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Iran seizes boat in the Strait of Hormuz, arrests Filipinos

Tehran fires up advanced centrifuges in latest nuclear step



Zimbabwe's former President Robert Mugabe

Zimbabweans mourn Mugabe

HARARE: Zimbabweans yesterday mourned the death of their founding father Robert Mugabe, but there was confusion over when his body would be returned from abroad for burial, two years after he was toppled in a coup. Mugabe died on Friday aged 95 in Singapore, where he had long received medical treatment.

He was one of the most polarizing figures in African history, a giant of national liberation movements whose 37-year rule ended in ignominy when he was overthrown by his own army in November 2017. President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who worked closely with Mugabe for decades before helping oust him, granted him the status of national hero on Friday, while tributes poured in from leaders across the continent.

Mugabe's body was initially expected to arrive in South Africa early yesterday before flying on to Zimbabwe. But there was still no word yesterday afternoon that the body had left Singapore. There were no major public events to mark Mugabe's passing in the capital Harare. Residents expressed a mix of sadness at the former president's death and frustration that their daily hardships had not relented since he left power.

Continued on Page 24

'Electronic armies' threaten activists and media in Iraq

BAGHDAD: Iraqi journalists, activists and researchers are facing a wave of accusations and threats by shadowy online groups they suspect are linked to powerful pro-Iran factions. Parties, armed groups and even officials in Iraq benefit from legions of supporters dubbed "electronic armies," which take to social media to anonymously sing their praises or mock their detractors.

These online rivalries now appear to have been fanned by months of rising tensions pitting Iran against the US and Israel. This summer, suspicious explosions hit five camps and arms depots run by Iraq's Hashed Al-Shaabi, a network of mostly Shiite armed factions linked to Iran. The Hashed was quick to blame Israel and the United States, but also said it suspected "agents" of the two countries contributed to the attacks.

That accusation was followed by an online campaign accusing a broad range of Iraqi nationals of "collaborating" with Israel and the US. One graphic shared by an Arabic-language page named "Don't Tread on Us" accused 14 Iraqis of de facto supporting a policy of "normalization with Israel." Shared on social media, it named figures such as journalist Joumana Mumtaz and blogger Ali Wajih.

'A broader plot?'

In response, Wajih penned a rare open letter to Iraq's prime minister Adel Abdel Mahdi, Hashed chief Faleh Fayyadh and his powerful deputy Abu Mehdi Al-Muhandis. "For years, a group of us journalists and bloggers has faced incitements to murder by people and pages that may be close to the Hashed, or directly linked to it," he wrote. Allegations they were "agents" or seeking normalization with Israel, Wajih said, were "empty and silly."

Iraqis have long been opposed to Israel because of its occupation of Palestinian land.

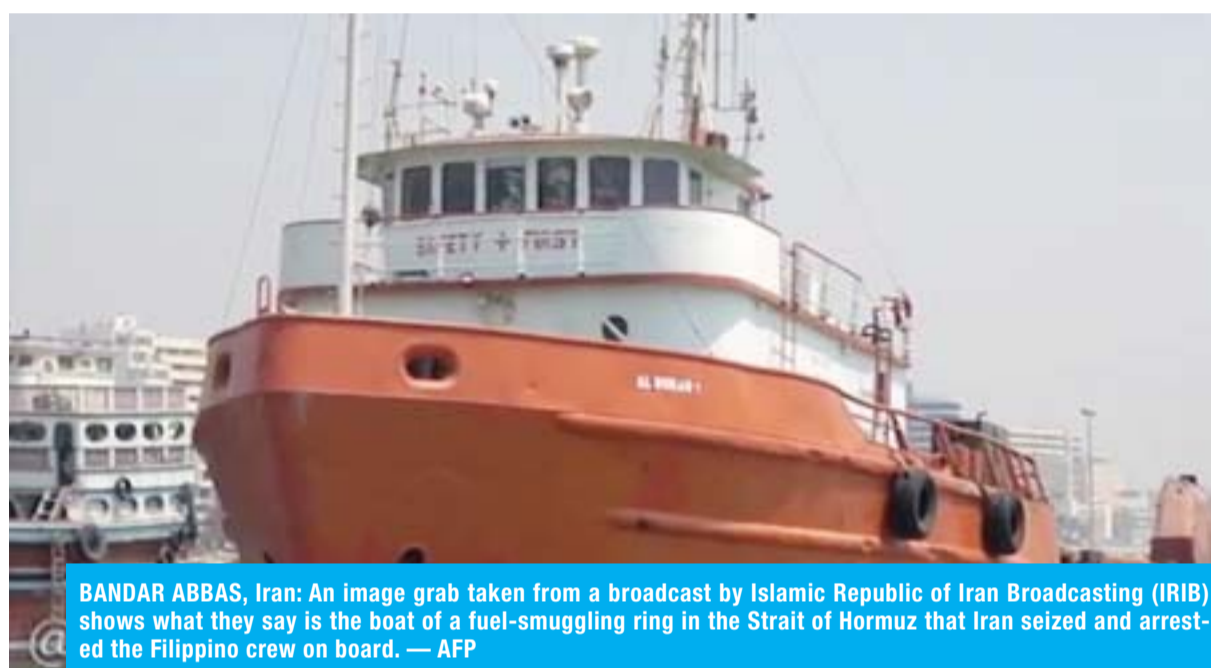
Continued on Page 24

TEHRAN: Iran seized a boat and arrested 12 Filipinos as it busted a "fuel-smuggling ring" in the Strait of Hormuz yesterday, the semi-official news agency ISNA reported. "A foreign tugboat was confiscated as well as 283,900 liters (75,000 gallons) of petrol worth 233.71 billion rials (about \$2 million)," ISNA said, citing the coast guard chief in the southern province of Hormozgan.

"Twelve Philippine nationals were arrested and the relevant judiciary officials are currently taking the required legal measures," Major Hossein Dehaki was quoted as saying. Dehaki said the group was suspected of operating a fuel-smuggling ring and the confiscated shipment had been intercepted close to Sirik county in the Strait of Hormuz. The seizure comes amid tensions in the Gulf after the United States unilaterally withdrew from a nuclear deal putting curbs on Iran's nuclear program in return for relief from sanctions.

The escalation has seen ships mysteriously attacked, drones downed and oil tankers seized in the Strait of Hormuz - a chokepoint for a third of world's seaborne oil. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps detained a "foreign tanker" in Gulf waters on July 14 for allegedly smuggling contraband fuel. "With a capacity of two million liters and 12 foreign crew on board, the vessel was en route to deliver contraband fuel received from Iranian boats to foreign ships," the Guards said at the time.

Maritime tracking service TankerTrackers reported



BANDAR ABBAS, Iran: An image grab taken from a broadcast by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) shows what they say is the boat of a fuel-smuggling ring in the Strait of Hormuz that Iran seized and arrested the Filipino crew on board. — AFP

the Panamanian-flagged MT Riah, used in the strait for fuelling other vessels, had crossed into Iranian waters, and at that point its automatic identification system stopped sending signals. In the most high-profile

seizure, the Guards impounded the British-flagged Stena Impero tanker in the Strait of Hormuz on July 19 for breaking "international maritime rules".

Continued on Page 24

India loses contact with Moon lander

BANGALORE: India's space program suffered a huge setback yesterday after losing contact with an unmanned spacecraft moments before it was due to make a historic soft landing on the Moon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to comfort glum scientists and a stunned nation from mission control in Bangalore, saying India was still "proud" and clapping the visibly emotional space agency head in a lengthy hug.

Blasting off in July, the emerging Asian

giant had hoped to become just the fourth country after the United States, Russia and regional rival China to make a successful Moon landing, and the first on the lunar South Pole. But in the early hours of yesterday, as Modi looked on and millions watched nationwide with bated breath, the Vikram lander-named after the father of India's space program-went silent just 2.1 kilometers above the lunar surface.

Its descent had been going "as planned and normal performance was observed", Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) chairman Kailasavidoo Sivan said. "Subsequently the communication from the lander to the ground station was lost," he said after initial applause turned to bewilderment at the operations room. "The data is being analyzed."

Continued on Page 24



BANGALORE: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (centre right) speaks with Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) scientists at the ISRO headquarters in Bangalore. — AFP

Like meat, but not meat - the latest tech

SAN FRANCISCO: Meaty mushrooms, printed 'steaks' and NASA discoveries - the latest array of meat alternatives has been showcased at the Good Food Conference in San Francisco. At various stages of production, here are a few of the ideas gaining attention as producers and investors focus on the booming vegetarian sector.

The Ecovative company was founded in New York in 2007 to develop bio-degradable packaging made from mycelium, the root structure of mushrooms. That project

was to find alternatives to plastic packaging - but the company then applied the same technique to make a leather substitute, and is now moving onto a meat alternative.

"You can grow a mushroom into a unique form" by changing its growing environment, says co-founder Gavin McIntyre. Once mature, the mushroom "has the structure and texture to simulate whole cut meat" - not just burgers and sausages - and can be a "blank canvas" for other ingredients to add taste and nutrients. The company is seeking partners to develop its product.

Italian technology entrepreneur Giuseppe Scionti was a university specialist in tissue engineering, who worked on creating human tissue using a three-dimensional printer.

Continued on Page 24



SAN FRANCISCO: Amadeus Driando Ahnan, cofounder of the start up company Better Nature, displays some of his products on his stand at the Good Food Institute's conference promoting plant-based and cell-based meat. — AFP

Facebook rolls out dating service

WASHINGTON: Is love the answer on Facebook? The huge social network rolled out its online dating service for the United States - a move to take on rivals such as smartphone app Tinder, while focusing on connecting people in "real" long-term relationships. The free "Facebook Dating" site which was announced last year and already available in 19 other countries will allow users to link their Facebook and Instagram posts to a separate dating profile.

It will seek to facilitate romantic connec-

tions among the more than two billion users of the social network worldwide. "Facebook Dating allows you to match with friends of friends and/or people not in your friend circle," said a blog post from Nathan Sharp, head of the project. One of the features, "Secret Crush," allows people who are friends to connect if they both secretly express interest in each other.

"Facebook Dating won't match you with friends, unless you choose to use Secret Crush and you both add each other to your list," Sharp said. "Finding a romantic partner is deeply personal, which is why we built Dating to be safe, inclusive and opt-in. Safety, security and privacy are at the forefront of this product."

Sharp said users will have the ability to report and block anyone.

Continued on Page 24



The Facebook sign and logo is seen in Menlo Park, California. — FP

Assembly panel mulls dropping social security loans' interest

MPs threaten to grill finance minister over 'religiously prohibited' interests

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The parliamentary economic and financial affairs committee is scheduled to hold a meeting today, to be attended by the Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf, to discuss proposals to drop the social security loans' interest. The meeting, headed by MP Salah Khorsheed, will be held amidst parliamentary threats to grill Hajraf unless the government passes the proposals on grounds that interests are religiously prohibited.

Meanwhile, informed source stressed that the government is totally against the proposal on grounds that the loans are part of a financial and economic process followed in all financial establishments, and that they do not overburden retirees as claimed by lawmakers. "The loans are very suitable to retirees' pensions," the sources added, noting that the government has a feeling that lawmakers are starting to interfere in the core of the social security financial operations in a way that hinders its executive procedures and affects its financial status, leading to considerable losses.

With reference to threats to grill minister Hajraf, the sources explained that he had been grilled twice in

vain, and argued that the issue has become too personal for some lawmakers "who seek to achieve more popularity in preparation for the parliamentary elections."

In other news, Kuwait Pharmaceutical Society's Secretary General Ali Hadi urged the minister of social affairs to work on imposing the new law which man-



Loans suitable to retirees' pensions, says govt

dates that pharmacies at co-op societies should be run by Kuwaiti pharmacists, adding that all those pharmacies' licenses had expired by the end of the grace period given by the law on June 30, 2019. Hadi added that



The National Assembly.

the health ministry had warned those pharmacies pending referring them to the penal committee which might close them down and withdraw their licenses until a court order is made.

Local Spotlight

Slavery of kids



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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In the past, childhood meant playing with the neighbors' kids outside, listening to grandma's bedtime stories every evening, going to bed early, dinner meal with parents, good breakfast, as well as reading stories and cartoon magazines when there was no social media or smartphones. Today, we are witnessing a transformation as many parents have forgotten about the presence of their children and assigned the duty of taking care of them to the housemaid as an 'alternative mother'. Even worse, some are abusing their kids' innocence through social media.

When parents exploit a child's innocence by introducing them to the world of social media and reality programs, those children become a source of money to the parents who only want to make money and achieve fame by using their children to be 'creatures for sale' and win large number of viewers.

It is a social and moral felony in the violation of the rights of children, and parents are directly responsible for any psychological harm caused to the child. Every conscientious person, including officials and journalists, must be aware of the seriousness of this matter.

Three different studies, with one going back to 2007, showed that kids just want to be famous. Clearly, the days are over when children wanted to be doctors or policemen. Now, they want to be actors, singers, YouTube personalities, or media influencers.

According to the Daily Mail, a study was conducted in 2009 in the United Kingdom that consisted of a survey completed by children, who were asked about what they wanted to be when they grew up. The top three choices were sports star, pop star or actor, while Jobs like doctor or policeman were much lower down the scale. Sadly, we are now witnessing a phase of replacing ethics and principles of hard work, with achieving fortune and fame without really donning anything to justify that.

According to a new research conducted in 2018, kids are looking at modern technology when they think about future jobs. The study concluded that children's career aspirations are often based on factors such as gender stereotypes or what they have seen in the media, TV and films. That is a big sign that there is a shift in the dreams of kids today, based largely upon new communications methods and the growth of online and gaming. There are many studies in this regard confirming that the aspirations of children have become linked to the love of appearances and achieving success on social media networks like Facebook and YouTube, because the fact that these children do not realize that parents are the ones who drive them towards this fishy road, and it makes no difference whether the child in this case is a boy or girl.

In Kuwait, such manipulations of kids are often highly criticized. Kuwait also has a child rights' law, as in many other countries which have laws that contain deterrent penalties for child cruelty and negligence, as well as holding parents full responsibility for providing child care. More work is needed to prevent the exploitation of children and putting them in the media for the purposes of fame and money. This is based on the Child Protection Act, which stresses that children should not be subject to any physical or mental abuse. Unfortunately, some celebrities on social media are deliberately posting negative images and socially unacceptable things for circulation, especially that these behaviors have psychological and moral effects on the child throughout his life.

The law in Kuwait guarantees the child's protection in the event of any incident of violence and the care and provision of treatment and psychological support as required by Chapter VIII of the law. The law places the custodian in charge of legal accountability in the cases that may occur as a result of his negligence, resulting in dropping the custody of the child and assigning another suitable custodian in the order of legal priorities. I think no laws should allow parents to use their kids by turning them to be slaves for money and false fame.

Kuwait crude tanker firm eyes gas cylinder safety plan

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Tanker Company (KOTC) has formed a plan to prevent possible hazards caused by the misuse of some three million gas cylinders that abound at the local market. Improper use of these gas cylinders proves not only costly but dangerous as well, which behooves state bodies to work together to address this growing problem, KOTC said in a statement. Around 90 percent of gas cylinders are misused, resulting in tremendous waste accumulation that not only threatens the environment but the oil industry as well, added the statement. The fact that many of these gas cylinders end up in households for residential use only magnifies the problem, the statement highlighted, citing frequent examples of misuse such as hurling the vessels around. Last year alone, the number of gas cylinders reported to have been damaged or tampered with amounted to 14,500, which indicates that the misuse of gas cylinders has become widespread, it revealed. Meanwhile, these gas cylinders can have a shelf life of 24 years if used properly and safely, but neglect and misuse can significantly slash durability, it added. — KUNA



Gas cylinders packed in the factory.

EPA: Gases released from sewage treatment within permissible limits



KUWAIT: EPA and Ministry of Public Works officials during the inspection tour. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: The Environment Public Authority (EPA) yesterday said the emission level of ammonia and hydrogen sulfide from sewage treatment plants in Sabah Al-Ahmad Residential City are within the permissible limits. An inspection tour was made by a delegation from the Ministry of Public Works to the residential area of Sabah Al-Ahmad to follow up on the latest developments of sewage treatment plants,

EPA said in a statement. The joint delegation inspected the treatment plants and measured the percentage of the emission of ammonia and hydrogen sulfide gasses, which are within the permissible limits, the statement added. It pointed out that the EPA continues to take samples for analysis and to ensure safety of environmental standards contained in the Environmental Protection Law, as well as pos-

sibility of utilizing this water for irrigation and afforestation purposes. The delegation included the Director of the Inspection and Control Department at the EPA Dr Meshal Al-Ibrahim, the Assistant Undersecretary of the ministry of Public Works Ismail Ahmad and Assistant Undersecretary for Maintenance Engineering affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Sabah. —KUNA

Councilmember inquires about 'harmful material' dumped in landfills

By Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Municipal Council member Maha Al-Baghli recently filed a number of inquiries on regulating and monitoring the process of work at the municipality's landfill sites, particularly concerning tips she had received about some companies allegedly dumping hundreds of tons of expired detergents in those sites, in addition to the presence of some electrical devices there as well. Baghli pointed that the dumped materials are extremely dangerous and detrimental to the environment and that the concerned companies' representatives had been entering

the municipality landfill sites without authorization.

In other news, Head of Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at Farwaniya Hospital Dr Amal Khodor announced that 18 bladder lifting surgeries were conducted at Farwaniya Hospital to treat urinary incontinence, in addition to six more done at Adan Hospital, in which Saudi Gynecologist and urinary tracts specialist Dr Ahmad Al-Bader took part. Dr Khodor added that this was Dr Bader's second visit to Kuwait, during which he trained obstetrics and gynecology staffs at Adan and Farwaniya hospitals on the procedure.

KFSD launches project to minimize dangers of fire accidents

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) announced yesterday the launch of its awareness project 'Kuwait Aman' to urge the public to install smoke detectors at home and acquire fire extinguishers and fire blankets for their importance in reducing damage caused by fire accidents. KFSD's department of Public Relations and Media said in a press release that the project includes distribution of flashers and flyers to educate citizens and residents and broadcast awareness messages for motorists in coordination with the General Directorate of Public Relations and Security Information at the Ministry of Interior. It added that the project, which will continue permanently, was launched in the citizen service centers of the Ministry of Interior, the General Directorate of Nationality and Travel Documents, the General Traffic Department, the Public Authority for Civil Information and the Amiri Hospital. It pointed out that is in the process of conducting a comprehensive survey on all public and private bodies with a high number of clients, in addition to the organization of lectures for employees to get them become acquainted with this project. — KUNA

Local

87,000 students start new school year today in Kuwait

Ministry of Interior in full gear for new school year



KUWAIT: Archive photos showing public school students on their first day of school. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: About 87,111 students from kindergarten and elementary levels start their 2019-2020 school year today. In a statistical study published by Ministry of Education, the total number of kindergarten students reached up to 31,558 in 196 schools in all educational areas. On the other hand, the ministry said that the total number of elementary school students reached 148,866 students, 126,362 of them are Kuwaitis. However, 126,056 students in middle schools, and 81,491 students of high school will begin their new year tomorrow and Tuesday respectively. The ministry announced that 72,045 teachers have begun their school year last Sunday in 853 schools on different educational levels. This year witnessed the opening of 20 new schools that have successfully operated and have provided all necessary human and financial needs.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (MoI) is in full gear for the start of the new school year



Traffic lights adjusted according to cars' flow

2019-2020, launching a media campaign and deploying police forces to ensure safety of students

and facilitate traffic. MoI will distribute patrol vehicles on highways, major roads and intersections as well as deploy police forces at entrances and exits of schools to make sure cars move smoothly, according to a statement by the ministry's Public Relations and Security Media Department yesterday. It added that timings of traffic lights would be adjusted according to flow of cars in order to reduce congestions. MoI called on people to leave their homes as early as possible in the morning in order to avoid traffic congestions, which would ultimately minimize accidents. It urged drivers to wear seat belts, abide by speed limits and never pass a red light, and refraining from using the emergency lane in highways unless in emergency cases, never park in parking lots of people with special needs nor parking in front schools' gates. — KUNA

Kuwait govt, Twitter discuss cooperation

KUWAIT: The head of the government's communication center and the spokesman of the Kuwaiti government Tariq Al-Mezrm met yesterday with

Twitter's Director for Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan Benjamin Ampen and commercial vice president of Connect Ads Agency Mohammed Mujahid. The government's communication center said in a press statement that the meeting dealt with supporting relations and exchanging experience in social media fields and benefiting from the experience of Twitter in developing communication mechanisms and strengthening them with the government agencies. — KUNA



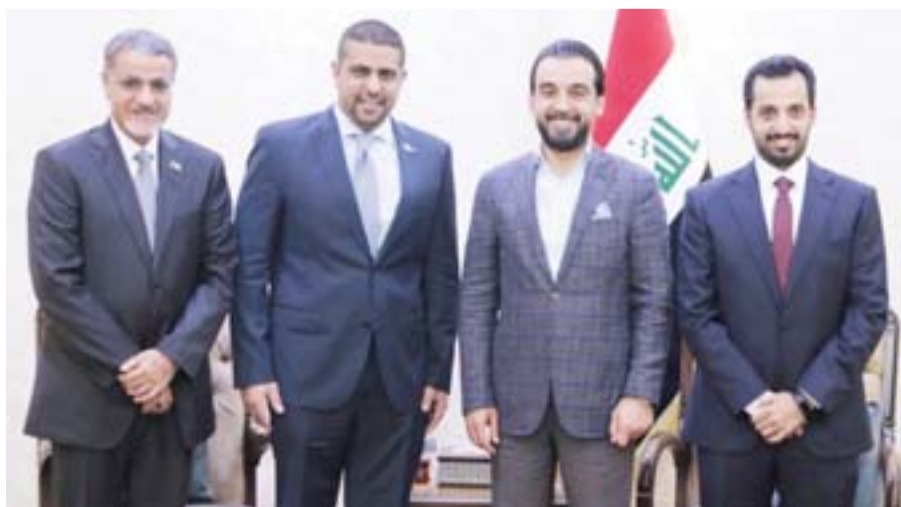
KUWAIT: The head of the government's communication center and the spokesman of the Kuwaiti government Tariq Al-Mezrm meets with Twitter's Director for Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan Benjamin Ampen and commercial vice president of Connect Ads Agency Mohammed Mujahid. — KUNA

Kuwaiti, Iraqi lawmakers discuss bilateral ties

BAGHDAD: Nothing can harm the Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations as long as there are international organizations and governing institutions, a Kuwaiti lawmaker said. MP Khalil Abdullah made that statement during a visit that a number of Kuwaiti lawmakers held with Iraqi

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Al-Halbousi, during which they held talks over strengthening bilateral ties. "Everyone is eager to strengthen bonds of cooperation between the two countries," Abdullah stressed.

Head of the Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation Rakan Al-Nisf said after the meeting that they had received an invitation from Halbousi to discuss means to buttress bilateral relations and joint parliamentary cooperation. He noted that the parliamentary relations between the two countries had undergone remarkable progress. He also hailed the success of the Iraqi parliament's hosting the meetings of the standing financial and administrative committee of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly. — KUNA



BAGHDAD: Kuwaiti lawmakers meet with Iraqi Parliament Speaker Mohammad Al-Halbousi. — KUNA

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Local

Kuwaiti Prime Minister congratulates Sudanese counterpart on new govt

Kuwaiti volunteers distribute aid to flood victims in Sudan



KHARTOUM: Relief aid is unloaded from a Kuwaiti plane which landed in Sudan on Friday. —KUNA photos



Kuwaiti and Sudanese officials pose for a group picture after the Kuwaiti relief plane's arrival in Khartoum.

KUWAIT/KHARTOUM: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a cable to Sudan's Prime Minister Dr Abdullah Hamdok, congratulating him on the formation of the new Sudanese government. In the cable, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak wished Prime Minister Hamdok success in achieving the aspirations of the Sudanese people. His Highness also praised the close brotherly relations between Kuwait and Sudan, affirming Kuwait's keenness to enhance these bilateral relations and fields of cooperation.

In other news, volunteers from Kuwait associations distributed humanitarian aid throughout the past week to victims of floods in Sudan. The activity coincided with arrival of three aircraft laden with 110 tons of supplies, as part of the Kuwaiti 'air bridge' to help the nation in the aftermath of recent devastating floods. Among the workers were volunteers from Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). The head of the society team, Dr Yousef Mesaad Al-Enezi, said that the KRCS teams were deployed in five regions for distributing 50 tons of food and other necessities. Meanwhile, convoys of relief supplies dispatched from the Kuwaiti Direct Aid arrived at the most hit province of the Nile, delivering 200 tons of assistance supplies for 4,000 families. Authorities said 78 people died, 98 were injured and 64,000 houses were demolished in the raging waters. The UN says an additional sum of \$150 million is needed from concerned donors to cope with the floods, in addition to \$1.1 billion for coping with the emerging tragic humanitarian conditions.

A third plane of Kuwait's humanitarian 'air bridge' carrying humanitarian aid meant for the victims of flash floods across Sudan had landed on Friday. KRCS

Secretary General Maha Al-Barjas said that the Kuwaiti plane is laden with food sent from Direct Aid Society to be delivered to the people of Sudan. This initiative comes from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's instructions for aiding "our brothers abroad to ease their suffering," she said. She pointed out that the third aid plane was carrying a number of volunteers from the Kuwait Air Force. She praised the efforts of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in speeding up the provision of aircraft to transport humanitarian aid to the affected people of Sudan. Barjas affirmed Kuwait's keenness on supporting the Sudanese people in their humanitarian crisis and alleviating their suffering.

Kuwait's deputy chief of mission in Khartoum Abdulkarim Al-Majim said meanwhile that the plane carried humanitarian aid sent by Direct Aid Society with 20 tons of food and KRCS with 10 tons to those affected by flash floods. Sudanese Chairman of the Support Committee of the Sovereign Council Musa Omar hailed Kuwait's leadership and government for aiding Sudan, adding that the humanitarian aid will be sent immediately to those affected. Direct Aid Office Fahad Abdulaziz said the plan is to provide about 270 tons of food and aid to those most affected in White Nile and Sennar and Al Jazirah states. In addition, the aid comes through two routes, through the 'air bridge' and buying from the local markets. The President of the Sudanese-Kuwaiti Friendship Society Mamoun Ibrahim expressed gratitude to Kuwaiti leadership and Kuwaiti people and humanitarian organizations. Two Kuwaiti airplanes carrying 80 tons of humanitarian aid had arrived earlier to Sudan.

Third 'air bridge' aid plane lands in Sudan



People gather for an event in Yemen to show gratitude for Kuwait's relief programs in the war-stricken country.



Kuwaiti Dr Faisal Al-Hajri performs surgery on a Syrian refugee in Turkey.



Kuwaiti relief aid distribution in Iraq.

Kuwait continues local, global humanitarian aid

KUWAIT: Kuwait's humanitarian aid activities continued to cover several areas locally and internationally to help those in need in all fields. Supporting the nations in need for assistance is a pillar in Kuwait's status as a 'Humanitarian Center,' thanks to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, designated by the United Nations as 'the Leader of Humanitarian Action.' As part of local charities, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced last week that it will continue its "donate to educate" campaign at the Avenues Mall which aims to benefit the students from needy families in Kuwait for the sixth consecutive year. The chairman of KRCS Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said in a press statement that increasing needs of families to educate their children necessitated organizing a fundraising campaign from Kuwaiti people and residents in order to provide underprivileged children an education that will be a foundation for their economic and social empowerment.

Kuwait's role

Kuwait strives to help people in other countries around the world, the Chairman of the United Iraqi Medical Society for

Relief and Development (UIMS) Dr Ahmad Al-Hayti said, praising Kuwait's role in providing humanitarian aid to displaced people all over Iraqi provinces, adding that the Kuwait Red Crescent Society extend a helping hand to needy people in various countries all over the world. He expressed his gratitude to Kuwait and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his continuous support and guidance to Kuwaiti charities. In a statement after meeting the Chairman of KRCS, Hayti said that medical, relief and development projects presented to the displaced Iraqis were reviewed, adding that these activities aim to alleviate their suffering, improve their living conditions and rehabilitate them to return to their towns, villages and their normal lives. He appreciated coordination with the KRCS in financing a project of operating and equipping three mobile medical hospitals, noting that the number of patients admitted per day exceeds 200. Dr Sayer mentioned that Kuwaiti assistance included relief, medical, developmental and other fields, pointing to the campaign "Kuwait beside you" which distributed food aid and adopted construction of schools and health centers for the displaced Iraqis in various governorates of Iraq.

In the meantime, the Consulate General of Kuwait in Irbil Omar Al-Kanderi issued a brochure about humanitarian aid provided by Kuwait to the displaced Iraqis since 2015 on the occasion of the International Charity Day on September 5th. Kanderi said that the number of beneficiaries of the relief program 'Kuwait by Your Side' reached 2,367,000 through the distribution of 377,500 food baskets, 38,000 heaters, 66,735 blankets. Moreover, 13,000 vouchers, each worth \$50, were

distributed in addition to 270,000 liters of kerosene. As for the support of Syrian refugees in Kurdistan region, many projects were provided to develop the infrastructure of the Syrian refugee camps in the Republic of Iraq which aims to improve shelter, water and sanitation conditions for more than 73,000 Syrian refugees. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti Office for Charitable Projects in Cairo has donated 13 million Egyptian pounds (\$785,000) to the Egyptian Orman Charitable Society to execute a number of humanitarian and charitable projects for low-income people. The director of the Kuwaiti Office Awatif Al-Yetamah said in a statement that the financial donation is from Al-Najat Charity association in Kuwait to help the poor families in Egypt by providing small booths for low-income people as small development projects, build houses for poor families and provide assistance to orphans as well as conduct heart operations for needy patients. Chairman of the Orman Charitable Society, Major General Mamdouh Shaaban, thanked the generous people of Kuwait and the Kuwaiti Office for Charitable Projects in Cairo for their charitable and humanitarian support.

Medical relief

Separately, a Kuwaiti medical team, which also included Dr Azzam Al-Zeer and Dr Abdullah Al-Nuaimi from Qatar, examined 20 Syrian patients of different ages in Sevgi hospital in Reyhanli town of Hatay, southern Turkey. Dr Faisal Al-Hajri, a urologist at Al-Farwaniya Hospital said. He added that each operation lasted three hours during which a urinary urethra was repaired for a Syrian young man and a urinary valve was

planted for another Syrian man suffering from complete urinary incontinence. Other surgeries were carried out on a 17-year-old Syrian man and two Syrian children who were injured in the war. Dr Hajri had performed several surgeries during his previous voluntary visits, which began in November 2015.

Moreover, the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Al-Haj Amadou Sy praised Kuwait's efforts and its positive impact on the international humanitarian sector. This came after Amadou and his accompanying delegation met with Sayer to discuss challenges facing the humanitarian arena, adding that it was agreed to enhance aspects of joint work through memorandums of understanding signed between the two sides. Amadou added that KRCS is one of the effective national societies in the region and the world. It strongly adopts directives of the International Federation and works to achieve goals and principles of the international movement by seeking to support those affected and needy by natural or man-made disasters. He expressed his deep thanks to the association for its support to the Union to combat the spread of Ebola virus in new areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo resulting from repeated humanitarian crises, noting that the danger to other cities and regions in the Congo and neighboring countries remains. Dr Sayer stressed meanwhile the association's keenness to work and coordinate with humanitarian organizations, adding that efforts should be increased due to the great needs, especially for the most affected countries such as Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Congo. —KUNA

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: An aerial view showing a part of Sharq. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shalkh

Authority launches Academy of Arts and Media on Sept 29th

Spreading the culture of dialogue, tolerance to strengthen cohesion, unity

KUWAIT: The Youth Public Authority (YPA) will launch a youth media and art project called 'Academy of Arts and Media' on September 29th, to enhance the role of youth in those fields, YPA Director General Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi announced yesterday.

The project will last eight weeks, Mutairi said during a press conference held at the YPA's headquarters, adding that it aims to strengthen the media dialogue for youth and spread the culture of dialogue and tolerance to strengthen cohesion and national unity. He expressed his optimism in this experience, which provides lectures, workshops and training in accordance with the curricula offered by academics, artists, media and journalists. Mutairi pointed to the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to empower and aspire the youth and provide opportunities.

