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Iran issues 'battlefield' warning as US to deploy troops to Gulf

Houthis pledge to halt attacks • Saudi reveals extent of damage to oil sites

Kuwait raises port security, has enough food for 6 months

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan on Friday issued a decision to raise port security level of facilities from one to two. Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) told KUNA in a statement that ministerial decree no. 448 orders a raise in security level of all port facilities in the country, both commercial and oil. The decision stresses to take necessary measures to protect ships and port facilities, it noted. In addition, it also comes in order to preserve the security of the country and its territory as well as ports due to conditions experienced by the region.

The ministry of commerce and industry also announced on Friday that Kuwait has strategic food reserves sufficient for six months. In a statement, the ministry affirmed its full readiness to cope with any emergency, affirming that all precautionary measures have been taken. The ministry added that it had taken all necessary measures and precautions with Kuwait Insurance Company and food supplies outlets throughout the country. Strategic stockpiles of food in warehouses are

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TEHRAN/WASHINGTON: Any country that attacks Iran will become the "main battlefield", the Revolutionary Guards warned yesterday after Washington ordered reinforcements to the Gulf following attacks on Saudi oil installations it blames on Tehran. Tensions escalated between arch-foes Iran and the United States after last weekend's attacks on Saudi energy giant Aramco's Abqaiq processing plant and Khurais oilfield halved the kingdom's oil output.

Yemen's Houthi rebels have claimed responsibility for the strikes but the US says it has concluded the attacks involved cruise missiles from Iran and amounted to "an act of war". Washington approved the deployment of troops to Saudi Arabia at "the kingdom's request", Defense Secretary Mark Esper said, noting the forces would be "defensive in nature" and focused on air and missile defense.

But Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Major General Hossein Salami said Iran was "ready for any type of scenario". "Whoever wants their land to become the main battlefield, go ahead," he told a news conference in Tehran. "We will never allow any war to encroach upon Iran's territory. We hope that they don't make a strategic mistake," he said, listing past US military "adventures" against Iran.

In Riyadh, the Saudi minister of state for foreign affairs, Adel Al-Jubeir, warned of "appropriate measures" once the source of the strikes on its oil facilities was confirmed. "We have asked the United Nations to do an investigation and there are also other countries involved in the probe," he told a press conference. "We are sure the attack was not launched from Yemen, but from the north. When it (the probe) is completed, we



KHURAIS, Saudi Arabia: A destroyed installation in Saudi Arabia's Khurais oil processing plant is pictured on Friday. — AFP

will take the appropriate procedures to deal with this aggression," said Jubeir, without specifying.

Iran's Salami, for his part, was speaking at Tehran's Islamic Revolution and Holy Defense museum during the

unveiling of an exhibition of what Iran says are US and other drones captured in its territory. It featured a badly damaged drone with US military markings said to be an

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News in brief



3 killed in Oman crash

KUWAIT: Three Kuwaitis, including two siblings, were killed in an accident in Oman, said Rustaq district's account on Twitter. It said the accident took place along the state's highway when the three Kuwaitis' vehicle overturned in an accident with another vehicle. — A Saleh



Fake goods confiscated

KUWAIT: Customs officers confiscated three shipments of counterfeit products, which will be destroyed after documenting them. The products were proven fake after contacting the commerce ministry. The 280 parcels weighing nearly six tons arrived from an Asian country via a Gulf port. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Defense minister inspects air force command center

KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah carried out an inspection tour of the Kuwait air force and air defense forces operations' command center. His visit came to closely assess arrangements made by the Kuwait armed forces, read a defense ministry statement, as the acting prime minister underlined the need for all units to maintain readiness amid the current regional circumstances.

On Wednesday, Kuwait's military

declared that it had raised the state of combat readiness of some of its units as a precautionary measure taken in such circumstances. These measures aim to protect the country's security and ensure the safety of its land, water and airspace from possible dangers, added the statement.

Chief-of-Staff of the Armed Forces Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khodhor also carried out a tour to inspect air defense sites in the north of the country.

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KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah inspects the Kuwait air force and air defense forces operations command center yesterday. — KUNA

Tunisia turns the page on Ben Ali

TUNIS: With the burial in Saudi exile yesterday of former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia is turning the page on more than two decades of nepotism and repression with a large dose of indifference. Forced out of Tunisia on Jan 14, 2011, by weeks of popular outrage spurred by the self-immolation of a market trader protesting police harassment and unemployment, Ben Ali died on Thursday in the Saudi city of Jeddah. His death did not feature especially heavily either in the news or the conversations of ordinary Tunisians, in a country that is in the

midst of elections.

Reflecting the pluralism that has emerged since Ben Ali's downfall, two non-establishment candidates made it through the first round of a presidential poll held last Sunday - one a socially conservative academic committed to radical decentralization of power, the other a populist media magnate currently behind bars.

The funeral of the former president took place in the holy city of Madinah in Saudi Arabia yesterday, an AFP photographer said. He was laid to rest at Al-Baqi cemetery next to Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) mosque and a place of great reverence for Muslims. His body, covered by a green shroud, was carried to his final resting place by a procession of about a dozen men. Some

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MADINAH: Mourners carry the coffin of late former Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali during his funeral at Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) mosque yesterday. — AFP

Trump slams whistleblower, Biden responds

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Friday vigorously rejected a whistleblower's claim of wrongdoing, amid reports he used a call with Ukraine's president to pressure him to investigate the son of Trump's Democratic rival Joe Biden. The whistleblower's secret complaint has triggered a tense showdown

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Dozens held in Egypt after rare protests

CAIRO: Protests erupted overnight in Cairo and other Egyptian cities calling for the removal of President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, in a rare show of dissent quickly quashed by authorities. Hundreds of Egyptians took to the streets late Friday, chanting slogans including "Leave, Sisi!" and demanding the "fall of the regime". At least 74 people were arrested, a security source told AFP, with plain clothed police patrolling side streets of downtown Cairo.

After overnight clashes with the protesters, security forces yesterday maintained tight control of Tahrir Square - the epicenter of the 2011 revolution that unseated long-time autocrat Hosni Mubarak. The country effectively banned protests under a 2013 law and a state of emergency is still in full effect. "I think it's safe to say that the events of the past few weeks, including the development last night, pose the most serious legitimacy crisis facing Sisi," Nael Shama, a Cairo-based political analyst, told AFP.

The protests came on the back of an online call put out by Mohamed Aly, a disgruntled exiled Egyptian businessman, demanding Sisi be toppled.

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CAIRO: Egyptian protesters shout slogans as they take part in a protest in downtown Cairo on Friday. — AFP

Local

Inaction encouraged Israel to continue defiance of int'l community: Kuwait

Kuwait regrets UN Security Council's failure to adopt Idlib ceasefire draft

NEW YORK: Kuwait has reiterated that the continued international inaction has clearly encouraged Israel to continue its defiance and intransigence in front of the will of the international community, violating international law and defying resolutions of international legitimacy. This was stated in Kuwait's speech at the Security Council session on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian issue delivered by Permanent Representative Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi.

