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Amir arrives in US



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, accompanied by National Guard Vice President Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, arrived in the US on Monday for a private visit. His Highness the Amir will travel to Washington DC for a summit with US President

Donald Trump which is scheduled tomorrow. His Highness was received at the airport by Kuwait Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait Permanent Representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi and Kuwait's Consul General in Los Angeles Faisal Al-Houli. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers yesterday blasted the Iraqi government for filing a complaint at the United Nations Security Council against Kuwait for building a maritime facility which Iraq claims undermined common borders near Khor Abdullah. In its complaint, Iraq accused Kuwait of making geographic changes to the maritime borders between the two countries close to Boubiyan Island where Kuwait is building a huge container harbor.

Head of the National Assembly Foreign Relations Panel MP Abdulkarim Al-Kundari called on the Foreign Ministry for an explanation over what Iraq has done, describing the Iraqi measure as "provocative". Kundari described the complaint as a dangerous development in the bilateral relations with Iraq that requires caution, adding the provocative action is totally rejected and must be confronted.

He said that the Kuwaiti-Iraqi borders had been demarcated by the UN Security Council in resolution 833 issued in 1993 and any aggression against the demarcation is an aggression against the sovereignty of Kuwait. The lawmaker said that the government must deal with this claim firmly at an international level and be highly transparent with the Kuwaiti people.

He said that it is not acceptable that this official Iraqi protest comes after the positive development in bilateral relations and the exchange of high-level official visits between the two countries, adding that such a step only affirms ill intentions on the part of Iraq. MP Osama Al-Shaheen said the Iraqi provocative action must be met by practical objective responses and by



MP Abdulkarim Al-Kundari

taking complete security and diplomatic precautions.

MP Hamdan Al-Azemi said the government must provide full explanation to what Iraq has done and called for taking all necessary measures. MP Safa Al-Hashem recalled the gestures that Kuwait has made to Iraq even after the 1990 invasion that included postponing debt repayment and the extended hand to take part in Iraq's reconstruction, adding that the Iraqi government has surprised Kuwait with the complaint.

News in brief

US boy shoots, kills five

MIAMI: A 14-year-old boy shot and killed all five members of his family in the US state of Alabama and then called police and confessed to the crime, local law enforcement said yesterday. Three of the victims were found dead at the scene, a house in Elkmont, Alabama, and the other two died later after being airlifted to a regional hospital. "The 14-year old caller was interviewed and confessed to shooting all five members of his family in the residence," Limestone County sheriff said on Twitter. "He is currently assisting investigators in locating the weapon, a 9mm handgun that he said he tossed nearby," it said. The shootings occurred late Monday. The boy in custody was not identified, and there was no immediate word on a possible motive for the murders. Gun violence is a prevalent feature in American life with more than 36,000 deaths a year. — AFP

India school meals exposed

NEW DELHI: Authorities' attempt to charge an Indian journalist who exposed the poor quality of meals served at a government school triggered protests yesterday over fears of worsening press freedom in the country. Pawan Jaiswal made national headlines after reporting that impoverished primary school students in a district in Uttar Pradesh state were fed bread with salt instead of a mandated healthy meal. The report led to widespread criticism of the local government controlled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which responded by launching a criminal probe against Jaiswal. "It is a cruel and classic case of shooting the messenger," the Editors Guild of India said in a statement. — AFP

Sudan's PM chooses cabinet

KHARTOUM: Sudan's prime minister has approved 14 members of his cabinet, the first to be appointed since the fall of long-term leader Omar Al-Bashir in April, a source said yesterday. The nominations include Sudan's first female foreign minister, and a former World Bank economist as its new finance minister who will face an economic crisis that has deepened in recent months. Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok approved them along with 12 other new ministers, a member of the main civilian group in the ruling Sovereign Council said. Asmaa Abdallah had been chosen as foreign minister, according to the member of the Forces for Freedom and Change grouping, who spoke on condition of anonymity. — Reuters

Iran rules out direct US talks

TEHRAN: President Hassan Rouhani yesterday ruled out holding any bilateral talks with the United States and threatened to further cut Iran's commitments to a nuclear deal within days. Iran and three European countries - Britain, France and Germany - have been trying to save the landmark agreement reached in 2015 and meant to limit Tehran's nuclear program after the US pulled out last year.

But French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian cautioned that several issues were still hindering their efforts. "There is still lots to work out. It's still very fragile," Le Drian told journalists in Paris. France has been leading efforts for

dialogue, with President Emmanuel Macron expressing hope during G7 talks in late August of organizing a meeting between Rouhani and US President Donald Trump.

However, in a speech to Iran's parliament yesterday, Rouhani said any dialogue with the US would have to fall within the framework of the six major powers that agreed the nuclear deal. "Maybe there has been a misunderstanding. We've said it several times and we repeat it - there has been no decision to hold bilateral talks with the US," said the Iranian president. "In principle, we don't want bilateral talks with the United States," he told lawmakers.

"If the United States lifts all sanctions... it would be possible to talk (to them) during 5+1 meetings as in the past," Rouhani said, referring to the

Continued on Page 24



TEHRAN: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani addresses parliament in the capital yesterday. In an address to parliament, Rouhani ruled out holding any bilateral talks with US, saying the Islamic republic is opposed to such negotiations in principle. — AFP



KUWAIT: The official logo of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is projected on the Kuwait Towers in Kuwait City yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

In Iraq's Baiji, mines turn farms into killing fields

BAIJI: One man lost his uncle. Another is mourning for two sons. Farmers and herders in Iraq's Baiji say mines left by the Islamic State group turned their beloved orchards into killing fields. The improvised explosive devices, planted by jihadists trying to fend off Iraqi troops in 2015, have also discouraged scores of families from returning to their battered farming towns around Baiji, in the north of the country.

"Daesh's ghosts are still here. Their crimes are still there, under the earth," said local official Abu Bashir, using an Arabic acronym for IS. His thin face contorted into a grimace as he recalled his personal loss to those "ghosts"—both his sons. "We came back in March 2018 and found the area booby-trapped. There was nowhere we could feel safe," he said.

"As the kids were playing, a bomb exploded under my six-year-old son who was outside the house. He was killed immediately." Exactly a year later, in March of this year, unexploded ordnance also killed his 18-year-old son. He said the experience had left him too scared to try rebuilding his home, reduced to rubble by ferocious fighting between IS and security forces. "A man bitten by a snake will be afraid of a rope, as the saying goes. After my two boys were killed, I'm afraid of everything."

Lahib, 21, has also been touched by IS's deadly legacy. "We got our houses back but the remnants of war are still there. Daesh left us with booby-trapped homes," he said. "One of these homes blew up on my uncle. I saw it with my own eyes."

Continued on Page 24

Local

Crown Prince receives Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad, Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah

Amir offers condolence to Afghanistan's president on terrorist attack victims

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Deputy Amir also received Kuwaiti Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah who presented to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Order of Bahrain of First Class, which was granted to him by Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa. Sheikh Azzam also presented to His Highness the Deputy Amir the Order of Merit, which was granted to him by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in recognition of his outstanding contributions to cementing the bilateral ties between the two nations.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences yesterday to the president of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani over the terrorist bombing that targeted a complex of aid agencies and international organizations in the capital Kabul. In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed the State of Kuwait's strong condemnation of this terrorist act

and its rejection of all forms of terrorism. His Highness the Amir prayed that Allah Almighty bestows his mercy upon souls of those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack and wished quick recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addressed cables of identical content.

Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem expressed his condolences and sorrow in cables he sent to Afghanistan Speaker of the Elders of the House Fazel Hadi Musliymaar and Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Mir Rahman Rahmani over the tragic terrorist bombing in the capital Kabul. In his cables, Ghanem expressed strong condemnation to such coward terrorist act and expressed full solidarity with the Afghan people. At least 16 people were killed and 119 others were wounded in a truck bomb attack, which targeted international organizations and agencies area in Afghan capital city Kabul. — KUNA



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



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwaiti Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Tariq Al-Qoni. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with India's Ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Greece's Ambassador to Kuwait Andreas Papadakis. — KUNA photos

Parliament Speaker receives diplomats, journalists

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem received yesterday a number of credited ambassadors in Kuwait. The parliament's official news network 'Al-Dustoor' said in a press release that Ghanem met with Egypt's Ambassador to Kuwait Tariq Al-Qoni, India's Ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar, and Greece's Ambassador to Kuwait Andreas Papadakis. Meanwhile, Ghanem met with Kuwait's Consul General to Shanghai Meshaal Al-Shamali.

In the meantime, Ghanem received at his office yesterday Kuwait Journalists Association's Profession Affairs Committee members, headed by Adnan Al-Rashed. The delegation also included Athra'a Al-Rifai, Mishari Al-Aloush, Badoor Al-Mutairi, and Sulaiman Al-Rashidi. The meeting was also attended by MPs Salah Khourshid, Mohammad Al-Dalal, Hamad Al-Harshani, and Faisal Al-Kandari. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Kuwait's Consul General to Shanghai Meshaal Al-Shamali. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and other lawmakers meet with Kuwait Journalists Association's Profession Affairs Committee members. — KUNA photos

New Romanian FM receives message from Kuwaiti counterpart

BUCHAREST: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Romania Talal Al-Hajri delivered yesterday a message from Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Romania's new Foreign Minister Ramona-Nicole Manescu. Hajri said after meeting with the minister that they discussed ways of enhancing bilateral relations, stressing the Romanian side's keenness to enhance and develop cooperation with Kuwait in various fields. He added that during the meeting,

they discussed the latest developments in the case of Kuwaiti citizen Mohammed Al-Baghli, who has been missing in Romania since August 2015. He called for more efforts to know his fate as the issue is receiving great attention at the official and popular levels in Kuwait. Hajri pointed out that the official positions between the two countries are identical in the international forums, on the situation in the Middle East, the Palestinian issue and the two-state solution. — KUNA



BUCHAREST: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Romania Talal Al-Hajri meets with Romania's Foreign Minister Ramona-Nicole Manescu. — KUNA

Kuwait stresses on media role in response to humanitarian crisis

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri stressed on media's vital role when responding to humanitarian crises. The minister also called on enhancing cooperation in this field to support the mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its humanitarian role. This came in a speech by Faisal Al-Mutlaqem, the Assistant Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information for the Foreign Media Sector, on behalf of Minister Jabri at the launch of workshop held for journalists organized by UNHCR yesterday. The workshop aims to introduce the role of media in supporting humanitarian work, he added.

Kuwait's continuous contribution to the humanitarian needs of refugees and those affected at regional and international arenas and to build a bridge of trust and cooperation with the UN and UNHCR, Jabri pointed out. In 2014, the UN honored His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as 'Humanitarian Leader' and the State of Kuwait as 'International Humanitarian Center' for assisting those affected by wars and humanitarian disasters, he noted.

During the speech, the Head of Office of UNHCR in the State of Kuwait, Dr Samer Haddadint said the workshop aims to exchange experiences and focus on highlighting role of countries supporting humanitarian work. This is the first workshop organized by UNHCR



KUWAIT: Faisal Al-Mutlaqem, the Assistant Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information for the Foreign Media Sector, speaks during the workshop. — KUNA

with cooperation with the Arab Media Forum, he added. Secretary General of the Arab Media Forum Madhi Khamees said that the forum is proud to be in partnership with establishing a workshop for journalists. Khamees stressed the need to learn from UNHCR previous experiences in humanitarian work. — KUNA

Local

Washington supports Kuwait's efforts in stabilizing the region

US ambassador 'disappointed' as GCC crisis lingers

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The United States expressed frustration over unresolved issues of unity amongst Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Outgoing US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman echoed his country's position during a press conference at his residence in Bayan yesterday, which was his last as US envoy to Kuwait. The US top diplomat in Kuwait told reporters that he was 'disappointed' that he was leaving Kuwait as US Ambassador with no clear solution regarding the ongoing diplomatic crisis within the GCC.

The GCC crisis will be one of the topics on the table of discussion during His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's imminent meeting with US President Donald Trump, which will also revolve around bilateral ties and current happenings around the region, said the American Ambassador. Since the very beginning of the dispute, His Highness the Amir has brokered talks to reach a solution, and the United States has supported his effort and will continue to do so, Silverman affirmed. "His Highness the Amir has done a tremendous job to find a solution and create dialogue within GCC countries, yet the issue remains unresolved," he said. "This dispute is within the Gulf Cooperation Council and we believe that it must be settled within the countries in the region. We support every effort done by His Highness the Amir and GCC countries to bring about a solution to this prolonged dispute." To this date, according to the envoy, the dispute remains a topic of high priority diplomatically. "The best way to restore full unity is through cooperation," he stressed.

Myriad of issues

US President Trump will host His Highness the Amir at the White House on September 12, where the two are expected to discuss a myriad of issues including bilateral cooperation and regional developments. "Yes, I am sure they will," the envoy said when asked if the two leaders will discuss the GCC dispute during their talks. "We have discussed this issue in the previous dialogues in 2017 and 2018, and I am sure they will discuss it once again," he added. A number of deals between the two countries are pending confirmation amid the upcoming talks, the ambassador noted. "I also want to recognize and appreciate the positive role Kuwait plays

protecting the freedom of navigation in the region. Ambassador Silverman admitted that they are in discussion with Kuwait and other countries in the region for the possibility of contributing in broader effort to help maintain freedom of navigation in the territorial waters and Strait of Hormuz. "We are still having discussion with the countries around the region including Europe; at least only about in safeguarding freedom of navigation," the envoy said. "We have a very broad international support to protect the freedom of navigation. There are many countries around who already come forward to openly support us."

Human trafficking and domestic labor

Asked by the Kuwait Times on Kuwait's efforts to improve in areas of human trafficking and domestic labor, Silverman noted that there have been significant improvements in this area. "We have seen Kuwait's progress in this issue, which is why Kuwait's rank has been raised to tier 2 from tier 3 in our 2018 human trafficking report," he said.

"We did that for a couple of reasons," the Ambassador went on. "One because we saw prosecutions of suspects and people who are engaged in this horrible treatment to humans." Most importantly, Silverman said, the decision came in recognition of Kuwait's implementation of laws like the one which stipulates that passports must be kept by employees, and setting specific working hours, which help protect domestic laborers.

In his valedictory press briefing, Silverman cited many great times and privileges accorded to him by Kuwaiti people and the government as US ambassador to Kuwait. He thanked the media for their "well-maintained-cooperation" and for show-



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman speaks during a press conference yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh



US appreciates Kuwait's progress in fighting trafficking

in this region to make it safer and secure," Silverman said. "We thank His Highness the Amir for his initiative and efforts done to bring about the solution to the GCC dispute. We also would like to thank His Highness the Amir on his humanitarian role, globally recognized; again it is because of the mentality of His Highness the Amir as Humanitarian Leader."

On the issue of Iran, maintaining stability and

ing professionalism in their fields. "It has been a wonderful three years' experience in Kuwait," he said. "My journey as US ambassador to Kuwait has come to an end, but our cooperation will continue and will flourish for more. My relationship with His Highness the Amir has always been strong." Silverman expressed his belief that Kuwait and the US could still do more together. "We have launched and initiated dialogue, and our relationship bore the very practical benefits for both. This relationship that we are talking about has benefits on investment, trade, education, entrepreneurship to diversifying the economy," he concluded.

Defense Minister seeks bolstering military cooperation with Turkey

ANKARA: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah discussed yesterday with Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar ways of boosting military cooperation between the two countries. Kuwait's Ambassador

to Turkey Ghassan Al-Zowawi said that the two ministers, who met yesterday in Turkey, also delved into the latest developments in the region. The two sides also agreed to activate previously signed agreements between the two ministries, the ambassador added. — KUNA



ANKARA: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar. — KUNA

Kuwaiti citizens in US unaffected by hurricane Dorian

NEW YORK: Kuwait's Consul General to New York City Hamad Al-Hazeem confirmed that all Kuwaiti citizens in the coastal areas of Florida where the hurricane Dorian is expected to fall were safe. "Under the directives of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, the diplomatic missions in the US are cooperating to ensure the safety of our citizens within the scope of the hurricane Dorian," Hazeem said. He pointed out that there is full readiness and continuous cooperation between the Embassy in Washington and its technical offices with the Consulate General in New York to follow up the conditions of citizens in Florida and work to transfer them to safe areas. Two safe cities, Tampa, Florida, and Atlanta, Georgia, had been identified earlier, and a number of students and tourists had been taken to there, he added. As for the consulate general, he noted that consulate staff were in the city of Atlanta where the patients were transported and some tourists and hotel rooms were reserved for citizens in both cities. Hazeem said that work is currently underway to provide supplies and water for citizens in case of any

emergency in Atlanta.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Cultural Office in Washington has formed an emergency committee to closely monitor Hurricane Dorian's movement and has issued instructions for Kuwaitis to evacuate three US coastal cities located in its path. The committee is also keeping a watchful eye on developments in case authorities issue updated instructions in the event of the hurricane changing its course, office director Aseel Al-Awadhi said. The Cultural Office is also in direct contact with Kuwaiti students in other cities, and has taken precautionary measures in the event they too face an emergency evacuation, she added. Kuwaiti students in the US were urged to remain in contact with the office, and to declare alterations that may occur to their status brought about as a result of the weather conditions. The maximum category five storm is expected to "move dangerously close to the Florida east coast late Tuesday through Wednesday evening and then move dangerously close to the Georgia and South Carolina coasts on Wednesday night and Thursday," the US National Hurricane Center said. People in these areas were instructed by authorities to evacuate their homes by Tuesday afternoon. — KUNA

Ready for the Beach ??

Kuwait Times

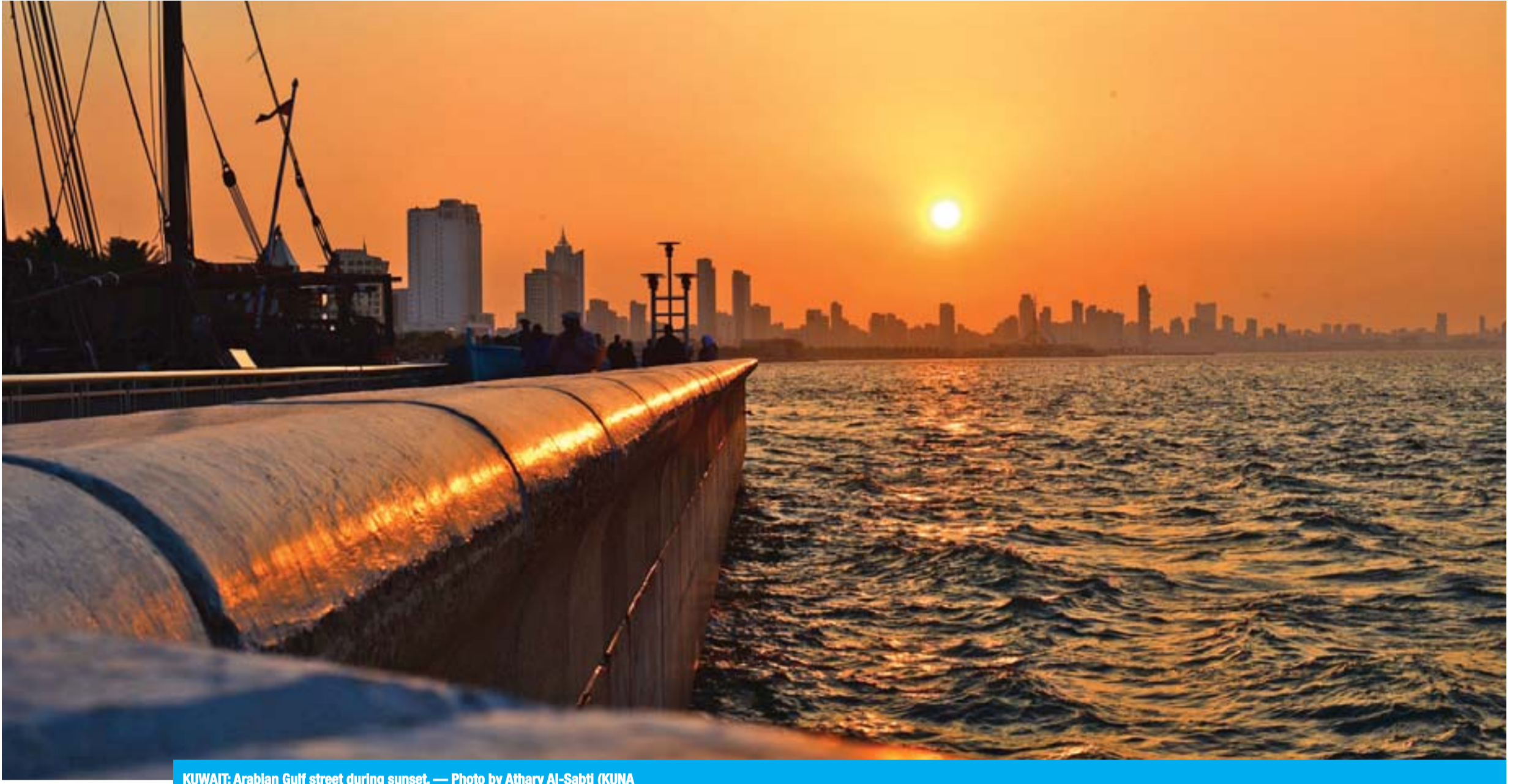
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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Arabian Gulf street during sunset. — Photo by Athary Al-Sabti (KUNA)

Ministry eyes strict supervision to control prices in markets around Kuwait

48 violations sent to commercial prosecution following market crackdown

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry could be moving to enforce more control over the retail market following its successful model in implementing strict supervision at the fish market, which helped lower fish prices in general, according to ministry sources.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, the sources explained that there is growing belief inside the ministry that its expected future step to 'Kuwaitize' auctioneers in the fish market will end what they described as "expatriate auctioneers' control of the market and manipulation of prices." The ministry had increased the number of inspectors at the main fish market in Sharq last month in order to supervise the implementation of new regulations that helped curb prices by holding two separate fish auctions: one for vendors and restaurants, and another for regular consumers. The new regulations came in response to wide complaints from consumers who alleged that market auctioneers, who are mostly

expats, controlled the market by manipulating prices in favor of merchants and to increase their profits.

Strict supervision

According to the sources, there is a plan already prepared and expected to be submitted to the Cabinet soon for implementing strict supervision on retail markets in Kuwait including clothes, food, transport, and others in order to provide more price control. "Kuwait is an open market, but that does not mean allowing manipulation and price increase," the sources argued. "There must be decisive measures by the commerce ministry that meet the public's demands."

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry yesterday sent 48 violations to the commercial prosecution following an inspection campaign in Jahra governorate. The campaign covered several stores and found 18 violations for not declaring prices, six violations for not posting a sign for return and exchange, two violation for

placing two price labels on one item, four for not having the name of the country of origin on the product, four for selling counterfeit items, one for not having lists of meat products' countries of origin on the menu, and one for commercial cheating.

Maintenance contracts

In other news, sources at the Ministry of Electricity and Water said the cost of annual maintenance contracts of thermal units nationwide varies between KD 28-30 million, noting that each station has four main permanent maintenance contracts. The maintenance cost of Subbiya, Zour and Shuaiba stations varies between KD 5.5-6 million, while the maintenance cost for Shuwaikh station reaches KD 3 million, they said. These figures do not cover the costs of full maintenance which is done with other contracts, the sources noted, adding that the full maintenance contract of West Doha Station was completed at the cost of KD 70 million for eight steam turbines.

Legalese

Abolish 153



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Many people have been recently speaking about honor killings in Islamic countries and the culture behind them, because of a horrific tragedy that happened in another country earlier this week. There is no question about how wrong and ill the actions of murder are, for whatever the reason may be. There is no question that what they did would be illegal.