Meanwhile, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Academy Abdullah Abdurassoul

said the YPA would start receiving applications from age group of 18-34 years on September 15th. He explained that the first set of youth at



For 18-34 years' age group

at the end of the course would receive certificates from the academy, while the second set of applicants will attend in March and April. Students of the academy will receive theoretical and practical lessons in the arts of acting, television and theatrical production and sound performance, as well as design decoration, Abdurassoul added.

In the meantime, member of the Board of Trustees artist Jassim Al-Nabhan said Kuwaiti youth must gain the expertise of their pioneers and expressed pride to be part of the board of trustees. Member of the media council Amal Abdullah said during the conference that the initiative of the YPA to establish this academy is to provide opportunity for talented youths to acquire the necessary skills. Director of the Academy Abdulaziz Al-Mujibel said meanwhile that the academy's building is located in Al-Daiya's Youth Center and ready to receive students of both sexes.

Mujibel explained the academy's headquarters includes six equipped classrooms and a vast classroom for public lectures as well as a theater for theatrical and cinema projects, seminars, lectures and a library containing references. The Board of Trustees of the Academy also includes Dr Mohammed Bilal, artist Hussein Al-Mufidi, writer Bader Mohareb, film director Dr Abdullah Al-Aber, Dr Ibtisam Al-Haadi and Dr Noura Qamlas, he noted. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Youth Public Authority's Director General Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi (center) speaks during the press conference yesterday. — KUNA

Kuwaiti woman earns global recognition in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia honored Chairperson of Kuwait's Women's Cultural and Social Society Lulwa Al-Mulla with the Muslim World Rania award in recognition of her contributions to women's rights in Kuwait and Muslim world. The award was received by Al-Mulla's son, Saleh Al-Nafisi, during a ceremony held at the conclusion of the Muslim World Business and

Investment Zone on Friday. Layla Rani, director of the event, said that Mulla has major social and cultural contributions in Kuwait as well as in Muslim worlds and internationally. She commended Mulla campaigning for women's rights and empowerment. Rani also praised Kuwait's contributions to Muslim countries and the rest of the world. She added the event's magazine highlighted the scientific, economic and social development in Kuwait. The Muslim World Rania Award is presented in recognition of amazing efforts by great women leaders and to appreciate their feat in all sections of life. Honored by the business and investment magazine 'OIC TODAY,' this year's award was extended to 12 women from Kuwait, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), India, Azerbaijan, Qatar and Iran. — KUNA



KUALA LUMPUR: Lulwa Al-Mulla's son, Saleh Al-Nafisi, receives the award. — KUNA



وزارة التجارة والصناعة
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Precious tagged metals amounted to 1.2 tons in August: Ministry

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced that the total weight of precious metals tagged during the month of August amounted to about 1.2 tons, which received fees estimated at KD 57,900 (about \$188,000). In a press statement issued yesterday, the ministry said that the weight of domestic and foreign gold tag amounted to 1,050 kilograms, which received fees estimated at KD 52,500 (about \$171,000). It also noted that the amount of local gold-tagged 22 carats amounted to 148.9 kg, while the amount of foreign gold amounted to 245.9 kg. The amount of local gold-tagged 21 carats stood at 462.4 kilograms, while the amount of foreign gold reached about 61 kilograms, it added. It pointed out that the amount of local gold tagged 18-carat amounted to about 19 kilograms, while the amount of foreign gold was estimated at 112.3 kilograms, noting that the amount of gold bullion tagged amounted to 70 kilograms received fees estimated at KD 3,000 (about \$9,772). The amount of silver tagged during the month of August amounted to 100 kilograms collected fees about KD 539 (\$1,755). It also noted that the precious metals department in the ministry issued 149 disclosures on the goods for clearance and conformity with the customs declaration, as well as 154 certificates for alloys, brands, and metals exempt from the seal and received fees estimated at KD 1,212 (about \$3,948). The department also examined 1,107 samples entered into the country and carried out 162 gold checks in this regard for 13.6 kilograms for which it received a fee of KD 136 (\$447.3). The ministry exercised its oversight role on the amount and caliber of gold, both from home and abroad to ensure compliance with the standards and ensure that there is no fraudulent process that may fall consumers. — KUNA

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّمَا إِلَهُ الْبَشَرِ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ الْمَلِكُ الْقَدِيمُ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا يَأْتِيهِ السُّبْحَانُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْفَتْحُ وَاللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا يَسْجُدُ لِلشَّمْسِ وَالْقَمَرِ سَجْدًا وَلا لِمَا خَلَقْنَ وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ الْكَافِرُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ سَوَاءً أَعْرَضَ عَنْهُ أَمْ لَمْ يَعْزُبْ عَنْهُ وَلا يَخَافُ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

Logo of the International Women's Group (IWG) - Kuwait

The International Women's Group (IWG) - Kuwait and its members wish to convey their heartfelt condolences to the Al-Sabah Family on the sad passing of the beloved

Sheikha Anwar Faisal Al-Sabah
Honorary President of IWG

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on her soul

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ لِلْأَرْوَاحِ الْمُنِجَّةِ



Russia and Ukraine swap prisoners to ease tensions

Muslim rebels hand over their guns in Philippines peace deal



KABUL: In this photograph taken on August 29, 2019, Afghan co-founder and president of ArtLords Omaid Sharifi, 32, speaks during an interview with AFP at his studio. — AFP

Young Afghans pen 'letters of pain'

Finding freedom by sharing their passions and emotions in written form

KABUL: Omaid Sharifi, who heads a Kabul-based art collective, sits in his studio and leafs through a stack of dozens of hand-written letters, reading out sentences at random. A line in one missive, written in Dari and spelled out in huge letters, states simply: "We want peace," Sharifi says. "By peace, they just mean a ceasefire, just stop this nonsense violence," he explains. The letters are the fruit of a recent initiative by ArtLords, a not-for-profit group that Sharifi co-founded and runs, which aims to give a voice to young Afghans who feel ignored and powerless as the war rages on.

In a pilot project in Kabul, where more than 30 people were killed by blasts in the past week, ArtLords is building on the Afghan tradition of penning "dard-e-dil" — letters of pain. The scheme allows people living in an ultra-conservative society to find freedom by sharing their passions and emotions in written form. Sharifi and his team have placed six large wooden letter boxes — painted white and decorated with love hearts

— in high schools, universities and cafes around the Afghan capital and invited people to share their stories.

"Whenever you want to share your deep thoughts, you write letters," Sharifi says. "So we asked the youngsters to write letters about their fears, about their solutions, about their hopes." Within the first two weeks of the project, they had more than 300 letters, Sharifi says. He reads from another, this one addressed to the Kabul government. "We are in a very bad situation," he quotes. "We need your attention because every single day we are dying from the fear of explosions and the fear that I might die today — in the car, in the office, in the university..." He says nowhere is safe.

Angry and ignored

The project launched a few weeks ago, just as talks between the US and the Taliban seemed to be entering their final stages. They are working on a deal that would see the Pentagon pull about 5,000 troops from Afghanistan by early next year, in return for various

security guarantees from the insurgents. But so far, the negotiations have all but excluded the Afghan government, and many Afghans — particularly educated young people in urban cores — feel angry and ignored.

The US says it is up to the Kabul government and Afghan society at large to forge an eventual peace deal with the Taliban that protects basic freedoms. But many fear a jaded America is selling out their interests in its bid to quit Afghanistan after 18 years of grinding and costly war. The young letter writers want "an inclusive peace process that takes into consideration all realities of Afghanistan," Sharifi told AFP at ArtLords' colourful base in Kabul, where artworks cover the walls and where anyone can walk in and paint a picture.

The 32-year-old artist is well known around Kabul and across Afghanistan thanks to ArtLords' prolific output, which centers mainly on the painting of huge murals on the capital's labyrinth of blast walls that divide the city into militarized ghettos. The latest mural

project ArtLords has undertaken is to paint one red tulip for each and every Afghan civilian killed in the war — some 35,000 in all since 2001.

Each "one of these tulips is a story of someone," Sharifi said. Many of the flowers will be painted at the scene of the explosion or attack that claimed an innocent life. Sharifi hopes to expand the letter-writing campaign across Afghanistan. He said the contents of all the letters would be shared with President Ashraf Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, the US and even the Taliban. "I know that the president has read all of the letters ... and he is aware of what the young ones are expecting of him in that whole peace process," Sharifi said. One of the letter boxes has been placed in a hip new cafe in Kabul, where young Afghans sip lattes and read books. "Afghan people are not very optimistic about this peace process because we do not know anything about the agreement," said one customer who gave her name only as Nargis. "For us the future is unclear." — AFP

In Arab Spring cradle, Tunisian youth dream of 'real leader'

SIDI BOUZID: As Tunisia prepares for presidential elections, young people in the city that was the cradle of the Arab Spring are disenchanted, saying the dreams of the revolution have been "dashed". "As long as we don't have a real leader that loves their country, we will not vote!" said Issam Heni, 34, determined to boycott the polls set for September 15.

The election was brought forward from November after the death in July of Beji Caid Essebsi, Tunisia's first president democratically elected in nationwide polls after the fall of longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. It was in the central Tunisian city of Sidi Bouzid that a young street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, set himself alight in December 2010 in protest over unemployment and police harassment.

His action sparked demonstrations that swept across the Arab world. Tunisia has since been praised as a rare success story for democratic transition after the uprisings. Yet while the first post-revolution elections in 2011 saw unprecedented participation, years later many residents, including those who were adolescents in 2011, are disillusioned. Major investments have breathed new life into Sidi Bouzid. But despite bright new infrastructure and a swimming pool, insecurity and unemployment exceeding 18 percent locally gnaw at young people's aspirations, while seven percent inflation batters already weakened purchasing power.

Dashed dreams

The interior of the country, traditionally less well

off than the coast, remains isolated, fuelling regular outbreaks of social unrest. While Heni voted in national polls in 2011 and in 2014, as well as the 2018 municipal elections, this time around he is more apathetic.

"The elections have become one of many events that don't concern me," he said, sitting in a cafe full of idle young people. "They want power and only power. Nothing more, nothing less," added Nadhmi, who is unemployed and in his 30s. He said he is often overwhelmed by financial difficulties.

"The dreams of the revolution and hopes of improving living conditions for Tunisians were dashed by mismanagement by a mafia political class," he said. Several residents told AFP they wanted a "strong" and "responsible" president like Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan. "When we have a candidate like the Turkish president, we will vote without fail," said Zied, 29, who has a degree in English and has been unemployed for five years. In 2014, Sidi Bouzid residents came out to support one of their own, conservative businessman Hechmi Hamdi, in the first round of the presidential election. Hamdi is running again, but this time with little traction.

'Trivial'

For some, the strongman they are looking for is embodied by controversial media mogul Nabil Karoui, a popular candidate now in prison on charges of money laundering. "I don't care if he is a thief or a bandit, the bottom line is that he is the only one working to help people like me," said Abir, 19, bent pulling onions in a vast field along the road to Sidi Bouzid. For Abir, the 56-year-old who built a reputation publicizing his charity campaigns "could save the poor in this country".

But some of the dozen other women working with Abir under the blazing sun disagree. "These elections are trivial. Nothing but the work we do with our own hands, now and like always, puts food on the table. No one will concern themselves with us," a woman called Fatma said. The president "does nothing but make the



SIDI BOUZID: Tunisian youths walk past a branch of the Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE) on August 15, 2019 in the central Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid, which nine years ago saw the start of the Arab Spring movements that brought down multiple autocrats in the Arab world. — AFP

rich richer and the poor poorer."

Nabil Jalleli, coordinator of the regional office of the Independent Higher Authority for Elections poll body in Sidi Bouzid, understands the strong temptation to abstain "especially on the part of the youth". Abstentions reached 65 percent for the 2018 municipal elections. For him, this is explained in part by "the political climate" and insufficient "services provided

by the political class to benefit young people".

Despite its democratic progress, Tunisia is struggling to meet the expectations of its population. Public services are inadequate and prospects limited for many young people, leading some to try to reach Europe to find a better future. But Haythem, a laundry worker in his 30s, refused to give in to defeatism. "We must vote so our country recovers," he said. — AFP

International

Trump and the US media just can't let go of 'Sharpie-gate'

The bizarre episode has taken on an even more bizarre mascot

WASHINGTON: It's been six days and Donald Trump and the US media can't seem to let go of a tit-for-tat involving the danger Alabama faced during Hurricane Dorian. The bizarre episode has taken on an even more bizarre mascot — a Sharpie marker used to alter a map of the storm's trajectory. Trump has insisted via Twitter to his more than 60 million followers that he was correct about the danger the southern US state had faced. He has brandished a mysteriously altered weather map in the Oval Office. He has deployed a rear admiral.

And the US media has lapped it up. On Friday — a day when survivors in the Bahamas and other places where the hurricane actually did hit were trying to rebuild their lives — the US president once more took to Twitter to argue about Alabama. The media "went Crazy, hoping against hope that I made a mistake (which I didn't)," he wrote. "Still without an apology."

The spat might seem insignificant as one of the most powerful Atlantic hurricanes on record wheels up the edge of the US east coast after pulverizing the Bahamas. But in terms of attention given by Trump, what's become known as "Sharpie-gate" is no sideshow. The strange tale began when Trump tweeted on Sunday that Alabama was among the states facing damage from the still approaching Dorian and would "most likely be hit (much) harder than anticipated."

Minutes after Trump's alarming tweet, the National Weather Service (NWS) counter-tweeted: "Alabama will NOT see any impacts from #Dorian. We repeat, no impacts from Hurricane #Dorian will be felt across Alabama. The system will remain too far east." By Friday, however, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the agency in charge of the NWS, seemed to vindicate Trump.

"From Wednesday, August 28, through Monday, September 2, the information provided by NOAA and the National Hurricane Center to President Trump and the wider public demonstrated that tropical-storm-force winds from Hurricane Dorian could impact Alabama. This is clearly demonstrated in Hurricane Advisories #15 through #41," it said. Furthermore, it stated, "The Birmingham National Weather Service's Sunday morning tweet spoke in absolute terms that were inconsistent with probabilities from the best forecast products available at the time."

Back down? Double down?

Opponents of Trump pounced on the topic. Trump, as he usually does, doubled down. Over and over this week he kept talking about Alabama, even when no other officials did, and he raged at the media for pointing out that Alabama still hadn't been hit and, in fact, never had been in real danger. On Wednesday, the back-and-forth took a still more curious turn.

In the Oval Office, Trump showed off a weather map showing an earlier — now completely out of date — forecast of Dorian's track that predicted the storm passing right across Florida, rather than turning up the coast. Added to the end of the path? A large bulge, apparently drawn in black Sharpie marker, that extended the storm deep into Alabama. Facing even more derision from TV comedians, satirists and Democratic opponents, Trump once more doubled down.

Late Thursday, the White House sent out the copy of a somber letter by Rear Admiral Peter Brown — Trump's counter-terrorism adviser — saying that back on Sunday he'd been the one to brief the president on Alabama being a possible target. On Friday, Trump accused the media of being "fixated" on the issue.



WASHINGTON DC: In this file photo taken on September 4, 2019, US President Donald Trump and Acting US Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan update the media on Hurricane Dorian preparedness from the Oval Office at the White House. —AFP

"This nonsense has never happened to another President," he said. But the icing on the cake came in the form of an item now for purchase on the Trump 2020 campaign merchandise website: a set of "Official Donald J. Trump Fine Point Markers." "Buy the official

Trump marker, which is different than every other marker on the market, because this one has the special ability to drive @CNN and the rest of the fake news crazy! #KeepMarkersGreat," Trump 2020 campaign manager Brad Parscale tweeted. —AFP

Hard-won 2015 Iran nuke deal

TEHRAN: Iran agreed with major world powers in 2015 to freeze its nuclear program in return for the lifting of punishing international sanctions. But in 2018, President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the agreement, later reimposing sanctions. Despite consistent denials from Tehran, the US and Israel continue to accuse Iran of seeking a nuclear weapon. Here is a look back.

Long road

Tough negotiations start in June 2013 between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Germany. The final deal is reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015, bringing an end to a 12-year international row over the Iran nuclear issue.

The aim

The goal of the deal is to render it practically impossible for Iran to build an atomic bomb, while at the same time allowing it to pursue a civil nuclear program. As part of the agreement, Tehran pledges to reduce its nuclear capacities for several years.

The accord caps Iran's enrichment of uranium at 3.67 percent, sufficient for power generation but far below the more than 90 percent level required for a nuclear weapon. Iran agrees to slash the number of its enrichment cen-

trifuges from more than 19,000 to 5,060, and to maintain that level for a decade. It also agrees to use only its less efficient, first-generation centrifuges. It undertakes to modify its heavy water reactor in Arak to make it impossible to produce plutonium for military use. The deal comes into effect on January 16, 2016.

Inspectors, sanctions relief

The International Atomic Energy Agency is charged with regular inspections of facilities such as uranium mines and centrifuge workshops for up to 25 years. The accord also paves the way for a partial lifting of international sanctions on Iran, opening the door to foreign investors. French energy giant Total and carmakers PSA and Renault all strike deals. UN embargoes on the sale of conventional arms and on ballistic missiles to Iran are however maintained up to 2020 and 2023 respectively.

US exit

But on May 8, 2018, Trump announces the US is pulling out of the agreement and will reimpose sanctions on Iran as well as all companies with ties to the Islamic republic. On August 7, it imposes sanctions that target access to US banknotes and key industries such as cars and carpets. A second tranche of sanctions kicks in on November 5, targeting Iran's vital oil sector and central bank transactions. From May 2, 2019, Washington ends temporary sanctions waivers it had granted to the eight main purchasers of Iranian oil, raising the pressure on hold-



BUSHEHR: In this file photo taken on February 25, 2009, Iranian technicians walk outside the building housing the reactor of Bushehr nuclear power plant at the Iranian port town of Bushehr, 1200 Kms south of the capital Tehran. —AFP

ers China, India and Turkey to find other suppliers.

Deal unravels

Responding to the sanctions, Iran announces on May 8 it will stop observing restrictions on its stocks of enriched uranium and heavy water agreed under the deal. It also gives the European Union, China and Russia until July 7 to help it circumvent US sanctions and sell oil, saying it would otherwise abandon more of the terms. Hours later Trump announces new measures on iron, steel, aluminum and copper.

On June 24, the US imposes financial sanctions on Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and senior Iranian military leaders. It comes as tensions rise

after Iran's downing of a US drone over sensitive Gulf waters and a series of tanker attacks that Washington blames on Tehran, despite its denials.

On July 1, Iran says it has exceeded the limit on its enriched uranium stockpiles set by the deal. On July 7, Iran announces it is set to breach the 3.67 percent cap on uranium enrichment stipulated in the deal and threatens to abandon more nuclear commitments in "60 days". On September 4, Iran lifts all restrictions on nuclear research and development. On September 7, Iran says it has fired up advanced centrifuges to boost its enriched uranium stockpiles, adding, however, that it will continue to give UN inspectors access to monitor its nuclear sites. —AFP

Tunisia airs first 'great debate' ahead of presidential poll

TUNIS: Days before the first round of Tunisia's presidential election, the fledgling democracy is holding three nights of televised debates between the candidates, a rare event in the Arab world. The showdown between the 26 hopefuls, starting Saturday, is seen as the highlight of the campaign and a turning point in Tunisian politics ahead of the vote a week today.

Called "The road to Carthage: Tunisia makes its choice", the programs will be broadcast on 11 TV channels, two of them public, and some 20 radio stations. "We won't be able to escape it," said a smiling Belabbes Benkreddda, founder of the Munathara Initiative which promotes open debate in the Arab world and helped organize the event.

The first hour-and-a-half debate on Saturday night will include several "heavyweight" candidates, pitting Abdelfattah Mourou of the Islamist-inspired Ennahda party against passionate secularist Abir Moussi, head of a group with roots in the party of former dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. There will also be an empty space for

the controversial media mogul Nabil Karoui, currently detained on money laundering charges. Organizers considered having him take part in the debate by phone from his cell, but whether or not he will be able to is up to the courts.

15 minutes to convince voters

The stage, at the studios of public TV channel Wataniya, places candidates in a semi-circle with two journalist moderators at the centre. The questions were set by the journalists and will be randomly selected and allocated to candidates on Friday. Each candidate will have 90 seconds to respond to a question and can be asked a follow-up question or interrupted.

At the end of the show, candidates will have 99 seconds to outline their manifestos and campaign promises. The number of questions has not been specified, but each candidate will have 15 minutes of speaking time during the program. "We are going to be extremely strict on time. It's the rule of the game, you are in front of the people and you each have the same amount of time to convince them", said Lassad Khedder, head of a private TV channel syndicate in Tunisia, who expects "very rich and heated debates".

Open competition

Beyond the organizational and technical elements, organizers highlighted the rare nature of the event. "Often in the Arab world, when we speak of competition we know who wins at the end,



TUNIS: Electoral posters of Tunisian presidential candidates Nabil Karoui (up), and Youssef Chahed, are pictured along a road in the capital. —AFP

with 99.99 percent. Today, we don't know who is going to win", Khedder said. Indeed, the plethora of candidates, political programs and issues, has led to an uniquely unpredictable election.

Many Tunisians say they are counting on the debate to help them make their decision. "It's unprecedented! As a Tunisian journalist, I am proud and impatient to see this," said Monia Dhoub, a member of the organizing committee. The debates are not entirely unprecedented in the region. In 2012, 15 months after the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, Egypt organised a historic

televised debate between two favorites among the 13 candidates running for president.

The winner of that election, the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi, was deposed by the army following massive protests a year after he took office. Munathara Initiative's Benkreddda said "the culture of debate doesn't yet have a place in the Arab world". But he noted that the Tunisian debates will also be broadcast by channels in Iraq, Algeria and Libya. The hope is, he said, that this "first step will serve as inspiration" for other Arab countries. —AFP

Mexico says migration crackdown working ahead of key US talks

MEXICO CITY: Mexico said Friday it has slashed undocumented migration to the United States by 56 percent since May, aiming to dodge the threat of tariffs under a deal the two countries are set to review next week. America's southern neighbor agreed in June to crack down on migration, mainly from poor countries in Central America, under the threat of import tariffs from President Donald Trump, who is seeking reelection on a largely anti-immigration platform.

"I do not think there will be a threat of tariffs because there is a 56 percent reduction" from May to August in apprehensions of undocumented migrants on the US side of the border, said Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard, who is due to travel to Washington next week to review the migration deal with the Trump administration 90 days in. The foreign ministry cited US Customs and Border Protection as the source of the figure, though that agency has not yet published data for August on migrant apprehensions at the border.

Ebrard repeated Mexico's refusal to become a so-called safe third country, which Trump has pressed for. Under such an arrangement, it would agree to make migrants who cross its territory seek asylum in Mexico rather than the United States. "The Mexican strategy is working. We will not agree to be a safe third country ... because it goes against our interests," the minister said. "It is unfair to our country."

Ebrard said he will tell Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo when he meets with them Tuesday that the way to fight undocumented migration from Central America is to reduce the poverty and violence that are prompting people to leave in the first place. He said that would include pushing Washington to fulfill its economic aid commitments to the region. "The United States promised \$2 billion, but we're still waiting for... a little more than \$1 billion" of that, he told a news conference. —AFP

Israel strikes Gaza after rocket attack

JERUSALEM: Israeli forces attacked Hamas positions in Gaza after rockets fired from the Palestinian enclave hit the Jewish state, the military said early yesterday. The exchange came hours after two Palestinian teenagers were killed by Israeli fire during clashes on the Gaza border. Late Friday, "five projectiles were launched from the Gaza Strip towards Israel," the army said.

The projectiles hit open fields in southern Israel, an army spokesman told AFP. In response, an "aircraft and tank struck a number of Hamas military targets in the northern Gaza Strip, including a post and military positions," the army said in a statement. A Hamas security source said there were no casualties resulting from the Israeli strikes. Later Saturday, a drone launched from southern Gaza crossed into Israeli airspace, the army said in a separate statement.

It "dropped what seems to be an explosive device" near the security fence, damaging a military vehicle before returning to Gaza. In response, an Israeli "aircraft targeted the squad which launched the drone," the army said. There were no reports of casualties in Gaza. During border clashes on Friday, two Palestinians aged 14 and 17 were shot dead by Israeli forces, the Gaza health ministry said, with another 46 Palestinians wounded.

The Israeli army said thousands of Palestinians took part in "especially violent" demonstrations along the border fence, which included throwing "fire bombs and explosive devices" at soldiers. Palestinians have been holding regular mass protests along the fortified border since March 2018. The protesters have called on Israel to end its crippling siege of the coastal enclave and demanded the right to return to lands their families fled during the war that accompanied the creation of Israel in 1948. —AFP

International

Russia and Ukraine swap prisoners in landmark 'first step' to ease tensions

'We have to take all the steps to finish this horrible war'

KIEV: Russia and Ukraine carried out a long-awaited swap of 70 prisoners yesterday, in a deal hailed by President Volodymyr Zelensky as a "first step" towards ending their conflict. Planes carrying 35 prisoners from each side landed simultaneously in Moscow and Kiev, where the passengers emerged under sunny skies. "We have taken the first step," Zelensky said on the tarmac after greeting and hugging former prisoners. "We have to take all the steps to finish this horrible war."

In emotional scenes at Kiev's Boryspil airport, family members embraced and handed flowers to the former prisoners, many weeping with joy. Among those swapped were 24 Ukrainian sailors, Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov and Russian-Ukrainian journalist Kyrylo Vyshynsky. "I am overflowing with happiness," Natalya Mokryak, the mother of one of the sailors, told AFP at the airport. "I have finally seen this come true." Russian state television showed the Russian prisoners emerging from the plane at Moscow's Vnukovo-2 airport used for government flights. Ukraine's SBU security service confirmed that Vladimir Tsemakh — a fighter with Moscow-backed separatists considered a key witness in the downing of flight MH17 — was handed over to Russia despite pleas from the Netherlands. Anticipation had been building for days for the exchange, which involved weeks of behind-the-scenes negotiations. Relations between Kiev and Moscow nose-dived in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea and Moscow backed separatists in the eastern industrial regions of Donetsk and Lugansk. Fighting there has claimed more than 13,000 lives over the past five years.

'Sign of hope'

Zelensky's election in April has raised hopes that a stalled peace process could be revived. The comedian-turned-politician vowed during his campaign to have Ukrainian prisoners in Russia returned and has said ending the conflict with Russia is his top priority. Russian

President Vladimir Putin said this week that the exchange would be "a huge step towards normalizing relations" with Kiev. Yesterday's exchange was "a very important step", Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said. "It's necessary to maintain this drive to solve problems as much as possible," she said on Twitter. German Chancellor Angela Merkel called the swap a "sign of hope" and called for the implementation of a 2015 ceasefire deal that Paris and Berlin helped broker.

The release of Sentsov will be seen as a major victory for Kiev. The 43-year-old was Ukraine's most famous political prisoner and the subject of a star-studded international campaign calling for his release. He was arrested in 2014 and had been serving a 20-year sentence in an Arctic penal colony for planning "terrorist attacks" in Crimea. "I thank all the people who have fought for us," Sentsov said at the airport in Kiev, where he was greeted by his teenage daughter who wept and smiled.

MH17 witness handed over

The sailors, including two members of Ukraine's SBU security services, were detained last year when Russia seized three Ukrainian vessels off Crimea. Moscow had wanted to put them on trial for violating Russia's maritime borders. Among those handed over to Russia was Vyshynsky, a 52-year-old journalist at Russia's RIA Novosti state news agency. The Russian-Ukrainian dual national was facing charges of "high treason" but was released on bail ahead of the swap. The release of Tsemakh, who was reportedly in charge of air defense in the area where the MH17 came down, was denounced by the Netherlands. The Dutch government contacted Ukraine "several times and at the very highest level" in an effort to prevent Tsemakh's handover. Foreign Minister Stef Blok said after his release. The Malaysia Airlines passenger plane travelling from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur



KIEV: A former prisoner is helped by a medical worker after he disembarked from a plane on September 7, 2019 at Boryspil International airport in Kiev after a long-awaited exchange of prisoners between Moscow and Kiev, a day after Russian President said for the first time the "large-scale" prisoner exchange with Ukraine was being finalised. — AFP

was shot down by a Russian-made BUK missile in 2014 over eastern Ukraine, with the loss of all 298 people on board. Most of those killed were Dutch and a Dutch-led Joint Investigation Team (JIT) is investigating the tragedy. An informed source told AFP that Dutch investigators

were able to question Tsemakh in Kiev this week before the swap. Efforts have intensified to resolve the conflict since Zelensky's election, with French President Emmanuel Macron calling for a summit of the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany this month. — AFP

Forgotten plight of Russia's jailed grassroots activists

REUTOV: When anti-corruption activist Yevgeny Kurakin went to make an official complaint about authorities destroying a park in his sleepy town near Moscow, he was arrested in the prosecutor's office. Three months later, he is still behind bars. Kurakin regularly denounces the corruption of officials in Reutov — a city of some 100,000 in the Moscow region where he lives. He had planned to run in Sunday's local elections.

Russian authorities have cracked down on mass protests calling for the elections to be free and fair, while the arrests of high-profile activists like Alexei Navalny have made international headlines. But Kurakin has gained little attention, despite languishing in jail on fraud charges his family say are fabricated. Investigators say the 42-year-old ran an embezzlement scheme in his apartment block through which he stole three million rubles that were supposed to go on building works and communal services.

Kurakin's neighbors have stood by him, with 132 of them signing a letter saying the accusations are false. Kurakin has exposed the controversial links between the city's former mayor Alexander Khodyrev and a local real estate developer, TsentrStroy. According to him, the alliance turned Khodyrev into a millionaire — allowing him to buy several villas, some exceeding 20 million euros. "He's a very uncomfortable person for the authorities," his wife Zhanna Bass said. "He exposes the crimes that they commit." Kurakin's case, lawyers say, is not unique. They say local authorities throughout the Moscow region have used such tactics to silence their critics. Khodyrev's personal office refused to comment, saying only that he is now mayor of another town. The current administration of Reutov also declined to comment to AFP.

'Local mafia'

Kurakin's arrest in June coincided with that of investigative journalist Ivan Goltunov, which led to an unprecedented mobilization of civil society which resulted in his quick release. But there is little public pressure to release Kurakin or others. "Yevgeny is not the only activist persecuted by the authorities in the Moscow region," said Kurakin's lawyer Dmitry Trunin. He said he could name "dozens" of names. But he said the cases often have "no resonance and these people are left alone to face the local mafia." The exact number of Russians jailed on trumped-up charges are difficult to estimate. A study published in April by US law firm specializing in human rights Perseus Strategies, Russia has at least 236 political prisoners — a figure that has risen in recent years.

'Absolute lawlessness'

Kurakin already spent 16 months in pre-detention under the same charges in 2015 before being released on bail. At the time, his case was returned to the prosecutor's office due to a lack of evidence. His wife said the second arrest came after he announced his candidacy in the local elections with the Yabloko opposition party.

"The aim is to find someone guilty of fraud so that authorities can say they are not corrupt because those accusing them of corruption are crooks," said another lawyer Dmitry Sotnikov. Kurakin's lawyers have challenged the conditions of his arrest but the case has dragged on. Valery Borshechov, the co-chairman of Moscow's Helsinki Group and a former Soviet dissident, said the investigation was taking place in an atmosphere of "absolute lawlessness."

At one hearing, masked armed men with batons working for the court prevented Kurakin's friends from entering the courtroom, throwing them to the ground. Three women, including his wife, were hospitalized. In such a system, many people facing similar charges have little chance of being acquitted. According to Russia's Investigative Committee, the acquittal rate of Russian courts in 2018 was a mere 0.51 percent. Complaints to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) are often the only hope for justice, said Tatyana Sukhareva, a lawyer working with former detainees. — AFP

Spain struggles to house thousands of young migrants

BARCELONA: Spain is struggling to accommodate thousands of young migrants who over the years have arrived alone on rickety boats or hidden in trucks, some of whom have ended up on the streets or even become involved in crime. There are currently around 14,000 unaccompanied young migrants in Spain, according to the government, up from just around 4,000 in 2016.