Otaibi said that the Security Council, in resolution 2334, demands that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and fully respect all its legal obligations in this regard. He stressed that Israel, the occupying force, while continuing to build and expand illegal settlements in the occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, sent a clear message that it was determined to continue.

Otaibi noted that building new settlements, expanding

existing settlements and annexing land in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, undermines the opportunity to establish a Palestinian state based on relevant Security Council resolutions and a two-state solution. He added that the measures taken by Israel and the policies pursued by the occupying Power on an ongoing basis and disregard of world opinion is clearly reflected in its recent announcement to approve the establishment of more than 2,300 housing units in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Otaibi stated that this latest step was followed by the recent provocative declaration of the intention to annex territories from the occupied West Bank in 1967 in flagrant violation of international law, the UN Charter and the relevant international resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. He explained that the illegal Israeli annexation plans for the Palestinian territories led to an increase in the number of settlers, which in turn contributed to the increase in the number of violent and criminal attacks by settlers against Palestinian civilians, which are still taking place under the eyes of the Israeli occupation forces. "The responsibility of the international community is clear and it is more urgent than ever to maintain international law and hold Israel accountable for all its violations, including campaigns to seize Palestinian buildings and houses, arbitrary arrests of Palestinian civilians and unilateral decisions," he said. He pointed to the decision to withhold part of the tax revenues from the Palestinian Authority, the pressures on UNRWA and the targeting of demonstrators participating in the Great Return march with live ammunition, which could amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Otaibi pointed out that the absence of any serious measures to activate accountability pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2334 and other relevant UN resolutions has unfortunately led to the persistence of the occupying Power in its flagrant violations of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Idlib ceasefire

Meanwhile, Otaibi expressed disappointment at Russia and China blocking of a UN Security Council draft resolution to end hostilities in Idlib Governorate, northwest Syria, in a voting that was held on Thursday. "[Thursday's] session and the stances of each UNSC member towards this balanced humanitarian draft will go down in history," he said, noting that the draft was meant to protect civilian life and property and end the suffering of civilians in Idlib.

Ambassador Al-Otaibi made the comments at a UNSC session after the vote of the draft jointly put forward by Kuwait, Germany and Belgium - the three co-penholders of the Syria humanitarian file. "The people in Idlib, particularly women, children and the elderly, will remember the results of the voting and continue looking at the UN Security Council with bitter disappointment," he said. "The Council's failure to adopt this purely humanitarian draft adds to the chain of failures by the Council to address the Syrian disaster over long years. No tangible progress was made towards ending the ordeal of the Syrian people," he protested.

The fact that Russia and China used their veto powers to block the draft means virtually that the lives of millions of people in Idlib are in jeopardy at a time when the UN cautions against the biggest humanitarian disaster in the 21st century due to the ongoing hostilities in Idlib, he reminded. "The shocking figures released by the UN on the tune of the catastrophe in Idlib were the main motive that prompted us, the co-penholders of the Syria

Kuwait reaches out to those in need around the region

KUWAIT: Last week was marked with plentiful humanitarian works by Kuwaiti institutions and humanitarian agencies to provide relief and assistance to those in need in the region and around the world. Director General of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer made sure the Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross societies take on their responsibilities in providing assistance to those who need it. He was speaking during a consultative session, grouping his peers from other Arab countries, held in preparation for the forthcoming constitutional meeting of heads of relief associations at the Organization of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies. The meeting aims for a resolution to boost collaborated works and efforts to serve humanitarian missions and strengthen cooperation between relief and humanitarian association with authorities in other fields, in addition to responding to the needs of migrants who have lost homes due to natural or manmade causes.

KRCS had also taken on another cause by providing financial assistance for a kidney transplant for a 19-year-old Lebanese girl after her condition worsened. Dr Sayer gave a statement during his visit of the girl at the hospital saying that decision was made to cover expenses of her operation after observing dangers of her condition that need an operation as soon as possible. The Kuwaiti society has also been helping cover healthcare expenses for tens of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, including children

wallowing in chronic ailments, as the KRCS has grown accustomed to helping out those less fortunate.

Training programs

In Aden, where Kuwait's aid was also extended last week in the Shabwa and Aden provinces through the works of the professional's qualification convoy project to benefitting 175 people, financed by the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Noori and 'Kuwait by Your Side' campaigns. This project provided five different training programs of 250 hours that benefitting 95 young men and women in Shabwa province to qualify for the working fields. An additional 80 individuals were also trained in a wide variety of fields including fixing machines, air conditioning, computers, mobiles, tablets and device maintenance.

Another project was also launched in Aden to provide sowing training for 150 women for three months to qualify them for work and also handing out sowing machines to all the trainees, which is funded by the Kuwait Relief Society as part of Kuwait by Your Side campaign. This project aims to provide women with an opportunity to work and financial aid for their families in provinces mostly affected by negative ramifications of the warfare.

In Irbil, North Iraq, 10 buses were donated to Mosul University to ease transportation for students-provided by Kuwait Relief Society under supervision of the Kuwaiti Consulate in Mosul. The Consul General of Kuwait in Irbil Dr Omar Al-Kanderi gave a statement saying 10 buses have been sent to the university in Mosul in line with resolutions that had been taken during the Kuwait-hosted international conference to rebuild Iraq. Kuwait's aid to the Syrian migrants extended to Turkey where three schools have been built in Shanly Urfa to provide education needed for Syrian and



WEST BANK: This picture taken from the Palestinian village of al-Sawahre, near the village of Abu Dis in the occupied West Bank near East Jerusalem on September 20, 2019 shows a view of make-shift Palestinian housing (foreground) before the Israeli settlement of Maale Adumim (background). — AFP

humanitarian file, to table this draft after lengthy transparent consultations with all UNSC members over the last three weeks," Ambassador Otaibi pointed out. The military escalation in Idlib since April has led to more than 1,000 civilian deaths and forced nearly half a million others, mainly women and children, to leave their homes, besides the extensive material damage inflicted on civilian infrastructure including hospitals and schools, he went on. "Regrettably these serious developments and violations of the international humanitarian law drew no correct or unified stand," he said, reaffirming Kuwait's denunciation of any attacks on civilian life or infrastructure whatever the attackers might be. He asserted the need to bring to book those responsible for such human rights violations.

Ambassador Otaibi reiterated that Kuwait believes there is no military solution to the crisis in Syria, saying that the only exit is through a political settlement that

includes their obligation to distinguish between civilian populations and combatants, and urges all parties to apply the principles of distinction, proportionality, and the obligation to take all feasible precautions to avoid and in any event minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects. It calls upon all parties to respect and fulfill their commitments to existing ceasefire agreements, including the full implementation of resolutions 2254 (2015), 2268 (2016) and 2401 (2018). Furthermore, it urges all member states to use their influence with parties to ensure the implementation of a cessation of hostilities, the fulfilment of existing commitments and to support efforts to create the conditions for a durable and lasting nation-wide ceasefire.

