online media and environment protection, he said. The country took serious measures to enhance the rule of the law and achieve the development vision 2035, the official noted. Harran added that Kuwait strongly believes in human rights and the right of nations in deciding their fate. It also considers the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli conflict of 71 years as a violation of the international law and the UN Charter. — KUNA

local spotlight

Health fees



By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

The minister of health issued a new decision to increase maternity charges for expatriate women registered in the health insurance system. The decree stipulated that non-Kuwaiti patients enrolled in the health insurance system will pay a fee of KD 100 for normal delivery, an increase of 100 percent compared to the previous fee of KD 50, as well as an increase in caesarean-section fees to KD 150.

The decision to increase birth charges for expatriates came after a study of health service costs of medical personnel and equipment, and the vast difference in maternity charges between the public and private sectors. The fees for natural or Caesarean delivery include birth and sonar examination and laboratory tests and medicines other than hospital stay, unlike what was previously in place, where hospital stay charges were included in the KD 50 collected for births.

The duration of the stay according to the previous decision was three nights, and the patient paid KD 10 for each extra day in regular wards and KD 50 in private rooms. The new decision increased the fees for private rooms to KD 100 per day, an increase of 100 percent.

Every expatriate is obliged to have health insurance. And not every citizen has excellent health insurance that allows them to go to any private hospital for treatment. So they will need to consult government hospitals regardless of whether they are expatriates or citizens. I believe health services in Kuwait are not up to the required level, not because of the large number of patients - whether expatriates or citizens - but because of a lack of beds and equipment.

A friend told me her son fell at school on his back and was taken to a government hospital. There he was treated in the corridor because all the observation rooms were full of sick and injured people. He stayed for several hours in the corridor until they found a vacant bed to transfer him! I think it is shameful that we as a rich country like Kuwait find people complaining about poor health services such as lack of beds and medical care.

I know that the ministry of health is now trying to increase fees, perhaps because it believes that raising prices will contribute to reducing the number of patients, which is a work mechanism that must be reviewed periodically to ensure its success and that health insurance companies must have a role in this process. The insurance an expatriate pays should be commensurate with the costs paid, the required treatments, the age of the expatriate and whether they suffer from chronic diseases. These are key elements that must be considered when fees go up.



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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Riders lead camels ahead of a race early yesterday in Kabd, 50 kilometers southwest of Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Dubai Tourism promotes Dubai Expo 2020 in Kuwait

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Dubai continues to consolidate its position as a leading destination for tourists. It will hold the Dubai Expo 2020, the first expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, with many reasons to be counted as one of the most important in exposition history.

On the sidelines of a press conference held in Kuwait, Essam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Tourism and Commercial Marketing Corporation (DTCM), said: "Dubai Tourism aims to target further growth in every potential segment of this important market, from short stays and weekend breaks to long vacations, especially families, who are our key audience and make up the majority of visitors from the GCC region."

Kazim added Dubai Tourism is organizing 18 events during 2019 aimed at attracting tourists from all over the world, especially the Gulf region and Kuwait, which ranked third in the Gulf and 11th globally in the number of visitors. He revealed that the number of Kuwaiti visitors to Dubai in the first half of the year reached 7,000, pointing out that concerned authorities in the emirate provide all facilities to tourists and visitors. "We added more than 13 nationalities to get visa on arrival to facilitate their visit to Dubai," he said.

Kazim pointed out that Dubai Tourism is currently focusing on the Expo 2020, which is held under the slogan "Connecting minds and making the future," in addition to many other events, adding that the Expo is the first international expo organized in the Arab world with the participation of 193 countries, including Kuwait.

Lisa Caudana, Director - Commercial Ticketing of Expo 2020, said: "One of the most important events that will be held in Dubai is Expo 2020, the largest international event that includes the achievements of the countries of the



KUWAIT: Essam Kazim, CEO of Dubai Tourism and Commercial Marketing Corporation (left) and Lisa Caudana, Director - Commercial Ticketing of Expo 2020 attend the press conference. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

world, where it expects to welcome 25 million visitors during the six-month event from October 20, 2020 to April 10, 2021." She told Kuwait Times that the Expo will witness several activities, including the national day celebrations of each participating country. She added that the Expo is a key meeting point for the global community to share innovations and make progress on issues of international importance, such as the global economy, sustainable development and improved quality of life for the world's population.

Caudana added that the Expo will be welcoming the world to the UAE for six months, aiming to leave a meaningful and lasting legacy. She affirmed the Expo is the first to be held in the Middle East, as it has been held every five years in a different country, and visitors will enjoy 60 shows daily. Expo 2020 is the largest event ever staged in the Arab world, and is set to welcome millions of visitors from across the globe.

KIB empowers women by promoting their health

KUWAIT: As part of its leading social responsibility program, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently participated in an event titled 'Stronger Heart,' organized by the Kuwait Cardiac Society in cooperation with the Sabah Al-Ahmad Cardiac Centre and held at The Avenues Mall. Held on the occasion of World Heart Day, the event focused on the health of women's hearts and aimed at spreading awareness amongst women about the causes of heart diseases and methods of prevention.

The event was held in the presence of cardiologists who provided medical advice to attendees and introduced them to the necessary steps to take in order to maintain a healthy heart and arteries for a healthier lifestyle. Additionally, the event also featured a number of sports activities and preliminary medical tests that included measuring blood pressure, body mass index and more.

Meanwhile, Senior Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "We remain committed to participating in a diverse number of activities and initiatives that aim at spreading awareness and positively impacting the local community. In particular, we focus on health-related activities, as they promote the importance of regular health checkups as well as controlling diseases among people. 'Stronger



Heart' sheds light on the importance of educating women and the community about the causes of heart diseases and preventing them through early detection."

Najia also noted that KIB believes in the key role women play, as they represent half of the community. Without them, the community cannot move forward. Accordingly, the bank has called for every woman to take care of her health by means of a healthy diet and regular exercise; thereby enjoying a healthier life and a healthier future.

This year, World Heart Day focused on caring for the health of women's hearts, clarifying the common misconception that heart disease affects men more than women. Not only is this not true, but everyone is just as vulnerable to heart disease if the proper precautions are not taken. It is also worth noting that medical studies have confirmed the necessity of heart examinations for women, as 50% of cases can be avoided through early detection.

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MAHABALIPURAM: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China's President Xi Jinping shake hands during their visit at the Pancha Rathas complex in Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu state. —AFP

India, China bury their differences

Modi picks up trash from seaside town while hosting Xi

MAHABALIPURAM: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi called yesterday for a "new era" in relations with China as he held talks with President Xi Jinping aiming to overcome troublesome differences between the world's two most populous nations. Modi and Xi strolled along a pristine Bay of Bengal beach and held one-on-one talks from chairs overlooking the ocean before their delegations sat down to official negotiations at the historic resort town of Mahabalipuram, south of Chennai.

The two leaders met for the second time in 18 months in a bid to ease tensions over border disputes, the troubled Kashmir region and China's domination of trade between their huge economies. They reaffirmed a pledge made at the last summit in Wuhan, China, that "both sides will prudently manage their differences and not allow differences on any issue to become disputes," said an Indian government statement. Modi said the Wuhan summit had given "increased stability and fresh momentum to our relationship". "Our Chennai vision today has launched a new era of cooperation between our two countries," he added. Xi said in his opening remarks to the summit delegations that he and Modi held "candid discussions as friends."

Kashmir silence

The buildup to the summit has been dominated by India's move in August to end the autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir state. Changes ordered by the New Delhi government will see Kashmir's Ladakh region - part of which is claimed by Beijing - turned into a separate Indian administrative territory. India has moved closer to the United States and its allies in seeking a counter-weight to China's growing military shadow in the Asia-Pacific region. It has been infuriated by China's backing for Pakistan, which controls a large chunk of Muslim-majority Kashmir. The Himalayan region has been a long-standing source of conflict between India and Pakistan. China's proposal for major infrastructure building in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as part of its Belt and Road program has faced strong Indian opposition. China is in turn sensitive to India letting the Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama keep his base in northern India.

But most of the disagreements were pushed to one side so they did not become a summit dispute. Kashmir was not raised in the two days of talks, Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said. They did however agree to step up their efforts so "that the international community strengthens the

framework against training, financing and supporting terrorist groups throughout the world," said the Indian statement. Modern rivalry between the world's two most populous countries dates back decades. They went to war in 1962 over disputed Himalayan territory and other border standoffs remain. In 2017, the Indian and Chinese armies faced each other down for more than two months on a high altitude border plateau claimed by China and India's tiny Himalayan ally Bhutan.

Modi and Xi "reiterated their understanding that efforts will continue to be made to ensure peace and tranquility in the border areas, and that both sides will continue to work on additional confidence building measures," said the Indian statement. On commerce, India and China are both facing a protectionist US and want greater access to each other's markets. India in particular is concerned by China's \$57 billion surplus in their joint trade.

India's summit statement said high level talks would start on ways to "better balance" trade between the countries. Modi and Xi also agreed to "encourage" more cross-border investment. No mention was made however of China's campaign for New Delhi to give Chinese telecoms giant Huawei a key part of India's transformation to 5G communications. The United States has been lobbying strongly against letting Huawei spread its influence because of its alleged close links to the Beijing government.

China made no immediate comment on the summit. The official Xinhua news agency said Xi received a "warm welcome" from Modi and they agreed their countries "should respect and learn from each other so as to jointly achieve common development and prosperity." Xi flew off to Nepal for a one-day stopover on his way home in a country that India has traditionally considered within its sphere of influence. China is pressing for a greater share of Nepal's infrastructure projects. Nepalese authorities detained at least 18 Tibetan activists in a bid to head off protests during the visit, the International Campaign for Tibet said.

Modi picks up trash

Meanwhile, Indian Prime Minister went picking up trash yesterday from a scenic beach resort where he is hosting Chinese President Xi Jinping for summit talks. Modi and Xi are meeting in the southern town of Mamallapuram, home to centuries old wind-swept temple monuments but also popular with tourists for surfing in its perfect waves. But Modi released a video of himself going "plogging" -

the looming cutbacks he said would mean fewer flights and receptions, limits on hiring, fewer documents, reports and translations and even an end to water coolers. Guterres called the crunch the "worst cash crisis facing the United Nations in nearly a decade."

He warned the organization "runs the risk of depleting its liquidity reserves by the end of the month and defaulting on payments to staff and vendors." The UN announced a \$1.4 billion shortfall on its operating budget this year, blaming the funding gap on around 60 states that had been late paying their dues. Of those, just seven countries made up 90 percent of the deficit: the United States, whose outstanding payments top a billion dollars, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Iran, Israel and Venezuela.

'The poor cop it'

Contributions to cover peacekeeping operations-



KOVALAM: Security personnel check a vehicle near Kovalam yesterday, during a summit between India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China's President Xi Jinping at the World Heritage Site of Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu state. —AFP

an activity where joggers combine their run or walk with picking up the trash - on the beach outside his luxury resort early yesterday. He collected plastic bottles - on which he has declared war - as well as banana skins and other litter in a big plastic bag, as the waves rolled into the shore in his latest effort to highlight the lack of cleanliness in public places in India. "Plogging at a beach in Mamallapuram this morning. It lasted for over 30 minutes. Also handed over my 'collection' to Jeyaraj, who is a part of the hotel staff," he tweeted. "Let us ensure our public places are clean and tidy! Let us also ensure we remain fit and healthy." Indian cities have some of the world's highest levels of atmospheric pollution but they are also among the dirtiest with piles of garbage lying in big centers like Delhi and Mumbai because of rapid urban growth and poor governance. Modi has called for an end to the consumption of single-use plastics by 2022.

Concerns are growing worldwide about plastic pollution, especially in oceans, where nearly 50% of single-use plastic products end up, killing marine life and entering the human food chain, studies have shown. Modi gave a personal tour to Xi of the Shore Temple, dating back to the seventh and eighth century and other ancient monuments that are part of UNESCO's world heritage sites and which were emptied of all visitors for the two-day summit. —Agencies

which come out of separate pot-have also suffered from tardy payment. In 2019, France for example owes another \$103 million. For the peacekeeping budget, the US owes another \$2.3 billion, according to UN documents. As a consequence, the UN is deferring payments to countries that have contributed troops, with some of the outstanding bills, such as Bangladesh, reaching huge sums.

"When the rich refuse to pay, it's the poor who cop it," said one UN official, asking not to be named. The UN has always faced budget struggles, but these days they are getting bigger, surfacing earlier and lasting for longer, the UN said. The UN budget runs according to the calendar year, while the US fiscal year is from October 1 to September 30, and the UN hopes Congress will free up the funds by the end of the year. The UN budgetary rules do not include any penalty or interest on late payments.—AFP

Deadly protests set stage for Iran, US tug-of-war in Iraq

BAGHDAD: Iraq's deadliest wave of protests since the 2003 ouster of dictator Saddam Hussein has made the country vulnerable to a battle for influence between its two main competing allies, the United States and Iran, analysts say. The anti-government protests that erupted on October 1 echoed the demands that young Iraqis have made over recent years. But the demonstrations played out differently this time, as tensions spiraled between the US and Iran.

"Without this context, Iran would not have intervened," Iraqi political analyst Munqith Dagher said. Tehran denounced the week of demonstrations that shook Baghdad and southern Iraq as a "conspiracy" that "failed". This response cost Iran "a lot of credit and support in Iraq, especially among Shiites," said Dagher. "But it sacrificed that in order to maintain the system in place in Iraq and to guard the country as an asset in negotiations with the United States."

'Conspiracy'

The wave of unrest left more than 100 people dead, mostly protesters, and put Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi in a weaker position than ever. Even before this Abdel Mahdi headed an unwieldy government. The coalition includes Shiite populist cleric Moqtada al-Sadr-who won the most seats in the last parliamentary elections-and Fatah, the political arm of Hashed al-Shaabi, the paramilitary force dominated by pro-Iran groups.

As protests peaked, Sadr called for the government to help form to resign. The Hashed took the opposite position, saying it was ready to crush the "conspiracy" aiming to bring down the government. Since then state institutions have been paralyzed by division, effectively preventing concrete responses to protester demands for jobs, services and ending corruption.

Caught in the middle, Abdel Mahdi is "even weaker and more vulnerable to pressure from the largest political blocs," said Maria Fantappie, an International Crisis Group Iraq analyst. This could favour Tehran, she said, as "the prime minister will be increasingly dependent on Iran's ally Fatah, which has stood by his side during the crisis". Polarization is complicating the premier's pursuit of "a foreign policy aimed at insulating the country from the unfolding US-Iran competition," Fantappie said.

But in a crisis-ridden and increasingly fractured region, a country like Iraq-which attempts to maintain relations with all, from Iran to the United States, Saudi Arabia to Syria-is a major asset for all. Neither Washington nor Tehran "would like to see the situation spin out of control," Fantappie said. A stable Iraq is vital for Iran. Stuffed by US sanctions, Tehran is committed to maintaining its six billion euro (\$6.6 billion) annual exports to Iraq. Likewise Washington needs Iraq to contain the danger of a resurgent Islamic State group, and to keep Iran's regional influence in check. —AFP

Stalled escalators, empty coolers; UN budget crunch hits

UNITED NATIONS: Stalled escalators, the heating turned down, even the diplomats' bar closing early at 5pm: already the UN budget crunch, one of the worst in a decade, is making itself felt in a series of measures announced by the world body on Friday. "We really have no choice," said Catherine Pollard, a top official in the UN's management department. The main priority now is ensuring the next paycheck for the UN's 37,000 employees.

In a letter to staff, a copy of which was seen by AFP, Secretary General Antonio Guterres laid out

International

We feel betrayed: Kurds in US voice anger at Trump

Turkey attacked after US decided to withdraw troops

NASHVILLE: Like many Kurds living in the United States, Lava Antar has had a hard time sleeping this week, waking often to check reports of Turkish jets and artillery pounding her northeast Syria homeland and learning her former neighbor's 30-year-old son was killed. "We feel betrayed, we feel angry," said Antar, a 26-year-old student, during a meeting to plan a rally in New York City decriing Turkey's strikes, which sparked international criticism and fears of a humanitarian catastrophe.

Turkey attacked after US President Donald Trump decided to withdraw US troops who had been fighting alongside Kurdish forces against Islamic State militants. "We've been helping the US Like, 11,000 people died for this," she said. "Is it because I'm Kurd that I have to be killed?" The US Census Bureau has estimated there are about 21,000 people of Kurdish ancestry in America. Hundreds on Friday protested in front of the federal courthouse in Nashville, home to the largest US concentration of Kurds.

Kurdish-American demonstrators carried signs with messages including "US protect us. Stand by your word" and "If you don't want refugees, stop creating them." More rallies were planned in the coming days in New York, Washington and Dallas. Kurds have long played a role in US military action in the Middle East, from the first Gulf War in the early 1990s to the latest fights against Islamic State militants. "We're not going to just let this go in silence," said Jolyar Hussein, a 34-year-old construction worker that attended the rally with his 5-year-old son.

"We stand side-by-side with the US Army and fight the ISIS. They do air, we do the ground. We both do our job. Now this is what the Kurdish people get as a reward?" "Trump all of a sudden forgot that Kurds were fighting

shoulder-and-shoulder with American soldiers," said Taber Sindi, 34, secretary of the Tennessee Kurdish Community Council in Nashville and a rally organizer. "Kurds were the only main force on the ground, the only boots on the ground. We sacrificed thousands of lives."

Sindi, a married father of four boys whose family came from northern Iraq 24 years ago, said his father, Ismail, was a Peshmarga commander killed in a mustard gas attack while fighting Saddam Hussein's forces in 1988. Even some of Trump's closest allies blasted the move, announced on Sunday. Twenty-nine of his fellow Republicans in the House of Representatives on Thursday said they would announce sanctions against Turkey over the attacks, a day after similar legislation was announced in the Senate.

'Stand by your word'

Sindi said people in Nashville's Kurdish community have been getting news from Syria through social media and media outlets but also personal contacts and family members. "We have a lot of Trump supporters in our community, but even they are mad. They are unhappy about this decision," Sindi said, adding that he also blames Congress and other US allies for allowing the attack to begin. "Where are all the other countries? The whole world has been silent about this." Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has said the purpose of the assault is to defeat the Kurdish YPG militia which has links to insurgents in Turkey.

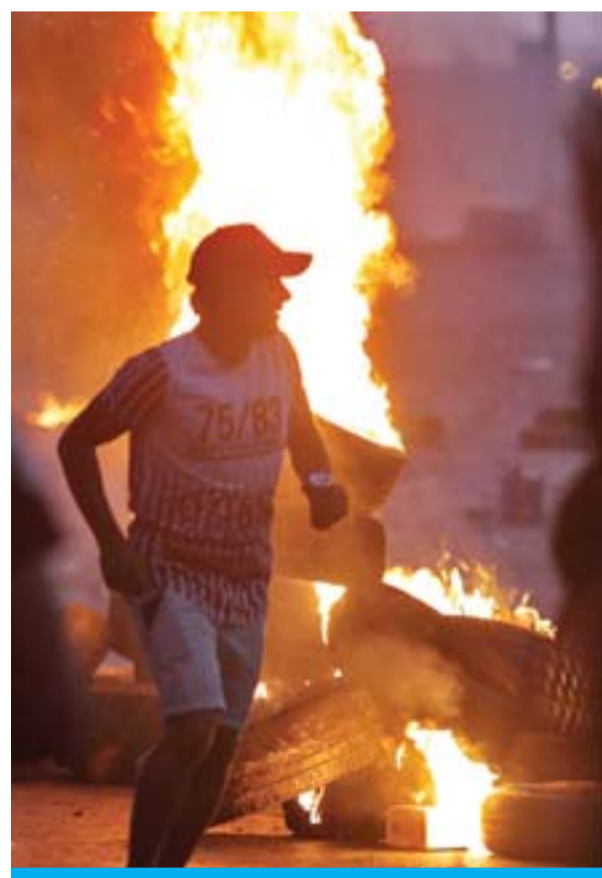
Kurdish activists in the United States said they planned to call congressional representatives. "I hear the senators-Republican and Democrats-talking about sanctions, but that that's not going to stop Erdogan," said Shyar Antar, a 24-year-old cousin of Lava Antar, from Qamishli City in



STRASBOURG: Demonstrators hold Kurdish flags and placards as they take part in a demonstration in Strasbourg, eastern France yesterday to support Kurdish militants as Turkey kept up its assault on Kurdish-held border towns in northeastern Syria. — AFP

northeast Syria, at the same New York meeting. "President Trump should send back the troops to the border so that Turkey would stop the bombing. But I don't think after

what has happened that Trump will go back," Antar said. "So I think right now the only hope is in Congress, try and implement a no fly zone." — Reuters



BAGHDAD: Iraqi demonstrators run next to a burning tyre during a demonstration against state corruption, falling public services and unemployment on Oct 5, 2019. — AFP

Facing pressure, Baghdad probes Iraqi bloodshed

BAGHDAD: Iraqi authorities, under pressure from the streets as well as political and religious forces, yesterday increased the number of commissions to investigate the deaths of more than 100 people in recent protest. From October 1 to 6, at least 108 people were killed and more than 6,000 wounded, according to the government's Human Rights Commission. The vast majority of them were protesters demanding an end to rampant corruption and chronic unemployment who were shot by live rounds. Authorities have blamed "unidentified snipers".

But human rights advocates and the growing numbers of Iraqis who have been able to access social media via channels bypassing restrictions in the country or from abroad, disagree. They hold security forces responsible for the bloodshed: either by firing themselves or not protecting protesters from snipers who infiltrated the demonstrations. So far, authorities have accepted responsibility for two incidents.

They have acknowledged that the military had used "excessive force" in the Shiite bastion of Sadr City in Baghdad and say anti-riot police were responsible for the killing of a protester in Babylon south of the capital. But overnight Friday, authorities ordered the creation of two new investigatory commissions. One is led by Iraq's military command and expected to shed light on the deaths and wounded as well as attacks on public buildings and raids by unidentified gunmen on media.

The other, composed of representatives from the armed forces, parliament, the human rights commission and the judiciary will investigate and bring to justice soldiers who acted illegally. This comes after a failed attempt in parliament on Thursday by lawmakers from former premier Haider Al-Abadi's Victory Alliance to garner enough votes to summon Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi. During his sermon on Friday, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, spiritual leader for Iraq's Shiite majority, upped the pressure on authorities.

"The government is responsible when, under the eye of law enforcement, protesters are fired on illegally and media are beaten or attacked to terrorize their employees," he said. Sistani, who wields significant power to influence the government, gave authorities "two weeks" to release the findings of the promised investigations. The prime minister's office said the creation of the commission set to investigate military personnel, comes "in response to Grand Ayatollah Sistani's sermon." — AFP

Exposed and under fire, Syria Kurds may turn to Damascus

BEIRUT: A US withdrawal from Syria's northern border this week has exposed Washington's Kurdish partners to a Turkish assault, creating conditions for a rapprochement with Damascus that both sides need badly, analysts said. The main US partner in the years-long battle against the Islamic State group, Kurdish forces were left to fend for themselves after allied US forces pulled back on Monday.

What the Kurds resent as a US betrayal paved the way for a Turkish operation that has seen Ankara bombard positions since Wednesday and send forces across the border. With little leverage left in the game, Syria's Kurds - viewed by Ankara as "terrorists" - may have to thaw ties with President Bashar Al-Assad's Russian-backed regime.

"The absence of US forces could cause them to turn to Damascus for assistance," Syria expert Samuel Ramani said. Marginalized for decades, Syria's minority Kurds carved out a de facto autonomous region across some 30 percent of the nation's territory after the devastating war broke out in 2011. After the Islamic State group swept across the region in 2014, the Kurd-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) mounted a fierce defense of their heartland and became the US-led coalition's main partner on the ground.

Middle East analyst Jean-Pierre Filiu argued that the leadership of Turkey's outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) - of which the SDF is an offshoot - was paying a price for two misjudgments. "It

believed its political project could take root in Syria without clearly antagonizing the Assad regime, and it thought it could build a lasting alliance with the United States thanks to the anti-jihadist fight," he said.

In the short term, according to Alexey Malashenko of the Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute, the Kurds should expect no help from Damascus to fight off Turkey. "Assad cannot give it to them for fear of harming relations between Moscow and Ankara," he said. The Kurds have already opened talks with Damascus on a long-term rapprochement but negotiations have stalled over outstanding issues, including the form of government in Kurdish regions and the future of forces stationed there.

'A bitter pill'

Damascus, which has accused the Kurds of treason over their alliance with Washington, rejects their self-rule and wants central government institutions restored in Kurdish-held areas, especially in the oil-rich east. In comments published Tuesday, Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad said Damascus was ready to welcome the Kurds back into the fold but stressed the government would not relinquish control over "a single pinch of dirt" in the war-torn country.

Waddah Abed Rabbo, editor-in-chief of the pro-government Al-Watan newspaper, said the Kurds would have to disband their fighting force as part of a rapprochement. "They have to hand over all their heavy weapons to the Syrian army... and return to the military's ranks so they can fight Turkey's incursion together," he wrote in an editorial.

Experts say these demands may be hard for the SDF to accept. "The SDF does not want to reconcile with Assad on terms placed down by Damascus, which would amount to surrendering their autonomy," said Nicholas Heras, an analyst at the Center for

a New American Security. "Turning to Assad might work to keep Turkey at bay, but it would be a bitter pill for the leadership of the SDF to swallow."

Resources and reconciliation

Despite this, Turkey's invasion has bolstered calls for deeper engagement from both the Kurds themselves as well as the regime and its Russian backers. Moscow on Thursday said it would "push to get contacts going between Damascus and Kurdish organizations" to calm the situation on Syria's northern border. For its part, the Kurdish administration has said it "looks forward to Russia playing the role... of a backer and guarantor" in talks with Assad's regime.

In a statement carried by state news agency SANA on Wednesday, Syria's foreign ministry said it was ready to "embrace" Syria's Kurds if they chose to "return to their senses". After successive Russia-backed victories against rebels and jihadists since 2015, Assad's regime controls some 60 percent of the country. But resource-rich areas in eastern Syria, essential for the regime's supply of oil, water and wheat, remain under Kurdish control. "On a strategic level, Russia and the Syrian regime stand to benefit the most from (Turkey's) operation," said the Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy.

"The benefits of forcing the Kurds to move to a deal that allows President Bashar Al-Assad to reassert control over the resource-rich east are immense," it said. As Washington prepares its exit, the Eurasia group predicts the "Kurds will rebalance and allow Assad's forces to incrementally expand in the east". Faced with Turkish fire and difficult demands by Damascus, the Kurds are seemingly stuck between a rock and a hard place. "Any solution will likely not be on the Kurds' own terms, because they don't have leverage" Ramani said. — AFP



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International

EU's Tusk slams Erdogan's threat of refugee surge as 'blackmail'

Netherlands to freeze weapons exports to Turkey

NICOSIA: EU Council President Donald Tusk has condemned as attempted "blackmail" a threat by the Turkish president to allow millions of refugees to head to Europe if the bloc criticizes Ankara's offensive in Syria. Tusk's comments came during a visit to EU member Cyprus, where he also slammed Turkey over its "illegal" drilling off the Mediterranean holiday island.