In regions like Catalonia in Spain's northeast, which has a large Moroccan community that attracts the youngsters after they arrive in the south, reception centers are overwhelmed. In Barcelona, dozens sleep rough on benches, in parks or in makeshift camps hidden in the hills that surround this Mediterranean seaside city. "They're damaged, many sniff glue. And they're very vulnerable on the street, criminal gangs take advantage and get hold of them," Peio Sanchez, a priest in charge of the Santa Anna church where young migrants sleep regularly, tells AFP.

In front of the church in a small, hidden square near the popular Ramblas avenue in Barcelona, two teenagers share a cigarette as they play on their mobile phones. One of them sleeps in a juvenile centre. The other, Sofiane, lives on the street. His child's thin and short body contrasts sharply with his hard appearance, his cheek scarred.



BARCELONA: 21-year-old Moroccan migrant Najib poses during an interview. — AFP

Orphaned when he was 10, he emigrated from Morocco to Spain hidden underneath a truck. He was sent to various centers far from Barcelona, but always ended up coming back to the city. "My friends are here, my life is here," he says. Adria Padrosa, a social worker at the church, says they persuaded him to go to a centre several weeks ago, but he returned the following day. "He's a complicated profile, very used to living on the streets," he says.

'Kick you out and bye bye'

The majority of the migrants the church tends to are no

longer underage. They were when they came to Spain, but when they turned 18 they were no longer given protection or support. Spain automatically gives minors a residency permit but not a work one. They can get a work permit after five years in Spain or if they get an annual full-time contract, which is hard to come by in a country with 32 percent unemployment among under 25s.

"You turn 18 and that's it. They give you your suitcase, they kick you out and bye bye," says Najib Benyaala, a 21-year-old Moroccan with curly hair he's dyed blonde. "From one day to the next, you find yourself on the streets." Athletic and smiley, Najib does boxing in a gym in Barcelona for vulnerable people, a haven of peace after years on the street, in squats or shelters. "The street is tough, it's bad," he says. "If they gave us work permits, we wouldn't all be on the street." In Catalonia, just one percent of unaccompanied minors have a work permit when they turn 18, says Georgina Oliva, in charge of childhood matters in the regional government. "Without this, it's very difficult."

Catalonia tends to 4,200 unaccompanied young migrants, a large chunk of the total in Spain. Despite a decrease in 2019, arrivals in the region rose tenfold between 2015 and 2018, from 350 to 3,700. That caused punctual scenes of chaos, with some youngsters sleeping on the ground in police stations for lack of room in reception centers. Authorities have since opened 3,000 new places for unaccompanied minors. "We've been warning about this for years but until the bubble burst, nothing was done," says Axel Roura of the NGO Casal dels Infants which looks for housing for homeless youngsters. — Reuters



ANTANANARIVO: This handout photo released by the Vatican Media shows Pope Francis as he attend at the meeting with the Bishops of Madagascar at the Andohalo Cathedral. — AFP

Strife-hit Madagascar welcomes Pope Francis

ANTANANARIVO: True to his reputation as "pope of the poor", Pope Francis began a visit Saturday to Madagascar, one of the world's most impoverished nations with a unique and threatened environment. Arriving from Mozambique, where he pleaded for understanding and the renunciation of violence in a country riven by 16 years of civil war and now jihadist attacks, the Argentine pontiff warned of the dangers of deforestation and the impact of environmental degradation.

Francis told his hosts that they should "create jobs and money making activities which respect the environment and help people escape poverty." Madagascar is home to 25 million people, the vast majority of whom live in poverty with income of less than two dollars a day. The pope said there "were many causes driving excessive deforestation which benefits just a few people... and compromises the future of the country."

The authorities must ensure social justice, he added, echoing concerns about the global environment highlighted by massive fires across the Amazon forest. After the welcoming ceremonies, the pope's first engagement Saturday is a mass and prayer vigil with at least 12,000 young scouts. Tafika Fanomenza, 39, who is helping to coordinate the scores of volunteers involved in the preparations, as well as in the pontiff's security, hoped Francis' visit would help bring about change in Madagascar.

Crowds of 800,000

Sunday will mark the high point of Francis' visit with a huge mass in the capital expected to be attended by some 800,000 pilgrims. Many had already started setting up tents on the outskirts of the city on Friday, armed with posters of the Argentine pontiff. Prosper Ralison, a 70-year-old farm worker, arrived with some 5,000 fellow pilgrims from the central eastern town of Ambatondrazaka, 200 kilometers away.

"We are tired, but it's worth making all these sacrifices to see the pope with our own eyes and receive his blessing," he told AFP, impatient to set out on the final two-hour hike on Sunday to attend the mass. "We spent 65,000 ariary (\$18/16 euros) and brought three kilos of rice to make the trip to Antananarivo," said another pilgrim and farm worker, Jean-Claude Rabemananika, 40.

"There are five of us at home and we don't have enough money so we had to choose just one family member to make the trip." "We've provided toilet, showers, a sick bay and somewhere to cook for our 5,000 guests," beamed Marino Andriamasy, 35, who is in charge of the makeshift site where the pilgrims are staying. — AFP

African Union lifts its suspension of Sudan

ADDIS ABABA: The African Union (AU) has lifted its suspension of Sudan three months after freezing its membership following Khartoum's bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. The AU's Peace and Security Council said Friday that the decision followed the announcement of Sudan's first cabinet since the ousting of veteran leader Omar Al-Bashir.

Handing down its suspension in June, the AU's conflict-resolution body had said transferring power to a civilian-led authority was "the only way to allow the Sudan to exit the current crisis". Sudan's new premier Abdalla Hamdok on Thursday unveiled a new 18-member cabinet, a major step in the transition toward civilian rule after decades of authoritarianism. The move was hailed by AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki as "the beginning of a new era" for Sudan. The cabinet formation followed the signing of a power-sharing deal last month between the movement that led the months-long protests against Bashir, and the generals who seized power after ousting him.

A joint civilian-military ruling body was sworn in and tasked with overseeing the transition. Part of the deal was that legislative body be formed within 90 days. The AU's Peace and Security Council said in a tweet Friday it had decided "to lift the suspension of the participation of #Sudan in the activities of the #AU, now that #Sudan established a civilian-led Government". Demonstrations over a worsening economic crisis in Sudan escalated into a months-long nationwide protest movement against Bashir's three-decade rule, which ended in April.

Bashir was later arrested and is on trial on charges of illegal acquisition and use of foreign funds. In early June, security forces broke up a protest-sit in outside military headquarters in Khartoum. Doctors linked to the protest movement said at least 127 people died in the violence. Sudan's membership from the AU was suspended on June 6 pending a transition to civilian rule. A number of African nations have been suspended from the 55-member AU in recent years, a move that bars them from all summits and meetings. — AFP

International

Muslim rebels hand over their guns in Philippines peace deal

'The war is over... I have no firearms left'

SULTAN KUDARAT: Muslim rebels in the mainly Catholic Philippines began handing over their guns to independent foreign monitors yesterday, as part of a treaty aimed at ending a decades-long separatist insurgency that has left about 150,000 people dead. Just over a thousand guerrillas in the country's restive south were turning in 940 weapons in a single day, the start of a graduated decommissioning process that aims to turn the country's largest rebel force into a regular political party.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) fighters who were demobilized on Saturday represent a symbolic first step towards retiring what MILF says is a force of 40,000 in the coming years. "The war is over... I have no firearms left," Paisal Abdullah Bagundang, 56, a self-described veteran of more than 100 firefights with government security forces since the 1970s, told AFP. But the disarmament will take time to make an impact in a place where violence is an almost-daily threat. A bomb hidden in a parked motorcycle exploded near a market in Isulan town early on Saturday, just hours before President Rodrigo Duterte was to witness the decommissioning ceremony some 40 kilometers away in Sultan Kudarat.

Police said eight people were injured in the attack that was later claimed by the Islamic State group, according to SITE Intelligence, which monitors jihadist activities worldwide. The decommissioning process "should not lead to expectations that it is going to result in a major deceleration in attacks", said Francisco Lara, senior conflict adviser for Asia at watchdog International Alert, noting that the general public in the region are also armed.

Acquiring a gun is "like buying fish in the market" in the southwestern provinces where most of the Philippines' Muslim minority live, MILF commander

Murad Ebrahim told reporters. But "if people no longer feel they need firearms to survive then they will easily give them up", added Ebrahim, who is also chief minister of the area that has its own regional parliament, but no separate police force or military.

'We are civilians now'

About a third of MILF combatants and their weapons are to be initially retired over the coming eight months. Each retired fighter will receive a million pesos' (\$19,000) worth of cash, scholarships, health insurance, and training to become productive civilians. Rebels facing criminal cases related to the insurgency will be granted amnesty, while those qualified can train to join the security forces, Duterte's peace adviser Carlito Galvez told reporters.

"Let me assure our MILF combatants that the government will assist you as you re-integrate into society and enjoy fruitful and productive civilian lives," Duterte told the ex-rebels in a speech yesterday. Suharto Abdullah, 36, told AFP he had joined the MILF when he was 10 years old, but now plans to sell rice. "We are civilians now and won't be carrying guns any more," he said. Saida Lingas, a 66-year-old former fighter, warned she and others would take up arms again if poverty continues to hound their communities.

"The war will resume if the government reneges on what it promised us," added Lingas, who said she dropped out of a Catholic-run high school and became a rebel courier and cook in 1969 after soldiers killed several of her cousins. The second phase of decommissioning involving the main bulk of MILF fighters kicks in next year, with the rest to undergo the process before 2022.

With the MILF pact, jihadists now pose the biggest



SULTAN KUDARAT: Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels wait for transportation to a weapons decommissioning ceremony at Camp Darapangan, Sultan Kudarat town on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao. —AFP

threat to security in the southern Philippines. In a January attack claimed by IS, an Indonesian couple carried out suicide bombings at a Catholic cathedral on the Muslim-majority island of Jolo, killing 21 peo-

ple. In 2017, local and foreign militants flying the IS flag seized the city of Marawi, sparking a five-month battle that flattened the city centre and left more than 1,000 people dead. —AFP

India says lifting of Kashmir restrictions 'depends on Pakistan'

NEW DELHI: The lifting of New Delhi's communications restrictions in Indian Kashmir depends on Pakistan stopping deploying "terrorists" and fomenting unrest there, India's national security advisor said yesterday. More than a month after India stripped the restive region of its autonomy and severely restricted movement, mobile phone networks and the internet remain cut off in all but a few pockets. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval said that "100 percent" of landlines now worked but that a further easing depends on Pakistan, which he said has sent 230 militants into the region.

"Lifting the communications depends on how Pakistan behaves," Doval told reporters. "We are determined to protect the lives of Kashmiris from Pakistani terrorists even if we have to impose restrictions." Doval also said that India had intercepted messages sent by Pakistani "communication towers" over the effective border to operatives inside Indian-administered Kashmir. He added that he believes a "majority" of Kashmiris backed India's step on August 5 to scrap Kashmir's special status since they felt it would bring economic and other benefits.

Thousands detained

Kashmir, split between India and Pakistan since 1947, has been the spark for two major wars and countless clashes between the two nuclear-armed arch-rivals. Indian-administered Kashmir has seen a decades-old armed rebellion — backed by Pakistan, New Delhi says — against Indian rule with tens of thousands, mostly civilians, killed.

Flies overwhelm Pakistan's Karachi in monsoon 'hell'

KARACHI: Swarms of flies are descending on Pakistan's commercial capital in what residents say are record numbers this rainy season, adding to the misery of Karachi's monsoon "hell". Heavy rains have inundated the sprawling port city of nearly 20 million people for weeks, overwhelming shoddy drainage systems clogged with mountains of uncollected garbage and flooding neighborhoods with raw sewage.

"I have never seen such a fierce presence of flies in my life," Karachi resident Abdul Aziz, 45 said. "Clouds of flies keep covering the food at the market. It's repulsive — they cover the fruit so much that you can't see beneath them." At a market in Surjani town, meat trader Zahid Ali looked on as flies engulfed the area. "If the customers

come, they impulsively leave after seeing the swarms of flies," said Ali, adding that an increasing number of people working in the market had fallen ill.

Shershah Syed, a health rights activist and prominent surgeon in Karachi, said many illnesses were on the rise because of flies and mosquitoes. "This time (the flies are) the worst ever as rain water is unable to drain and the garbage heaps are not dealt with," Syed said. "The number of children entering hospitals for diarrhea or dysentery has jumped several fold this year. The number of children — who are the most vulnerable to the fly-borne diseases — has increased by about 10 times."

While Karachi is responsible for 60 percent of Pakistan's economic output, the city has long endured creaky infrastructure, illegal construction and failing municipal services. This week, the Economist Intelligence Unit ranked Karachi as one of the least liveable cities in the world along with the likes of war-torn Libya's Tripoli and the crisis-hit Venezuelan capital Caracas.



SRINAGAR: Indian paramilitary troopers stand guard. —AFP

Multiple sources have told AFP that several thousand people have been detained since August 5, including local politicians. A senior government source told AFP last week that at least 500 protests and incidents of stone throwing have occurred, leaving nearly 100 civilians and 400 members of the Indian security forces injured. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, who has compared the Indian government to the Nazis, has been on a diplomatic offensive against New Delhi's move in Muslim-majority Kashmir, saying it is bent on "ethnic cleansing".

Indian media yesterday quoted US State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortugas as saying Washington

remained "very concerned by widespread detentions, including of local political and business leaders, and the restrictions on the residents of the region." "We are also concerned about reports that Internet and mobile phone access continues to be blocked in certain regions," Ortugas said.

India has repeatedly insisted that Kashmir is purely an internal matter and has bristled at outside comment or suggestions of mediation. Yesterday Pakistan said that it denied Indian President Ram Nath Kovind permission to fly through its airspace in view of New Delhi's "behavior". —AFP



KARACHI: Young boys wade and play among floodwaters during heavy monsoon rains. —AFP

"People in Karachi are numb to the idea of living with medical waste, overflowing gutters, broken down roads, and a complete lack of any kind

of respectable public transport system," wrote Saadat Ali Zia on Twitter. "We live in hell," tweeted Farooq Afridi. —AFP

Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai, a military officer and a vigilante said. "The convoy came under fire from the terrorists near Kamuya at around 11:30 am (1030 GMT), killing one soldier and injuring three others," said the military officer who spoke on condition of anonymity. A military pickup truck was "burnt in the attack", said vigilante Mustapha Karimbe who confirmed the casualties. Kamuya, the home village of Buratai's mother, has been repeatedly hit by jihadists since 2015 when Buratai was appointed army chief.

In January this year, six soldiers were killed and 14 injured when ISWAP sacked a base in Kamuya, stealing weapons and burning military vehicles. The IS-backed faction has repeatedly targeted military installations and troops since mid-2018. Late on Thursday the convoy of

Borno state governor was attacked by jihadists from rival Boko Haram faction near Kawuya village, south east of the state capital Maiduguri, but no one was hurt.

Governor Babagana Umara Zulum was returning from a tour of some districts around 2000 GMT when the militants opened fire on his motorcade, two civilian militias who spoke anonymously said. "Police escorts in the convoy returned fire and thwarted the ambush, forcing the insurgents to retreat," one of the militias said. In February Boko Haram fighters killed dozens of civilians when they opened fire on the convoy of Zulum's predecessor near Dikwa, 80 kilometers east of Maiduguri. Boko Haram's decade-long conflict has killed more than 35,000 people and displaced around two million in northeast Nigeria. —AFP

N Korean leader berates officials over typhoon prep

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has berated officials for their "easygoing" attitude to the approach of Typhoon Lingling, state media reported. The powerful storm is expected to make landfall in the North yesterday afternoon after passing off the coast of South Korea, according to Seoul's Korea Meteorological Administration.

Kim convened an emergency meeting on Friday and said "dangerous circumstances" caused by the typhoon were "imminent", but that many in positions of authority were ill prepared, the North's KCNA news service said later that day. Officials in North Korea "remain unchanged in their attitude and helpless against the typhoon, unaware of its seriousness and seized with easygoing sentiment", Kim said during the meeting, according to the KCNA report. The impoverished and isolated North is vulnerable to natural disasters, especially floods, due in part to deforestation and poor infrastructure. In South Korea, at least one death was reported after the country was hit by the storm, which yesterday had wind speeds of up to 125 kilometers per hour. A woman in her 70s was killed after being blown over by strong winds in Boryeong, a city 140 kilometers southwest of Seoul, authorities said.

More than 230 flights were cancelled and power outages were reported in more than 30,000 South Korean homes, while public parks and zoos were closed for the weekend due to heavy rain and strong winds. Seoul's weather authorities also warned of landslides and flooding, advising the public to stay indoors. Kim said efforts to minimize damage from the typhoon in North Korea would be an "enormous struggle", adding that its army should "remain loyal to its sacred duty" of ensuring citizens' safety. At least 138 North Koreans were known to have died after torrential rain triggered major floods in 2016, the United Nations said at the time. More than 160 people were killed by a massive rainstorm in the summer of 2012.

New commander

In other news, Pyongyang has named an army general with expertise in artillery as its new military commander, North Korean state media reported, in a move that an analyst said could signal plans for the development of new weapons. Pak Jong Chon was appointed the "chief of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army," KCNA said late Friday, adding that the decision was announced during a meeting attended by leader Kim Jong Un. Pak succeeds Ri Yong Gil, an expert on military operations who has served in the position on two separate occasions since 2013. His promotion from head of the Korean People's Army's Artillery Command may suggest a new military focus on weapons development, said Ahn Chan-il, a North Korean defector and researcher in Seoul.

The North was particularly threatened by the South's acquisition of cutting-edge American F-35 stealth fighter jets — known for their ability to evade radar detection — earlier this year, Ahn said. "It is also notable that Pak accompanied Kim during the North's test-firing of its new weapons," he added. "With him as the North's top military officer, it's more likely that Pyongyang will prioritize artillery along with its new weapons system."

Pak accompanied Kim when he supervised the test-firing of what North Korea said were "new-type tactical guided missiles" in August. Pak was also present when Kim oversaw the test of a "newly developed large-caliber multiple launch guided rocket system" in July, KCNA reported at the time. South Korea has described the two launches as "short-range ballistic missiles," which the North is barred from testing under UN resolutions. Pyongyang had said the two launches — along with five other tests in July and August — were a warning to Washington and Seoul over their August joint military drills, which it has long considered rehearsals for invasion. —AFP

Jihadists kill Nigerian soldier in ambush

KANO: At least one soldier was killed and three others injured when suspected IS-affiliated jihadists ambushed a military convoy in northeast Nigeria's Borno state, according to security sources. Militants believed to be from the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) on Friday opened fire on the convoy in Kamuya village, close to the family home of Nigeria's army chief,

Analysis

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Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
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Moscow, Kiev
exchanged

Russia and Ukraine carried out a long-awaited swap of 70 prisoners yesterday. As a result of five years of bitter conflict, dozens of prisoners have been held by the two ex-Soviet countries. Here are the high-profile prisoners involved in the swap.

Ukrainian filmmaker Sentsov

Film director Oleg Sentsov is the most prominent of the Ukrainian prisoners held by Russia. In 2015, he was sentenced to 20 years in a Russian Arctic penal colony on terror charges after a trial that Amnesty International likened to a Stalin-era show trial. During court appearances, he remained unbroken, often smiling, singing the Ukrainian anthem and making defiant comments.

Sentsov, 43, opposed Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, where he lived. He was sent to a strict-regime penal colony on the remote Yamal peninsula where he spent 145 days without solid food last year, demanding the release of all Ukrainian political prisoners. His severe health problems and support from international film stars including Johnny Depp did not cause the Kremlin to budge. Another Ukrainian, Alexander Kolchenko, who was convicted as Sentsov's co-defendant with a lower sentence, was also picked for release.

MH17 witness Tsemakh

Vladimir Tsemakh, an alleged air defense specialist for pro-Russian separatists who Dutch investigators have described as a key witness in the downing of flight MH17, was also part of the exchange. Ahead of the exchange, Dutch investigators questioned Tsemakh in Kiev this week, an informed source told AFP. Investigators consider him a "witness", not a "suspect", the source added.

Journalist Vyshynsky

A journalist for Russia's state-funded RIA Novosti news agency, 52-year-old Kyrlo Vyshynsky was detained last year in Kiev and charged with "high treason" in the interests of Moscow. He has dual Ukrainian and Russian citizenship.

24 Ukrainian sailors

Russian coastguards captured 24 Ukrainian sailors off the coast of Crimea in November last year after seizing their three vessels. The crew includes 22 sailors and two agents of Ukraine's SBU security service. Moscow had wanted to put them on trial for violating Russia's maritime borders.

Ukraine's Klykh and Karpyuk

Stanislav Klykh, 45, is a history professor while Mykola Karpyuk, 55, is a senior member of two Ukrainian nationalist protest groups. They were arrested in Moscow in 2014 and handed lengthy sentences for fighting against Russian armed forces in Chechnya in the 1990s. Both men said they confessed after being tortured.

Ukrainian blogger Gryb

Pavlo Gryb, a 21-year-old blogger, is the youngest Ukrainian prisoner. Kiev said he was kidnapped by Russian special forces in Belarus where he went to visit a friend. Russia sentenced him to six years in prison after finding him guilty of inciting a friend to carry out a bombing.

Ukraine journalist Sushchenko

Roman Sushchenko, 50, was Paris correspondent for Ukraine's Ukrinform national news agency. He was detained while on holiday in Moscow and last year sentenced to 12 years for espionage after he was accused of serving in Ukrainian military intelligence and gathering Russian state secrets. —AFP



A vendor sells the various daily newspapers on the streets of Harare yesterday, on the first day of a period of national mourning following the death of former Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe, guerrilla hero turned despot who ruled Zimbabwe for 37 years. —AFP

Celebrate or cry? Zimbabweans have mixed feelings about Robert Mugabe

Some call him a 'true African' and a 'revolutionary icon'. For others, the name evokes only 'evil', 'destruction' and 'suffering'. Zimbabweans on Friday woke up to the death of their founding president Robert Mugabe - a hero-turned despot whose increasingly tyrannical rule and economic mismanagement prompted millions to leave the country. "To be honest I thought I would celebrate when he died," said Tatenda Musoni, a 39-year old school teacher in Zimbabwe's capital Harare. "I'm actually sad because he was an embodiment of what a true African should be." Mugabe, 95, died overnight in a hospital in Singapore, where he was receiving medical care. He ruled Zimbabwe for 37 years - making him one of Africa's longest-serving presidents - before being deposed by the military in 2017. "As a leader the only thing he did wrong was to stay in power for a long time," Harare resident Joshua Tsenzete told AFP on the morning of his death.

"He liberated us from the colonialists as well as gave us land," said George Bindu, as the passersby went on with their daily business. Mugabe, a former guerrilla lord

who led Zimbabwe to independence from Britain in 1980, was initially hailed for preaching racial reconciliation and for extending education and health services to the black majority. One Harare resident, Eddington Pangezi, recalled that "speaking proper English" was "courtesy of our former president".

'Manipulated everyone'

Mugabe's rule took a dark turn in the early 1980s with the slaughter of thousands of civilians belonging to the ethnic group of a political rival. He then led a violent campaign against white farmers - many of whom backed the main opposition party - causing the collapse of agricultural production.

"Mugabe was an educated man but he used his education for evil," said Baster Magwizi, a war veteran in the southwestern city of Bulawayo. "He manipulated everyone around him and fooled the world, only Zimbabweans can testify to this as we lived in hell under his leadership." Mugabe responded to the farming crisis and a series of poorly judged economic reforms by pumping cash into the

economy. The resulting hyperinflation rendered the Zimbabwean currency worthless and plunged thousands into poverty.

"I am a qualified mechanic but I never got employed," Bulawayo hawker Isaac Maenzanise told AFP. "Going around carrying these brooms is not by choice." Nicolas Mapena, head of the Zimbabwean diaspora in South Africa, said many Zimbabweans left the country after "Mugabe collapsed the economy". "President Mandela died in South Africa," he said. "Whereas our political leadership has not been seeking treatment in Zimbabwe. And this is because they collapsed the healthcare sector, the educational system and the economy."

'We used to buy bread'

On the streets of Yeoville, a central Johannesburg neighborhood popular with foreigners, Zimbabweans had mixed feelings about Mugabe's passing. "We are here in South Africa because of what was happening in Zimbabwe. We didn't want to be here, we came here just because of the situation that Mugabe created," said Palmolive Nxumalo, 38, who works as a

waitress. "On my side I am happy that he is dead."

Faraynesu Madzimore, a 47-year old telecom engineer, told AFP he was saddened by the news. "We regard him as a great Zimbabwean citizen and I am sure you know about the education of the people in Zimbabwe." Close to three million Zimbabweans live abroad, according to the International Organization for Migration. They moved to neighboring South Africa and Botswana, and further afield to Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States among others.

"Since 1993 things started to change very dramatically," said Lamek Swanda, a Zimbabwean security guard. "We left our beloved country just because of him." But like many Zimbabweans, Swanda was more concerned with the economic hardship that continues under the current president. "That guy was much better than what we have now," said Harare taxi driver Mandla Latefa. "We used to buy bread for 90 cents and now it's \$9." Zimbabwe's annual inflation rate hit 176 percent in June, the highest in the world after Venezuela. —AFP

What did violence
bring to Hong Kong?By Li Minggang
Ambassador of China

On August 31st, a 13-year-old boy from Hong Kong, misled by violent individuals, was found carrying two petrol bombs and lighters and arrested by Hong Kong police for the vandalizing of a Hong Kong's MTR station. It is truly heartrending to see this boy, who should have returned to school with his classmates, was misguided by ill-intentioned rioters and involved in such violent activities.

Another Hong Kong secondary-school student recently wrote to a newspaper: "In the past two months, Hong Kong has suffered severe damages. Violent black-clad mobs have repeatedly recklessly crossed the police line and mercilessly attacked innocent residents; they defaced the Chinese national emblem with ink, and even unscrupulously desecrated the Chinese national flag and threw it into the sea. It is really heartbreaking to see all of this."

This letter truly reflects the sincere aspirations of most Hong Kong teenagers to fight violence and restore peace. Not long ago, I contributed an article to the newspapers to introduce the situation in Hong Kong. However, Hong Kong has not restored calm since August, as some opposition parties and radical elements further escalated violence and riots under the pretext of peaceful protests.

They used guerrilla tactics to vandalize and damage various places, deliberately paralyzed the traffic, besieged the MTR stations to obstruct people from working and traveling, and even showed no mercy towards a pregnant woman and prevented her from going to a hospital. Hong Kong police have exercised strong restraint, but the violent criminals intensified their actions by storming police stations, assaulting police officers with poisonous and hazardous liquid and powders, iron bars, arrows and petrol bombs, damaging police officers' eyes with laser pointers, harassing and threatening police families, and beating innocent residents and reporters.

So far, more than 500 people have been injured in violent conflicts, including 177 police personnel. On August 31st alone, violent radicals destroyed 32 MTR stations, which accounts for one-third of the total. These violence and extremist acts have breached the bottom lines of law, moral ethics and humanity, greatly disturbed the living and working conditions of Hong Kong residents, and caused serious harm to Hong Kong. Such behaviors should not be tolerated by any civilized society governed by the rule of law.

Up till now, in addition to committing violent crimes, the radical protesters have even publicly supported and promoted the agenda of "Hong Kong independence". Other than those who turned blind eyes, any country or person with a sense of justice will not regard the current chaos in Hong Kong as "an expression of democracy and freedom", and will instead recognize that the opposition forces and extremist demonstrators have exploited gullible people who were unaware of the truth, and attempted to destabilize the legitimate government of HKSAR, challenge the authority of the Chinese central government, and shaken the constitutional basis of "One Country, Two Systems" principle in Hong Kong through illegal and violent means, which bears the features of a "colored revolution".

Many facts demonstrate that the external forces have inflamed the recent situation in Hong Kong. When recalling the "colored revolutions" in some Arab states like Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen, it

could be found that all those revolutions began from peaceful petitions and protests, then evolved to social chaos, followed by labor and student strikes and paralysis in traffic, and finally escalated to terrorist acts, aiming to force the government to surrender.

These tragic events eventually resulted in nearly one million deaths and economic losses amounting to almost one trillion dollars in the Arab world. Eight years have passed, however these countries still suffer from economic hardship, social unrest and prevalence of terrorism. Now the external forces are employing the same steps and tactics in Hong Kong.

A substantial number of videos and photos have indicated that violent acts in Hong Kong are organized: Although the rioters have a lower standard of education, they use special and professional hand signals, have developed methods to deal with tear gas, and use extremely dangerous laser pointers to avoid penalties. It is clear to see that they have received special training. Seeing those well-organized and well-equipped rioters, we feel compelled to ask: Who have been providing financial and material support to the rioters, and who have been delivering and distributing the equipment? Since what happened in Hong Kong, the Western media, instead of reporting the situation in a just and unbiased manner, have failed to play a credible role by misleading the public. There has been massive coverage on so-called "right to peaceful protest", whitewashing and glorifying the violent offences by the extreme radicals, while discrediting and smearing the legitimate acts of the Hong Kong police to punish perpetrators of violence and uphold law and order.

Some social media even deleted comments in favor of the HKSAR government and the police, and banned voices of justice for supporting the HKSAR government and upholding Hong Kong's law and order. Recently, CNN has made clarifications and apologized to Hong Kong Police Force after it was found that CNN maliciously deleted and altered some video contents during its coverage of the situation in Hong Kong. Such selective reporting and distortion have resulted in the prevalence of misinformation and have misled the public who are unaware of the truth. It is fair to say that Western media have inescapable responsibility for the current situation in Hong Kong. The most pressing priority of Hong Kong now is to end violence and restore order. The Chinese central government firmly supports the HKSAR Government and Chief Executive Carrie Lam in governing Hong Kong in accordance with law, supports the Hong Kong police and judiciary bodies in strict, rigorous and decisive enforcement, and supports the acts of justice by the majority of Hong Kong residents who oppose violence, uphold the rule of law and support the police. Any violent act that tramples upon the rule of law in Hong Kong, undermines Hong Kong's prosperity and stability, and challenges the "One Country, Two Systems" principle must be brought to justice. Any foreign country, organization or individual attempting to interfere in Hong Kong affairs will be resolutely countered by the entire Chinese people, including Hong Kong residents.

Any attempt to incite a "colored revolution" in Hong Kong will end in vain. Peace, like air and sunshine, is hardly noticed when people are benefiting from it, but none of us can live without it. Those countries that suffered greatly from street politics and have not yet been spared from the chaos and disorder caused by the "Arab Spring" would have deeper feelings.

I believe that all Kuwaiti and Arab friends, who have a sense of justice and care about Hong Kong, will support Hong Kong in restoring social order at an early date, achieving sustained peace and stability, and maintaining prosperity and development. We are

confident that Hong Kong will overcome the current difficulties, emerge from the shadow of recent chaos, and the 'Pearl of the Orient' will shine again brightly.

Message from
Embassy of Pakistan
in Kuwait

Dear Editor-in-Chief,

This rejoinder is with regard to a news item captioned "Teen dies by stone-pelting in Kashmir" published on 5th September, 2019 on Page Number (8) of your newspaper. It is requested that the following may be published in your newspaper for the sake of fair and impartial reporting.

The Embassy of Pakistan, Kuwait completely rejects the assertion in the above news item that these deaths have happened because of terrorists, stone pelters and puppets of Pakistan. There is no proof provided in the story that Pakistan is responsible for it.

The fact is that the whole population of Indian Occupied Kashmir is protesting against Indian government for denying them their inalienable right of self-determination given by international law and relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The Indian government is committing gross human rights violations in Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, which has been clearly documented by United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in its two successive reports in June 2018 and July 2019.

UN Secretary General in his statement of 8 August, 2019, had clearly stated that the UN's position on this region (Jammu & Kashmir) was governed by the UN Charter and the relevant UNSC resolutions. Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in its recent press release issued on 31st August, 2019, has also reaffirmed the UNSC Resolutions on status of Jammu and Kashmir dispute and its final disposition through a UN supervised plebiscite.