War crimes

The draft resolution recalls that some of the violations and abuses committed in Syria may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, and stresses that those who have committed violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be held accountable. It reiterates a demand that all parties allow and facilitate, safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access for the United Nations and its implementing partners to requested areas and populations in Syria in order to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches people through the most direct route in order to meet basic needs, consistent with the provisions of its resolution 2449 (2018). It underlines the need that all parties facilitate safe and unimpeded passage for medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their equipment, transport and supplies, including surgical items, to all people in need, consistent with international humanitarian law.

It calls upon all parties, in particular the Syrian authorities, to undertake confidence-building measures, including through the immediate release of any arbitrarily detained persons, particularly women, children, and the elderly, as well as the provision of information on missing persons and handover of the bodies of the deceased to families, as outlined in resolution 2474 (2019). The draft resolution reiterates that there will be no significant and sustainable improvement of the humanitarian situation in the absence of a political solution to the Syrian conflict in line with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, to facilitate a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political transition, in order to end the conflict in Syria. — KUNA

Annexation plans increased settlers' attacks

could realize the aspirations of the brotherly people of Syria based on the UNSC resolution 2254 and the Geneva declaration of 2012.

China, Russia block Kuwait, Germany, Belgium-presented draft UNSC resolution calling for ceasefire in Idlib

The blocked resolution calls on all parties to immediately cease hostilities to avoid a further deterioration of the already catastrophic humanitarian situation in Idlib Governorate, beginning at noon Damascus time on September 21, 2019. It also demands member states to ensure that all measures taken to counter terrorism, including in Idlib Governorate, comply with their obligations under international law. It stresses that counterterrorism operations do not absolve parties to armed conflicts of their obligations under international humanitarian



A Kuwait Red Crescent Society delegation visits a 19-year-old Lebanese girl, who underwent a kidney transplant funded by the society.



Kuwaiti humanitarian Aid distributed to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Turkish students to complete their education. One of the schools provides 20 classrooms for 550 students and 25 staff members, while the other two schools provide a spot for 1,150 students with 50 teachers and administrative staff.

1,000 food baskets

In the Jordanian capital Amman, 1,000 food baskets were handed out to families who are in need with basic nutritional needs as part of a joint humanitarian

campaign. And after the Sudanese authorities announced casualties and damage caused by the floods, Kuwaiti societies were there to provide aid to those affected by the floods during the whole week with the arrival of three planes loaded with 110 tons of food and supplies. In a statement to the press, Ahmad Al-Sanousi, head of the relief society in Sudan, said that humanitarian aid from funding to food and supplies was provided for 500 families. — KUNA

Local Spotlight

Feminism



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The Oxford English Dictionary defines a 'feminist' as 'an advocate or supporter of the rights and equality of women'. It also worth mentioning that the term "feminist" was among the most searched terms in Merriam Webster dictionary's word of the year for 2017. This highlights the world's growing interest in the movement for women's rights. The term feminism was first used in the 19th century after it was invented by the French philosopher Charles Fourier in 1837 when writing about the indelible link between women's status and social progress.

Since then, the movement for equality between men and women has been able to pave its way to several countries and regions including the Middle East, which has seen many names among key figures leading equality campaigns and has had a clear impact on the feminist movement. Yet, these movements have been accused throughout history to upset religious groups and conspiring to stabilize society, especially by Islamist groups.

However, feminist movements in the Middle East have been working hard and continue to be seen as a threat to the traditional distribution of roles between men and women and a threat to identity and traditions. It is well known that the early beginnings of the feminist movements in the Gulf region were influenced by the prevailing cultural movement in Egypt and Syria, as well as the writings of thinkers who addressed women's issues such as Qasim Amin and pioneers of the Arab feminist movement such as Huda Shaarawi.

The first signs of the Kuwaiti women's movement can be traced back to the 1940s, where girls' education began to spread despite the difficulties due to conservative forces opposing girls' education. The long struggle of Kuwaiti women was a success, and women were granted the right to participate in the Kuwaiti parliament. A number of women were able to win elections of the National Assembly, but unfortunately for only one term. This is why we need to work harder for the empowerment and awareness of women to have more than one or two women in the parliament.

Many people believe that the existence of a feminist movement in Kuwait is less important because Kuwaiti women have all their rights as they claim, and this idea was entrenched after women gained their political rights. But, the fact that progress is in the interest of Kuwaiti women today is due to individual moves by some women who faced injustice in cases such as the housing law, which distinguishes between the rights of men and women. I think there are still outstanding issues that need a lot of efforts, including domestic violence, whose victims are mostly women, and the rights of Kuwaiti woman who are married to non-Kuwaitis.

I believe that the struggle of women around the world has made a big difference in the world today, by launching several campaigns and movements, the most important of which is the feminist movement that worked for the rights of women with the aim of gender equality at many levels, including political, economic and social. Many women today suffer discrimination in many parts of the world, the result of many intellectual, social, economic and legal accumulations that have produced many feminist movements to demand an end to injustice from women.

I believe that what women in Kuwait and all of our Arab countries need are NGOs to be closer to the problems that women suffer from, regardless of all ethnic, religious and class boundaries, pressuring decision-making centers to achieve equality and raising community awareness. I believe that that feminism is a long road that requires patience and intensive efforts to raise awareness of women and cooperation with all institutions and civil society organizations.

Local

Amir asks parliament speaker to convey greetings to all nationals

Kuwaiti activists publicize letter of affection toward Amir

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at his residency in the United States on Friday. During the audience, His Highness the Amir said to Ghanem, "Convey my greetings to all Kuwaitis, males and females." Meanwhile, the National Assembly Speaker expressed his best wishes for His Highness the Amir to return home safely and thanked him for his noble sentiments towards the people of Kuwait.

Meanwhile, leaders of young volunteers involved in the 'National Initiative for Presenting the Letter of Loyalty' to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah have posted the letter at public



Letter posted at public places

places, reflecting the Kuwaiti people affection toward the great leader. The initiative, involving citizens and foreign residents of the country, will continue, "till the people of Kuwait get assured with comeback of the great leader" to the homeland, the leading activists said in a press statement.

Talal Al-Zamanan, head of the 'Kuwaiti back up and rescue team,' says the letter echoes rejoice among the nationals and

residents regarding "the successful medical tests that have been undergone by His Highness the Amir recently. Moreover, it embodies their aspiration to see His Highness back to the homeland and people safe and well." The letter will be posted at shopping malls, universities, the fair ground and other locations frequented by a large number of people. Anyone will be entitled to sign it to show the affection toward His Highness the Amir.