Turkey is set to dominate the agenda at a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg on Monday—both for the Syria operation and for its continued controversial drilling operations off Cyprus. "Turkey must understand that our main concern is that their actions may lead to another humanitarian catastrophe, which would be unacceptable," Tusk said.

"Nor will we ever accept that refugees are weaponised and used to blackmail us. That is why I consider yesterday's threats made by President (Recep Tayyip) Erdogan totally out of place," he added. Erdogan made his comments on Thursday in the face of mounting condemnation from European governments of Ankara's long-threatened operation to enforce a buffer zone in northeastern Syria to accommodate some of the 3.6 million refugees currently living in Turkey.

"Hey EU, wake up. I say it again: if you try to frame our operation there as an invasion, our task is simple: we will open the doors and send 3.6 million migrants to you," the Turkish leader said. Under a 2016 agreement with the EU, Turkey agreed to prevent refugees from leaving towards Europe in exchange for six billion euros and visa-free travel for its citizens, but has frequently criticized the lack of assistance from Brussels.

Tusk condemned Turkey's offensive, launched Wednesday, saying it was "of grave concern and should stop". "A military intervention will only make matters worse," he added, saying it would exacerbate instability in the region, cause further civilian suffering and displacement as well as undermine the fight against the Islamic State group. Tusk said he was visiting Nicosia to demonstrate the EU's "full solidarity" in the face of Turkey's continued drilling activities in the waters off Cyprus.

'Unprecedented escalation'

"The European Council has strongly condemned these

illegal actions. And in light of the new drilling activities by Turkey... I reconfirm that the EU stands united behind you," Tusk said after meeting Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades. He called on Ankara to end the drilling activities, which "not only undermine the recent efforts to resume Cyprus settlement talks, but... also undermine good neighbourly relations between the EU as a whole and Turkey".

Last week, Nicosia accused Turkey of defying the bloc by sending another drilling ship to operate inside its waters. According to the Cyprus government, the area where the Turkish vessel is operating is clearly defined under international law as Cypriot territorial waters. "These actions constitute an unprecedented escalation of Turkey's illegal behavior and the most severe provocation so far," said Anastasiades. "We cannot remain idle," he added, saying there was a need for a more "concrete" response to Turkey's actions.

The EU has issued repeated statements condemning the Turkish drilling bloc member Cyprus. Ministers will have further talks Monday about possible sanctions against individuals involved in the drilling. But while Cyprus and Greece are pushing for such measures, diplomats say other countries are more cautious, fearing that sanctions could risk inflaming tensions with Ankara still further. Turkey is opposed to Nicosia's energy exploration plans and wants a say in the development of hydrocarbons in the region.

Ankara also demands Turkish Cypriots on the divided island have their share of the profits from natural gas but argues a Cyprus solution must be found first. Cyprus has pushed ahead with exploring for offshore energy resources despite the collapse in 2017 of UN-brokered talks to end the country's decades-long division. Turkey has had troops stationed in the country since 1974 when it invaded and occupied its northern third after a coup sponsored by the military junta then ruling Greece.

Freeze weapons exports

The Netherlands is to freeze all weapons exports to Turkey in the aftermath of Ankara's assault on Kurdish forces in northern Syria, the Dutch foreign ministry said. "The Netherlands have now decided to withhold all license applications for the export of military goods to



MARSEILLE: People take part in a demonstration yesterday to support Kurdish militants as Turkey kept up its assault on Kurdish-held border towns in northeastern Syria. —AFP

Turkey pending the course of the situation," the ministry said in a statement sent to AFP.

The move comes in the wake of foreign trade minister Sigrid Kaag's announcement in the Dutch parliament Thursday that all military license applications by Turkey would be turned down "unless there is clear proof that the goods are not being used in northeastern Syria". The Netherlands, which is part of an international coalition against ISIS and a fellow NATO partner with Turkey also called on EU member states to "exercise restraint and closely follow the criteria for arms exports" to Turkey.

"We are deeply concerned about the humanitarian aspect of this operation" which may "hinder the fight against ISIS and stability in the region," Dutch Deputy

Prime Minister Hugo de Jonge told journalists Friday at a weekly news conference. The Netherlands is responsible for about eight percent of Europe's total arms exports to Turkey, according to figures by the Amsterdam-based research and campaign organization Stop Wapenhandel.

This included mainly parts for tanks and armoured vehicles, as well as technology and parts for fighter planes and attack helicopters. Stop Wapenhandel said in a report released in 2017. Dutch Foreign Minister Stef Blok on Wednesday summoned Ankara's envoy to protest Turkey's deadly offensive against Kurdish forces, effectively triggered this week by President Donald Trump's order to pull back US forces from the Syrian border. —Agencies

News in brief

Nepal bus crash kills 11

KATHMANDU: An overloaded bus plunged down a hill in central Nepal, killing at least 11 and injuring 108 people, an official said yesterday. The packed bus was ferrying passengers - who had been celebrating the Hindu festival of Dashain - from Sindhupalchowk to neighboring Kathmandu. But the crowded vehicle slipped and fell more than 50 meters at a bend. "Six people were killed instantly and five more passed away on the way to hospital or while being treated," district official Goma Devi Chemjong said. Chemjong said 108 people were injured but only 39 were kept for treatment. "We are investigating what caused the accident," she said. Accidents are common on Nepal's poorly maintained highways, with the number increasing during the festival season when the roads are far busier and public transport overcrowded. —AFP

Two dead as boat sinks

MEXICO CITY: A small boat carrying African migrants off the coast of southern Mexico sank Friday, leaving two people dead and one missing, authorities said. The boat was traveling off the southern border state of Chiapas when it listed to one side, pitching its occupants into the water, the state prosecutor's office said in a statement. A 39-year-old man was found dead, it added, washed up on the shore. A second body was later located a few hundred meters from the first. A search operation "managed to rescue eight migrants alive," the prosecutor's office said, adding one person was still missing. All were from Cameroon, a country that has seen a growing exodus of refugees amid an increasingly violent conflict between its French- and English-speaking communities. —AFP

Train smashes into bus

MEXICO CITY: A freight train smashed into a bus in Mexico Friday, killing eight people and injuring seven, authorities said. The bus driver tried to beat the approaching train at a railroad crossing in the village of La Valla, in the central state of Queretaro, but miscalculated, emergency officials said. Images from the scene showed the wreckage of the bus upside-down along the tracks, its top badly crumpled. "The injured are being taken to the hospital and investigators are in the process of identifying the deceased," the local public security chief, Angel Rangel, said on Twitter. Two of the injured are in serious condition, officials said. The accident occurred just outside the city of San Juan del Rio, an industrial hub that receives heavy train, truck and bus traffic. —AFP

Huge haul of synthetic drugs

THE HAGUE: European police seized drugs worth 85 million euros and arrested hundreds of suspects during a continent-wide sweep last month, Europol announced Friday. The operation called "Joint Action Days 2019" in mid and late September not only targeted the trade in synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, but also human trafficking, migrant smuggling and environmental crime, the Hague-based law agency said. Led by the Polish Central Bureau of Investigation and joined by 15 other member states, the sting conducted by more than 37,000 officers "targeted drug traffickers across Europe," Europol said. "These activities brought in an important hit on drug trafficking networks, pulling drugs worth more than 85 million euros (\$93.5 million) out of the illegal market," Europol said, quoting preliminary results. —AFP

California bans private prisons and immigrant detention centers

LOS ANGELES: California on Friday banned private prisons and immigrant detention centers under a bill signed by the liberal state's governor. The measure stipulates that beginning next year, the state's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is prohibited from entering into or renewing a contract with a private, for-profit prison to incarcerate people.

The bill also calls for such facilities to

be phased out by 2028. "During my inaugural address, I vowed to end private prisons, because they contribute to over-incarceration, including those that incarcerate California inmates and those that detain immigrants and asylum seekers," Newsom, who has repeatedly sparred with the Trump administration over immigration, said after signing the bill. "These for-profit prisons do not reflect our values," he added.

California lawmaker Rob Bonta, who authored the bill, described the signing as "a truly historic moment for California." "By ending the use of for-profit, private prisons and detention facilities, we are sending a powerful message that we vehemently oppose the practice of profiteering off the backs of Californians in custody, that we will stand up for the health, safety and wel-

fare of our people, and that we are committed to humane treatment for all," he told a news conference.

Rights advocates also hailed the measure, pointing to what has been described as inhumane conditions at many of the private facilities where several inmates have died in recent years. Mario, a 31-year-old Mexican immigrant who spoke at the news conference, said he had spent six months at one of these for-profit detention centers and had "experienced first-hand the injustice, the lack of medical care, the lack of nutritious food, the lack of everything." "This is completely unacceptable," he said. "People's lives are at stake and people's lives have been lost because of this."

There are currently some 115,000 inmates being held at California prisons, and approximately 1,700 of them are

Thousands evacuated as California wildfires rage

LOS ANGELES: Wind-driven wildfires forced the evacuation of about 100,000 people in southern California Friday and destroyed dozens of structures and homes as authorities warned it could take days to extinguish the flames. By Friday evening, the strongest blaze, dubbed the Saddleridge Fire, had consumed 7,542 acres in areas of the San Fernando Valley, about 20 miles north of downtown Los Angeles, fire officials said.

They added that it had damaged or destroyed at least 31 structures and was 13 percent contained as of Friday evening. One man in his 50s died of a heart attack as he struggled to save his home in the Porter Ranch area, fire officials said. The fire quickly got out of control after it erupted late Thursday for unknown reasons in the city of Sylmar, driven by low humidity and gusts known as the Santa Ana winds.

"This is a very dynamic fire," Los Angeles Fire Department Chief Ralph Terrazas told a news conference. "Do not wait to leave," he urged residents. "If we ask you to evacuate, please evacuate." He said some 1,000 firefighters, backed by water-dropping helicopters and planes releasing fire retardants, were battling the blaze that forced the shutdown of several major highways. The metro line in the area was also closed as were schools and businesses.

"We've calculated that the fire is moving at a rate of 800 acres per hour," Terrazas said, adding that it would probably take days to get it under control. Some 200 firefighters were meanwhile battling several other blazes in Riverside County, east of Los Angeles, including one that

tore through a trailer park and was started by burning trash. That blaze, dubbed the Sandalwood fire, destroyed 76 homes and buildings and killed an 89-year-old woman who was unable to escape the flames.

There were no immediate reports of injuries, but authorities ordered several hundred homes in the area be evacuated. The National Weather Service said it expects the high winds fanning the flames to subside by Friday evening, making it easier for firefighters to do their work. A red flag warning - which indicates ripe conditions for wildfires - remains in effect through today.

In the dark

"That seems to be the new normal in California," lamented Sylmar resident Oscar Mancillas, as he helplessly watched the flames spread in the hillside near his home. "I mean the vegetation is so dry... but we're kind of lucky because it didn't grow back from the last fire," he told AFP. "In California you have to be earthquake ready and you have to be fire ready... and for those of us who have a family, it's a little daunting sometimes."

The wildfires in the south erupted as California's largest utility, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), implemented rolling power blackouts that affected some two million people in northern California this week. About 312,000 customers remained in the dark Friday as a result of the shutoffs designed to reduce the threat of wildfire that can be sparked by lines downed in heavy winds. Many schools and universities were also closed in northern parts of the state as people stocked up on gasoline, water, batteries and other basics, with frustration mounting at the blackouts condemned by some as "third world."

"We're seeing a scale and scope of something that no state in the 21st century should experience," Governor

"Kevin now, after many years in Government, wants to spend more time with his family and go to the private sector. Congratulations Kevin, on a job well done!" McAleenan served in the role for six months, replacing Kirsten Nielsen, who sat at the helm of the powerful agency for 1.5 years. Trump said he would announce a new acting homeland security secretary next week, and that there were "many wonderful candidates."

During McAleenan's brief tenure, the Trump administration stepped up efforts to discourage an exodus of migrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador by asking Mexico to impede their transit and requiring them to apply for asylum in the first country they enter - meaning either Guatemala or Mexico.

Cracking down on illegal immigration is a major goal on Trump's agenda, and efforts have been paying off. US border

agents arrested or stopped nearly one million undocumented migrants at the southern border with Mexico in the last 12 months, the most in more than a decade, according to statistics released this week. Migrants arrested at the border fell to just over 52,000 in September, the final month of the 2019 fiscal year, down from more than 144,000 in May and the lowest monthly figure in one year.

McAleenan's exit came after he told The Washington Post that he did not feel in control of his department, as news reports said he was discouraged by his standing in the Trump administration. "What I don't have control over is the tone, the message, the public face and approach of the department in an increasingly polarized time," McAleenan told the paper. "That's uncomfortable, as the accountable, senior figure." On Friday he tweeted a thank you to Trump and highlighted his department's accomplishments. —AFP



PARADISE: Photo shows a burnt car as a gas station remain visible after the 'Camp' fire tore through the region near Pulga, east of Paradise, California. —AFP

Gavin Newsom said Thursday, blaming decades of what he called neglect and mismanagement by PG&E. "This is not, from my perspective, a climate change story as much as a story about greed and mismanagement over the course of decades," Newsom said. "Neglect, a desire to advance not public safety but profits."

PG&E has defended the outages as necessary for safety reasons and has said it will take days before power is restored to all customers as inspections must be conducted on all power lines and equipment before the lights can be turned back on. "This is not how we want to serve you but blackouts can happen again," Bill Johnson, the CEO of the company said Thursday. Last November, PG&E's faulty power lines were determined to have sparked the deadliest wildfire in the state's modern history, which killed 86 and destroyed the town of Paradise. —AFP

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International

Two dead as unprecedented Typhoon Hagibis hits Japan

Authorities issue highest level of disaster warning

TOKYO: Powerful Typhoon Hagibis slammed into Japan yesterday, killing at least two people and prompting authorities to issue their highest level of disaster warning over "unprecedented" downpours that caused flooding and landslides. Around 7.3 million people were placed under non-compulsory evacuation orders and more than 30 people were injured, four seriously. Even before making landfall, Hagibis caused enormous disruption, forcing the cancellation of two Rugby World Cup matches, delaying the Japanese Grand Prix and grounding all flights in the Tokyo region.

It crashed into Japan's main Honshu island just before 7:00pm (1000 GMT), barreling into Izu, a peninsula southwest of Tokyo, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said, packing gusts of wind up to 216 kilometers per hour around an hour. The storm claimed its first victim hours before arriving on the coast, when strong winds from its outer bands flipped a car in Chiba east of Tokyo and killed the driver. But it was Hagibis' torrential rain that prompted the JMA to issue its highest-level emergency warning for parts of Tokyo and the surrounding areas, warning of disaster.

'Unprecedented' rains

"Unprecedented heavy rain has been seen in cities, towns and villages for which the emergency warning was issued," JMA forecaster Yasushi Kajiwara told reporters. "The possibility is extremely high that disasters such as landslides and floods have already occurred. It is important to take action that can help save your lives." At least two landslides were already confirmed, with a man in his sixties killed in one in Gunma north of Tokyo.

By early evening, tens of thousands were in shelters and receiving emergency rations and blankets, though a 5.7-magnitude quake that rattled the Tokyo area did little to calm nerves. Among the evacuees were people whose homes were damaged by a powerful typhoon that hit the region last month. "I evacuated because my

roof was ripped off by the other typhoon and rain came in. I'm so worried about my house," a 93-year-old man told national broadcaster NHK as he sheltered at a centre in Tateyama in Chiba east of Tokyo.

In Yokohama, outside of Tokyo, others hunkered down in their homes despite the storm. "I'm 77 and I've never seen anything like this," Hidetsugu Nishimura said. "We can hear an infernal din from the rain and the wind, and a fragment of the roof has gone. For an hour, the house was shaking from wind and rain." Even in the



Million placed under evacuation orders

hours before the storm neared land, its outer bands brought tornado-like gusts of wind to Chiba, east of Tokyo, where one home was destroyed and several damaged. Five people including a three-year-old boy were sent to hospital, but none suffered serious injuries, the local fire department said.

Rugby, F1 disrupted

In Gotemba, west of Tokyo, the fire department said it had rescued one man who fell into a swollen canal but was still searching for a second man. The JMA has forecast half a meter of rain for the Tokyo area in the 24 hours to midday on Sunday, with more for the central Tokai region, but many rivers were already close to breaching their banks by afternoon. In Kanagawa, authorities implemented an emergency discharge as



ICHIHARA: This general view shows damaged homes caused by strong wind brought by Typhoon Hagibis in Ichihara, Chiba prefecture yesterday. — AFP

the Shiroyama dam reached capacity, with warnings issued for people living downstream. Across the regions affected by the storm, more than 180,000 people lost power.

And everything from auto plants to the country's ubiquitous convenience stores, usually open 24 hours a day, shut their doors. The storm has forced the delay of Japanese Grand Prix qualifiers scheduled for yesterday and the cancellation of two Rugby World Cup matches: England-France and New Zealand-Italy. It could also jeopardize a key match-up between Scotland and Japan on Sunday. Officials are not expected to make a final decision on that game until Sunday morning, after

they have assessed any damage to the venue and transport links.

Scotland face elimination if the match is axed and have warned they could take legal action if the game is cancelled. World Rugby called the threat "disappointing". And organizers warned yesterday night that a Namibia-Canada fixture could be cancelled in Kamaishi, which was hit by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami disaster. Japan is hit by around 20 typhoons a year, though the capital is not usually badly affected. Hagibis is bearing down on the region just weeks after Typhoon Faxai hit the area with similar strength, killing two and causing major damage in Chiba. — AFP

Ecuador indigenous group rejects talks

QUITO: The indigenous group leading mass protests in Ecuador on Friday rejected an offer of direct talks from President Lenin Moreno to end days of deadly protests against fuel price hikes. "The dialogue that he's seeking lacks credibility," the indigenous umbrella group CONAIE said in a statement, adding that it would negotiate with the government only when a decree to remove fuel subsidies has been "repealed." Moreno earlier Friday proposed the direct talks as the protests stretched into a 10th day. "It is essential to stop the violence," he said in a brief address on television. "I call on the leaders to talk directly with me."

In their statement, the indigenous group replied that "the dialogue that the national government says it promotes... is based on one of the worst massacres in the history of Ecuador." Clashes between protesters and security forces have left five dead and more than 2,000 wounded, according to the ombudsman's office. Indigenous groups from disadvantaged communities in the Amazon and the Andes have spearheaded demands that Moreno reinstate fuel subsidies that were cut last week - part of a deal his government struck to obtain a \$4.2 billion loan from the IMF.

Police, protester clashes

Riot police clashed with indigenous demonstrators at various areas in Ecuador's capital again Friday. Demonstrators respond-



QUITO: Demonstrators take part in a protest over a fuel price hike ordered by the government to secure an IMF loan, in Quito. — AFP

ed to volleys of tear gas with homemade mortars and fireworks launched through tubes, turning the area around the Congress building in Quito into a battleground. Also arriving in the capital to protest were a thousand Amazon Indians, armed with spears. Road blocks were reported in 17 of Ecuador's 24 provinces, according to authorities.

On Thursday, indigenous leaders had hardened their stance in the face-off, rejecting UN and Catholic Church-mediated talks, and calling for a "radicalization" of the protests. The violence has brought much of the capital to a standstill since Monday and forced Moreno to relocate his government to Ecuador's second city, Guayaquil. The government declared a state of emergency for 60 days and

deployed some 75,000 military and police, in addition to imposing a curfew in the vicinity of government buildings.

The end of the fuel subsidies has meant that prices shot up by as much as 120 percent from October 3. "If it weren't for us people from the countryside, city people, the rich, couldn't survive," said 52-year-old indigenous protester Maria Escobar as she called for the president's dismissal. Diego de la Vega, a student who joined the indigenous crowd, said that "we don't just protest about gas, but about Moreno's entire agreement with the IMF, as it affects all of us." "All countries that have signed agreements with the IMF, it didn't turn out well for them, like Argentina for example," the 24-year-old said. — AFP

Journalist's killing fuels ire of Haiti protesters

PORT-AU-PRINCE: The killing of a journalist who had closely covered Haiti's political and economic crisis fueled the anger of protesters on Friday, as they clashed with police and pressed calls for the president of the impoverished nation to resign. Nehemie Joseph was found dead in his car with several gunshot wounds to the head late on Thursday, according to his media outlet Radio Mega.

Violent crime is rife in Haiti, and the circumstances behind Joseph's killing were not immediately known. He had complained publicly last month of threats from politicians close to the government over his work, but Haiti's police had no immediate comment on the killing. A government spokesman lamented the death on Twitter but offered no further comment.

The country's online media association said Joseph was the third journalist to have been killed or "disappeared" since Moïse became president 2-1/2 years ago. "The surge in attacks on the media is very worrying," said international rights group Reporters Without Borders, calling on authorities to step up pro-



PORT-AU-PRINCE: Protesters march on the street to demand the resignation of President Jovenel Moïse in Port-au-Prince. — AFP

tection for journalists. Opposition-led protests over fuel shortages, galloping inflation and allegations of corruption by public officials have rocked Haiti for the past four weeks.

At least 17 people have been killed and 189 injured during the anti-government demonstrations, according to Haiti's National Network for the Defense of Human Rights, and schools and businesses have had to close. The toll appeared to have risen on Friday as

local media and the opposition reported the death of a 16-year-old in clashes with police in the town of Saint-Marc, just north of Port-au-Prince. Details were not immediately available. In the capital, police firing teargas, rubber bullets and live shots in the air dispersed thousands of protesters who had gathered in one of Port-au-Prince's main squares. Some protesters fought back by throwing bottles and debris. — Reuters

India eases mobile phone shutdown in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: The Indian government said yesterday it would unblock most mobile telephone lines in Kashmir in a major easing of a two-month-old security clampdown since cancelling the region's autonomy, but a grenade attack in the main city highlighted tensions over New Delhi's actions. Police said militants threw a grenade in a market area near the old town in Srinagar injuring seven people.

Most stores, schools and businesses across Kashmir have been closed since the Hindu nationalist government brought the region under tighter central control on August 5. But the easing of the communications blockade was the latest bid by the authorities to show that its tough policies were working. Government spokesman Rohit Kansal told a press conference in Srinagar, just before the grenade blast, that authorities had decided to end the phone blockade after a

security review in the Muslim-majority Himalayan region. All phones linked to a monthly subscription "will stand restored and be functional from noon on Monday," he said, adding that the measure would apply to all of Kashmir.

Tourists welcome

The New Delhi government imposed a mobile phone and internet blackout as part of a huge security clampdown to back its annulment of Kashmir's constitutionally guaranteed autonomy. Tens of thousands of extra troops were also sent in an operation that critics said virtually cut off Kashmir from the outside world.

Kansal said restrictions on public movement had been lifted in "99 percent" of Kashmir but gave no indication on whether internet services would also be restored. The government, however, on Thursday lifted restrictions on tourists travelling to the region and released three politicians among hundreds of people detained after August 5.

Kansal said all those detained would be released gradually after their cases are reviewed. The leader of the opposition Congress party in the region, GA Mir, was sceptical of the government's announcement. "We have been hearing for days that they would restore mobile phones. So unless they actually do this on Monday, this is just another one of their announcements," he said. — AFP

Abiy: Meteoric rise of the man trying to remould Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA: The son of poor villagers who became a spy boss, and now the man behind dizzying attempts to reform Africa's fastest-growing economy and heal wounds with Ethiopia's neighbors, Abiy Ahmed has seen an unpredictable and peril-strewn rise to fame. Another chapter was added to his remarkable tale on Friday when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Since becoming Ethiopian prime minister in April 2018, the 43-year-old has aggressively pursued policies that have the potential to upend his country's society and reshape dynamics beyond its borders. Within just six months of his swearing-in, Abiy made peace with bitter foe Eritrea, released dissidents from jail, apologised for state brutality, and welcomed home exiled armed groups branded "terrorists" by his predecessors.

More recently he has turned to fleshing out his vision for the economy while laying the groundwork for elections currently scheduled to take place next May. But analysts fret that his policies are, simultaneously, too much too fast for the political old guard, and too little too late for the country's angry youth, whose protests swept him to power. Despite the challenges, Abiy's allies predict his deep



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

well of personal ambition will prompt him to keep swinging big.

Tareq Sabt, a businessman and friend of Abiy's, says one of the first things that struck him when they met was the prime minister's drive: "I always said to friends, when this guy comes to power, you'll see a lot of change in Ethiopia." "I have said often that winds of hope are blowing ever stronger across Africa. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is one of the main reasons why," UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said after Abiy's Nobel victory was announced.

'Sleeping on the floor'

Born in the western town of Beshasha to a Muslim father and Christian mother, Abiy "grew up sleeping on the floor" in a house that lacked electricity and running water. "We used to fetch water from the river," he said in a wide-ranging radio interview with Sheger FM last month, adding that he didn't even see electricity or an asphalt road until the seventh grade. — AFP

Analysis

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ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

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

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

Washington Watch

Straw that broke the camel's back?

By Dr James J Zogby

I have never forgotten a political cartoon that appeared in the midst of the Watergate impeachment investigation. It caricatured the strange relationship evangelical Christians had with then President Richard Nixon, and speaks to me today of way the current group of right-wing preachers are dealing with President Donald Trump.

The cartoon was made up of a series of eight separate boxes. Shown in the background of each box was Richard Nixon speaking on the phone. Pictured in the foreground of each box was the face of a prominent evangelical Christian preacher. In the first seven boxes, Nixon is shown ordering the bombing of Cambodia, the invasion of Laos, surveillance of political opponents, criticizing welfare benefits for the poor, etc. In the first seven, the preacher in the foreground is shown saying "Praise the Lord, truly this is a man of God."

In the eighth and final box of the cartoon, Nixon is on the phone using the obscene and vulgar language that appeared in the White House tapes he had been forced to surrender to a Senate investigative committee. In this box, on hearing Nixon's foul language, the preacher, in the foreground, looks shocked and says "Tsk, tsk, a moral lapse!"

What I loved about this cartoon was that it so perfectly captured the moral bankruptcy that characterized the religious right's relationship with Nixon. He could invade and bomb other countries, use napalm on civilian villages, gut federal programs for those in need, deny equal rights to an entire group of Americans and still be embraced by right-wing preachers because he supported their narrow social agenda and espoused the idolatry of hyper-Americanism they also advocated.