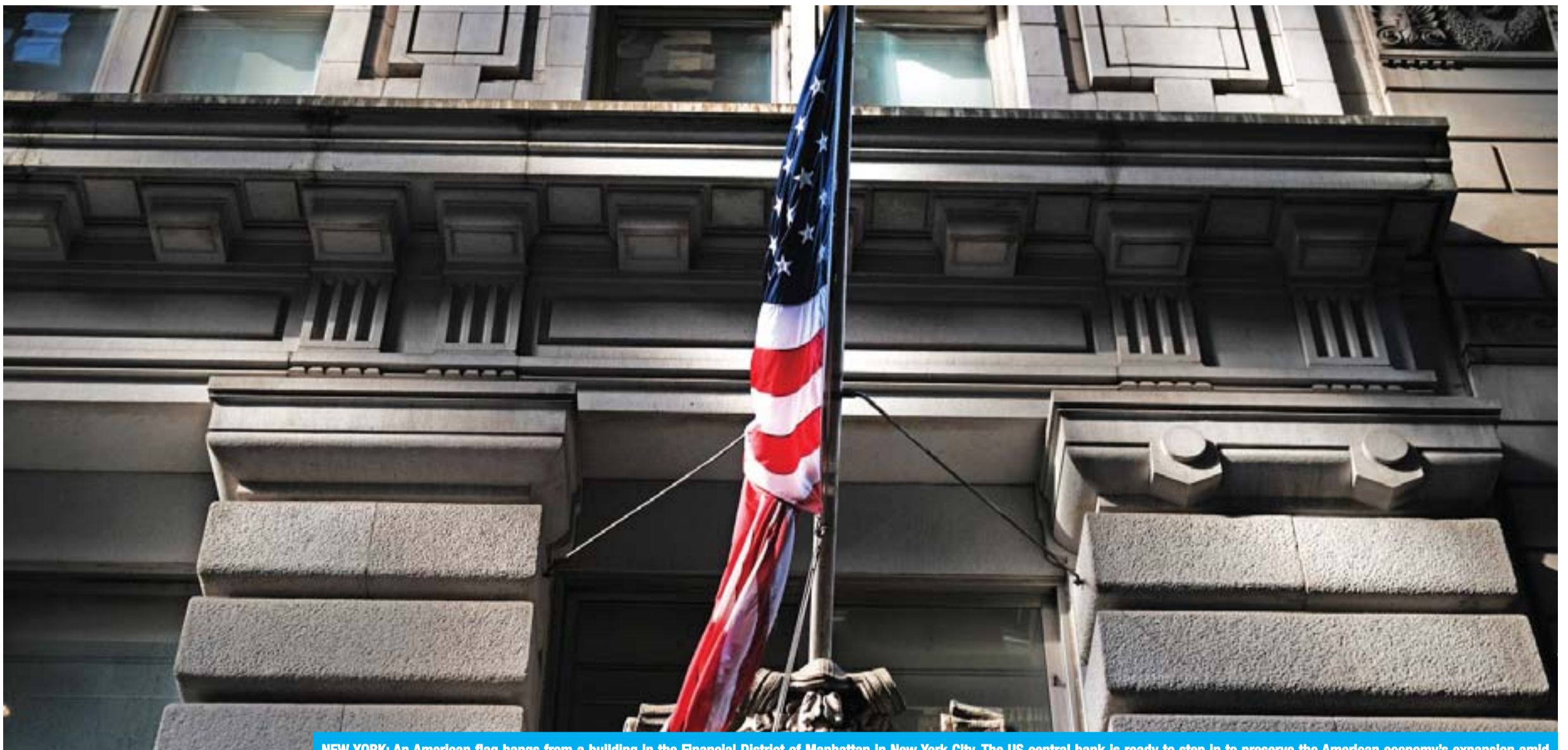
In order to help alleviate suffering of the Kashmiri People on an urgent basis, the intervention of international community and human rights organizations is essential at this point. Indian government should be urged to revoke its illegal actions taken on 5th August, 2019 with regard to the status of Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and immediately stop all human rights violations being carried out by its security forces in the valley.

Best Regards
Ashar Shahzad
Charged Affairs
Embassy of Pakistan, Kuwait

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

Business

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2019

12 Kuwait awards \$358m contracts for developing Al-Mutlaa Residential City**13** Chinese construction company CSCEC supports 'Kuwait Vision 2035'**14** KFH and Xpress Money celebrate successful launch of KFH Xpress

NEW YORK: An American flag hangs from a building in the Financial District of Manhattan in New York City. The US central bank is ready to step in to preserve the American economy's expansion amid mounting risks, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said Friday. — AFP

Fed could step in to sustain growth: Powell

US job creation cools in Aug as Trump hammers Fed

ZURICH: The US central bank is ready to step in to preserve the American economy's expansion amid mounting risks, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said Friday. While the Fed is not expecting a recession, trade frictions—as well as slower global growth and persistently low inflation—are among the “significant risks” that policymakers are watching, Powell said during a conversation at the University of Zurich.

The remarks should strengthen widespread expectations that the central bank will cut interest rates later this month. As it becomes increasingly apparent that the US economy has slowed in 2019, President Donald Trump has publicly berated Powell and the Fed for failing to loosen monetary policy fast enough—something Powell said Friday policymakers tune out.

“We see the most likely case for the US and for the world too as continued moderate growth,” Powell said. “We’re not forecasting or expecting a recession.” He added that the Fed will “continue to act as appropriate to sustain this expansion,” while “trade policy uncertainty will be weighing on business investment decisions.” Powell’s remarks echoed those made earlier this week by New York Fed President John Williams, the vice chair of the central bank’s monetary policy committee, who likewise said policymakers should be “vigilant” and “act as appropriate” to bolster growth.

The economic landscape has shifted this year, as business investment weakened noticeably, manufacturing has

fallen into decline and job creation has slowed. Powell noted, however, that unemployment had remained near historic lows for about 18 months while wages were rising, fueling consumer spending. “The consumer has been strong. The service sector has been strong,” he said. “Our labor market is in quite a strong position.”

Trump on Friday renewed his attacks on Powell, whom the president promoted to Fed chairman last year, denouncing both 2018’s interest rate increases and the pace of cutting so far this year. “Where did I find this guy Jerome?” Trump asked on Twitter. But in Zurich Powell reiterated that he and his Fed colleagues ignore such comments when they set monetary policy. Congress created the Fed to operate as an independent body. Powell also rejected the suggestion that the Fed could seek to oppose Trump’s reelection by temporarily undermining the economy.

William Dudley, a top former Fed official, caused a considerable stir last month by publicly suggesting the Fed should do just that. “Absolutely not,” Powell said. “Political factors play absolutely no role in our discussions.” He also reiterated the Fed’s cautious position on Facebook’s proposal to introduce a new digital currency, saying the approval process would not be a “sprint.”

Given Facebook’s global penetration, “it could be systematically important right away,” he said. “And because of that it would have to be held to the highest regulatory expectations.”

Meanwhile, America’s jobs engine downshifted in

August as employers unexpectedly held back hiring across major industries, another sign that the world’s largest economy is cooling off, government data showed Friday. As the numbers were released early Friday, President Donald Trump, whose record as a job creator could pale ahead of next year’s election, renewed his attacks on the US central bank, which he blames for failing to stimulate the economy fast enough.

The surprisingly soft result confirmed that labor markets in 2019 have slowed from their brisk pace last year, amid a protracted trade dispute with China that has dragged down global commerce, fueled business uncertainty and driven US manufacturing into recession.

Employers added a still-solid 130,000 net new positions for the month, far lower than analyst forecasts, while the jobless rate held steady at 3.7 percent for the third month in a row, according to Labor Department estimates. Figures for May and June were also cut by a total of 20,000 positions, bringing the rolling, three-month average to 156,000, well below the 241,000 seen in August last year. The report did bring some good news, however: wages continued to rise, suggesting consumer spending—which is almost single-handedly supporting US economic growth—will continue.

And the share of the working-age population with a job rose to its highest level since the depths of the Great Recession in December 2008. “The softening in job growth should surprise no one. But it doesn’t mean the

economy is headed toward a recession right away,” economist Joel Naroff told clients in a note. Economists on Friday also pointed out that August numbers are frequently revised upward in later months. Amid weak investment by companies and mounting fears of a recession, employers also say they are struggling to find qualified workers to fill open positions.

‘Oh, well...’

The slower jobs numbers should also support a Fed decision later this month to cut interest rates, as markets widely expect it will do for the second time this year. Late Thursday and early Friday, Trump took to Twitter to fire off the latest of many attacks on the US central bank, which he said had raised interest rates too quickly last year. “They were WAY too early to raise, and Way too late to cut—and big dose quantitative tightening didn’t exactly help either,” said Trump, who has advance access to the jobs report before its public release.

“Where did I find this guy Jerome?” he said, referring to Fed Chairman Jerome Powell, whom he prompted to central bank chairman. Workers got a bump in pay, as hourly wages rose 11 cents on average, putting them up more than three percent, year-on-year, for the 13th month in a row. But within the August jobs details there were other causes for concern. About a quarter of August hires came from the government itself as federal authorities ramped up staffing to conduct next year’s census. — AFP

Voice-command ovens, robots for pets on show at IFA tech fair

BERLIN: Europe’s biggest tech fair, Berlin’s IFA, is showcasing a flood of product launches until Wednesday. Here are five trends and gadgets making waves.

Fitness trainer for pets

No time to walk or play with your pet puppy or kitten? California start-up Varram showcased a Pet Fitness robot, which plays with cats and dogs at home via smartphone instructions, even dropping treats as a reward, while the owner is at work. Sensors in the robot help it detect and stay away from furniture to not get stuck, avoiding bored pets. The robot can be timed to play with the family pet at different times and keep track of how much activity the animal has had.

AI at home

As executive director Jens Heithecker told AFP, “three

main trends at IFA this year are 5G, voice control and AI (artificial intelligence)” with the latter two combined in innovations for the home. Siemens claimed two world firsts with an oven that opens on voice command and separate washing machine and clothes drier that communicate via wifi to predict how long garments will need to dry.

The Home Connect system links household appliances, suggests recipes and even knows which ingredients are already at home, via cameras in the fridge. Once the meal has been prepared, the oven door opens on voice command, leaving the cook with both hands to slide in the dish.

Meanwhile, the system’s washing machine has built-in sensors to measure the moisture in washed clothes, sending the information to the drier. However, the sensor cannot detect whether a stray black sock is about to ruin a load of white laundry. “That would be useful to know,” admitted a Siemens spokeswoman with a smile.

Christmas gifts

Heithecker tips that of the thousands of items showcased at IFA, headsets and wireless stereos will make popular Christmas gifts, as they are “affordable, moveable, high quality and part of the digitally connected world.” “Headsets with noise cancelling are mostly used in homes now, to squeeze out the surrounding noise – you go into your own world and won’t be disturbed if you want to hear music,” he added. However, some of these items do not

come cheap. Panasonic’s high-tech earphones are retailing for 1,200 euros (\$1,326) while Samsung’s massive 219-inch television, aptly called ‘The Wall’, is retailing to business customers for around 500,000 euros.

‘All-in-one’ 5G chip

Huawei created a buzz Friday by launching a new super-fast Kirin 990 processor, which has a version specially designed for the 5G era – the fifth generation of cellular network technology.

According to Huawei’s claim, the “industry’s first and only all-in-one” 5G chipset includes a modem with fast download speeds. The company also said that by using a single chip, the Kirin will make phones more efficient compared to their rivals, who use a separate processor and modem. The new Kirin chip, no bigger than a fingernail, “can make phones much smaller,” boasted Richard Yu, who is in charge of Huawei’s consumer business group. The Chinese firm is embroiled in US-China tensions with Washington advising its allies against using Huawei’s technology to build 5G networks, due to fears it could be used for spying by Beijing, an accusation the company denies.

Yu took no questions in Berlin, as Huawei also showcased their sleek Mate 30 Series, due to be launched on September 19 in Munich. Not to be outdone, Korean rivals Samsung also showed off their 5G Fold, a phone which folds out into a single screen.



BERLIN: The Galaxy Fold 5G phone is presented at the booth of Samsung during the international electronics and innovation fair IFA in Berlin on Friday. — AFP

High-tech relief

High-tech relief for the incontinent is offered by D-Free, a sensor which fits on the abdomen and detects changes in bladder size, calculating how full it is and giving a prediction via a smartphone about when the user will need to urinate. The system is aimed at young children being toilet trained and the elderly worried about being caught short. It keeps track of the average time between bathroom visits and a version for senior care homes tells staff which patients will soon need to visit the toilet. — AFP

Business

CSCEC supports 'Kuwait Vision 2035'

Top Chinese construction company seeks to bolster partnership in Kuwait



The Kuwait University project



The Kuwait University project

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Heading toward modernization of Kuwait in line with Kuwait Vision 2035, many foreign companies have come forward in participating in the development programs of the country. China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) Middle East is one of the pioneering companies that opened its first overseas office in Kuwait in late 1970s.

The China State Construction Engineering Corporation is the largest construction company in the world by revenue and the 14th largest general contractor in terms of overseas sales as of 2016.

Li Biao, Deputy General Manager of CSCEC, said that the company was in charge of various construction projects in Kuwait, which in turn add to the success of Kuwaiti-Chinese partnership.

Biao told the Kuwait Times that CSCEC appreciates the level of cooperation it enjoys in the State of Kuwait. He said the company is eager to bolster its ties further to contribute to various development plans, the Kuwait Vision 2035 and China's Belt and Road initiative.

He affirmed the achievements made by CSCEC, stressing that it played an integral role in aiding Kuwait to realize its development vision under the supervision of the Kuwaiti leadership.

"CSCEC was in charge of various construction projects in Kuwait, which in turn adds to the success of Kuwaiti-Chinese partnership. It has started in 2006 with the construction of the Central Bank of Kuwait's (CBK) headquarters along with various projects. CSCEC is also involved in the Kuwait University Shadadiya campus project and other endeavors within the infrastructure and housing domains," he added.

He noted that after His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to China, the CSCEC was registered with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), which was a great step toward more cooperation between China and Kuwait.

Biao said that Kuwait is developing fast, but he suggested that the procedures need to be easier for contractors to get involved in projects faster. "China provides adequate support to our clients and addresses their needs in achieving their business objectives in the market. I noticed some improvements in Kuwait during our project implementation for the Kuwait University. They have begun to minimize the procedures of payments which helped the contractor a lot. But certain other procedures still remain complicated and not easy to get through," he suggested. In 2016, The Headquarters Building Project of the Central Bank of Kuwait received top honors for projects excellence at the 2016 MEED Quality Awards for Projects. Also, the Corporation was awarded the contract to construct the project of Construction, Completion, Operation and Maintenance for Administration Facilities—Sabah Al-Salem University City—Kuwait University by Kuwait Central Tenders Committee.

The project consists of seven buildings, with distinct and unique shape, such as Administration Building, Grand Mosque, Cultural Centre, Convocation Hall, Conference Centre, University Library and Visitor Centre, etc. The Administration Facilities, creatively designed, functionally serves as the main gateway to the university city. It is characterized by light lacy screens creating a very harmonious and interactive dramatic effect.

The CSCEC was founded in 1957 as a state company. Earlier, the company had an international profile building



Awards



Li Biao, Deputy General Manager of CSCEC at Kuwait University construction site



heavy industry and infrastructure in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. It has over 100 bureaus globally.

China State Construction Engineering Corporation (Middle East) (L.L.C) is an integrated part and one of the major overseas operational entities of China State Construction Engineering Corporation Ltd. (CSCEC), whose shares are traded on the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

In the Middle East Region, CSCEC is one of the region's largest construction groups with offices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar. The company's regional Headquarters are located in Dubai UAE. China State Construction Engineering Corporation is

the world's largest transnational multidisciplinary conglomerate in the field of civil and industrial engineering as well as real estate development, and the No 1 home builder in the world. In 2016, CSCEC ranked top 27 on the list of Fortune Global 500 companies. By this ranking, CSCEC has realized its strategic target set in the company's "13th Five-Year" Plan ahead of schedule.

"With great support from our parent company, we are actively seeking opportunities for alternative/innovative forms of contract including Project Investment, Project Financing, EPC and Design & Build projects," he said.

"We are dedicated to providing a one-stop service for



The Central Bank of Kuwait building

all elements of the construction process from planning, design, construction to operation and maintenance. To achieve our goals, I am supported by a strong team of dedicated and experienced staff and skilled workforce working in our region and site offices already established in the Middle East. For the future challenges, we should be firm, strong-willed and spare no effort to diversify our business model and improve the efficiency of the operation to meet our aim to be one of the most competitive international contractors in the Middle East," he concluded.

Citigroup doubles down on credit cards even as US economy softens

NEW YORK: Despite signs that the US economy is slowing, New York-based Citigroup Inc is betting big on credit cards. Citigroup, the third-largest US card issuer, according to payments industry publication The Nilson Report, has been among the most aggressive promoters of zero-interest balance transfers.

For a small fee, customers can move debt from a rival card onto Citi's plastic and pay no interest for 21 months. That is currently the longest 0% deal in the industry, according to consumer finance company Bankrate L.L.C. Rivals offer 15 interest-free months with no fee.

The card business now accounts for nearly one-third of Citigroup's overall revenue and is one of the biggest potential drivers of future earnings growth. But some analysts and investors worry this portfolio could become a liability if the economy goes south. The bank continues to advertise zero-interest deals on popular personal finance websites and through mailers, even as competitors have scaled back.

"Just recognizing where we are in the credit cycle, it's interesting to see Citigroup doubling down and pushing forward," said Moody's analyst Warren Kornfeld. Credit card customers who use balance transfers are considered higher risk because they often use the easy financing to accumulate more debt, according to bank analysts and credit underwriters. Wall Street's worst fears lie with borrowers such as Jacqueline Alvarado, a Pennsylvania truck

driver who now owes \$12,000. Over the past five years, Alvarado says she has moved balances around on 19 cards, including one from Citigroup, to avoid finance charges. If the promotional offers dry up, she said, so do her hopes of paying off that debt. Zero interest is "the only way I can stay afloat," said Alvarado, 40.

In interviews with Reuters, Citigroup executives defended their card strategy and tough underwriting standards they say will protect the bank from major losses in the event of a downturn.

Citigroup's card business has reported delinquency rates far below the industry average in recent years, according to federal data and filings. In addition, 83% of consumers in its American credit card business, excluding its retail partnership cards, have credit scores of 680, which is considered a good score, according to credit rating firm Experian.

Tempting borrowers

Citigroup counts on customers sticking around after the promotional period expires. With annual percentage rates of up to 27 percent on its cards, the profits on borrowers who carry balances can be juicy. The strategy so far is paying off. Interest-bearing balances rose 10 percent in the second quarter versus the year-ago period. That growth helped boost overall profits on consumer lending by 9 percent.

Anand Selva, the bank's head of consumer strategy, said he expects the business to continue picking up steam. Citigroup shares have rallied more than 20 percent so far this year. The KBW Banking Index, the benchmark stock index for the US banking sector, rose 6 percent over the same period. Selva says Citigroup has taken other steps to encourage cardholders to do more than transfer balances. For example, it has sweetened its reward program by offering a new credit card that rounds up to the nearest 10 reward points on every new purchase. And it has introduced installment loans linked to credit lines for large purchases. Major card rivals, meanwhile, are

proceeding more cautiously. Discover Financial Services, known for flooding mailboxes with promotions, has said on analyst calls that it is paring those offers and tightening personal loan underwriting over concerns the economy is slowing. Capital One Financial Corp., which pioneered balance transfers in the early 1990s, similarly told analysts and investors it has become more conservative in extending credit lines while targeting wealthier clients who typically do not carry balances. Bank of America Corp and JPMorgan Chase & Co., two of the biggest card lenders, have grown their businesses by prioritizing affluent consumers over people already carrying credit card debt, according to analysts.

Card crunch

Citigroup has leaned more on its card business since the 2007-2009 financial crisis. The bank required three government bailouts when its US subprime mortgage business turned toxic and caused it to shrink its portfolio to stem losses. It sold its retail wealth management unit to Morgan Stanley, and it no longer engages in traditional mortgage and auto lending. Citigroup now has one-fifth the number of US branches as its primary competitors. So it has turned to its card business to drive growth and lure deposits. The bank now earns more than half of its consumer profit and revenue from cards. And it markets online checking and savings accounts to its 28 million cardholders. Doing so helped Citigroup add \$2 billion in consumer deposits during the first half of 2019. That is more than double what it gathered all of last year.

Analysts said the business will be a bright spot for Citigroup - as long as the economy remains healthy. US banks suffered \$87 billion in losses on credit card loans from 2009-2010 in the wake of the financial crisis, according to a Federal Reserve report. Alvarado, the truck driver, said she has been slowly chipping away at her balance thanks to 0 percent financing. "This works out for me for now, until they change it," she said. — Reuters

Cuba remittances cap will not apply to private sector: US

WASHINGTON/HAVANA: The Trump administration on Friday published new limits on money transfers to Cuba as part of tighter US sanctions on the island, but the previously announced rules allow funding for private businesses, and pro-democracy and citizen groups.

US remittances to Cuba have surged to an estimated several billion dollars per year since former US President Barack Obama started easing restrictions on them a decade ago, playing an increasingly important role in the beleaguered Cuban economy. But the administration of US President Donald Trump has reversed Obama's policy of detente, reinstating such limits and sanctions in what it says is an attempt to coerce the communist government into reform and abandoning support for leftist Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Analysts say it is likely also eyeing the anti-Castro Cuban American vote in the key swing state of Florida in next year's presidential election. "Through these regulatory amendments, Treasury is denying Cuba access to hard currency, and we are curbing the Cuban government's bad behavior while continuing to support the long-suffering people of Cuba," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement. Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said on Twitter he strongly rejected the measures aimed at strengthening the "economic siege against Cuba." "The opportunistic attempts to divide Cubans will fail," he said. The US Treasury Department said in a statement on Friday its Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) had amended its regulations to reflect the new limits on remittances announced in April by US National Security Adviser John Bolton.

The changes, which go into effect on Oct 9, cap the amount Cuban Americans can send family members to \$1,000 per quarter, and no longer allow transfers of money to nonfamily members. However, the department said it was adding a provision authorizing remittances to certain individuals and independent nongovernmental organizations in Cuba that would "support the operation of economic activity in the non-state sector." — Reuters

Business

KFH and Xpress Money celebrate successful launch of KFHXpress

Chalouhi: Customers can transfer money anywhere, anytime via KFHXonline

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) and global money transfer organization, Xpress Money, a Finabl company, are celebrating the successful launch and execution of KFHXpress service for instant cross-border money transfer. This partnership is facilitated by Xpress Money's business solution - FLEX. This innovative service was launched in line with KFH's commitment to continually enhance its customers' banking experience by introducing new financial solutions while keeping up with the rising bar of quality.

Present at the ceremony from KFH were Group General Manager Retail Banking-Fadi Chalouhi, General Manager Private Banking- Abdullah AlMejhem, Group Deputy General Manager Products-Mohamed Ghandour, Executive Manager Liabilities and Investments Products- Nehal Almosalem, along with Xpress Money senior officials headed by Sudhesh Giriyan - CEO, Prasad Katta - Vice President - Digital (Flex) Business, Vivek Menon - Marketing Director (MENASA) and Gautam Kanjilal - Head- Banking & Key Partnerships.

KFH and Xpress Money discussed the successful partnership and strategized on ways to strengthen the collaboration with the aim of delivering unique banking and payment solutions that meet customer expectations. On the sidelines of the ceremony, Chalouhi said KFHXpress service confirms KFH is on track of its digital transformation strategy, emphasizing the keenness of strengthening the leadership position as the best digital financial services provider.

Chalouhi added: "KFHXpress for money transfer, is convenient, affordable, accessible and secure. It is offered by KFH to its customers in collaboration with Xpress Money, one of the most dependable international

money transfer organizations. Customers can transfer money anywhere, anytime by using KFHXonline on the website or via mobile application."

He mentioned that KFH ensured the availability of a variety of options for customers to receive money: cash pick up, transfer to a bank account, or even get it door delivered "for selected countries".

Meanwhile, Group Deputy General Manager Products- Mohamed Ghandour confirmed KFHXpress service has witnessed high demand from Kuwaiti and expat customers, since it has a competitive transfer rate if compared to the other money transfer companies in Kuwait. The service is designed and structured as per regulatory considerations and regulations and in accordance with highest standards of service quality.

Ghandour added that the service is available for customers to transfer money to beneficiaries in more than 80 countries around the world. Meanwhile, Sudhesh Giriyan- CEO, Xpress Money said, "Remittances from Kuwait increased by 23 percent in the first half of 2019 as compared to the previous year reinforcing the demand for seamless money transfer services in the country. Our partnership with KFH, one of the pioneers in the world of Islamic banking is a step in the right direction within the ambit of remittances. With customer centricity being at the core of both the organizations involved, I am certain that customers will enjoy the convenience of the services that this partnership offers. This collaboration holds immense growth potential for all stakeholders involved and we look forward to a fruitful alliance."

KFH Xpress is facilitated by Xpress Money FLEX platform, a flexible and compatible solution available to businesses seeking to venture into the remittance industry. Xpress Money has consistently



Group photo of KFH and Xpress Money officials

focused on developing partnerships that bring new money transfer channels to customers.

Chalouhi said that KFH had made significant strides with its digital transformation journey, drawing attention to its advanced and innovative financial services and products. This includes in addition to KFHXpress, instant financial transfers service using RippleNet network, Mobile Deposit of Cheques that enables quick deposit of cheques in a fast and efficient way to customers' accounts, the queuing system Skiplino for booking appointments electronically in bank branches, opening several KFHX-go self-banking stations, cash withdrawals via mobile using QR code, Civil ID or mobile number, KFH Pay service for electronic payments, Robotics Process Automation, Artificial-Intelligence-driven Chatbot, KFHX Pass that allows customers to postpone the one of their installment payments online, and many other digital services.



Chalouhi and Giriyan signing partnership agreement

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced on Wednesday the winners of its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners. Al-Hassad has have over 850 prizes, over a 12 month period.

The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Ayman Abdullah Tim.

20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and they are: Fajer Othman Alsaedi, Ali Eissa Alali, Bader Saleh Alenezi, Reem Ahmad Alenezi, Nasser Abdulla Abel, Suad Ahmad Dashti, Huda Shamikh Alreshedi, Amal Jumaa Jaber,

Hanan Ahmed Alkandari, Lafi Mohsen Alsubaie, Zain Alabdien Jragh, Nabil Y Ayoub, Obaid M A Alanezi, Taibah Abdulmohsen Almunayes, Mohammad Waleed Alabras, Nosra Jaffar Ahmed, Fuad Abdulmustafa Abdulla Altaif, Ameena Hasan Ahmed, Mahmood Haji Ali and Ahmed Kadhem Isa.

On the occasion Ahli United Bank congratulate its winning customers, and commented that there are many chances to win waiting for our customers. Draws are held every Wednesday at AUB Kuwait or AUB Bahrain depending on the draw plan. On public holidays, the draw is postponed to the next business day.

Gulf Bank's 8th monthly salary draw tomorrow

KUWAIT: Tomorrow, Gulf Bank will be holding its eighth monthly Salary Account draw live on air on FM 88.8 'Q8 Pulse' (Nabd Al-Kuwait). The announcement will be approved by, and held in the presence of, a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

"Summer may be drawing to an end, but

for one lucky winner their summer is about to get a whole lot better! Tomorrow, we're going to be announcing the winner of our eighth Salary Account draw, and we can't wait to see who's going to be taking home a cash prize of up to 12 times their salary," said Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank.

"With the Gulf Bank Salary Account, everyone is a winner. Not only are account-holders automatically enrolled in the monthly draws, but they can also take advantage of a host of benefits, including interest-free loans, cash gifts, fee waivers, and more."

The 2019 Kuwaiti Salary Offer automatically enrolls both existing and new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank in the monthly and annual draws. The monthly

draws allow customers the chance to win cash prizes of up to 12 times their salary, while the yearly draw gives them the opportunity to win Kuwait's largest salary prize of up to 100 times their salary.

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

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

Iceland's WOW Air to resume flights with new owners

REYKJAVIK: An American aviation firm said on Friday it had taken over Iceland's bankrupt airline WOW Air together with local investors and said flights would resume in October.

USAerospace Associates CEO Michele Ballarin told a news conference that the company would relaunch carrying the same name, and that its first flight would be between Dulles airport in Washington DC and Keflavik in Iceland next month. She gave no financial details of the buyout, but USAerospace said that it had earmarked \$85 million to help with WOW's cash flow.

The bankruptcy of the low-cost carrier

er March caused a big stir in Iceland where it was expected to have a negative impact on tourism numbers, as well as on the wider economy which is headed for recession.

Until its insolvency, WOW Air carried more than a third of all visitors to Iceland. Some 51 percent of the airline's capital will be held by Icelandic investors, allowing it to operate in Europe, with the rest taken up by USAerospace. WOW's headquarters will be at Dulles airport. WOW Air will resume operations with two aircraft, Ballarin said, but plans to operate 10 to 12 planes by the summer of 2020.

Until the US company stepped in, the airline had run out of potential investors after its local competitor, Icelandair, pulled the plug on takeover talks. The relaunch of WOW Air comes at a difficult time for Icelandic tourism. Visitor numbers to the island fell by 20 percent in the second quarter of 2019 compared to the same period last year as tourists balked at the high cost of holidaying there. — AFP

KFH announces winners of 'Win with Hesabi' campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the second draw of "Win with Hesabi" campaign that offers 3 Jeep Wrangler Sport cars and 120 cash prizes worth KD250 each. The draw was held at KFH Headquarters under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The winners are: Fajer Abdullah, Shouq Al-Munaikh, Abdulrahman Almutairy, Mohamad AlHajraf, Manal Al-Azemi, Fatemah Al-Azemi, Shahd Al-Rashedi, Abdulrahman Alduwaisan, Saad Alotaibi and Sundus Alwanda who won cash prizes worth KD250 each.

This campaign comes as part of KFH continuing efforts to add value to Hesabi customers including advantages, discounts, prizes and exclusive rewards. Once the social allowance is transferred to Hesabi program, customers enter the monthly draw on 10 prizes of KD250 each, in addition to 3 spe-



Representative of Ministry of Commerce and Industry with KFH officials

cial draws on Jeep Wrangler Sport cars.

KFH offers "Hesabi for Youth" with a variety of privileges as part of its continued endeavor to provide adequate customer care, innovate new products and services and fulfill the needs of all customers of various age categories and interests. Services and products are tailored to suit customers' needs and provide distinguished service as per global standards regarding quality, accuracy and speed.

"Hesabi" program has been designed to meet the needs of youth and aspire for their active life style. This program presents for

youth many exclusive offers and a wide range of privileges including Hesabi ATM card with a unique design, eligibility to issue Hesabi prepaid card (as per credit regulations of KFH), distinguished offers and discounts etc.

KFH continues to launch marketing campaigns to reward youth customers. Hesabi for Youth represents the ambitions and expectations of youth category and copes with KFH aspirations to attract the largest portion of youth who represents the major part of Kuwaiti society. Also, the account represents KFH initiative to diversify banking services and products.

Fitch upgrades Ukraine's debt rating, outlook remains positive

WASHINGTON: The ratings agency Fitch on Friday upgraded Ukraine's sovereign debt to "B" from "B-", pointing to the country's increasing political and economic stability as well as falling debt levels.

While the debt remains in highly speculative status, the outlook for Kiev is also "positive," the agency said, noting that President Volodymyr Zelensky enjoyed a strong political mandate to pursue a reform agenda. Ukraine's new prime minister, Oleksiy Goncharuk, also

intends to seek additional assistance from the International Monetary Fund, which could help make debt payments in the coming years, according to Fitch.

After a popular uprising ousted a Kremlin-backed regime in 2014, the new Ukrainian government secured a \$17.5 billion deal led by the IMF to buttress the struggling economy. But disbursement of the IMF funds had been frequently delayed under the government of former President Petro Poroshenko, which struggled to push through reforms required by the IMF. Zelensky, who was a popular comedian before being elected in the spring, commands a parliamentary majority and took office on promises to tackle corruption.