Meanwhile, head of the voluntary team 'Al-Zajel,' Henan Al-Genae, explains that any individual or a group of persons can collect signatures in a special record at work places or 'diwaniyahs,' or among family members and friends. They can print the letter and sign it before delivering it to

any center of the Public Authority for Youth in the districts of Al-Shamiya, Al-Jahraa, Al-Ardiya or Al-Qsour. Nasser Al-Waleed, head of the 'voluntary solidarity team,' said that the letter reflects sincere allegiance and faithfulness of the people for his sagacious leadership and their affection toward to the rulers in general. "This has been the case since establishing the country," he said, praising the unlimited



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

support for the initiative from the authority officials, namely its General Director Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

Waleed adds that the involved voluntary teams will also launch it on the social media so it may reach the largest number possible of citizens and expatriates, noting that any young person wishing to be involved in the activity is welcome. In the meantime, Nasser Al-Shemmari, the head of 'Al-Jawallah team' and members of the national scout movement affirm that the scout teams will be among the first to ink the written message for His Highness' wellbeing. — KUNA

Premier heads to New York for 74th UNGA meetings



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah leaves to New York for the 74th session of the UN General Assembly. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and a delegation accompanying him left Kuwait yesterday to participate in the 74th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). The Kuwaiti delegation includes Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr

Hamed Al-Azmi and Kuwait's Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Housing Affairs Dr Jenan Boushehri. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak was seen off at the airport by Deputy National Assembly Speaker Issa Ahmad Al-Kandari, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh and a number of Sheikhs, advisors at the Prime Minister's office, senior army officials, police and National Guard commanders, senior government officials as well as officials in Prime Minister's office. — KUNA

Kuwait Airport's new Terminal 2 36% complete

KUWAIT: The ministerial committee for public services announced yesterday that completion ratio of the new Terminal 2 project at Kuwait International Airport has currently reached 36 percent. According to the project's timeframe, T2 is due for an overall completion and full operation by 2023, the committee said in a press statement following its inspection visit to the project site to check with latest updates and developments regarding its workflow. So far, the project's expenses have amounted to 21.3 percent, while delay in completion remains little and has not pass 0.3 percent, it said. It affirmed the government's keenness to move on with implementing this new grand monument entirely, including phases 1, 2, and 3, in addition to operating it on its due date, and overcoming all obstacles that could hinder its achievement. It is important that all state bodies in the country cooperate jointly to complete T2 and other development projects on time, it noted, affirming keenness to attain His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision to transform Kuwait into financial and economic hub.

The committee also stressed the importance of meeting all requirements to implement T2, pointing out His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's directions and keen interest to keep an

eye on all development projects in the country. Furthermore, the statement quoted the ministers' affirmation in constantly following T2's workflow phases, holding intensified meetings with state bodies' representatives in this regard, and conducting inspection visits to the project site to be closely acquainted with it. The ministers also commended the great efforts exerted by the project's main sponsors, particularly the Ministry of Public Works and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), said the committee.

DGCA's Chairman Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said meanwhile that T2 would be a substantial addition to Kuwait International Airport and a quantum leap in the air-transport field in the country. T2 is backed directly by His Highness the Premier as one of the vital projects in Kuwait, Sheikh Salman added, noting it is part of the government's main development schemes with a capacity to accommodate some 25 million passengers yearly. The project's building has a unique design in its exterior and interior parts, Sheikh Salman noted, adding DGCA would convey T4's success to the new passenger terminal in a record time. He also lauded Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan's efforts, along with other ministers, at the ministerial committee for public services in making the new passenger terminal a top priority thru their constant attention and follow up. Furthermore, the DGCA chief commended the great efforts exerted by the staff of public works ministry, notably Minister Dr Jenan Boushehri, noting their endeavor had an apparent impact on the project's workflow and completion progress. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials inspect the new Terminal 2 project at Kuwait International Airport. — KUNA photos

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A general view of Kuwait City from Al-Seif beach. — Photo by Mohammad Al-Otaibi (KUNA)

NBK honors its MVPs, collaborative teams through its 2019 program

Our human capital is the cornerstone of NBK growth: Sager



KUWAIT: A group photo taken during the event.

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) honored its distinguished employees and teams for 2019 at its fourth Annual Award Ceremony - Most Valuable Team Players Awards. The prestigious event was attended by Isam Jassim Al-Sager, NBK Group Chief Executive Officer, Shaikha Al-Bahar, NBK Deputy Group CEO, Salah Youssef Al-Fulaij, NBK Chief Executive Officer-Kuwait, and Emad Al-Ablani, General Manager - Group Human Resources, in addition to a number of NBK's top executives.

In his speech, Isam Al-Sager highlighted the importance of human capital as a main pillar in NBK's success over the years, indicating that none of the Bank's strategic objective would have been possible if it weren't for the efforts and contributions of such an amazing effective group of employees.

"We highly appreciate our employees for

their efforts, dedication and commitment to the highest professional standards as they are the cornerstone of NBK's future success and the force driving our leadership in providing excellent services to our valued customers," Sager said.

"I am extremely proud of your dedication and very proud to be part of such an outstanding leading organization," Sager added. In the meantime, the Group CEO also called on all NBK family to foster and promote positive professional conduct to ensure business transparency and maintain future success.

Sager stressed that NBK Group establishes an environment shaped by the highest values of integrity, thus creating synergy among all employees to drive the Bank's continued success and achieve its vision and objectives.

He assured that NBK will continue to invest

in its human resources, which now exceeds more than 6,000 employees in four continents, as it firmly believes in their vital role in executing NBK's strategy to maintain its local and regional leadership.

NBK organizes several events throughout the year to honor its employees in an effort to support and encourage its human capital to always strive for excellence. The selection of MVP honorees depends on the votes of their colleagues within the same business unit. The voting criteria is based on teamwork, cooperation, participation, and efficiency. The ceremony honoring MVPs included several activities and contests, as well as awarding prizes to participating employees. This year, and for the first time, teams across NBK Groups were also awarded for their effective transparency, communication and team spirit.



Officials attend the ceremony.

Kuwait partakes in air-transport talks in Tunisia: Official

TUNIS: Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) has taken part in talks on ways to improve air transport in Arab states, and challenges facing Arab airlines, a senior executive said Friday. Talks also focused on Arab airlines relationship with international civil aviation organizations, and discussed agendas for the Arab Air Carriers Organization (AACO) General Assembly meeting, slated for November 4 in Kuwait, KAC Board Chairman Youssef Al-Jasem said. Jasem made his remarks on the sidelines of heading Kuwait Airways' delegation at the 85th session of AACO's executive committee meetings in Tunis. He stressed the

importance of elevating the level of competitiveness in Arab air-carrier companies in light of current challenges facing the air transport industry worldwide. The AACO's forthcoming meeting coincides with Kuwait Airways' 65th anniversary, he said, adding, "we will hold a grand celebration for this occasion at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre on honor of Arab airlines' delegations." Established in 1965 by recommendation of Arab League, AACO's headquarters is currently in Beirut, Lebanon and includes membership of 32 air carriers from 18 Arab countries, including Kuwait Airways. — KUNA



Isam Jassim Al-Sager, NBK Group Chief Executive Officer, presents an award during the ceremony.