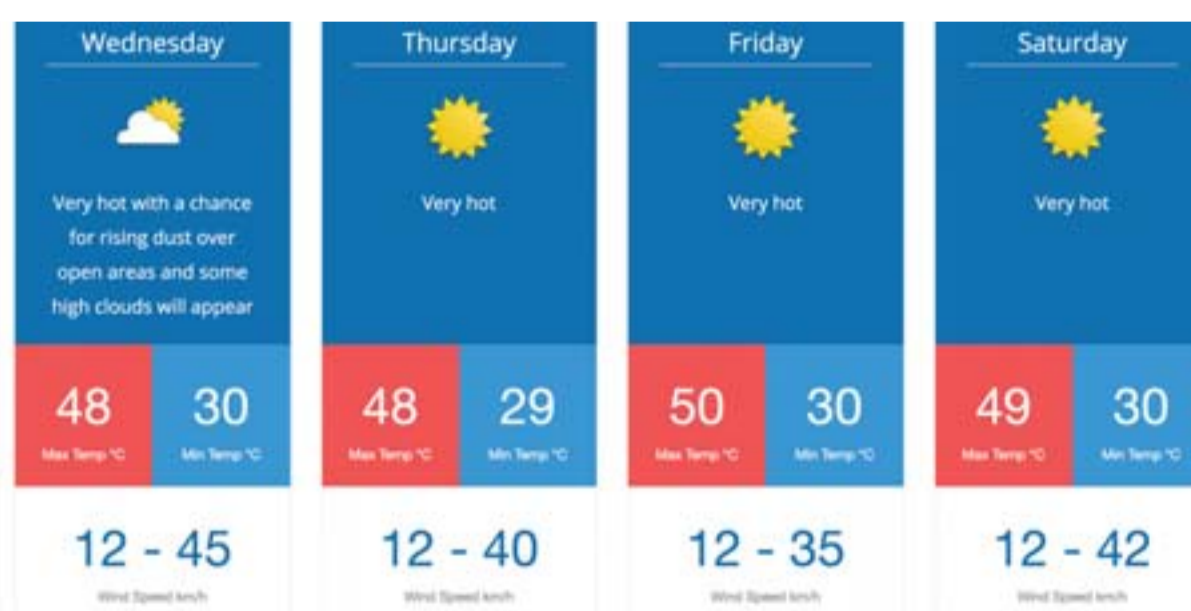
Since this important topic has been brought to the attention of many, I wanted to take this chance to speak up about an issue that we are currently facing in Kuwait. The State of Kuwait has always been more forward with women's rights than any of the countries in the region. Women got their rights to vote, got their right to be parliament members and ministers, as well as, hopefully soon, to be judges. With that said, there is one particular Article of law that everyone has been campaigning against, Article 153 of the Kuwait Penal Code.

According to article 153 of Kuwait's penal code, if a man catches a female member of his family in a "sexual (zina) act with a man and kills her or him or both, [it] will be treated as a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum of three years jail time and/or a fine."

Three years and a fine, while the act will just be a misdemeanor, is quite drastically less of a punishment of what a man or woman may receive for another murder. The murderer has to be in a state of anger and shock, and he has to walk in on the action. If the murderer walks out after seeing a woman in a sexual act and goes to grab a weapon, then the court may see it that he was no longer in a state of shock as he had the option to change his mind. So this does not apply to men seeing a post on Instagram of their daughters, wives, sisters etc with another man. The article is very specific to a situation, and of course I think the article should be abolished. I understand that the woman's act in that case is punishable by law, as any sex outside of marriage is punishable by law for both men and women equally, but that does not give men an excuse to kill someone.

I would like to mention that you have probably heard a lot about Abolish 153 because there is a movement under that name, which has really worked hard to bring awareness to the matter. The movement not only aims to bring about legal change and abolish the article, but to also provide support to those affected by the law. They are also very creative, bringing awareness to their cause through exhibitions and other fun events. You can check them out at abolish153.org.

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



KUWAIT: A screen grab taken yesterday from the Kuwait Meteorological Department's website showing the weather forecast for today and the following three days, which predicts a very hot weekend. If the temperature reaches 50 C degrees on Friday as predicted, then September would be the fourth straight month in which the temperature has reached the benchmark, making this summer one of the hottest in Kuwait. UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) experts said in June that Kuwait recorded the world's highest temperature in recent years; 53.9 C degrees in Mitribah northeast of the country on July 21, 2016.

Strict rules eyed to appoint physiotherapists at health clubs

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Physical Therapy Association (KPTA) is coordinating with the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) to have strict rules to appoint physiotherapy specialists in health clubs around Kuwait, KPTA President Hanaa Al-Khamees said. She made that statement after a meeting with deputy director general for manpower protection at PAM Abdullah Al-Mutoutah, noting that Mutoutah expressed readiness to cooperate so such goal is achieved.

In other news, Social Affairs Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Cooperation Affairs Hiyam Al-Khudair said that the ministry is aware of video clips circulating on social media regarding the arrest of four people for allegedly stealing items from Abdullah Al-Mubarak Co-op Society. She said the ministry took all administrative and legal measures to verify the credibility of the claims, and a final report will be submitted within few days.



KUWAIT: Hawally fire department personnel closed six facilities during a crackdown yesterday in the governorate, for violations of fire safety conditions. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Local

Zain partners with Mentor Arabia to empower, upskill, protect region's youth

Youth among our most precious resources; we need to inspire them to make good decisions: Kharafi

KUWAIT/BEIRUT: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its strategic partnership and support of Mentor Arabia Foundation, the regional branch of Mentor International, founded in 1994. The mission of Mentor Arabia is to empower Arab children and youth to prevent them from risky behaviors through policies, capacity development, advocacy, knowledge and partnerships.

Mentor International, registered in Switzerland and based in Stockholm, Sweden, is a non-profit foundation presided by Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden, and has branches in the USA, UK, Latvia, Sweden, Germany, Lithuania, and Denmark. The regional branch, Mentor Arabia, was founded in 2006, with its headquarters established in Beirut, Lebanon.

Mentor Arabia foundation is led by a reputable board of trustees, chaired by Prince Turki Bin Talal Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud and consists of representatives from multiple regional and international organizations; alongside leading public figures, youth, specialists and scientists in related fields.

The foundation seeks to strengthen joint Arab and international cooperation and to build a solid alliance to accelerate the momentum in halting the spread of substance use and other dangerous phenomena among youth in the region.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "Zain is pleased to cooperate with and support the efforts of Mentor Arabia as these objectives are so well aligned to our own. Our youth are among the most precious resources we have, and we need to guide and inspire them to make good decisions and end up contributing positively to their communities, countries, and the region."

Kharafi continued, "Zain has a long tradition of giving back to the communities it serves across all its markets, and through supporting similarly inspired initiatives or our numerous corporate sustainability media campaigns highlighting the ills of child abuse, our enduring aim is to protect, engage, upskill, and allow the youth across the region to reach their full potential. We have every confidence that our new relationship with Mentor Arabia will further build on our efforts and positively impact the lives of thousands of young people across the region."

Limited studies issued by the United Nations indicate that there are more than 500,000 drug addicts in the Arab world. Other studies show that drug use among people aged between 15 and 24 is growing in 13 Arab countries. Poverty, unemployment, school drop-outs, migration, war, disintegration, domestic violence, poor prospects for youth participation in decision-making, among other issues, were all essential catalysts to the establishment of an Arab foundation focused



mainly on issues of risky behaviors prevention and awareness among children and youth.

Building on Mentor Arabia's vision, the agreement with Zain Group will see the two organizations jointly develop strategic partnerships with relevant entities and stakeholders; network with entities and organizations that are effective in the field of youth empower-



Preventing risky behaviors among youth

ment; and coordinate the various implementation phases of the joint programs. Collaborating closely together, Zain Group and Mentor Arabia will also look to advocate their endeavors through various media and social media platforms; and create fundraising opportunities for Mentor Arabia to scale up the number of program beneficiaries.

Thuraya Ismail, Executive Director, Mentor Arabia said, "Our vision is of an Arab world where children and youth are empowered to lead healthy lives and make sound decisions. The core of everything we do is to make a difference in young people's lives and we have been able to make significant progress in this area;



thanks to the support of outstanding people and organizations. We are grateful to be able to welcome Zain to this inspirational collection of organizations and look forward to working closely together on the Foundation's development and scaling up the number of our programs' beneficiaries."

An extensive awareness raising and social media campaign to be undertaken by Zain and Mentor Arabia

will embrace their combined goals to build the capacities and skills of children, youth, parents and other beneficiaries; develop policies and strategies for children and youth empowerment; promote youth participation in all areas of social work and human development; develop and disseminate prevention and youth empowerment studies and research; and forge partnerships and spread awareness through media and social media channels.

Social activist touts success of academic program

KUWAIT: An academic program aiming to instill in Kuwaiti students virtues such as optimism and creativity has thus far been largely successful, said the head of its executive council Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah. Citing surveys and reports issued by schools participating in the academic endeavor, she expressed amazement over the impressive turnout the program has elicited, where more than 480 instructors are taking part. The social activist sensed an earnest desire on the part of students to soak up knowledge amid the four-day program, "which keeps on making progress over the years," with 49 schools participating this year. She revealed that Kuwait University will soon delve into research over the pedagogical approach used by teachers to create a positive impact on the lives of students. The program targets the crucial high-school age demographic, which makes it all the more significant, according to the director general of Kuwait's Public Authority for Youth (PAY) Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi. "PAY fully supports such productive initiatives that help mold the minds of our youth," he said. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah with Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi. — KUNA photos



Participants in the four-day program.

Kuwait launches mixed sports program at public schools

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Olympic Committee will introduce an assorted sports curriculum to public schools across the country for children aged 5-9 in cooperation with domestic sports federations. The program, which kicks off in November, seeks to develop the capabilities of the young pupils across numerous sports disciplines. Secretary General Hussain Al-Musallam told reporters after a board meeting on Monday. The meeting was headed by the committee's



KUWAIT: Kuwait Olympic Committee President Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks during the board meeting. — KUNA

President Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The changes will focus on earlier grades at its initial phase only to be expanded to later grades in the

near future. They are being launched in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's school healthy food campaign, according to Undersecretary Saud Al-Harbi. — KUNA

Mangrove trees revived on Shuwaikh shores

KUWAIT: Mangrove trees were rehabilitated on the coastal road in Shuwaikh as part of a joint project

run by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), and Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). Mangrove trees, known for their ability to withstand high salinity, purify sea water, stabilize coastal soils, and form an ecosystem for coastal marine organisms, grew on Kuwait's shores during the 1940s, but became extinct because of logging. — KUNA





Russia court hands first jail terms to protesters

Kabul blast death toll rises as US tries to finalize Taliban deal



MANILA: Scavengers collect garbage from a dumping site near the US housing and recreational complex in Manila.—AFP

Poverty worsens Philippines' plastics crisis

'It's likely the garbage will still be there when my son grows up'

MANILA: Armed with gloves, rubber boots and a rake, "Mangrove Warrior" Willer Gualva, 68, comes to Freedom Island in the Philippines almost every day to stop it being engulfed by trash. No one lives on the island, yet each morning its shores are covered in garbage, much of it single-use sachets of shampoo, toothpaste, detergent and coffee that are carried out to sea by the rivers of overcrowded Manila.

"We collect mostly plastics here and the number one type are sachets," said Gualva, one of 17 people employed by the environment agency to help preserve the island and its forest. The agency, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), calls them "Mangrove Warriors", and pays them slightly above \$8 per day. Five days of coastal cleanup on the Manila Bay island last month yielded a total of 16,000 kg of trash, DENR data showed, the bulk of it plastics, including the sachets made of aluminum and blends of plastics.

These packets give some of the poorest people in Asia access to everyday household essentials. For the multinationals that manufacture them, it's a way to increase sales by targeting customers who cannot afford bigger quantities. Such sachets are sold in most developing countries but the number consumed in the Philippines is staggering - 163 million pieces a day, according to a recent study by environment group The Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA). That's almost 60 billion sachets a year, or enough to cover 130,000 soccer fields.

In Manila's slum areas which are inaccessible to garbage trucks, sachets and other waste are thrown in estuaries or dumped on the street, and end up clogging drains and waterways. "Money is hard to come by, so I only buy sachets," said Lisa Jorillo, 42, a mother of four who lives in a slum in Manila's Tondo area, behind a beach blanketed by trash. "It's likely the garbage will still be there when my son grows up," Jorillo said, referring to her four-year-old.

The Philippines' law on solid waste is poorly enforced and the country doesn't regulate packaging manufacturing. The country is ranked third in the world for failing to deal with its plastics, according to a 2015 study by the University of Georgia, which said 81 percent of plastics waste in the country was mismanaged.

Sachets for the poor

About 14 million people live in Metro Manila, one of Asia's teeming mega-cities. Overall, the Philippines has a population of 107 million people, and one-fifth of them live below the national poverty line, described by the statistics agency as monthly consumption of less than \$241 per person. Jorillo's family earns about 2,500 pesos (\$48) a week from the construction work that her husband does, and she and her family buy about 80 sachets of coffee, toothpaste and shampoo each month.

In sea-facing Manila, much of the trash ends up in the sea. The Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and China account for 60 percent of the world's marine plastic, or 8 million tons annually, according to the Ocean Conservancy non-profit. Environmentalists say the main culprits aren't governments or consumers, but the multinationals that churn out plastic packaging.

"They have money to do research that will remove the problematic packaging," said Sonia Mendoza, head of the Mother Earth Foundation, which promotes waste reduction. She said refilling stations could be one way to reduce the use of single-use sachets. The environmental group GAIA studied

non-recyclable waste collected in Philippine cleanups and found that 60 percent of it came from just 10 companies, led by Nestle, Unilever and Procter & Gamble. Nestle declined to disclose the volume of sachets it produced or sold in the Philippines.

Fighting malnutrition

Nestle said it was committed to finding ways to keep plastics out of oceans through plastic collection and recycling programs, but added that sachets prevented leakage of micro-nutrients essential to addressing malnutrition, especially among children. Unilever did not say how many sachets it produces in the Philippines, but said its global plastic packaging production is 610,000 tons annually.

The figure, Unilever said, includes "flexible packaging formats" used by 1 million micro-businesses in the Philippines. Nestle and Unilever's target is for 100% of their packaging to be recyclable or reusable by 2025 worldwide. Unilever said it has a community-based sachet recovery program in the Philippines where collected sachets are converted to school chairs and cement pavers. It also pilot ran shampoo and conditioner refilling stations this year, which it plans to scale up.

P&G referred questions to the industry group Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability (PARMS) or the government's National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC). The Philippines government does not have a clear strategy to tackle its plastics crisis. In an e-mail response to Reuters, the DENR said it was in discussions with all manufacturers to identify ways to manage waste. It provided no details.

Elsewhere in the region, Indonesia has a law requiring producers to manage non-biodegradable packaging and the tourist island of Bali bans single-use plastics. Thailand is between now and 2025 introducing bans on seven types of plastics most commonly found in the ocean, like bottle cap seals, disposable bags, cups and straws. Vietnam hopes to raise taxes on plastic bags and its prime minister has urged shops to stop using non-recyclable plastics in cities by 2021, and countrywide by 2025.

Eco-bricks

The Philippines industry group PARMS, which includes Unilever, P&G and Nestle among its members, is building a 25 million pesos (\$475,000) facility that aims to turn sachets into plastic blocks and eco-bricks. But Von Hernandez, global coordinator for the Break Free From Plastic movement, calls that "greenwashing" - or only trying to appear more environmentally friendly. "They are not really changing the true nature of their business," Hernandez said of the multinationals. "The plastics industry is slated to grow exponentially, especially by 2030. The bulk of that is going to packaging and you can bet this is going to end up in sachets."

Crispian Lao, president of PARMS, said every effort, even those which "may be perceived as small and insignificant", helps address the problem. Lao said sachets were a necessity for lower income groups, but added the industry is exploring other delivery formats and packaging alternatives. Cynthia Villar, a senator, says she is pushing for a radical re-write of an existing waste law to force firms to collect, recycle and dispose of all single-use plastics they produce. "They always say they're willing to do it. But it's a different story altogether whether they'll do it, so we have to embody it in a law so they'll all follow," Villar said.—Reuters

S Africa battles fresh xenophobic violence

JOHANNESBURG: South African police fired rubber bullets and patrolled parts of Johannesburg yesterday after the financial capital was hit by a new wave of anti-foreigner violence. Rocks, bricks and rubber bullets lay strewn across the empty streets of Alexandra after mobs plundered the township overnight, burning and looting shops in their path.

AFP photographers in Alexandra said police presence remained heavy and officers were still firing rubber bullets to disperse the crowds. Alexandra township is situated just five kilometers from Sandton, the city's affluent business and shopping district — considered Africa's richest square mile.

The township was scene to a second night of urban rioting in Johannesburg, where hundreds of people marched through the streets on Monday in an unusually large expression of anti-foreigner sentiment. More than 90 people were arrested on Monday in connection with the violence and looting of shops in Johannesburg and surrounding areas, the government said. Such violence breaks out sporadically in South Africa where many locals blame immigrants for high unemployment, particularly in manual labor. "They burnt everything," Bangladeshi shopowner Kamrul Hasan, 27, told AFP in Alexandra, adding that his shop gets attacked every three to six months. "All my money is gone. If the (South African) government pays for my plane ticket, I will go back to Bangladesh," he said.

'Overwhelmed by hatred'

South African truckers also started a nation-wide

strike on Sunday to protest against the employment of foreign drivers. They staged road blockades and torched foreign-driven vehicles in various parts of the country on Monday. At least another 20 people were arrested in connection with the truck attacks in the southeastern province of KwaZulu-Natal, bringing the total number up to more than 110, the government said in a statement.

South Africa is a major destination for economic migrants from the southern Africa region, with many moving from neighboring Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe in search for work. Deputy President David Mabuza yesterday condemned all acts of violence targeting foreign nationals. "We are a nation founded on the values of Ubuntu (humanity) as espoused by our founding father, President Nelson Mandela... we should always resist the temptation of being overwhelmed by hatred," he said during a meeting with ministers in Cape Town. The violence has erupted on the eve of the World Economic Forum on Africa in Cape Town, where hundreds of political and business leaders will gather for three days on Wednesday.

David Makhura, the premier of Johannesburg's Gauteng province, said that while irregular migrants could pose a challenge by pushing drugs and counterfeit goods, rioting was not a solution. "This issue can be dealt with without resorting to xenophobia," Makhura told reporters. "There is no country that does not have foreign nationals".

Opposition parties condemned the violence, placing the blame on the ruling African National Congress. "South Africans are scared and lack real hope for the future," said Mmusi Maimane, leader of the Democratic Alliance, South Africa's official opposition. "We are seeing economic and social collapse in action, and the widespread violent protests, looting, destruction of property and general lawlessness". — AFP



JOHANNESBURG: Zulu residents of the Jeppe Men Hostel scream waving batons in the Johannesburg CBD yesterday after South Africa's financial capital was hit by a new wave of anti-foreigner violence. — AFP

International

Cultures clash as Amazon cowboys close in on indigenous tribal lands

The self-styled guardians of nature mostly live along the boundaries

MONTE NEGRO: As evening falls over their Amazon home, the hunter gatherers of the Uru-eu-wau-wau people extract bamboo arrows from the flank of a wild pig and begin roasting it. A few miles — and a world — away on the opposite side of the rainforest's delicate existential divide, cowboys on horseback round up cattle at the outer reaches of a vast ranch. "We have no problem with them," said Awapy Uru-eu-wau-wau, the young chief of the 19-person forest community in central Rondonia state.

It's an uncommon expression of goodwill in an area where the worlds of rich landowners and indigenous tribes collide and jostle over the future of the planet's largest rainforest. The tribe's resource-rich 1.8 million hectare native reserve — an area nearly twice the size of Lebanon — is under constant siege from landlords, timber traders, landowners and miners who rely on deforestation to exploit its bounty. "I've been facing this invasion since I was 19 or 20, and these guys are threatenings because we're standing up to them," says Awapy, 38. "I'm not afraid of risking my life. It's the only way."

The few hundred inhabitants of the reserve, divided into seven hamlets, have a long history of resistance. To help survey the forest and protect themselves, the self-styled guardians of nature mostly live along the

boundaries of their territory, demarcated in the early 1990s. Awapy's village comprises half a dozen small dwellings, some of wood with a straw roof, others of cement with roofs of tile. The five families here live almost entirely off the jungle, where they venture daily to hunt and when necessary, to see off invaders — often organized groups — in confrontations that often turn violent, he says.

'They deforest everything'

In this area south of the town of Porto Velho, fresh clearings and grasslands are evident from the air, signs of ever-advancing deforestation often heralded by the wildfires which have reverberated on a global scale in recent weeks. The state's absence from the ground has made areas like this a breeding ground for gangs and encourages occupation of land which often ends up being integrated into cattle farms, NGOs say.

Prosecutors have filed complaints against rural producers for having occupied, parcelled and sold land on this reserve and in other places. The Uru-eu-wau-wau argue that the invaders feel protected since the arrival in power in January of President Jair Bolsonaro, who has supported the opening up of protected lands to agriculture and mining activities. He said at his inauguration that indigenous people needed to be integrated into society

and not live in reserves "as if they were animals in a zoo." "It wasn't like that in the past, but today they are deforesting everything," said Awapy, in his "oca" or room used for family gatherings, surrounded by villagers lying in hammocks.

'Beef, bible and bullets'

An hour and a half away along a forest road, in the small town of Monte Negro, the agribusiness sector shows its muscle at a rodeo where around 20 cowboys display their talent by riding bulls for as many seconds as they can. Dressed in stetson hats, blue jeans and cowboy boots, they work at some of the area's vast cattle ranches that have cut into the forest over decades.

The spectators enjoy the show and laugh loudly at an interlude sketch in which a clown chases a deer — a "veado" in Portuguese, which is also a disparaging term for homosexuals. This is rural, conservative Brazil, a fiefdom of Bolsonaroism, whose inhabitants belong to the "BBB" demographic. The "Beef, Bible and Bullet" set is the triumvirate of powerful interests that helped sweep Bolsonaro to power — the agribusiness sector, Evangelical churches, and the pro-arms lobby in Congress. The landowners, arrogant and circumspect to outsiders, are accused by environmental activists of being partly responsible for spreading ruin



PORTO VELHO: A member of Uru Eu Wau Wau tribe poses in the tribe's reserve in the Amazon, south of Porto Velho, Brazil. — AFP

in the Amazon, profiteering to the detriment of public lands and indigenous reserves. They maintain they respect the boundaries of their lands, claim their right to develop it and recall the importance of agricultural expansion for the Brazilian economy. — AFP

Jihadist 'ghosts' wreak havoc in Mozambique

MACOMIA: Aldeia da Paz was once a sleepy place. Farmers went about their daily lives, tending to meagre crops along the road linking Mozambique to its northern border with Tanzania. Everything changed after nightfall on August 1st. "They arrived around seven o'clock in the evening," said Lucas Saimone, one of the village chiefs. "When they started shooting and burning down houses, the whole population fled into the forest."

No one was killed, said Saimone, but the entire village was "turned to ashes." That day, the inhabitants of Aldeia da Paz became the latest victims of unknown Islamist militants sowing death and fear in the north of Mozambique — an impoverished coastal country renowned for its pristine beaches and coral reefs. Pope Francis is expected to visit on Wednesday, months after the nation was hit by two devastating cyclones that claimed more than 600 lives. But the northern province of Cabo Delgado is also grappling with a less visible, more insidious enemy than climate change.