They didn't even break with him when law enforcement arrested some of his operatives breaking into his Democratic rival's campaign headquarters, then lied about it to Congress and did everything he could to obstruct the investigation. But when the White House was forced to release Nixon's secretly recorded phone conversations and they revealed the president's penchant for "colorful language" - that was, as we say, "the straw that broke the camel's back." While the matter in question was Nixon's language, it opened the door to a deeper rupture that allowed right-wing Christians to join the growing chorus of Americans - Democrats and Republicans, alike - who recognized that Nixon had abused the office of the presidency and who now were calling for his impeachment.

There are interesting parallels to the relationship Nixon had with the religious right and the way that their contemporary counterparts have embraced President Donald Trump. They say they support him because he promised and delivered on much of their conservative social agenda. He appointed federal judges whom they believe will oppose abortion and gay marriage. He has pledged to eliminate penalties for tax-exempt churches that engage in electoral political activity. He has warned about the dangers of allowing too many Muslim refugees to enter America. He has been seen as a staunch defender of Israel, going so far as to move the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem - a step which some evangelicals view as necessary to bring on the awaited "final days". And he has promoted today's version of the idolatry of hyper-Americanism.

Because of this, they have either ignored or forgiven Trump's otherwise decidedly less than exemplary behavior and un-Christian policies: his multiple marriages, the too numerous to count allegations of sexual misconduct, his public use of obscene and vulgar language, and his policies of family-separation and denial of entry to refugees and asylum seekers. Despite all of this and more, the religious right has stood by Trump, sometimes using over-the-top language to describe him. One has referred to Trump as "heaven-sent," while another called him a "gift from God."

This past week we witnessed the first crack in this support for "their president": Trump's decision to order US troops in Syria to stand down and allow for a Turkish invasion of northeastern Syria. While the Turks say their goal is to create a "safe corridor" that will allow them to forcibly resettle Syrian refugees who have entered Turkey, they are also targeting the US-allied Kurdish militias - whom Turkey refers to as "terrorists".

The response of the religious right has been outrage and condemnation - focused narrowly on their professed concern with the rights of Christians. Said one evangelical preacher, "Kurdish Christians (and others among the brave Kurds) have stood up for the United States and for freedom and human dignity... What they are now facing from Erdogan's authoritarian Turkey is horrifying beyond words." Another called on his followers to "pray for the Christians who the Kurds have been protecting. They could be annihilated." And Pat Robertson, notorious for his "end of days" prophecies, declared that President Trump was in danger "of losing the Mandate of Heaven".

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

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



Swedish environment activist Greta Thunberg, 16, speaks during a "FridaysForFuture" climate protest at Civic Center Park in Denver on Friday. — AFP

Nobel snub no obstacle in Thunberg climate quest

Hours after judges passed her up for the Nobel Peace Prize, Greta Thunberg stood before a cheering throng, insisting once again that something must be done about climate change - and fast. "We as young people are tired of constantly being betrayed by those who are supposed to work for our greater good," the 16-year-old Swedish activist told hundreds of supporters gathered in an outdoor amphitheater in Colorado's largest city, Denver.

"We are here because we care about the future, about what we one day will leave after us," Thunberg, clad in a cream-colored jacket with her hair in her trademark braid, said to thunderous applause. "But the political leaders can't seem to think beyond the next election, and that needs to come to an end." Calls to action, condemnation of politicians and appeals to youth are all familiar rhetoric for Thunberg, whose activism against what some view as humanity's most pressing problem made her an apparent frontrunner for the Peace Prize.

Earlier on Friday, the Norwegian judges instead selected Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed for the award, citing his efforts to end two decades of conflict with Eritrea. A world away, Thunberg responded with a succinct "no" when asked by AFP if not winning had disappointed her. "Yeah, I'm very focused. This day was amazing," she said.

Bound for Chile

Thunberg's stop in Colorado came amid a highly publicized journey from her hometown of Stockholm in which she traversed the Atlantic on a zero-emission sailboat before making an appearance at a United Nations climate summit. "How dare you?" she thundered at world leaders gathered in New York, accusing them of handing younger generations a world of rising seas and increasingly severe weather. That refrain - emphatically repeated by Thunberg in her UN speech - could be seen on several cardboard signs carried by crowd members in Denver.

"She helped voice the opinions that I didn't know how to word. She said everything that I'd been thinking," said Dante Lanthier, 16, one of many high school students who attended the event. Students have been among the most receptive of audiences for Thunberg, who first rose to prominence in August 2018 when she started skipping school to sit outside the Swedish parliament with her "School Strike for the Climate" sign, to criticize government inaction on climate change.

Students across the world then began emulating her academic disobedience, leading to organized school walkouts and the rise of the "Fridays for Future" movement, which organized the event in Denver. "When you're younger, you can't vote, you can't see the way to make

changes," said Molly Ring, 18, a high schooler who recently participated in her first climate strike. "Having her... is really inspiring."

Fire and ice

Thunberg, who is heading by electric vehicle to Santiago, Chile in time for another UN climate conference in December, arrived in Denver on a day so cold that local media reported it broke a record set in 1946. Hundreds of miles away, wildfires tore through southern California, forcing tens of thousands to evacuate. Both are seen as symptomatic of the climate disaster Thunberg warns against. "With hotter summers, and earlier, colder winters, we need this message," 74-year-old Kate Hilsenbeck said of Thunberg's activism, as she waited for the young Swede to appear. Thunberg has already won Amnesty International's top human rights prize and the Swedish Right Livelihood Award, often presented as an alternative Nobel. She's also earned adoration from fans, some of whom shouted "we love you, Greta!" as she left the venue following a speech that lasted just under 10 minutes. That a Nobel Prize had eluded Thunberg this year seemed to worry her audience little. "I think she's got lots of years to win all the prizes," said Denver resident Laurence Larrick, 67. "I don't think she has to worry about that." — AFP



A car drives passed a power station in Mill Valley, California amid a statewide blackout on Oct 10, 2019. — AFP

Are blackouts the new normal for California?

Millions of people lost electricity last week in California as the state's utility giant PG&E sought to prevent catastrophic wildfires, leading many to question whether such power shutoffs will become the new normal. The unprecedented outages plunged large swaths of Northern California in the dark, forcing the closure of schools and businesses and prompting backlash and questions on how this could happen in a state that boasts the world's fifth largest economy.

"This can't be, respectfully, the new normal," fumed Governor Gavin Newsom on Thursday as he spoke with reporters. "And it is a false choice to say it's hardship or safety." PG&E, the state's largest private utility company that services some 5.4 million customers in the northern and central part of the state, has defended the shutoffs that affected about two million people as necessary to prevent wildfires that could be sparked by lines downed in heavy winds.

Last November, PG&E's faulty power lines were determined to have sparked the deadliest wildfire in the state's modern history, which killed 86 and destroyed the town of Paradise. Power lines were also behind devastating fires in 2017 in the Napa wine region. PG&E, which filed for bankruptcy in January, has argued the outages this week were necessary for safety reasons and said it will take days before power is restored to all customers as employees beforehand must check the grid in person or electronically.

'Not adequately prepared'

The beleaguered company also warned that such shutoffs could be ordered annually until its aging power grid and power lines can be updated to handle fire hazards. Experts believe such an overhaul can take a decade to complete, especially as PG&E is undergoing a massive reorganization linked to the multi-billion dollar settlements it has had to pay victims of last year's fire.

Bill Johnson, the company CEO, apologized at a news conference Thursday evening for the massive power cuts ordered this week and admitted the agency had poorly handled the issue. "We were not adequately prepared," he admitted, while defending the decision. "We faced a choice here between hardship on everyone and safety, and we chose safety."

His argument, however, was dismissed by many, including the governor, who blasted PG&E for failing to invest enough in recent years to upgrade its power lines. "It's decisions that were not made that have led to this moment in PG&E's history in the state of California," Newsom told a news conference. "This is not, from my perspective, a climate change story as much as a story about greed and mismanagement over the course of decades," he added. "Neglect, a desire to advance not public safety but profits."

'Lives disrupted'

Mikhael Chester, a professor of sustainable energy at Arizona State University, said even if billions of dollars were spent to upgrade utility grids, power shutoffs would continue to happen as infrastructure could not be expected to be "one hundred percent reliable". "We have pushed infrastructure to a point where we are going to have to recognize that reliability is going to become compromised more and more often," he told Popular Science magazine.

As suggestions that California bury its power lines underground to ward off wildfire, experts say such a solution comes down to cost and time. It costs approximately \$3 million per mile to convert underground electric distribution lines from overhead, while the cost to build new overhead lines is approximately \$150 per foot or \$800,000 per mile, PG&E says on its website.

Severin Borenstein, a University of California Berkeley professor of business administration and public policy who specializes in energy, said given the state of affairs, Californians should brace for blackouts becoming regular occurrences. "We've been pretty lucky in California that we have far fewer weather disruptions than in other parts of the country," he told National Public Radio. In coming years, however, he added that the state must seriously address the threat of wildfires "and do a lot more preparation and have our lives disrupted for a few days a year at least." — AFP

China's progress since 40 years

By Al-Anoud Al-Sabah

Under the auspices of and with the attendance of the Chinese President Xi Jinping, the People's Republic of China recently celebrated its 70th National Day annually marked on October 1.

The ceremony included the longest military parade ever held in Asia, demonstrating all Chinese military developments. Nonetheless, what the Chinese are really proud of is the economic diversity and progress they have achieved over the past 40 years, in addition to scientific and educational development, which made China lead the world in technology and caused US-Chinese commercial conflicts.

The Chinese form 42 percent of buyers in digital markets as Chinese people mainly rely on the WeChat application for communication, chatting, payment, ordering taxis, doing government transactions, etc. It is becoming hard to do anything without smartphones.

In addition, Chinese companies like Alibaba, Huawei and Tencent are competing with international peers such as Amazon, Apple and others, giving Asia a larger influence in technological development than the West.

China has also developed its infrastructure, e-commerce and banks, which made them a huge economic power in less than 25 years. In addition to developing its financial, administrative, educational, social and military establishments in record time, the highlight of Chinese developments is in the fields of technology and industrial intelligence, which is due to change China's weight in international sciences and economy as per its 'Made in China 2025' strategy.

The Silk Belt and Road

It is an economic initiative for logistics development and linking international markets with China. I believe this is China's second most important project after technological advances.

GCC states

GCC states are a basic sources of energy for China (oil and gas) as well as a major market for Chinese products. They also pose a major stopover along the Chinese Silk Road, which is expected to include the majority of the world's countries.

GCC states have well-established relations with China in various fields such as energy, renewable energy, defense, military equipment, education, environment, technology and telecommunications represented by the region's leading company, Huawei.

NOTE: Al-Anoud Al-Sabah is a PhD student and researcher in Kuwaiti-Chinese relations

Business

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2019

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DUBAI: Zain Kuwait's Chief Technical Officer Nawaf Al-Gharabally participates in a panel discussion.

Zain showcases its leadership in adopting 5G applications

Company participates in GITEX 2019 in Dubai

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, showcased its leadership in adopting fifth generation wireless technology (5G) applications as the first operator to commercially launch 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market. The company recently participated at the 39th edition of The Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX Technology Week 2019). The international event, hosted in the United Arab Emirates, was organized by the Dubai World Trade Center, and featured the biggest global companies, organizations, and entities from the Telecom and IT industry.

Zain took part in a number of panel discussions last week represented by Zain Kuwait's Chief Technical

nologies such as artificial intelligence, internet of things, automation, augmented tech, and others are extremely reliant on transferring huge amounts of data in record times and with low latency. This was almost impossible before 5G".

Al-Gharabally added: "the impact of digital transformation not only affected the telecom sector, but extended to many other industries such as health, finance, education, and others. This opened up huge untapped opportunities, and we at Zain were keen on being the first in adopting 5G, not only in Kuwait, but across the region".

Al-Gharabally explained: "back in May, Zain was the first to announce that its network was fully ready for

Hamad Al-Marzouq participated in a panel discussion entitled Adoption of 5G in B2B/Enterprise Market that came as part of Huawei's 4th Middle East 5G Ecosystem Conference. During the discussion, Al-Marzouq said: "5G is at the cornerstone of Zain's ambition to lead in the Enterprise space in Kuwait. Use Cases across Health, Government, Financial, and Oil & Gas sectors are instrumental to the success of our Zain Enterprise Digital Strategy. We welcome Huawei and an ecosystem to help us develop those use cases and enrich our presence as an active partner of leading Kuwait's digital transformation future".

Al-Marzouq also took part in a panel discussion organized by Ericsson entitled: Unlocking 5G Business Potential. During the discussion, Al-Marzouq said: "at the moment, many of our enterprise services are powered by 4G LTE technology, and we will soon start implementing 5G in all our services and solutions as the technology continues to mature and as per the market's needs. We expect IoT-based solutions to be the main area that will rely greatly on 5G, because of the huge data-transferring speeds IoT equipment rely on. We believe this will change the rules of the digital transformation game in all vital sectors".

Last year, Zain participated in GITEX 2018 through its own dedicated booth as the only telecom company that represented the State of Kuwait in this leading global and regional event amongst the presence of international companies. Zain's participation reflected its strategy to enrich its transformation into a fully integrated digital service provider, as the company started its digital transformation journey by launching many smart services and solutions to both consumers and businesses throughout the past years.

Through its participation at GITEX Technology



DUBAI: Hamad Al-Marzouq participates in a panel discussion.

- Nawaf Al-Gharabally: Zain succeeded in designing first integrated network for 5G services, built on a world-class infrastructure.
- Hamad Al-Marzouq: 5G at the cornerstone of our ambition to lead in the Enterprise space in Kuwait.

Officer Nawaf Al-Gharabally and Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer Hamad Al-Marzouq. The panel discussions featured many experts, professionals, and leaders from the world's top ICT companies.

Zain Kuwait's Chief Technical Officer Nawaf Al-Gharabally participated in a panel discussion entitled Operator's playground: Unlocking 5G commercialization in an untapped market, which came as part of the GITEX 5G Countdown Conference. During the discussion, Al-Gharabally said: "5G opened up new horizons that were not possible in the past. Today's latest tech-

the commercial launch of fifth generation wireless technology (5G), and was the first operator to offer 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage of all areas in June. We succeeded in designing the first integrated network for 5G services built on a world-class infrastructure, fully launching the company's potential within the digital community and further reinforcing our leadership in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. We are extremely proud of this huge feat".

Zain Kuwait's Chief Enterprise Business Officer

the company said in an emailed statement.

"We remain focused on our strategy and our own significant efforts to enable financial inclusion around the world. We believe there are potential benefits in such initiatives and will continue to monitor the Libra effort." A Visa spokesperson offered a similar statement, indicating the company was dropping out of the alliance but could rejoin in the future.

"We will continue to evaluate and our ultimate decision will be determined by a number of factors, including the association's ability to fully satisfy all requisite regulatory expectations," Visa said.

Silicon Valley-based eBay said: "We highly respect the vision of the Libra Association; however, eBay has made the decision to not move forward as a founding member." Stripe also said it will follow the progress of Libra and remain open to working with the association at a later date.

"Stripe is supportive of projects that aim to make online commerce more accessible for people around the world," Stripe said. "Libra has this potential."

Fierce scrutiny

Libra Association confirmed that the companies would no longer be founding members, but said that it would continue building an alliance of businesses, social-good organizations, and others to implement the cryptocurrency. The original list of founding members was cut to 23 factoring in the departures from the group on Friday. "Although the makeup of the association members may grow and change over time, the design principle of Libra's governance and technology, along with the open nature of this project, ensures the Libra payment network will remain resilient," spokesman Dante Disparte said in response to an AFP enquiry. — AFP

More companies back away from Facebook's Libra

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook's digital currency alliance lost more companies on Friday amid heavy criticism from regulators around the world on the planned Libra global cryptocurrency.

Credit card giants Visa and Mastercard, online marketplace eBay and digital payments firm Stripe each announced they had changed their minds about being founding members of the Libra Association assembled to promote the digital currency. "Mastercard has decided it will not become a member of the Libra Association at this time,"

Boursa Kuwait launches int'l crossing orders

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing efforts to further contribute to the development of Kuwait's capital market, Boursa Kuwait launched Intentional Crossing Orders. An Intentional Crossing Order is a single order entered through a single broker that includes a buy and a sell order for a security, whereby such orders are identical in quantity and price and are executed immediately.

This order will be launched today (October 13) and falls in line with Boursa Kuwait's strategy to diversify products and services, which are a key pillar in the development of a more attractive investment platform.

Business

KFH opens its 4th digital self-banking station 'KFH-Go' in Sabah Al-Ahmad City

Mandani: KFH is committed to providing the best service to the vast majority of customers



KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) inaugurated KFH-Go, its fourth digital self-banking station and first one in Sabah Al-Ahmad Co-op. area (B). As second state-of-the-art e-branch in Al Ahmadi Governorate, the new 24/7 automated branch is unmanned and equipped with an advanced and wide range of technical and self-service devices.

Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at KFH, Waleed Khaled Mandani said that KFH is keen to provide customers with the best services and products in different areas. The new branch in Sabah Al-Ahmad city is an advanced step that represents clearly the achievements of KFH in diversifying retail banking services and is a new self-banking channel to deliver better and more effective customer experience via an innovative automated branch.

Mandani added that KFH-Go is not staffed and contains state-of-the-art XTMs and ATMs as well as cash deposit machine (Bulk Deposit) capable of accepting 300 notes in a single transaction i.e. KD 6000. It offers the capability of communicating directly with the telephone service personnel in audio and video calls via XTM machines. Customers can access several services, including cash withdrawals without a card through the mobile phone using the "QR code", IDs or phone number, as well

as conducting "Murabaha" financing transactions, requesting credit cards and prepaid cards, updating data and phone numbers, activating bank cards, opening deposits and accounts and a host of banking and financing services, therefore dispensing with the need to visit the branch or deal directly with the staff.

Deputy General Manager Sales and Distribution at KFH, Khaled Al-Subaie said that the KFH GO branch in Sabah Al-Ahmad City is the fourth branch to be opened shortly after the Ishbiliya, Al-Jabriyah and Al-Mangaf branches. This, he added, confirms KFH keenness to spread these branches in view of their customer popularity. He pointed out that the KFH GO allows customers to benefit from over 80% of the services and operations of traditional branches around the clock and outside official working hours.

Officials of Sabah Al-Ahmad City Co-op lauded KFH's initiative of opening one of its latest tech branches in the Co-op, and expressed their appreciation of a move representing a vital addition to the services offered to the City residents and workers. They noted that the move adds a special distinction to the City, saves customers' time and effort and offers them an integrated system of the most sophisticated banking services around the clock. They

stressed that such initiatives are not new to KFH which is highly regarded for its local and world successes, as an example of the strength of the local economy and as a leader of Islamic banking.

KFH has made great strides in its digital transformation strategy which affirmed its leadership in adopting digital services, pioneering the offering of a diverse package of innovative e-services in several sectors and in the Group, in addition to increasing its investment in technology.

KFH succeeded in providing a plethora of high-tech banking services, most of which are unique in Kuwait. KFH launched cheque deposit via mobile service, the Queuing System; Skiplino service, the first of its kind in the Kuwaiti banking sector for online appointments booking in the branches via smart phones. KFH launched its Chatbot service in cooperation with Microsoft, to improve interaction with customers who can use this service through different KFH channels such as KFH.com and the mobile app KFHonline. KFH offers QR, mobile, Civil ID cardless withdrawals, updating information online, activating the new and renewed debit cards and changing the PIN. The Bank introduced a fast cross-border transfer service (KFH Xpress) and operated an instant remittance service using RippleNet. KFH also launched the first banking robot in



Kuwait. It launched KFH Pay service, where customers can receive money from any KFH account or local accounts with just a few taps on their mobile. With just their payer's email or mobile number, they can securely receive transfers 24/7.

KIB appoints Musab Al-Shalan as deputy GM of retail banking

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently appointed Musab Al-Shalan as the Deputy Manager of the Retail Banking Department. Al-Shalan holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Massachusetts in the US. Additionally, he has also obtained a number of international certifications and took part in several training courses at globally accredited academic institutions.

In his new role, Al-Shalan will be responsible for transforming KIB's banking offerings, as well as improving the customer banking experience. In addition to this, he will also be responsible for enhancing the Bank's competitive position in the market by introducing more innovative and advanced solutions in line with its strategic plans. On this occasion, General Manager of the Retail Banking Department at KIB, Othman Tawfeq, said: "KIB always strives to attract high-caliber expertise and local talents in the banking industry. Accordingly, Al-Shalan was brought on board as the new Deputy General Manager of the Retail Banking Department. Al-Shalan brings with him a wealth of skills, as well as extensive experience that spans more than 17 years in Islamic retail banking."



Musab Al-Shalan

Tawfeq also pointed out that Al-Shalan has long-standing experience in project management which enables him to improve banking processes and customer service. He also has experience in Islamic retail banking, sales, business process reengineering, management reporting, operational risk, as well as the development of new sharia-compliant offerings in line with CBK rules and regulations.

It is worth noting that Al-Shalan has amassed broad-ranging experience by holding a number of senior executive positions in the retail banking sector, including Relations Manager at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), as well as Head Office Branch Manager, Head of Branches, Manager of Business Change Management, Regional Manager - Branches Department, Deputy Head of Branches - Branches Business Division Head of Branches Support & Control, and Head of Branches - Consumer Banking Group - all at Boubyan Bank.

At the end of his statement, Tawfeq noted that Al-Shalan is one of the notable local figures in leadership, KIB is proud to have him join its team as he brings with him a wealth of experience. His appointment is in line with the Bank's strategy to recruit highly qualified caliber in an effort to enhance its position as a leading Islamic banking institution.

GM workers struggle with daily expenses as strike continues

DETROIT: Betty Johnson, who has worked on General Motors assembly lines in Michigan and Tennessee for more than 34 years, said she knew a strike by the United Auto Workers would mean personal sacrifice. Nearly 50,000 GM hourly employees have been striking since September 16 in a walkout that has halted production at 31 factories and led to thousands of layoffs at auto supply companies.

"It's not easy," Johnson said. "I've got \$45 left from my \$250 in strike pay. I'm getting ready to hit up my 401K (retirement account) and borrow from myself," she said as she picketed outside GM's Detroit-Hamtramck assembly plant. GM employees who are boycotting receive only \$250 a week, a minuscule fraction of their normal salaries. Johnson has already contacted the United Way, the local community organization that helps families in distress, for assistance in stretching out her utility bills and mortgage payments.

The union has urged members to contact a community information and referral services hotline and passed out cards with the corresponding phone number, Johnson said.

Credit unions supported by organized labor have also stepped forward to help some of the strikers. "I don't see how you can feed five children on \$250 a week," said Johnson, noting that many of her coworkers face even greater hardships, especially temporary employees. The UAW says the typical GM worker at the top of the pay scale makes an average of \$65,000 per year and employees with less than eight years seniority make even less. Meanwhile the seven percent of GM workers classified as temporary employees make \$16.50 per hour or about \$33,000 per year.

Community support

Louis Rocha, president of UAW Local 5960 in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, who works at an assembly plant where GM builds electric vehicles, said community support has been helpful. Local 5960 runs a strike kitchen that prepares food around the clock and gives away free meals thanks to donations from local businesses, churches, community groups and ordinary people.

Pizza has been delivered free of charge to the hall every day since the strike began on September 16, he added. Rocha even recounted the story of a local veterinarian who offered to do surgery on a family's cat for free so that they didn't have to euthanize it.

Gerald Lang, Local 5960 vice president, said he doesn't believe GM ever anticipated the broad community support the UAW has gotten during the walkout. "There are a lot of workers pinched by corporations. Everyone who packs a lunch box sees it and knows it. They're expected to do more with less," said Lang. Workers have been learning to economize on food, transportation and entertainment.

David Michael, a member of Local 5960, said he dropped cable television and switched to processed food. "I buy gas by the gallon rather than filling it up," said Michael, who has dipped into savings to cover his bills. Diana Reed, who has worked for GM for 20 years and is also a member of Local 5960, said she's begun combing her house for belongings to sell on an online marketplace.

A single mother with five sons, Reed said her three oldest have jobs and are helping with household bills while her youngest two, both at university, took the semester off to save money since she pays their tuition.

"Do I feel bad? Yes. But it's a concession we had to make," Reed said. "It's hard for people to save for something like this," said Reed, who notes that most workers with children live paycheck to paycheck. Reed, who has previously made donations to food pantries, now finds the tables turned, accepting donated food. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	304.750
Euro	340.100
Sterling Pound	389.010
Canadian dollar	232.720
Turkish lira	53.460
Swiss Franc	309.080
US Dollar Buying	297.350

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.811
Indian Rupees	4.298
Pakistani Rupees	1.960
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.682
Nepali Rupees	2.679
Singapore Dollar	224.000
Hongkong Dollar	38.861
Bangladesh Taka	3.595
Philippine Peso	5.916
Thai Bhat	10.053
Malaysian ringgit	77.941

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.321
Qatari Riyal	83.757
Omani Riyal	792.073
Bahraini Dinar	809.750
UAE Dirham	83.027

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.900
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.737

Yemen Riyal/for 1000

Tunisian Dinar	1224
Jordanian Dinar	111.220
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	430.290
Syrian Lira	0.203
Morocco Dirham	0.000
	31.944

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfr Selling Rate

US Dollar	304.740
Canadian Dollar	230.725
Sterling Pound	375.885
Euro	333.495
Swiss Frank	307.075
Bahrain Dinar	810.415
UAE Dirhams	83.370
Qatari Riyals	84.610
Saudi Riyals	82.160
Jordanian Dinar	431.105
Egyptian Pound	18.729
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.672
Indian Rupees	4.308
Pakistani Rupees	1.949
Bangladesh Taka	3.609
Philippines Pesto	5.872
Cyprus pound	18.130
Japanese Yen	3.815
Syrian Pound	1.595
Nepalese Rupees	2.697
Malaysian Ringgit	73.635
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	4.935

Thai Bhat	10.935
Turkish Lira	54.365
Singapore dollars	220.536

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

EUROPE		
British Pound	0.376883	0.392783
Czech Korune	0.005049	0.014349
Danish Krone	0.041038	0.046036
Euro	0.329583	0.343283
Georgian Lari	0.121620	0.121620
Hungarian O.001149	0.001339	
Norwegian Krone	0.029502	0.034502
Romanian Leu	0.065326	0.082176
Russian ruble	0.004769	0.004769
Slovakia	0.009116	0.019116
Swedish Krona	0.027076	0.032076
Swiss Franc	0.299732	0.310732

AUSTRALASIA		
Australian Dollar	0.199058	0.211055
New Zealand Dollar	0.187376	0.196876

AMERICA		
Canadian Dollar	0.225778	0.234778
US Dollars	0.300650	0.305950
US Dollars Mint	0.301150	0.305950

ASIA		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002966	0.003767

Chinese Yuan	0.041689	0.045189
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036981	0.039731
Indian Rupee	0.003687	0.004459
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002740	0.002920
Korean Won	0.000247	0.000262
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069177	0.075177
Nepalese Rupee	0.002628	0.002968
Pakistan Rupee	0.001350	0.002120
Philippine Peso	0.005599	0.005999
Singapore Dollar	0.216983	0.226983
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001321	0.001901
Taiwan	0.009708	0.009888
Thai Bhat	0.009672	0.010222
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013

ARAB		
Bahraini Dinar	0.802202	0.810254
Egyptian Pound	0.018659	0.022019
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000215	0.000275
Jordanian Dinar	0.424927	0.433927
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021230	0.045230
Omani Riyal	0.786427	0.794331
Qatar Riyal	0.083051	0.083885
Saudi Riyal	0.080180	0.081480
Syrian Pound	0.001292	0.001512
Tunisian Dinar	0.103107	0.111107
Turkish Lira	0.045163	0.054998
UAE Dirhams	0.082339	0.083167
Yemeni Riyal	0.000991	0.001071

Business

US consumer inflation tame, labor market still tightening

Weekly jobless claims fall 10,000 to 210,000

WASHINGTON: US consumer prices were unchanged in September and underlying inflation retreated, supporting expectations the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates in October for the third time this year amid risks to the economy from trade tensions. A strong labor market could, however, complicate matters for the Fed amid divisions among officials on the appropriate response to the rising headwinds to growth. Other data on Thursday showed an unexpected decline in the number of Americans filing claims for unemployment benefits last week.