Given the government's commitment to reforms and the outside help of bodies like the IMF, "Fitch expects further improvements in creditworthiness," the agency said in a statement. — AFP

S&P 500 rises; Treasury yields dip

NEW YORK: The S&P 500 posted a nominal gain and Treasury yields edged lower on Friday, as remarks from Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell firmed interest rate cut expectations and China announced an economic stimulus package, both of which helped offset weaker-than-expected US jobs data.

The roller-coaster week began with a flight to safety driven by trade jitters and weak US manufacturing data, but positive geopolitical developments in Britain, Hong Kong and Italy, along with news that US-China trade talks would continue, revived market risk appetite.

That appetite was further stoked after

China's central bank said it would lower the amount of cash that banks must hold as reserves, in order to bolster the nation's weakening economy. "Over the week we've seen risk assets rebound as favorable economic data and positive geopolitical developments provided comfort to investors that a broad slowdown isn't about to take shape," said Charlie Ripley, senior market strategist for Allianz Investment Management in Minneapolis.

But optimism was dampened by the US nonfarm payrolls report, which showed an increase of 130,000 jobs in August, fewer than analysts expected. The underwhelming data provided another possible sign that the longest-ever period of US economic expansion is losing steam and increased the likelihood that the Fed will cut rates when it meets later this month. But Ripley believes the jobs report was not as downbeat as the headline number suggested. "We still have an unem-

ployment rate at 3.7 percent and wages are increasing at a decent clip," Ripley said. "Beyond that we had favorable comments from Powell, which helped alleviate investor concern."

Indeed, in remarks made at a panel discussion in Zurich, Powell called the jobs report consistent with a strong labor market, adding that despite trade uncertainties he does not foresee or expect a U.S. recession. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 69.31 points, or 0.26 percent, to 26,797.46, the S&P 500 gained 2.71 points, or 0.09 percent, to 2,978.71 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 13.75 points, or 0.17 percent, to 8,103.07.

European and emerging markets extended their gains as China's stimulus announcement outweighed the disappointing economic data from the United States and also from Germany. The pan-European STOXX 600 index rose 0.32 percent and MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe gained 0.20 percent. — Reuters

What's On

Kyrgyzstan Embassy in Kuwait welcomes delegation, promotes agriculture products



By Ben Garcia

The Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to the State of Kuwait Samargyul Adamkulova recently organized a ceremony to welcome its agriculture delegation to Kuwait. The event promoted their agriculture business and encouraged people in Kuwait to buy their products. Variety of pears and apples were displayed at the embassy promoting it as the best in the world as they are organically nurtured.

"If you talk about our agriculture products, they are the best in the world because it is grown organically. These are samples of our best pears and apples that can be compared with the rest of the fruits in the market," said Adamkulova. Some of the products that are already available in the market from Kyrgyzstan are honey, cherries, melon, juices and byproducts of their best produces. She was also elated to announce the growing number of people visiting Kyrgyzstan. "In 2018, we welcomed about 2,500 Kuwaitis during the summer. In the five-year diplomatic relations shared between both the countries, our bilateral ties have been excellent and growing stronger," she said.

— Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh



KALA Kuwait honors Malayalam language program teachers



"A person must attach priority to learn his/her own mother tongue before learning other languages as the mother tongue helps a person better express his/her emotions and feelings, said famed Malayalam actor, director and cultural activist Madhupal here on Thursday. Inaugurating the 'Mathrubhasha Sangamam,' the valedictory conference of this year's Malayalam language program, organized by Kerala Art Lovers Association (KALA Kuwait), Madhupal said, 'It is good to learn more languages. Unfortunately, there is an emerging trend among Malayalis today to give preferences to other languages while ignoring their mother tongue

Malayalam.' The conference was hosted to honor the teachers and facilitators of the Malayalam Language program conducted by KALA and 'Mathrubhasha Committee' during the summer this year in Kuwait. Over 2,000 children attended the summer classes to learn Malayalam language during the three-month program. Madhupal applauded KALA Kuwait and Mathrubhasha Samiti for undertaking such a noble endeavor of Malayalam language program with the assistance of Kerala Language Mission. KALA has been conducting Malayalam language program for the diaspora children for the last 29 years.

KALA president T V Hikmat presided over the meeting while general secretary T K Saiju welcomed the guests. Mathrubhasha Samiti Convenor Anish Kallunkal presented the activity report. Malayalam Mission Kuwait Chapter Coordinator J Saji, Adv John Thomas and Mathrubhasha central committee member Sajeev K. Peter delivered felicitation speeches. Treasurer K V Nizar, Vice president Jyothish Cherian, Joint secretary Rajeeesh C Nair, Abbassiya regional secretary Shymesh, Mathrubhasha Samiti convenor George Thymannil, Patronage Committee member Sathar Kunnil and central committee member Bashir Batha were present during the function.

Recipes

Cajun Butter Shrimp Tacos

Ingredients

For The Shrimp
3 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
2 tbsp lightly packed brown sugar
1 tsp whole-grain mustard
1 tsp Cajun seasoning
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 tsp fresh thyme leaves
Red pepper flakes
Butter
1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 green onion, chopped
4 tortillas, warmed, for serving

1/4 cup freshly chopped cilantro
1/4 red onion, thinly sliced
1 green onion, chopped
Salt

Directions

In a small bowl, whisk together soy sauce, brown sugar, mustard, Cajun seasoning, garlic, thyme, and a large pinch red pepper flakes. In a large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the butter over medium-high. Add the shrimp and cook, tossing once, until golden on both sides, about 3 minutes. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and pour the soy sauce mixture into the skillet. Cook, tossing, until the shrimp are coated in sauce and sauce it thickened, 2 minutes more

Remove skillet from heat and add green onion. Make the cabbage slaw, in a medium bowl, whisk together the olive oil and lime juice. Add the cabbages, carrot, cilantro, red onion, and scallion and toss to coat. Season with salt. Serve shrimp in flour tortillas topped with slaw.

For The Cabbage Slaw

2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp fresh lime juice
1/2 cup shredded red cabbage
1/2 cup shredded green cabbage
1/4 cup shredded carrot



French Onion Mac & Cheese

Ingredients

5 tbsp butter
2 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
Salt
8 oz pasta
2 tbsp all-purpose flour
2 1/2 cup whole milk
1 cup grated fontina cheese
2 1/2 cup grated Gruyere
1 cup shredded sharp white cheddar
1 tsp Dijon mustard
Pinch of cayenne pepper
1 tsp fresh thyme leaves

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°. Brush 4 to 6 ramekins (depending on size) or small oven-proof baking dishes with butter. Alternatively, brush one large baking dish with butter. In a large skillet, melt 3 tablespoons of the butter over medium. Add the onions and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until they are golden, about 30 minutes. Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, following package directions until al dente. Drain pasta.

In a medium saucepan, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons butter over medium-high. Add flour and cook, stirring, 1 minute. While whisking, slowly pour in milk until combined. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium. Simmer, stirring, until sauce is thickened, about 6 minutes. Stir in fontina, 1 cup of the gruyere, and cheddar until cheese is melted. Remove from the heat. Stir in the pasta, caramelized onions, Dijon, thyme, and cayenne. Season with salt and pepper.

Divide mixture among ramekins and top each ramekin with the remaining gruyere. Bake until sauce is bubbly around the edges, about 20 minutes. Switch oven to broil and broil until cheese is golden, about 2 minutes. Garnish with more thyme before serving.



Health & Science

Meat-free champions lick their lips as market booms

SAN FRANCISCO: Beef-free burgers, egg-free omelettes and milk-free ice cream — meat and dairy alternatives have shot to the top of the menu, and producers are facing up to the challenges of going mainstream. “Progress has been stunning,” said Bruce Friedrich, director of the Good Food Institute, which hosted a conference this week in San Francisco for an industry abuzz with ambition and technological advances.

A new generation of vegetarian products has re-invigorated the sector, with fast-food giant Burger King now offering the meat-free “Impossible Whopper” and McDonald’s working with Nestle on its own plant-based burgers. Eyeing the booming market, major meat processors such as Smithfield, JBS and Perdue have all launched new brands using plants and are investing heavily to tap into changing consumer demand.

The latest example is Arkansas-based Tyson, which on Thursday announced it had taken a stake in New Wave Foods, a San Francisco start-up developing a shrimp substitute made from seaweed and soy protein — with crab and lobster next on the target list. Kroger, the second largest supermarket chain in the United States, also announced on Thursday that it was launching a new line of meat-free products to be sold under the brand name “Simple Truth” ranging from burgers to Bolognese sauce.

Beyond Meat, the best-known of the new plant-based ventures, made a major splash when shares soared on its first day of trading on Wall Street in May. Globally, the sector has also attracted government interest, with India now funding scientific research into products created from meat cells. At the three-day Good Food Conference in San Francisco, officials from Japan and Singapore were among

government representatives mixing with producers, scientists, entrepreneurs and investors.

Texture and taste

Delegates credited recent success to new technology that produces texture and flavor far closer to real meat — pushing aside often-derided vegetarian alternatives such as nut cutlets and soy sausages that have been around for decades. Kellogg’s Morningstar Farms vegetarian brand this week announced a new product range to keep up with the latest advances.

“Consumers want meat,” said Friedrich. “Screaming ‘eat lentils’ is not going to be effective. But changing the way meat is made can be.” The latest innovations in the race to mimic meat were showcased at the conference, including a 3D printer, ground-breaking mushroom cultivation and a new method to ferment tempeh, a traditional Indonesian soy product. The sector is still in its infancy in the US, at less than one percent of the conventional meat sector, but the potential for growth looks strong. Conference speakers hammered home the message that products had to become even closer to real meat, while other challenges include pricing and the problem of simply getting products into stores and onto restaurant menus.

Another major obstacle is criticism that plant-based burgers are not actually a healthy option as they are highly “processed” — often containing more than 20 ingredients — and can have high levels of salt. Several US states have also passed laws to stop retailers of animal protein alternatives from using labels like “meat” or even “sausage” — a push often driven by local farmers.

“Many efforts come from grassroot producers, not the



SAN FRANCISCO: A Mycelium mushroom based piece of “meat” developed by the Ecovative company is on display on a stand at the Good Food Institute’s conference promoting plant-based and cell-based meat. — AFP

meat industry,” said US former agriculture minister Ann Veneman. For Tom Mastrobuoni, the chief financial officer of Tyson’s investment subsidiary, the key to propelling further global consumption of meat alternatives is to promote them

in parallel to traditional products. “It’s not a ‘binary’ choice,” he said. “The population continue to grow — in some cultures a sign of wealth is eating meat. Consumers want options so you are going to have to supply both.” — AFP

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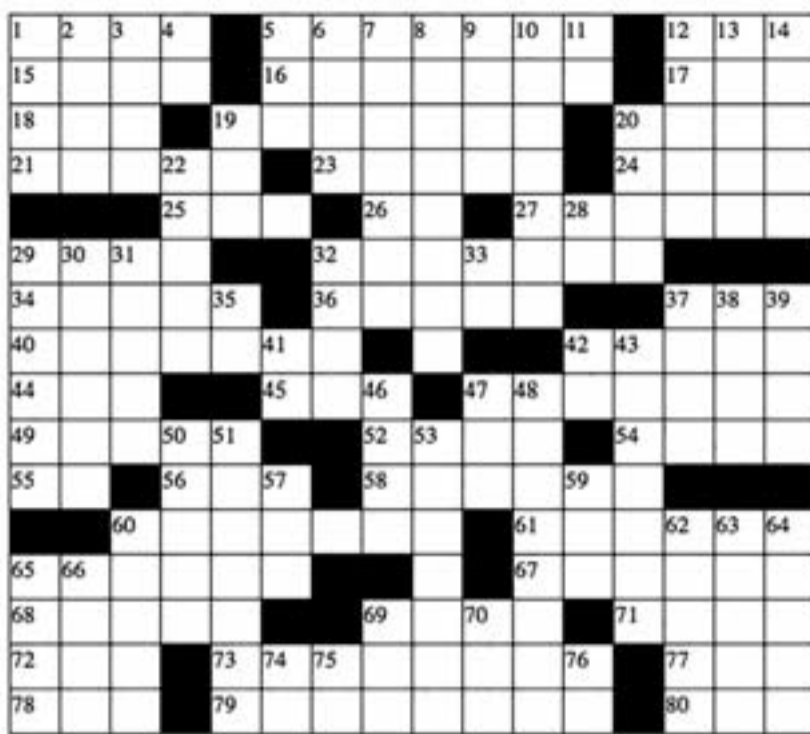
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ACROSS

- 1. Fail to keep or to maintain.
5. A group of languages of the Hoka family in California.
12. An enclosed space.
15. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
16. Examine by palpation for medical purposes.
17. Inflammation of the urethra of unknown cause.
18. Seed of a pea plant.
21. A genus of Ploceidae.
23. A kind of heavy jacket ('windcheater' is a British term).
24. A republic consisting of 26 of 32 counties comprising the island of Ireland.
25. A federal agency that supervises carriers that transport goods and people between states.
26. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.
27. I species.
29. (of molten metal or glass) Formed by pouring or pressing into a mold n l.
34. Feeling or showing extreme anger.
36. A port in northwestern Israel on the Bay of Acre.
40. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
44. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
45. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
49. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
52. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
54. A slender double-reed instrument.
55. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
56. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
58. Wear away through erosion or vaporization.
61. Large high frilly cap with a full crown.
65. A mock scepter carried by a court jester.
67. The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
68. An island of central Hawaii.
71. (Greek mythology) Daughter of Zeus and Demeter.
72. The products of human creativity.
73. Capable of being scaled.
77. Mythical bird of prey having enormous size and strength.
78. (formerly) A title of respect for a man in Turkey or Egypt.
79. Without a hand or hands.
80. The compass point midway between northeast and east.

DOWN

- 1. An inhabitant of Lapland.
2. Evergreen trees and shrubs having oily one-seeded fruits.
3. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
4. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
5. A health resort near a spring or at the sea-side.
6. A fastener for a door or lid.
7. A region of northeastern France famous for its wines.
8. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
9. An enclosed armored military vehicle.
10. Unarmed feather palms of central and northern South America.
11. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
12. Freshwater or marine or terrestrial gastropod mollusk usually having an external enclosing spiral shell.
13. Earlier a god.
14. Spicy fruit of the cubeb vine.
19. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
20. United States labor organizer who ran for President as a socialist (1855-1926).
22. A mark used to indicate the word above it should be repeated.
28. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
30. The mountain peak that Noah's ark landed on as the waters of the great flood receded.
31. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
32. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
33. 30 to 300 kilohertz.
35. The square of a body of any size of type.
37. Block consisting of a thick piece of something.
38. (Greek mythology) The Muse of history.
39. A native or inhabitant of Denmark.
41. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
42. A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
43. Pertaining to or resembling amoebae.
46. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
47. A close friend who accompanies his buddies in their activities.
48. A restraint that confines or restricts freedom (especially something used to tie down or restrain a prisoner).
50. A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
51. Do away with.
53. Situated away from the axis of any body or part.
57. A metal-bearing mineral valuable enough to be mined.
59. To an excessive degree.
60. The sister of your father or mother.
62. (in Indian English) The number that is represented as a one followed by 7 zeros.
63. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
64. The state prevailing during the absence of war.
66. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
69. An honorary law degree.
70. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
74. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
75. An associate degree in nursing.
76. A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is a good time to consolidate and organize your affairs or rearrange your living situation. You may be put in charge of the children or the yard work or some other chore that does not usually make up your day but this may call for a fair exchange and you are ready to help. General good feelings and a sense of support create a happy time. You have a clear vision into your own inner sense of values: how you appreciate and love. Take the time this afternoon to relax ... Perhaps a movie or a bicycle ride through the park would be fun. If you are still sitting with children, a ball-game could be considered.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Perhaps this is the best time to think and study, for you have a real appreciation for ideas and thoughts. You may find yourself enjoying a long conversation with a friend—writing a letter, or making a special phone call. There are sudden insights into some of the most sensitive and vulnerable areas of a puzzling situation or person this day. Contemplating what you have heard and understanding that there may be more to the story will get you happily through the day. Dispute what you hear too soon, and the truth could be lost, as well as a real understanding of a difficult individual. Be patient and in a few days you will have a new understanding.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is an instinctive imperative to be in control—pulling the strings. You may be the head of the household or think you are in charge, but others have their ideas and need your listening ear. This understanding may lead to greater interest or experience in healing and investing and gaining better insight into the people living around you. You may be reminded of your various responsibilities. Check your anxieties at the door and come into a room with your good attitude. Take care of any business you had previously postponed. A meeting with someone older or in authority is at hand this afternoon—with a listening and patient attitude, a satisfactory agreement can be met.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Refinement and relationships are the keys to emotional satisfaction. You may be able to enjoy and value your own life situation at this time or feel especially kind towards a friend or loved one. You have an opportunity to show this friend or loved one that you understand the words and the goals that are expressed. Your artistic talent and appreciation are heightened beyond words. You have a clear vision into your own inner sense of values and how you want your life to progress. This is a good time to examine and think about what is important, perhaps share your ideas. This is a very nice day that is filled with some renewed appreciation for all that is beautiful and fine.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Family, home, relatives and real estate gain your attention today. You enjoy your family and want to help provide the best. You contribute a lot of energy to your family group that encourages confidence and trust. Matters of health come to your attention and you may decide to begin an exercise program—perhaps with a loved one. Early morning walks are a good thing. Today, someone new may come into your living surroundings. This could be a birth or the agreement to have someone in your home for a while. You could have compassion for a student or a young person who opens to you. You are able to dispense with the unessential in order to develop what is most basic in your environment. Planning can go on paper this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are very expressive and outgoing when it comes to your feelings and emotions; you may even be a little too sensitive at times. You could, however, be successfully working with some new creative expression to reveal the real you, perhaps through sports, art, theater, etc. Teaching, other than your professional work, may be where you find your thoughts today. This could be as a tutor or a teacher of some creative subjects. It may be a good time to teach a young person how to ride a bicycle. Creativity and time to create are important for you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Religious, philosophical and cultural matters are likely to have special appeal. These things have a way of stirring your blood. A meeting with someone older or in authority gets you thinking about gaining more insight through continued education. The ability to listen and express yourself in clear messages is most important to you. You will be pleased with some of the courses that are offered and you might even decide to continue your education so that you can teach others or work in the school system. This afternoon you can relax and just sit back and enjoy what you have—to live life. Your desires are strong and you will want to enjoy yourself this evening. There is a basic drive to appreciate and taste life.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your grasp for many subjects and ideas helps you to convey important messages to others, particularly when no one else can succeed. You may receive a challenge from someone in the business field who wants to break away and try new things. A business consultant or employee advisor may be a consideration for next week. If you are looking to improve your health, begin by reading the ingredient list on the products you love. Products with high-fructose corn syrup are the most important to mark off of your grocery list. For now, you might enjoy a walk, a little exercise—shampoo the dog.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

There is an opportunity to understand those around you and to have a fun time with friends and family today. General good feelings and a sense of support and harmony make this a happy time. A young person may need lessons in managing money and you are providing a plan. Careful, do not become too carried away—he or she will learn about the state of the economy soon enough. You find yourself feeling more private and in a stay-at-home mood later today. You have a great social drive and love to work in a group or with close friends but this afternoon you may prefer to spend some time with your loved ones and family members.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You possess, at your center, an intensity that burns through any inconsistency; searching for opportunities to understand the world and all of the many secrets therein is a search you love to perform. This may mean you listen to a special radio show or you read particular books about space travel, time, underwater living, stocking up the food shelves, survival techniques, technology that is new on the market, etc. Deep conversations may be disturbing, stimulating and enlightening and may encourage investigation. You enjoy the light-bulb effect these long talks promote. You could meet with some opposition with some of your own ideas.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may appear very tranquil this morning. Everything seems to be working together and you may find yourself expressive and able to communicate well. In-depth discussions and probing conversations find you at your top performance. Your investigative abilities are high. This afternoon you could find yourself in a hobby store buying parts, games or an addition to your favorite pastime. Before you begin to play with those hobbies of yours, clear away some of the things that no longer serve a purpose for you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may find that you have been chosen or volunteered as a guide for someone or several people that do not come to your town very often. Smile—this may be an opportunity to grow professionally. A friend may want to invest in real estate. This is generally a fruitful period for real-estate investments and you may want to invest as well. Your most respectable self is showing today. You have the ability to communicate well with others. Family, home and the other roots in your life give you a sense of mission. There is growth and gain through these things. Being appreciated and admired for your gifts and talents are powerful needs. Taking chances can bring big rewards. A new understanding between loved ones is possible.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Delicious Desserts

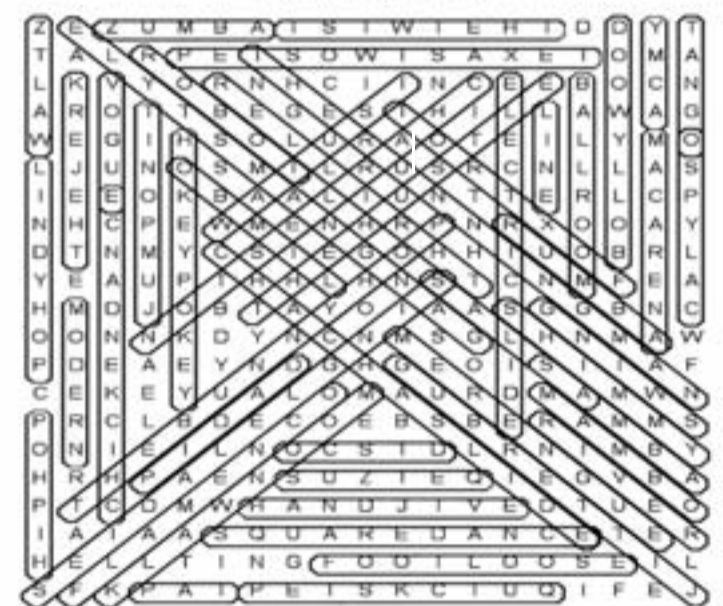
Find and circle all of the desserts that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- AMBROSIA, CINNAMON ROLLS, JELLY ROLLS, PINEAPPLE DELIGHT, APPLE CRISP, CREAM BRULEE, LEMON BARS, PLUM SQUARES, BAKED ALASKA, CREPES, MACAROONS, RAISIN PUDDING, BAKLAVA, EMPANADAS, MERINGUES, RUM BALLS, BANANA SPLIT, FLAN, MONKEY BREAD, SORBET, BREAD PUDDING, FRUIT CRUMBLE, MOUSSE, STRAWBERRY SHORT CAKE, BROWNIES, FUDGE, NUT BRITTLE, STRUDEL, BUTTER TARTS, GELATO, PASTRIES, SUNDAE, CARROT CAKE, GINGERBREAD, PAVLOVA, TIRAMISU, CHEESE CAKE, ICE CREAM, PEACH COBBLER, TRIFLE, CHOCOLATE CAKE

Friday's Solution

Dance crazes



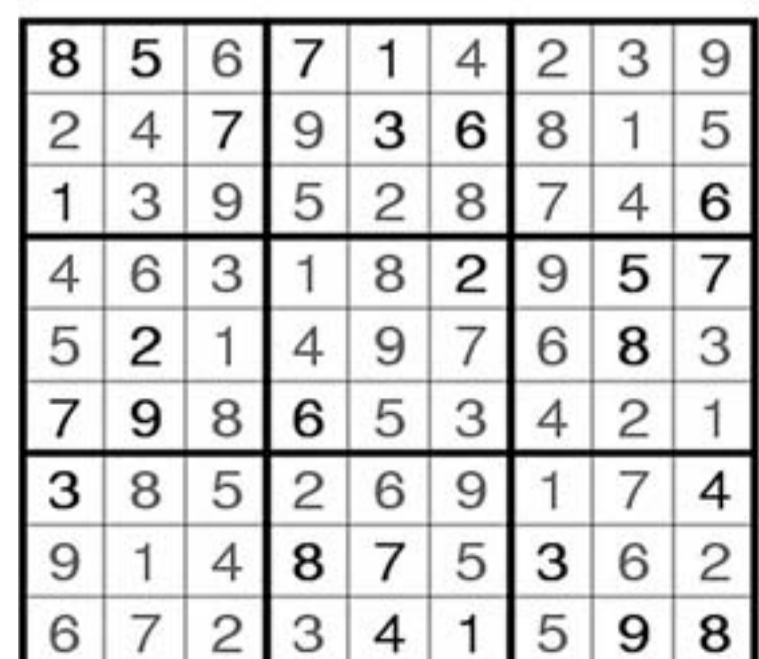
- BALLROOM, BOLLYWOOD, CALYPSO, CHA CHA SLIDE, CHARLESTON, CHICKEN DANCE, DA DIP, DISCO, ELECTRIC SLIDE, FLAMENCO, FOOTLOOSE, FOXTROT, GANGNAM STYLE, HAND JIVE, HEP HOP, HOKEY POKEY, JITTERBUG, JUMP ON IT, LIMBO, LINDY HOP, LINE, MACARENA MAMBO, MERENGUE, MODERN, MOONWALK, QUICKSTEP, REVER, ROBOT, RUMBA, SALSA, SAMBA, SHIMMY, SINGLE LADIES, SQUARE DANCE, SUZIE Q, SWING, TANGO, TAP, TEXAS TWO-STEP, THE BUNNY HOP, THE HUSTLE, THE JERK, THE RUNNING MAN, THE TWIST, THRILLER, VOGUE, WALTZ, WATUSI, YMCA, ZUMBA

The hidden message is: DANCING IS THE BODY'S WAY OF CELEBRATING LIFE

Daily Sudoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2019



US actor Rob Morgan arrives for the premiere of 'Just Mercy' at the Roy Thomson Hall during the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival Day 2, in Toronto, Ontario. — AFP

Rihanna back as Ford promises new era for New York Fashion Week

Tom Ford, Rihanna, and the return of big names including Tommy Hilfiger herald a promised new era for New York Fashion Week which kicked off Friday after a run of underwhelming seasons. American designer Ford is credited with reviving Gucci in the 1990s and has quickly set about trying to do the same for Fashion Week, shortening its length and strengthening its diversity. "I want global exposure to the creativity that is in New York," said Ford, who in June became chairman of the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA) which runs Fashion Week.

"Everything is too inward-looking in this country. So American star designers, they leave. Virgil Abloh, where is he? He's at Vuitton. "You go to Paris and you become global. You stay in New York, and you're in New York," he added in the interview with Vogue, published in August. Ford drove the CFDA's decision to cut this year's Fashion Week from seven to five days, a move insiders have been calling for years to strengthen the event.



In this file photo Barbadosi singer Rihanna poses during a promotional event of her brand Fenty in Paris. — AFP photos



In this file photo US fashion designer Tom Ford arrives for the 2019 CFDA fashion awards at the Brooklyn Museum in New York City.

The women's shows—which traditionally kicked off on a Wednesday night—began on Friday evening and will run through the evening of Wednesday, September 11. Ford's background is a significant departure from that of his predecessor Diane Von Furstenberg, who chaired the CFDA for 13 years. Her house "DVF" has called New York home for half a century, while Ford, a Texan by birth, worked in Italy and England for a time before settling in Los Angeles. New York is the first of the season's four big fashion weeks and tightening the schedule makes it more attractive to buyers and foreign media scoping out talented new designers.

Diversity

"A shortened week is more economical and expeditious for attendees, especially those coming to New York from abroad," said Steven Kolb, president and chief executive officer of the CFDA. New York has struggled in recent years with several leading designers opting to showcase their collections elsewhere, including in Paris and even Los Angeles. Abloh, Rodarte, Altuzarra, Thom Browne and Alexander Wang have been among high-profile names to skip the event recently, leading some commentators to speculate whether New York Fashion Week was over.

There are early signs that its revival has already begun under Ford with several famous designers returning to the event, such as Tommy Hilfiger who is back for the first time in almost three years. Pop icon Rihanna will present her bestselling lingerie line Savage X Fenty after it premiered in September 2018. Before the official kickoff by Ford, several collections were presented Friday, including Rag & Bone and Jeremy Scott.

Rag & Bone returned to the runway after a three-year absence, but with a new conceptual show that included dancers, an orchestra and an artificial intelligence camera that loomed over participants. The collection was in keeping with the cosmopolitan spirit of the label, and was characterized by light and breadth, in an ode to mobility. Far from the sobriety of Rag & Bone, Jeremy Scott lived up to his reputation as a troublemaker, with florescent prints and a retro-futuristic look. This year's line-up also includes the latest from acclaimed Haitian-American designer Kerby Jean-Raymond's Pyer Moss line. Telfar, Tomo Koizumi and Khaite are also high on the hot list.

Diversity will again be a major theme. The CFDA is committed to having a greater range of models from different ethnic groups and representing varied body shapes. The council recently appointed Jean-Raymond, Abloh and British designer Carly Cushnie, who are all black, to its board. Chilean-born designer Maria Cornejo also joined. "Diversity, inclusion, and model well-being are key to our efforts, as is showcasing young talent, which is core to our work," said Kolb.—AFP

Rapper *Nicki Minaj* announces retirement

Rap queen Nicki Minaj on Thursday shocked fans by announcing her retirement from music, saying she was going to focus on family. The provocative 36-year-old known for hits like "Super Bass" is engaged to music executive Kenneth Petty, and she recently said a wedding is in the cards in the coming months. "I've decided to retire & have my family," tweeted the wildly successful rapper raised in the New York borough of Queens. "I know you guys are happy now," she continued. "To my fans, keep reppin me, do it til da death of me, X in the box - cuz ain't nobody checkin me." "Love you for LIFE."

The surprising news fueled pregnancy rumors that had already been swirling since June after she appeared on a late-night television show and opted against drinking. She went Instagram-official with her partner Petty in December 2018, after rebooting the relationship decades after they were involved as teenagers. The rekindled romance raised eyebrows considering Petty's criminal

past: he is a registered sex offender in New York and was convicted in 1995 of attempted rape. Minaj dismissed criticism of her new relationship, saying "He was 15, she was 16 ... in a relationship. But go awf Internet. Y'all can't run my life. Y'all can't even run y'all own life. Thank you boo."

Walking exaggeration

Minaj's profanity-laced lyrics, skin-baring music videos and unique, animated flow first catapulted her to fame in 2010. Known for her bold sartorial style that includes neon costumes and wigs, Minaj—whose hits include "Starships," "Bang Bang" and "Anaconda"—is considered one of rap's most influential female artists. The Grammy-nominated artist born in Trinidad and Tobago cites Foxy Brown and Jay-Z as major inspirations, and has crafted a lightning-speed sound distinctive for her use of alter egos and accents, especially British cockney.

She's "a sparkling rapper with a gift for comic accents and unexpected turns of phrase," wrote a New York Times critic in 2018. "She's a walking exaggeration, outside in sound, personality and look." "And she's a rapid evolver, discarding old modes as easily as adopting new ones." Her brash personality and penchant for controversy also made Minaj a tabloid regular, especially for a feud at a Fashion Week 2018 after party that saw rap rival Cardi B throw a shoe and allegedly attempt to fight Minaj.—AFP



In this file photo US rapper Nicki Minaj arrives for the 2019 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.—AFP

Lifestyle | Music & Movies



These photos show members of the Dustyesky Choir during a rehearsal in Mullumbimby. — AFP photos

Tsars of the show: Aussie blokes become unlikely Russian folk heroes

The idea of starting a Russian choir in rural Australia began as a vodka-fuelled lark, but five years on a rag-tag bunch of farmers, lawyers and laborers have become unlikely international folk heroes. None of them speaks Russian, only one has ever travelled to Russia, and absolutely no one would mistake their tiny coastal hometown of Mullumbimby for Moscow.

But "Dustyesky" has won over fans from Sydney to Sochi with renditions of traditional Russian folk songs, which they perform at festivals across Australia.