Jihadists have killed at least 300 civilians over the past two years, often by beheading them. Dozens of villages have been wiped off the map and thousands of people displaced. Local media reported around 20 deaths in August. Since the attack, Aldeia da Paz has come to a standstill. The villagers are hungry and terrified. All that remains are piles of ash and a few daub walls topped with blacked roof beams.

'Sentenced to die'

Zahina Asman sits near a rusty saucepan surrounded by a pile of debris. "This is all that is left of my house," said the 60-year old, chewing on a cassava root. "They didn't kill anyone but they burnt all our crops. It makes no difference because without food we are sentenced to die of hunger." Catholic charity Caritas has delivered emergency aid, but chief Saimone does not consider this "enough".

"What we need the most is a roof. People are sleeping outside," he said. "We also want some soldiers to stay here permanently, like they do in other villages." Military officials were deployed to Cabo Delgado after the first suspected Islamist attack in October 2017. But today there is barely a checkpoint along the 400 kilometers of road linking the regional capital Pemba to the border post town of Mocimboa da Praia. There is only the occasional soldier carrying an automatic rifle.

Without a shelter and crops to harvest, many villagers have left. Fransa Abou fled her home in November after it was incinerated by Islamists. She found refuge 50 kilometers away, in the district of Macomia, with her husband and four children. "My



MACOMIA: Residents gather for a distribution of utensils organized by the Catholic relief organization CARI-TAS in the village of Muagamula, outside Macomia, northern Mozambique. — AFP

house was burnt with everything inside it. I came here to protect my children," she said.

'We are hungry'

Fransa first stayed in a hut provided by relatives. But the house was destroyed by Cyclone Kenneth in May, forcing the family to squeeze into a tiny wooden structure. "Over there I used to fish and cultivate [crops]. Here I can do nothing to feed my children. We are hungry," said Fransa's husband Ayuba Chacour, 30. "Those who are attacking us, we don't even know what they want!" Less than 20 percent of Mozambique's 29.5 million inhabitants are Muslim. The majority live in Cabo Delgado, and do not understand why they are being targeted. Little is known about the attackers, who act under the name of Al-Shabab-Arabic for "the Youth". The group was started by young fundamentalists who returned to the area after attending Koranic schools in Somalia and Tanzania. Aside from two dubious claims of responsibility by so-called Islamic State (IS), the group seldom communicates and makes no distinction between Christians and Muslims. Experts are baffled. Some have drawn parallels to Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria. Others describe a group of political dissidents, frustrated by poverty and anxious to benefit from the vast natural gas deposits discovered off Mozambique's northern coast.

Lack of action

"Some of those who were arrested said they were paid to attack... They have no (religious) conviction," said Eliane Costa Santana, a Brazilian missionary who has lived in Mocimboa da Praia for two years. "But they have succeeded in creating a climate of terror. People are scared to speak, to meet, to move, they stay holed up in their homes," she said. "And the army is not changing anything."

President Filipe Nyusi has repeatedly pledged to "eradicate" what he refers to as "criminals" rather than Islamists. Cabo Delgado's police spokesman Augusto Guta told AFP the situation was a "concern" but that measures were being taken "to ensure safety to the communities". He added that specific details could not be disclosed for security reasons. On the eve of Pope Francis' scheduled arrival in Maputo, the bishop of Pemba strongly condemned the government's passivity in the face of what he calls Islamist "ghosts".

"They should tell us who they are, expose them and act to put an end to the attacks," said Dom Luiz Fernandes. "It is the poorest who die, those who have almost nothing, and we cannot accept this." The frustration is palpable. "We live in a state of war," said a Mocimboa resident. "It is high time we went back to a regular life." — AFP

Democrats slam Pence for staying at Trump hotel

SHANNON: US Vice President Mike Pence drew fire from Democrats yesterday when he met with Irish leaders in the capital, Dublin, but stayed at a hotel owned by President Donald Trump almost 300 kilometers away, at Trump's urging. Pence flew to Dublin on Tuesday after spending the night at the Trump International Golf Club in Doonbeg on the west coast of Ireland. The hotel also hosted the Trump family during a brief trip to Ireland by the president in June.

Asked if Trump had suggested that Pence stay at the property, the vice president's chief of staff, Marc Short, told journalists, "I think that it was a suggestion." "It's like when we went through the trip it's like, 'Well, he's going to Doonbeg because that is where his family is from, it's like 'oh, you should stay at my place,' Short said. "It wasn't like a 'you must.' It wasn't like a 'you have to.'"

California Democratic Congressman Ted Lieu accused Pence in a post on Twitter of "funneling taxpayer money" to

Trump by staying at the hotel. "You took an oath to the Constitution, not to @realDonaldTrump," Lieu said. The Democratic National Committee also chimed in, saying in a post on its DNC War Room Twitter feed that Pence's choice of hotel meant "your tax dollars: making the Trump family richer." Pence's stay was paid for by US taxpayers, Short said, but the vice president personally paid for his sister and mother who had travelled with him. Pence's great-grandmother was from Doonbeg.

Trump has retained ownership of his hotels, golf courses and other businesses, but he gave control of the businesses to his sons shortly before he took office in January 2017. Former government ethics officials and watchdog groups say Trump has failed to put safeguards in place to ensure that he does not directly profit from his actions as president. Short said the original plan had been for Pence to hold meetings in Dublin and to head to Doonbeg afterwards. A last-minute schedule change meant Pence would need to visit Dublin after staying overnight in Ireland, and Trump's property had already been vetted.

Trump on Thursday cancelled a visit to Poland in order to monitor Hurricane Dorian, and sent Pence in his stead. He was later criticized for playing golf during that time. In Dublin, Pence met with



DUBLIN: Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar (2R) and his partner Matthew Barrett (R) welcome US Vice President Mike Pence (2L) and Second Lady Karen Pence (L) to Famlagh House in Phoenix Park, Dublin, yesterday on day two of his visit to Ireland. — AFP

Irish President Michael Higgins and Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, after urging Britain to leave the European Union in a manner that ensures stability in Ireland and respects Northern Ireland's 1998 peace deal. — Reuters

Indonesia restricts foreigner travel to restive Papua

JAKARTA: Indonesia is imposing restrictions on foreigners visiting its restive Papua region, the government said yesterday, after four Australians were deported over claims they took part in independence protests. Papua, where a low-level insurgency against Indonesian control has simmered for decades, has seen two weeks of mass protests and deadly riots sparked by anger over racism and fresh calls for self-rule.

Yesterday, Indonesia's chief security minister Wiranto said the country would limit foreigners entering its easternmost territory — which has popular beach destinations — over safety concerns and to weed out suspected agitators. "We'll temporarily limit (access to Papua)," the minister, who goes by one name, told reporters in Jakarta. "That doesn't mean we won't allow anyone in. There will be filters based on security and safety issues," he added, without elaborating.

It was unclear whether the new restrictions would prevent foreign journalists from going to a region subject to a government-ordered internet shutdown since the unrest broke out — a policy slammed by media and free-speech advocates. "This is to protect foreigners from becoming victims of the riots," Wiranto said. "It's difficult to distinguish between foreigners who are there to provoke and interfere from those who went as tourists," he added.

Wiranto also dismissed accusations that the government was dragging its feet on probing claims security forces committed human rights violations, amid unconfirmed reports that the military shot dead six protesters last week. He reiterated Jakarta's position that it was not open to talking about Papuan independence. "The door is closed on dialogue about a referendum," Wiranto said. Indonesia took control of Papua, a former Dutch colony on the island of New Guinea, in the 1960s after an independence vote that was widely seen as being rigged.

On Monday, Indonesia said it was deporting four Australians who had entered Papua — which shares a border with independent Papua New Guinea — on a yacht last month. The group allegedly participated in a demonstration and raised the banned "Morning Star" flag, a symbol of Papuan nationhood. Indonesian authorities have arrested dozens for taking part in protests and banned demonstrations that could lead to what it described as "anarchist acts". The recent unrest appears to have been triggered by the mid-August arrest of dozens of Papuan students in Java, who were also racially abused. Indonesia is deeply sensitive about Papua. In May, a Polish man was sentenced to five years in prison for plotting with rebels to overthrow the government in the province. — AFP

Hungary charges Syrian IS suspect with imam beheading

BUDAPEST: Hungarian prosecutors yesterday charged a Syrian man arrested in Budapest last year of terrorism and crimes against humanity including the beheading of an imam in Syria in 2015. According to a statement from the Budapest Chief Prosecution Office, prosecutors are seeking life imprisonment without parole for the 27-year-old man, identified as F Hassan.

The authorities believe he commanded a small unit of the Islamic State group in Homs province in 2015 tasked with terrorizing and executing civilians and religious leaders who refused to side with the terror group. He is accused of personally taking part in the beheading of an imam in the town of Al-Sukhnah, as well as the murders of three other people in the area between May 13 and 15 in 2015. His unit also killed at least 25 people in the town during the period including women and children, according to the prosecutors' statement. Authorities in Malta, Greece and Belgium, as well as in Hungary, took part in the investigation, which was coordinated by the European judicial cooperation agency Eurojust. — AFP

International

Russia court hands first jail terms to protesters

Days ahead of the controversial local elections that sparked the protests

MOSCOW: Two Russians were sentenced yesterday to two and three years in jail respectively in the first major convictions over anti-government demonstrations this summer. The convictions came as investigators dropped "mass unrest" charges against five others, and days ahead of the controversial local elections that sparked the protests. Danila Beglets, a father of two and the sole breadwinner of his family, was sentenced to two years in prison for attacking a policeman.

At first Beglets insisted he did not take part in the July 27 rally and turned up near the site of the protest by accident. He later admitted using violence against police in an apparent bid for a reduced sentence. The second, Ivan Podkopayev, was convicted of attacking policemen with pepper spray during the same July rally and sentenced to three years in prison. Over the past weeks, tens of thousands have taken part in protests demanding a fair vote after allies of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny were barred from the Moscow parliament vote taking place this Sunday.

Several thousand people were briefly detained during the demonstrations, and more than a dozen had been facing prison time on charges of mass unrest and attacking policemen. Protesters insist their rallies are peaceful, while rights groups and

Western countries have accused Russian police of using excessive force against demonstrators. Investigators did back down in other cases yesterday however, announcing that the mass unrest charges had been dropped against five men detained over the July 27 protest.

Russia's Investigate Committee said that the men, including student Daniil Konon, would instead face lesser, administrative charges. The committee said it had requested that two more people, including student Yegor Zhukov, be transferred from jail to house arrest. At the same time, investigators laid new "extremist" charges against Zhukov, who is a popular blogger, said rights lawyer Pavel Chikov.

Baby left alone

Three protest leaders were briefly detained late on Monday, including prominent journalist Ilya Azar and two Navalny allies, in connection with the latest rally held at the weekend. More activists were detained yesterday. Azar, a municipal deputy who works for top opposition newspaper Novaya Gazeta, could face up to 30 days in jail, while Navalny ally Lybov Sobol got a hefty new fine. Azar's detention sparked a backlash after police took the journalist away and left his 20-month-old daughter unsupervised at home in an

unlocked apartment.

Azar said he expected to be detained but could not imagine police would leave his child home alone. "Unfortunately, you have to be ready for everything if you live here and remember the Soviet-era practices," he said. Azar's wife Ekaterina Kuznetsova said she was lost for words. "I came home and found our apartment unlocked while the child was sleeping peacefully in her bed. Alone," she said on Facebook. The Kremlin's own human rights' council called on prosecutors to investigate police officers over the incident.

'Stalinist tactics'

Earlier Monday, supporters denounced late-night detentions of the protest leaders. "Night-time arrests are purely Stalinist tactics resurrected in the 21st century," opposition politician Konstantin Yankauskas said on Twitter. Sobol, a 31-year-old lawyer for Navalny's Anti-Corruption Fund, said the latest detentions were "revenge" for their activism and efforts to get on the ballot.

"People are ready to continue protesting," Sobol, who refused food for more than a month to protest her exclusion from the election said. She said over the past two months she had already racked up more than 900,000 rubles (\$13,500) in fines for her activism. In a separate case yesterday, a



MOSCOW: Ilya Azar, a municipal deputy working for top opposition newspaper Novaya Gazeta, speaks with journalists near the court yesterday, one day after being arrested for organising illegal protests. — AFP

court sentenced a blogger to five years in prison for a tweet that called for attacks on the children of law enforcement officials.

The tweet was written in response to the police crackdown. The protests and ensuing crackdown are the biggest since a wave of

demonstrations in 2011-12 against Vladimir Putin's return to the Kremlin. At the peak of the protests in August some 50,000 to 60,000 people attended, while the latest demonstration at the weekend drew a few thousand. — AFP

'Swashbucklers' and 'dwarfs': UK's odd Brexit cast

LONDON: The Brexit saga has featured a cast of larger-than-life characters determined to stamp their own visions on Britain's future. Their clashing personalities have created high drama in parliament and become the butts of numerous jokes. Here is a look at some of the leading players:

Boris Johnson

The mop-topped prime minister is known for his jokes and bluster that have landed him in hot water both as the two-term mayor of London and foreign minister. But his buffoonish charm and gift for public speaking propelled him in July to achieve his lifelong ambition of leading Britain. The 55-year-old Oxford graduate has vowed to succeed where his predecessor Theresa May failed in finally getting Britain out of Europe at any cost on October 31. His take-no-prisoners approach has seen his fiercest critics accuse Johnson of being a "tinpot dictator" by running roughshod over parliament and humiliating Britain on the global stage.

Jeremy Corbyn

The main opposition Labour leader is as polarizing with voters — and his own party members — as the British premier. The 70-



SALFORD: Britain's main opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn gives a keynote speech on Brexit in Salford, north-west England, on September 2, 2019 ahead of a meeting of the Shadow Cabinet. — AFP

year-old socialist has been trailed by controversy since taking over as leader in 2015. His condemnation of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories has been accompanied by complaints of anti-Semitism within Labour. And his refusal to spell out a clear position on Brexit — most party members are against but Corbyn himself is an EU sceptic — has pushed Labour to the bottom of opinion polls. Yet the teetotal vegetarian could emerge as the next British leader should Johnson falter in the weeks to come.

John Bercow

The House of Commons speaker has turned into a social media meme and TV sen-

sation thanks to his passionate calls for "Order! Order!" during especially rowdy Brexit debates. He has also become a lightning rod of Brexit backers' fury by repeatedly bending the rules to give MPs every chance to vote to frustrate the government's Brexit plans. His elevation to speaker in 2009 was supposed to make the Conservative party member politically neutral. The 56-year-old's approach to his job saw one Conservative critic dismiss him as a "sanctimonious dwarf".

Philip Hammond

The long-serving former finance minister — nicknamed "Spreadsheet Phil" for his dogged devotion to budgets — quit in protest at Johnson's approach to Brexit last month. The 63-year-old is now spearheading a Conservative rebellion designed to block Johnson's "no-deal Brexit" threat. The Financial Times newspaper once called him "a risk-taker" who was "a product of Britain's swashbuckling (Margaret) Thatcher". His latest gambit could see Johnson trigger an early election with unpredictable results.

Dominic Cummings

Johnson's chief adviser is known as a ruthless political strategist who masterminded the unexpected 2016 vote to leave the EU. UK media paint him as the power behind the throne who is most responsible for Johnson's uncompromising approach to Brexit. His ruthless style and suspicion of global institutions have drawn comparisons to US President Donald Trump's former adviser Steve Bannon. The 47-year-old was portrayed by actor Benedict Cumberbatch as a tortured genius in a TV drama about the EU referendum that aired this year. — AFP

Spanish PM makes fresh bid to win support for govt

MADRID: Spain's acting Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez unveiled yesterday more than 300 policy proposals, including free daycare, in a fresh bid to win the support of far-left party Podemos to form a new government and avoid new general elections. His Socialists won April polls but fell well short of a majority, and Sanchez has until September 23 to be confirmed as premier by a deeply fragmented parliament or else fresh elections will be held in November, the country's fourth in as many years.

Sanchez failed twice in July to be confirmed by the assembly as the Socialists and Podemos were unable to reach an agreement on the formation of a coalition government, which would be Spain's first in the modern era. This time around, Sanchez is no longer seeking to form a coalition with Podemos but instead wants to strike a "pact" with the party in exchange for its support in a parliamentary confidence vote. A coalition government "was not viable and still is not," Sanchez said.

"The conditions are not met for us to be allies in the heart of the government. But that should not make us adversaries. We can be loyal allies like we have been in the past," he added. To win the support of Podemos, Sanchez proposed appointing members of the far-left party to the head of public institutions, and he unveiled a series of progressive measures such as free daycare and a mini-



MADRID: Spanish acting Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez arrives to give a press conference. — AFP

mum income to fight child poverty. Sanchez came to power in June 2018 by winning a surprise no-confidence vote against conservative predecessor Mariano Rajoy with the support of Podemos, as well as Catalan separatist parties and Basque nationalists. But in July Sanchez refused to allow Pablo Iglesias, Podemos's leader, to be part of his government because of major disagreements over policy, including their stance on the Catalan independence question. Podemos, however, insists on forming part of Sanchez's new government. "A coalition government is the only guarantee to carry out policies that can change people's lives. That's what's at stake. And that's always been our commitment," Iglesias tweeted after Sanchez unveiled his policy proposals.

'Last minute'

Spain will face fresh elections unless an

"intermediate" solution is found between the Socialists' desire to govern alone and Podemos's goal of governing in a coalition, said University of Zaragoza political scientist Cristina Monge. "If there is an agreement it will be at the last minute and probably precarious," she added.

The Socialists currently have 123 seats in the 350-seat assembly. Polls suggest the Socialists would win more seats in a new election but still fall short of a majority, and would again need the support of Podemos and several smaller regional parties to be sworn in. "The question is if the Socialist party is interested in having fresh elections. If that is the case, this is a 'mise-en-scene'. We don't know if what happened today is a step towards a negotiation (with Podemos) or a lie to say 'I tried'," said Autonomous University of Barcelona political scientist, Oriol Bartomeus. — AFP

Sarajevo braces for first Pride parade

SARAJEVO: "Ima izac!" which roughly translates as "Open the door, please!" is the defiant slogan of the Sarajevo's first-ever gay Pride parade, scheduled to go ahead this Sunday. But the call to bring the LGBT community on to the streets has gone out despite a backlash of hostility from political and religious actors. Sarajevo is the last capital in the conservative Balkans to hold a Pride march — and its organizers have certainly not been pushing at an open door.

Already, there are two counter-rallies planned, while some politicians have openly denounced it. "It's not easy, knowing that we live in a society that is very homophobic," said Lejla Huremovic, one of around 15 organizers from across Bosnia planning the event in an atmosphere of excitement and some trepidation. "But this fear gives us energy and strengthens the revolt to fight for rights," the 32-year-old added. The march is an attempt to carve out a safe space for the LGBT community in a city that has no openly gay-friendly bars, clubs or cafes.

In 2008 and 2014, queer festivals were attacked by radical Islamists and hooligans. While discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is technically outlawed in the Balkan state, same-sex unions are not recognized. And any show of public affection remains a risky business. Another organizer, 20-year-old Amina Imamovic, describes how she and her girlfriend were attacked in May by two young men, as they held hands in downtown Sarajevo. "They threatened to kill us, but are still at large," Imamovic, a student, told AFP.

Controversial interior minister in running for Georgia PM

TBLISI: Georgia's ruling party put forward controversial Interior Minister Giorgi Gakharia as prime minister yesterday, further fuelling an already tense political atmosphere in the tiny Black Sea nation. In a televised statement, the ruling Georgian Dream party leader Bidzina Ivanishvili — a billionaire oligarch widely believed to be the man in charge in Georgia — said he "presented the candidacy of Giorgi Gakharia to the post of prime minister".

The nomination is expected to easily win approval by parliament where Georgian Dream holds a majority. The move followed Monday's surprise resignation of premier Mamuka Bakhtadze after just over a year in office. Gakharia thanked the ruling party for the nomination and announced changes in the cabinet. He said he would appoint the head of Georgia's state security service Vaktang Gomelauri as interior minister

Counter rallies

A number of Bosnian artists, writers and other celebrities have come out as allies to support the march, some of them speaking in videos posted on the organizer's website. But there have also been a homophobic backlash in online comments, including from people in high places. Two weeks ahead of the event, the centre-right 'Narod i Pravda' (People and Justice) party, part of Sarajevo's ruling coalition, urged organizers to cancel the parade for security reasons. The party argued the event could "escalate" tensions and trigger "negative consequences".

"The very large majority of Sarajevo's citizens are against the march because it is contrary to traditional values and their religious feelings," it said. But the head of the regional government Edin Forto, of the progressive Nasha Stranka (Our Party), ensured the event would go ahead as planned. Two anti-LGBT rallies will make their voices heard. One is set for Saturday, organized by a Muslim association. The other will be on Sunday, called by a Islamic theologian. Around 80 percent of Sarajevo's residents are Muslim, though most practice a moderate form of the faith.

Rejection by families

When the event was first announced in April, an elected official from the main Bosnian Muslim party SDA, Samra Cosovic Hajdarevic, wrote on Facebook that "such people should be isolated and put as far as possible from our children and our society". This is exactly the type of thinking the Pride parade is trying to counteract, says Masha Durkalic, author of a recent analysis on the struggle of the local queer community. It is a "necessary political protest to make LGBTI people visible," she told AFP, using the term that refers to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex community. "They exist, like all the others in the country, but they are cruelly dehumanized, to say the least." — AFP

and former prime minister Irakli Garibashvili as defence minister.

'Moscow's man in Georgia'

In protest of Gakharia's nomination, opposition MPs disrupted a plenary session of Georgia's parliament chanting "shame!" and blowing vuvuzelas as hundreds of anti-government demonstrators rallied outside the legislature. Independent analyst Nodar Kharshiladze said that by appointing a loyalist, Ivanishvili was preparing for parliamentary elections scheduled for October next year.

He called Gakharia "Georgia's most hated politician" and said his nomination was "likely to mount a fresh wave of protests in the country." "The move undermines Georgia's declared pro-Western orientation," he said. Gakharia, 44, is perceived by many as pro-Kremlin, due to the years he spent in Russia. Opposition MP Salome Samadashvili said that "Gakharia's nomination is dragging Georgia deeper into a political crisis", describing him as "Moscow's man in Georgia." In June and July, thousands rallied in Tbilisi demanding Gakharia's departure after riot police used rubber bullets and tear gas against a largely peaceful anti-Russian protest. Dozens were injured in the violent police crackdown, with several people losing an eye. — AFP

International

Kabul blast death toll rises as US tries to finalize Taliban deal

'We want these foreigners to move out of our neighborhood'

KABUL: A massive blast in a residential part of Kabul killed at least 16 people, officials said yesterday, following yet another Taliban attack that came as the insurgents and Washington try to finalize a withdrawal deal. US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad was in the Afghan capital to discuss the proposed deal — which would see the US withdraw troops in return for Taliban security guarantees — when the Monday bombing happened.

Local television footage showed a massive crater near crumbled blast walls, twisted metal where buildings once stood and the charred remains of a petrol station that had caught fire and blown up as a result of the attack. Interior ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said the blast was caused by a tractor packed with explosives that had been parked alongside a wall by Green Village, a large fortified compound that houses aid agencies and international organizations. Five gunmen then tried to storm the area in a "complex attack", but Afghan security forces shot and killed them before they got far into the compound, Rahimi said.

In addition to the 16 killed, 119 were wounded, he added, noting that all the victims were civilians. The bombing was the third major Taliban attack in as many days — and the violence is likely to continue, Taliban expert Rahimullah Yusufzai said. The insurgents are convinced it was their military strength which has forced Washington to open talks with them on a withdrawal, he said. "This is the weapon in their hands and they will keep on using it until they gain their objectives," he said.