Layoffs remain low even as companies are becoming hesitant to hire more workers because of a slowing economy. The unemployment rate is near a 50-year low of 3.5 percent.

The longest economic expansion on record, now in its 11th year, is under threat from the 15-month-old US-China trade war, slowing growth overseas and a likely disorderly exit from the European Union by Britain. The trade war has undermined business investment and helped to drive manufacturing into recession. Growth is also being restricted by the fading stimulus from last year's \$1.5 trillion tax cut package. "The downside risks from slower global growth, trade disruptions and the contraction in US manufacturing could carry more weight among Fed officials," said Ben Ayers, senior economist at Nationwide in Columbus, Ohio. "The odds of a rate cut in October are moving up with domestic economic data turning softer in recent months."

The Labor Department said the flat consumer price index last month was the weakest reading since January and came as increases in the cost of food and rents were offset by decreases in the prices of gasoline and used cars and trucks. The CPI edged up 0.1 percent in August. In the 12 months through September, the CPI increased 1.7 percent after advancing by the same margin in August.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the CPI nudging up 0.1 percent in September and rising 1.8 percent on a year-on-year basis.

Excluding the volatile food and energy components,

the CPI climbed 0.1 percent after gaining 0.3 percent for three straight months. The so-called core CPI was restrained by moderate gains in healthcare costs, as well as declines in apparel, new motor vehicles and communications prices. In the 12 months through September, the core CPI increased 2.4 percent, matching August's rise.

The report came on the heels of data on Tuesday showing the biggest drop in producer prices in eight months in September. Minutes of the US central bank's Sept. 17-18 policy meeting published on Wednesday showed that while officials agreed risks to the economy "had increased somewhat," they were divided on what the appropriate response should be.

The minutes showed "several" favored keeping rates unchanged at that meeting as they felt the policy stance was "already adequately accommodative," while a "couple" preferred a 50 basis point rate cut.

The Fed cut rates by a quarter point last month after reducing borrowing costs in July for the first time since 2008. A further reduction is expected at the Oct. 29-30 meeting. US stocks rose after President Donald Trump confirmed he would meet Chinese Vice Premier Liu He on Friday for further trade talks, raising hopes for a deal. The dollar weakened against a basket of currencies. US Treasury prices fell.

Layoffs remain low

The Fed tracks the core personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index for its 2.0 percent inflation target. The core PCE price index rose 1.8 percent on a year-on-year basis in August and has fallen short of its target this year. Economists said based on the CPI and PPI data, they expected the monthly core PCE price index to tick up 0.1 percent in September, matching August's gain. That would lower the annual increase in core inflation to 1.7 percent from 1.8 percent in August.

While benign inflation has increased households' purchasing power and boosted consumer spending, it has led to moderate annual increases for Americans



receiving Social Security benefits. Based on July, August and September inflation data, recipients could see a 1.6 percent cost of living adjustment in the new fiscal year, according to Labor Department calculations.

Economists expect inflation will pick up and breach the Fed's target in 2020 following the recent broadening of US tariffs on Chinese goods to include a range of consumer goods. A tightening labor market is also expected to support inflation. In another report on Thursday, the Labor Department said initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 10,000 to a seasonally adjusted 210,000 for the week ended Oct. 5. Economists had forecast claims unchanged at 219,000 in the latest week. Employers are holding on to their workers, even as demand for labor is ebbing.

"While the claims data have been upbeat, we still have seen job growth slow lately, with this cooling tied primarily to reduced hiring rather than increased layoffs," said Daniel Silver, an economist at JPMorgan in New York.

Job openings fell to a 1-1/2-year low in August.

Nonfarm payrolls rose by 136,000 jobs in September, down from 168,000 in August. The three-month average gain in private employment fell to 119,000, the smallest since July 2012, from 135,000 in August.

The CPI report showed gasoline prices declined 2.4 percent after falling 3.5 percent in August. Food prices gained 0.1 percent after being unchanged for three straight months. Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence, which is what a homeowner would pay to rent or receive from renting a home, rose 0.3 percent in September after rising 0.2 percent for two consecutive months. Healthcare costs climbed 0.2 percent last month after jumping 0.7 percent in August, which was the biggest gain in three years. Apparel prices fell 0.4 percent after gaining 0.2 percent in the prior month.

Used motor vehicles and trucks prices decreased 1.6 percent in September, the most in a year, after rising for three straight months. Prices for new motor vehicles dipped 0.1 percent. There were increases in the costs of household furnishings, motor vehicle insurance, airline fares and tobacco. — Reuters

Al-Khaled Auto displays Maxus, Faw and Dorcen at Kuwait Motor Show



Khaled Meshari Al-Khaled

KUWAIT: Al-Khaled Auto Company, the accredited distributor of Dorcen, Maxus and FAW vehicles, recently participated in Kuwait Motor Show that was held at the Avenues Mall and concluded yesterday.

Chairman Khaled Meshari Al-Khaled said that the company participated in the exhibition to introduce its special luxury Chinese vehicles to the visitors.

"The company is keen on taking part in such exhibitions held at significant locations in Kuwait with a view to supporting Kuwaiti youth projects and as part of its social and economic responsibility programs", Al-Khaled said. He said that such participations will help the company comprehend automobile lovers' needs and that Al-Khaled Auto team was readily available to answer visitors' inquiries and provide them with suitable advice on selecting vehicles that match their budgets and satisfy their ambitions.

Al-Khaled added that Kuwait Motor Show gathers so many automobile agencies under one roof facilitating exchange of views, introducing new models and discussing solutions for various auto-related problems and challenges.

Further, Al-Khaled said that more models would be on display at the company's show-



Dorcen G70S 2020

The exhibition also witnessed the launching of the 2020 model of Dorcen 70S which arrived in Kuwait on October 2, 2019 as the new upgraded edition of Domy X7. It was first launched in 2017 and kept evolving in shape until 2019.

rooms and stressed that the company offers customers an unrivalled 12-year warranty, free maintenance, free insurance and many other privileges including outstanding customer care services, competitive spare-part prices and attractive finance offers with five-year interest-free installments.



Get up to 50% cashback on your everyday shopping with NBK Visa cards



Deepankar Wavare

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to reward its customers with unique campaigns and has recently launched its year-end campaign giving customers up to 50 percent guaranteed cashback on everyday shopping at selected merchants.

Running until 31st of December 2019, the campaign is exclusive to NBK Visa Platinum, NBK Visa Signature and NBK Visa Infinite Credit Cardholders, and is valid on purchases made at the following retailers: Cinescape 50 percent, Ooredoo 15 percent, Sephora 15 percent, Centerpoint 10 percent, Talabat 10 percent, Carriage 10 percent, Lulu Hypermarket 5 percent, Home Center 5 percent, Eureka 5 percent and Ikea 5 percent.

Commenting on the campaign, Deepankar Wavare, Head of Cards and Loans, National Bank of Kuwait, said, "At NBK, we are constantly rewarding our customers through various campaigns launched throughout the year. This time we wanted to offer them an exceptional campaign that would enable them to get up to 50 percent cashback

on their daily purchases and up to KD 200 cashback per month per customer."

Wavare added: "We focus on satisfying the needs of our customers and ensure we customize these campaigns in line with what they aspire for, providing them with exceptional features that suit their lifestyle as we strive to provide the best and safest banking experience for them."

NBK Credit Cards are the best and convenient method to make payments and give customers access to many benefits, especially when using their credit card when shopping, including the NBK Rewards Program, NBK Miles Program, NBK Secure Shopping, extended warranty on new purchases, in addition to the opportunity to enter valuable draws held during the year.

NBK Credit Cards were designed to enhance the lifestyle of customers and allows them to win big in campaigns launched throughout the year.

EPSCO, ChemiKuwait to participate in KOGS 2019 expo



Alaa Hassan

KUWAIT: Kuwait proved yet again that it is an important player in the oil sector as was evident at the KOGS 2019 exhibition, as Kuwait was present in force because it occupies a central and distinguished location in the Gulf that enables it to play many important roles at all levels.

Because of the importance of the petrochemicals sector, which has become one of the main pillars to diversify income sources, EPSCO International Contracting Company and ChemiKuwait Chemical Industries were keen on participating in KOGS 2019, which is the official exhibition for oil and natural gas products that will be held in Kuwait with 180 international participating oil companies in the fields of oil geology, exploration and production, in addition to refining and petrochemical products and services.

EPSCO and ChemiKuwait Chairperson Alaa Hassan said she was pleased to participate in KOGS 2019, adding that the exhibition is an important event for Kuwait's oil and gas sector, as more than 30 countries in addition to government representatives and organizations related to oil participated. She said that Kuwait is considered one of the most prominent oil countries in the world, not only for its reserves and production levels, but also for its ability to innovate in the oil sector.

Business

Al-Sayer garners Arabia CSR Award 2019

A journey towards excellence for Al-Sayer Group

KUWAIT: Al-Sayer Group Corporate Excellence received the 1st Runner up award at the 12th Cycle of Arabia Corporate Social Responsibility Awards in Large Business Category. The awarding ceremony took place recently in Dubai was attended by Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer, CEO, Al-Sayer Franchising Co. and Vice Chairman of Al-Sayer Sustainability committee and Eng Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Deputy Group Manager Corporate Excellence at Al-Sayer Holding.

According to Hamad Musaed Al-Sayer, "We were honored by winning this remarkable award out of 22 Large Business Category companies. The sustainability vision of Al-Sayer Holding is to remain a leading sustainability group of the companies providing prosperity for future generations across multiple industries and its vision is to use the pioneering spirit and talented expertise of its employees to constantly deliver sustainable growth through superior customer service, quality and commitment".

Arabia CSR Award 2019 - Journey Towards Excellence

"In its 12th Cycle, The Arabia CSR Awards has driven 116 organizations from different parts of the Arab Region, to demonstrate the level of maturity that would reflect their commitment, inclusiveness and the quest for continuous improvement. These organizations have described their journey towards excellence with corporate responsibility being main propeller. Out of them, 28 organizations have convincingly distinguished themselves as true champions and exemplars of sustainability. We congratulate each organization that joined the Arabia CSR Award in 2019. You all do us proud and prove beyond a doubt that responsible business is the growing norm in our Region," said Habiba Al-Mar'ashi, President & CEO, Arabia CSR Network.



Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali said "the principles we set out guide us towards our goals of reducing carbon emissions, decreasing consumption of water and energy, increasing recycling, reducing our workplace injury rate. Al-Sayer Holding is proud to be working towards meeting the goals of the 10 principles of UN Global Compact on Human Rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption."

Compliance with International Benchmark

Al-Sayer has aligned its goals to several of the 17 United Nations Sustainability Development Goals particularly (1,4,8,9,12 & 17) based on the decisions of Top Management and Sustainability Steering Committee and taking baseline data for (2016-2017) and 2018 targets. The company has also set clear targets for its environmental performance (e.g., emissions, recycling) since the past 3 years and for the

next 3 years, with clear delegation of responsibility creating a cycle of development of innovative products, technology and services while contributing to the local community an society at large, but minimal environmental impact through its "Do More with Less" and "Support Innovative Ideas" initiatives." "We remain committed to reporting on our progress and invite stakeholders to partner with us to make a positive impact going forward," added Eng Nehad.



VIVA successfully launches 5G connectivity for enterprises

KUWAIT: VIVA, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, and a subsidiary of STC Group, announced yesterday the successful launch of the first "5G Connectivity" services in the Middle East for Enterprises across Kuwait. After leading the 5G network commercialization and nationwide coverage in the Kuwait, VIVA has been focusing on providing the latest and best business solutions based on 5G technology to enable national ICT Transformation across the country. The initiatives aim at tackling the challenges to access fast and flexible deployment, high reliability and low latency connectivity for enterprises in the Kuwaiti market. By leveraging VIVA's leading infrastructure, "5G Connectivity" services will open a new era for Enterprise connection and ICT solutions in Kuwait. The "5G Connectivity" includes a series of products, such as "Dedicated Data Access", "Dedicated Internet Access", and on demand services like CCTV, Cloud PBX, which allows enterprises to have access to P2P and robust Internet with best experience and guaranteed bandwidth, that complements fiber connectivity.



Maziad Al-Harbi

Eng Maziad bin Naser Al-Harbi, VIVA's CEO stated: "We are proud to launch "5G Connectivity" which is a service that enables enterprises to focus on growth of their business rather than worrying about connectivity. Thanks to our strong and leading 5G stance in the market, "5G Connectivity" will facilitate enterprise lease lines deployment and daily maintenance while ensuring an uninterrupted and enhanced experience. It will also provide the agile and scalable connectivity according to the enterprises' needs and requirements. In the 5G era, the Dedicated Access will be a typical application scenario. I believe the services will promote the commercial and social value of 5G. In the future, we will continue to enhance our portfolios so that to enable state-of-art ICT solutions for local enterprises, hence we were eager to participate at GITEX Technology Week to showcase our developed products and services."

Anowd Muthaib, General Manager of Enterprise Marketing, represented VIVA at the 39th GITEX Technology Week held in Dubai, where she has showcased VIVA's significant growth in the B2B sector, focusing on innovative enterprise technology solutions and services that help both SMEs and large enterprises in developing their projects in line with the ICT Transformation process across the nation.



Viva's booth at GITEX

The Huawei P30 Pro 128GB new edition is your perfect companion

KUWAIT: Whether chilling out on beaches or scaling mountains, summertime comes armed with tech. This should be no surprise - a smartphone can document your excursions and be used for gaming among many other useful functions. This summer, Huawei has added a new member to its successful Huawei P30 series: Huawei P30 Pro Breathing Crystal with 128GB new edition. It has a great Leica Quad Camera and loads of power in trendy design. This phone is worthy of being your perfect companion this summer, and here is why.

Enough Space

The 128GB variant gives you a decent space to store photos, videos, apps, games and more. So you can now take plenty of photos of your holiday, lots of



videos of fun times using the dual-view mode, or download enough books to read or as many games as you please to enjoy during your summertime.

All-scenario camera

Huawei equipped this phone with Leica Quad Camera: 40 percent more light into the sensor, 50x digital zoom and more. What this all means is Huawei P30 Pro is proficient at taking photos in any

summer situation you might be thrown into. It deals very satisfactorily with low light and compensates for lack of artificial lighting, so you take sharper snaps full of details and colors even at night. It even fascinates further with never-seen-before 50x digital zoom, making you travel long distances through the lens.

More power

The phone's core has Huawei's own



Kirin 980 processor and 8GB of RAM, so performance is powerful and efficient along with a big 4,200mAh battery, long enough for one day and even beyond. Huawei P30 Pro has also a broad resistance of water and dust at IP68. Clearly, phones have become part and parcel of our holidays and the perfect companion to rely on and Huawei P30 Pro is such a good example.

KIC unveils new life insurance products

KUWAIT: Kuwait Insurance Company (KIC) Chief Executive Officer Sami Sharif underlined the importance of generating more awareness about the significance of life insurance products and the need to keep developing new insurance products in order to cope with the changing requirements.

Speaking at a press conference held to introduce KIC's new products, Sharif said that Kuwait insurance market requires to be upgraded so that it can meet needs of the individuals.

"Our market share of life insurance is 20-25 per cent and we have 13 branches in Kuwait," Sharif added noting that the large number of branches and the company's innovative insurance services covering both



KUWAIT: Kuwait Insurance Company (KIC) Chief Executive Officer Sami Sharif speaks during the seminar. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

corporate and individual customers is an asset for KIC."

Further, Sharif added that KIC is debt-free and that the total company assets during the first six months of 2019 is KD 194 million. "KIC is the only company that has a

risk management department", he added noting that KIC strongly believes in technology innovations and the significance of utilizing it to accelerate and simplify services for the company's clients.

In addition, Sharif said that KIC's new

products include creative life insurance solutions and salary protection plan which entitled the insured or beneficiaries with the salary payment for 15 years in cases of death and disease or disabilities caused by accidents.

Gulf Bank's 9th monthly salary draw to be held tomorrow

KUWAIT: Tomorrow, Gulf Bank will be announcing the winner of its ninth monthly Salary Account draw at Gulf Bank's Al-Adan branch. The announcement will be approved by, and held in the presence of, a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

"The Gulf Bank Salary Account offers our clients multiple valuable features, and the monthly draws are only a part of the package. Not only are customers automatically enrolled into the monthly and annual draws, but they can also avail interest-free loans, cash gifts, fee waivers, and many more rewards throughout the year," said Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank. "To date, we have had eight lucky winners of our monthly Salary Account draws, and we can't wait to see who is going to be our ninth!"

The 2019 Kuwaiti Salary Offer automatically enrolls both existing and new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank in the monthly and annual draws. The monthly draws allow customers the chance to win cash prizes of up to 12 times their salary, while the yearly draw gives them the opportunity to win Kuwait's largest salary prize of up to 100 times their salary.

The Salary Account also gives new customers the opportunity to receive either a KD 100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank or an interest-free loan of up to KD 10,000. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and will be eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank.

Customers can also enjoy additional benefits like a Visa or MasterCard credit card free of charge for a year, as well as a chance to apply for a loan of up to KD 70,000 or a consumer loan of up to KD 25,000.



Ahmad Al-Amir

No-deal Brexit an 'enormous challenge' for Irish economy: CB

DUBLIN: A no-deal Brexit would present "enormous challenges" to the Irish economy and cut growth to just 0.8 percent next year, Ireland's Central Bank said in its most detailed set of projections to date on the potential risks. Ireland's fast-growing economy is considered the most vulnerable to Brexit among remaining European Union members because of its close trade links and shared land border with the United Kingdom.

The forecast for next year should Britain leave the bloc on Oct. 31 without any kind of transition period was similar to the official government forecast for 0.7 percent gross domestic product growth, which Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe used as his base case when presenting a "no-deal" budget for 2020. —Reuters

What's On

ACK attends launch ceremony for Huawei ICT Skill Competition

The representatives of the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) attended the official launch ceremony for the Huawei ICT Skill Competition. The Ceremony was held on Sunday, October 6th and among the attendees were representatives of Huawei along with representatives from different branches of the government and universities; including The Public Authority for Manpower, The KAFO program, the Kuwait Society of Engineers, Kuwait University, and other private universities.

The ceremony started with a speech from Huawei Deputy CEO, Yu Peng. Representatives of The Public Authority of Manpower, and the KAFO program also gave speeches during the ceremony. At the end of the ceremony, Huawei awarded trophies as a token of appreciation for the attending government and university representatives.

The Huawei ICT Skill Competition is an annual competition held since 2017 where students compete locally to showcase their skills in Information and Communications Technology for a chance to represent their country in the International ICT Skill Competition in China. The top 3 students in each country are chosen to attend the 3-day International Competition in China, students also receive

training from Huawei while there.

During last year's competition, 1st place was awarded to an ACK student, with two ACK students being selected to represent Kuwait in the international competition. This year among the 227 participating students to compete in Kuwait, 100 of them are ACK students.

Commenting on the passion and hard-work he's seen from ACK staff and students, Jun Gao, Director of Public Affairs and the Representative of Huawei Kuwait Office, said: "We want to thank ACK. We can feel the passion of ACK's management team and the students. We want to develop a long and fruitful relationship with ACK and we want to support ACK students to develop their careers in the future."

The ICT Skill Competition has been very valuable for ACK students, according to Dr Zeina Nehme, Manager of Alumni and Career Placement Services at ACK. "We believe in the great benefit of the ICT Skill Competition for our students. We would like to thank Huawei for giving our students such a wonderful opportunity to expand their skills and prepare them for their careers," added Dr. Nehme.



Burgan Bank sponsors 'Waves of Brazil' for third consecutive year



Burgan Bank, in partnership with Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya and the National Council of Culture, Arts and Literature, concluded its sponsorship to the Brazilian Musical Night 'Waves of Brazil.' The event took place at the Yarmouk Cultural Center for the third consecutive year, under the patronage of the Brazilian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Norton de Andrade Mello Rapesta.

The event returned due to popular demand as it brings unique musical styles and performances. Burgan Bank's sponsorship is aimed at introducing Brazilian art and the most famous Brazilian musicians to Kuwaiti audiences, driven by the belief that music is a universal language that connects people.

The musical extravaganza is brought by composer, interpreter, arranger and musician, Cris Delanno, who holds a Bachelor in Arrangement of Brazilian Popular Music. Cris Delanno has recorded 12 albums and travelled the world singing Brazilian music in major concerts, such as Latin Grammy Awards and many other international festivals. Additionally, the band that came specially to perform in Kuwait, is comprised of Alfredo

Cardim, a pianist, composer and arranger, Ronaldo Silva, a member of one of the most traditional Brazilian drummer families and

Alexandre Cavallo, a bassist, composer and arranger. All of them have played with great names all over the world. Burgan Bank has long been a contributor to Kuwait's cultural scene by encouraging global platforms that enrich the local communities with the latest movements and tastes, and honors local and global cultural and historical heritage. Burgan Bank appreciates diversity and inclusion through participation of multicultural backgrounds that build meaningful connections.

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

Nagma wins 'Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Award 2019'

Nagma, an Indian socio-political activist and former actress bagged the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Award 2019, instituted by the Overseas Indian Cultural Congress (OICC) Kuwait, the overseas arm of the Indian National Congress.

Addressing a press conference yesterday accompanied by Kerala's Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala, Palghat MP Sreekantan and OICC president Varghese Puthukulangara, Nagma said, "It is a great honor for me to win an award instituted in the name of the great Indian leader Rajiv Gandhi who steadfastly upheld the principles of secularism and democracy. He also worked hard to empower women in India. It is also a good fortune for me to receive

this award from veteran Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala, who arrived yesterday morning to attend the 'Puraskara Sandhya - 2019' organized by OICC Kuwait.

Nagma also applauded the efforts being taken by the OICC Kuwait for the welfare of the Indian expat community in Kuwait. Chennithala, in his remarks earlier, detailed the political situation in Kerala as the state is heading to the polls soon for by-elections to five assembly constituencies. Chennithala yesterday presented two awards - Rajiv Gandhi Award for Top Industrialist and Socio-cultural Activist and Rajiv Gandhi Excellence Award 2019 — at a glittering ceremony held at the Mareena Hall, Jleeb Al-Shoyoukh.

Nagma was chosen for the award in recognition of her exemplary humanitarian services and social work as a socio-political activist in India, said B S Pilla, the jury chairman of the award committee. Nagma was also a popular actress who has acted in a wide range of Indian films in multiple languages such as Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Bhojpuri, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, Punjabi, and Marathi.



Lulu Hypermarket launches its Italian Week promotion 2019



Lulu Hypermarket, the leading retailer in the region, launched its 'Italian Week 2019' promotion at the hypermarket's Egaila outlet on 9 October. The event was inaugurated by Italian Ambassador to Kuwait Carlo Baldocci along with top Lulu management in Kuwait, and in the presence of a large gathering of shoppers, well-wishers and media personnel.

A cultural program featuring traditional songs and dances of Italy entertained visitors at the inauguration event. The promotion, which is set to run till 19 October at all Lulu Hypermarkets in the country, will feature the best of Italian products.

During the 11-day promotional period, a variety of enticing promotional sales are being offered aimed at promoting Italian products, especially the country's excellent food prod-

ucts and culinary tradition. Special food stalls and sampling counters will present an assortment of tantalizing food choices reflecting the richness of Italian culinary history.

As part of the promotion, special prices are being offered on select products sourced from Italian companies and from leading brands including Crispo, Dececco, Fiorentini, Forno Bonomi, Gechele, La Mole, Mlidi, Pozzi and Renna. Adding to the festive mood of the Italian week are several large and colorful cut-outs of various tourist attractions and well-known monuments around Italy. The exciting Italian Week promotion once again underscores the hypermarket's continued commitment to providing shoppers with the widest range of products from around the world at highly competitive prices and in a customer-centric retail environment.



Health

Alexei Leonov, the first man to perform spacewalk dies aged 85

MOSCOW: Alexei Leonov, a legendary Soviet cosmonaut who was the first man to perform a spacewalk in 1965, died in Moscow on Friday aged 85 after a long illness. The Russian space agency Roscosmos said it was saddened to announce the death of "cosmonaut No 11" who was twice decorated with the country's top honor, the Hero of the Soviet Union.

Tributes poured in from across the globe, with Western space agencies and experts praising Leonov's contribution and admirers bidding him farewell. "This is a loss for the whole planet," said Russian cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko. Leonov's assistant Natalia Filimonova told AFP that he died at Moscow's Burdenko hospital after a long illness. Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his condolences to Leonov's widow and daughter, calling him a "true trailblazer" and a "heroic person."

"They knew each other very well," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "Putin always admired Leonov's courage." Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield wrote on Twitter: "One of the finest people I have ever known. Alexei Arkhipovich Leonov, artist, leader, spacewalker and friend, I salute you." NASA and the European Space Agency both praised the pioneering cosmonaut. "His venture into the vacuum of space began the history of extravehicular activity that makes today's @Space_Station maintenance possible," NASA said on Twitter. Leonov became a legend at home and his feats

were immortalized in cinema and literature. Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film "2001: A Space Odyssey" included recordings of Leonov's breathing in space. The 1965 mission was also celebrated in a 2017 Russian film "The Spacewalker" where Leonov acted as consultant. A crater on the far side of the Moon was named after Leonov in 1970.