Andrew Swain, a local builder and the choir's director, admitted the all-male group had varying degrees of choral experience. It ranges, he said, from "the guys who can actually sing" to those who "don't have any idea what they're doing—but they're great company". "There's no Russian talent, let's be clear about that," he said. Swain said he offered to set up the 28-strong cult act in 2014 when a friend who runs the town's music festival com-

plained he would love to feature a Russian choir at the event but couldn't afford to fly one in.

"We were drinking vodka and it was late at night, and I said to him, 'mate, we'll just start our own,'" he said. "The next morning we woke up and I thought, I don't really know what I've done here, but I've run choirs before and I think we can do this. "And off we went." The choir's repertoire mixes romantic folk melodies with rousing Soviet Red Army revolutionary classics and Russian Orthodox Church hymns. "The songs kind of sing themselves," said choir member Chris Mallory. "We learnt the songs phonetically, most of us not really having a clue what we're singing."

The act is somewhat tongue-in-cheek. Their name, Dustyesky, is a Dostoevsky-inspired merging of "dusty" and "esky"—an Australian brand of insulated coolers often used on construction sites and at barbecues. And although one member introduces their songs in a fake

Russian accent, the choir also has a more serious side. Dustyesky's members gather faithfully every Tuesday at the local veterans' club to practice. It is a ritual they agree has closely bonded the men, many of whom didn't know one another before they joined.

And the line-up has remained virtually unchanged since its creation, with so many others keen to join there is now a waiting list of about 100 aspiring members. Mallory said the group provided an important sense of camaraderie—an element at times lacking in Australia's "blokey" macho culture—describing it as "an amazing part of my life". "In Australian culture, especially, there's a missing thing of men getting together and singing," he said. "But we do, and it's fantastic."

Despite their distinct Australian accents and uneven singing abilities, they have been embraced by audiences at home and abroad. Expatriate Russians regularly attend their shows and they have been featured by Russian tele-

vision network Channel One, prompting an outpouring of support from people in the country. "When we started we didn't realize how much it would resonate with Russian people," said Swain.

"But then we started to do gigs and there would be Russian people in the audience and they would all be singing along with every word with tears streaming down their eyes." In turn, the choir—who will release a "very best of" album as their debut in November—have also formed a deep appreciation for Russian music. "The Russian thing was a bit of a left-of-field concept but as we've learnt more Russian songs we've come to appreciate the depth of feeling and history and passion and power that come through the music of Russia," Swain said. "It's next-level musicality, and next-level passion and history."—AFP



English rock musician, singer-songwriter, and composer Roger Waters reacts upon his arrival for the screening of the film 'Roger Waters Us + Them' presented out of competition during the 76th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP

Pink Floyd legend labels PM Johnson a 'sociopath'

Pink Floyd legend Roger Waters branded British prime minister Boris Johnson a dangerous "sociopath" Friday. The singer said Johnson and other populist leaders like Donald Trump are hell-bent on destroying the planet as a movie of his latest world tour, "Us + Them"—which highlighted the plight of migrants—was premiered at the Venice film festival. He said that like Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, Johnson and Trump had embarked on "a willful quest to destroy this beautiful planet on which we live."

"If we do not resist the neo-liberal and neo-fascist forces that are tearing the planet apart there will not be anything left for our children and their children," the veteran star declared. British-born Waters, a long-time supporter of left-wing causes, told AFP that Johnson "fits all the fascist paradigms. He is a larger-than-life buffoon totally uninterested in anything beyond how can he get power. "Fascism is always an unholy alliance between the ruling and the corporate class with the popular support of the uneducated mass. That is what is happening in the UK at the moment," he insisted.

Nevertheless, Waters said he would gladly sit down with Trump, Johnson or Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage "if such a meeting would bear fruit. I am a great believer of the stone dropped in the well... and the ripple that might do some good." But the writer of such classic protest songs as "The Wall" said none of the wave of populist leaders across Europe were capable of feeling "for a fellow human being. "You either have love in your heart or you don't," he told AFP.

No love in their hearts

"[Matteo] Salvini has no love in his heart," Waters added, in a swipe at Italy's former far-right interior minister. "Neither does Boris Johnson, neither does Donald Trump," he said. "They are heartless sociopaths. So they shouldn't be taken seriously by ordinary human beings." Waters had earlier told reporters that Trump's and Johnson's divisive brand of politics was "succeeding in keeping ordinary people at each other's throats."

He said the appeal of Trump and other populists was based on fear. "They are amusing and they give (their supporters) permission to be complete arseholes. "It pumps them up" and tells them "that they are better than the blacks and the brown people and anybody who lives in Mexico. However poor you are, you are superior to them," he said. The 76-year-old said so many young fans had flocked to his concerts because "most popular music is entirely devoid of meaning and emotion. They recognize the truth" in the fire-brand lyrics of his songs about US drone strikes and the growing gap between rich and poor.

Earlier at a highly charged press conference, Waters voiced his support for WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who he said would probably be killed for revealing US atrocities in Iraq. He also claimed that Brazil's jailed former president Luis Inacio Lula da Silva—or Lula—had been framed on corruption charges and that the "powers that be" had done everything in their power to undermine "Hugo Chavez's Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela".—AFP

Star-studded 'Band' doc frustrates Toronto critics on opening night

Tales of The Band's descent into drug-fueled feuding are as well-worn as their pioneering Americana sound—but a star-studded documentary opening the Toronto film festival has stoked controversy by largely ignoring them. "Once Were Brothers: Robbie Robertson and The Band," executive produced by Martin Scorsese and featuring rock legends including Bruce Springsteen, Van Morrison and Eric Clapton, was showcased Thursday at North America's biggest film festival.

It follows de facto band leader Robertson's journey from childhood in Toronto, through playing alongside Bob Dylan on his infamous "electric" tour, to culminate with The Band's farewell 1976 gig. The rock outfit never again all appeared on stage after "The Last Waltz" concert, with rifts emerging among the group—in particular between Robertson and drummer Levon Helm, who lapsed into heroin addiction.

"I loved Levon, and we were not 'like brothers' to me—we were brothers," Robertson said Thursday. "Years later, I wasn't there—but for him, it went to another place, and I had no control over that. So I just stepped aside," he added. The Band reformed without Robertson soon after the farewell concert, and toured until another member, Richard Manuel, killed himself. Helm, who penned a memoir accusing Robertson of breaking up the group and monopolizing songwriting credits, died in 2012.

But 26-year-old Canadian director Daniel Roher said he chose to focus on the group's music and camaraderie in their early touring days because that is something "we're going to remember in 100 years." "Part of the legacy of The Band, a lot of the oxygen in that room was absorbed by this apparent feud," he said. "I really just put emphasis on the brotherhood, and what these guys did together, and this extraordinary creative collaboration. And that's what I'm really excited about to share with the film," he added.

Initial reviews suggested that approach was wide of the mark. The Hollywood Reporter said the film took "a respectful fan's-eye view" but avoided taking "more artistic chances," while IndieWire accused it of "reckless self-mythologizing" on behalf of Robertson. The Wrap said the film's "truncated timeline" was "frustrating," and called its selection as the festival's opening-night movie "an odd choice."

Suspension of disbelief

Robertson—whose memoirs inspired the film, and who provides first-person narration throughout the documentary—did not answer any journalists' questions on the glitzy



US-Italian director Martin Scorsese arrives for the Opening Night Gala presentation of 'Once Were Brothers: Robbie Robertson and The Band' during the Toronto International Film Festival, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. — AFP

premiere's red carpet. Also in attendance was Scorsese, a longtime collaborator with Robertson who will use the musician's talents for the score of his upcoming "The Irishman." The only other surviving band member, Garth Hudson, did not appear.

Festival head Cameron Bailey introduced the opening film by inviting leaders of Canada's indigenous First Nations peoples onto the stage, noting to loud applause that "This is the sacred land that has been the site of human activity for 15,000 years." Elsewhere, British director Armando Iannucci's "The Personal History of David Copperfield" received its world premiere. The film adaptation of Charles Dickens's classic autobiographical novel, set in Victorian London, stars Dev Patel in a title role typically played by white actors.

"As long as you embody a character, there's already a suspension of disbelief in the audience anyway," actress Rosalind Wiseman told Variety. "As long as the actors do a good job... why not?" Hugh Laurie and Tilda Swinton also star along with Game of Thrones' Gwendoline Christie in a cast jokingly described by Patel as the "British Avengers."—AFP



US actress Susan Sarandon takes pictures with fans as she arrives for the premiere of 'Blackbird' during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto. — AFP

Asia's richest man offers free TVs in Indian broadband blitz

Having already turned India's mobile market upside down, Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani has now set his sights on broadband.

In 2016 Ambani's Jio network entered the mobile telecoms market with free calls and ultra-cheap data, triggering a brutal price war and making Indian mobile data reportedly the cheapest in the world. JioFiber, launched on Thursday, offers a minimum internet speed of 100 megabits per second (Mbps) from 699 rupees per month, around 35 to 45 percent lower than rivals, according to Indian media, going up to one gigabit per second.

"Currently, the average fixed-line broadband speed in India is 25 Mbps. Even in America, which is the most developed economy, it is around 90 Mbps," Ambani's Reliance Jio firm said. Ambani, the world's 13th richest person according to Forbes with a fortune of \$50 billion, has also announced that customers will be able to watch films in their living rooms the day they come out in cinemas, irking film distributors.

In India, video-on-demand growth is explosive, according to researcher Boston Consulting Group which predicts the market could leap to \$5 billion by 2023 from \$500 million last year, according to Bloomberg. Mukesh Ambani is also currently engaged in fierce competition with Amazon and Walmart in an ongoing race to dominate India's e-commerce market.—AFP

Pop star Eilish urges fans to join climate protests

Pop star Billie Eilish has called on her millions of fans all over the world to participate in massive climate change protests planned for later this month. The American singer urged her 37 million Instagram followers to "take it to the streets" on September 20 and 27 in demonstrations to be held around the same time as the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit.

"Right now, there are millions of people all over the world begging our leaders to pay attention. Our earth is warming up at an unprecedented rate, icecaps are melting, our oceans are rising, our wildlife is being poisoned, and our forests are burning," she wrote. On Wednesday, the 17-year-old also released her latest music video for the song "All Good Girls Go To Hell," which was full of symbolic references to environmental catastrophe.

Large youth-led protests around the planet are scheduled for the Fridays of September 20 and 27 to pressure leaders gathering in New York for the United Nations climate summit on September 23. Teenage environmental activist Greta Thunberg is expected to lead the protests in New York. She arrived in the US financial capital last week after crossing the Atlantic on a zero-carbon emissions yacht. Eilish became the first musician born in the 2000s to top the Billboard Hot 100 last month when her breakout song "Bad Guy" reached number one.—AFP

Lifestyle | Music & Movies

AI as good as Mahler? Austrian orchestra performs symphony with twist

Can artificial intelligence turn out symphonies to match one of the greats of classical music? That was the question posed by one unusual orchestra performance in the Austrian city of Linz on Friday, in which Gustav Mahler's unfinished Symphony No.10 was played-immediately followed by six minutes of "Mahleresque" music written by software. The project's creator says that the two are clearly distinguishable but not everyone in the audience agreed.

"I couldn't really feel the difference... I believe it was really well done," Maria Jose Sanchez Varela, 34, a sci-

ence and philosophy researcher from Mexico, told AFP. The performance was part of Linz's Ars Electronica Festival, which aims to highlight connections between science, art and technology. The brains behind the pioneering performance was AI researcher and composer Ali Nikrang, who works at the Ars Electronica Futurelab research centre affiliated with the festival. He used the open-source AI software MuseNet to write the music.

"It all sounds like music, there are emotions, but someone who really knows Mahler will notice immediately that it is not Mahler," Nikrang told AFP, admitting



Markus Poschner, conductor of the Bruckner Orchestra Linz performs during the 'Mahler Unfinished Project' at the Ars Electronica in Linz, Upper Austria. — AFP photos



AI researcher and composer Ali Nikrang poses at the Ars Electronica in Linz, Upper Austria. — AFP photos



Dancer and choreographer Silke Grabinger performs with a robot during her performance at the Ars Electronica in Linz, Upper Austria.

Mahler's typical "harmonic expressions" were not quite there yet. He said AI learned from "data from the past, from data left to us by Mahler" so it may be able to create an exact copy of Mahler, but it still could not come up with a "concept" or overall theme for the music the way the classical composer himself did.

But Nikrang says that AI has nevertheless made great strides. Working with the first 10 notes of Mahler's Symphony No. 10, the software gave him four suggested segments, out of which he chose one, following which it continued giving him four more segments and so on. In all, Nikrang evaluated a few dozen pieces before choosing what spectators heard on Friday.

"All the suggestions were quite good... That is not obvious with AI, at least given the state of the technology five months ago" Nikrang said, adding that MuseNet had enabled a jump in quality. Christine Schoepf, the Ars Electronica festival's co-director, said that back when she took part in the very first edition 40 years ago, "of course we couldn't have guessed what would happen with AI". "The fact it would progress in such quick steps wasn't foreseeable," she said.

Lacking emotional depth

Experts say the project highlights interesting questions. "This is of course really exciting," said Aljoscha Burchardt of the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI). "One wonders whether the machines are so smart that they can accomplish great

music, or whether the music wasn't such a great accomplishment after all?" Burchardt asks. "Maybe the pieces followed a graspable logic that in the past only very good composers knew, and now a machine can do it. That's the question," he told AFP.

With computers churning out work at a speed composers cannot compete with, prices could drop, but on the other hand-just as in other fields where "hand-made" commands more prestige-artists who write their music without software could be able to charge a premium, Burchardt said. Machines also still needed humans to guide them, Austrian music expert Christian Scheib said. "Even with highly-complex AI, it depends on the artistic quality and skills of the respective composer," he told AFP.

And of course, AI isn't yet able to explain its projects to journalists either. As Nikrang predicted, some spectators noticed when AI took over the composition in Friday night's performance. One of them, Manuela Klaut, said: "I somehow thought suddenly: 'Ah, it is getting a bit more arbitrary' or something like that." But she admitted that it was hard to pinpoint what exactly changed, and the overall performance was still "great". "I felt slightly that the emotional depth that you have in a Mahler composition was missing, maybe also the melancholy," the 39-year-old from Germany said.—AFP

Weinstein looms as Toronto fest talks Oscar lobbying, sexism

Susan Sarandon knows what it takes to win an Oscar, but on Friday the veteran US actress blasted Hollywood for only handing out statuettes to stars backed by "the Harvey Weinstins of this world." Speaking at the Toronto International Film Festival for the world premiere of "Blackbird," the Academy Award-winning star said Oscars glory is only possible today with vast amounts of money and lobbying. "Honestly, film now has become so corporate to get an Oscar," she said. "When I got nominated five times and won once, you didn't have to spend."

"That would never happen now," she said, pointing to the six-month-long campaigns for nominations that have become commonplace, including VIP screenings, brunches and other "opinion-maker things." Sarandon, 72, won an Academy for 1995's "Dead Man Walking," after four previous nominations. In recent years the Toronto festival has been a key step on the journey to Oscar glory, with recent Best Picture winners including "Green Book" and "The Shape of Water" emerging as frontrunners.

Sarandon admitted she would love to win for "Blackbird," in which she plays a terminally ill mother ending her own life, but said: "I take it with a grain of salt because I know that it's up against, you know, whatever Meryl Streep is doing this year." But she added that outstanding performers in smaller films do not stand a chance because they don't have the means to "compete with some of these films that the Harvey Weinstins of the world are pushing."

Before his spectacular downfall, Weinstein was seen as a master Oscars lobbyist with enormous clout across town. Tales are legion of the lengths the Miramax mogul would go to in order to earn improbable wins for the likes of "Shakespeare in Love" and "The Artist." His reign came to an abrupt end when he was accused of harassment and assault by more than 80 women, including stars such

as Angelina Jolie and Ashley Judd. The original accusations against him were a catalyst for America's #MeToo movement. Weinstein has always insisted his sexual relationships were consensual.

Drug the bad guys

Elsewhere in Toronto, the makers of "Hustlers"-a film about New York strippers who turned the tables on wealthy Wall Street executives, also premiering at the festival-said their jobs still involved "pitching to primarily white men." "I don't know what's changed yet, to be honest," director Lorene Scafaria told a panel discussion Friday. "I hope some things have gotten better as a result of the #MeToo movement and #TimesUp. "I certainly hope that some people have adjusted their behavior and their thinking. But we've got thousands of years (of sexism) before this movie was made."

Producer Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas said procuring funding for the female-dominated film, starring Jennifer Lopez, Constance Wu and Cardi B, had been problematic, with the end result shot for \$20.7 million in just 29 days. The film, which premieres Saturday, is based on the real-life story of a group of strippers and sex workers who scammed businessmen out of vast sums, including slipping drugs into their drinks before swiping their cards.

Potential financial backers for the film had asked for changes to be made, including presenting the male "victims" as villains by inventing criminal back stories. "The note they gave us was 'It's great, could they drug the bad guys? Make one of the guys a rapist and drug him?'" said Goldsmith-Thomas. She said a fellow female producer had asked: "If we were making 'The Wolf of Wall Street' would you have said to Leonardo DiCaprio 'just scam the bad people?'" TIFF, North America's largest movie festival, runs until September 15.—AFP

Polanski's Dreyfus

drama favorite to win Venice film festival

Roman Polanski's film about the Dreyfus Affair-in which he was accused of drawing parallels between himself and the persecuted French Jewish army officer-has won the critics' prize at the Venice film festival, making it a favorite to lift the top award yesterday. If the official jury were to make the same choice it would cause an outcry, with feminists already furious the veteran maker of "Rosemary's Baby" was allowed to compete at the festival.

Polanski, 86, has been shunned by Hollywood for decades after he was convicted of drugging and raping a 13-year-old girl. The last two winners of the Golden Lion-"Roma" and "The Shape of Water" — have gone on to lift the best picture Oscar, and the festival was also the launch pad for "La La Land" and "Birdman".

The three men and three women of the Fipresci jury of international critics said they were won over by Polanski's "rigorous and elegant" direction and "the powerful dialogue and exceptional performances by all of the actors". However, Polanski's "An Officer and a Spy" has stiff competition from the taut divorce drama "Marriage Story", which features Adam Driver and Scarlett Johansson at their best, and Joaquin Phoenix's brauvura turn in "The Joker"-which has set the Internet abuzz.

Obscene

While some critics found Polanski's inferred comparison with Dreyfus "obscene", others admired the artistry of the Polish auteur and Holocaust survivor. Oscar winner Jean ("The Artist") Dujardin's fine performance as the military prosecutor who becomes convinced of Dreyfus' innocence may be rewarded if the jury balk at crowning Polanski. Its head, Argentinian director Lucrecia Martel, had to make an embarrassing about-turn after boycotting a gala dinner for Polanski, only to be forced to clarify that she was not prejudiced against his film. In a year fraught with controversy over sexual politics, festival director Alberto Barbera was also accused of being "tone deaf" for his inclusion of a Black Lives Matter drama by the American Nate Parker, who was embroiled in a rape trial while at university, as well as the director's cut of Gasper Noe's 2002 rape shocker "Irreversible". Barbera added further fuel to the fire by saying he "wished he had got" Woody Allen's latest, "A Rainy Day in New York".

Politics were everywhere on the Lido. The Russo brothers-the makers of "Avengers: Endgame", the biggest grossing film in history-won plaudits for "Mosul", the first Hollywood action film shot entirely in Arabic. South African film "Moffie" was hailed for getting to the roots of "toxic masculinity" in the country just as thousands of women were taking to the streets there to protest against male violence.

Red carpet protest

Climate change and anti-cruise ship protesters invaded the red carpet on Saturday before the screening of the art world thriller "The Burnt Orange Heresy" starring the Rolling Stones' Mick Jagger. Only hours before his fellow rock "dinosaur", Pink Floyd songwriter Roger Waters, had urged young people to revolt to save the planet as he lambasted populist leaders including US President Donald Trump, Britain's Boris Johnson and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro for trying to destroy it.

They were all "sociopaths", he told AFP. "If we do not resist the neo-liberal and neo-fascist forces that are tearing the planet apart there will not be anything left for our children and their children," the veteran star declared. Ukrainian director Sergei Loznitsa warned about the dangerous rise of Stalin nostalgia as he premiered his new documentary of long-lost archive footage of the Soviet dictator's "grandiose, terrifying and grotesque" funeral.—AFP

French and Italy critics in particular were wowed



Members of Venice's 'No Big Ships' Committee (No Grandi Navi) and people stage a protest against the cruise ships that sail in the Venice lagoon, outside the Festival Palace (Palazzo del Cinema) during the 76th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP photos

Anti-cruise ship protesters target Venice film festival

Several hundred protesters demanding the authorities ban huge cruise ships they say threaten one of the world's most historic cities targeted the Venice film festival Saturday to make their point. Between 300 and 400 protesters gathered in front of the main marquee where the glittering closing ceremonies of the film festival will be held later in the day. They carried banners denouncing the impact the massive ships are having on Venice and its environment as well as the threat of global climate change.

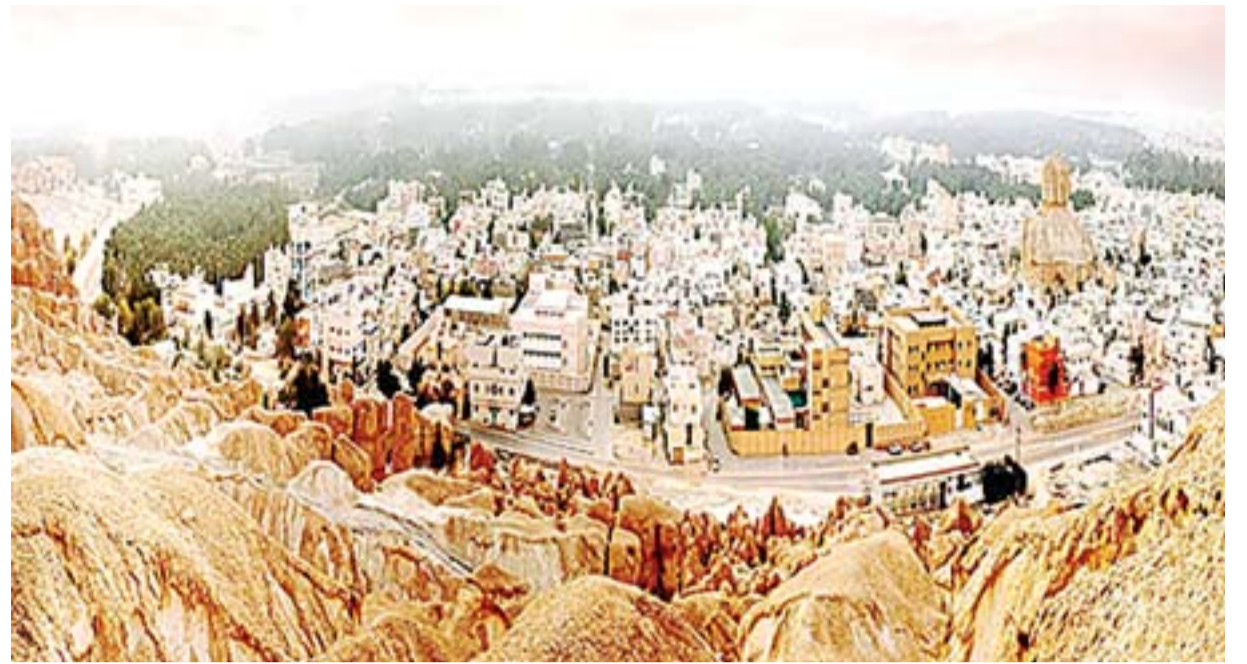
In particular, they say the boats sailing through the lagoon are eroding the very foundations of the city. "The 'Venice Climate Camp' has sounded the alarm. The message is clear, the earth is burning. The

time has come to mobilize, to take serious measures, to ensure social and climate justice," the organizers said on their website.

"So, let us make Venice a symbol of the struggle against climate change, let us use the film festival as a sounding board." The festival attracts global attention, especially so with the award of the prizes watched over by stars, celebrities and hundreds of journalists. Venice is one of the most visited cities in the world but the sight of giant cruise ships so close to its invaluable historic inheritance has sparked uproar.—AFP



Actors Sam Neill, left, Susan Sarandon, center, and Rainn Wilson arrive for the premiere of 'Blackbird' during the Toronto International Film Festival in Toronto, Ontario. — AFP



OASIS OF ARTS: AL-AHSA

Al-Ahsa has enriched the national cultural scene due to its ancient heritage, which allowed the UNESCO to declare 'Al-Ahsa Oasis' among the World heritage sites, and to its people, who interacted with civilizations, cultures and sciences since 6000 BC. Al-Ahsa is open to other cultures due to its location in the eastern Arabian Peninsula. Al-Ahsa is the largest natural palm oasis, connects with the ancient world civilizations in Mesopotamia, the Levant and the Indian subcontinent and bridges the Arabian Gulf states.

More than 3,000,000 palm trees in Al-Ahsa Oasis cast shadow over intellectuals and knowledge centers, supporting the cultural movement in the Governorate while the Saudi Vision 2030 strengthens integration among talent investment institutions and establishes cultural projects. As Al-Ahsa witnessed chapters of history, this allowed Al-Ahsa to be on the list of UNESCO World Human Heritage 2018, and the capital of Arab tourism in 2019. People settled in Al-Ahsa 6000 BC.

The first people lived there was the Canaanites, who displaced from the central Arabian Peninsula after being attracted by the fresh water springs. Among their descendants were the Phoenician, who were known with agriculture, irrigation, adventure, sailing and trade. The immigrant Chaldeans from Babylon lived in Al-Ahsa and founded a city near Al-Uqair named Al-Jahra, which was an important business center.

Throughout history, Al-Ahsa has maintained its cultural climate. Perhaps one of its most important intellectual traditions is the 'Houses of Literature and Cultural Councils'. Its programs have played active roles in spreading culture and hosting literary and intellectuals. During this year 2019, Al-Ahsa witnessed a cultural movement whose activities were distributed through packages of literary and artistic programs.

mony between colors and brushes were obvious with 50 art works. The Culture Authority devoted 17 art training courses during "Cultural Nights" event. The content of the event was characterized by cognitive enrichment as well as artistic and intellectual diversity. The event highlighted the chapters of Al-Ahsa Oasis culture and heritage. Group of poets from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States delivered poems at Ibrahim Palace as



There are several heritage sites in Al-Ahsa Governorate, including Jawatha settlement, Jawatha mosque (which is one of the first mosques in Islam), Dughat Al-Gharash site (which is more than 600 years old), Ibrahim archaeological palace, Sahoud, Mahiris, Abu Jalal, Al-Hazm palace, Al-Uqair port, Al-Qarah mountain, Al-Qaysariya market, and the old neighborhoods such as Al-Mubarraz. The heritage sites also includes Al-Amiriya School (which was built in 1360H), and Bayt Al-Mulla (in which the people of Al-Ahsa pledged allegiance to King Abdulaziz in 1331H, and is considered one of the most famous landmarks that witnessed the most prominent events before and during the unification of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

Artistic diversity

"Al-Ahsa Literary, Summer Time and Culture," under this theme, Al-Ahsa Literary Club has developed 30 programs within its cultural, literary and community activities, in line with institutional efforts towards inclusiveness and diversity in order to promote intellectual mobility in the Governorate, and to meet the wishes of the community. The programs varied in their target audience of both sexes, and addressed the heads of thought and literature according to a specialized method, while the space was larger for the youth category and focused on values and positive behavior towards the exploitation of time and the safe use of technical means as well as the engagement in volunteering work.

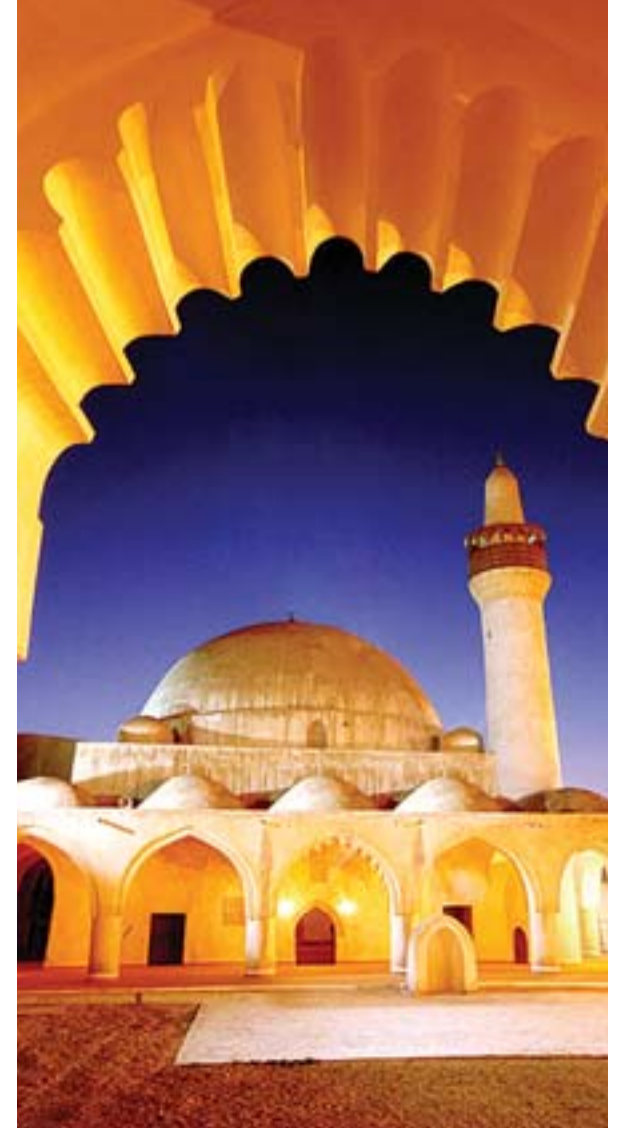
"Family and Children" is a prominent theme in the club's programs as the club recognizes the importance of safe family environment, as well as the right guidance for children. The theater, cinema, visual arts, and music were the identity of the activities of the "Cultural Nights" last March, which were organized by the General Authority for Culture at King Abdullah Environmental Park. On the stage, two plays entitled "Transit" and "One Thousand and a Half Night (for Children)" were held, while a number of Saudi films were presented.

In another location on the activities ground, the har-

part of "Poetry Nights" organized by King Abdulaziz International Cultural Center.

The "Land of Civilizations" project in Jabal Qarah (12 kilometers from the administrative capital of Al-Ahsa, Hofuf, with a maximum height of about 1,000 meters) has added diversity to the nature of the historical place. The site, which includes a museum and theaters, hosted weekly cultural events. Al-Ahsa celebrated in May its choice of the Arab tourism capital for 2019. As many as 15 children were enrolled in the art programs which began last July. The children were trained on theatrical skills and self-confidence while facing the audience.