Residents in the area around Green Village were furious that their neighborhood, which has been targeted before, had been hit once again and blamed the assault on the nearby international presence. "All our rooms have been destroyed, and I don't know where to go now," a woman

victim in a local hospital said. "My two daughters have been injured and are in the hospital. This explosion ruined our lives." Locals set tyres on fire, sending plumes of thick, acrid smoke into the morning sky, and closed off a main road next to the scene of the attack. The sound of gunfire could be heard Monday morning but by the afternoon the situation appeared to have calmed.

"We want these foreigners to move out of our neighborhood," resident Abdul Jamil told AFP. "This is not the first time we suffer because of them... We don't want them here anymore." The most recent previous attack on Green Village was in January, when a powerful truck bomb killed at least four people and wounded more than 100 others. Green Village is separate from the nearby Green Zone, a walled-off and heavily fortified part of Kabul that is home to several embassies including the US and British missions.

US to leave five bases

The Taliban claimed Monday's attack, which was condemned by President Ashraf Ghani and came as Afghanistan's main TV station, Tolo News, was broadcasting an interview with Khalilzad. The Afghan-born envoy, who has spent about a year negotiating with the Taliban, told Tolo the US would pull troops from five bases across Afghanistan under a final deal if the Taliban honor their end of the bargain.

"We have agreed that if the conditions proceed according to the agreement, we will leave within 135 days five bases in which we are present now," Khalilzad said. The Pentagon gives the official number of US troops in Afghanistan as 14,000 — though the real number is thought to be a bit less — and President Donald Trump last week said America would maintain a permanent pres-



KABUL: Afghan security forces investigate at the site near the crater from where a tractor packed with explosives exploded the night before at the Green Village. — AFP

ence of about 8,600 troops initially, even after a deal is reached with the Taliban. That would appear to mean about 5,400 US troops are set to leave Afghanistan under the initial terms of the deal, reducing the US military presence to about what it was before Trump came into office. In return for reducing troop numbers, the Taliban would

vow to cut ties with Al-Qaeda and open negotiations with the Afghan government with the aim of creating an eventual ceasefire. But even as negotiations for an accord between the US and the Taliban have entered what are widely considered to be the final stages, violence has surged across Afghanistan. — AFP

Bangladesh bans phone access in Rohingya camps

COX'S BAZAR: Bangladesh on Monday ordered operators to shut down mobile phone services to almost one million Rohingya refugees living in camps in the country's south-east, an official said. The move follows an outbreak of violence in recent weeks at the camps, most of whose residents fled into Bangladesh from Myanmar's Rakhine state two years ago following a military crackdown on the Muslim Rohingya minority.

It also comes after none of the refugees turned up in late August to return across the border to conflict-scarred Rakhine, when a fresh push to repatriate the refugees to Myanmar fell flat. Telecommunications operators have seven days to submit reports on the actions they have taken to shut down networks in the camps, said the spokesman for the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), Zakir Hossain Khan.

"Many refugees are using mobile phones in the camps. We've asked the operators to take action to stop it," he told AFP, saying the decision was made on "security grounds". The order stunned the Rohingya, one of their leaders said on condition of anonymity. He said the ban would hugely affect Rohingya life, disrupting communications between different camps scattered across the border district of Cox's Bazar. "We won't be able to communicate with our relatives living in Myanmar or other parts of the world," the leader said. Many Rohingya, he said, rely on remittances sent by their diaspora and usually receive phone calls informing them of the money transfers.

Bangladesh has in the past tried to restrict mobile phone access in the settlements. But the move was not enforced seriously, spawning booming markets of mobile phone sets and SIM cards in the camps. Police spokesman Iqbal Hossain welcomed the decision, saying the refugees had been "abusing" mobile phone access to conduct criminal activities such as trafficking of methamphetamine pills worth hundreds of millions of dollars from Myanmar. "It will definitely make a positive impact. I believe criminal activities will surely come down," he said.

On Sunday police said a fourth Rohingya refugee was shot dead in the fallout over the murder of local ruling party official Omar Faruk by suspected Rohingya criminals. Faruk's murder led hundreds of furious locals to block a



UKHIA: Rohingya refugees attend a ceremony organized to remember the second anniversary of a military crackdown that prompted a massive exodus of people from Myanmar to Bangladesh, at the Kutupalong refugee camp. — AFP

highway leading to a refugee camp for hours on August 22, burning tyres and vandalizing shops visited by refugees. Rohingya refugees have said the recent bloodshed has created an atmosphere of fear in the camp, where security has been tightened. Rights groups have previously accused Bangladesh police of extrajudicial killings.

'Isolate and victimize'

Local police said nearly 600 cases of drug trafficking, murders, robberies, gang fighting and family feuds were filed against the refugees since they arrived. Bangladeshi security forces have shot dead a total of at least 34 Rohingya over the past two years, mostly for alleged methamphetamine trafficking. There was no immediate reaction to the phone service shutdown from United Nations agencies, but a UN official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it "would further isolate and vic-

timise the already persecuted people". "Seeking to limit their communication amongst themselves, with Bangladeshis and people abroad, will serve to push them towards negative coping habits be it crime, violence or extremism," he added. The two countries signed a repatriation agreement in November 2017 but a first offer to return was rejected by refugee camp leaders in October. UN investigators have said the 2017 violence in Myanmar warrants the prosecution of top Myanmar generals for "genocide".

Bangladesh last week accused Buddhist-majority Myanmar of lacking the "will" to repatriate the Rohingya, after the latest failed attempt to return the stateless minority. The Rohingya are not recognised as an official minority by the Myanmar government, which considers them Bengali interlopers despite many families having lived in the country for generations. — AFP

China backs N Korea amid deadlocked nuclear talks

SEOUL: China reasserted its backing for North Korea yesterday as its foreign minister visited Pyongyang, vowing to maintain "close communication" with its longstanding ally in the face of deadlocked nuclear talks with Washington. Beijing has long been North Korea's key diplomatic backer and main provider of trade and aid, and while ties deteriorated over Pyongyang's nuclear provocations and China's subsequent backing of UN sanctions, the two have since worked to repair their relationship.

Since March 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have met five times, with Xi seeking to weigh in on Pyongyang's diplomacy with Washington. Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi arrived in Pyongyang on a three-day trip on Monday, just two months after Xi became the first Chinese leader to visit the North in 14 years. Wang told his North Korean counterpart Ri Yong Ho that Beijing was ready "to promote... close communication and cooperation on the international stage". China's foreign ministry said yesterday.

Reflecting on their 70 years of alliance, Wang noted that Beijing and Pyongyang have "always been in the same boat and moving forward side by side", it said in a statement. Ri said that North Korea is willing to work with China to "promote greater development" of their relations in the "new era", according to the document.

Pyongyang and Washington are engaged in a long-running diplomatic process over the North's nuclear programs although little progress has been made.

Those talks have been deadlocked after a second summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump collapsed in Hanoi in February with the two unable to reach a deal on sanctions relief and what the North might give up



This undated picture released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on August 31, 2019 shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (C) inspecting a construction site at the Yangdok County hot spring resort. — AFP

in return. They agree to restart talks at an impromptu meeting in the Demilitarized Zone in June, but that working-level dialogue has yet to begin. China always prefers stability in its neighborhood and officially supports talks between the North and the US.

But Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said Wang's visit "will raise concerns about their coordinating economic cooperation despite UN sanctions". "Beijing and Pyongyang may also strategize how to exploit widening divisions between Seoul and Tokyo and

how to play the US election cycle," he added, but stressed that North Korea wanted to avoid over-reliance on China. "Despite signs of camaraderie, Kim isn't choosing sides, he's playing everyone off each other," he said. Beijing sent millions of troops known as "Chinese People's Volunteers" to save the North from defeat during the Korean War, and Mao Zedong described their relations as "close as lips and teeth". Nowadays Beijing sees the North as a strategic buffer, preventing the possibility of US troops on its borders — 28,500 are stationed in South Korea. — AFP

Top Philippine court refuses to legalize gay marriage

MANILA: A landmark case to legalize gay marriage was rejected by the Philippines' highest court yesterday, but LGBT advocates in the deeply Catholic nation vowed to push their battle in the legislature. Lead plaintiff Jesus Falcis had said the current law was a violation of his rights, but in a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court threw out his case primarily on technical grounds.

Government lawyers argued Falcis had never tried to get married, thus would not benefit if justices struck down the portions of the 1987 law defining marriage as between a man and woman. Though the Philippines has a reputation for being accepting of same-sex relationships, few legal protections and rights exist in a nation where conservative Catholic values are deep-seated. Abortion is illegal and the country of about 107 million is the only place outside the Vatican where divorce is outlawed. Roughly 80 percent of the population is considered Christian.

Despite its decision, in a text released to journalists, the court noted the "constitution does not define, or restrict, marriage on the basis of... sexual orientation, or gender identity". It went on to say that same-sex unions "may, for now, be a matter that should be addressed to Congress". Danton Remoto, chair of LGBT political party Ang Laddad, meaning Out of the Closet, told AFP that regardless of the rejection, the community would continue its battle for equal rights.

"It simply means we have to continue advocacy for legislating an anti-discrimination bill in Congress, where we have many allies," Remoto said. However, he acknowledged it will be difficult to pass a bill on gender equality in the Senate, whose leader has already ruled out approving such a measure. "The great stumbling block will be the Senate, peopled by Christian fundamentalists who have forgotten that there is separation of church and state in the Philippines," he said. — AFP

Charred bones of rights activist found in Thai lake after five years

BANGKOK: The burnt bones of a community activist who disappeared in Thailand more than five years ago were found under water in a national park, investigators said yesterday, confirming his death for the first time. Rights groups say 30 human rights activists have disappeared or been murdered in Thailand since 2001, and the country is considered one of the deadliest in Asia for environmental defenders.

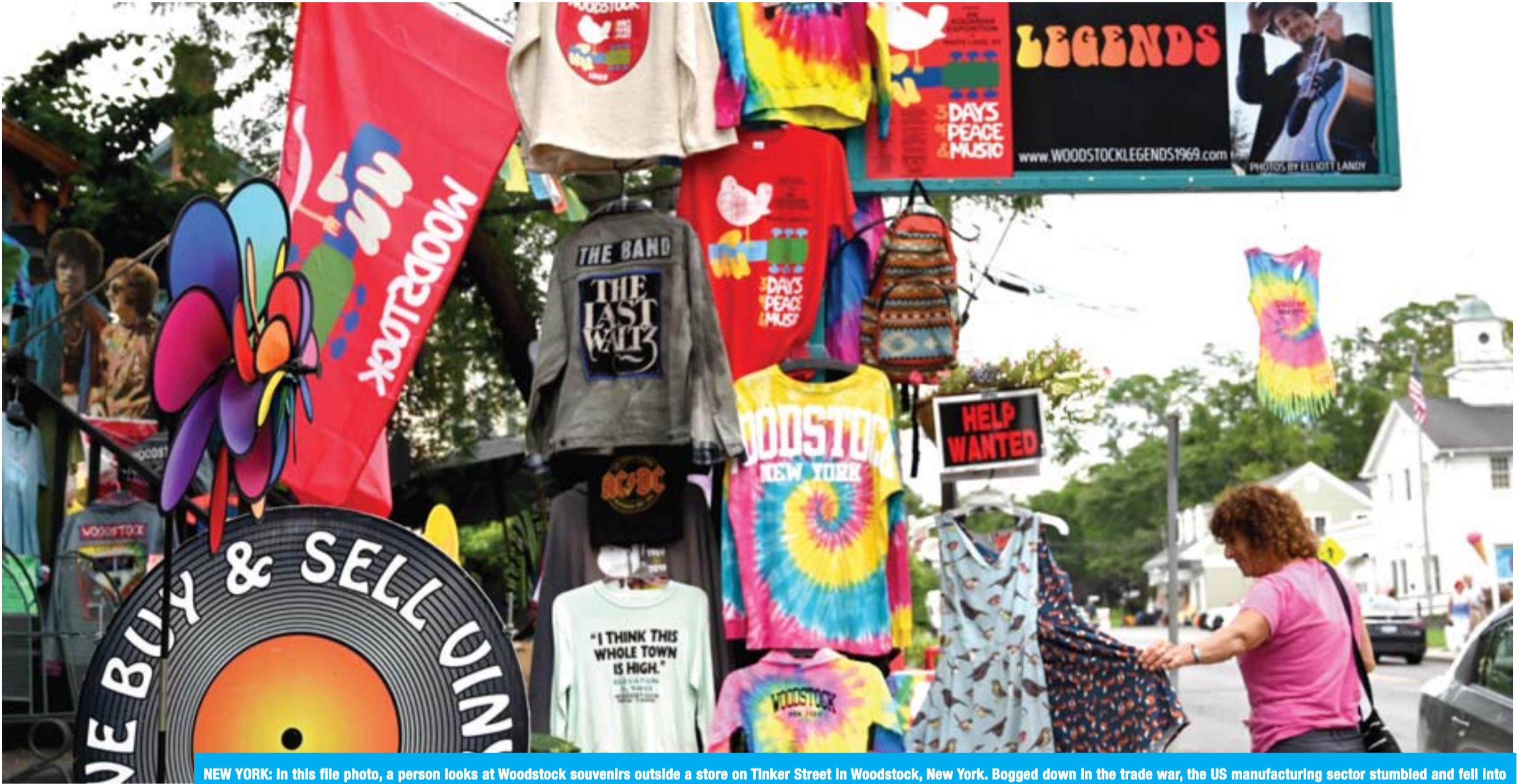
Known as Billy, ethnic Karen leader Por Cha Lee Rakcharoen was stopped by local authorities at a checkpoint in April 2014 while travelling to meet Karen villagers who had accused officials of destroying their homes in Kaeng Krachan national park. Officials later said he was questioned for illegally gathering honey but released. Divers found his remains in a lake in the same park in April this year, and identified the bones using DNA from his mother.

"We can assume Billy is dead, as these bones were removed from his body," Korawat Panprapakorn, deputy director general of the Department of Special Investigation (DSI), told reporters. One bone was found in an oil drum while others were scattered around the lake. The Karen are an ethnic minority in Myanmar but many have been driven into Thailand fleeing military abuses. The special investigations unit said there were suspects in the case but did not release further details.

It also said the discovery was made after questioning locals and carrying out surveys of the area in southern Thailand. Impunity in cases of activist disappearances is common in Thailand. There have been at least 82 cases of enforced disappearances in the country since 1980 according to the United Nations. "The discovery of Billy's remains should now prompt Thai authorities to step up their efforts to uncover the truth for the sake of his family," said Sunai Phasuk, senior Thailand researcher with Human Rights Watch. "No more cover-up and delay!" — AFP

Business

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NEW YORK: In this file photo, a person looks at Woodstock souvenirs outside a store on Tinker Street in Woodstock, New York. Battered by the trade war, the US manufacturing sector stumbled and fell into contraction in August 2019 for the first time in three years. — AFP

US manufacturing shrinks for first time in 3 years

ISM manufacturing index falls; new orders, factory employment contract

WASHINGTON: US manufacturing activity contracted for the first time in three years in August, with new orders and hiring declining as trade tensions weighed on business confidence, which could renew fears of a sharp economic slowdown. Other data yesterday showed construction spending barely rising in July. Data on consumer spending had suggested that while the economy was slowing, it was not losing momentum as rapidly as financial markets were flagging. The Institute for Supply Management (ISM) said its index of national factory activity dropped to a reading of 49.1 last month from 51.2 in July. A reading below 50 indicates contraction in the manufacturing sector, which accounts for about 12 percent of the US economy. Last month marked the first time since August 2016 that the index broke below the 50 threshold.

August's reading was also the lowest since January 2016 and was the fifth straight monthly decline in the index. The ISM said there had been "a notable decrease in business confidence," adding that "trade remains the most significant issue, indicated by the strong contraction in new export orders."

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the ISM

index would slip to 51.0 in August. The year-long US-China trade war is eroding business sentiment, with business investment contracting in the second quarter for the first time in more than three years. That, together with an inventory bloat, is undercutting manufacturing, with output declining for two straight quarters.

Weak manufacturing and business investment are offsetting some of the boost to the economy from strong consumer spending. A new round of US tariffs on imports of Chinese goods, mostly consumer products like clothing, footwear and televisions, took effect on Sept. 1. These duties are expected to slow consumer spending. Additional US tariffs are due to be imposed in December.

With trade tensions still simmering in the background, the Federal Reserve is expected to cut interest rates again this month to keep the longest economic expansion in history on track. The Fed lowered its short-term interest rate by 25 basis points in July for the first time since 2008, citing trade tensions and slowing global growth. Financial markets have fully priced in another quarter-percentage-point cut at the Fed's Sept. 17-18 policy meeting.

The ISM's forward-looking new orders sub-index dropped to a reading of 47.2 last month, the lowest level

since June 2012, from 50.8 in July. A gauge of factory employment tumbled to 47.4, the weakest reading since March 2016, from 51.7 in July. Manufacturing employment is being closely watched after the workweek dropped to its lowest level since November 2011 in July and factories cut overtime.

US stock indexes extended losses after the data. Yields on US Treasuries tumbled while the dollar was slightly stronger against a basket of currencies.

In a separate report yesterday, the Commerce Department said construction spending edged up 0.1 percent. Data for June was revised up to show construction outlays decreasing 0.7 instead of falling 1.3 percent as previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast construction spending would rise 0.3 percent in July. Construction spending fell 2.7 percent on a year-on-year basis in July.

Investment in public construction projects increased 0.4 percent after tumbling 3.1 percent in June. Spending on state and local government construction projects rebounded 0.6 percent. That followed a 3.7 percent plunge in June. Outlays on federal government construction projects fell 2.4 percent in July after surging

4.3 percent in the prior month. Spending on private construction projects dipped 0.1 percent in July, reversing June's 0.1 percent gain. Investment in private residential projects rose 0.6 percent, the most in eight months, after being unchanged in June. Private residential investment was boosted by a 1.4 percent jump in single-family home building. There were also gains in home renovations.

Land and labor shortages have constrained homebuilding even as mortgage rates have dropped sharply from last year's levels. Spending on residential construction has contracted for six straight quarters, the longest such stretch since the Great Recession. Spending on private nonresidential structures, which includes manufacturing and power plants, dropped 0.8 percent in July to a seven-month low. That followed a 0.2 percent rise in June. Investment in nonresidential construction fell at its steepest pace in more than three years in the second quarter. That contributed to business investment declining for the first time in more than three years. The economy grew at a 2.0 percent annualized rate in the April-June quarter, slowing from the first quarter's brisk 3.1 percent pace. — Reuters

Dubai economic slump to persist to 2022: S&P

DUBAI: A slowdown in Dubai's economy since 2014 is forecast to carry on through 2022 due to low oil prices, fallout from the US-China trade war and political turmoil, Standard and Poor's said yesterday.

Growth in the Middle East's most diversified economy has also been impacted by a deterioration in the key real estate and tourism sectors, the international ratings agency said in a report. Dubai faces high public debt amounting to around \$124 billion, or 108 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), divided between the government and state-linked companies, the report said.

The emirate's GDP grew at just 1.94 percent last year, its lowest since 2010 when the city state was still recovering from the impact of the global financial crisis and defaulting on its debt. S&P said it expected Dubai's economy to pick up to 2.4 percent this year, largely due to the completion of projects related to the international trade exhibition Expo 2020 opening in October next year.

After the Expo, growth will then moderate to 2.0 percent through 2022, it said. The trade war between the

United States and China, and lower regional demand due to sanctions on neighboring Iran, are likely to slow transit trade, an important contributor to the Dubai economy, S&P said.

Dubai's GDP grew at 4.8 percent in 2013 before starting to decline and the drop accelerated last year after the property sector slumped and the number of tourists stagnated. The city-state had expected to attract 20 million visitors annually by 2020 when it hosts the six-month Expo.

But in the past two years, the number of tourists stood at just under 16 million and in the first half of 2019, Dubai welcomed 8.3 million visitors, according to official figures. The property market, which contributes some seven percent to GDP, has been in a downturn since mid-2014, with sale and rent prices shedding a third of their values.

Dubai ruler and UAE Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid on Monday formed a committee to regulate the oversupplied real estate market. During the past year, the emirate has taken a raft of measures to boost the domestic economy and lure foreign investors by easing residency and business rules, including allowing full ownership of businesses by foreigners outside free trade zones.

The emirate draws 70 percent of its revenues from fees on a host of transactions, some 24 percent from taxes and profits of government companies, and just six percent from oil. — AFP



DUBAI: Workers clean the glass facade of the Burj Khalifa tower in Dubai. — AFP

Business

Bahrain invites GCC entrepreneurs to invest in oil and industrial sectors

BCCI delegation visits Kuwait ahead of major investment conferences in Manama



KUWAIT: Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry officials and Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry officials during a press conference at the KCCI office yesterday.



KUWAIT: (From left) Emad Al-Zaid, Assistant General Director, Kuwait Chamber of Commerce, Sonya Mohamed Abdulla Janahi, Board Member, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Basim Mohammed Al-Saie, Executive Committee, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry during a press conference yesterday. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Bahrain has been chosen as the destination for the 18th Arab Businessmen and Investors Conference (ABIC) and the 3rd edition of the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum 2019 (WEIF 2019) titled: "4th Industrial Revolution: Shaping the future - Digital disruptions for a better tomorrow". These events will be held concurrently in the Kingdom of Bahrain from November 11 to 13, 2019, under the patronage of King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, The King of Bahrain.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is open for investments and investors. "Bahrain, like any other GCC country, supports and encourages investments in industrial and petrochemical projects, whether it is an enterprise by an individual entrepreneur or with the support of any GCC government," said Sonya Mohamed Abdulla Janahi, Board Member, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) during a press conference that was held yesterday at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI).

"Bahrain is a leading example of a business-friendly nation with no free zone restrictions, 100 percent foreign ownership for a majority of ventures and low operating costs. As the first GCC nation to move away from its dependence on oil, Bahrain is today the region's most diversified and sustainable economy and a leading financial hub," she added.

Al-Janahi explained that the 4th Industrial Revolution has made paradigm changes in the way society and businesses have been functioning and is about more than just technology-driven incremental change. "It is an opportunity to help varied stakeholders, including leaders, policy-makers and the general population from all income groups and nations, to harness converging tech-

nologies in order to create an inclusive, human-centered future. The real opportunity is to look beyond technology and find ways to enable the greatest number of people to positively impact their families, organizations and communities," she stated.

Bahrain is currently implementing projects worth \$32 billion. "These projects include the BAPCO refinery, and expansion of Aluminium Bahrain (Alba) worth \$3 billion which will become the world's largest aluminum smelter. This is in addition to the infrastructure projects including the new terminal of the Bahrain Airport worth \$1.1 billion and the King Hamad Bridge worth over \$4 billion which connects Bahrain with Saudi Arabia," she pointed out.

"Aptly therefore, the focus of the 18th Arab Businessmen and Investors Conference is on the impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution on the Arab world and the BCCI is delighted to invite representatives from all over the region and the world to explore the possibilities, challenges and most efficient ways of adapting this revolution to obtain a dramatically improved future," stressed Al-Janahi.

Set to attract 1,500 participants from across the globe, a first-of-its-kind forum in the region will represent a variety of expertise including key policy decision-makers, regulators, business investors, entrepreneurs and global influencers.

Students are part of the event. "Also, a key highlight of the 18th ABIC 2019 is the Arab Entrepreneurship Rally, a competition designed to encourage and assist all Arab university students to convert their innovative business ideas into start-up enterprises. The competition will provide students with an opportunity to make a positive impact on society through technological innovation, whilst contributing to their own economic benefit," she noted.