'Earth was beautiful'

Born in Siberia, the youngest of eight children, Leonov became a fighter pilot before being selected as one of the first potential cosmonauts. He was a friend of Yuri Gagarin, who became the first man in space in 1961 and trained with him. He was selected to perform the first spacewalk as the Soviet Union and United States, Cold War foes, were locked in a frantic race to conquer space.

After 18 months of intensive training Leonov was ready to become the first man to float in space. On March 18, 1965, at the age of 30, he made history when he left a spacecraft during the Voskhod 2 mission for a spacewalk that lasted 12 minutes and nine seconds. "There was an inky black, stars everywhere and the sun so bright I could barely stand it," Leonov told AFP in 2015 interview when he was a sprightly 80-year-old. Tethered to the craft with a five-metre (16-foot) long cord, he gazed in wonder at Earth's geography laid out sweepingly below him. "I filmed the Earth, per-

fectly round, the Caucasus, Crimea, the Volga. It was beautiful." Leonov and another cosmonaut, pilot Pavel Belyayev, orbited at a distance of 500 kilometers from Earth. They completed the first ever spacewalk 10 weeks before the United States repeated the feat. Their mission was declared successful even though Leonov experienced several mishaps. Their return to Earth nearly ended in tragedy when Leonov and Belyayev were forced to crash land in a forest some 180 kilometers from the Urals city of Perm. The crew was discovered four hours later and rescued only in two days as it was an ordeal to reach them.

Tribute in outer space

A decade later in 1975 Leonov commanded the Soyuz 19 spacecraft which docked with the US Apollo spacecraft in the first joint space mission between the Soviet Union and the United States. Leonov celebrated his 85th birthday on May 30 and cosmonauts Kononenko and Alexei Ovchinin dedicated a May spacewalk to him, taking a picture of him into space and wearing spacesuits with birthday greetings written on the back.

Putin also congratulated Leonov at the time, calling him "a worthy representative of the legendary team of Soviet cosmonauts". Leonov was an accomplished artist and writer and his contemporaries described him as warm and likable. He is survived by his widow



In this file photo taken on April 22, 1982 in Moscow Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov, who was the first man to walk in space on March 18, 1965, works at the main assembly department of the ZIL ("Zavod Imeni Likhachyova," or Likhachyov Factory) car plant during a day of unpaid labor. — AFP

Svetlana and his younger daughter Oksana. "It's a huge tragedy for us all," said the wife of fellow cosmonaut Boris Volynov, Tamara Volynova. "Alexei is a unique person," she told AFP. He helped many cosmonauts and was a

"great storyteller", space historian Alexander Glushko said. He also helped US astronaut Tom Stafford adopt two Russian boys. Leonov will be laid to rest at a cemetery just outside Moscow on Tuesday. — AFP

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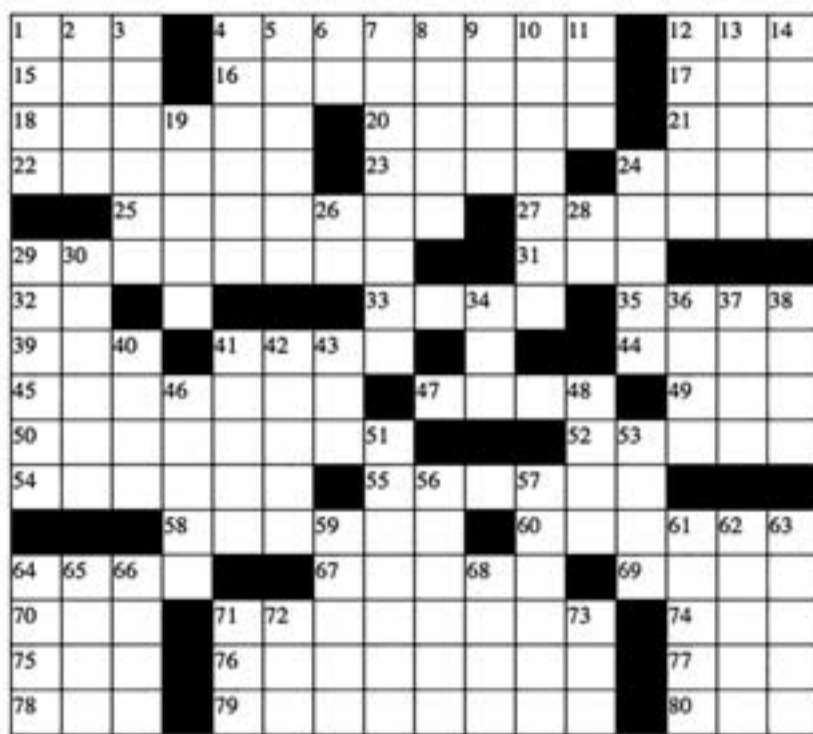
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ACROSS

1. A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served on a counter.
4. Shaped like a cross.
12. The foot of a human being.
15. A member of the Shoshonean people of Utah and Colorado and New Mexico.
16. Troubled persistently especially with petty annoyances.
17. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
18. A dog small and tame enough to be held in the lap.
20. Unable to see.
21. A writing implement with a point from which ink flows.
22. The front part of the trunk from the neck to the abdomen.
23. South African term for 'boss'.
25. A passageway between buildings or giving access to a basement.
27. A republic in southern Europe on the Italian Peninsula.
29. Southeastern Asian perennial with aromatic roots.
31. The executive agency that advises the President on the federal budget.
32. A radioactive gaseous element formed by the disintegration of radium.
33. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
35. (physics and chemistry) The smallest component of an element having the chemical properties of the element.
39. The month following July and preceding September.
44. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
45. Grow stronger.
47. (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.
49. Flower arrangement consisting of a circular band of foliage or flowers for ornamental purposes.
50. Either of two folds of skin that can be moved to cover or open the eye.
52. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
54. Small genus of evergreen trees of tropical America and western Africa.
55. A nation in northern North America.
58. Of or relating to the lips of the mouth.
60. The capital and largest city of Poland.
64. A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
67. Of or relating to or characteristic of Cuba or the people of Cuba.
69. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
70. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
74. Black-and-white short-necked web-footed diving bird of northern seas.
75. A bachelor's degree in theology.
76. Marked by excessive self-indulgence and moral decay.
77. A strong emotion.
78. Grass mowed and cured for use as fodder.
79. A rope fitted with a hook and used for towing a gun carriage.
80. (British) Your grandmother.

DOWN

1. A modified bud consisting of a thickened globular underground stem serving as a reproductive structure.
2. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
3. An official or legal cancellation.
4. Preferred above all others.
5. Disparaging terms for the common people.
6. An ancient city of Sumer located on a former channel of the Euphrates River.
7. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
8. California evergreen wild plum with spiny leathery leaves and white flowers.
9. The largest continent with 60% of the earth's population.
10. Feelings of hostility that are not manifest.
11. A doctor's degree in education.
12. Proceeding from or ordered by or subject to a pope or the papacy regarded as the successor of the Apostles.
13. Fragrant resin obtain from trees of the family Burseraceae and used as incense.
14. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
19. A unit of elastance equal to the reciprocal of a farad.
24. Hungarian choreographer who developed Labanotation (1879-1958).
26. A state in northwestern United States on the Pacific.
28. A soft silvery metallic element of the rare earth group.
30. (zoology) Relating to frogs and toads.
34. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
36. A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
37. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
38. Type genus of the Majidae.
40. Made from or covered with gold.
41. A drama set to music.
42. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
43. To make a mistake or be incorrect.
46. A column of wood or steel or concrete that is driven into the ground to provide support for a structure.
48. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
51. (zoology) Lacking a tail or taillike appendage.
53. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
56. The ratio of reflected to incident light.
57. A canopy made of canvas to shelter people or things from rain or sun.
59. Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
61. A parliamentary monarchy in southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula.
62. (Zoroastrianism) Title for benevolent deities.
63. Cause to become awake or conscious.
65. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
66. Being or befitting or characteristic of an infant.
68. A primeval personification of air and breath.
71. An ester of adenosine that is converted to ATP for energy storage.
72. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
73. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Frustration, especially in getting things accomplished, sets today's mood. Exercise some control over your emotions and be ready to let go of some longstanding view. Think about what is relevant and important in the larger scheme of life. You may be the one appointed to take charge of a project today and you will be pleased to find several ways to move things forward. This afternoon you may find yourself interested in the problems of young people. You could find yourself devoting one day a week toward the advancement of child protection or children's educational interests. There is a keen sense of color, music and all the other arts—the beautiful and the comfortable.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Visiting with a friend this morning puts you in a great mood before the workday begins. You may be thinking about updating your resume, whether you are looking for a job or not, and making appointments for future business connections. Make sure you do not overextend yourself for the next few days and you will find your energy level balances out nicely by midweek. Being on the go and keeping a finger to the winds of change make you feel in touch. You will find yourself in group lectures, studies or presentations this afternoon. Learning and communicating may also find you in the local library with research on your mind.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There are conversations in the elevator and the break room about advancements today. An increase in salary is likely for many of the employees, including you. Working in groups is positive at this time. You are able to teach a new employee about the company and the job he or she will be performing. New ways to communicate will make teaching as well as learning less time-consuming than ever before. You have gotten into the good habit of developing your thinking into most positive forms and you enjoy transforming a negative to a positive—and there are benefits! You may be more talkative and able to deal with disturbing issues than in the past. A dialogue with an older person may take place this afternoon.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

New job, new project or just simply solving old problems today puts you in a great mood. That feeling of wellbeing also comes from good health as well as a job well done. Working conditions are good and the social atmosphere surrounding your work can be quite enjoyable. Your love life is fast-paced and you will be happy to find that there is some serious progress in all areas of your life. There is a strong need for nurturing where you may feel the need to care for others or to have them care for you—perhaps on a public rather than private level. Community affairs or helping neighbors may be a part of these feelings.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You can be assertive successfully today as you move forward with your career decisions. You have enthusiasm for your work and enjoy the process of success. Your professional path is clear and you will find yourself deeply involved at this time, with the technical side of your chosen profession. You will find that this is a lucky day as well. There are plenty of opportunities to expand your awareness and grow in many areas of your life. One area may include the area of finance. New things are learned and this new information will create new ways for you to invest and, in time, double your money. This could mean investing in stock or property, etc. This evening may be a good time to reevaluate your budget. Include family members.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You find your way through the many turns and twists of solving puzzles today. You liked puzzles as a kid but professionally speaking, you may have never thought your duties would be to solve puzzles. When the public or the boss comes to you with ideas or with questions of building, fitting, matching or size... You can very quickly please the most difficult request. You feel successful and able to handle difficult situations. Today you set good examples to follow by taking praise as well as criticism to heart and you learn, you grow and you teach. You will prosper. In your personal life, everything centers on you. Increasing your fitness can improve your love life. You will build endurance while mastering new levels of flexibility.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You could be enjoying a rather average, or less than average day—find ways to reach out and help others. With work being rather light just now, it would be a good time to learn something new or complete any unfinished projects. Enthusiasm picks up this afternoon as you realize you are becoming more effective in the work-force. You make people feel comfortable at work and at home. No matter where you are, today the matter of comfort in a business meeting or a new co-worker's quick orientation is very important. Your fear of being left out in this life can be alleviated by jumping in with both feet and putting your actions into positive outcomes. New inventions are topics of conversation tonight with family members.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You can be a great worker, once you make up your mind to move forward. Sometimes you are not quite ready to blindly follow instructions—which can be a real plus in some cases. Once two and two make four, you will have no trouble initiating things and getting them moving. This is what today is about, although it may be a bit of a struggle. Circumstances can throw you into a position where you must use your mind and deal with communications of all sorts. This may be through education, psychology, spiritual enlightenment or teaching principles and techniques. You have more than just the gift of gab.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may feel inclined to create new ideas, think in new directions and spot new ways your company can grow and prosper. This will certainly help secure your job and is one of the reasons your skills are in demand. Enlarge and enhance your job skills so that you are not tied to one company. You could make plans now that require decisive action to accomplish. Joint planning sessions go well this afternoon—differences of opinion can be worked through at this time. Business and recreational travel are favored under the energies available now, as are outdoor sports. This afternoon you may be dealing with personal matters.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

It is your turn for positive rewards. You might say the research is over and now it is show time. Your skills are showing and you do not have to prove any points as your work speaks for you. It is time to call your own decisions and this includes choice of job, time, place, etc. Challenging authority and rocking the boat is in the past. The new broom sweeps clean old patterns of organization and power are ripe for a new approach. Your main interest now should be in how to find the best benefits or how to provide what is needed for personal and family health and insurance protection through means other than your work.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Ambition and the desire for status can get a little out of touch with reality. Inflated expectations could be a problem unless you get a grip on yourself. Still, you may find that you develop a knack for being in the right place at the right time—and that can win you the admiration of others. You could develop a reputation as a prophet of some kind. You are able to appreciate and value all sorts of people today. Family members may find you especially witty and eccentric this evening. You may have insights or breakthroughs in regard to your living situation or life circumstances. Others value you for your insights. Family and real estate matter the most at this time.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your outward seriousness and no-nonsense approach to things is obvious to all. This deliberate sense of responsibility comes across and is central to your personality and the way you relate to other people. Everything is run through your checkpoint to see if it holds up and can pass the test. You can be a stickler with details. This is a good workday and much can be accomplished. This afternoon you may find yourself visiting with the young people in your family. Close personal relationships are likely to undergo some testing. You decide to do things that will cement your ties to others and make sure they are rock-solid; if they are not, they are apt to crack under stress. Responsibility to the other people in your life is emphasized now.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Hawaii

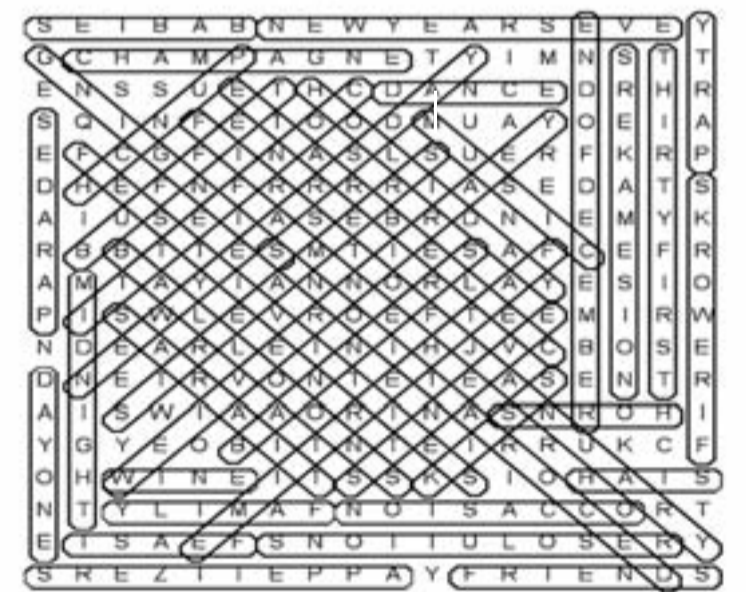
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 48 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| ALPHA | KAHO'OLAWE | NI'HAU | SUGARCANE |
| ARCHPELAGO | KAUAI | NORTH SHORE | SURFING |
| BEACHES | KAYAKING | O'AHU | TOURISTS |
| CANOES | KONA COAST | PACIFIC OCEAN | TROPICAL |
| COFFEE | LANAI | PEARL HARBOR | UKELELE |
| GRASS SKIRT | LIJAU | PINEAPPLES | VACATION |
| HAWAIIAN | MACADAMIA NUTS | RESORTS | VOLCANOES |
| HONOLULU | HANATA RAYS | SAND | WAIKIKI |
| HULA | MAUI | SCUBA DIVING | WAIHEA BAY |
| HUMPBACK WHALES | MOLOKAI | SNORKELING | WARM |
| ISLANDS | NAPALI COAST | STATE | WHALE WATCHING |

Friday's Solution

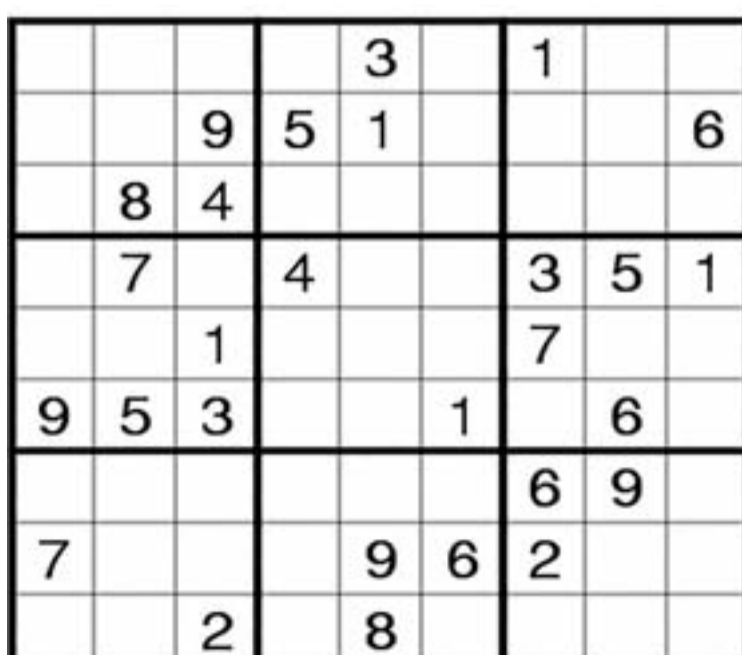
Happy New Year



- | | | | |
|------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| APPETIZERS | DECORATIONS | HATS | PARADES |
| BABIES | END OF DECEMBER | HOLIDAY | PARTY |
| BALLOONS | EVENTS | HORNS | PUNCH |
| BANNERS | FAMILY | KISSES | RESOLUTIONS |
| BUFFET | FATHER TIME | MIDNIGHT | SINGING |
| CELEBRATE | FEAST | MUSIC | STREAMERS |
| CHAMPAGNE | FESTIVITIES | NEW YEARS DAY | THIRTY FIRST |
| CONFETTI | FIREWORKS | NEW YEARS EVE | TIARAS |
| DANCE | FIRST OF JANUARY | NOISEMAKERS | WINE |
| DAY ONE | FRIENDS | OCCASION | YEAR IN REVIEW |

The hidden message is: TIMES SQUARE IN NEW YORK CITY

Daily Sudoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2019



Performers with 'Spark!', an LED-illuminated theatrical drumming ensemble, leave after entertaining the public during the annual 'Light Night Leeds' festival of visual arts in the centre of Leeds, northern England. — AFP

Beyonce's designer bets on 'Made in Africa' fashion to create jobs

Propelled to fashion fame by Beyonce, an African clothing designer plans to expand production in Senegal and train local tailors to translate her brand's success into jobs, she said. Sarah Diouf's Tongoro designs gained an international following after the superstar wore her patterned dresses and wide-leg pants on vacation in Italy last year, causing sales to nearly triple. The 31-year-old was then asked to make a custom design for Beyonce, who wore a Tongoro suit and dressed her dancers in its jewellery in her "Spirit" music video for "The Lion King" film.

R&B singer Alicia Keys and British model Naomi Campbell have also been spotted in Tongoro, whose pieces are sold online for about 200 euros (\$220). But rising demand for "Made in Africa" fashion has not yet benefited many people at home, said Diouf, who employs

only seven tailors so far. With more local training and online sales, she thinks Senegal's nascent clothing industry can grow.

"We have so much talent, but I think we just need a little bit more structure to take it to the next level," said Diouf in an interview in the Senegalese capital, Dakar. "For me, the Beyonce storyline is opening the conversation and opening doors." Diouf started her brand in 2016 after going back and forth between Dakar and Paris and realizing that her friends in France were eager to buy the clothes she had made in Senegal.

Dakar is known for its vibrant fashion scene but most tailors are self-taught, work on street corners and have no way to reach a wider customer base. After Tongoro was featured in Elle and Vogue magazines, Diouf recognized its potential to sell worldwide. She plans to scale up next year

and eventually open a production facility with 100 to 150 tailors. "I feel like, for so long, everything that comes from Africa has been associated with bad quality," she said. "It was important for me to push that narrative forward, to say, you can actually buy something from Africa that is not cliché ... but something that can be modern and youthful."

The challenges are big. Senegalese tailors are not used to producing en masse, and selling clothes online is a relatively new idea for locals, said Diouf. If more African businesses embraced e-commerce it could be a game-changer for expanding their reach, she said. "In Dakar there are more and more emerging brands," said Diouf. "I think with the new generation, especially because we're more keen on digital, things are slowly changing." Her biggest markets are currently Nigeria, South Africa and Ghana but she hopes to lower prices as the company grows and become

an African version of Zara, the giant Spanish chain.

"To scale, I will have to invest in training. I think this is the next challenge for 'Made in Africa,'" she said. "We have a lot of artisans with great skills and talent, but when it comes to scale we cannot afford to have one item not looking alike." Other West African designers have recognised the same need. Sophie Sy, who recently launched the Senegalese brand BAAX, plans to open a tailoring school in Dakar next year. Diouf said she hopes the attention on her brand will lead to more respect for and investment in other African businesses too. "It's very important for me to create an ecosystem where everyone can benefit from what I do," she said. — Reuters

Thousands of Czechs bid farewell to 'Sinatra of the East'

Thousands of tearful fans spent hours queuing outside a palace in Prague on Friday to bid farewell to Czech pop icon Karel Gott who died from leukaemia aged 80. "I always dreaded the day he'd be gone and when I heard the news of his death, my world fell to pieces," Pavel Sychra, a fitter who travelled to Prague from the eastern city of Vyskov, said. Dubbed "Sinatra of the East" and the "Golden Voice of Prague", Gott died on October 1 after

undergoing treatment for leukemia.

On Saturday, a funeral ceremony with state honors and a requiem are scheduled to take place at Prague Castle's St Vitus Cathedral. The first mourners arrived at the Zofin palace on an island in central Prague on Thursday afternoon and stayed the night. City officials have restricted public transport and boosted police presence in the area. Loudspeakers at the palace played Gott's songs on Friday

while fans bearing flowers and presents patiently waited in line.

Once inside, they bowed to a coffin set beneath a large photograph of the singer who was also extremely popular in neighboring Germany. "I'm sorry, I can't," said a young woman from Berlin who rejected an interview request before bursting into tears. "He was a good man. When I listen to his songs again now, I realize how... he sang from his heart," Berta Prasilova, a psychologist from the central city of Mlada Boleslav, said. The mourners have until 2000 GMT to pay their respects but the palace may remain open longer if necessary.

Smaller tributes were also organized across the Czech Republic. Gott was known as "Divine Karel" for his impeccable tenor voice, and had been voted the most popular singer 42 times in the annual Golden Nightingale poll of Czech music fans. He released almost 300 records and CDs, selling tens of millions of copies. Although his hits included cover versions of The Beatles' "From Me To You" and Roy Orbison's "Pretty Woman", most of his songs were written by Czech songwriters.

Born on July 14, 1939, Gott trained as an electrical mechanic before studying to be an opera singer. He rose to stardom in the 1960s while touring the US and what was then West Germany, and represented Austria in the Eurovision song contest.

Gott, who was also a skilled painter and an occasional actor, won international awards including in Germany, Poland and Russia. — AFP



People crowd at the Saint Vitus Cathedral as the coffin of Czech singer Karel Gott is transported after a funeral mass in the Saint Vitus Cathedral at the Prague Castle, in Prague. — AFP

Brazilian drag queen makes Time magazine's 'Next Generation Leaders' list

Time magazine on Thursday named a top Brazilian drag queen and LGBT+ advocate as one of 10 young people "changing the world" in its biannual list. Pablo Vittar, a 24-year-old Brazilian drag pop singer, was included alongside other rising stars from around the world such as rapper Stormzy in Time's roster of "Next Generation Leaders." Vittar "has established herself as someone to watch on many fronts...using her platform as a musical star to demand equality for LGBT+ communities in Brazil and beyond," the U.S. magazine said.

The drag performer, who identifies as gay and genderfluid, has become something of an internet sensation in recent years, racking up half a billion Spotify streams and a billion YouTube views as well as garnering nine million Instagram followers. Vittar has also collaborated with major international artists like Charli XCX and Major Lazer, whose popular song "Sua Cara" featuring Vittar was nominated for a Latin Grammy award last year - a first for a drag artist.

The young Brazilian's prominence has become particularly significant since the election last year of President Jair Bolsonaro, who once described himself as a "proud" homophobe and has taken steps to clamp down on LGBT+ expression. "I feel really ashamed to be a Brazilian sometimes because of this president," Vittar told Time. "People are dying. People are having their homes and rights taken away," she said.

While its Supreme Court ruled in June that homophobia and transphobia are crimes, Brazil remains a deeply religious country where both the Catholic Church and the popular evangelical Christian movement frequently criticize gay rights. It is also one of the world's deadliest countries for LGBT+ people, with 320 gay and trans people murdered there last year, according to watchdog group Grupo Gay da Bahia. LGBT+ rights campaigners welcomed Time's announcement as coming at a particularly precarious time. — Reuters



This undated handout photo obtained from the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan shows a still of the movie 'Haifa Street' directed by Iraqi-director Mohanad Hayal. — AFP photos



This undated handout photo obtained from the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in Busan shows a still of the movie 'Rom' directed by Vietnam's Tran Thanh Huy.

Iraqi, Vietnamese directors scoop top prize at **Busan film festival**

An Iraq-Qatar co-production looking at life in war-torn Baghdad and a Vietnamese tale of a young bookie struggling to support himself and his loved ones have shared the top award at the 24th Busan International Film Festival. Iraqi director Mohanad Hayal's "Haifa Street" and "Rom", from Vietnam's Tran Thanh Huy, won the festival's New Currents award, which hands out two prizes of \$30,000 to first- or second-time Asian directors, early Saturday.

"The decision was tough and these two films are not first and second, this was not a horse-race," said New Currents jury head Mike Figgis, the Oscar-nominated director of "Leaving Las Vegas". "We saw a lot of great

work from young, exciting filmmakers who understand the art of cinema." "Haifa Street" was a film with tension from beginning to end, the jury said in a statement.

"This is a mature, grown-up movie and the director exhibited a confidence and understanding of cinema language which set the film apart," their statement read. "Good to see a strong gender-balanced cast." The New Currents jury praised "Rom" for "its amazing energy". Among the Hollywood stars to grace this year's event were previously Oscar-nominated Timothee Chalamet, with thousands waiting for his red carpet appearance alongside co-star Joel Edgerton, before the screening of their new film "The King".

Japanese auteur Hirokazu Kore-eda was in town to collect the Asian Filmmaker of the World award while the Korean industry was out in force, led by opening night host Lee Hanee. This year's festival comes during unprecedented interest in Korean cinema, thanks to the global success of director Bong Joon-ho's Oscar favourite "Parasite".