Al-Ahsa Museum of Antiquities plays a major role in activating the tourist and cultural movement. On an area of 40,000 square meters, the Museum hosts about 1400 artifacts that tell the history of the Oasis. The museum opened in 1984 is responsible for the maintenance and protection of important historical sites, in addition to facilitating the process of recording and surveying these sites. It is worth mentioning that the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage in Al-Ahsa is working on the establishment of Al-Ahsa Regional Museum with a cost of more than SR44,000,000. Al-Ahsa has 28 public and private museums, including the Allegiance Museum and the Museum of Arabs and Caliph.—KUNA



Classifieds

Sunday, September 8, 2019

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DAY: Saturday 07/09/2019 Valid From 7 PM To 7 AM

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 07/09/2019 1200 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	31 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	31 °C			
ABDALY	44 °C	29 °C			
BUBHYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	46 °C	31 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	41 °C	32 °C			
AHMADI	43 °C	33 °C			
NUWAISIB	42 °C	30 °C			
WAFRA	45 °C	30 °C			
SALMIY	43 °C	28 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	09/08	Hot	44 °C	31 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Monday	09/09	Hot	44 °C	29 °C	NW	12 - 42 km/h
Tuesday	09/10	Hot	43 °C	29 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	09/11	Hot	44 °C	30 °C	NW	12 - 45 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES		RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
Fajr	04:07	MAX. Temp	48 °C
Suhoor	05:28	MIN. Temp	30 °C
Zuhr	11:46	MAX. RH	78 %
Ash	18:18	MIN. RH	08 %
Sunset	19:04	MAX. Wind	N 43 km/h
Isha	19:23	TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UPO 20190907 14:55 UTC V1.00 T2.4

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

CHANGE OF NAME

Thiru Saravanan (Hindu), Son of Thiru Jayaraman, born on 28th April 1977 (native district: Thanjavur) residing at No. 347, Mariyamman Kovil Street, Murukkudi, Kumbakonam Taluk, Thanjavur - 612202, has converted to Islam with the name of AHAMED RASHEED on 17th June 2015. (C 5587)

I, Alvi Mirahussain Abdullatif, holding Indian Passport No. Z2816291, S/o Abdullatif Dawood Alvi, PR/O 28/10, FLR-2,

Ashok Niwas, Nawroji RD-5, Mumbai-400009. Presently residing in Kuwait, hereby declare that henceforth my name is read as Given name: Mirahussain, Surname: Alvi, Father Name: Abdullatif (C 5588)

I, JOSEPH MORAES, holder of Indian Passport No. M6712986 having permanent address at Benclean Vaddo, Cuncolim, Salcet - Goa, at present residing in Kuwait, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as GIVEN NAME: JOSEPH and SURNAME: MORAES. (C 5589) 5-9-2019

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Watanaiya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

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Arrival Flights on Sunday 8/9/2019				Departure Flights on Sunday 8/9/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEA	441	Asyut	09:05	SAW	708	Damascus	11:40
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	JZR	309	Beirut	11:45
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MEB	402	Damascus	12:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	SVK	542	Jeddah	12:05
JZR	130D	Dubai	00:20	JZR	213	Doha	12:10
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	QTR	1075	Cairo	12:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	IGO	1756	CNN	12:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	123	Dubai	13:10
AHY	119	Baku	00:55	KAC	115	Doha	13:25
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	KAC	541	Cairo	13:30
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	ETH	3621	Addis Ababa	13:30
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	MSR	611	Cairo	13:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	515	Tehran	13:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	726	Alexandria	01:55	KAC	197	Baku	15:00
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
MSR	3035	Sohag	02:25	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	UAE	878	Dubai	15:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	SAW	501	Jeddah	15:45
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
PGT	856	Istanbul	03:10	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	FEA	442	Asyut	16:55
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
KAC	1751	Chennai	04:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	KAC	503	Jeddah	17:40
JZR	1738	Cairo	04:45	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
THY	1414	Trabzon	05:05	FEA	242	Alexandria	17:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	KAC	621	Doha	17:50
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
IGO	1759	Delhi	05:10	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	332	Mumbai	05:25	SVK	511	Riyadh	18:10
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	127	Alexandria	18:20
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	708	Luxor	06:15	JZR	501	Lahore	18:35
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	IRA	664	Shiraz	18:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	261	Beirut	19:10
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
QTR	8511	Doha	07:10	FDB	064	Dubai	19:45
KAC	2708	Madinah	07:15	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
JZR	724	Alexandria	07:50	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
KAC	384	Trivandrum	08:05	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	351	Kochi	20:45
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	376	Dammam	20:55
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	DLH	624	Trivandrum	21:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	333	Muscat	21:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
JZR	114	Delhi	09:50	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
SAW	703	Damascus	10:00	KAC	783	Lahore	22:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
SAW	707	Damascus	10:40	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	JZR	701	Asyut	23:45
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KNE	234	Riyadh	23:45
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05				
JZR	414	Doha	11:10				
IGO	1755	CNN	11:30				
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45				
JZR	704	Asyut	11:55				
JZR	252	Amman	12:20				
JZR	738	Cairo	12:20				

Hurricane Dorian death toll hits 43

MARSH HARBOR: The death toll from Hurricane Dorian's devastating rampage across the Bahamas rose to 43 and was likely to climb "significantly," officials said, with hundreds missing even as rescuers plucked desperate survivors from the debris. More than 260 residents of the brutally damaged Abaco Islands arrived in the capital city of Nassau after spending more than seven hours on a government-chartered ferry, a second of which was expected to arrive overnight.

Those who made it to safety awaited news of loved ones such as Diane Forbes, who had not heard from her two sons since Tuesday and was searching for them among some 200 evacuees sheltering at a gymnasium Friday night in Nassau, which was spared the wrath of the hurricane. "They said they were hungry and the scent of the bodies, the dead, was really getting to them... I don't know if my son is alive or not," she said of one of her children, who had been in Marsh Harbor on Abaco with his girlfriend and her mother. Confirming the new toll of 43, Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said 35 were killed on worst-hit Abaco and eight on Grand Bahama island. "The loss of life we are experiencing is catastrophic and devastating," he said in a statement late Friday quoted by The Tribune newspaper. With many missing, "this number is expected to grow significantly," his spokeswoman Erica Wells Cox told NBC News.

On the eventual death toll, Health Minister Duane Sands earlier said "the number will be staggering." "Literally hundreds, up to thousands, of people are still missing," Joy Jibril, the director general of the Bahamian tourism and aviation ministry, told CNN. Thousands of people were left homeless on Grand Bahama and Abaco and many were

becoming frustrated with the speed of relief and evacuation efforts. "There's no gas station, no food stores, my job is gone" said Melanie Lowe of Marsh Harbor, whose house was partially destroyed and had packed into a two-bedroom apartment with 16 people before arriving in Nassau. According to UN relief officials, more than 70,000 people - virtually the entire population of Grand Bahama and Abaco - are in need of assistance after the storm reduced homes to matchsticks and destroyed people's livelihoods.

The US Coast Guard and private organizations have been evacuating residents of Abaco and other islands to Nassau. The multinational relief effort, which also includes Britain's Royal Navy and several non-governmental organizations, has been hampered by flood damage to airport runways, destroyed piers and docks and downed communications. Tents and awnings installed at Nassau Airport, not far from rescue planes taking off and landing, provided temporary housing for storm-battered Bahamians.

Landfall in Outer Banks

As survivors began the first steps of rebuilding their lives, arrangements were being made to take care of the dead and the Bahamian authorities were seeking to account for the missing. Sands said extra morticians and refrigerated coolers to store bodies were being sent to the affected islands. Mortuary workers in white hazmat suits, blue gloves and masks could be seen in Marsh Harbor carrying corpses in green body bags and loading them onto flatbed trucks.

"As you know, in the United States, we weren't hit nearly as hard as was thought but the Bahamas, you got hit very, very hard," US President Donald Trump said in a video

statement on Twitter. "On behalf of the United States and the people of the United States, we're working hard, we're with you and God bless you," he said. "Any cruise ship companies willing to act as stationary housing, etc., I am sure would be appreciated," he also tweeted. Dorian made landfall meanwhile in the United States as a Category 1 hurricane packing winds of nearly 90 miles per hour.



MARSH HARBOR: Damaged property from Hurricane Dorian litters the ground in Marsh Harbor, Great Abaco. — AFP

The Miami-based National Hurricane Center (NHC) said the storm made landfall at Cape Hatteras on North Carolina's Outer Banks, the finger-like barrier islands off the coast. Flooding was reported in the town of Ocracoke to the southwest of Cape Hatteras. Thousands of coastal residents of US states from Florida to Virginia had been fearing the worst but the East Coast largely escaped unscathed. Some flooding occurred in the historic city of Charleston, South Carolina, and tens of thousands of residents lost electricity but no major damage was reported.—AFP

'Electronic armies' threaten activists...

Continued from Page 1

Baghdad has however developed close ties with Washington since the American-led invasion that toppled ex-dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003. Despite that, Washington's bitter rival Tehran also holds considerable sway in Iraq's political scene and within the Hashed.

In recent months, anti-Israel and anti-US rhetoric has been on the rise as Iraqis feel increasingly squeezed by the war of words between the two sides. Some Iraqi factions have used the purported Israeli strikes to relaunch calls for US troops to leave Iraq. Just last week, many of the same figures lashed out against US-funded Al-Hurra TV for a documentary alleging corruption among Iraq's religious bodies, both Sunni and Shiite.

Perceptions Iraq was being "attacked" by Israel and America were "broadened to include critical and independent Iraqi voices, who have been maligned as agents in a broader plot," said Fanar Haddad, an Iraq expert at the National University of Singapore. "In this way, entrenched domestic interests and rivalries have been folded into the ongoing tensions between the Iran-led axis of resistance and the United

States, Israel and their allies in the region," he said.

Rights groups react

Omar Al-Shaher, a journalist named in the graphic, said there was "not a shred of proof" to back up the claims. "These days, it's more dangerous than ever to have your name associated with the Israeli camp," he said. Historian Omar Mohammad, who documented atrocities in Mosul under the Islamic State group, said he suspected the new accusations came "as a result of the recent (purported) Israeli airstrikes and US-Iranian tensions."

Mohammad said the graphic's sleek production meant he was "absolutely" taking its threats seriously. "It is institutional and professional. Seems there is a team specialized in dehumanizing us," Mohammad told AFP from outside Iraq. Media rights groups are worried such incitement could lead to real violence. "The sensitivity of the Palestinian question in the region means that accusing someone of working with Israel is tantamount to calling for their killing," said the Journalistic Freedoms Observatory.

On Thursday, monitor and rights group Iraqi Media House called for better protection of journalists. "The phenomenon of electronic armies has reached dangerous levels, issuing threats including incitement to violence and hatred," it said. "We are surprised by the authorities' continued silence so far, including the judiciary, in a clear abandonment of its responsibilities when it comes to electronic crimes."—AFP

opment of meat substitute technology.

Volcanic organisms

Sustainable Bioproducts, based in Chicago and led by Frenchman Thomas Jonas, is developing a new way to grow edible protein using NASA research. The company's technology emerged out of studying organisms that survive extreme temperatures in Yellowstone National Park's volcanic springs. It says it has discovered a so-called "complete protein" with all nine amino acids essential to the functioning of the human body, and that it can re-create the protein to manufacture food. The company, which plans to open a factory next year, recently raised \$33 million in financing from venture capital funds and food and agribusiness companies.—AFP

US 'not surprised'

US Defence Secretary Mark Esper said he was "not surprised that Iran has announced that it's going to violate the JCPOA". Britain called Iran's move "particularly disappointing at a time when we and our European and international partners are working hard to de-escalate tensions". Despite the decision to further step back from the 2015 deal, Kamalvandi said Iran would allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to continue monitoring its nuclear program, as it has done under the 2015 accord.

"Regarding the monitoring and accesses of the IAEA... so that everything is clear (Iran's) commitments regarding transparency will be followed as before," the spokesman said. The European Union on Friday emphasized its reliance on the IAEA to monitor Iran's activities as it voiced "great concern" over the country's decision to roll back its commitments.

In its latest report on August 30, the watchdog said it continues to verify compliance through cameras and on-site inspections. But in an apparent hint at worries about access it said "ongoing interactions... require full and timely cooperation by Iran". Yesterday, the UN atomic agency noted Iran's latest move and indicated its inspectors were ready to check its compliance. "Agency inspectors are on the ground in Iran and they will report any relevant activities to IAEA headquarters in Vienna," spokesman Fredrik Dahl said.

Europe 'must hurry'

Iran's new step came after Britain, France and Germany were unable to find a way to offset the impact of sanctions on the country before a September 7 deadline set by the Islamic republic. "If Europe wants to do something, it must hurry, because returning to the situation before reducing commitments could take time," Kamalvandi said. Tehran has already hit back twice with countermeasures in response to the US withdrawal from the 2015 deal.

On July 1, Iran said it had increased its stockpile of enriched uranium to beyond the 300-kilogram maximum set by the deal. A week later, it announced it had exceeded a 3.67-percent cap on the purity of its uranium stocks. Yesterday's developments came on the eve of a visit to Iran by the acting head of the IAEA, Cornel Feruta. Kamalvandi said Feruta would meet the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, Ali Akbar Salehi, and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.—Agencies

Facebook rolls out dating...

Continued from Page 1

and prohibit people from sending photos, links, payments or videos in messages. Users may share their "stories" posts from the network, which are short video segments. This will help the service be "authentic in a way that a typical dating profile can't," according to Sharp.

'Real relationships'

Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg, in announcing the plan last year, said it was being designed for "real, long-term relationships, not just hookups." He pointed out that one in three marriages in the United States starts online and that some 200 million Facebook users identify as being single. Facebook may have an advantage over rivals in that it can allow people to share profiles and images from their social

media accounts.

The dating service will be free, unlike some rivals which offer both free and paid plans. Shares in Match Group, the parent firm of dating applications Tinder and OK Cupid, slumped on Thursday's news. Facebook Dating has already launched in 19 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Laos, Malaysia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, Surinam, Thailand, Uruguay and Vietnam.

It is set to launch in Europe in 2020. The move comes with Facebook battling to restore its reputation after a series of privacy blunders, including the hijacking of personal data on tens of millions of users ahead of the 2016 US election, and struggles to stem the flow of misinformation and manipulation.

Facebook's new service offers features that leverage the huge social network's user base while also promoting safety. Users may choose to see other people who are using Facebook Dating within the groups in which they participate. They also may share details of an upcoming date with someone they trust via Messenger.—AFP

India loses contact with...

Continued from Page 1

The Chandrayaan-2 ("Moon Vehicle 2") orbiter, which will circle and study the Moon remotely for a year, is however "healthy, intact, functioning normally and safely in the lunar orbit", the ISRO said.

Freshly re-elected Modi had hoped to bask in the glory of a successful mission, but yesterday he deftly turned consoler-in-chief in a speech at mission control broadcast live on television and to his 50 million Twitter followers. "Sisters and brothers of India, resilience and tenacity are central to India's ethos. In our glorious history of thousands of years, we have faced moments that may have slowed us, but they have never crushed our spirit," he said.

"We have bounced back again," he added. "When it comes to our space program, the best is yet to come." Other Indians also took to Twitter to offer words of encouragement. "The important thing is we took off and had the Hope and Belief we can," said Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan. Indian media offered succor by quoting a NASA factsheet that said out of 109 lunar missions in the past six decades, 48 have failed.

Chandrayaan-2 took off on July 22 carrying an orbiter, lander and rover almost entirely designed and made in India—the mission cost a relatively modest \$140 million—a week after an initial launch was halted just before blast-off. ISRO had acknowledged before the soft landing that it was a complex maneuver, which Sivan called "15 minutes of terror".

It was carrying rover Pragyan—"wisdom" in

Zimbabweans mourn Mugabe...

Continued from Page 1

Mnangagwa said on Friday that Zimbabwe would be in mourning until Mugabe was buried, but he did not say when that would be. It was also unclear whether Mugabe would be buried at Heroes Acre, a monument for national heroes built with the help of North Korean architects. The Zimbabwe Independent newspaper reported last month that Mugabe, who cut a bitter figure since the 2017 coup, preferred not to be buried at Heroes Acre because he did not want Mnangagwa to "pontificate over his dead body".

But yesterday Zimbabwe's deputy information minister Energy Mutodi wrote on Twitter that the plan was still for Mugabe to be interred at the monument. If Mugabe's family were to choose to bury the former leader at his rural home in Zvimba instead of Heroes Acre, it would be a major snub to Mnangagwa and ZANU-PF, the ruling party that Mnangagwa now heads but which Mugabe led for four decades.

Mugabe was feted as a champion of racial reconciliation when he first came to power in 1980 in one of the last African states to throw off white colonial rule. But by the time he was toppled to wild celebrations across the country of 13 million, he was viewed by many at

Sanskrit—which was due to emerge several hours after touchdown to scour the Moon's surface, including for water. According to Mathieu Weiss, a representative in India for France's space agency CNES, this is vital to determining whether humans could spend extended periods on the Moon. That would mean the Moon being used one day as a pitstop on the way to Mars—the next objective of governments and private space-faring programs such as Elon Musk's Space X.

'Space superpower'

In March Modi hailed India as a "space superpower" after it shot down a low-orbiting satellite, a move prompting criticism for the amount of "space junk" created. Asia's third-largest economy also hopes to tap into the commercial possibilities of space. China in January became the first to land a rover on the far side of the Moon.

In April, Israel's attempt failed at the last minute when its craft apparently crashed onto the lunar surface. India is also preparing Gaganyaan, its first manned space mission, and wants to land a probe on Mars. In 2014, it became only the fourth nation to put a satellite into orbit around the Red Planet, and in 2017 India's space agency launched 104 satellites in a single mission.

The country's principal scientific adviser, K Vijay Raghavan, described Chandrayaan-2 as "very complex, and a significant technological leap from previous missions of ISRO" in a series of tweets yesterday. Raghavan said the orbiter will help India better understand the Moon's evolution, mapping minerals and water molecules "using its eight state-of-the-art scientific instruments". "After a moment of despondency, it is back to work!! It is inspirational to see this characteristic of science in collective action. Kudos to ISRO," he added.—AFP

home and abroad as a power-obsessed autocrat who unleashed death squads, rigged elections and ruined the economy to keep control.

Most residents in downtown Harare said yesterday that they were saddened by Mugabe's death since he was their liberator and had broadened access to education. "Even now we have livestock we keep in the rural areas because of him, so it's painful to lose our father, our grandfather who helped us to learn and go to school," said Tongai Huni, a fruit vendor, speaking in the local Shona language. Others expressed anger that Mugabe had left the economy in a sorry state, with hyperinflation and mass unemployment.

Margaret Shumba, another resident of the capital, said she had bigger things to worry about than Mugabe's death. "We are just trying to deal with ... the harm that he did." Nearby, a policeman shook his head as he walked past a row of newspapers bearing pictures of Mugabe's face. "End of an era," read the headline of the Daily News, while the state-run Herald ran a commemorative edition to mark Mugabe's death with articles praising him. But the harsh reality for many Zimbabweans is that the economy is mired in its worst crisis in a decade, with triple-digit inflation, rolling power cuts which can last up to 18 hours a day and shortages of basic goods like fuel. Moves towards reintroducing the Zimbabwean dollar have been met by a deep-seated lack of confidence, and a clampdown on dissent by Mnangagwa's government has revived memories of repressive tactics in the Mugabe era.—Reuters

Like meat, but not meat - the...

Continued from Page 1

He has applied his expertise to the food sector after founding the Spanish start-up NovaMeat that uses plant ingredients such as rice, pea protein and seaweed. The printer uses the material to create alternative beef steaks and chicken breasts, with texture claimed to match real meat. NovaMeat announced at the conference that it had raised \$2million from New Crop Capital, a specialty food fund, for further devel-

Iran seizes boat in the Strait...

Continued from Page 1

Iran also seized another ship on July 31 with seven foreign crew onboard over fuel smuggling, but it has not revealed the vessel's identity or the nationality of its crew.

Latest nuclear step

In another development, Iran said yesterday it has fired up advanced centrifuges to boost its enriched uranium stockpiles, in the latest scaling back of commitments under a crumbling 2015 nuclear deal. The Islamic republic was acting on a threat to further abandon its nuclear commitments based on a deadline it set for European powers to do something to shield it from US sanctions. The country's Atomic Energy Organization spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said it had activated 20 IR-4 and 20 IR-6 advanced centrifuges. "The centrifuge machines, as they are engaged in research and development, will help with increasing the stockpile," he said. "The capacity of these machines is many times more than the previous machines. This started as of yesterday (Friday)," he told a news conference in Tehran.

Under the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran was allowed to enrich uranium using only first generation-or IR-1 - centrifuges. Tensions have been escalating between Iran and the United States since May last year when President Donald Trump pulled out of the accord and began reimposing sanctions that have crippled its economy. 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.

Britain, France and Germany have repeatedly said they are committed to saving the deal that gave Iran relief from sanctions in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, but their efforts have so far borne little fruit. Iran said yesterday it was capable of enriching uranium beyond 20 percent but for now it had no plans to do so. "Our plan is that if the other parties act on their commitments, we too return to our commitments," said Kamalvandi.

Sports

Giants chase Kershaw, hold on to beat Los Angeles Dodgers 5-4

Rockies take advantage of sloppy Padres, end skid

LOS ANGELES: Mauricio Dubon hit a home run and Jeff Samardzija went six solid innings as the visiting San Francisco Giants topped the Los Angeles Dodgers 5-4 on Friday in the opener of a three-game series. The Giants overcame a three-homer night from A.J. Pollock, who got the Dodgers within a run in the ninth inning with his third blast. Dubon's second career home run came against Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw, who was held to his shortest outing of the season, four-plus innings. Kershaw (13-5) gave up three runs on seven hits with three walks and six strikeouts. San Francisco's Jeff Samardzija (10-11) pitched six innings of three-run ball, allowing five hits and no walks while fanning three.

ANGELS 5, WHITE SOX 4

Brian Goodwin belted a game-tying, two-run home run in the eighth inning, Justin Upton hit a go-ahead homer in the ninth, and Los Angeles held on for a win over host Chicago. Shohei Ohtani added a double and a triple for the Angels, who trailed 4-1 to start the seventh before mounting a comeback. Luis Rengifo also homered for Los Angeles, which snapped a four-game losing streak. Angels center fielder Mike Trout left the game in the fifth inning because of right toe discomfort. His status is day-to-day.

METS 5, PHILLIES 4

Pete Alonso drew a bases-loaded walk with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning, giving New York a dramatic win over visiting Philadelphia. RBI singles by Alonso and Wilson Ramos in the eighth gave the Mets a 4-2 lead, setting the stage for closer Edwin Diaz to finish the game in the ninth. However, the Phillies, who played most of the game without star Bryce Harper, rallied to tie on J.T. Realmuto's two-run homer in the top of the ninth. The Phillies lost Harper in the third inning to what the team announced was a right hand contusion. Harper was hit by a Steven Matz pitch that went up and in and almost struck him in the face.

RED SOX 6, YANKEES 1

Mitch Moreland slugged a three-run home run on his 34th birthday, and Xander Bogaerts drove in two more with a double as Boston powered past visiting New York. Moreland's blast, his first since Aug. 9, gave the Red Sox a 4-0 lead in the fourth inning. He finished with three hits as Boston won for the sixth time in nine games. Brett Gardner homered for the Yankees, who were held to three hits by a parade of Red Sox relievers. New York fell for just the third time in 11 contests.

RAYS 5, BLUE JAYS 0

Rookie Brendan McKay and four relievers combined for a two-hitter, Mike Zunino smacked a two-run homer, and Tampa Bay beat Toronto in St. Petersburg, Fla. Austin Meadows had two hits and an RBI for the AL wild-card leaders, who have won eight of their past nine games. McKay, who finished August on the minor league injured list due to left shoulder fatigue, pitched his first game since Aug. 19. He delivered 3 2/3 innings of one-hit baseball, striking out seven without a walk.

BRAVES 4, NATIONALS 3

Dallas Keuchel further established his credentials as ace of the Atlanta pitching staff with six scoreless innings, and the Braves hit two home runs in a win over visiting Washington. It was Keuchel's first career victory over Washington in his sixth try. Keuchel (7-5) allowed six hits and two walks, striking out three, and won his fourth straight start. Ozzie Albies and Josh Donaldson homered for the Braves, who won their eighth straight and extended their lead in the National League East to nine games over second-place Washington. Atlanta has won 12 straight at home, tying a franchise record for the modern era.

INDIANS 6, TWINS 2 (11 INNINGS)

Roberto Perez ripped a go-ahead RBI single to ignite a four-run 11th inning as Cleveland recorded a victory over Minnesota in Minneapolis. Francisco Lindor followed with an RBI single, and rookie Oscar Mercado added a two-run single in the 11th inning for the Indians. In the eighth inning, Cleveland got a Yasiel Puig sacrifice fly to tie the score. Tyler Clippard (1-0) picked up the win after striking out three of the four batters he faced.

ATHLETICS 7, TIGERS 3 (COMPLETION OF SUSPENDED GAME)

Liam Hendriks, Jake Diekman and J.B. Wendelken combined for three shutout innings of relief, and Chad Pinder added a lead-extending two-run homer run in the ninth as the A's defeated Detroit in Oakland to complete a suspended game from May 19. Without throwing a pitch Friday, A's right-hander Mike Fiers (14-3) picked up a win after throwing all six innings in Detroit before the game was halted in the bottom of the seventh because of rain with Oakland leading 5-3. Reliever Zac Reiner (0-2), who gave up the go-ahead runs in the top of the seventh back in Detroit, got the loss.

TIGERS 5, ATHLETICS 4 (11 INNINGS)

Willi Castro doubled home Dawel Lugo with the tiebreaking run in the top of the 11th inning, allowing visiting Detroit to avoid a two-loss night with a victory at Oakland. The A's led the regularly scheduled game 4-0, but the Tigers forced extra innings with two late two-run rallies before pushing across the difference-maker against the seventh Oakland pitcher, Paul Blackburn (0-2), in the 11th. Grayson Greiner, Christin Stewart and Miguel Cabrera joined Lugo in the multiple-hit category with two apiece for the Tigers, who beat the A's for the first time in five tries this season.

ASTROS 7, MARINERS 4

Michael Brantley produced a two-out RBI single in the sixth inning to help provide Houston some insurance in its victory over visiting Seattle. Houston improved to 14-1 against Seattle this season after improving to 2-0 in the current four-game series. Jose Altuve and Alex Bregman each had two hits and two runs for the Astros, who got a home run from Josh Reddick. Daniel Vogelbach hit his 30th homer of the



MINNEAPOLIS: Luis Arraez #2 of the Minnesota Twins is out at first base as Carlos Santana #41 of the Cleveland Indians fields the ball during the eighth inning of the game at Target Field in Minneapolis, Minnesota. — AFP

season for the Tigers.

ROYALS 3, MARLINS 0

In just the second Lopez versus Lopez starting-pitcher matchup in major league history, it was Jorge Lopez who excelled as Kansas City defeated Pablo Lopez and host Miami. Jorge Lopez (3-7) pitched six scoreless innings, allowing four hits and no walks while striking out five. Pablo Lopez — no relation — allowed eight hits, no walks and two runs in 6 1/3 innings. He struck out six as his record dropped to 5-8.

BREWERS 7, CUBS 1

Christian Yelich smacked his 44th home run of the season, and four pitchers combined on a three-hitter to lift host Milwaukee to a victory against Chicago. Zach Davies (9-7) scattered one run and three hits with one walk and four strikeouts in five innings to earn the victory. Brent Suter, Junior Guerra and Ray Black then teamed for four innings of no-hit, one-walk, three-strikeout relief. Despite the loss, Chicago remained 2 1/2 games behind the first-place St. Louis Cardinals in the National League Central. Milwaukee moved within four games of the Cubs for the second NL wild-card spot.

DIAMONDBACKS 7, REDS 5

Ketel Marte had three hits, including a three-run home run, and Nick Ahmed also homered as Arizona overcame an injury-shortened outing by starter Robbie Ray in a win at Cincinnati. Marte hit his 31st homer in a five-run fifth inning for a 6-2 lead before Ray was forced to leave with a 1-1 count on Joey Votto with one out in the last of the inning with a blister on his left middle finger. Rookie Kevin Ginkel (2-0) pitched two

scoreless innings for the victory. Archie Bradley got Curt Casali to fly out with the bases loaded in the ninth for his 13th save, all since July 30.

ROCKIES 3, PADRES 2

Tim Melville allowed just two runs on five hits over 5 2/3 innings, and visiting Colorado took advantage of some shoddy San Diego defensive play in a victory over the Padres. Melville (2-1) and four relievers held the Padres to five hits as the Rockies snapped a nine-game losing streak while winning for only the second time in the past 15 games. The Padres have lost four in a row. Assisted by an error and a passed ball, two of the three runs that the Rockies scored in the first two innings were unearned.

PIRATES 9, CARDINALS 4

Adam Frazier hit a two-run triple and Josh Bell a two-run single during a six-run seventh inning as Pittsburgh topped visiting St. Louis. The Pirates broke an eight-game losing streak against the Cardinals. Kevin Newman had an RBI double, Starling Marte a two-run single, and Melky Cabrera and Jose Osuna each added an RBI single for Pittsburgh, which has won 10 of 14.

RANGERS 7, ORIOLES 6

Willie Calhoun homered twice and drove in four runs, both career highs, to help visiting Texas earn a win against Baltimore. Shin-Soo Choo, Rougned Odor and Elvis Andrus had two hits each, and Andrus delivered a two-run single in the seventh to give Texas the lead. Richie Martin hit a three-run home run for the Orioles, Anthony Santander hit a two-run shot, and Trey Mancini had a solo homer. — Reuters

Kuwait shooters excel at Green Cup tourney



By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Shooting teams manager Mohammad Mizyed Al-Daihani said Kuwait shooting continues its achievement at the international level, the latest of which their participation in the Green Cup tournament which was held in the Italian City of Todi at the Umriaverde Shooting

Complex. The tournament was held during the period from 22/8 until 3/9/2019.

Al-Daihani said Kuwait shooters competed with European and Asian shooters, as Kuwait participated with Olympian Mansour Al-Rashidi and Abdelrahman Al-Faihan who won the Olympic trap silver medal, as the Italian Shooter Julio Vioraventi won first and British Shooter

Mathew won third place.

Al-Daihani said Olympian shooter Mansour Al-Rashidi won the skeet bronze medal.

Al-Daihani said shooters Al-Faihan and Al-Rashidi will go into special training as they qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, that in addition to prepare for more qualifications to that highly important global event.



Thirty-first Arab Table Tennis Championship

KUWAIT: Fahaheel table tennis team qualified to the quarter finals of the 31st Arab Table Tennis Championship being held in the Moroccan City of Agadir, and will continue until September 9. In all 19 teams are participating, distributed over four groups, as Fahaheel topped group 4 that includes Sar from Bahrain, Rayyan from Qatar, Saham from Oman, and Sinaah from Iraq. Fahaheel did not lose any of its matches after beating Rayyan by the score of 3-2, then Sar 3-2 and Sinaah (3-0) after it withdrew, then Saham 3-1.

The delegation is headed by Fahaheel Club Chairman Hamad Al-Dabbous, and it includes Mohammad Al-Harby, Yaqoub Al-Mansouri, Hamad Al-Shimmari, Ehab Khalifa, Mishko Anderea and six players: Ibrahim Al-Hassan, Jiyong Sinyomjan, Salem Al-Hassan, Abdallah Al-Mukaimi, Abdallah Baroun and Khalid Al-Otaibi.

Hamad Al-Dabbous lauded the performance of the player as they attracted all those participating in the tournament, especially that group four is considered



Hamad Al-Dabbous

the strongest as the clubs in it are predicted to reach the final rounds. He said "we hope to continue our winning ways and represent the game at its best".

Meanwhile Fahaheel beat the Palestinian team Sinjal 3-0 and qualified for the semi-finals of the tournament.

Sports

Afghanistan's Rashid claims five wickets, pile misery on Bangladesh

Debutant Zadran hit highest 87 off 208 balls for Afghanistan

SCOREBOARD

CHITTAGONG: Scoreboard after the third day in the one-off Test between Bangladesh and Afghanistan at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday:

Afghanistan first innings 342	
(Rahmat Shah 102, Asghar Afghan 92, Rashid Khan 51; Taijul Islam 4-116)	
Bangladesh first innings (overnight 194-8)	
Shadman Islam c Zazai b Ahmadzai	0
Soumya Sarkar lbw b Nabi	17
Liton Das b Rashid	33
Mominul Haque c Asghar b Nabi	52
Shakib Al Hasan lbw b Rashid	11
Mushfiqur Rahim c Zadran b Rashid	0
Mahmudullah b Rashid	7
Mosaddek Hossain not out	48
Mehidy Hasan b Qais	11
Taijul Islam b Nabi	14
Nayeem Hasan lbw b Rashid	7
Extras (b4, lbl)	5
Total (all out: 70.5 overs)	205
Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Shadman), 2-38 (Soumya), 3-54 (Liton), 4-88 (Shakib), 5-88 (Mushfiqur), 6-104 (Mahmudullah), 7-130 (Mominul), 8-146 (Mehidy), 9-194 (Taijul), 10-205 (Nayeem)	
Bowling: Ahmadzai 10-2-21-1, Nabi 24-6-56-3, Zahir 9-1-46-0, Rashid 19.5-3-55-5, Qais 8-2-22-1.	