Isam Jassim Al-Sager, NBK Group Chief Executive Officer, speaks during the event.



TUNIS: Members of the Kuwaiti delegation to the 85th session of AACO's executive committee meetings. — KUNA

Local

Kidney dialysis added to Kuwaiti patients' treatment abroad program

Stop multimillion-dollar grants to other countries: Lawmaker

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah issued a ministerial resolution amending the regulations of the government-sponsored treatment abroad program for Kuwaiti citizens. The new amendments included adding kidney dialysis for patients dispatched for treatment for other diseases who happen to need it without having to be examined by a committee specialized in kidney dialysis.

The amendments also included paying treatment expenses for patients hospitalized for over two weeks with road accident injuries, severe fractures, burns, heart attacks and strokes, allowing transplant patients to suspend treatment for a maximum of three months and later resume it without having to be reexamined, authorizing overseas treatment managers to facilitate the travel of patients and their escorts and authorizing health offices to extend cancer treatment for a maximum of six months.

In other news, Mubarak Al-Kabeer hospital's manager Dr Nadia Al-Jumaa strongly denied social media allegations about a Syrian family stealing oxygen cylinders from the hospital. Jumaa urged all social media networks to verify the content of various posts and

check their validity from official sources.

Stop grants

Commenting on Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development's signing of an agreement to grant Egypt a \$15 million loan to build four water desalination



Panel mulls water guns' ban

plants, MP Osama Al-Shaheen stressed that it is a public and parliamentary demand as well as a national necessity to stop all grants worth millions of dollars to Egypt and other countries. On another concern, Shaheen demanded immediate educational reform after only three Kuwaiti physics teachers graduated this year

compared to 3,000 social studies teachers, adding that it is no longer acceptable that only 59 percent intermediate school and 46 percent secondary school teachers are Kuwaitis.

Public universities

The government started preparing the charter of regulations for the government universities law, said official sources, expecting regulations to be completed by the end of the year. The sources added that the government will form a special academic committee to prepare to build new universities - in northern Jahra and Sabah Al-Ahmad - to meet the new urban expansions and the expected population increase. The sources stressed that the government is considering building a new university to teach only the specialties Kuwait will need over the next 50 years, such as renewable energy, electronics, project management, development and other majors.

Water guns

The Municipal Council's technical committee is scheduled to hold a meeting on Tuesday to discuss several topics including the Kazema project and banning the use of water guns and balloons during the national



Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah

celebrations. The meeting's agenda will also include a request by private universities to allocate land for private universities in Abu Halifa, in addition to various other proposals and topics.



KUWAIT: The Amiri Guard mission that includes several officers and non-commissioned officers left for South Korea to join the first advanced VIP protection course, as per the joint agreement between the Amiri Guard and the Korean presidential security department. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Kuwaiti FM receives call from Iranian peer



Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received on Thursday a phone call from his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif. During the conversation, Zarif inquired about the health of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah after the recent medical checkups he had. On behalf of the Iranian leadership, Dr Zarif expressed the best wishes for His Highness the Amir and the State of Kuwait. The conversation also dealt with the latest developments of the situations in the Gulf region and ways to deescalate the tensions in the region. — KUNA

Kuwait appreciative of election as IAEA board member

VIENNA: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna Sadeq Marafi on Friday stated that Kuwait's earning of membership in the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors by unanimous votes portrayed the 35 member states' deep admiration toward the country. The ambassador, in a statement to the press upon conclusion of the IAEA's 63rd annual convention that lasted for five days, said the board is the most supreme executive apparatus in the international agency after the general assembly. Kuwait has earned membership in the board for the fifth time since joining the IAEA 55 years ago, Marafi said. He indicated that Kuwait's election coincided with current preparations within the IAEA quarters to elect a new director general to succeed the late Yukiya Amano, adding that nominees from Romania, Slovakia, Argentina and Burkina Faso were contending for the top seat.

Kuwait, he said, has affirmed its commitment to partake "in a constructive manner in the process of selecting the most qualified nominee" for the post. Moreover, Marafi re-affirmed Kuwait's support for the IAEA pioneering role and the outcome for Kuwait, reaped during the convention. Furthermore, two agreements for updating nuclear and technological sciences as well as monitoring and protecting marine environment were signed between Kuwait and the IAEA during the conference, he said, indicating that these accords would back up the Kuwaiti institutions.

In an address to the conferees, during the gathering earlier, Marafi affirmed the State of Kuwait persistent adherence to the approach toward establishing a zone free of nuclear or weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in the Middle East. Such an approach will contribute to the region stability, in addition to preserving its security as well as boosting global peace, Ambassador Marafi stated. Marafi praised a declaration by the IAEA Acting Director General Cornel Feruta, affirming that the agency would partake in a convention in New York in November on ridding the Middle East of the WMDs.

Earlier on Friday, the IAEA wrapped up the annual 63 conference, during which stakeholders affirmed the need for boosting peaceful usage of nuclear energy,



VIENNA: Sadeq Marafi speaks during IAEA's 63rd annual convention. — KUNA

Although the Israeli delegation argued during the sessions that the demand to enlist the Israeli nuclear file in the agenda was politically motivated, representatives of Arab States insisted on its inclusion and addressed a statement to the conferees, re-demanding that Israel must join the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and called anew for allowing international experts examine Tel Aviv's nuclear facilities. The conferees, during the annual gathering, adopted a number of resolutions on boosting international collaboration in the nuclear field and anti-radiation safety.

The session adopted a draft resolution, presented by Egypt, on applying the IAEA safeguards in the Middle East with 117 votes in favor, 10 absentees and a single opponent, Israel. The adopted resolution called on all stakeholders to "seriously examine practical and adequate steps with respect of implementing the proposal on imposing safeguards to all activities in the Middle East, or establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle east that can be verified on mutual and effective basis." On North Korea, the conferees urged Pyongyang to fully abide by the NPT and cooperate with the agency on enforcing the safeguards with respect of nuclear weapons non-proliferation. The IAEA eyes with deep concern North Korea's nuclear activities.

The Kuwaiti delegation to the conference was headed by Ambassador Marafi and included Director General of Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences Dr Adnan Shehabeddine, Director General of Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research Dr Samira Omar, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations' Affairs Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah, the national liaison officer at the IAEA Dr Osama Al-Sayegh and Director General of Jaber Al-Ahmad Center for Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Fahad Marafi. — KUNA

The Kuwaiti Danish Dairy Co. (KDD) is hiring the below professions for its Kuwait Factory:



• Personnel /Administration Manager:

Lead the administration cycle at KDD including preparation, completion, obtaining of approvals, submission and follow-up until finalization of all government formalities, applications and credentials related to KDD and its employees. Regularly updated with new laws and regulations, the incumbent shall communicate on daily basis to senior management all changes in government procedures or regulations with recommendations to best practice implementations.