That film is rolling out this week in the United States after claiming a Palm D'or at Cannes in May-but there was a wealth of other local talent on display, with a buzz building around the likes of Yoon Dan-bi's sweeping family drama "Moving On". BIFF had opened with the threat of Typhoon Mitag looming and with hundreds of flights to Korea cancelled, but skies cleared and the festival was able

to go ahead with a series of outdoor screenings at venues across the city.

"There was the possibility of chaos but in the end there were no problems," said BIFF chairman Lee Yong-kwan. The festival announced on Saturday it intended to expand its film funding efforts, including more TV and streaming platform content, and building a Korean cinema museum. This year BIFF screened 299 films from 85 countries, with 118 world premieres, and almost 200,000 attending across its 10-day run. The event ends on Saturday night with the official prize-giving, and with the world premiere of Korean director Lim Dae-hyung's mother-daughter relationship drama "Moonlit Winter". —AFP

HMV boss seeks rebirth of UK record store giant

The new boss of long-troubled British music retailer HMV told AFP it can overcome "tough times" on the high street-with help from keen demand for vinyl records and K-Pop. HMV's first store was opened by English composer Edward Elgar as 'His Master's Voice' in 1921 and helped propel the Beatles to fame-the group signed 40 years later with EMI, the record label which HMV owned until 1996.

Yet it has gone bust twice in recent years, ravaged by booming demand for online music and home entertainment-and souring consumer sentiment. The ailing chain was rescued in February for an undisclosed sum by Canadian company Sunrise Records, after failing to make it through last year's busy festive holiday trading period. "Retail is having a tough time right now," HMV UK owner Doug Putman, 35, said in a telephone interview with AFP. "But our belief is that there is opportunity out there. And we know that customers still want physical products ... and ultimately we are going to offer that." The Canadian businessman, who is chief executive of Sunrise Records, snapped up 100 stores from administrators earlier this year, rescuing almost 1,500 jobs. Some 27 branches were closed by administrators, including HMV's original first store on London's Oxford Street, but HMV has since reopened a number of outlets and currently has 114 in total.

Doing something different

HMV is now seeking to listen more closely to its customers and respond rapidly to changing musical tastes, in order to differentiate itself from the likes of US tech titan Amazon. "Everybody is going to



In this file photo pedestrians walk past a HMV store in central London. — AFP

have to change not only how they think, how they work, how they sell," Putman told AFP, when questioned about the struggling British high street. "Because if all you are doing is offering what Amazon offers, then it is going to be really hard to compete. So you definitely need to do something a lot different."

Most recently, that has meant that the group has embraced nostalgic demand for old-style vinyl records, as many customers choose to shun top-end technology. And it has also sought to tap into strong demand for Korean K-Pop music that appeals far more to the younger generation. "We recently just did a survey in the stores to see who is the demographic coming, and it was really split in all ages," Putman told AFP. "So what we are seeing is they are buying different things."

"But that younger demographic is certainly coming in to buy K-Pop from us. They are certainly coming in to buy vinyl from us, record players. "And ... when you look at the technology offering we have, you know, they are buying our headphones. "So we are getting them in and they're

buying; they just may not be buying exactly what they were ten years ago." Putman was speaking to media ahead of Friday's opening of HMV's biggest store in Britain's second biggest city of Birmingham. In recent months and years, Britain's traditional high street shops have been buckling under pressure from souring consumer sentiment ahead of Brexit.

Remaining authentic

And the high street is also battling rising costs and rents, high taxes on business property, fierce online competition and stretched household budgets. Most recently, debt-plagued British travel agent Thomas Cook—a staple of many of the nation's city centers—declared bankruptcy. Putman insisted however that HMV, which filed separately for bankruptcy in both 2013 and 2018, would still be around as long as it remained relevant. "I have no doubt we are going to be here in two, three, four, five years," he told AFP. "As long as we keep listening to the customer, we remain relevant, we remain authentic, I think we will be here." —AFP

Actor Cuba Gooding Jr, accused of groping, faces new charge

Oscar-winning actor Cuba Gooding Jr-facing trial over accusations he groped a woman in New York-is to be slapped with a new, unspecified charge, prosecutors said Thursday. The "Jerry Maguire" star will be arraigned in a state criminal court next week to hear the indictment against him, a judge ruled. Gooding's trial over allegations he grabbed the woman's breast without her consent in a Manhattan bar on a night out in June was due to start on Thursday.

But the case was adjourned to October 15 after prosecutors said they had filed new charges against the 51-year-old. Assistant District Attorney Jenna Long told a court in New York that the indictment covered the original accusation as well as a "previously uncharged incident." It is not clear if the alleged victim is the same woman who made the original complaint.

The nature of the new charge will not be revealed until the arraignment. Gooding, 51, was originally charged with forcible touching, a crime that can come with a sentence of up to a year in prison if convicted. He denied the allegation. Gooding won an Academy Award in 1997 for his performance as a football player in "Jerry Maguire." He recently played OJ Simpson in "The People vs OJ Simpson: American Crime Story." —AFP

Sienna Miller faces worst nightmare in grueling new role

Portraying a single mother whose teenage daughter suddenly disappears in "American Woman" was a "grueling" role for Sienna Miller that forced the British-American actress to imagine her worst nightmare. Miller plays Debra, a 32-year old supermarket cashier whose daughter Bridget, a mother herself, fails to return home after a night out. Set in rural Pennsylvania, the harrowing drama follows Debra over the course of 11 years as she looks after Bridget's toddler son and faces personal hardships.

"It was grueling ... The idea of exploring that, the unimaginable, my worst nightmare, felt interesting and that being said when I agreed to do the film I was praying I wouldn't have to because I started to dread what that would be and it was impossibly hard," Miller told Reuters in an interview. "Obviously not nearly as hard as the actual experience but I spent a lot of time with people who had gone through that and it was crushing. But we were a very strong group of cast members and filmmakers and everybody was very supportive throughout, which I think I really needed."

Miller, who has a young daughter, is known for supporting roles in dramas "American Sniper" and "Foxcatcher" but she said "American Woman" was harder than her past work. "There were moments where I completely fell apart ... I think anybody would, but I felt supported and I had my daughter to go home to every night which is a huge blessing," she said. Critics have praised her performance as Debra, who transforms from brusque mistress to a more settled grandmother.

"Women are often left to pick up the pieces of a broken life and struggle through it and do their best," Miller said. "I liked that it felt feminist. I liked that this woman was messy and imperfect and I love looking at the bravery of a woman like that ... I liked potentially not respecting her at the beginning and really respecting her by the end."

The film, released in Britain on Friday, also stars "Mad Men" actress Christina Hendricks as Debra's sister Katherine and "Breaking Bad" actor Aaron Paul as love interest Chris. Miller, 37, said the female-led storytelling felt "new and original" as well as "essential". "I'd never read a script that was one woman in every scene, I never had that experience in the 15 years that I have been making films," she said.

"I feel like I've seen men represented in that way and grown up with that. Women are over half the population, they deserve to be represented as well ... But the industry is shifting in a positive way and so I hope to make more of these." —Reuters

Iraq War whistleblower film has Bush and Blair in its sights

A British whistleblower responsible for a dramatic leak in the run-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and now the subject of a Hollywood film hopes it will refocus attention on the flawed evidence that led to war. Ex-spy Katharine Gun—the lead character in the new movie "Official Secrets"—believes the dramatization could also damage the partially repaired reputations of the UK and US leaders behind the military action.

Former British premier Tony Blair and US president George W Bush were dogged by criticism for years after launching a conflict that ultimately killed hundreds of thousands of people. But in recent years they appear to have been able to move beyond the issue. "This film might go some way to redressing that—let's see," Gun, a former intelligence translator, told AFP ahead of the screening at the London Film Festival this week.

The 45-year-old leaked a top-secret US intelligence memo in 2003 which requested Britain's help in spying on non-aligned UN Security Council members to win a key vote authorizing war. The revelations caused a political storm at the time and saw Gun, who eventually admitted leaking the document, charged with breaching Britain's Official Secrets Act and nearly end up in prison.

She and some of the film's creators hope the movie will highlight again that invading Iraq was justified on the false premise Baghdad had illegal weapons of mass destruction (WMD). "There's no rehabilitating two leaders who have had to admit that the whole WMD thing was an absolute fabrication and a manipulation and a lie," said director Gavin Hood. "It's terrible, this rehabilitation of George Bush only because (current US President Donald) Trump seems worse... We've got to stop this nonsense."

Back to normal life

"Official Secrets", which opened in the United States in August and hits cinemas in Britain in October before being released elsewhere later in the year, chronicles how and why Gun leaked the memo and the fallout from it. The British government eventually opted in 2004 not to prosecute Gun after she pleaded not guilty. It would have been forced to disclose key documents and decision-making related to the Iraq war.

A mum-of-one now based in Turkey, she and her husband remained living in the shadow of GCHQ, the government eavesdropping centre in southern England where she had worked as a Mandarin translator, until 2011. "All I wanted to do was just to go back to normal life, and that's what I did," Gun said, who went on to work as a Mandarin tutor—even coaching former colleagues from GCHQ. "It took me a long time to come to terms with the events... every time I tried to recount (them), my stress levels would go up again."

Another central character in "Official Secrets" is Martin Bright, the journalist at The Observer newspaper who received the leaked memo and broke the story, and is played by actor Matt Smith. "It was immensely exciting," Bright recalled of the experience. "It's the journalist's equivalent of scoring a goal at Wembley—getting a front page news story in a Sunday newspaper. "I've subsequently felt that this is an extremely important story that risked being forgotten."

Questions about loyalty

Gun said she was initially hesitant about getting involved in the film, fearing another false dawn after numerous failed attempts to make a movie about the dramatic events that have shaped the last 16 years of her life. But after spending several days forensically recounting it all to Hood, a South African-born director whose other politically driven films include "Tsotsi" (2005) and "Eye in the Sky" (2015), both were convinced of the importance of the collaboration.

"I'm telling this story because I think it raises interesting questions about loyalty... to what and to whom do we owe our loyalty?" the director said. People's loyalty should be to "fundamental values as espoused by the American constitution and its bill of rights and if you step outside of those, you don't have my loyalty." For Gun, the film reminds audiences of the apparent lack of accountability for Bush and Blair over the Iraq War, which caused immense suffering and eroded regional stability.

She also sees a correlation between this and the prevailing political culture in Britain and the US, where Trump and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson are frequently accused of dishonesty. "If they see that other people haven't been held to account, it sets an extremely bad example," Gun said. "And human psychology says that you just emulate what you see." —AFP

Lifestyle | Music & Movies

Shadow land: New film dissects anti-gay stigma in Nigeria

A film about the fallout from a romantic relationship between two Nigerian men has premiered in London before a hoped-for but likely controversial release in the west African country. "Walking With Shadows"-a British-Nigerian co-production adapted from author Jude Dibia's 2005 debut book of the same name-chronicles one man's struggle for acceptance by his family and society following revelations of a past gay relationship.

The award-winning and critically-acclaimed book, initially self-published after Dibia failed to find someone willing to release it, was the first Nigerian novel to feature a gay protagonist, according to the filmmakers. As in much of sub-Saharan Africa, homosexuality is illegal in religiously conservative Nigeria, which is almost evenly split between a Muslim-majority north and a largely Christian south.

Lengthy jail terms exist under federal law and homosexuality carries the death sentence in the parallel sharia or Islamic system in northern states, although it has not been carried out. "Walking With Shadows", set in megacity Lagos and shown for the first time at the London Film Festival on Wednesday, is yet to receive approval from Nigeria's authorities. But those involved hope censors will approve it for general release-and further afield-for it to be appreciated by African audiences.

"I think it will be well-received," actor Ozzy Agu, who plays the leading role, told AFP at the movie's world premiere. "Of course, it's a touchy subject matter back in Nigeria but the way the movie is done is actually quite respectful. 'I'm sure that there's an audience that needs their stories told and this movie is for them," he said, adding the notion there are no gay people in Nigeria or other African nations was "crazy".



(From left) Producer Olumide Femi, actress Funlola A Raimi, Producer Funmi Iyanda, Director Aoife O'Kelly, Author Jude Dibia, actor Ozzy Agu and actress Zainab Balogun pose as they arrive to attend the 'Walking With Shadows' UK Premiere during the 63rd BFI London Film Festival at the Curzon Soho in London. — AFP

Attitudes are shifting, however, particularly among younger people in more cosmopolitan African cities. Last year, a ban on the film "Rafiki" about a lesbian love affair, was overturned in Kenya. The movie was then shown at the Cannes Film Festival. In June, Botswana decriminalized homosexuality in a landmark ruling.

Social intolerance

"Walking With Shadows" tells the story of protagonist Ebele Njoko, who has remade himself as a successful and respected father and husband named Adrian after abandoning a gay relationship earlier in his life. When the affair is newly exposed, he chooses not to deny it to his wife and others in the face of growing hostility, and his

fragile life soon begins to crumble.

The film's creators include Nigerian TV personality Funmi Iyanda. Her interview with Bisi Alimi, an openly gay Nigerian rights activist, caused a storm. "That experience opened my eye to the depth of homophobia and the heightened levels of social intolerance," Iyanda, who served as the creative director and a producer on the movie, wrote in a press release. "I wanted to find the right story to tell about struggles with one's self and society's expectations in a country which was incredibly vibrant yet deeply and punitively conservative," she added.

Iyanda optioned Dibia's book in 2015 and began filming two years later, but struggled throughout to find those willing to fund a movie about such a topic.

London-based Irish writer and director Aoife O'Kelly said she was naturally drawn to directing it-her first feature-length film-after growing up in Ireland, where homosexuality was illegal until 1993.

"I was very empathetic towards the story," she told AFP, noting "the devastation" the Irish law caused many people who were forced to hide their sexuality and persistently faced arrest or ostracism. "What I hope is that from the story people will gain an understanding of what someone has to go through... (keeping) themselves in hiding most of their lives, and the devastating consequences that will have on not just the person, but their family," O'Kelly added.—AFP

Aria that cost Marie-Antoinette her head is sung again at Versailles



Flyman Carlos Casado operates ropes to move the scenery on stage of the Royal Opera of the Chateau de Versailles, west of Paris during a rehearsal of Gretry's opera 'Richard the Lionheart'. — AFP photos



This photograph shows the Royal Opera of the Chateau de Versailles, west of Paris.

The last time the strains of the aria "Oh Richard! Oh my king!" echoed around the Opera Royal at Versailles it was for Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette just before they were dragged off to Paris and their doom by their revolting subjects. The piece from "Richard the Lionheart" by Andre Gretry, one of the tragic queen's favorite composers, was last performed by the Palace of Versailles' own opera company in 1789, as the ancient regime crumbled.

This week it returned to the gilded chocolate-box opera, commissioned by the Sun King Louis XIV, after a 230-year break. The lavishly decorated theatre was used less than 20 times-most famously for the festivities that followed Marie-Antoinette's marriage when she was just 14 — before she and her husband lost their heads in the French Revolution.

And it was the singing of the aria by the king's bodyguards when the royal couple appeared at a banquet at the opera on October 1, 1789 that led to their downfall. Versailles' theatre and events director Laurent Brunner told AFP. Such a defiant display of royalist sentiment three months after the fall of Bastille incensed the hungry people of Paris, whose women marched out a few days later to take the royals back to the capital.

Scandalous orgy

"It caused a scandal in revolutionary Paris," said Brunner, with radical leaders like Marat and Danton branding the banquet "counter-revolutionary". Rumors circulated "that the revolutionary tricolor rosette has been trampled underfoot" by the royalist revelers, he added. The fake news was further fuelled by revolutionary tracts portraying the ban-



Laurent Brunner director of the Royal Opera of the Chateau de Versailles poses for a photograph at the Royal Opera of the Chateau de Versailles, west of Paris.

quet as an orgy and claims that the rosette had been turned over to show only the white side, the symbol of the king.

"Three days after (the news broke), the women of Paris marched on Versailles and the day after the palace was empty," Brunner added. By then the three-minute song about Richard the Lionheart, the English king who had also been taken hostage while he was returning from the Crusades, had become a royalist anthem. It was quickly banned by the revolutionary government.

Even before the monarchy fell, the comic opera had never been fully performed on the Versailles stage-which was formally inaugurated on Marie-Antoinette's wedding day as a gift to the opera-loving teenager.

Revolutionary

She later built her own little theatre, the Trianon, in the grounds of the palace where she would put on amateur dramatics starring herself and her friends, and stage concerts

by her favorite composers like Gretry and Gluck. Having hardly hosted another opera from the revolution right up until its restoration in 2009, the theatre is something of an 18th-century time capsule, with machinery to match. Its design may have been revolutionary in its time-allowing for the stalls to be removed for balls and banquets-but today it takes brawn as well as brains to operate.

Six levels above the stage, Carlos Casado hauls the backdrops up and down by hand, one of the last machinists in France to do so. "It is quite tough physically," he admitted. "It is like working at theatre's very beginnings. The movements need to be very quick, and a lot depends on 'feeling' so it all goes with the music," he added.

Even though "Richard the Lionheart" is a story from the Middle Ages, American director Marshall Pynkoski has set the new production in Versailles' 18th-century heyday. "There is a real emotion about working here at Versailles," said Camille Assaf, the wardrobe mistress. "The atmosphere gets deeply into you," she told AFP. She reproduced costumes "by looking at an awful lot at paintings by Watteau, Fragonard and Boucher" to catch "the very particular grace" of the period.

The next production at the Opera Royal will be another nod to the palace's rich history-"The Ghosts of Versailles", which was created by the New York Metropolitan Opera nearly 40 years ago. In it Beaumarchais-the author of "The Marriage of Figaro"-tries to change the course of history so that Marie-Antoinette keeps her head and never has to face "Madame Guillotine". —AFP



This photograph shows the exterior of the Royal Opera of the Chateau de Versailles, west of Paris.



Actors perform during a rehearsal of the opera 'Richard the Lionheart' at the Royal Opera of the Chateau de Versailles, west of Paris.

Actor Theo Germaine

urges parents to love LGBT+ kids

Theo Germaine, a breakout star of new Netflix TV series "The Politician", urged parents to love their LGBT+ children unconditionally as he recalled struggling to come out to his own family ahead of National Coming Out Day on Oct 11. "I want to beg parents to love their kids no matter what," Germaine, who plays James, a loyal, witty adviser to an ambitious student running to be high school student body president, said by telephone on Thursday.

"There's nothing wrong with being gay or trans. It's normal, it's natural... It's just who somebody is, it's not a choice, and you can't hate somebody for just trying to be who they are," Germaine, who identifies as transmasculine and non-binary - transgender, but not fully male - uses both the pronouns they and he. "My parents at the time were not supportive. So when I really tried to come out when I was 17 it didn't go well," said Germaine, who grew up in a small, rural community in Illinois.

"Mentally I was a struggling a lot," he said, adding that a relative had him committed to a psychiatric ward. "But part of the reason why was because they were like, 'You must have been sexually abused, you must have some kind of trauma, that's why you're saying these things ... It's not real.' And it was really rocky for me for a long time."

Liberated

Germaine, 21, has been living in Chicago working and auditioning for about three years. In "The Politician", released on Sept. 27, James is written as transgender. But his gender identity is never mentioned in the colorful political satire, which Germaine said is unusual for a trans character. "Historically there's been a trope - like trauma porn, or inspiration porn. It's kind of about that person's gender identity ... and they kind of don't get to be anything else."

"To play a character who has been liberated from that, when in the real world I am not liberated from that, is pretty exciting," said Germaine, noting that James is never "misgendered" in "The Politician", unlike his own experience. "I remember thinking, 'Oh my God, is this what it's like for cisgender actors? Do they just get to play a character who's a good guy or a bad guy?'"

Germaine was inspired to persevere with acting by Laverne Cox, a trans actress who appeared on the cover of Time magazine in 2014 after visiting Germaine's school in rural Illinois. Nonetheless, he struggled with the idea of representation and whether he was representing other trans and non-binary people well. "I want there to be freedom to do queer indie films and I want there to be room to do major blockbusters. I want everyone to be able to have access, and we don't have it yet. We're grappling for it," he said.

The actor is currently writing a play and also wants to get involved in political advocacy and in helping casting directors give more trans people roles. "I have a lot of big ideas and goals," Germaine said. "It just all comes from wanting other people like me to have access and to be able to express themselves and to be able to make their own content, and also be safe." —Reuters



A picture shows a group of old Vespa parked in a mechanic's garage in Bamako. — AFP photos



A mechanic repairs a Vespa in his garage specialized in repairing old Italian motorcycles in Bamako.



A Malian man sits on the chassis of an old Vespa.



Seck Seydou rides his Vespa through the streets of Bamako.

In Mali, love for Italy's vintage scooter is timeless

Seydou Seck's Vespa is 41 years old, but he sits upright and proud on the ancient grey scooter when he heads down Bamako's Independence Avenue. In a city flooded with cheap, Indonesian-made two-wheelers, the classic Italian-made Vespa has a passionate following. Enthusiasts like Seck reckon several hundred venerable Vespas are still cruising the streets of the Malian capital, most of them survivors of the 1970s.

"We all know each other and flash our lights when we pass each other," says Seck, 60, a wedding photographer by trade. The Vespa—its name means "wasp" in Italian—has a special place in Malian hearts. For many, it's a symbol of the 1960s and 70s, when the country was at peace and cities bustled with people streaming in from the countryside, eager for an easier life.

"The Vespa was the bike which young people bought when they started to make money," says Igo Diarra, curator of "Rencontres de Bamako" (Bamako Meetings), an upcoming biennial exhibition of African photography. "Posing in front of machines like the Vespa was a sign of respectability and social success." Vespa's manufacturer Piaggio estimates it has sold 19 million scooters since 1946.

Its sales network does not extend to Mali, but Vespas readily made their way into the country from neighboring states, finding a ready market for people craving mobility. One out of every two Malian households today has a moped, three times more than 20 years ago, according to official figures. In Bamako, a sprawling city cut in two by the Niger River, two-wheelers are crucial for weaving through the traffic and crossing the clogged bridges. But most of them are Jakarta-an Indonesian model that began to flood the local market at the start of this century.

and riders struggle to get parts for repairs. Seck says he and many other Vespa-lovers turn to Adama Guindo, 51, a mechanic who began to specialize in the Italian scooter when he started to work 36 years ago. "In the old days, it was easy," Guindo said. "But today it's complicated—the suppliers only send spare parts if there is a demand, and demand here is low."



A vicious circle is thus squeezing the Vespa: fewer surviving models means that fewer spare parts for them are available, and the scooter's distinctive wasp-like buzz becomes even rarer. In Adama's workshop, four half-stripped Vespas sit waiting for the surgeon to cannibalize them and give life to others. "The Jakartas have killed the Vespa, but we're still here!" Adama said with a tone of defiance.—AFP

Last buzz?

Classic Vespas are starting to disappear as mechanics

Vivid gladiator fresco discovered at Pompeii

A vivid fresco depicting an armor-clad gladiator standing victorious as his wounded opponent stumbles gushing blood has been discovered in the ancient Roman city of Pompeii, Italy's culture ministry said Friday. The striking scene in gold, blue and red was uncovered in what experts think was a tavern frequented by gladiators, who fought each other, prisoners and wild animals for the public's entertainment.

"We do not know how this fight ended. Gladiators were killed or shown mercy," Pompeii's director Massimo Osanna said. A "Murmillo" fighter wearing a plumed, wide-brimmed helmet with visor, holds aloft his large rectangular shield in his left hand, as he grips his short sword in the right. On the ground next to him lies the shield of the defeated "Thraex", who has suffered deep wounds and is on the point of collapse.



This handout picture shows a fresco depicting a heavily-armed gladiator standing victorious over his opponent gushing blood which has been discovered at Pompeii, Italy's culture ministry. — AFP

"What is particularly interesting is the extremely realistic representation of the wounds, such as the one on the wrist and chest of the unsuccessful gladiator, from which the blood runs, wetting his leggings," Osanna said. "The Thraex is gesturing with his hand, possibly asking for mercy," he said. The fresco—which measures 1.12 meters by 1.5 meters—was found in what excavators believe was a basement room, as the imprint of a wooden staircase can be seen above it.

Treasures of a ruined city

The building was situated not far from the gladiators' barracks in Regio V, an entire quarter of the site that has recently offered up several impressive archaeological finds but is yet to open to the public. It was most likely a tavern with an upper floor of rooms used either by the innkeeper or by prostitutes, the ministry said. The discovery was made during works to secure an area of the north of the archaeological park under the Great Pompeii Project, launched after years of bad maintenance and poor weather caused a series of wall collapses.

Culture Minister Dario Franceschini said the find showed Pompeii was "an inexhaustible mine of research and knowledge for the archaeologists of today and the future". The ruined city in southern Italy is the second most visited tourist site in the country, after the Colosseum in Rome, with more than 3.6 million visitors in 2018. Perhaps the most significant find at the Regio V so far has been an inscription uncovered last year that proves the city was destroyed by Mount Vesuvius after October 17, 79 AD and not on August 24 as previously thought.

The most eye-catching one, however, was the skeleton of a man in 2018 whose torso was found protruding from a large stone block which had crushed his head. He appeared to have survived the initial eruption, and attempted to flee as volcanic ash blanketed the city, but was slowed down by a limp and was probably overcome by lethal gases, experts said.—AFP

Museum explores spooky science behind 'Frankenstein', 'The Mummy'

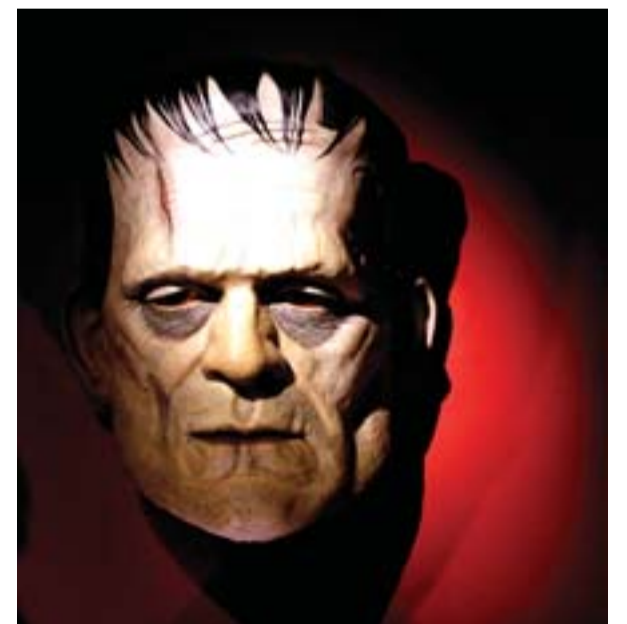
What is the spookiest thing about "Frankenstein," "The Mummy" and "Dracula"? The hideous monster? The ancient curse? The sharp fangs? Or the fact that these classic horror films were all rooted in real-life scientific experiments and discoveries? That is the premise of a new exhibition at Los Angeles' Natural History Museum, showcasing movie props from Hollywood's golden age of horror alongside scientific artifacts that inspired them.