Afghanistan second innings	
Ihsanullah Janat lbw b Shakib	4
Ibrahim Zadran c Mominul b Nayeem	87
Rahmat Shah c & b Shakib	0
Hashmatullah Shahidi c Soumya b Nayeem	12
Asghar Afghan c Shakib b Taijul	50
Afsar Zazai not out	34
Mohammad Nabi c Mominul b Mehidy	8
Rashid Khan b Taijul	24
Qais Ahmad lbw b Shakib	14
Yamin Ahmadzai not out	0
Extras (b4)	4
Total (eight wickets: 83.4 overs)	237
To bat: Zahir Khan	
Fall of wickets: 1-4 (Ihsanullah), 2-4 (Rahmat), 3-28 (Hashmatullah), 4-136 (Asghar), 5-171 (Ibrahim), 6-180 (Nabi), 7-210 (Rashid), 8-235 (Qais)	
Bowling: Shakib 16-3-53-3, Mehidy 12-3-35-1, Taijul 24.4-5-68-2, Nayeem 17-2-61-2, Mominul 10-6-13-0, Mosaddek 4-1-3-0.	

CHITTAGONG: Ibrahim Zadran and Asghar Afghan hit half-centuries while Rashid Khan played a quick cameo after claiming five wickets in an innings, as Afghanistan took command in the one-off Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong yesterday.

The visitors — playing only their third Test in history — reached 237-8 at stumps on the third day, setting a huge target for Bangladesh by taking an overall lead of 374 runs. Debutant Zadran hit highest 87 off 208 balls for Afghanistan in the second innings while former skipper Afghan made 50 off 108 balls, his second fifty, adding to Bangladesh's frustration.

Rashid added 24 off 22 balls before wicketkeeper-batsman Afsar Zazai's unbeaten 34 runs extended Afghanistan's lead. "Our aim is to get a 400-plus lead. We are just 30-40 runs short, so it will not be easy for Bangladesh to achieve it," Zadran said. "We feel we are 70 percent hopeful of winning the game."

Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan was hoping against hope. "Anything can happen in cricket... a team can lose from a winning position and also can win from a losing position," Mehidy said. "Our batsmen need to take the challenge. Our batsmen have to contribute in order to win the match," he said.

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan took three wickets for Bangladesh, including two in the first over of the innings, but Zadran and Afghan shared 108 runs for the fourth wicket to snatch the momentum back for Afghanistan.

Shakib trapped Ihsanullah Janat for four in the third ball of the innings and then dismissed first innings centurion Rahmat Shah for a golden duck in the next ball. Afghan, who also made 92 runs in the first innings, joined Zadran after off-spinner Nayeem Hasan removed Hashmatullah Shahidi for 12.

Taijul Islam dismissed Afghan, who hit four fours and two sixes in his second fifty of the game, before Nayeem ended Zadran's brilliant innings



CHITTAGONG: Afghanistan's cricketer Rashid Khan (2L) delivers a ball during the second day of the one-off cricket Test match between Bangladesh and Afghanistan at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong. —AFP

featuring six fours and four sixes. The spinner also dismissed Mohammad Nabi in the next ball after the all-rounder hit him for a six to revive some hope for Bangladesh.

Rashid then took the attack on Nayeem, hitting him for five boundaries in one over before Taijul bowled him finally. The Afghan skipper earlier completed his five-wicket to finish with 5-55 as Afghanistan bowled out Bangladesh for 205 runs in the first innings after the hosts resumed the third

day's play with 194-8.

Rashid, who scored 51 runs with the bat making his debut as youngest-ever Test captain, took the final wicket of Nayeem to wrap up Bangladesh's innings after Nabi gave a breakthrough in the first over of the day.

Nabi bowled Taijul without allowing him to add any run to his overnight 14 before finishing with 3-56 runs. Mosaddek Hossain was unbeaten on 48. —AFP

Tributes roll in for Springbok 'icon' Chester Williams

JOHANNESBURG: As news of the death of South African World Cup winner Chester Williams at the age of 49 began to circulate, so the tributes rolled in for a pioneering player whose significance was felt both on and off the field. "Chester's name will go down with the greats of South African rugby as a player and for what he stood for in our country's history," said South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus from the team's hotel in Japan.

Williams died of a suspected heart attack on Friday in Cape Town, where he lived and worked as a rugby coach at the University of the Western Cape. Each tribute made mention of the winger's talent on the rugby field, made famous by the part he played in the Springboks' momentous victory in the 1995 Rugby World Cup, and all leant heavily on Williams' role off the field in breaking down the apartheid barrier within the sport.

"Chessie was an icon," Breyton Paulse, another black wing who followed Williams into the Bok side, told news channel eNCA. "He paved the way for us, especially the guys coming from underprivileged areas," said Paulse who went on to win 64 caps.

"He was a father figure. He is the reason so many players of colour today can walk into the Springbok team, it is because of players like Chester Williams and the late, great Tinus Linde."

Linde, who played with Williams at Western Province and was capped nine times by the Boks, died in 2014 from motor neurone disease. Williams' importance to the black people in South Africa as Nelson Mandela attempted to build his 'Rainbow Nation' cannot be underestimated.

"Chester Williams' death at this tender age leaves all South Africans bereft of a rugby hero and national role model," said current president Cyril Ramaphosa in a statement. "(He) inspired hundreds of thousands of South African children who had previously been excluded from rugby, to take up the game."

WORLD CUP GLORY

When the World Cup came to South Africa in 1995, Williams was the poster boy for the tournament as the government of Mandela, elected a year earlier, tried to use the event to foster greater ties between the different races in the country.

Williams was the only black player in the squad, playing a sport that had long been associated with white rule. The Springbok itself was seen as a symbol of apartheid by many black South Africans who had either ignored the game or made a point of supporting the opponents of the Boks.

As the Clint Eastwood film *Invictus* accurately portrayed, Williams was the go-to star when the Boks visited the black townships to run training clinics with the kids. Williams did not seek a public relations role but he recognised the importance of the moment and responded with patience and charm.

"Who will forget '95 when Chessie had such a massive impact on people, millions of South Africans?" said Paulse. "He was a symbol of hope."

But it nearly did not happen as the Western Province wing was injured just before the event and was only brought back into the squad by coach Kitch Christie after Pieter Hendricks collected a suspension for his part in a fight in the 'Battle of Boet Erasmus' pool match against Canada. —AFP

Starc at the double as Australia press for Ashes clinching win

MANCHESTER: Australia's Mitchell Starc took two wickets, including the prize scalp of Ben Stokes, as England desperately tried to avoid following-on in the fourth Test at Old Trafford. England were 278-8 at lunch on Saturday's fourth day, 219 behind Australia's first-innings 497-8 declared and needing 20 more runs to make the tourists bat again.

Left-arm fast bowler Starc, in his first match of this Ashes, had so far taken two wickets for 66 runs in 18 overs. Jos Buttler was 26 not out and Stuart Broad two not out.

Victory for Australia in Manchester would see them retain the Ashes at 2-1 up with one to play in a five-Test series. England resumed on 200-5, after Josh Hazlewood — a member of an impressive fast-bowling trio also featuring Starc and Pat Cummins — had rocked them with a burst of 3-15 late on Friday.

Pakistan's PM remembers Qadir as 'genius'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday remembered former spinner Abdul Qadir as a "genius" a day after the legendary cricketer died of a heart attack. Cricket hero-turned-politician Khan and Qadir had a long and eventful association as team-mates.

Qadir, who would have turned 64 on September 15, was a favourite of the former captain. "Abdul Qadir was a genius, one of

the greatest leg spinners of all time," Khan tweeted, as fans all over Pakistan mourned the player's death.

"And he was also the life of the dressing room entertaining the team with his wit & humour", Qadir made his Test debut against England in Lahore in 1977 and went on to play 67 Tests, taking 236 wickets with a best of 9-56 against the same side in 1987.

Those figures are still the best by a Pakistan bowler in a Test innings. He also took 132 wickets in 104 one-day internationals, with Imran using him as an attacking weapon in the 1983 World Cup held in England.

"Qadir's bowling statistics do not do



MANCHESTER: England's Stuart Broad (R) celebrates taking the wicket of Australia's David Warner (unseen) for no runs during the fourth day of the fourth Ashes cricket Test match between England and Australia at Old Trafford in Manchester, north-west England yesterday. —AFP

away when caught behind by Australia captain and wicketkeeper Tim Paine with a loose waft off Cummins, who had been unlucky to go wicketless in a 17-over spell Friday. Cummins, however,

got England closer to avoiding the follow-on with a bouncer that cleared both Broad and the leaping Paine for five wides, before Buttler square-drove him for four. —AFP

All Blacks declare themselves ready for WCup defence

WELLINGTON: The All Blacks declared themselves ready for their record World Cup triple crown bid yesterday after a thumping 92-7 victory over Tonga in Hamilton. While Tonga are not a top 10 side and were never expected to pose a real threat, the size of the 14 try win ticked a lot of boxes for coach Steve Hansen.

"We're exactly where we want to be," Hansen said, adding that completing the match injury free was an added bonus two weeks before their opening World Cup match in Japan against South Africa.

He was even able to deliberately finish with only 14 players on the field to practice with a man down, should the occasion arise in Japan. The All Blacks, world champions in 2011 and 2015, are gunning for a third consec-

utive title. "We get on a plane on Monday to go and have a crack at something that's never been done before, and we're the only ones that can do it, so winning three in a row would be something really special," said Hansen.

Even when they lost recently to Australia and drew with South Africa during the Rugby Championship, Hansen rejected suggestions his squad was too old and maintained their World Cup plans were on track.

With a handsome win in the return game against Australia they showcased their fast-paced game, which was again on display against Tonga.

Most of the All Blacks' tries were long-range affairs and scored out wide as they stretched the visitors' defence.

HIGH-OCTANE PERFORMANCE

It was an effort that employed all 15 players delivering a high-octane performance, with even tight-head prop Nepo Laulala producing one-handed off-loads in a quality impression of Sonny Bill Williams.

The tight forwards believed that "they can do a bit

more than just push and shove in scrums and rucks," Hansen said.

"They've worked hard getting themselves really, really fit. They've dropped weight, some of them, muscle rather than fat... but we've worked out we don't need them bulky, we need them to be agile."

With the outside backs doing the finishing work, George Bridge scored four tries while Ben Smith and Ryan Crotty both touched down twice, with another try to right wing Sevu Reece and scrumhalf TJ Perenara.

Forwards Codie Taylor, Kieran Read, Matt Todd and Ardie Savea also scored while Beauden Barrett kicked seven conversions and Josh Ioane four. Tonga's sole try to captain and Bristol midfielder Siale Piutau came in the closing minutes when the Pacific islanders enjoyed a one-man advantage.

Until then, Hansen had been impressed with the All Blacks defence. "Although we didn't get tested that much, what we did see was good line speed, guys coming forward in good positions and getting up off the deck and getting reset in the line pretty quickly," he said. —AFP



Abdul Qadir

Sports

Neymar snags equalizer in return as Brazil draw Colombia 2-2 in friendly

Netherlands shock stunned Germany in 4-2 comeback win

MIAMI: Neymar didn't disappoint in his much anticipated return Friday, grabbing a second-half equalizer for Brazil in a 2-2 friendly draw with Colombia on Friday.

The Paris Saint-Germain star was playing for the first time for club or country since suffering an ankle injury in a friendly against Qatar in June, which ruled him out of the Copa America.

Since then the Brazilian star had been embroiled in a long-running transfer saga that ended this week with the Brazilian staying at PSG — a return to Barcelona finally ruled out. Before a sell-out crowd of 65,232 at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL's Miami Dolphins, Neymar delivered for Brazil, scoring the equalizer in the 58th after setting up Casemiro for the game's opening goal in the 20th minute.

Colombia were lacking top stars James Rodriguez and Radamel Falcao, but thanks to Luis Muriel's brace they gave Copa America champions Brazil a fright before Neymar rode to the rescue and Tite's men extended their unbeaten run.

Although Neymar made a quiet start, it was his cross from a corner that found a soaring Casemiro, who nodded past helpless Colombian keeper David Ospina to open the scoring. The lead didn't last long as Luis Muriel converted from the spot in the 25th after taking a high kick from Alex Sandro. Less than 10 minutes later Muriel fired Colombia ahead 2-1. Roger Martinez launched the counter-attack and Duvan Zapata played a ball out wide to Muriel, who blasted past Ederson.

Brazil almost pulled level seven minutes into the second half but Philippe Coutinho's attempt went wide.

Coutinho was key to Brazil's 58th-minute equalizer, finding Dani Alvez from the halfway line. Alvez's cross found Neymar, who was in the right place to slot a side-footed shot into an empty net.

The draw extended Brazil's unbeaten run to 17 matches, a streak that dates back to their 2018 World Cup elimination by Belgium.

Neymar notched his 61st international goal, put him one behind Ronaldo, who sits second on Brazil's all-time list headed by Pelé's 77.

Both countries will be back in action on Wednesday, with Brazil hosting Peru in a Copa America final rematch in Los Angeles and Colombia taking on Venezuela in Tampa, Florida.

Meanwhile, in Hamburg, Netherlands scored four times in 32 second-half minutes to secure a remarkable 4-2 comeback victory against hosts Germany in their Euro 2020 Group C qualifier on Friday. Goals from Frenkie de Jong, a Jonathan Tah own goal, Donyell Malen and Georginio Wijnaldum wrapped up the win after Serge Gnabry had given the hosts an early lead and Toni Kroos had pulled them level at 2-2 with a controversial penalty.

The result leaves Germany on nine points from four games, three behind leaders Northern Ireland, who they face on Monday in Belfast. The Netherlands move to six points from three games and next face bottom side Estonia.

It was a winning return to Hamburg for Dutch coach Ronald Koeman, who won in the port city against the Germans as a player during Euro '88, and a clear mark of his team's improvement after they failed to reach the last two major tournaments.

"I told my players (at halftime) to stay in the game, not to give them so much space, control the ball better," Koeman told reporters. "That we should just keep going and we would get our chances. In the second half the Germans looked more tired and we benefited from that."

"Overall we worked harder than Germany for this victory," he said. Joachim Loew's Germany side, undergoing their own overhaul after a disappointing 2018 World Cup first round exit and Nations League relegation, got off to a good start with Gnabry scoring on the rebound in the ninth minute.

There was little to be seen in terms of attacks from the Netherlands but that changed after the break. They turned the game around within seven minutes, first scoring through De Jong in the 59th and then taking the lead courtesy of Tah's unfortunate own goal.

The Germans, missing several injured players, including Leroy Sané and Leon Goretzka, were struggling with the Dutch pace down the wings and were lucky to level with a



MIAMI: Brazil's forward Neymar Jr. (R) and Colombia's defender Luis Manuel Ojeda vie for the ball during their international friendly football match between Brazil and Colombia at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Florida. — AFP

73rd minute Kroos penalty after Matthijs de Ligt accidentally handled.

There is no video replay for referees in the qualifiers. The visitors got revenge for their 3-2 loss in Amsterdam in March, striking through debutant Malen in the 79th after a quick combination left the German defence frozen.

Nijaldum completed the victory in stoppage time and ended Germany's 14-match winning run in World Cup and Euro qualifiers. "We played below our skill level and abili-

ties," Loew told reporters. "The Dutch were the better team and we deserved to lose. We went ahead but I never had the feeling that we were in control of the game."

"The Dutch kept pressing and then we ended up playing high balls. That is not how we had planned to play. We will now need to analyse this game and draw our conclusions," Belarus earned a stoppage time 2-1 win at Estonia to claim their first points in the other game in the group on Friday. — Agencies

Bale hopes rescue mission is Wales 'turning point'

CARDIFF: Gareth Bale hopes Wales' 2-1 victory against Azerbaijan can prove a turning point in their race to qualify for Euro 2020 after the Real Madrid star spared his side's blushes on Friday. With just six minutes left at the Cardiff City Stadium, Ryan Giggs' team were on the brink of an embarrassing draw that would have severely damaged their hopes of reaching next year's European Championship.

Despite taking the lead through Pavlo Pashayev's farcical own goal in the first half, Wales had surrendered a sloppy equaliser to Mahir Emreli after the interval. Already in trouble in Group E after successive defeats by Hungary and Croatia, Wales were saved by their captain as Bale headed home from close range. Wales now sit third in the group, three points behind Hungary and Croatia after four matches. "Azerbaijan made it difficult. We were sloppy at times. We ground it through and showed our character," Bale said.

"Scrappy wins help you get a winning mentality and momentum. Hopefully this is a turning point. 'We'd like to do it in style but three points is three points. We all believe we can qualify. We'll keep doing that until the end.'"

Giggs wasn't impressed with Wales' erratic display, but took heart from their determined finish. "It wasn't good enough, first half. We didn't stick to our game plan. Some of our players wanted to do whatever they wanted to do," he said. "We showed character to come back. Everyone needs a little bit of luck. Hopefully it will help momentum. That's what we need." Bale's crucial contribution was another welcome boost for the former Tottenham forward



CARDIFF CITY: Wales' forward Gareth Bale (L) vies with Azerbaijan's defender Maksim Medvedev during the UEFA Euro 2020 Qualifying - 1st round Group E football match between Wales and Azerbaijan at Cardiff City Stadium, Cardiff. — AFP

in what could be a season of vindication. As his country's all-time leading goalscorer, Bale is always guaranteed a warm welcome in Wales — a feeling he hasn't often enjoyed in Madrid during his turbulent spell with Real. Having survived Real manager Zinedine Zidane's latest

attempts to freeze him out after a proposed move to China collapsed, the 30-year-old has battled back into the Madrid line-up.

Bale, who scored his first goals since March 16 in the weekend draw at Villarreal, this week dismissed the suggestion that it has been the worst time of his career and insisted the problems have only made him stronger.

Bale was out-of-sorts in Wales' summer qualifying defeats, but — handed the captain's armband in the absence of Ashley Williams — he was quickly into his stride, bursting down the right wing and crossing towards Tom Lawrence, who volleyed wide at the near post.

Azerbaijan, ranked joint 109th in the world, had already conceded 10 goals in three qualifying defeats, making them the group's whipping boys on paper.

But Wales didn't have it all their own way and Bahlul Mustafazade let rip with a fierce strike that flashed just wide from the edge of the area. Luck was on Wales' side however and they took the lead in bizarre circumstances in the 26th minute. When Bale tried a long-range effort, his shot was deflected off Dmitri Nazarov high into the air towards Pashayev, who instead of getting out of the way, allowed the ball to bounce off the side of his head.

Azerbaijan keeper Salahat Agayev had come out to catch the ball but instead he ended up fooled by the deflection and had to watch as it trickled into the empty net. Azerbaijan kept fighting and they snatched an equaliser in the 59th minute after a series of Wales errors.

Neil Taylor carelessly gave the ball away and Ramil Sheydaev slipped a perfect pass to Emreli, who sprinted away to score at the second attempt after Wales goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey weakly pushed out his first shot.

But, with time running out, Bale rode to the rescue in the 84th minute. Joe Allen's shot was deflected high into the Azerbaijan area and Bale rose highest to head in despite Maksim Medvedev's despairing attempt to clear off the line. — AFP

2000 and 2002. He was part of a golden generation that featured Rigobert Song, the late Marc-Vivien Foe and Geremi as Cameroon also won the gold medal at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, with the emerging Eto'o both scoring and converting a penalty in the shoot-out win over Spain in front of a blockbuster 114,000 crowd.

His pace left him as his career slowed down with low stints at Russia's Anzhi Makhachkala, Chelsea and Everton in the Premier League. Last year, after a short spell with Turkish side Konyaspor, he joined Qatar league side, Qatar Sports Club, his last club. — AFP



CAIRO: In this file photo taken on July 19, 2019 Qatar SC's Cameroonian forward and captain Samuel Eto'o brings the trophy onto the pitch ahead of the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) Final football match between Senegal and Algeria at the Cairo International Stadium in Cairo. — AFP

African great Eto'o hangs up his boots

PARIS: Cameroon's four-time African Player of the Year Samuel Eto'o announced his retirement yesterday at the age of 38, declaring "I need a rest". "The end, towards a new challenge," the former Barcelona, Inter Milan and Chelsea striker posted on Instagram.

"Thank you all, big love, adrenalin." "In a few months you'll see me doing something new," Eto'o, who has campaigned relentlessly against racism during his playing days, later said on the margins of an economic forum in DR Congo. "I need a rest, I've been running for 19-years," he added light-heartedly in Kinshasa. He stands alongside Liberia's current president George Weah and Ivory Coast's Didier Drogba as a great of African sport, and cuts a mythical figure in his homeland where he is close to national president Paul Biya.

He is slated for a major role in the Confederation of African Football where he has vowed to fight corruption to ensure funds go into infrastructure. The most memorable period of his club career includes five hugely successful seasons with Barcelona from 2004 to 2009.

Despite an unfortunate knack for ruffling feathers, a return of 108 league goals from just 145 matches in five stunning seasons with Barcelona pays testament to his talent. At his peak he enjoyed electric pace, impeccable touch and instinctive shooting to make him one of the most feared centre-forwards in the world.

He won a pair of Champions League titles and three La Liga crowns before departing under a cloud for Inter Milan after rowing with Ronaldo leading to Pep Guardiola showing him the dressing room door.

He then spearheaded Jose Mourinho's charge to a never to be forgotten treble with Inter of Champions League, Serie A and Coppa Italia titles in his first season in Italy. He led Cameroon to an impressive four World Cups in 1998, 2002, 2010 and 2014 and enjoyed huge success at the Africa Cup of Nations as the Indomitable Lions won in

Vettel keeps Ferrari on top in final Monza practice

MONZA: Sebastian Vettel kept Ferrari on top with a classic demonstration of speed in yesterday morning's closely-fought third and final free practice at the Italian Grand Prix. The four-time champion bounced back from a spell of subdued form to give the tifosi cause for optimism with a best lap in one minute and 20.294 seconds.

That kept him 0.032 seconds clear of Max Verstappen's surging Red Bull with Valtteri Bottas third for Mercedes ahead of Charles Leclerc in the second Ferrari. Vettel gained from slipstreaming behind his Monegasque team-mate, a factor that made the difference in a busy session that saw Daniel Ricciardo take fifth ahead of Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes.

Nico Hulkenberg was seventh in the second Renault ahead of Red Bull new boy Alex Albon, Antonio Giovinazzi of Alfa Romeo and Daniil Kvyat of Toro Rosso. After Friday's rain, warm and dry conditions prevailed as the session began following a brief delay to remove a sausage kerb at the exit of Parabolica where Alex Peroni was sent spiraling airborne into fencing during the F3 race.

He was unhurt, but one week on from the death of French driver Anthoine Hubert after a Formula Two race crash at the Belgian Grand Prix it was another shocking image for the sport. "If that was an F1 car, it would have been in the forest," said 2016 world champion Nico Rosberg on Sky Sports F1.

Once the action began, it was not long before the teams were practicing their slipstreaming, so important for fast laps at Monza, and pit-stops, having lost so much time on Friday. — AFP

War on racism is 'going backwards', says Rashford

LONDON: England striker Marcus Rashford fears football's struggle with racism is "going backwards rather than forwards". Manchester United star Rashford is one of a host of top players to have suffered abuse this season after missing a penalty in a defeat against Crystal Palace.

Rashford's former United team-mate Romelu Lukaku was subjected to monkey chants while playing for Inter Milan at Cagliari last weekend, while his current United colleague Paul Pogba was attacked on social media.

Chelsea duo Tammy Abraham and Kurt Zouma also endured racial taunts on platforms such as Twitter and Rashford doesn't believe enough is being done to eradicate the problem. "It's obviously disappointing. It seems to me like things have been going backwards rather than forwards," he told reporters on Friday.

"You know, it's tough, but like you've been seeing all around the world, people have been standing together and I think in this moment that's all we can do. "We have to rely on the campaigns and stuff like that to deal with the situation because our voice only has so much power." Rashford took part in the Professional Footballers' Association's 24-hour boycott of social media platforms back in May.

Twitter says it has "taken action" on "more than 700 examples of hateful conduct" in the past two weeks. The company has also met "directly affected" clubs, the PFA and anti-racism campaigners Kick it Out in an attempt to "tackle the issue collectively".

But Rashford, speaking ahead of England's Euro 2020 qualifier against Bulgaria on Saturday, insisted the authorities must take stronger action because nothing has changed despite so many high-profile incidents.

"To be honest, I've always said that the more we speak about it, it doesn't have much of an impact," Rashford said. "We've tried. There's been examples everywhere where people have spoken out and I wouldn't say they've been ignored, but nothing has really changed."

"So, just to see it spike in the last couple of months, it's been unbelievable, so we want to just nip it in the bud while it's happening." Rashford, 21, did not see the comments aimed at him on social media after his penalty miss, but the lack of control and protection from platforms such as Twitter has not surprised him.

"Obviously, social media is a big problem because of that," Rashford said when it was put to him that the medium feels like a free for all. "For me, it is too easy to do what you like on the internet and any of us now can go on and create accounts and write what we want under anyone's post and no one would ever know."

"It's easier to sort of figure it out, you know, if you have to show identification to create an account, that means everybody can only have one account. "I know, for me, there's hundreds of thousands of people that use my name on social media, and they can write what they like - so I think obviously a lot of the racism has been coming from social media as well."

Several England players were targeted during March's Euro 2020 qualifier in Montenegro and winger Jadon Sancho admitted recently it could stop him loving football. "To be honest, I think that people will start to come off the platforms and if it is doing more bad than good, I don't think there's a reason to have the channels," Rashford added. — AFP

25 Giants chase Kershaw, hold on to beat Los Angeles Dodgers 5-4



26 Pakistan's PM remembers Qadir as 'genius'



27 African great Eto'o hangs up his boots



NEW YORK: Rafael Nadal of Spain returns a shot during his Men's Singles semi-final match against Matteo Berrettini of Italy on day twelve of the 2019 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in the Queens borough of New York City. —AFP

Nadal advances to US Open final

Serena eyes historic 24th Slam against teen upstart Andreescu

NEW YORK: Rafael Nadal will play for his 19th Grand Slam title, one shy of Roger Federer's all-time men's record, after battling past Italy's Matteo Berrettini and into his fifth US Open final. The 33-year-old Spaniard dispatched Berrettini 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, 6-1 at Arthur Ashe Stadium to reach today's showdown against Russian fifth seed Daniil Medvedev, who ousted Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov 7-6 (7/5), 6-4, 6-3.

"Very happy to be back into the final of the US Open," Nadal said. "It means a lot to be back where I am today after some tough moments at the beginning of the season."

Nadal, who shook off an early season right hip injury to win a 12th French Open title, seeks his fourth US Open crown — one short of the Open-era record of five shared by Federer, Pete Sampras and Jimmy Connors — to reach the brink of Federer's mark.

"It's just another chance on Sunday," Nadal said. "I want to enjoy a day off, have a good practice and Sunday is the day to play my best." Nadal, into his 27th Grand Slam final, beat Medvedev in last month's Montreal final in their only prior meeting. But the world

number two skipped Cincinnati, where Medvedev was champion the following week.

"He's one of the more solid players on tour," Nadal said of Medvedev. "He's making steps forward every single week. "I need to be playing at my best."

Medvedev, in his first Grand Slam final at 23, has gone 20-2 in the past six weeks with runner-up efforts in Washington and Canada, a title in Cincinnati and a breakthrough US Open run.

"I'm just happy to be in the final," Medvedev said. "When I was going to USA, I didn't know it was going to be this good. So I have to say I love USA." Medvedev is the first Russian in a men's Grand Slam final since Marat Safin won the 2005 Australian Open title and the first Russian to reach the US Open final since Safin won the 2000 crown.

Nadal has dropped only one set at the Open but was severely tested by 24th seed Berrettini, the first Italian man in the US Open semi-finals since Corrado Barazzutti in 1977. Berrettini denied Nadal on six break points in the first set, jumped ahead 4-0 in the tie-break and seized two set points at 6-4 as the Ashe crowd

roared with delight.

"Winning the first set would have been big," Berrettini said. "It's tough to go a set down with him after more than an hour. I was playing really good." But the Italian netted two backhand volleys, a baseline backhand and then hit a forehand long to hand Nadal the set.

US Open fans gave solid applause to Medvedev after earlier-round boos for flashing an obscene gesture and taunts saying he thrived on their jeers for energy to win. He later apologized. Medvedev took the first-set tie-break after Dimitrov netted a forehand and sent another long on the last two points.

"The confidence means a lot in this case because I do think he was better player in first set. I do think I was kind of lucky to win it," Medvedev said. "Then the momentum changed completely."

Dimitrov netted a backhand to surrender a break and the second set in the 10th game. Medvedev broke for a 3-1 lead in the third set and held to the finish. "There's something strong that makes me win these crazy sets and crazy matches, which maybe two months ago I

would have lost," said Medvedev. Dimitrov, ranked 78th, would have been the lowest-rated US Open men's finalist since the rankings began in 1973.

Earlier, Serena Williams will take a fourth shot at equaling Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Grand Slam singles titles in US Open final against fast-rising Canadian teenager Bianca Andreescu.

Williams, who turns 38 in three weeks, is aiming for her first Grand Slam title since giving birth in September 2017 to arrest a run of three major finals defeats in a row. She would become only the fourth mother in the Open era to win a Slam after Aussies Court and Evonne Goolagong Cawley and Belgium's Kim Clijsters.

The 23-time Grand Slam champion won her last major at the 2017 Australian Open, finishing runner-up at Wimbledon the past two years either side of an infamous meltdown against Naomi Osaka in the 2018 final at Flushing Meadows. "Is this the best opportunity? I don't know. I literally haven't thought about it this tournament. I've been way more chill," said Williams, who could break her own record as the oldest women's Grand Slam champion. — AFP

Lyles seals sprint double before world championships

BRUSSELS: American Noah Lyles completed a sprint double with victory in the 200 metres at the Diamond League finals on Friday to add to last week's 100 title before he seeks to be crowned world champion for the first time later this month.

In the last major meeting before the world championships in Doha starting on Sept. 27, Britain's Dina Asher-Smith also put down a marker with victory in

the women's 100 metres. Lyles was pushed by Turkey's Ramil Guliyev and Canada's Andre de Grasse, with both running season's bests.

Lyles, 22, had talked on Thursday of wanting to improve on his personal best, but on a cold wet evening in Brussels he had to settle for a still respectable 19.74 seconds. The American said it had started to rain just before the gun went off, while two of the pins on his bib popped off. He also felt a sudden urge to use the bathroom for the first time ever in a race.

"It was chaotic to be honest, a lot happened in that race," Lyles said. "That's when the race became a lot more complicated... This was definitely a test." In a photo finish, Guliyev came second, just ahead of De Grasse.

Lyles has broken through in the past two years and

bettered Usain Bolt's Paris Diamond League record for 200 metres last month. He also became the first man in the Diamond League's 10-year history to win both the 100 and 200 metres titles in the same season, having won the shorter sprint in Zurich last week.

Nevertheless, he will only run the longer distance in Qatar, saying he is not so strong over the 100 metres. The women's 100 on Friday was a straight foot race between Asher-Smith, 23, and 32-year-old Jamaican Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, the Briton showing greater stamina in the final strides to finish a metre or two ahead in 10.88 seconds, her best time of 2019. Marie-Josee Ta Lou of the Ivory Coast was third.

Olympic champion Elaine Thompson of Jamaica, who had run the world leading time in the 100, had qualified but opted out of the race to prepare for Doha. Asher-Smith, who won the sprint double at the

European championships in Berlin last year, will compete in both the 100 and 200 metres in Qatar.

"My aim this year was to make sure I could translate my performance to be one of the top athletes in the world... You've got to take it to a different level. Europeans are great, but worlds and Olympics are different things," she said.

The closest finish was in the men's 3,000-metre steeplechase as Ethiopia's Getnet Wale held off a surge from Morocco's Soufiane El Bakkali to win in eight minutes, 6.92 seconds. There was drama ahead of the women's 100 metres hurdles as Nigerian Tobi Amusan was disqualified for coming out of her blocks in 0.096 seconds, just ahead of the permitted 0.1 reaction time.

After long protests and boos from the crowd, Danielle Williams of Jamaica won the race in 12.46 seconds. — Reuters