"Students from the Arab Region will be invited to participate in submitting their innovative business ideas with the opportunity of having them reviewed and recognized by designated experts. Through its sponsors and partners, students will be awarded for their efforts and play an active role in inspiring and unleashing the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. Three winners from the region will be announced at the conference in November 2019 and an impressive cash prize will be handed to them to facilitate converting their ideas into action," added Al-Janahi.

The 3rd edition of the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum 2019 (WEIF 2019) will be held in the Kingdom of Bahrain concurrently with the 18th Arab Businessmen and Investors Conference between November 11-13, 2019. The event is organized by UNIDO ITPO Bahrain, in partnership with the Union of Arab Chambers and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In line with the success achieved during the previous versions of WEIF; this year's main theme is "Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through Entrepreneurship & Innovation" but with a special focus on "Investing in the 4th Industrial Revolution in a Digital Economy," she concluded.

WEIF 2019 will highlight and promote the role of impactful investment and innovation towards economic development and achieving the sustainable development goals. Discussions will also focus on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of developing countries, particularly in the Middle East, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa, in attaining these goals.

With an impressive group of speakers, experts, entrepreneurs, investors, academics, financial institutions and high-level senior officials, the conference

promises to empower the audience with the needed knowhow to effectively be part of the transformation that industry is bringing in. Emphasis will be on the need to embrace technological innovation as a means of fostering entrepreneurship and productivity.

Basim Mohammed Al-Saie, Executive Committee Member, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Bahrain is currently developing the Bapco Refinery to increase the production from 250,000 barrels per day to 350,000 bpd. "Bahrain depends on the Saudi oil to supply the refinery. Also Bahrain has built a new pipeline to keep up with the new developments and to raise its production. The new refinery was built according to the latest technology," he explained.

Organized and supported by the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI), Union of Arab Chambers, Arab League, The Arab Investment and Export Credit Guarantee Corporation and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO ITPO Bahrain), this edition of the Arab Businessmen and Investors Conference will represent an Arab economic and investment gathering to lead the investment in the 4th Industrial Revolution and digital innovation in Arab countries in this field.

The main objectives of the 18th Arab Businessmen and Investors Conference will be to represent a gathering that drives investment in entrepreneurship and innovation in the digital revolution in the Arab world. It will also highlight opportunities and challenges of the 4th Industrial Revolution to key stakeholders from the private and public sectors. Emphasis will also be laid in understanding the need to move ahead and align with global developments and disruptive innovations which are driving major breakthroughs across many industries and sectors.

Middle class feels the squeeze in debt-wracked Argentina

BUENOS AIRES: Facing mounting piles of credit card debt, unpaid medical bills and private school fees, Argentina's cash-strapped middle class, much like the state itself, is facing its own debt default.

"We cannot pay everything, we are sinking little by little," laments Buenos Aires lawyer Monica, who says she and her accountant husband are overwhelmed by a morass of mounting bills. Like many of her friends, the 42-year-old says her family maintains its living standards at the price of a mounting credit in a country where annual inflation is running at over 50 percent.

"With no savings, we started to pay for our daily expenses with credit three years ago. In the past, we did that kind of thing to buy Christmas presents, but nowadays we need the card to pay for the electricity, the cellphone, the food, everything," adds Monica, who says shame prevents her from giving her full name.

Argentina imposed currency controls at the weekend in what the government said was part of a series of "extraordinary measures" to stabilize a deepening financial crisis. And last week it sought to defer payments of a \$56 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. The country's embattled currency, the peso, fell to record lows last month after business-friendly President Mauricio Macri suffered a thumping defeat at the polls. Much like the government's debts, the strategy adopted by middle class families like Monica's has fuelled debts they are finding impossible to repay.

"In the beginning, we paid off all the debt on our card at the end of the month-until we couldn't. With the usurious rates of interest, we are on the verge of ruin," she said, shocked by the sudden change. In order to retain the family car, she had to convert to natural gas-half the price of gasoline. To save on hairstyling bills, she learned how to cut and color her own hair.

The couple own their own apartment and have jobs in a society with 10 percent



A cashier counts pesos in a Buenos Aires supermarket. —AFP

unemployment. But the need for credit led the family to request more cards. Currently using five, they are unable to keep up to date with repayments on any of them. "We owe the psychologist, we are late with the condominium charges and the health insurance. We don't use supermarkets, we go to wholesale stores instead and we have given up holidays."

'Pay and pay again'

Neither she nor her husband are Macri supporters, but an increasingly likely victor for his leftist opponent Alberto Fernandez in the October 27 election gives them little hope of change.

"What are we hoping for? We know it will take us years to get back afloat and get out of debt, and maybe we'll never get there," the lawyer said.

Miguel, a 50-year old office cleaner, has similar debt worries, which he says keep him up at night.

"In three years, I took out four loans. Two to pay the credit on my card-which my bank withdrew in the end because I didn't pay anymore-and two to pay off the initial loan arrears because the interest rates had mushroomed," he says.

Half his salary of 30,000 pesos (\$508) goes in loan repayments. The plunging peso means his salary is worth half what it was a year ago in dollar

terms. To save on transportation costs, he makes part of his daily commute by bicycle. "That way, I only spend 300 pesos a month (five dollars), otherwise it would be double," he says.

No frills

He says he can't afford even small treats with his wife, who works part time as a child-minder, and teenage daughter. "We don't even go to the cinema once a month. We just pay, and pay again," said Miguel, who lives with his family in his mother's house.

At least he doesn't have to pay rent like Claudia, 45. The company where she worked went out of business in 2017 — like many other businesses in Macri's austerity drive-and she had to move to a studio apartment with her two children.

"I went from managing 40 stores to doing part-time housework," she says. She had to take her daughter out of private school last year and put her in a public school with a canteen. "They always let her bring an extra tray home," she says, embarrassed.

Sometimes, she says, she drinks a glass of sweetened water for dinner, too proud to take the handouts at a social services canteen where her son eats. "I owe 35,000 pesos (\$580) to the school and 30,000 to the bank," she says. —AFP

Pound strikes near three-year dollar low on Brexit turmoil

LONDON: The British pound tumbled yesterday to the lowest level against the dollar in almost three years, as the UK faces a possible general election amid Brexit turmoil. Sterling struck \$1.1959 around 0750 GMT, as British Prime Minister Boris Johnson faces a rebellion by his own lawmakers over his Brexit strategy that could result in an early general election next month.

It was the pound's lowest level since October 2016, when sterling dived to a 31-year trough at \$1.1841 in a so-called "flash crash" just a few months after Britain's referendum vote in favour of leaving the European Union. On October 7, 2016, the pound crashed 6.1 percent against the dollar to hit its lowest level since 1985 before quickly rebounding.

"Ignoring the flash crash, we are very much in uncharted waters here," Neil Wilson, chief market analyst at Markets.com, said yesterday.

UK high-speed railway costs soar, to open years late

LONDON: Britain's new high-speed railway linking London with other major English cities will open years late and cost an extra £20 billion (\$24 billion, 22 billion euros) to build, the government warned yesterday.

The Department for Transport announced that the cost of building High Speed 2 (HS2) has escalated due to the complexity of building in densely populated cities and challenging ground conditions.

The budget has surged to between £81-88 billion, up from the prior guidance of £62.4 billion, according to inflation-adjusted figures given yesterday. And rather than HS2's first phase opening in 2026, trains face not running until between 2028 and 2031, the government added.

The revised forecasts were made by HS2

"We could feasibly see \$1.15 or even \$1.10 in the coming weeks if traders decide to move against the pound." By mid-afternoon in Europe, the pound had come off its early lows.

The fate of Brexit hung in the balance as the UK parliament prepared for an explosive showdown with Johnson that could end in a snap election. Members of the prime minister's own Conservative party are preparing to join opposition lawmakers in a vote to try to force a delay to Britain's exit from the EU if Johnson cannot secure a divorce deal with Brussels in the next few weeks. The UK leader insists that Britain will leave the EU with or without a deal on October 31.

Weak pound impact

Markets fear that a no-deal Brexit could be disastrous for the British economy, at least in the short term, and could plunge the country into recession. While the pound's weakness makes imports into Britain more expensive, for example oil which is traded in dollars, it cheapens exports. Sterling's heavy falls have meanwhile helped to boost London's benchmark FTSE 100 index, as it features many multinationals earning overseas. However, a general election could see the main opposition Labor party win power, led by Jeremy Corbyn whose policies are widely regarded as being unfriendly towards business. —Reuters

chairman Allan Cook to transport minister Grant Shapps. They come ahead of findings into a review ordered by Prime Minister Boris Johnson into the huge infrastructure project. "The prime minister and I have been clear about the potential for transport investment to drive growth, redistribute opportunity and support towns and cities across the UK," Shapps said in a statement.

"But we have been equally clear that the costs and benefits of those investments must stack up." The first phase of HS2 plans to connect London in southeast England with the country's second biggest city Birmingham in the Midlands. The second phase is for trains to travel further north to cities Manchester and Leeds.

Originally planned to open in 2033, this section of track now risks being delayed until between 2035 and 2040. Johnson has previously warned that HS2 would end up costing more than £100 billion-but also signalled that the project would continue following costly construction work already through Britain's countryside and after the review that could see alterations to the high-speed link. The review will be led by former HS2 Ltd chairman Douglas Oakervee and report back before the end of 2019. —AFP

Business

Asia-Pacific leads 5G innovation, Huawei enables development of digital economy

Huawei announces over 50 5G commercial contracts secured and over 200,000 Modules shipped

KUWAIT: The 5th Huawei Asia-Pacific Innovation Day was held in Chengdu, China yesterday. This year's Innovation Day is themed "Innovation Enables Asia-Pacific Digitization". More than 200 representatives from government, industry and academia of Asia-Pacific countries and regions got together to discuss innovative 5G technologies and applications, sustainable development, as well as technology, humanity, and nature.

As a ubiquitous technology, 5G is the cornerstone of a smart world in which everything is connected. Today, as we usher in the 5G era, we are also at a critical stage of digital transformation across industries worldwide. Industrial development has progressed from mechanization and electrification to automation and digitization.

Speaking at the event, William Xu, Huawei Director of the Board, President of the Institute of Strategic Research said: "5G is arriving at the right time. More specifically, 5G can provide wide coverage, large bandwidth, and low latency on the basis of traditional connections. It can also provide slicing for different applications. This new feature makes it adaptable to a variety of complex industrial applications. With the advancement of 5G, there will be many 5G-enabled applications that will change the world. At the same time, 5G, AI, IoT and cloud are improving everyday life and nature, making the world a better place." Huawei is helping carriers across Asia Pacific to deploy 5G faster

Asia-Pacific is leading the world in terms of 5G deployment. South Korea is the world's first country that has realized large-scale commercial use of 5G. Since the roll-out of 5G in early April, the number of 5G subscribers in this country exceeded 2 million. South Korea has become the global benchmark for the commercial use of 5G. China has built a large-scale 5G network for pilot commercial use. The three major carriers have deployed 5G networks in cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Chengdu. The tested downlink rate is as high as 1 Gbps, which means it takes only seconds to download an HD movie in 1080P.

5G is becoming a reality. Around the world, 35 carriers in 20 countries have launched 5G and 33 other countries have distributed 5G spectrum. Huawei has secured over fifty 5G commercial contracts worldwide and shipped over 200,000 Massive MIMO AAUs. With rich experience in 5G pilot commercial use and active exploration of 5G innovative applications, Huawei is committed to providing the safest and most advanced 5G products and solutions, as well as application scenarios. Huawei seeks to enable carriers in the Asia-Pacific region to deploy 5G faster and fully leverage the advantages of 5G. The aim is to empower numerous industries, improve social efficiency and accelerate industrial digitization.

With the launch of 5G stereo-coverage network, there will be more 5G-enabled

innovative applications

At the event, China Mobile Sichuan and Huawei launched a 5G stereo-coverage network, which consists of a basic coverage layer, a capacity experience layer and indoor coverage for high-value scenarios to achieve seamless coverage of 5G. In addition, Huawei has partnered with carriers and other industry partners to demonstrate various innovative industry applications, including 5G+VR, 5G+8K video, 5G+drones, 5G telemedicine and 5G ambulances. All these indicate the infinite potential applications of 5G in the era of commercial use.

Guests from government, industry and academia gave speeches from various perspectives, such as policy-making and regulation and industry digitization. They talked about how innovative technologies can support the development of the cultural industry and natural ecological protection and shared typical cases on how "5G+AI" can empower numerous industries.

Technology for good - the use of new technologies opens up a better intelligent world StorySign is an AI-enabled application that uses image recognition and optical character recognition technologies to translate children's books into sign language, helping deaf and mute children learn how to read.

In Costa Rica, a company called Rainforest Connection has deployed solar-powered monitoring equipment in 2,500 km² of rainforest. With the massive data



CHENGDU: William Xu, Huawei Director of the Board, President of the Institute of Strategic Research, addresses the 5th Huawei Asia-Pacific Innovation Day in Chengdu.

storage and intelligent analysis capabilities of Huawei Cloud, the monitoring equipment can process complex audio data in the rainforest in real-time, and identify the noises of chainsaws and trucks in an accurate and timely manner, so as to prevent illegal logging.

Helping vulnerable groups, protecting the earth, and realizing the harmonious development between man and nature are issues that concern everyone in society. New technologies like 5G, cloud, IoT and AI are shaping a world where all things will be sensing, connected and intelligent.

The intelligent world is coming to all individuals, all companies, and all industries. Technologies are making the world a better place.

Since 2013, Huawei Innovation Day has been held in different cities, including London, Milan, Munich, Paris, Singapore, Sydney, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Dubai, and Sao Paulo. Following the principles of openness, innovation, collaboration and shared success, Huawei is committed to bringing digital to every person, home and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world.

Canon showcases ecosystem of banking innovations for digital era

DUBAI: Canon Middle East (CME), a provider of imaging technologies and services, is introducing a pioneering End-to-End (E2E) compliance platform for the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector that will shape and define a new era of digital operations in the region.

The E2E compliance platform will be revealed at the 9th Annual Middle East Banking Innovation Summit held on 3-4 September 2019 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and has been developed by Canon to support BFSI institutions to efficiently monitor, improve agility, and quickly implement new compliance processes. The compliance platform can immediately identify the impact of a regulatory change on corporate policies and implemented processes; define obligations and apply for new or changed product or processes; automate audits and regulatory reporting; and reduce costs of the compliance process.

The E2E compliance platform has been developed by technologically advanced solutions such as Robotics Process Automation (RPA), Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI), Natural Language Processing (NLP), Blockchain, Business Intelligence (BI) & Analytics and customer experience innovations to ensure banking and finance institutions can swiftly respond to changes in regulations and compliance.

Shadi Bakhour, B2B Business Unit Director, Canon Middle East, said, "The banking and financial services sector faces several challenges with regards to transitioning from legacy, manual systems to a more digitally-enabled infrastructure due to compliance, security, regulatory and other issues that may affect swift adop-



tion. These challenges were also particularly magnified in a market where there are economic shifts that may affect how wide-sweeping decisions are made. As a trusted technology partner, we can offer an ecosystem of solutions that are interdependent and work seamlessly together to make the integration of digital solutions more efficient, cost-effective, and customised to each entity's requirements. More importantly, Canon's advanced E2E compliance platform will completely redefine how institutions approach regulatory compliance in a more definitive, quick and cost-effective way."

During the summit, Canon will also showcase additional BFSI sector specific services and solutions that are proven to support the industry's digital transformation. Some of Canon's digital solutions include traditional business solutions such as managed print services, multifunction printers, cheque scanners, e-signature solutions, as well as BFSI specific innovations such as customer onboarding and experience solutions, RPA, AI and blockchain. In fact, according to Deloitte's 2019 Banking and Capital Markets Outlook: Reimagining transformation report, globally RPA is already bringing productivity gains, and AI is enabling intelligent insights on customers, compliance, and operations

through accurate data processing and reporting.

Khaled Antoun, General Manager, Canon Emirates, who will also be giving a keynote presentation at the Summit, said: "The UAE is witnessing a fundamental shift toward more modern, digital services in many industries, which is primarily driven by the government placing an emphasis on transitioning to smart and sustainable cities as defined by Vision 2021. While there have been some market challenges, the banking sector is expected to grow by 6.5 percent this year, and the technologies that Canon is introducing will not only cater to supporting the UAE's Vision 2021, but also meet the requirements of a growing banking and financial industry that is in the process of digital transformation. Through our innovations, we are able to showcase the benefits of transitioning to a modern infrastructure, so institutions can be competitive and prepared for a future that is undoubtedly more digital in nature."

Alongside the E2E technology platform, Canon Middle East's BFSI strategic program also aims for co-creation developments with peer groups from the banking and financial services industry to serve their current needs and to prepare them for future developments in technological innovations.

South Africa Q2 growth beats expectations as mining recovers

PRETORIA: South African GDP grew more than expected in the second quarter thanks to a recovery in mining and manufacturing, official data showed yesterday, in a reprieve for President Cyril Ramaphosa as the economy looks set to dodge recession this year. After a downturn in the first half of 2018 when farming plunged, the economy has struggled to regain momentum, posting a shock contraction in the first quarter of this year.

Analysts said while the second-quarter GDP print could see South Africa avoid recession in 2019, it was not enough to stop credit rating downgrades linked to debt issues including bailouts for state power utility Eskom. "It's a great relief. A huge positive, but in reality it won't do much for the credit rating situation. That's more about debt," said Wayne McCurrie, portfolio manager at FNB Wealth and Investments.

The rand extended gains after the data, firming more than 0.5 percent to a session high of 15.1125.

GDP growth in the three months to June was 3.1 percent, after a revised contraction of 3.1 percent in the first quarter, Statistics South Africa said. Economists polled by Reuters had predicted an expansion of 2.4 percent for the quarter. The second-quarter growth was the highest since the fourth quarter of 2017. Year-on year GDP growth was 0.9 percent compared with zero previously.

Mining turnaround

The data showed mining output grew by 14.4 percent in the second quarter, after declining by 10.8 percent previously. Manufacturing output rose 2.1 percent, rebounding after declining 8.8 percent in the first quarter. "There was a strong rebound in iron prices in the months leading to this quarter ... and remember with mining in the first quarter there were challenges with electricity supply and those have eased a bit," said Mike Manamela, chief director for national accounts at the statistics office.

Growth in Africa's most industrialized economy hinges heavily on saving power firm Eskom, which is drowning in debt. At the start of the year, it implemented power outages that triggered a slowdown across most sectors in the first quarter. Fixing Eskom, which supplies more than 90 percent of the power in South Africa, is one of the biggest challenges Ramaphosa faces. It is regularly cited by ratings agencies as one of the main threats to South Africa's investment-grade credit rating status and economic growth prospects.

Moody's, the last of the three big international ratings agencies to keep South African debt at investment grade, said in July that government's proposal to provide additional financial support to Eskom was "credit negative". The government said it would give Eskom 59 billion rand (\$3.87 billion) of additional financial support over the next two years, on top of an already-promised bailout of 230 billion rand spread over the next decade.

"We could avoid a recession this year with even zero growth in the next quarter," said Isaah Mhlanga, chief economist at Alexander Forbes. "But there's absolutely no room for Ramaphosa to manoeuvre. The macroeconomic fundamentals are still very weak." — Reuters

Burgan Bank announces winner of Al-Thuraya account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, announced yesterday Amal Nashi Abdullah Alkhuraif as the lucky winner of the Al-Thuraya Salary Account monthly draw.

The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank by offering them a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month. With every KD 10 available in the account, the customer receives one chance to enter the draw.

The Al-Thuraya account holders have the option to hold money in Kuwaiti dinar and other major currencies and can access account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards, and benefit from the discounts and offers throughout the year.

Customers wishing to open the Al-Thuraya account can do so by simply visiting the nearest Burgan Bank branch and obtain all the necessary details.

Huawei P30 Pro glamorous case embellished with Swarovski crystals

KUWAIT: The Huawei P30 Pro is one of Huawei's most coveted phones, winning awards and accolades since its launch. Adding to the Huawei P30 Pro's growing success and its series of powerful devices, Huawei has unveiled the new Huawei P30 Pro Limited Edition Pearl White. Inspired by the flowing movement and clear essence of the clouds that reflect across salt flats, this new color is one of the most stunning additions to the Huawei P30 Pro's color spectrum.

To add more glamour to your life, Huawei introduced a stunning Glamorous case wrapped with Swarovski elements in line with the launch of its latest addition to its flagship Huawei P30 series that capture the glamour of sparkling light to celebrate this Eid. Coated in stunning Ice White and Pink Pearl colors, the cases are embellished with Swarovski elements to make your phone an elegant jewel that stands out. With this new stylish accessory, you can now add the final touch of elegance and some sparkle to your smartphone and show off all its cool features in style.

For those of you who don't know much about the Huawei P30 Pro, it comes with the world's first Leica Quad Camera setup for beautiful photos and videos in any situation. This unmatched super camera system includes a 40MP main camera with a SuperSpectrum lens, a 20 MP Ultra-Wide-Angle Lens, 8MP telephoto lens with SuperZoom and a Huawei Time of Flight (ToF)



lens, allowing you to create vivid images of unforgettable moments. Thanks to its 6.47-inch FullView display, watching movies or reading e-books is a treat to the eyes, while the massive 4,200 mAh battery will ensure you finish your movies and books with battery to spare. You can also enjoy 128GB of solid storage, making space for all your photos, videos, movies and more.

You can get the Huawei P30 Pro Limited Edition Pearl White along with the Glamorous Case in a Special Edition Gift Box for KWD 209,900, making it a perfect gift for friends, family or even yourself. Alternatively, you can also get the phone and case separately for KD 209,900 and KD 59,900 respectively. So, whether you like the attention or want to glam-up your phone, Huawei ensures you get to customize your Huawei P30 Pro as you like it. Time to get used to a shiny lifestyle.

What's On



PAS concludes swimming activities

Public Authority for Sports (PAS) concluded its swimming activities for children aged 5 to 13 in Jahra, Salmiya and Surra which was organized by "Sports for all" sector in partnership with the Education Ministry, within the "Your summer is cool" festival. Next

week will mark the end of swimming activities for girls at Saud Al-Sabah swimming pool in Mansouriya. Director of "Sports for all" department Hamid Al-Hazim lauded the outstanding turnout for the swimming pools activities which continued for two months.



Aviation Technology College held an orientation meeting for new students and their guardians on various specialities in the college. Head of the trustees' council Dr Abdelrazaq Al-Mahmoud said that college will soon become an academy that provides Bachelors of Science in Aircraft Engineering. He said the college's programs are internationally accredited through Berth College of Scotland from which earlier Kuwaiti civil and military pilots graduated.



LKS convenes meeting to help Kerala flood victims

Kerala community in Kuwait under the Loka Kerala Sabha (LKS) members once again rose to the most needed time of their state as it was battered by torrential rains, subsequent fast flood and large-scale mudslides. Last year around the same time of the year, Kerala witnessed one of the largest floods in centuries and the Indian community had come out with a helping hand to help the flood victims. In the present floods and landslides two panchayats were washed off and five districts were completely affected. For most Keralites, the extent of the flooding, the economic and infrastructural damage - and worst of all - the loss of lives was something that was matching the one witnessed in August last year.

Kuwait-based Keralites under the Loka Kerala Saba convened a community leaders' meeting to drum up the

emergency support for the distressed people. More than 100 members participated from 35 organizations at short notice. Well-known migration expert orator and Kerala Public Service Commission member Dr Ginu Zacharia inaugurated the meet. "Kerala diaspora community is the backbone of Kerala and protecting their interest is the primary duty of the Left Democratic Front government. The various welfare measures taken by the Kerala government for its diaspora is the best proof for the same." Ginu said in his speech. He also lauded the Kerala diaspora for its contributions to the Kerala when the state was going through hardships due to the effects of climate change.