The "Natural History of Horror"—opening Thursday, as Halloween looms—displays the cloth wrappings used to mummify Boris Karloff in the 1932 classic movie alongside real ancient Egyptian corpse bindings from the museum's archeology collection. Visitors can pull a lever to recreate Luigi Galvani's 18th-century electrical experiment on twitching frog legs—which inspired Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein"—while examining the metal shackles used to bind The Monster on-screen in 1931.

"The early electrical work that was done to see if you can re-energize animals and bring them to life was the beginning of 'Frankenstein,'" said museum director Lori Bettison-Varga, who moved frog specimens from the institute's herpetology collection to the new exhibition. "These films are essentially inspired by the natural and physical world, and the imagination that people had to create stories based on real things," she added.

The exhibition explains how 19th-century diseases such as cholera inspired the Dracula from Bram Stoker's vampire novel we know today. It also features a silicon copy of the monster suit worn in 1954's "Creature from the Black Lagoon." According to curators, the monster was inspired by the discovery of a living coelacanth—an ancient fish once thought to be extinct, which scientists then believed was the common ancestor of all land animals.

"We have a real one on display in a tank out on the hallway on this floor," said Bettison-Varga. Created as the



In this file photo a piece from the movie 'Frankenstein' is displayed during the exhibition 'Guillermo del Toro, At Home with My Monsters'—a collection of personal items and some that he used in his movies— in Guadalajara, State of Jalisco, Mexico. — AFP

Museum of History, Science and Art in 1913, the institution's early collection of motion picture props was boosted in the 1930s by a large donation from Universal Pictures—including a pitchfork from "Bride of Frankenstein." "Because we began so early, and before it was considered a real industry worthy of collecting, we were the first through the door," said curator Beth Werling.

While science's astounding progress since the 1930s makes the discoveries that inspired these horror movies seem quaint—or obsolete—today, the same canon of legendary characters continue to resonate with modern audiences. "Something that I really love about the monsters is that they're continually reinterpreted over and over again," said NBC Universal archivist Jeff Pirtle. "Universal has so many sequels to Frankenstein. The Son of Frankenstein. Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein! Every time they're reimagined you still see this common theme."—AFP



US President Donald Trump steps off Air Force One upon arrival at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport in Minneapolis on Oct 10, 2019. — AFP

Why did Turkey launch 'Operation...

Continued from Page 1

The threat of terrorism originating from Syria and targeting our borders is not limited to DAESH. In its more than 30-year terror campaign against Turkey, the PKK-listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the US and the EU, and NATO-has been responsible for the deaths of 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants.

During the last two years, especially from the east of River Euphrates, we have been exposed to more than hundred cases of attacks or hostile acts by PYD/YPG, the Syrian offshoot of PKK. PYD/YPG has perpetrated terrorist attacks also within Syria and against Syrians. Northwest Syria is a particular case in point. More than 200 cases of attacks and killing or wounding of scores of civilians took place. PYD/YPG-affiliated elements assumed responsibility in these cases without hesitation.

Our expectations and sensitivities regarding the PYD/YPG threat were repeatedly shared with our allies, especially the US. Our talks with the US on the establishment of a safe zone has remained inconclusive. Promises made by the US have not been fulfilled. PYD/YPG fortifications were not destroyed. PYD/YPG even built new ones. They did not withdraw. Their heavy weapons were not taken back. We could no longer tolerate the presence of terrorists at our borders. We were compelled to take our destiny into our hands. That is why we launched "Operation Peace Spring".

What does Turkey want to achieve and how?

The main objectives of this operation will be to ensure Turkey's border security, neutralize terrorists in the region and save Syrians from the oppression and cruelty of these terrorists. The operation will be carried out on the basis of international law, in accordance with the right of self-defense as enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As was the case with Operations Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch, only terrorist elements and their hide-outs, shelters, emplacements, weapons, vehicles and equipment will be targeted during the planning and execution phases of the operation. The US and other allies who have a military presence in the region were informed of the operation in a timely manner. Channels of military deconfliction will remain open and functional.

We took immediate steps to inform the international community on the background, legal basis and goals of this operation. President Erdogan had already informed President Trump about our intention. President Erdogan also called President Putin before the start of the operation. We notified UN Secretary General, President of the UN Security Council and NATO Secretary General of the start of this operation.

We invited ambassadors representing permanent

members of the UN Security Council as well as regional countries to the ministry. We delivered a verbal note to the Syrian Consulate General in Istanbul. We made clear that this was limited to a counter-terrorism operation. We reiterated our commitment to Syria's territorial integrity and unity. We intend to continue the operation until all terrorists have been wiped out of the region, our border security has been ensured, and local Syrians have been liberated from the tyranny of PYD/YPG as well as the DAESH threat.

Not against but for Syria and Syrians

The Syrian National Coalition and the Syrian Interim Government as well as tribal leaders have expressed support for the operation.

The operation also aims to facilitate safe and voluntary returns of displaced Syrians. A safe zone free from terror will encourage these Syrians, including more than 300,000 Syrian Kurds taking refuge in Turkey, to voluntarily return to their homes. Turkey plans to resettle 2 million Syrians in a 30-kilometer wide safe zone to be set up in Syria, stretching from the Euphrates River to the Iraqi border, including Manbij. But the presence of terror groups such as the PKK, PYD, and YPG risk its formation.

In fact, Turkey has best practices in terms of liberating areas from terrorism and facilitating safe and voluntary returns of Syrians. In northwest Syria, more than 360 thousand Syrians returned from Turkey to their homes in areas cleared of terrorists by Operations Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch.

Turkey has no plans whatsoever to modify the demographic structure in the operation area. It is the other way around. Our operation will give a chance to at least one million displaced Syrians, including Kurds, Arabs and Christians alike, to return to their ancestors' lands after having been subject to ethnic cleansing by PYD/YPG. Turkey's counter-terrorism efforts in Syria will contribute to the territorial integrity and unity of Syria by disrupting separatist agendas.

International solidarity needed to combat terrorism

The future of detained DAESH terrorists is of paramount importance for Turkey. The only sustainable solution is repatriation of all foreign terrorist fighters by their countries of origin. The issue of foreign terrorist fighters can be effectively dealt with only by collective action by the international community. Protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure is our top priority.

Turkey has always been at the forefront of the efforts to combat DAESH. We will remain so. This vision is recognized and supported by the Syrian National Coalition and the Syrian Interim Government, as the legitimate representatives of the Syrian people, along with the tribal representatives, Kurdish and Christian leaders across the region.

As President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says, our plan is that everyone can return home. Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, Assyrians other ethnic and religious groups will be able to return to their homes. Therefore, we will be able to restore the demographic wealth of the region, which was deteriorating.

"Happiness 1" broke down at about the same location off the port of Jeddah and was repaired in Saudi Arabia, where it was held until its release on July 21.

Yesterday Iran vowed not to let the attack against the Sabiti go unanswered. Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said clues had been uncovered as to who was behind what he called a "missile attack" on tanker, the semi-official ISNA news agency reported. "Maritime piracy and wickedness in international waterways... will not be left unanswered," he said, quoted by ISNA.

Iran is prepared to hold talks with regional rival Saudi Arabia, with or without the help of a mediator, the Iranian foreign ministry said yesterday, ahead of a visit by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. Asked about reports that Khan, due to arrive in Iran at the weekend, may try to mediate between Tehran and Riyadh, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said: "I am not aware of any mediation," according to state broadcaster IRIB.

"Iran has announced that, with or without a mediator, it is always ready to hold talk with its neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, to get rid of any misunderstandings," Mousavi added. Iran's foreign minister signaled last week that his country would be willing to discuss regional issues with Saudi Arabia, but that Riyadh had to stop "killing people". Saudi Arabia, which is locked in several proxy wars in the region with Iran, has blamed Tehran for attacks on Saudi oil plants on Sept 14, a charge Iran denies. The kingdom has said it prefers a political solution to a military one. — Agencies

BTS rocks out in Saudi...

Continued from Page 1

its economy away from oil. As Saudi Arabia boosts its entertainment offering, its record has put off some artists, including rapper Nicki Minaj, who pulled out of the Jeddah World Fest in July, citing human rights concerns. Janet Jackson, 50 Cent and Chris Brown were among artists who did not turn down the kingdom's invitation to perform.

Kipchoge runs sub-two hour...

Continued from Page 1

Maintaining a very regular pace at around 2:50 minutes per kilometer, he passed the finish line gesturing and smiling, describing his approach to the finish as "the best moment of my life".

The founder of the main sponsors, Ineos, British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe, took a personal interest in the challenge. "That last kilometer where he actually accelerated was super human," said Ratcliffe, who himself competes in Ironman triathlons. Kipchoge had been 11 seconds in advance at mid-race as fans lining the course, many waving Kenyan flags, loudly cheered him on.

Kipchoge's coach, Patrick Sang, said the Kenyan had "inspired all of us that we can stretch our limits in our lives". Kipchoge told reporters earlier this week that his attempt in the Austrian capital was about "making history in this world, like the first man to go to the moon".

Because of the way the run was set up and paced the International Association of Athletics Federations will

Turkey steps up assault in Syria...

Continued from Page 1

US President Donald Trump has faced a firestorm of criticism, even from his own domestic supporters, for abandoning a loyal ally and stands accused of giving Turkey a green light to launch the offensive after ordering American troops to pull back from the border. The SDF have taken mounting losses against the vastly superior firepower of the Turkish army.

At least 23 SDF fighters have been killed, including in overnight clashes, bringing the over death toll since the Turkish offensive began on Wednesday to 81, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor. Turkish air strikes on Kurdish-held towns and intense artillery exchanges caused mounting casualties on both sides of the border. On the Syrian side at least 28 civilians have been killed, according to the Britain-based Observatory, and 17 are dead in Turkey, according to Turkish reports. Four Turkish soldiers have been killed, Turkey's defense ministry and state-run Anadolu news agency said.

The towns of Ras al-Ain and Tal-Abyad further west have been primary goals of the Turkish offensive and have both come under heavy bombardment. They lie at either end of a section of the border which although Kurdish-controlled has an ethnic Arab majority. Ankara says its forces' mission is to establish a safe zone run by its mainly Arab Syrian allies in which some of the 3.6 million mostly Arab refugees from Syria can be rehoused.

But the Kurds say the Turkish invasion amounts to an attempt to redraw the ethnic map of the region at their expense. The operation has so far displaced some 100,000 people, according to the United Nations. Roads leading out of the area have been filled with fleeing civilians, some on foot, other in vehicles piled high with their belongings. "We always get displaced no matter where we go," Yusra Al-Saleh, 38, who fled violence along Syria's northern border, said. "We are destroyed."

The Kurdish Red Crescent said it would no longer dispatch medical teams to Ras al-Ain because its ambulances are being hit by Turkish fire. It said one of its medical points south of Ras al-Ain was hit by Turkish fire yesterday, wounding an ambulance driver and damaging the vehicle. Aid groups have warned of yet another humanitarian disaster in Syria's eight-year-old war if the offensive is not stopped. "More people are leaving on a daily base and

But fans on Friday were excited about the prospect of future events, as children and their parents waited in anticipation outside the stadium in the kingdom that rarely pulsates to the beats of pop songs and throngs of young people. "This concert means a lot to me," said Mohammed, who had the green Saudi flag tied around his shoulders. "I feel like this is supporting our country and our economy. Also, that we are showing everyone that we welcome everyone," added the young man, who said he was an amateur YouTuber who produces art and music.

Nearby was a group of three Filipinos, who made the trip from Jeddah, about 800 km west of Riyadh. "We've been waiting for such an event for so long," one of the young women told AFP before she bolted with her friends to listen to their "favorite" song. — AFP

not validate the time as a world record. The running surface had been partly retarred and readied with other features such as a banked corner that could save time and avoid injury.

Pacemakers took turns to support him throughout the 42.195-km race. They included 1,500-m Olympic champion Matthew Centrowitz and former world champion Bernard Lagat. The course comprised a 4.3 km-long straight alley, which the Kenyan ran up and down several times amid dry but foggy weather. Throng of fans cheered on Kipchoge whenever he passed by.

William Magachi, 33, from Nairobi, was one of many Kenyans watching in Vienna. "It's amazing. He is a super human being, the positivity, what he has been able to achieve. It's a record breaking moment. It never happened and may never happen again in my lifetime... I'm a lucky man." Another fan, Markus Parzer, 32 and from Vienna said: "It's absolutely amazing. I'm a runner as well, a hobby runner. Just running his pace for a few hundred metres, I can't do it longer. This really shows the magnitude of what he achieved today... It's really history made here in Vienna."

Fans from around the world also followed the run, broadcast live over YouTube and on many television channels, as well as on a giant screen near Eldoret in west Kenya, where Kipchoge's family lives. His number one fan, his mother Janet Rotich, was watching from her home. — AFP

those numbers will go up," the World Food Program said.

Most of those fleeing were heading east towards the city of Hasakeh, which has not been targeted by Turkey. "Turkey's aim is to prevent further fleeing Syrian civilians from entering Turkey rather than genuinely providing protection," Human Rights Watch. The SDF lost 11,000 fighters in the protracted US-led campaign against IS before finally overrunning the jihadists' self-proclaimed "caliphate" in March.

Yesterday, it decried being "abandoned" by Washington. "Our allies had guaranteed us protection ... but suddenly and without warning they abandoned us in an unjust decisions to withdraw their troops from the Turkish border," a statement said. "We call on our allies to fulfill their duties and assume their moral obligations," to protect us by "closing the air space to Turkish warplanes".

The offensive sparked international condemnation and even Trump toughened his policy towards Ankara, threatening on Friday crippling sanctions if the operation goes too far. Yesterday, Germany said it was halting sales of weapons to Turkey over the Syrian offensive, after France, a key partner in the US-led anti-IS coalition, threatened sanctions against Ankara. But Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan has voiced defiance and the Pentagon has reported no progress in its belated efforts to persuade Ankara to halt the assault.

Arab foreign ministers yesterday condemned Turkey's "aggression" in Syria, calling for an immediate withdrawal of Ankara's troops. The statement came after an emergency session of the Arab League in Cairo called for by Egypt to discuss Turkey's assault on the Kurds.

Arab League chief Ahmed Aboul Gheit slammed the Turkish attack as an "invasion of an Arab land". The ministers called for "ending the aggression and the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Turkey from all of Syria's land", the statement said. The group said Ankara's offensive was a "direct threat to Arab national security", adding they would consider "urgent measures to confront the Turkish aggression".

The potential responses included diplomatic and economic actions, as well as "military cooperation to confront the Turkish aggression", the statement said. The foreign ministers of Iraq and Lebanon also called for Syria's Arab League membership to be unfrozen. Damascus has been suspended from the pan-Arab bloc since 2011 over its bloody crackdown on protesters.

Turkey dismissed the Arab League statement, saying it misrepresented its military operations. Fahrettin Altun, director of communications for the Turkish presidency, also said governments that disliked Turkey's stance on Middle East issues including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and war in Yemen "do not speak for the Arab world". — Agencies

Sports

South Africa's Maharaj overcomes pain barrier to hit maiden fifty

Kohli hits career-best 254 not out to surpass Don Bradman's Test tally of 6,996 runs

PUNE: South Africa's Keshav Maharaj battled through pain and held back from hitting out as he resisted India's drive for a decisive win in the second Test yesterday. The tourists were eventually dismissed for 275, 127 runs away from avoiding the follow-on, but Maharaj earned praise for his courageous stand with Vernon Philander that held up India's march towards a victory that would seal the three match series.

Maharaj, who made 72 with an injured shoulder, and Philander, unbeaten on 44, put on 109 for the ninth wicket to frustrate the Indian bowlers for 43.1 overs in Pune. "It's (shoulder) very sore. Yesterday I

dived on it so lot of bruising. But hopefully I'll be fine for the rest of the series," Maharaj, primarily a left-arm spinner, said.

"Vernon and I said to ourselves that we'll just get through to tea and see after that. Being a lower order batsman your fingers do itch to play a big shot but Vernon kept me in a good mind space.

"After a few pulls I felt normal (in the shoulder). It's better to be positive, because if you go into your shell a ball with your name will come along sooner or later."

Ravichandran Ashwin broke the stand by taking number 10 Maharaj in the final overs and then claimed last man Kagiso Rabada, for two, to wrap up the innings with figures of 4-69.

India, who scored 601-5 declared, have until the start of play today to decide whether to enforce the follow-on. South Africa still trail India by 326 runs.

'LONGER YOU BAT, EASIER IT IS'

The Proteas, who resumed on 36-3, slipped to 162-8 after skipper Faf du Plessis fell for 64 to Ashwin's off spin. Maharaj, who injured his shoulder while fielding on Friday and went off the pitch for scans, came out to join Philander to make a last stand.

Maharaj passed his previous Test best of 45 with a boundary off Ashwin and completed his fifty to an ovation from the crowd. "I wanted to stay outside off stump to spin, I tried to stay leg side of the ball for (Ravindra) Jadeja," said Maharaj, who claimed his 100th Test wicket in the Indian innings.

"We saw (Mohammed) Shami got the ball to reverse, and the wicket is deteriorating, but the longer you bat, the easier it is," Philander, a pace-bowling all-rounder, also played a patient innings. He stayed on for 192 balls before running out of partners.

Fast bowler Mohammed Shami struck early to remove nightwatchman Anrich Nortje for three when he edged a delivery to Virat Kohli at fourth slip. Theunis de Bruyn was caught behind off Yadav for 30 as the



PUNE: South Africa's batsman Keshav Maharaj (R) plays a shot during the third day play of the second Test cricket match between India and South Africa at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune yesterday. —AFP

tourists slipped to 53 for five. Wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock put on a 75-run fourth wicket stand with du Plessis to offer some resistance before Ashwin's off spin bowled him for 31.

Kohli hit a career-best 254 not out to surpass Don

Bradman's Test tally of 6,996 runs on Friday as India tightened the screws on the tourists. A victory for India, already one up in the three Tests, will see them beat the record of 10 straight home series wins they share with Australia. —AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on day three of the second Test between India and South Africa in Pune yesterday:

India 1st innings 601-5 (V. Kohli 254 not out, K. Rabada 3-93)	
South Africa 1st innings (overnight 36-3, T. de Bruyn 20, A. Nortje 2)	
D. Elgar b Yadav	6
A. Markram lbw b Yadav	0
T. de Bruyn c Saha b Yadav	30
T. Bavuma c Saha b Shami	8
A. Nortje c Kohli b Shami	3
F. du Plessis c Rahane b Ashwin	64
Q. de Kock b Ashwin	31
S. Muthusamy lbw b Jadeja	7
V. Philander not out	44
K. Maharaj c Sharma b Ashwin	72
K. Rabada lbw b Ashwin	2
Extras (lb8)	8
Total (all out, 105.4 overs)	275

Fall of wickets: 1-2 (Markram), 2-13 (Elgar), 3-33 (Bavuma), 4-41 (Nortje), 5-53 (de Bruyn), 6-128 (de Kock), 7-139 (Muthusamy), 8-162 (Du Plessis), 9-271 (Maharaj), 10-275 (Rabada)

Bowling: I. Sharma 10-1-36-0, Yadav 13-2-37-3, Jadeja 36-15-81-1, Shami 17-3-44-2, Ashwin 28.4-9-69-4, R. Sharma 1-1-0-0.

Kuwait Olympic sign cooperation agreement with Afghanistan Olympic Committee

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Olympic Committee signed a cooperation and coordination agreement with Afghanistan Olympic committee to exchange experiences in team games as well as martial arts, besides organizing friendly tournaments in order to benefit athletes of both countries.

The agreement was signed during a visit by a sports delegation from Afghanistan headed by President of AOC and Youth and Sports Raheemi Hafeez, in addition to the President of the Republic's advisor on youth and sports affairs Ajmal Ghani and AOC Secretary Dr Mohammad Younis.

President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Sabah was briefed on the latest developments in the Afghanistan sports movement, particularly martial arts in which it made very good progress. He said that we should benefit from such experience to advance those games in Kuwait.



headed by Sheikh Talal Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Board Members to have the tournament at its best.

He said bowling is highly popular and people of all ages play it, and hoped that branches for the bowling club will be built in order to all Kuwaitis to play the game in all areas.

Dr Fulaiteh said the Asian bowling tournament is the first official tournament to be held at the bowling complex after it was officially opened by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and expected more continental and international tournament to be held here and restore Kuwait's place on the world sports map.

Dr Humoud Fulaiteh concluded by saying Public Authority for Sports continues its support for sports and athletes, and removing all obstacles they face according to the vision of the political leadership, that



always gives directions to work on fulfilling Kuwait athletes' ambitions and dreams.

Asian Bowling Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Director General of the Public Authority for Sports Dr Humoud Fulaiteh said Kuwait hosting of the Asian Bowling Championship from October 20 is a significant sports event, that augments Kuwait sports links with continental and world sports organizations, after lifting the suspension for good.

Fulaiteh lauded the efforts being exerted by the higher organizing committee and all sub-committees of the championship, adding that he is fully confident towards the ability of the Kuwait Bowling Club administration,

AUB kicks off registration for 'Fun Run' charity event

KUWAIT: As part of its dynamic community initiatives, Ahli United Bank announced commencing registration for the "Fun Run" charity event organized by the Bank for the second year in row to reflect its commitment to be closer to the community it serves through raising awareness about the importance of preserving and protecting the environment. This event is part of the Bank's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program that gives priority to youth and the environment in line with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's "New Kuwait 2035 Vision".

The AUB Fun Run will take place

on the 14th of December 2019 in Kuwait City. Commenting on this activity, Mrs. Sahar Dashti, General Manager of Customer Protection and the head of AUB CSR Team, invited all age groups to participate in this event, emphasizing that each participant is considered a contributor in achieving His Highness the Amir's vision, which considers the environment one of its main pillars. "Supporting the implementation of the vision is a source of pride for every contributor and participant".

Mrs. Dashti said: "The exceptional success we achieved in this initiative last year was demonstrated by the surprising level of participation through an unexpected number of contestants. The participants included people of determination who showed great enthusiasm to contribute to the success of the event, which motivated us to continue developing this event year after year".

Mrs. Dashti noted that all the proceeds from this event will be dedicated for planting palm trees through

Al-Najat Charitable Society. Then the Society will distribute the harvested dates to support vulnerable families. This means that the "Fun Run" event will have environmental, social and humanitarian contributions under the slogan "Plant Palm Trees with Your Steps".

Dashti affirmed: "The Bank's passion to encourage group sports is reflected by organizing and supporting such an event with the aim of promoting a culture of teamwork to foster the values of fair competition. At the same time, such activities have an active role in the development of mental and physical abilities for different age groups, which in turn has encouraged us to increase the number of prize categories for the winners."

The early bird registration in AUB Fun Run is ongoing until the end of October 2019 through (www.events.provision.com/event/detail/304). After that date, there will be a special discount for group registrations of 10 participants or more.

Flower leaves England set-up after 12 years

LONDON: Former England coach Andy Flower has ended his 12-year stay with the England and Wales Cricket Board. Flower was appointed England assistant coach to Peter Moores in 2007 and took over as head coach two years later.



Andy Flower

The Zimbabwean switched to working with the Lions in 2014 and has opted to step down shortly after Chris Silverwood's appointment as England's new head coach. During his spell as head coach, Flower led England's Test side to number one in the world, victory at the 2010 World Twenty20 and Ashes success in Australia in 2010-11.

"It's been a real privilege. The Ashes victory in 2010-11 stands out. It's difficult to win in Australia and to do it so comprehensively was a really proud moment in my coaching career," Flower said.

"It was wonderful to watch those young men take on that challenge successfully and have a great time doing it. "The win in India in 2012-13 was a highlight too, to overcome some great players in tough spinning conditions was a special victory.

"So was the T20 World Cup win in 2010. The way we played our cricket, with such freedom and aggression, really was fun to be part of." —AFP

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Sports

14-man Ireland thrash Samoa to reach World Cup quarter-finals

Play-offs leaves Japan and Scotland in shoot-out today for remaining Pool A slot

FUKUOKA: World Player of the Year Johnny Sexton scored two tries as 14-man Ireland secured a 47-5 bonus-point win over Samoa to reach the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals yesterday. Ireland had Bundee Aki sent off for a high tackle in the first half but they were still too much for Samoa as they qualified from a tight Pool A despite their shock loss to Japan.

With Ireland safely through to the play-offs it leaves Japan and Scotland in a straight shoot-out today for the remaining Pool A slot. If the game is cancelled because of Typhoon Hagibis, which slammed into Japan yesterday, the host team will qualify ahead of Scotland.

Whoever tops the pool will play South Africa in the quarter-finals while the runner-up will face defending champions New Zealand, whose final match against Italy was cancelled because of the typhoon. Ireland were down to 14 men in the 28th minute when Aki, who is of Samoan descent, was sent off for a shoulder to the head of Samoan fly-half Ulupano Seuteni.

Ireland coach Joe Schmidt said the dismissal was "devastating" for Aki, who faces missing the rest of the tournament. "It's hard to argue (about the red card) at the moment but it's pretty devastating for Bundee," said Schmidt.

"He knows a lot of the Samoan players really well. I know they've got a lot of respect for him and for us it's a really disappointing finish to the night."

Earlier, Samoa hooker Seilala Lam had been yellow-carded for a similar high shot, but he had tried to lower his point of contact while Aki remained upright and referee Nic Berry ruled there was "a high degree of danger".

Ireland were up 21-5 at the time, but even with a man down they still managed the bonus-point fourth try before half-time when Sexton scored his second.

HUGE DIVOTS

In the second half, amid farcical scenes of ground staff repairing huge divots that opened up in the newly laid turf, Ireland added three more tries and kept Samoa scoreless. Ireland coach Joe Schmidt had complained before the match that the All Blacks would benefit from the extended break caused by the cancellation of their game against Italy.

But, there was an advantage too for Ireland who started with a solid win against Scotland then went off the boil against Japan and Russia, and Samoa gave them a chance to get their green machine working smoothly again.

As forecast strong winds in Fukuoka from the outer edges of the typhoon did not eventuate, Conor Murray and Sexton were able to work on their kicking game to give Ireland a territorial advantage.

From there, Tadhg Furlong and James Ryan led an emerald tide that bullied their way forward. The opening try to Rory Best came from a lineout drive and Furlong scored the second by charging directly into the Samoan defensive wall and emerging on the other side with the try line in front of him.