• Sales Manager:

10 years of FMCG Experience, Bi-Lingual (English/Arabic) with advanced computer skills and sales applications. Holding an accredited University Degree with a recognized leadership stamina when working with both team and top management. Ability to define goals and draw sales strategy for the Company. Must hold a valid driving license with full awareness with Kuwait cooperatives and demographic distribution.

• Social Media Specialist:

Responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring the company's Social Media strategy in order to increase brand awareness, improve Marketing efforts and increase sales. Bi-Lingual (Arabic/English) holding an accredited University Degree with innovative content writing skills and creativity in attracting social media followers.

• ICS Cybersecurity Engineer:

Experience with cyber security technologies with at least 3 years serving critical infrastructure/ industrial control systems (ICS) to include DCS, SCADA, PLCs, RTUs and similar. BS degree in a computer or system science discipline from an accredited college or university.

- 1) Updated CV
- 2) Personal Photo
- 3) Latest Passport Copy with all residency and civil ID Copy
- 4) Work Permit Copy
- 5) Accredited University Degree Copy

Kindly send us the below required documents to: hr@kddc.com
or call the recruitment specialist on **1888100** Ext. 4379 or 4516. Fax **24747029**



Whistleblower and Trump's phone call

Used and abused: Oceans key to fighting climate change

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ABQAIQ: Damaged installations in Saudi Arabia's Abqaiq oil processing plant are pictured. Saudi Arabia said its oil output will return to normal by the end of September. —AFP

Inside the Saudi response to oil raids

Aramco deploys more than 5,000 contractors, employees to bring production back

KHURAI: Saudi Arabia's newly appointed energy minister was in London when he learned in the middle of the night of the largest-ever attack on the kingdom's oil infrastructure. Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, a veteran oil official and senior member of the Al Saud ruling family, hurried back to the kingdom, flying by private jet to Aramco's headquarters in Dhahran to assess the damage and manage the fallout from the attack on the world's largest oil exporter, three sources close to the matter said.

Officials at state-run oil company Saudi Aramco, meanwhile, gathered in what was referred to internally as the "emergency management room" at the company's headquarters. Interviews with at least a dozen Gulf and Western officials provide the most detailed account to date of the response by Saudi officials and state oil company Aramco to the most destructive strike on Saudi Arabia since it opened an offensive in Yemen more than four years ago.

The attack knocked out more than half the kingdom's oil production, or almost 6 percent of global oil output. Saudi Arabia has said Iran was responsible, an assessment that US officials share. Yemen's Houthi movement, an ally of Iran battling a Western-backed, Saudi-led coalition has claimed responsibility. But Gulf diplomats and regional officials say they are skeptical of the claim given the sophistication of the attacks.

The attacks place pressure on both US President Donald Trump and Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who have worked closely together to contain Iran's

growing regional influence. Both nations have stressed the need for caution. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has described the attacks as "an act of war" against Saudi Arabia, though Trump says there are options short of war. Iran has warned that any US or Saudi military strike against the country would bring "all-out war."

Missiles and drones

Shortly after 3:30 am local time on Saturday, 25 drones and low-flying missiles struck two of Saudi Arabia's largest oil facilities located in the east of the kingdom, according to Saudi officials. Amin Nasser, the chief executive of state-run Saudi Aramco, which owns the two plants, rushed to Aramco's emergency-response room at the company's headquarters in the oil-producing Eastern Province, where he was joined by other senior managers, according to several people briefed on the matter.

There was a sense of shock at the scale of the damage, some of the people said. By the time Aramco's team was dealing with the fires at the first site in Khurais, where more than 200 people were at the time, strikes were still hitting the facility, according to the company. More than a hundred contractors were immediately evacuated.

Saudi officials believed Iran was responsible because the intensity of the attack was beyond the capability of the Houthi, but they wanted to gather evidence before going public with the claims, according to Gulf diplomats and regional officials. Saudi officials also spoke to their allies, in some instances

requesting assistance with experts to help with the investigation and help in strengthening air defenses.

On Saturday, Prince Mohammed provided Trump an update by phone, according to a US official. Trump offered "his support for Saudi Arabia's self-defense", according to the White House readout of the call. US officials also quickly came to believe that the attack did not come from Yemen and that Iran was responsible, according to US officials who briefed reporters. The Houthi had not struck that distance before or in such a "precise and coordinated fashion," said a senior administration official.

'Phoenix from the ashes'

By midday Saturday in Saudi Arabia, Nasser and other senior company Aramco executives were headed to the damaged plants, first to Khurais and then to Abqaiq, one of the sources briefed on the matter said. That night, Nasser was joined at Abqaiq, the world's biggest oil processing facility, by Prince Abdulaziz and Aramco's new chairman Yassir Al-Rumayyan, according to sources and pictures released by the state news agency. Aramco, which runs a variety of large projects in the kingdom, deployed more than 5,000 contractors and pulled employees from other projects to work around the clock to bring production back, according to Nasser's public comments and one of the sources briefed on the matter.

Initial assessments were that the damage was significant and that bringing full production back online could take weeks or even months, said Saudi officials and industry

sources who visited the sites or were briefed on the attacks. Saudi oil officials were scrambling to produce a report on the extent damage for the kingdom's top leadership, including King Salman, the energy minister's father, according to two of the sources briefed on the matter. But engineers needed 48 more hours for a final assessment, the people said.

Crude markets would begin trading again in two days and Saudi Arabia was under pressure to reassure buyers that oil supplies will not be disrupted. "Imagine if this (production) didn't come back on time the whole global security of supply is going to be impacted," Nasser told reporters earlier this week. "We have a lot of projects in the kingdom... so we have a lot of the workforce that's needed to rebuild, reconstruct and put it back," he said.

By Tuesday, the kingdom had managed to restore full supplies to customers by drawing oil from their massive oil inventories. The company also announced production would return sooner than expected - by the end of the month. Aramco had emerged "like a phoenix from the ashes," said Prince Abdulaziz in remarks to news media that night in Red Sea city of Jeddah. The news restored some confidence, prompting a fall in oil prices that had jumped on Monday.

Attack evidence

The Saudis continued to analyze the attack debris. That included aerial weaponry that missed their targets and was recovered just to the north, according to US officials. The United States dispatched to Saudi Arabia forensic specialists to assist in the effort:

France said it was also sending investigative experts. On Wednesday, Saudi Arabian officials publicly accused Iran of involvement.

At a news conference, a defense ministry official displayed drone and missile debris it said was undeniable evidence of Iranian aggression and identified the drones as Iranian Delta Wing unmanned aerial vehicles. "The attack was launched from the north and unquestionably sponsored by Iran," said the official. Colonel Turki Al-Malki. US officials fingered southwest Iran as the staging ground, an assessment based at least in part on still-classified imagery showing Iran appearing to prepare an aerial strike, according to two US officials.