The meeting conducted at Abassiya was presided over by Sreemal and N Ajith Kumar briefed about the Kerala government migrant friendly policies and programs. Mubarak kamroth (GKPA), Muhammed Faizal (FIMA), Sakir Hussain (KIG), Jyothidas (Santhwanam Kuwait), I V Alex (Idukki Association), Sathar Kunnil (INL), T V Hikmath (Kala), Jacob Channapetta, Basheer Batha, and V D Paulose spoke on the occasion. Babu Francis made the concluding remarks. Sam Pynnumoodu welcomed the gathering and Thomas Mathew Kadavil expressed vote of thanks



NOTICE

Since 2004, the Government of India has been organizing "Know India Programs" (KIPs) for the Indian youth diaspora in the age group of 18-30, with an objective to connect them with their motherland and to give them an exposure to various aspects of contemporary India's Art, Culture and heritage. To promote greater awareness among the PIO youth about

KIP, Government of India has decided to hold a worldwide global KIP LOGO contest. The contest is open to all PIOs irrespective of their age, nationality, gender. The winner of the contest will be awarded with a prize of 25 day fully sponsored tour to India as a KIP participant. The contest starts on September 1, 2019 and the entries will be accepted till October 15, 2019. Interested candidates may please go through guidelines and may submit their entries directly to PIC wing of Embassy of India, Kuwait at pic.kuwait@mea.gov.in.

Health & Science

UK's Prince Harry says he rarely takes private jets, offsets his CO2

AMSTERDAM: Britain's Prince Harry, under fire for using private jets while endorsing environmental causes, said yesterday he only uses them rarely, for safety reasons, and takes steps to offset the carbon dioxide his trips release into the atmosphere. Speaking at the Amsterdam launch of an initiative to make the travel industry more sustainable, Harry said "I spend 99% of my life travelling the world by commercial (aircraft)."

Harry, Queen Elizabeth's grandson, said he flew by private jet only occasionally or in "a unique circumstance, and to ensure that my family are safe - and it's genuinely as simple as that... I always offset my CO2." Carbon offset programs help travelers compensate for the carbon dioxide emissions they cause by paying a fee that goes to reducing CO2 by a similar amount, usually by planting trees. Harry said that carbon offsets are "the right thing to do and we need to make it cool". "But it can't just be a 'ticking the box' exercise," he added.

Harry has faced accusations of hypocrisy for taking private planes to attend recent engagements while at the same time voicing concerns about the environment. The criticism prompted singer Elton John, whom Harry visited with his wife Meghan at his home in the south of France for a vacation last month, to launch a defense of the couple against the "distorted and malicious account in the press".

The sustainable travel scheme "Travelyst" announced by Harry yesterday in Amsterdam is



AMSTERDAM: Britain's Prince Harry (1st-L) attends the Adam Tower project introduction and global partnership between Booking.com, SkyScanner, Ctrip, TripAdvisor and Visa in Amsterdam yesterday an initiative led by the Duke of Sussex to change the travel industry to better protect tourist destinations and communities that depend on it. — AFP

backed by major tourism industry companies including Booking.com, TripAdvisor, Ctrip and Visa. It plans initiatives that will help travelers to cut their carbon emissions, prevent over-tourism and develop local economies. "... while no one is perfect, we are all responsible for

our own individual impact. The question is what we do to balance it out," Harry said. Harry and the founding members of the organization did not give specific examples of programs they would introduce or actions they would undertake. — Reuters

French mayor urges action against Mont-Blanc 'wackos'

GRENOBLE: The mayor of Chamonix in the French Alps has urged President Emmanuel Macron to act against "wackos" climbing the nearby Mont Blanc, after a series of incidents including a British tourist abandoning a rowing machine on the famed mountain. Mayor Jean-Marc Peilleux, who for years has sounded the alarm against overcrowding on Europe's highest peak, said a member of Britain's "Royal Commandos" hauled up the exercise machine for a stunt on Saturday.

But he did not have the strength to bring it back down and left it in an emergency hut situated at 4,362 meters. The man gave his name as Disney — "with a name like that, you'd think he thought he was at an amusement park," Peilleux said in an open letter published Sunday. Also over the weekend, he added, a German tourist made the ascent with his dog despite warnings from police brigades who patrol Mont Blanc routes during the busy summer season, and a promise that he would leave the dog at a refuge

before attempting the summit. Instead, the tourist snuck out for the top in the middle of the night with the dog who survived but returned with bloodied paws, according to photos posted on Peilleux's Twitter account.

The weekend incidents came after two Swiss climbers in June landed a small plane just east of Mont Blanc's summit and then started hiking to the top. Stopped by the mountain police, they were given only a 38-euro (\$42) fine and allowed to fly off, since technically they had only broken laws from the 1960s setting out landing sites in the area. "This situation has gone on long enough!" Peilleux said in his letter. He called on Macron to "write and pass laws without delay that from 2020 would severely punish all these wackos who break the law, and restore peace to Mont Blanc." Officials are already grappling with a huge influx of climbers hoping to scale the 4,809-meter-high peak, which has sharply increased security risks as well as environmental impacts. — AFP

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DERMATOLOGY, VENEREOLOGY & LASER

These services include, but are not limited to, the below:

- Diagnosis of all diseases and infectious diseases related to the skin, nail, hair, mucous membrane, and STDs
- Laser hair reduction
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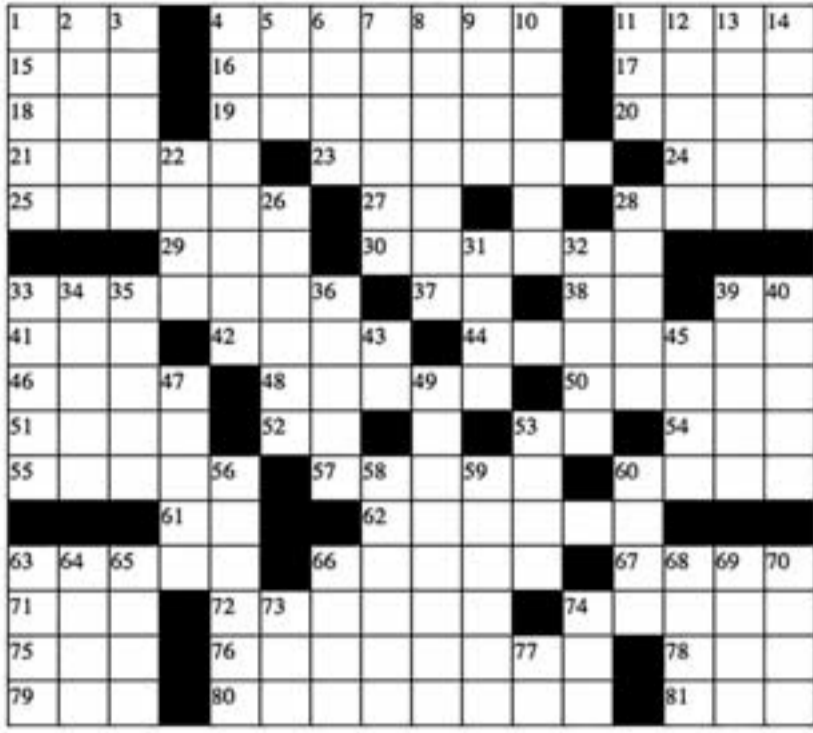
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2298



- ACROSS
1. A federal agency that supervises carriers that transport goods and people between states.

- DOWN
1. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You will be dealing with facts and figures throughout most of this day. Your ability to manage and supervise people plus a built-in sense of responsibility makes you a unique character.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Ambition and achievement can be a tough path to follow. You win reward, recognition and authority through hard work and knowing the score.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is a yearning for adventure and far horizons. To roam, to wander and wonder, seeking freedom and experience and to go where no one has gone before.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are valued for your ability to make sensible decisions concerning group issues. Fairness is always an issue when there are so many personalities involved.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This is a time for new accomplishments, during which insights and new goals can be made. You discover new ideas and new ways to do and use things.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This could be a crazy time when you may feel under a lot of mental pressure. You could be facing some time limits.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Travel and intellectual connections are important to you. These activities may come through your work—and because of your interests.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You enjoy working in group or team situations: there are special people in your work with whom you enjoy a friendship.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 18)

This could be a time when everything around you seems to be in a state of change—your living situation particularly.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are a very forceful speaker and communicate with great enthusiasm. Words just flow out of your mouth and always seem to give rise to an emotional impact.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your communication skills are energized this morning. There are plenty of puzzles to work through and that is just like you like it.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a lucky day in many ways. An old debt is paid off and misunderstandings—problems or puzzles—have a way of becoming clear.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Computer Jargon 2

Find and circle all of the computer words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional computer word.



Table with 5 columns of computer-related terms: ASCII BANDWIDTH, BIOS, BUG, CACHE, COPY, CRASH, CYBERSPACE, DATABASE, DESKTOP, DISK DOCUMENT DOWNLOAD DRIVER, EMOTICON ETHERNET, FAQ, FIREWIRE, FONT, FREWARE, GIGABYTE, HACKER, HARDWARE INPUT JAVA, JPEG, KEYBOARD, LINUX, MENU, MULTIMEDIA, NETTIQUETTE, OPEN, PASSWORD PCI, PERIPHERAL, PORT, PRINTER, REBOOT, RESOLUTION, SAVE, SERVER, SMILEY, SOUND CARD SPYWARE, TERA FLOP, TROJAN HORSE, UPLOAD, USB, USERNAME, VIRUS, WEB BROWSER, WINDOWS, ZIP FILE.

Computer Jargon 1

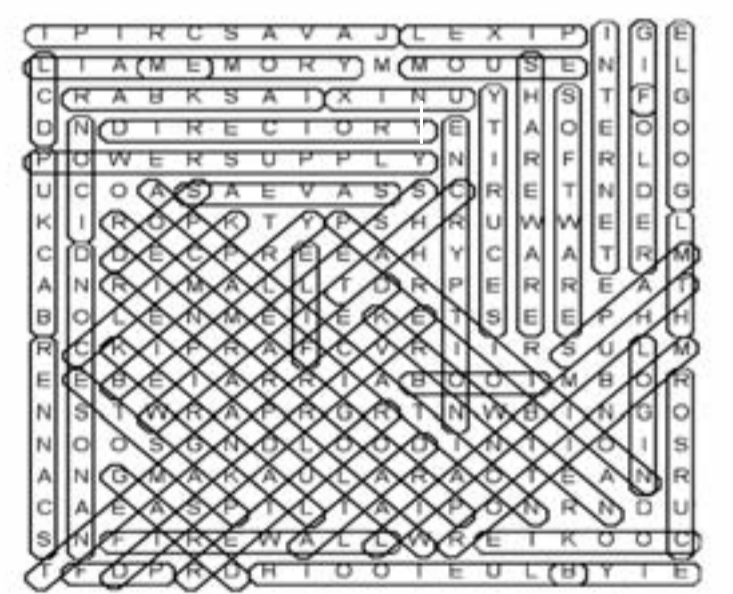


Table with 5 columns of computer-related terms: APPLICATION BACKUP, BINARY, BLUETOOTH, BOOT, BYTE, CHAT, CLICK, COOKIE, CURSOR, DATA, DEFRAGMENT, DIRECTORY, DISK DRIVE, DOS, EMAIL, ENCRYPTION, FILE, FIREWALL, FOLDER, GIF, GOOGLE, HTML, ICON, INTERNET, JAVASCRIPT, KERNAL, LCD, LOGIN, MEMORY, MONITOR, MOUSE, NANOSECOND, NETWORK, PARTITION, PASTE, POWER SUPPLY, PROGRAMMER, ROUTER, SAVE AS, SCANNER, SECURITY, SHAREWARE, SOFTWARE, SPAM, TASKBAR, THUMBNAIL, UNIX, WALLPAPER, WIRELESS.

The hidden word is: MOTHERBOARD

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2019



.....
A picture taken shows the Mont-Saint-Michel, northwestern France. — AFP
.....

BANKSY WORK STOLEN FROM OUTSIDE POMPIDOU CENTRE IN PARIS

A stenciled work by the elusive British street artist Banksy has been stolen from outside the Pompidou Centre in Paris, the modern art museum announced yesterday. The image, which appeared in June 2018 on the back of a sign for the museum's car park, features a masked rat-Banksy's avatar, symbolizing the down-trodden-brandishing a utility knife, the instrument he uses to cut out his stencils. The Pompidou Centre said it suspected the thieves of using a saw to cut the sign, which had been fitted with a plexiglass cover to prevent it being pilfered.

It said its the museum's security guards had already caught thieves trying to snatch the work a year ago. The Pompidou, which houses Europe's biggest collection of contemporary art but does not own the Banksy work, said it had filed a police complaint for destruction of property. The

theft comes seven months after another Banksy oeuvre paying homage to the victims of the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris was stolen from outside the Bataclan, the concert venue where Islamic State gunmen massacred 90 people. There also, the thieves brazenly cut the white stenciled image of a girl in mourning out of a fire exit.

Both the girl and the revolutionary rat were among a dozen works with which Banksy blitzed Paris a year ago. The rat was inspired by Paris street artist Blek le Rat, who started out in 1986 when a general strike by students and workers brought France to a halt. An anti-capitalist mural in the Left Bank, featuring a businessman in a suit offering a dog a bone after sawing the animal's leg off, has also disappeared. — AFP



This combination of pictures created yesterday shows (up) women walking past a recent artwork by British street-artist Banksy on June 28, 2018, in Paris and (down) the same wall but empty yesterday where a recent artwork by anonymous street artist Banksy was stolen, in Paris.—AFP

Kashmir trims its big fat weddings after Indian lockdown

After a year-long countdown, Arshi Nisar's wedding plans are in tatters, with the Kashmiri bride-to-be fearing for her guests' safety as an Indian security and communications clampdown on the Himalayan valley leaves residents on edge. The marketing manager had originally planned a three-day extravaganza, including a special make-up session, music, and a huge canopy to accommodate more than 700 guests invited to partake in the traditional 10-to-15 course Kashmiri feast known as wazwan. But like thousands of families in the troubled region, Nisar has resigned herself to an austere event, with no more than 40 guests in attendance-if they are able to venture out of their homes.

"I grew up dreaming about a grand wedding but there is not much to celebrate because of the situation," the 29-year-old told AFP. "Now we have decided on a very simple ceremony but I am still worried (about) how my in-laws and my family will move around in these tense times." India's decision in early August to scrap Kashmir's autonomy and impose a ban on phone and internet communications has left the region reeling, cutting off its eight-million-strong population from the outside world.

Hundreds of clashes between government forces and protesters have erupted since the order, leaving more than 100 injured. Authorities have eased the security restrictions in parts of the valley but tensions still run high amid a complete shutdown of businesses, public transport and educational institutions. Government forces use steel barricades and coils of barbed wire to block roads while protesters stop private vehicles from using the roads, forcing many to remain at home.

Already in the grip of a decades-long insurgency against Indian rule, the heavily militarised region is no stranger to security crackdowns. But this time, even the usually buoyant wedding industry—a major driver of Kashmir's economy—is buckling under the strain, with hundreds of notices appearing in newspapers and on television in recent weeks, postponing or cancelling ceremonies.

'Heartbreak'

In a status-conscious society famed for its hospitality, weddings have long served as a showcase for wealth and generosity, with guest lists regularly topping 1,500 and costs running upwards of \$30,000. "Families save for years or decades to splurge on weddings," Bilal, who wanted to be identified only by his first name, told AFP. Parents start preparing for their child's marriage almost immediately after birth, he said. So when only 15 percent of the invited guests turned up for his brother's wedding last month, "it was a heartbreak for the family," he



In this file picture a Kashmiri shopkeeper displays a wedding dress at a market ahead of the Muslim festival of Eid Al-Fitr in Srinagar.



In this file picture a Kashmiri vendor waits for customers at a stall with wedding garlands made from Indian rupee notes at a market in Srinagar. — AFP photos

said. For others consumed by wedding preparations, the communications clampdown has made it near impossible to contact suppliers and event managers.

Days before his sister Tehmina's wedding, Muntazir, who declined to give his last name, is struggling to procure everything from a wedding bed to jewelry and clothing for her trousseau. "I had placed an order for a bed and given clothes for stitching to the tailor. Both the stores are closed and there is no way to contact them," the 41-year-old told AFP. Even hiring cooks and butchers was a challenge because of the communication blackout, he said. "Weddings are a once in a lifetime event," he said.

"As a brother I feel gutted by the thought that her wedding is devoid of the traditional color." For bride-to-be Nisar, her September wedding to her boyfriend of five years came after a hard-fought battle with their parents to overcome resistance to the marriage. "We had a tough time convincing our families for the relationship and this was the time to be happy," she said. But, she added: "you cannot have dreams in Kashmir." — AFP



Lil Nas X wants to make 'at least 70' songs for his debut album

Lil Nas X wants to record "at least 70 songs" so he has plenty to choose from for his debut album. The 20-year-old rapper shot to fame after his country trap hit 'Old Town Road' went viral on video-sharing platform TikTok earlier this year, and he has revealed his first record, which is only "two per cent" complete, will be very "personal" and varied. He told Angie Martinez on Power 105: "With this [project], I wanna have at least 70 songs to choose from." Although he said it will be "more personal", he also promised it will be "slapping". It's likely he'll open about his sexuality on the album, after he came out as gay during Pride Month in June this year. The 'Rodeo' rapper recently admitted he believes the universe was sending him signs to push him toward opening up about his sexuality. Nas - whose real name is Montero Hill said being thrust into the spotlight made him realize it was time to come out. He said: "I never would have

done that if I wasn't in a way pushed by the universe. In June, I'm seeing Pride flags everywhere and seeing couples holding hands - little stuff like that." Nas first alluded to his sexuality when he asked fans to listen to his song 'C7osure (You Like)', and noted the rainbow on his album cover. Then in July, he tweeted: "wow man last year I was sleeping on my sisters floor, had no money, struggling to get plays on my music, suffering from daily headaches, now i'm gay. (sic)" Nas admitted he is still at the "first stage of figuring out" what he wants to do in his music career and he has no idea what songs he'll be recording in 10 years' time. Referencing lyrics from 'C7osure', he said: "This is what I gotta do / Can't be regretting when I'm old. That's my philosophy right now. Do everything you can because [snap!] ... it could all go in a second."

Gamez teases new music

Selena Gomez has teased she's "working on" new music. The 27-year-old singer hasn't released her own material since last year's 'Back to You', and after taking some time away from the spotlight to work on her mental health, she's now revealed she's ready to step back into the studio again, telling fans there's new music on the way. Selena took to her Instagram Stories to share a picture of a soundboard in a recording studio, and wrote alongside it: "Just so you know, I see your comments and I'm working on it." The 'Wolves' singer also posted another image of herself flashing a peace sign as she sits next to a keyboard. Meanwhile, it was previously claimed that her close pal Taylor Swift inspired her to get back in the studio after the recent release of her new album 'Lover'. A source said: "She has actually been working on music for her album over the last few years here and there and with the recent release of Taylor Swift's 'Lover' album, it has really lit a completely new fire in Selena to get some of her music out there. She is actually looking to get stuff out before the end of the year." And if things go to plan, the source believes Selena - who recently featured on Benny Blanco's 'I Can't Get Enough' - should have new music out later this year. They added: "If all things go as planned we should be hearing at least a new single by the



end of the year if not a fully released album. One of the things now to think about is the surprise factor, Selena wants that aspect involved in it as well. But people and fans should get excited because we are going to get something soon."

Chastain tested by director Muschietti on It Chapter Two



Jessica Chastain says 'It Chapter Two' director Andy Muschietti left her "drowning in blood" on the set of his horror film because he is a perfectionist. The 42-year-old actress plays the adult version of Beverly Marsh in the sequel to Muschietti's hit 2017 movie based on Stephen King's iconic 1986 novel. Chastain appears in one scene in which she is drenched in 4,500 gallons of fake blood and she has now revealed that she had to shoot the scene multiple times, each time getting cleaned up and starting afresh, because Muschietti wanted it to be flawlessly fear-inducing so it had the biggest impact on the audience. Speaking at the European premiere of 'It Chapter Two' which was held on Monday night at The Vaults in London, she said: "Everything is much easier than making a movie with Andy Muschietti. He's funny but he's also impossible because he does 60 million takes in the mud, in the slime, in the blood, every take you have to start again. It was a lot, I was drowning in blood." Chastain admits she and the rest of the adult Losers' Club - James McAvoy, Bill Hader, Jay Ryan, Isaiah Mustafa, James Ransone and Andy Bean - became close friends during the shoot and she couldn't help but feel a pang of sadness when they had their final "Loser lunch" in Los Angeles recently. She said: "I love these actors so much. We were just in LA together, all of the Losers, and we had a lunch and I just thought, 'It's our last Loser lunch.' It was a bit heartbreaking." Chastain was responsible for creating the Losers' Club WhatsApp group but she has spilled that one of her castmates has had the audacity to leave. Speaking about the chat group, she said: "I started it, but you know what people have slowly started to leave it. Bill Hader left first, although I think changed his number. He's been texting me since so we're OK." 'It Chapter Two' sees Bill Skarsgard reprise his role as Pennywise the Dancing Clown and is set 27 years after the first installment with the Losers' Club returning to Derry, Maine, to battle the child-eating monster once again. — Bang Showbiz

McAvoy did his own stunts on It Chapter Two

James McAvoy did all of his own stunts on 'It Chapter Two'. The 40-year-old actor plays the adult version of Bill Denbrough in the sequel to Andy Muschietti's hit 2017 movie and as a huge fan of Stephen King's original 1986 novel he admits it was a huge thrill to get to step foot inside the creepy Neibolt Street house, which leads to Pennywise the Dancing Clown's lair, and ride Bill's bike. Some of the sequences in the horror were physically challenging but rather than rely on a stuntman McAvoy took it upon himself to put his body on line for the fear-inducing film. Speaking at the European premiere of 'It Chapter Two', which was held on Monday night at The Vaults in London, he said: "The Neibolt Street house was quite a laugh, usually! There was a lot of stunts. I generally got to ride my bike up to it or away from it which was always fun because I loved [the bike] Silver and Silver was a big thing for Bill and for me as a fan of that book. So getting to ride around and shout, 'Hi-yo, Silver, away!' was pretty awesome. "I got to do a few stunts tumbling out of the house. You could watch the film and it could be a stuntman and you'd never know it wasn't me, but I did it all and it was awesome." McAvoy stars alongside Jessica Chastain, Bill Hader, Jay Ryan, Isaiah Mustafa, James Ransone and Andy Bean as the adult members of the Losers' Club who return to Derry, Maine, 27 years after the events of the first film to once again battle child-eating monster Pennywise the Dancing Clown - played by Bill Skarsgard. 'It Chapter Two' hits cinemas this Friday (06.09.19).