Fullback Jordan Larmour, who was a threat each time he ran with the ball, created the gap which gave Sexton his first try. Jack Lam put Samoa on the board with a try before Sexton scored the vital fourth try right on half-time when Murray went the short side from a five-metre scrum.

It was another blindside move by Murray early in the second half that saw Larmour go over in the corner. When flanker TJ Ioane was sent to the sin-bin for a ruck infringement, one of 17 penalties conceded by Samoa, Ireland mounted a sustained forward-led attack which resulted in a try to backrower CJ Stander before Andrew Conway completed their scoring. —AFP



FUKUOKA: Ireland's lock Iain Henderson catches the ball in a lineout during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool A match between Ireland and Samoa at the Fukuoka Hakatanomori Stadium in Fukuoka yesterday. —AFP

Wales on trial as Gatland holds back on pet picks

KUMAMOTO: Wales coach Warren Gatland is billing today's World Cup match against minnows Uruguay as a trial for quarter-final spots after he named a vastly rearranged side following the battering it took to overpower Fiji.

Australia's 27-8 bonus-point win over Georgia on Friday means Wales need only a draw against the South Americans to secure top spot in Pool D and a quarter-final against France.

In the unlikely event that Uruguay cause an upset in Kumamoto, far higher on the Richter scale than their shock win over Fiji, then Wales will finish second and play England in the quarter-finals leaving Australia to play France.

After the bruising Wales took in beating an enthusiastic Fiji 29-17 on Wednesday, Gatland has made 13 changes and put his entire 31-man squad on notice that his preferred run-on side for the play-offs is not yet settled.

"The message to the players against Uruguay is that the door is not shut," the New Zealand-born coach said.

"There are opportunities for players to go out there and impress and stake a claim for a quarter-final spot."

Injured fly-half Dan Biggar (head), centre Jonathan Davies (knee) and wing George North (ankle) were not considered but wing Josh Adams, who limped off with a leg knock after scoring three tries against Fiji, will start again as will midfield linkman Hadleigh Parkes.

Justin Tipuric starts in the back row and will captain the side with Alun Wyn Jones rested after leading the side through the first three games.

"Ideally, we'd have given Josh a rest but that hasn't been the case. That's why we've gone with a six-two split on the bench with the two nines covering. We can cover a number of positions. We can move guys around," Gatland said.

Rodrigo Silva, who started on the bench for Uruguay in their historic 30-27 victory over Fiji and is again among the replacements against Wales, said the win over the Pacific islanders was inspirational but it was the way they played against Australia, despite the 45-10 scoreline, that gave them hope.

"We played a great first half and we went toe to toe with a team who are one of the best in the tournament and in the world," Silva said of the Australia match.

"When these things happen you start to dream and to think that it's not crazy to think that every time we are a little closer."

While Typhoon Hagibis has wreaked havoc with scheduling in the greater Tokyo area - forcing the cancellation of New Zealand against Italy and England against France - Wales and Samoa will face each other in the relatively calm Kumamoto on southern Kyushu island.

Gatland said he was not concerned about weather issues and his Six Nations champions were "just concentrating on ourselves and hoping to finish on top of this group and then start thinking about the quarter-final".

"Hopefully after Sunday we can think about getting down to Oita and preparing for a Sunday game against France. They will be very tough but we have to do a job this Sunday first." —AFP

Rugby World Cup warned of fresh cancellation as typhoon slams into Japan

TOKYO: Rugby World Cup officials warned that a third match could be cancelled and urged fans to stay safe as a powerful typhoon slammed into Japan yesterday, leaving two people dead. Ireland confirmed their place in the quarter-finals with a 47-5 bonus-point win over Samoa — the only game possible as Typhoon Hagibis smashed into the country, causing serious flooding and several landslides.

Organisers had already taken the unprecedented step of scrapping England's game against France and New Zealand against Italy on Saturday over the unusually large typhoon. They warned Namibia and Canada of the "potential of cancellation" of their game on Sunday in Kamaishi, which was badly hit in the 2011

earthquake and tsunami disaster.

"We have advised the Namibia and Canada teams of the current situation and potential of cancellation, and our message to fans not currently in Kamaishi is not to travel before confirmation of the match status," World Rugby said.

The governing body also urged fans to stay inside and follow any evacuation orders as the typhoon swept into Japan's east coast and over Tokyo.

"Remain indoors, check typhoon-related updates regularly and follow the advice of local authorities including any evacuation orders and ensure you have basic food provisions," it warned.

The venues for today's four matches — including Scotland's crunch clash with Japan — will be inspected after the typhoon has passed before deciding whether they can go ahead.

The potential cancellation of the Pool A showdown has prompted a furious row, with Scotland — who will be eliminated if it is called off — threatening legal action.

Ireland's victory over Samoa means Scotland must beat Japan to have a chance of reaching the quarter-finals, while the Japanese need at least two points.

Even as the fate of today's showdown remained unclear, Japan's players took to a sodden training field in Tokyo — wading through a flooded passageway to get there, widely shared footage showed.

World Rugby has found itself in the firing line for staging the tournament in Japan, which is prone to typhoons and is also in one of the most seismically active regions on the planet.

But the governing body rejected a British media report that the back-up stadium for England v France was in Tokyo, not far away from the original venue in Yokohama, and that there were no contingency plans for the Japan v Scotland game.

The report was "categorically untrue", a World Rugby spokesman said. Ireland have been in patchy form at the World Cup but they found their feet against Samoa, running in seven tries for the bonus-point win that guarantees their place in the last eight.

However, they made life difficult for themselves when inside centre Bundee Aki was sent off in the first half — the latest player to be disciplined for a high tackle.

Ireland coach Joe Schmidt said the dismissal was "devastating" for Aki, who faces missing the rest of the tournament. —AFP

Boxer Fury to make pro wrestling debut in Saudi Arabia

LAS VEGAS: A pair of pugilistic big men will clash in a cross over of combat sports as former boxing champion Tyson Fury fights Braun Strowman in Saudi Arabia later this month.

Fury will make the brief switch to professional wrestling when he fights on a World Wrestling Entertainment Inc. (WWE) card in Saudi Arabia on October 31. "How honoured I am to be here and be involved in such a massive event in Saudi Arabia. It's a fantastic opportunity for me," Fury said at a news conference in Las Vegas, Nevada on Friday.

Fury made a ringside appearance at WWE Smackdown last Friday where he was confronted by Strowman. Fury, who is preparing for a rematch with World Boxing Council heavyweight champion Deontay Wilder next year, said performing in the WWE has long been a dream of his. In December, Fury got off the canvas to earn a draw with Wilder.

"This is something I've always dreamed of. I am life-long WWE fan and this is a fantastic opportunity for me," Fury said.

"When I go to Saudi, I am still going to be undefeated, I am going to knock Braun Strowman out. He's meeting a guy who has the best hands in boxing. He don't want none of these hands."

Strowman said he will have the upper hand when Fury makes his wrestling debut. "Tyson heed my warning. In WWE we don't wear gloves and you are coming into my world," Strowman said. —AFP

Table tennis season begins

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The table tennis 2019-2020 season will be launched today with the participation of 14 teams in four age categories (under 12, under 15, under 18 and the open). The start will be with the open category for all stages, then it will be followed by the cup and the individuals championships, at the Mulla Hassan Al-Kandary School Hall in Rumaithiya.

There will be five matches in the U-12 category, with Yarmouk v Sulaybkhath, Kheitan v Qadisiya, Sahel v Nasr, Fahaaheel v Burgan and Kuwait v

Salmiya. The open category league will start tomorrow with five matches also.

Table Tennis Secretary General Hisham Al-Arboud said the league matches will conclude on December 4th, then the cup tournament will start during the last week of January, bearing in mind students' school examinations.

Al-Arboud said chairman and board members are keen on extending all forms of cooperation with all clubs in order to serve table tennis and its athletes. He said "we welcome views and ideas from clubs, officials as we all work towards the development of the game."



LAS VEGAS: WWE wrestler Braun Strowman (L) and heavyweight boxer Tyson Fury attend the announcement of their match at a WWE news conference at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas. —AFP



Sports

England lose to Czechs in Euro qualifiers, Ronaldo nears 700 goals

Portugal next travel to Kiev to face Ukraine

PARIS: England missed an opportunity to qualify for Euro 2020 on Friday as they slid to a 2-1 loss in the Czech Republic, while Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 699th goal in a routine Portugal win over Luxembourg.

Harry Kane converted a fifth-minute penalty in Prague after Raheem Sterling was clipped by Lukas Masopust, the Tottenham striker taking his qualifying tally to seven goals. But Czech Republic, humbled 5-0 by England in the reverse fixture last March, levelled shortly after as Jakub Brabec bundled in from a corner for his first international goal. Substitute Zdenek Ondrasek swept home the winner on his debut for the hosts on 85 minutes, a goal that ended England's decade-long unbeaten run in qualifying spanning 43 matches. "I think we have had a lot of credit over the last couple of years and tonight we did not do enough," England manager Gareth Southgate told ITV.

"Our performance was not good enough, it's as simple as that. The goals we conceded were typical of the chances we gave away." England's last qualifying defeat came ahead of the 2010 World Cup when they lost 1-0 away to Ukraine in October 2009.

Southgate's side remain top of Group A on 12 points alongside the Czechs, who have played a game extra. England could still clinch qualification on Monday with victory in Bulgaria if Kosovo fail to beat Montenegro.

World champions France claimed a 1-0 win away to Iceland as Olivier Giroud delivered the only goal with a penalty on 66 minutes in Reykjavik.

Giroud has played sparingly for Chelsea this season but the 33-year-old is now just four goals behind Michel Platini (41) for second on France's list of all-time leading scorers. France are level on 18 points with Turkey atop Group H ahead of Monday's showdown in Paris, where

victory would send Didier Deschamps' men through to the finals. "It was very difficult, a really hard match. We needed to take the three points and now we have an important game coming up at home," said Antoine Griezmann, who was fouled for the penalty.

"We're going to suffer against Turkey and we'll need to prepare well for it." Cenk Tosun popped up with a 90th-minute winner for Turkey as they scraped past Albania 1-0 in Istanbul.

Iceland's first home loss in qualifying since June 2013 dropped the Nordic island nation six points adrift of the top two. Juventus star Ronaldo grabbed his 94th goal at international level in Portugal's 3-0 home victory over Luxembourg. Bernardo Silva opened the scoring in Lisbon in the first half before Ronaldo added a second on 65 minutes with a magnificent chip following an error in the visitors' defence. Goncalo Guedes added a late third although defending champions Portugal still trail Group B leaders Ukraine by five points.

"We are already thinking about the crucial game with Ukraine, like we did for this one," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos. "There are four finals left and this one is over. We want to finish first."

Portugal next travel to Kiev to face a Ukraine side on the cusp of qualification following a 2-0 home win over Lithuania secured by Atalanta midfielder Ruslan Malinovskyi's brace.

A goalless draw between Montenegro and Bulgaria eliminated both teams from contention in Group A, while it was a night to remember for Andorra. The minnows won their first European qualifier in history after 56 defeats in a row as Marc Vales' second-half header earned Andorra a 1-0 victory over 10-man Moldova. — AFP



LISBON: Portugal's forward Cristiano Ronaldo (L) vies with Luxembourg's midfielder Lars Gerson during the Euro 2020 qualifier football match between Portugal and Luxembourg at the Jose Alvalade stadium in Lisbon. — AFP

Giroud puts injury-hit France on the brink of Euro 2020

REYKJAVIK: Olivier Giroud's lack of club action proved no handicap as the Chelsea striker's penalty earned France a 1-0 away win against Iceland to put Les Bleus closer to next year's European Championship finals on Friday.

Giroud, who has only played 101 minutes in the Premier League this season, converted a second-half spot kick as injury-hit France stayed second in Group H behind Turkey who beat Albania 1-0 thanks to a last-gap Cenk Tosun goal.

France and Turkey, who meet at the Stade de France tomorrow, have 18 points but the world champions are behind by virtue of their 2-0 loss in Konya in June. Third-placed Iceland have 12 points, Albania nine, and Andorra are second to last on three points after beating Moldova 1-0 for their first-ever Euro qualifying points.

Andorra had lost all 56 of their previous Euro qualifiers but Marc Vales ended that streak by scoring with a header in the 63rd minute, after Moldova had seen Radu Ginsari sent off for picking up a second yellow card. France were without the injured Kylian Mbappe, Paul Pogba and Hugo Lloris and there was more bad news when Ngolo Kante picked up a muscle injury during the warm-up, leaving his place in the starting 11 to Moussa Sissoko.

"It was a very tough game but we ground through and Olivier's goal did the job," said forward Antoine Griezmann. "We had several chances to add to our goal and it would have been nice because they are danger-

ous on set pieces," said coach Didier Deschamps.

"But it's a good victory ahead of tomorrow's clash." Both teams struggled to create chances in a poor first half as Les Bleus failed to supply Griezmann, who had the best opportunity with a blocked shot on the turn three minutes from the break. The game turned France's way when Griezmann was brought down in the area by Ari Skulason, with Giroud sending Hannes Halldorsson the wrong way from the spot to score in the 66th minute. With 37 international goals, Giroud is now four goals shy of Michel Platini's tally of 41, with only Thierry Henry having scored more for France (51).

France came close to doubling the tally when Blaise Matuidi's low shot hit the post but Deschamps' team remained under threat until the final whistle.

They could have ended the night alone on top of Group H but Turkey prevailed against Albania when Tosun found the back of the net in the final minute with a close-range effort. — Reuters

Suzuka on typhoon lockdown as F1 bosses hope Japan GP can go ahead

SUZUKA: Japanese Grand Prix organisers were hoping that today's race would be able to go ahead as Typhoon Hagibis began to lash a deserted Suzuka Circuit with wind and heavy rain yesterday.

A huge ground operation to protect the track and infrastructure was launched as soon as Friday practice ended and lasted late into the night after Saturday's entire programme was cancelled on safety grounds.

Thousands of sandbags were deployed to protect pit lane garages from flooding, electronic timing gear was moved inside and even the victory podium signage dismantled and packed away.

Formula One sporting director Steve Nielson said the aim of the massive lockdown was to ensure that "when we come in on Sunday morning, the timing, the start lights, the GPS, the light panels around the circuit are in an environment where they have a chance of surviving the storm."

He told Formula1.com on Friday that the sport's technical staff faced an unprecedented logistical task to keep at bay one of the biggest typhoons to hit Japan in decades and would work throughout Saturday night "connecting everything back up again and systems-checking" once the worst of the storm had passed.

The 10 Formula One teams also went into survival mode with mechanics and support staff working furiously to raise sensitive equipment off pit lane floors in case of flooding and protecting garages with sandbags and plastic sheeting.

Should Sunday's rescheduled qualifying session not be possible then Valtteri Bottas will be on pole position by virtue of being the quickest in Friday practice, a whisker ahead of teammate and world championship leader Lewis Hamilton.

The Mercedes pair, benefiting from an aerodynamic upgrade, were followed on the timesheets by the Red Bull of Max Verstappen, with the Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Sebastian Vettel fourth and fifth.

Qualifying has been rescheduled to 10am (0100 GMT) Sunday, with the race at 2:10pm (0510 GMT), providing the weather improves in time.

As it stands Mercedes are sitting pretty as they look to secure the one-two finish they need to clinch a record sixth successive constructors championship. A win for Hamilton today would leave only Bottas, who lies 73 points behind, able to catch him in the drivers' standings with just four races to come after Japan.

It would also put the Englishman in line to wrap up a sixth drivers' title, a feat only previously managed by Michael Schumacher, and third world title in a row at Mexico later this month. The typhoon is already wreaking havoc across Japan and has forced the cancellation of two matches at the Rugby World Cup yesterday. Rated "large and very strong", the storm was forecast to crash into land in central or eastern Japan early Saturday evening, packing maximum gusts of 216 kilometres per hour (134 miles per hour) Japan's Meteorological Agency said. — AFP

Hockey hurts just like football, says Petr Cech

PRAGUE: Facing his first-ever ice hockey game in Britain's fourth-tier competition, former Chelsea and Arsenal keeper Petr Cech insists there are few differences between the two sports. "When you get hit by the puck in the wrong spot, it hurts even when you're wearing the padding," Cech said in an interview for his Czech agent yesterday.

"But then, when someone hits you from a meter's distance in football, it hurts too," chuckled the 37-year-old who retired from professional football in the summer. On Wednesday, Cech, who currently works as a technical and performance adviser at Chelsea, announced signing up as a netminder with the Guildford Phoenix.

Founded in 2017 and based just south of London, the Phoenix are facing the Swindon Wildcats' reserve team in the fourth tier of Britain's ice hockey system today. Cech said he was not afraid of the much rougher sport despite wearing a protective helmet even as a footballer following a skull fracture he had suffered in a 2006 Premier League game.

"The puck will hit you hard through the trapper but then you end up with a bruise at worst, that's no disaster," Cech said. He found other parallels between football and ice hockey, the two most popular sports in his native Czech Republic.

"The warm-up will be the same as what I did in football," said Cech. "And the pre-match skate has a similar structure as the warm-up before a football game," he added. "Also the coach gives you information before the game, tells you what he wants from the team and you."

"The only difference is that I don't know anything about the opponents here — I would be able to gather more information at Chelsea," Cech complained. Like in football, the goalkeeping chore was the obvious choice for Cech, who loved watching and playing ice hockey as a child.

"I wasn't keen to turn into a forward. I can only skate well enough for a netminder — I don't think I could play up front," he said. Cech won four Premier League titles, four FA Cups, three League Cups, the Champions League and the Europa League during his Chelsea career, with a further FA Cup success coming at Arsenal.

With Guildford, success is uncertain, but Cech, who owns the all-time record for the most clean sheets in the Premiership, is looking forward to the first game. "I was allowed to practise with the team but I couldn't play games. It's great to have the opportunity now and I hope it will end well."

As if to boost his chances, Cech chose a shirt number 39 once worn by Dominik Hasek, his childhood idol, two-time Stanley Cup winner and six-time Vezina Trophy holder for the NHL's best goaltender. Hasek, who is currently contemplating running for the Czech president, led the Czechs to a sensational win at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, the first-ever Olympic tournament bringing together all NHL stars.—AFP



CHICAGO: (L-R) Kenya's Betsy Saina and Britain's Mo Farah attend the Elite Athlete Press Conference for the Chicago Marathon in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

Angry Farah hits back at critics in Salazar doping row

CHICAGO: A defiant Mo Farah angrily hit back at critics Friday, saying he was never given any banned drugs while a member of the Nike Oregon Project and claiming he has been unfairly singled out in the scandal surrounding his former coach Alberto Salazar.

Farah, one of British track's highest profile athletes, said "there are no allegations" against him as controversy continued to rage over Salazar who has been slapped with a four-year ban by the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

"I was never given anything," said four-time Olympic champion Farah, breaking his silence on the scandal just hours after US sportswear giant Nike said it planned to shut down its Oregon Project training group following 61-year-old Salazar's suspension.

Defending champion Farah was among a group of elite runners who gathered Friday for a news conference two days before the Chicago Marathon. But most of the focus was on the recent banning of Salazar.

Farah, who has never tested positive, waited more than two years after the accusations were first made against Salazar before parting ways with the coach in October 2017. He expressed disappointment in what he considered a line of questioning at the news conference that has been covered already.

"It's very disappointing to see this, you guys going at it again and again. As I said, there is no allegation against me, I've not done anything wrong. These allegations, let's be clear here, are about Alberto Salazar,"

Farah said. "There are no allegations against Mo Farah for any wrongdoing."

Farah insisted he was clean, adding "I can't win whatever I do." "I'm probably one of the most tested athletes in the world," he said. "I get tested all the time and I'm happy to be tested anytime, anywhere and for my samples to be used for whatever they need to do."

"Keep it and freeze it, there is not much more I can do." Farah refused to answer directly when he was asked several times whether he was disappointed in his former coach. He added his success comes from hard work and maturity and not from performance-enhancing drugs. "(Don't) try and take away what I have earned from hard work I have learned to win races and control races," he said. US distance runners Galen Rupp and Jordan Hasay were also coached by Salazar until last Monday.

Rupp said he has not communicated with Salazar since the ban but is supporting his former coach. "I understand that it's under appeal and I support him in that appeal," Rupp told reporters. As for Hasay, she also has not had any contact with Salazar since the ban but missed his positivity.

SUPPORT OF ATHLETES

"It's hard because he's very, very close to me. Usually the last few weeks before the marathon are fun because he starts getting anxious and starts calling three times a day about 'You should bring your grey socks instead of white socks' or this or that."

"Just little stuff. Just in the sense of having that mentor and that friendship and those last moments of advice and excitement before the race, that's been tough. I really miss that," Hasay said.

She added that she had no knowledge of any wrongdoing by Salazar. "I've never been offered anything or seen anything and if that were to happen I would have left long ago," Hasay said. — AFP

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27 England lose to Czechs in Euro qualifiers, Ronaldo nears 700 goals



Medvedev set up Shanghai final with Zverev

Teenage star Gauff reaches maiden WTA final



SHANGHAI: Daniil Medvedev of Russia hits a return against Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece during their men's singles semi-final match at the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP

SHANGHAI: Dominant Daniil Medvedev reached a staggering sixth final in a row but will need to beat Alexander Zverev for the first time to win the Shanghai Masters today. The US Open finalist defeated fellow rising star Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece 7-6 (7/5), 7-5. In the other semi-final yesterday, Germany's Zverev eased past Matteo Berrettini of Italy 6-3, 6-4 in a showdown between two more budding talents.

With Roger Federer and world number one Novak Djokovic ousted in the quarter-finals on Friday, the next generation of men's tennis stars has made its mark in China. The 23-year-old Russian Medvedev embellished his fast-growing reputation with a fifth victory in as many matches against Tsitsipas, 21.

In contrast, he is yet to overcome the 22-year-old Zverev in four attempts. "I did say before this year and during this year in the beginning that Sascha (Zverev) was the best in our 'Next Gen' group," the world number four said.

"He won three Masters when none of us were even close to doing this. 'Positions have changed a little bit

so I think I can contest him right now." The seventh-ranked Tsitsipas, who dumped out defending champion Djokovic in three sets on Friday, said that Medvedev's formidable serve had been the difference.

"Same vibes, same thing all over again," said Tsitsipas of yet another defeat to the red-hot Russian.

"I don't mean to be rude at all, but it's just boring."

"It's so boring that I hate myself for putting myself into that kind of situation where I have to play in his own terms and not in my terms." Sixth-ranked Zverev, long touted as the man most likely to join the "Big Three" of Federer, Djokovic and Rafael Nadal, has had a disappointing year, winning only one title.

But the German defeated 20-time Grand Slam champion Federer on Friday and took that momentum into his last-four clash with the 23-year-old Berrettini.

The Italian, 13th in the world, put up a better fight in the second set but was broken in the ninth game as his hopes of an upset faded.

Zverev said the victory over Federer had given him a major confidence boost. But he said that past meetings

with Medvedev stood for nothing because the Russian has improved markedly since their last match, in 2018.

"He's different this year than previous years," said a wary Zverev. "He's been playing some unbelievable tennis in the last few months."

"He's probably the best player in the world, making six finals in a row, winning a Masters (in Cincinnati in August) and making the US Open final. "He's definitely playing the best tennis of his life." Nadal, the world number two and winner over Medvedev at Flushing Meadows, is not in Shanghai because of a wrist injury.

Meanwhile, American teenage sensation Coco Gauff reached the first WTA final of her career on Saturday as the 15-year-old beat Andrea Petkovic 6-4, 6-4 in the last four in Linz. Gauff, who burst onto the scene with a run to the Wimbledon last 16 earlier this year, is the youngest woman to make a WTA final since Nicole Pietrangeli won the Tashkent title in 2004.

"This is definitely unreal, my first final on the WTA," said Gauff, who only got into the main draw in Austria as a lucky loser. "Linz is my special place."

"Not even in juniors did I ever get into something as a lucky loser — now I'm in the final. "I've had a lot of luck and happiness here." The current world number 110 is set to climb to at least 80th in the rankings next week. In Sunday's final, she will face 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko who saved three match points in beating Russian eighth seed Ekaterina Alexandrova 1-6, 7-6 (7/5), 7-5.

"This is crazy," Gauff added after winning in 92 minutes. "I thought I was out in qualifying and now I'm here. "This was one of the highest-level matches I've played. Andrea hit a lot of winners and put pressure on me. "I was fighting for every point, even at break points down, I just tried to get the serve in and make her play a point." This is Gauff's first WTA tournament since she left the court in tears after a heavy defeat by two-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka in the US Open third round.

Gauff showed plenty of variety in her game as she beat the 75th-ranked Petkovic, relying frequently on well-executed drop shots. — AFP

Biles wins vault gold, Yulo claims Philippines' first-ever gold

STUTTGART: Simone Biles claimed a record-equalling 23rd medal at the gymnastics world championships yesterday, leading an American one-two finish in the vault final in Stuttgart. Biles produced two breathtaking vaults — a Cheng and an Amanar — to finish with an average score of 15.399 inside a packed arena.

The 22-year-old has now matched Belarusian Vitaly Scherbo's record tally of 23

world medals and she can surpass him later later if she takes another medal in the asymmetric bars final.

Four-time Olympic champion Biles was joined on the podium by team mate Jade Carey, who finished with an average score of 14.883 for her second world medal in three years on the apparatus.

Britain's Ellie Downie landed two well-executed vaults to claim bronze for her first individual medal at the worlds.

It was Biles' 17th world title and her third victory in Stuttgart this week.

She helped the United States to win their fifth consecutive team title on Tuesday before collecting a record-extending fifth all-around world title on Thursday.

Earlier, Carlos Edriel Yulo of the Philippines became the first gymnast from his country to ever win a gold medal at the world championships, edging Israel's Artem

Dolgopyat in the floor exercise final in Stuttgart yesterday. Yulo, the youngest competitor in this year's event at 19, consistently posted controlled landings to post an impressive score of 15.300 points - 0.1 more than second-placed Dolgopyat.

Raising the degree of difficulty from 6.2 to 6.5 paid dividends for Yulo as he outperformed Dolgopyat, who came into the final as the top qualifier.

China's Xiao Ruoteng followed a disappointing fourth-place finish in Friday's all-around final by claiming the bronze medal.

Tokyo-based Yulo improved on last year's bronze medal, which made him the first Filipino ever to occupy a podium spot at the championships.

Yulo is enjoying a memorable week in Stuttgart, having punched his ticket for next year's Tokyo Olympics with an 18th-place finish in the all-around qualifying. — Reuters



STUTTGART: (L-R) 2nd placed Israel's Artem Dolgopyat, winner Philippines' Carlos Edriel Yulo and 3rd placed China's Xiao Ruoteng pose on the podium during the medal ceremony for the Men's Floor event. — AFP