On Thursday, the United States was considering sending anti-missile batteries, drones and more fighter jets to Saudi Arabia, US officials said. "Frankly there's just not enough defense capability in the country, if you could be hit from multiple directions," one US official said. It is possible the attacks were launched from more than one location, a Western security source said. "The exact launch location is important as it determines the response and there does have to be a response," the person said.

On Friday, repair work to the oil plants was ongoing. At the Khurais facility, parts of the facility were visibly burnt and pipes melted. During a tour of the site organized by the company, Fahad Abdulkarim, general manager for Aramco's southern area oil operations, told reporters that the company is shipping equipment from the United States and Europe to help repair the damage. —Reuters

Several dozen alien hunters gather near secretive at 'Area 51'

RACHEL: Several dozen people - rather than the two million feared - showed up on Friday near a secretive US military base in the Nevada desert, answering a meme-inspired Facebook event to storm the site in search of aliens. The revelers, some wearing alien masks or tin foil hats, began gathering at the suggested time of 3:00 am Friday near the base known as "Area 51," but they did not attempt to storm the heavily-guarded site.

One woman who attempted to pass under a gate was briefly detained as was a man who urinated nearby. The event had been posted on Facebook as a hoax in June but it quickly got out of control when more than two million people answered the call to storm the remote base, long the subject of UFO conspiracy theories. "They can't stop all of us," quipped the post, later taken down by Facebook. "Let's see them aliens."

The military issued a stern warning ahead of the event saying lethal force would be used against anyone who tried to trespass at the site, which the government only acknowledged existed in 2013. The "Storm Area 51" invitation has meanwhile spawned weekend festivals in the two tiny Nevada towns of Rachel and Hiko which are located near the site, about a two and a half hours drive from Las Vegas. —AFP



RACHEL: Revelers pose at the 'Storm Area 51' spinoff event 'Alienstock' in Rachel, Nevada. —AFP

Britain and EU spar over Brexit as clock ticks down

LONDON: Britain said on Friday a Brexit deal with the European Union could be reached at a summit next month, but EU member Ireland said the sides were far from agreement and London had not yet made serious proposals. Three years after Britons voted to leave the EU, hopes of a breakthrough over the terms of its departure have been stoked in recent days by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson saying the shape of a deal is emerging and European Commission President Juncker saying agreement is possible.

But diplomats say the two sides are split over London's desire to remove the Irish border "backstop" from the divorce deal struck by Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, and then work out a replacement in coming years. The backstop is an insurance policy to keep the 500-km border between Ireland, which will remain in the EU, and the British province of Northern Ireland open after Brexit. "We both want to see a deal," British Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay said after talks in Brussels with EU negotiator Michel Barnier. "The meeting overran, which signals we were getting into the detail." —Reuters

International

A historic first? Israel's Arabs could lead the parliamentary opposition

Arabs make up 21 percent of Israel's population

HAIFA: Israel's Arab parties are set to be the largest non-ruling bloc in parliament - and could even lead the opposition - if a national unity government emerges from Tuesday's election. A surge in turnout gave the Arab-dominated Joint List 13 of the Knesset's 120 seats, making it the third-largest grouping behind Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party, with 31 seats, and Benny Gantz's centrist Blue and White, with 33.

That would make the Joint List the largest opposition grouping in parliament if a unity government takes shape, a realistic possibility even though Gantz rebuffed Netanyahu's initial invitation. No party drawn from the 21 percent Arab minority has ever been part of an Israeli government. But if Joint List head Ayman Odeh, 44, becomes opposition leader, he would receive monthly briefings from the Mossad intelligence agency and meet visiting heads of state, among other perks.

This would provide an outlet to voice Arab complaints of discrimination against them and give a bigger platform to Arab parties that differ with those drawn from the country's Jewish majority on many political debates. "It is an interesting position, never before held by someone from the Arab population. It has a lot of influence," Odeh told reporters outside his home in Haifa, a mixed Arab and Jewish city in northern Israel.

But although the Joint List will be the single largest group, other opposition parties combined would have enough seats to block his appointment through an absolute majority vote, analysts said. "There's no way the other parties will agree to have Ayman Odeh as head of the opposition, and grant our community recognition and

legitimacy," said Aida Touma-Sliman, an Arab lawmaker from Odeh's Hadash faction. Arab lawmakers often call for an end to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital and the dismantling of Israel's settlements in the West Bank.

'Symbolic win'

The Arab community in Israel is mainly descendants of the Palestinians who remained in Israel after its creation in 1948, and some in the younger generation openly identify as Palestinian. They make up 1.9 million of Israel's 9 million population, and often complain of discrimination in health, education and housing, living in cities such as Nazareth and Acre in the north and Bedouin towns in the southern Negev desert.

The Mossawa Center rights group says Israel's state budget often favours Jews, allocating more funds to Jewish localities and schools than to Arab ones. Some 47% of Arab citizens live in poverty, far above a national average of 18%, it says. However, Netanyahu's Likud party counters that its 15 billion shekel (\$4.19 billion) investment plan for the Arab sector during the last parliament was "the largest such commitment in Israel's history", according to Eli Hazan, Likud's foreign affairs director.

In Tuesday's election, Odeh and his group of four Arab parties ran a united front and Arab turnout increased sharply. That helped them regain seats lost in April when they were divided and turnout plummeted. The Joint List held up its stronger showing on Tuesday's rerun as a victory over what it described as an "unprecedented campaign of incitement against the Arab public" by Netanyahu and



KAFR MANDA: Arab Israelis votes during Israel's parliamentary election at a polling station in Kafr Manda near Haifa. — AFP

right-wing parties. Netanyahu made allegations of voter fraud in Arab communities an issue in his election campaign, and sought to deploy cameras to the country's polling centers in what Arab leaders described as an attempt to scare off voters. Israel's top court refused to allow cameras. Eid Jbaili, a 55-year-old gym teacher from Haifa, said he boycotted

the April election but voted on Tuesday "because my community's leaders showed they could exude unity in the face of adversity". But Jbaili was unsure an Arab opposition leader would be able to provide anything beyond a "small symbolic win" for his community. "We still won't be decision-makers in this country," he said. — Reuters

The new US sanctions target access to food and medicine: Tehran

DUBAI: Iran's foreign minister yesterday denounced renewed US sanctions against its central bank as an attempt to deny ordinary Iranians access to food and medicine, and said the move was a sign of US desperation. The United States on Friday imposed a new round of sanctions on Iran, some aimed at its central bank and sovereign wealth fund, following attacks on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia that Riyadh and US officials have blamed on Iran. Iran denies involvement in the attacks, which initially halved oil output from Saudi Arabia. Responsibility was claimed by Yemen's Houthi movement, an Iranian-aligned group fighting a Saudi-led alliance in Yemen's civil war.