Ora and Lambert to perform at Avicii Tribute Concert

Rita Ora, David Guetta and Adam Lambert are among the artists set to perform at the Avicii Tribute Concert for Mental Health Awareness. The special benefit has been organized by the Tim Bergling Foundation - which was setup following the Swedish DJ's tragic passing in April last year at the age of 28 - to raise awareness of suicide and put an end to the stigma surrounding mental illness. The concert at the Friends Arena in Stockholm, Sweden, on December 5, will see some of Avicii's music played live for the first time ever, which was always the 'Wake Me Up' hitmaker's "dream". The 'SOS' hitmaker's father, Klas Bergling, said: "Tim had plans for his music to be performed together with a large live band, and now we are realizing his dream and giving fans a chance to experience his music in this unique way. "We are grateful that his friends, producers, artists and colleagues are coming to Stockholm to help. "They have all expressed a sincere interest and desire to engage in efforts to stem the tide of mental illness and lend their support to our work with the Tim Bergling Foundation. "We are very much looking forward to this evening, which will be a starting point for the foundation's work going forward ... We want this concert to help put the topic on the agenda and pay attention to the stigma surrounding mental illness and suicide. "Policies and tools are needed to detect the risks and prevent suicide, especially among young people." Rita teamed up with Avicii on the hit song 'Lonely Together' in 2017, whilst Adam featured on 2013's 'Lay Me Down' from the late star's debut studio album 'True'. Special guest performers will include 19 of the singers featured on his tracks and DJ sets from Avicii's peers; including Guetta, Kygo, Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike, Laidback Luke and Nicky Romero. The singers will also perform with an epic 30-piece live band. All profits made from ticket sales will go to charities and organizations supporting mental health awareness and suicide prevention. More artists are set to be announced. In June, Avicii's family posthumously released his final album, 'TIM', and proceeds from the record went to the foundation.



Pattinson expected harsher Batman backlash

Robert Pattinson expected more of a backlash over 'The Batman'. The 33-year-old actor will don the famous cowl when he plays the Caped Crusader in screenwriter Matt Reeves' upcoming comic book blockbuster, and while some fans have voiced their disapproval of the casting - including a Charge.org petition to have him removed from the role - he insisted it could have been worse. Speaking to Variety, he said: "To be honest, it was less vitriolic than I was expecting. It's much more fun when you're an underdog. There's no expectation of you." Rather than worrying about public reaction, Pattinson revealed he was actually more "upset" about the casting news leaking before an official announcement. He admitted: "When that thing leaked, I was furious. Everyone was so upset. Everyone was panicking from my team. I sort of thought that had blown up the whole thing." The 'Twilight' star's big screen debut as Batman is set to be released in 2021, and he admitted putting on the iconic costume for his final audition was "quite transformative". He added: "It's maybe the craziest thing I've ever done in terms of movie stuff. I put it on. I remember saying to Matt, 'It does feel quite transformative!' He was like, 'I would hope it does! You're literally in the Batsuit.'" Despite the backlash, 'The Batman' team has thrown its support behind Pattinson, with producer Michael E Uslan asking people "wait till they see



Spice Girls to discuss Glastonbury with Beckham

The Spice Girls are planning to meet up with Victoria Beckham to discuss playing Glastonbury. Mel B - who is known as Scary Spice in the girl band - claimed she and Emma Bunton (Baby Spice), Geri Honer (Ginger Spice) and Mel C (Sporty Spice) are going to catch up with Posh Spice on Wednesday (04.09.19) to talk about their plans to perform at Worthy Farm, after Mel revealed the fashion designer is keen to play the iconic festival. Speaking at her 'A Brutally Honest Evening with Mel B' book show at The Savoy Theatre in London on Sunday, Mel said: "I think if you are just going to do Glastonbury then let's just go on tour and do the rest of Europe." She also confirmed Victoria, who opted out of their 'Spice World' reunion tour this year, is also part of their upcoming animated film. She spilled: "We are definitely signed on board to do that. All five of us, yes." Mel, 44, praised her bandmate for her successful career in fashion but admitted that "you can't beat being Posh Spice". She told fans at the show: "Victoria is Victoria. She's made an amazing career based on the Spice Girls. "She's got a fashion empire and she's done amazingly well. "But you can't beat being Posh Spice in the Spice Girls, can you? You can't beat that." Scary first spilled that Victoria was keen for Glastonbury to Mo Gilligan on 'The Lateish Show' in July. She said: "Funnily enough, my mum was at her mum's summer party and Victoria was there, and she did actually mention to my mum that she'd love to do Glastonbury for their 50th next year. "It's not just me saying it, she actually did say that to my mum." The 'Stop' hitmaker are keen to reunite again as soon as possible and Mel previously cited Glastonbury as the perfect place. She said: "You know what, it just happens to be Glastonbury's 50th anniversary next year. "I think that'd be a really good thing to do. "And the girls are going to kill me for saying it but I don't care. we owe it to our fans and ourselves. We are gonna do more and I don't care what anyone says."



Lifestyle | Features



Boy creates a 'wizard' pose in his Harry Potter inspired outfit at the Harry Potter Wizard's Unite event in Indianapolis, Indiana. — AFP photos



Woman stands underneath prop clock tower.



Two participants compete on stage for a chance to spin a prize wheel at the Harry Potter Wizard's Unite event.



Man poses wearing Harry Potter merchandise at the Harry Potter Wizard's Unite event.

Catholic school priest bans 'Harry Potter' books on exorcist advice

Exorcists advised a Nashville school priest to ban the Harry Potter books, over fears the popular children's novels could be used to summon spirits. Reverend Dan Reehil contacted exorcists in Rome and the US, who recommended removing the fantasy novels from St. Edward Catholic School's library in Tennessee. Launched in 1997, the series of books spins an epic tale of good and evil focused on the adventures of the eponymous bespectacled young wizard as he struggles

against the dark wizard Lord Voldemort.

"The curses and spells used in the books are actual curses and spells; which when read by a human being risk conjuring evil spirits into the presence of the person reading the text," the reverend said in an email obtained by local media. Rebecca Hammel, the superintendent of schools for the Catholic Diocese of Nashville, told the newspaper The Tennessean that Reehil had "canonical authority to make such deci-

sions." Although the school used to stock the books, it will not offer them to pupils in its newly opened library, Hammel said. A global success, the Potter series by British author J.K. Rowling has been repeatedly banned from schools in the US and Britain, mostly for allegedly promoting satanic values or black magic. — AFP

'TERRIFIED' CHALAMET TAKES ON SHAKESPEARE WITH LOVE LILY-ROSE DEPP



French-US actress Lily-Rose Depp arrives for the screening of the film 'The King' presented out of competition.

Hollywood heartthrob Timothee Chalamet said Monday he was "terrified" about playing Henry V in an epic new Shakespeare movie for the millennial generation. The Oscar-nominated 23-year-old takes on the Bard's most swashbuckling character, Prince Hal, opposite his real-life girlfriend Lily-Rose Depp as Catherine of Valois in "The King", which is premiering at the Venice film festival. Confessing that he was more used to "light sabres than swords", the American star said it was "terrifying for me" to take on the 15th-century English monarch who triumphs over the French in the mud and blood of the Battle of Agincourt.

"It was entirely new for me to do stunt work. It was mediaeval," said the star of "Call Me By Your Name" of fierce battle scenes shot over a fortnight in 40-degree Centigrade heat in Hungary. The film combines Shakespeare's Henry plays into one extended tale of the rogue carousing prince who never wanted to be king but is thrust into power at a time of terrible turmoil. Australian director David Michod admitted that he took extreme liberties with the text, one of the founding myths of English nationalism. "We made a whole bunch of stuff up, I can't remember what was real, what was Shakespeare and what was us," he told reporters. Chalamet said the story had much to say to young people, not least because most of the key characters were his age and "still shopping for their personality".

North Korean parallels

And he hinted that the youthful North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was on his mind as he limbered up for the role. "At the time power was wielded by unusually young people... and there is something almost disturbing in that," the actor added. "There are modern allegories in the world. I am not going to shout them out but there are people today who came into power by lineage-who have virtues perhaps, though we don't know-but wield (power) in scary ways often."

British heartbreaker Robert Pattinson has a show stealing turn as the long-haired decadent French Dauphin, who gets his tail roundly spanked at Agincourt, with director Michod saying he had given the character a certain "razzle dazzle". Depp, 20, whose father Johnny is starring in Ciro Guerra's "Waiting for the Barbarians" at Venice later this week, said the Netflix film "speaks a lot to power".

"It was a time when women were given no power and had no choice over their own lives. The way in which Catherine harnesses her power and uses it in a very calm way with a lot of conviction and strength resonates with this period" of empowerment, she added. — AFP



British actress Julie Andrews acknowledges receiving a Golden Lion for lifetime achievement during a ceremony at the 76th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP

'Lucky' Julie Andrews lifts Venice lifetime award

Julie Andrews, the star of classic family films such as "Mary Poppins" and "The Sound of Music", was honored with a lifetime achievement award Monday at the Venice film festival. The English actress, 83, kissed the special Golden Lion award and said she felt "so blessed" for having such a fairytale career. "I'm still amazed, I've been a lucky girl who got to play beautiful roles," she added.

The child singer and dancer began in London's West End before rising to theatrical stardom on New York's Broadway in musicals such as "My Fair Lady" and "Camelot". She won an Oscar for "Mary Poppins" in 1965 and a nomination for best actress the following year for playing the governess Maria von Trapp in "The Sound of Music". After being made a dame by the Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, Andrews made a big-screen comeback in the "Princess Diaries" in 2001. She has lent her voice to hits such as the "Shrek" and "Despicable Me" movies in recent years. The festival laid on a special screening of another of her most famous roles in "Victor Victoria" in her honor. — AFP



French US actor Timothee Chalamet poses for a selfie photo with fans as he arrives for the screening of the film 'The King' presented out of competition during the 76th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP photos



(From left) Australian actor Joel Edgerton, French-US actress Lily-Rose Depp, Australian director David Michod, French US actor Timothee Chalamet and British actor Tom Glynn-Carney arrive for the screening of the film 'The King' presented out of competition during the 76th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido.

I.Coast arrests 12 in DJ Arafat tomb desecration probe

Ivorian police have detained 12 people as part of a probe into the desecration of DJ Arafat's tomb after fans opened the music star's coffin to take photos of him hours after his burial, officials said Monday. The incident took place Saturday following an overnight funeral concert at Abidjan's main stadium, where tens of thousands paid tribute to the singer who died aged 33 in a motorbike crash last month. Events took a dark turn when fans tried to enter the Williamsville cemetery where the singer's family had given him a private burial, prompting clashes

with police. Several people made it past security, forced open the fresh grave and coffin, and took photos and videos that they shared on social media. Police fired teargas to disperse the grave profaners, and several people were injured, witnesses told AFP. "A probe has been opened and will be made public," state prosecutor Richard Adou told AFP. Abidjan's prefecture, meanwhile, confirmed that 12 had been detained following the incident. DJ Arafat, whose given name was Ange Didier Houon, was one of the

most popular African musicians in the Francophone world, and had been referred to as the "king" of coupe-decale (cut and run), an Ivorian form of dance music.

News of his death had led to scenes of hysteria among some of his fans and Twitter tributes from fellow artists. President Alassane Ouattara called him "a youth icon and ambassador of Ivorian music and culture". — AFP



Ivorian singer Tina Glamour (center on the giant screen) pays her respects to his late son Ivorian singer DJ Arafat, during his funeral ceremony at the Felix Houphouet-Boigny stadium in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. — AFP



A Darth Vader helmet and mask from the film 'The Empire Strikes Back' on display at the Profiles in History auction house in Calabasas, California ahead of 'The Icons and Legends of Hollywood Auction' on September 25 and 26. — AFP photos

Darth Vader helmet among Hollywood treasures in \$10 mn auction



A Marilyn Monroe outfit from the 1950 movie "A Ticket to Tomahawk" (left) is seen beside the outfits of Leonardo DiCaprio (center) and Kate Winslett (right) from the 1997 film "Titanic".



Spyros Skouras's Best Picture Academy Award for the 1947 film "Gentleman's Agreement" is seen on display beside an Emmy Award from the first Emmy's in 1949 (left) and Martin Landau's 1967 Golden Globes Award (right) at the Profiles in History auction house.



Spectacles worn by the actor Danile Radcliffe in the 2001 film "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" on display.

Darth Vader's helmet from "The Empire Strikes Back" is among a vast collection of coveted Hollywood treasures going under the hammer next month, with experts predicting it could fetch nearly \$500,000. The mask and helmet is one of only a handful worn by actor David Prowse, who played Luke Skywalker's nemesis and-spoiler alert-father on-screen in the 1980 "Star Wars" blockbuster, making them the "holy grail" of science fiction artifacts, according to auction organizers.

"The catalog estimate is \$250,000-\$450,000, and you never know what something will go for until it crosses the block-it could well exceed that," said Zach Pogemiller of auctioneer Profiles in History. "Star Wars is always popular. It's never been hotter than it is right now, with the franchise continuing as strongly as it is." The "Icons and Legends of Hollywood" sale will take place September 25-26 in Los Angeles, with nearly 1,000 lots together expected to sell for over \$10 million.

It will feature items from some of Tinseltown's most iconic movies, ranging from Hollywood's golden age to contemporary action movies and sci-fi. Up for grabs will

be a black-and-white dress worn by Dorothy-or more specifically, Judy Garland's camera double Barbara Koshay-in 1939 classic "The Wizard Of Oz," which is estimated to reach up to \$500,000.

A prototype moon buggy stolen by James Bond from villain Blofeld's secret lair in "Diamonds Are Forever" will also go under the hammer, with an upper estimate of \$600,000. Among additional items expected to trigger bidding frenzies are a dress worn by Rose (Kate Winslet) in "Titanic," the DeLorean car smashed by a train in "Back to the Future III," and an authentic best picture Oscar statuette from 1948. "You always hear stories of movie studio personnel who rescued what are now priceless pieces from the dumpster because they were being thrown out," said Pogemiller. "It's incredible that people really didn't have the foresight until relatively recently to preserve all of these important artifacts that are part of our cultural history." — AFP



Zach Pogemiller from auction house Profiles in History displays Uhura's (Nichelle Nichols) Phaser from the Star Trek series which began in 1966.



Dorothy Gale's screen used dress from the 1939 film "The Wizard of Oz" on display at the Profiles in History auction house.



Phaser used by actress Nichelle Nichols who played the role of Uhura in the Star Trek series which began in 1966 on display.



A helmet worn by actor Tom Skeritt who played the role of Dallas in the movie 'Alien' is placed on a mannequin dressed in his outfit from the film.



A miniature Moonraker 5 from the 1979 James Bond film on display.

Blockbuster King Tut show breaks French attendance record

A major show of artefacts found in the tomb of Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun in Paris has smashed visitor records for a French exhibition, after being extended to cope with huge crowds. The La Villette hall in northeast Paris has sold more than 1.3 million tickets for "Tutankhamun: Treasures of the Golden Pharaoh", organizers said yesterday. The largest number of Tutankhamun artefacts ever to have left Cairo are on display in the show, which has been described as a "once in a generation" event about the young Egyptian

monarch. The exhibition, which opened on March 23, is set to close on September 22 after a one-week extension.

King Tut was also the subject of the previous attendance record for a French art exhibition, a 1967 show at the Petit Palais in Paris that attracted 1.2 million visitors. After Paris, the show travels to the Saatchi Gallery in London in November, and then continues touring other cities until 2024. More than 150 treasures from the boy king's tomb-including 60 which have never left Egypt before-were assembled for the Paris exhibition. The

unparalleled collection is being transferred to the enormous new Grand Egyptian Museum near the pyramids at Giza, which is due to open next year. The Louvre in Paris has also loaned one of its top Tutankhamun pieces to the show, a statue of Amon, the king of the gods, protecting the pharaoh. The Egyptian antiquities ministry is sharing in the proceeds of the show. — AFP



PORTO VELHO: A member of Uru Eu Wau Wau tribe covers his face in the tribe's reserve in the Amazon, south of Porto Velho, Brazil. The tribe has vowed to fight to the death against land invasions. — AFP

Kids struggle to breathe as smoke chokes Amazon city

PORTO VELHO: When Maria Augusta Almeida, 45, heard her grandson cough incessantly, she knew what was to blame: the fires raging in the Amazon forest, some of them more than 200 miles away from Porto Velho. The smoke permeating the city, the capital of Brazil's north-western state of Rondonia, is leading concerned parents to wait for hours in line at local hospitals to get help for their children who are struggling to breathe.

The Thomson Reuters Foundation visited four health centers in the city, one of the hardest hit by smoke from the burning rainforest. In all, there were reports of children, some of them infants, seeking medical care due to smoke inhalation. Last month, Brazil's space research agency, INPE, revealed the number of fires in the Amazon was the highest since 2010.

That sparked international calls for the country to do more to protect the world's largest tropical rainforest - key to curbing climate change - from deforestation and other threats. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro authorized the military to fight the fires after several days of

public protests and criticism from world leaders. In Porto Velho, residents said the Cosme e Damiao Children's Hospital, run by the Rondonia state government, had become the epicenter for children with breathing difficulties.

The symptoms from outdoor smoke inhalation have evolved into a full-blown crisis for some parents, as they do not know how to protect their children from what is in the air. The daughter of local salesman Mauro Ribeiro do Nascimento, almost two years old, has asthma and could not stop coughing. "I have taken her to Cosme e Damiao three times already," her father said. "They were doing nothing but putting her on a nebulizer." The device helps patients breathe in medicine as a mist through a mask or a mouthpiece, to treat respiratory problems.

Worried about the strain on her lungs, do Nascimento took his daughter to a different centre for an X-ray, which showed her lungs were "congested" due to irritation caused by smoke. Staff at Cosme e

Damiao were not authorized to say how many children they had attended since the fires escalated, and did not respond to requests for comment. But volunteers and locals said the lines grew much longer about a month ago, when smoke began choking the city streets.

"The city was so filled with smoke you did not know if you should keep the windows open to maybe get some fresh air, or close them to stop more smoke from getting in," said Sara Albino, a nursing student who volunteers at the hospital. At her worst, Albino's 20-month-old daughter had to use a nebuliser five times a day, which she has at home. Eye drops had to be applied constantly to ease the burning sensation in the child's eyes, her mother said. "Her eyes would not stop tearing up ... they were almost glued shut; it was like conjunctivitis," she said.

Urban fires

According to the World Health Organization, fires in the Amazon pose a risk to health including from respira-

tory diseases, especially in children. But not all fires affecting Porto Velho are far away in the jungle, as they have become a cheap way to clear vegetation from urban areas for construction purposes, according to residents.

Last week, the city's airport had to shut down after smoke from an urban fire got out of control. The vegetation on the roadsides leading to the airport was burned to a crisp. The fires in Brazil's sprawling Amazon rainforest have receded slightly since Bolsonaro sent in the military to help battle the blazes last week.

Meanwhile, families do what they can at home. "I bought a humidifier ... we keep it in my granddaughter's room," said Raimundo dos Santos, 71, who was selling water to people waiting in line at a Porto Velho health centre. The machine, which increases moisture in the air, has helped his eight-year-old granddaughter breathe. But the rest of the family is still struggling. "I myself have already been to the hospital since the fires started," dos Santos said, adding that he was treated for smoke inhalation. — Reuters

Hezbollah: Flare-up with Israel over but 'new phase' begins

JERUSALEM: Lebanon's Hezbollah leader said that while a flare-up with Israel at the border was over, the episode had launched a "new phase" in which the Iran-backed group no longer has red lines. In a televised speech, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the new focus would be on targeting Israeli drones that enter Lebanon's airspace, and this would be handled by fight-

ers in the field. Hezbollah and the Israeli army exchanged cross-border fire on Sunday after a drone attack last week in a Hezbollah-controlled Beirut suburb. Hezbollah blamed that incident on Israel, raising fears of a wider regional conflict.

In his speech, Nasrallah said Sunday's missiles sent Israel "a clear message that if you attack, then all your border, your forces and your settlements at the border and (deep inside)" will be at risk. His comments struck a defiant tone, although perceptions in the region are that the longtime enemies privately want to avoid all-out war at a time of soaring regional tensions. During Sunday's flare-up, Israel faked soldier injuries to dampen any inclination of Hezbollah to escalate hostilities.

Israeli media photographed an army helicopter performing what appeared to be the evacuation of two

wounded soldiers to hospital after Hezbollah launched anti-tank missiles at an army base and vehicles. Israel said there were no casualties. But a person briefed on the evacuation, and who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said the soldiers were in fact unharmed and bandaged with fake blood in what he called "a psy-ops stunt". Hezbollah said it had destroyed an Israeli armored vehicle, killing and wounding those inside, and it broadcast what it said was footage of two missiles hitting a moving vehicle.

Nasrallah said Sunday had marked the first such Hezbollah operation in a long time targeting Israel in positions across the border, not in the Israeli-occupied Shebaa farms. "This is no longer a red line," the Hezbollah chief said. "I tell the Israelis, we no longer have red lines because you changed the rules of engage-

ment." Hezbollah, whose forces have fought in support of President Bashar Al-Assad in Syria's war, also said two of its men were killed in an Israeli strike in Syria last week. Israel said its attack thwarted an Iranian-led drone strike against it.

But after the Hezbollah missile volley on Sunday, scores were apparently settled and the two sides, who fought a deadly month-long war in 2006, returned to business as usual on Monday, with the border reverting to calm. Israel had raised the stakes last week by accusing Iran of stepping up efforts to provide Hezbollah with precision-guided missile production facilities. Hezbollah denied this. And Israel has increasingly put the blame on Lebanon as a whole for letting Hezbollah, which is part of Lebanon's coalition government, grow in military and political power. — Reuters

Iran rules out direct US talks...

Continued from Page 1

powers involved in negotiating the 2015 deal. "We have received several proposals (to have talks with the United States) and our answer has always been negative."

Tehran and Washington have been at loggerheads since May 2018 when Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the nuclear deal and began reimposing crippling sanctions. The arch-foes were on the cusp of confrontation in June when Iran downed a US drone and Trump ordered retaliatory strikes before cancelling them at the last minute.

Iran has riposted by scaling back its nuclear commitments in response to the US withdrawal from the deal, which gave it the promise of relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its atomic program. It has already increased its uranium enrichment and stockpiles, and Rouhani said yesterday a "third step will be enacted in the coming days" unless the remaining parties to the deal honor their own commitments.

"If by Thursday these negotiations yield no results, we will announce the third step of the reduction of our commitments," he said. On Friday, the International Atomic Energy Agency said just over 10 percent of Iran's uranium stockpile was enriched to 4.5 percent, above the 3.67 percent limit stipulated in the 2015 deal.

The UN watchdog said Iran's total stockpile of uranium, which under the accord should be no more than the equivalent of 300 kilograms of uranium hexafluoride, stood at roughly 360 kilograms. But Rouhani stressed the Iranian countermeasures were reversible. "Our steps have been taken in such a way that it doesn't take much time to get back to the starting point," he said. Rouhani voiced regret over the failure of European governments to fulfill pledges they made during negotiations.

"Unfortunately after the US betrayal... the Europeans haven't acted on their commitments or couldn't... in some cases they could have acted but did not," he said. "What we are asking of the other countries is that they continue to buy our oil. "We can continue negotiations even after the third step," he added. Rouhani has had a series of phone calls with Macron in recent weeks aimed at salvaging the nuclear deal. The French president has been trying to convince the United States to offer Iran some sort of relief from sanctions it has imposed on the Islamic republic since pulling out of the agreement.

A conservative Iranian lawmaker said Macron had proposed offering Iran a \$15-billion credit line on condition it returns to the fold. "Macron has proposed Iran stop its third step for now in exchange for this sum, and maybe retreat from its first and second steps to the initial situation," said Ali Motehari, quoted late Sunday by Iran's Tasnim news agency. The 2015 deal was brokered between Iran and the so-called 5+1 - UN Security Council permanent members Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States plus Germany. — AFP

In Iraq's Baiji, mines turn farms...

Continued from Page 1

The loss pushed him to join Halo Trust, a non-profit group clearing unexploded ordnance in Baiji since June as part of the United Nations' Mine Action Service (UNMAS).

In temperatures reaching 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit), Halo Trust mine searchers scanned a field near Baiji for an IS speciality: plastic jerrycans packed with explosives and rigged to pressure plates. The bombs appeared to have been planted in long rows parallel to a main thoroughfare to defend against incoming Iraqi troops. Mine searchers used excavators to map out the bombs, then mechanically defused them so Iraqi troops could take the components away.

"When we talk as friends, it's clear no one hasn't seen injustice and explosions with his own eyes. This is why we're doing this job," said Lahib. In Baiji alone, 340 explosive hazards were removed since UNMAS operations began, with up to 25 IEDs uncovered daily. UNMAS says the scope and complexity of IED contamination in IS-controlled areas is "unprecedented", with tripwires painted to blend in with surroundings and even Iraqi currency turned into bombs.

The fear of undiscovered threats has kept around 100 families away from the area, said Abu Mohammad, another local official. "People want to come back, live in their homes and get on with normal lives, but when they see that this guy

got blown up or that guy was killed, they stay away," he said. "This soil means so much to us and we hope this kind of thing-losing our loved ones, our children, our homes-doesn't happen on it."

More than 2,500 people remain displaced from Baiji, according to the International Organization for Migration. Returns seem to be speeding up, with some 15,000 people back in their home district since December. For the most part, however, they are returning to an utterly destroyed moonscape. The town of Baiji is a labyrinth of mostly-abandoned buildings, still riddled with bullet holes and craters. Twisted rebar stick out from the ruins like crushed spider legs. UNMAS hopes clearing IS-laden explosives will allow for Baiji's reconstruction, but other challenges remain.

The area is controlled by various Iraqi paramilitary factions that must approve any activity, which aid workers said slows down their work. "We get authorization from one group but it doesn't work with the others, so we end up going to four or five different groups before we can start working," one mine removal worker said. Iraqi parliamentarians from Sunni-majority areas, including Baiji, have also complained that the government has not allocated enough reconstruction funds to the area.

"The problem is huge but the effort to fix it is small," said Iyad Saleh, program director at Iraqi non-profit group IHSO. He spoke on the sidelines of an IHSO awareness session at a Baiji elementary school, where volunteers showed pupils pictures of IEDs strewn in the dirt and warned them of the gory consequences of touching them. "If the rate of reconstruction is so weak and slow," said Saleh, "it will take long years to return this area to the way it was before." — AFP

Sports

Mike Minor, Texas Rangers end Yankees' 220-game scoring streak

Dodgers bash seven homers in rout of Rockies

NEW YORK: Mike Minor pitched 7 1/3 outstanding innings as the Texas Rangers withstood a lengthy rain delay Monday at Yankee Stadium and recorded a 7-0 victory over the New York Yankees, who did not score a run for the first time in 221 games. After a delay of 2 hours, 52 minutes before the first pitch, the Rangers won for the fourth time in six games thanks to Minor (12-8). The lefty allowed five hits Monday. He struck out five and walked one while throwing 111 pitches. After consecutive walk-off wins over Oakland, the Yankees were blanked for the first time since June 30, 2018, against Boston. It was the second-longest streak of scoring a run since 1900, only behind a 308-game run by the Yankees from Aug. 3, 1931, to Aug. 2, 1933. Jose Trevino, Delino DeShields and Shin-Soo Choo homered for the Rangers.

ASTROS 3, BREWERS 2 (10 INNINGS)

George Springer led off the 10th inning with his 30th home run of the season, and Alex Bregman matched his career high with four hits to lead visiting Houston over Milwaukee. Bregman went 4-for-5 with an RBI, and Jordan Alvarez homered for the Astros, who won for the ninth time in 11 games. Roberto Osuna (4-3) picked up the win despite allowing Christian Yelich's game-tying home run in the bottom of the ninth. Josh James walked two batters in the bottom of the 10th but still earned his first save. He struck out three of the five batters he faced, including Yelich and Hernan Perez back-to-back to end the game.

DODGERS 16, ROCKIES 9

Joc Pederson and Chris Taylor each hit two of the Dodgers' seven home runs and had three hits apiece, and host Los Angeles beat Colorado. Pederson had five RBIs but was injured in the fifth inning when he ran into the short wall in right as he caught Charlie Blackmon's potential home run ball. He left the game but said postgame that he merely lost his breath and experienced cramps. Corey Seager and Matt Beaty homered and had two hits each, Chase Bellingier also connected, and Gavin Lux had two hits for Los Angeles in his major league debut. Trevor Story, Nolan Arenado, Ryan McMahon and Ian Desmond went deep for the Rockies.

CUBS 5, MARINERS 1

Anthony Rizzo ended the Cubs' 24-inning scoreless drought with a one-out single in the seventh inning, and Kyle Schwarber added a bases-loaded triple later in the inning to key a victory over visiting Seattle. Kyle Hendricks combined with three relievers on a four-hitter, allowing the Cubs to end a two-game losing streak while defeating the Mariners for a third consecutive time this season. Hendricks worked the first six innings, allowing one run and three hits. David Phelps (2-0) pitched a scoreless seventh, and Duane Underwood Jr. and Brad Wieck each followed with a shutout inning.

Ski legend Hirscher to announce retirement

VIENNA: Alpine skiing legend Marcel Hirscher is expected to announce his retirement today, ending an illustrious career that saw him win a record eighth consecutive World Cup this year. The 30-year-old Austrian has spoken before about calling it quits — as early as 2014, in fact — but lately speculation that he would stop has intensified despite his endless winning streak.

The multiple world and Olympic champion has called a press conference for today, titled "Retrospectives, insights and perspectives" after saying earlier in the year he would announce a decision on his future after the summer.

"An era that was phenomenal and unique, as much as captivating and amazing ends," the tabloid newspaper Kronen's sports editor wrote in a commentary on Saturday. "Thank you Marcell!" said the paper on its front-page in a tribute typical of other newspapers headlines anticipating the retirement of one of the ski-mad country's favourite sporting sons.

Hirscher already has two more overall World Cup titles than the second most successful skier in history, another Austrian Annemarie Moser-Proell, who won six large globes. She is followed by Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg with five, and American Lindsey Vonn and Austrian Hermann Maier both with four.

Earlier this year, Vonn retired at age 34 as did Norwegian skiing legend and her close friend, Aksel Lund Svindal, 36.

'ROLE MODEL FOR EVERYONE'

At a press conference in March, fresh from winning his eighth crystal globe, 12 years after his first World Cup race, Hirscher said he was noticing his age, feeling "very, very tired" at the season's end.

The slalom specialist has also said in the past that he wants to spend more time with his family. He married and had a son last year. He had said he would take the summer to make a decision. A press conference for early August was called off.

Retired Gorgodze named in Georgia World Cup squad

TBLISI: Georgia's leading try scorer Mamuka Gorgodze was included in his country's squad for the Rugby World Cup, more than two years after announcing his international retirement. Gorgodze, 35, brought an end to his Test career in 2017, but was recalled by head coach Milton Haig with the likes of loose forwards Nodar Cheishvili and Giorgi Tsutskeridze missing out on selection. The Toulon lock, who has the nick-name

BRAVES 6, BLUE JAYS 3

Josh Donaldson stroked a two-run homer and scored three runs against his former team, and Canadian pitcher Mike Soroka earned his 11th win in Atlanta's victory over visiting Toronto. Donaldson's home run staked the Braves to a 2-0 lead in the first inning. Soroka (11-3) worked five innings and yielded three runs on five hits and two walks while striking out six. Johan Camargo added his fourth pinch-hit homer this season, and Dansby Swanson went 2-for-4 for the Braves. Mark Melancon notched his ninth save (eighth with Atlanta) by striking out all three batters in the ninth to seal the club's fifth straight win. Randal Grichuk (two RBIs) and Rowdy Tellez ripped solo home runs for the Blue Jays.

CARDINALS 3, GIANTS 1

Adam Wainwright threw seven shutout innings as St. Louis beat visiting San Francisco. The National League Central-leading Cardinals won for the 19th time in their past 24 games. They have not lost consecutive games during that span. The Giants fell for the sixth time in seven games and the 10th time in 13 games as their fade from the wild-card race continued. Wainwright (10-9) allowed four hits and no walks while lowering his home ERA this season to 2.43. Carlos Martinez recorded the last four outs to earn his 17th save.

TWINS 4, TIGERS 3

Max Kepler had a go-ahead two-run single, and Ehire Adrianza hit a two-run homer as visiting Minnesota edged Detroit. Luis Arraez had three hits and scored twice, while Jorge Polanco added three hits for the Twins, who took three of the four games in the holiday weekend series. Zack Littell (3-0) tossed an inning of scoreless relief to collect the victory. Taylor Rogers notched his 22nd save. Miguel Cabrera homered for Detroit, which has lost eight of nine. Victor Reyes had two hits and an RBI.

METS 7, NATIONALS 3

Noah Syndergaard bounced back from the worst start of his career by striking out 10 over seven scoreless innings as New York cruised to a win at Washington. Syndergaard (10-7), who became the first Mets pitcher in more than nine years to give up 10 runs when he was tattooed by the Cubs last Wednesday, allowed three hits and walked none. The Mets earned just their third victory in the past 10 games. The Nationals saw their four-game winning streak end. J.D. Davis had three hits for the Mets, including a two-run double, and Jeff McNeil hit a two-run homer.

INDIANS 11, WHITE SOX 3

Franmil Reyes laced a three-run double in the first inning, and Jake Bauers and Carlos Santana homered as host Cleveland sent Chicago to its seventh consecutive defeat. The Indians snapped a three-game skid behind a



NEW YORK: Elvis Andrus #1 of the Texas Rangers is tagged out at home by Gary Sanchez #24 of the New York Yankees to end the fifth inning at Yankee Stadium in New York City. — AFP

patient, 11-hit attack. Six of the 10 Cleveland batters who walked came around to score. Indians rookie Aaron Civale (3-3) allowed three runs, one earned, and seven hits in five innings with three walks and four strikeouts. Leury Garcia collected three hits for the White Sox.

DIAMONDBACKS 14, PADRES 7

Rookie Josh Rojas had four hits, including a home run, and Ketel Marte homered, doubled and drove in four runs in Arizona's victory over San Diego in Phoenix. Eduardo Escobar and Christian Walker also hit home runs for Diamondbacks, who have 202 homers and are on pace to break the franchise season record of 220 set in 2017. Padres rookie Ty France hit his third homer in two days. Marte homered to cap a six-run second inning, and Rojas, Escobar and Walker homered in a span of four batters in the sixth off Javy Guerra, a converted infielder who was making his major league pitching debut.

PHILLIES 7, REDS 1

Rhys Hoskins homered twice, and visiting Philadelphia

beat Cincinnati in the opener of the four-game series. Hoskins hit a two-run homer in the third and a solo shot in the eighth, and Scott Kingery and Bryce Harper also hit two-run homers for the Phillies. Philadelphia's Drew Smyly (3-6) bounced back after a winless August and allowed one run and four hits in 5 1/3 innings. Smyly, who has been released by two major league teams this season, struck out eight and walked three.

RAYS 5, ORIOLES 4 (10 INNINGS)

Tommy Pham delivered an RBI single with two outs in the bottom of the 10th inning to give Tampa Bay victory over Baltimore in St. Petersburg, Fla. Pham finished with three hits and three RBIs. Colin Poche (4-4) earned the win with a scoreless 10th. Rays starter Ryan Yarbrough couldn't hold a 4-0 lead, giving up four runs in the sixth that tied the game. Asher Wojciechowski made it through seven innings for the Orioles and gave up four runs on five hits. Tampa Bay's Austin Meadows and Baltimore's Hanser Alberto homered. — Reuters



ANDORRA: In this file photo taken on March 17, 2019 Austria's Marcel Hirscher poses with his different crystal globe trophies during the podium ceremony after competing in the Men's FIS Alpine ski world cup championship in Grandvalira Soldeu - El Tarter, in Andorra. — AFP

"Of course this is a very, very difficult decision for Marcel. No matter what he decides, I know professional skiing is his life, his passion," Hans Pum, former sports director of the Austrian Ski Federation (OeSV), told AFP.

"He is simply a role model for everyone. He really lived the sport, 24 hours a day, with an exceptional consistency and attitude, and that is of course very intense."

Hirscher has also secured seven world championship gold medals, as well as two gold medals at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, eclipsing his previous best, a slalom silver from Sochi four years earlier.

'Gorgodzilla', has 26 tries in 71 appearances for the 'Lelos' and is set to feature at his fourth World Cup. Teenage hooker Vano Karkadze, who featured at this year's junior world championships, is also included in Kiwi Haig's group unlike injured veteran Merab Kvirikashvili and fly-half Lasha Khmaladze.

The 'Lelos' have beaten South African side the Southern Kings and lost to Scotland so far in warm-up matches for the tournament, fixtures Gorgodze has missed, and they travel to Edinburgh on Friday for a Scotland rematch. Georgia open their campaign against Wales before facing Uruguay, Fiji and Australia in the pool stages.

Georgia squad of the Rugby World Cup in Japan: Backs (14): Tedo Abzhandadze (Brive), Gela Aprasidze (Montpellier), Giorgi Begadze (Kochebi Bolnisi), Zurab Dzeladze (Lokomotiv Tbilisi), David Katcharava (Enisei-

STM), Lasha Khmaladze (Batoumi), Giorgi Kveseladze (Armazi Marneouli), Vasil Lobzhanidze (Brive), Lasha Malaguradze (Krasny Yar Krasnoyarsk), Ioseb Matiashvili (Lelo Saracens), Tamaz Mchedlidze (Rouen), Mirian Modebadze (Kutaisi), Merab Sharikadze (Aurillac), Alexander Todua (Batoumi)

Forwards (17): Jaba Bregvadze (Sunwolves), Levan Chilachava (Montpellier), Beka Gigashvili (Toulon), Otar Giorgadze (Brive), Guram Gogichashvili (Racing 92), Beka Gorgadze (Bordeaux-Begles), Mamuka Gorgodze (Toulon), Vano Karkadze (Aurillac), Lasha Lomidze (Doncaster), Shalva Mamukashvili (Enisei-STM), Giorgi Melikidze (Stade Francais), Kote Mikautadze (Montpellier), Mikheil Nariashvili (Montpellier), Giorgi Nemsadze (Ospreys-capt), Beka Saginadze (Aurillac), Shalva Sutiashvili (Soyaux-Angouleme), Giorgi Tkhalishvili (Batoumi). — AFP

France drop Lambey, Priso for WCup squad

PARIS: France head coach Jacques Brunel dropped lock Felix Lambey and prop Dany Priso from his final Rugby World Cup squad yesterday. Brunel had originally named the pair, both 25, in his 31-man group to prepare for the tournament during the summer, but replaced them with Toulon's Charles Ollivon and Toulouse's Cyril Baille.

The former Italy boss Brunel said he had chosen Ollivon and Baille due to their displays in the warm-up Tests against Scotland and Italy in August. "When I had to make the choice Felix was a bit behind with his preparation and the matches. The loose-forwards was the hardest position," Brunel said.

"Cyril arrived in the middle of our preparation. He made a big effort to get up to the required level. It's without a doubt his performances during the matches which made the difference with our decisions. "We took players who proposed good things during the preparation," he added.

Picamoles picked

On Sunday RMC Sport reported the most experienced member of the side, Louis Picamoles with 79 Test caps to his name, was to be excluded but Brunel said the No. 8's inclusion was down to his display in the 47-19 victory over the Azzurri on Friday.

"Picamoles responded to the questions we put to him most notably in the match against Italy," Brunel said. "He showed his quality and his ability during the big matches," he added. The 65-year-old had omitted the experienced pair of Morgan Parra and Mathieu Bastareaud in June from his original squad as Brunel and new advisor Fabien Galthie looked to implement a quicker style of play. During the games last month he handed debuts to Fiji-born Alivereti Raka, Peato Mauvaka and Emerick Setiano. Lambey and Priso along with lock Romain Belleau and winger Vincent Rattez will remain as back-up. Les Bleus start their campaign against Argentina before facing the US, Tonga and England in their pool.

France's 31-man squad for the Rugby World Cup in Japan:

Backs (13): Maxime Medard (Toulouse), Thomas Ramos (Toulouse), Yoann Huget (Toulouse), Damian Penaud (Clermont), Aivereti Raka (Clermont), Wesley Fofana (Clermont), Gael Fickou (Stade Francais), Sofiane Guitoune (Toulouse), Virimi Vakatawa (Racing 92), Camille Lopez (Clermont), Romain Ntamack (Toulouse), Antoine Dupont (Toulouse), Maxime Machenaud (Racing 92), Baptiste Serin (Toulon).

Forwards (18): Gregory Alldritt (La Rochelle), Yacouba Camara (Montpellier), Arthur Iturria (Clermont), Charles Ollivon (Toulon), Wenceslas Laurent (Racing 92), Louis Picamoles (Montpellier), Paul Gabrillagues (Stade Francais), Bernard Le Roux (Racing 92), Sebastien Vahaamahina (Clermont), Demba Bamba (Lyon), Emerick Setiano (Toulon), Gabriel Slimani (Clermont), Camille Chat (Racing 92), Guilhem Guirado (Montpellier-capt), Peato Mauvaka (Toulouse), Cyril Baille (Toulouse), Jefferson Poirot (Bordeaux-Begles). — AFP

25 Ski legend Hirscher to announce retirement



26 India beat West Indies by 257 runs, win Test series 2-0



27 Neymar and PSG left to pick up pieces as transfer saga ends



NEW YORK: Rafael Nadal of Spain returns the ball against Marin Cilic of Croatia in their Round Four Men's Singles tennis match during the 2019 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York. — AFP

Nadal reigns, Zverev exits US Open

Osaka falls to Bencic while Vekic, Mertens win

NEW YORK: Rafael Nadal ramped up his quest for a fourth US Open title Monday with an impressive win over 2014 champion Marin Cilic to advance to the quarter-finals while Alexander Zverev slumped to a four-set defeat.

Second seed Nadal — the winner at Flushing Meadows in 2010, 2013 and 2017 — produced some electrifying moments of brilliance to end the challenge of Croatian 22nd seed Cilic 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2.

After barely breaking a sweat in reaching the last 16, a run that included a second-round walkover, Nadal stared down his stiffest test so far to surge into a quarter-final meeting with Argentine 20th seed Diego Schwartzman. "It's a huge honor playing in front of all of you and playing in front of Tiger Woods is a very special thing. I always say I don't have big idols but one idol is him and I always try to follow him."

Nadal's path to the final sees him take on Schwartzman next after the 5ft 7in (1.70m) Argentine chopped down sixth seed Zverev.

"He is playing amazing, nothing new, he's one of the

players with best talent on tour," the 18-time Grand Slam champion said of his upcoming opponent.

"It will be a big challenge. I have to play my best. I'm happy for him. He's a close friend and I hope to play a great match." Zverev rolled through the opening set against Schwartzman under the roof on Ashe during a rainy afternoon session, but he lost his way to go down 3-6, 6-2, 6-4, 6-3.

The German was enjoying his deepest run in New York but committed 17 double faults and 65 unforced errors and received a point penalty for swearing as Schwartzman advanced to a second US Open quarter-final in three years. "Generally my season so far has not been the best," said Zverev, who has reached just two quarter-finals in 18 Grand Slam appearances.

Zverev said he was hindered a "very swollen" back and right hip following a fall in his previous match.

"I had a lot of chances which I didn't use early in the match. He kind of ran away with it."

Zverev lost his serve three times during the second set but appeared to have steadied himself when he moved a break ahead at 3-2 in the third, only for

Schwartzman to wrest the momentum back in his favor after a lengthy sixth game. Matteo Berrettini became just the second Italian man to progress to the US Open quarter-finals, 42 years after Corrado Barazzutti's run to the last four in New York.

Berrettini, the 24th seed, eased to a 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (8/6) win over Russia's 43rd-ranked Andrey Rublev to reach the last eight at a Grand Slam for the first time.

Meanwhile, top-ranked defending champion Naomi Osaka was ousted from the US Open on Monday by Belinda Bencic while Croatian Donna Vekic erased a match point to join the Swiss 13th seed in a quarter-final matchup.

Bencic's 7-5, 6-4 triumph, her WTA-best sixth over a top-five foe this year, ensured 21-year-old Japanese star Osaka will fall from atop the rankings next week and won't become the first repeat US Open winner since Serena Williams in 2014.

"The challenge cannot be bigger against Naomi," Bencic said. "I had to be at the top of my game and I'm really pleased how well I handled my nerves at the end." Bencic, 22, matched her deepest career Grand

Slam run from the 2014 US Open with her third victory of the year over Osaka, having also won at Indian Wells and Madrid.

"She played pretty clean. She had a specific plan she wanted to execute," Osaka said. "I guess just being aggressive." Australia's Ashleigh Barty, the reigning French Open champion, will move atop the rankings next Monday after the loss by Osaka, who defends her Australian Open title in January.

Vekic, the 23rd seed, saved a match point in the second set and made her first Slam quarter-final by rallying past German 26th seed Julia Goerges 6-7 (5/7), 7-5, 6-3. "I don't even know how I won this match," Vekic said. "She was serving for the match. She had match point. I just kept fighting and believing I could win. It feels pretty amazing."

Belgian 25th seed Elise Mertens cruised past 141st-ranked US wildcard Kristie Ahn 6-1, 6-1 in 67 minutes to book a quarter-final berth against 19-year-old Canadian 15th seed Bianca Andreescu. "I just tried to play my best game," said Mertens, who has dropped only 16 games in four matches. — AFP

US sprinter Coleman cleared as USADA withdraws case

LOS ANGELES: Christian Coleman has been cleared to take part in this month's World Athletics Championships after the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) dropped charges against him on a technicality, a statement said Monday.

US sprinter Coleman, the fastest man over 100m this year, had been facing a two-year suspension after drug-testers were unable to locate him on three separate occasions in a 12-month period.

However, USADA said in a statement that after receiving guidance from the World Anti-Doping Agency on how the 12-month window should be calculated, it was withdrawing its case.

"Consistent application of the global anti-doping rules is essential in every case," USADA chief executive Travis Tygart said in a statement. "In this case we applied the rules to Mr Coleman in the manner that USADA understands should be applied to any other international-level athlete. "We must approach every case with the primary goal of delivering fairness to athletes under the rules and providing transparency and consistency in order to build their trust and support for the anti-doping system."

USADA said in its statement it had first recorded a "whereabouts failure" against Coleman on June 6 last year. A doping control officer had attempted to test the sprinter and discovered that he had failed to update his

whereabouts information to accurately reflect his location.

Two more whereabouts failures were also logged on January 16 this year and April 26. However Coleman argued that under International Standard for Testing and Investigations (ISTI) guidelines, his first missed case should have been backdated to the first day of that quarter — April 1, 2018 — which would mean the dates of the three offences fell outside the required 12-month time frame for a doping offence to have occurred.

In order to avoid future confusion, the rule is being revised with the change expected to take place in 2021. USADA said it had consulted with WADA to receive an official interpretation of the ISTI rules last week.

"This interpretation was received on Friday, August 30, 2019, and was that the Filing Failure which USADA had recorded in June 2018, should relate back to April 1, 2018, the first day of the quarter in which the failure

to update occurred," USADA said in a statement.

"Given these facts, USADA has determined that under the applicable rules, and in order to ensure that Coleman is treated consistently with other athletes under the World Anti-Doping Program, Coleman should not be considered to have three Whereabouts Failures in a 12-month period."

USADA said Coleman had since provided his whereabouts information by the start of each quarter as required and had been tested by the agency on 20 separate occasions. The sprinter had been due to face a hearing on Thursday which has now been scrapped, USADA said.

The agency said Coleman was free to compete with immediate effect but noted that the decision to withdraw the case could still be appealed by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). — AFP