"This is a sign of US desperation ... When they repeatedly sanction the same institution, this means their attempt at bringing the Iranian nation to its knees under 'maximum pressure' has failed," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told reporters in remarks shown on state television. "But this is dangerous and unacceptable as an attempt at blocking ... the Iranian people's access to food and medicine," Zarif said, speaking after arriving in New York for the annual UN General Assembly next week.

Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports on social media said a number of Iranian websites—including those of some petrochemical firms—were under a cyber attack. There was no immediate official comment, and the websites of the main state oil company NIOC appeared to be functioning normally. Residents said their internet access was not affected.

The fresh sanctions target the Central Bank of Iran, which was already under other U.S. sanctions, the National Development Fund of Iran—the country's sovereign wealth



TEHRAN: An Iranian fruit vendor adjusts his fruit shop in the Tajrish Bazaar in capital Tehran. — AFP

fund—and an Iranian company that U.S. officials say is used to conceal financial transfers for Iranian military purchases. Zarif said he would meet on Wednesday with foreign ministers of the remaining signatories to the 2015 nuclear accord, which was agreed with Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia as well as the United States.

"As we have said before, the United States can only attend if it returns to the (nuclear accord) ... and ends its

economic war against Iran," Zarif said. The United States withdrew from the accord last year and re-imposed unilateral sanctions on Iran. "I hope the US government realizes that they are no longer the only economic superpower in the world and that there are many countries that want to benefit from the Iranian market," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said, according to state media. — Reuters

Washington-Tehran relations since Trump came to power

TEHRAN: Tensions between Tehran and Washington have spiraled since US President Donald Trump came to power, quit the multilateral deal on Iran's nuclear program and reimposed sweeping sanctions. Here is a recap.

'Isolate' Iran

In a landmark address to Middle Eastern leaders in Saudi Arabia on May 21, 2017, just months after taking office, Trump urges nations to work together to isolate Iran. "From Lebanon to Iraq to Yemen, Iran funds, arms and trains terrorists, militias and other extremist groups that spread destruction and chaos across the region." The Iranian government, Trump claimed in an address to the United Nations on September 19, 2017, "has turned a wealthy country with a rich history and culture into an economically depleted rogue state."

Nuclear deal walkout

Trump on May 8, 2018 pulls the US out of the nuclear pact between world powers and Iran. The move heralds the reinstatement of US sanctions on Iran and companies with ties to it. On August 7, Washington reimposes a first set of sanctions that involve freezing financial transactions and imports of raw materials, as well as penalties on purchases in the car and commercial aviation industries. A second wave of US sanctions comes into force on November 5, described by Washington as the "toughest" yet.

US drone shot down

From May 2019, tensions rise between Washington and Tehran after acts of sabotage and attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf, blamed by the US on Iran, which denies the charges. On June 20, Iran's Revolutionary Guards say they shot down a US spy drone which allegedly violated Iranian airspace. The Pentagon denies the unmanned aircraft entered Iran's airspace. The next day Trump approves a retaliatory strike, but cancels it at the last minute. On June 24 the US imposes "hard-hitting" financial sanctions on Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and senior Iranian military leaders.



TEHRAN: Iranian missiles are shown at Tehran's Islamic Revolution and Holy Defense museum, during the unveiling of an exhibition of what Iran says are US and other drones captured in its territory, in the capital Tehran yesterday. — AFP

Gulf tensions

On July 18, Trump says the US military has taken down an Iranian drone that came dangerously close to one of its naval vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran denies the claim. On September 3 the United States imposes sanctions on Iran's space program.

Backing off nuclear deal

On September 7, Iran says it has fired up advanced centrifuges to boost its enriched uranium stockpiles. It is the latest step in scaling down nuclear commitments following Washington's withdrawal from the accord. Since May it has exceeded the enriched uranium stockpile permitted by the accord and begun enriching to above 3.67 percent, to a level of at least 4.5 percent, but still far from that required for military use.

'Highest' sanctions

On September 20 Trump announces "the highest sanctions ever imposed on a country", hitting Iran's central bank. But he indicates he does not plan a military strike, calling restraint a sign of strength, while stressing it would be "the easiest thing... (to) knock out 15 different major things in Iran." The new sanctions come after September 14 attacks on two oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, which Washington blames on Iran. — AFP

Yemen pounded by war for five years

SANAA: Impoverished Yemen has been mired in a devastating conflict since Iran-backed fighters overran the capital Sanaa five years ago prompting Saudi Arabia and its allies to launch a military intervention the following year. Here is a broad overview:

Sanaa falls

On July 8, 2014, Houthi rebels from the country's Zaidi Shiite minority launch an offensive from their northern stronghold of Saada. In September, they enter Sanaa, seizing the government headquarters. Days later, rebel leader Abdelmalek Al-Houthi hails the "victory" of a "popular revolution". The rebels ally themselves with military units loyal to ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was forced to quit after a 2011 uprising. In October, they capture the Red Sea port of Hodeida, a crucial entry point for imports and humanitarian aid. In January 2015, they seize the presidential palace in Sanaa, after heavy fighting, and surround the residence of President Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi, who flees to the southern port of Aden.

Riyadh enters war

A coalition led by Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia, a bitter rival of Shiite Iran, enters the conflict in March 2015 with air strikes on the rebels. Around a dozen countries form part of the coalition, including five from the Gulf. Washington says it contributes logistics and intelligence. As the rebels advance southwards on Aden, Hadi flees, taking refuge in Saudi Arabia. By August, pro-government forces have retaken five southern provinces. In October, they announce they have retaken control of the Bab al-Mandab strait, a key waterway for international shipping. Splits emerge in the rebel camp in 2017 and Saleh is assassinated in December by his former Houthi allies.

Battle for aid port

In June 2018, government fighters, backed by Saudi and Emirati ground forces, launch an offensive to retake the port of Hodeida. UN-brokered talks between the warring parties open in Sweden in December, yielding a series of breakthroughs including a ceasefire in Hodeida where combat largely ceases. In May 2019, the UN announces the rebels have withdrawn from Hodeida and two other nearby ports, the first practical step on the ground since the truce deal.

Southern separatists

The anti-Houthi camp is also divided, notably in the south where fighting between separatists and unionist forces loyal to the government threatens to create "a civil war within a civil war". South Yemen was an independent state until it united with the north in 1990, and separatists remain powerful. In January 2018, heavy fighting breaks out in Aden between unionist forces and separatists. In August 2019, deadly new clashes erupt. The separatist-dominated Security Belt forces, which are backed by the UAE, and pro-government fighters seize Aden and other parts of the south, and retain control despite briefly being driven out in a see-sawing battle. The new front exposes a rift between the UAE and Saudi Arabia, who are effectively backing different sides in the south despite being partners in the anti-Houthi coalition.

Humanitarian crisis

Yemen's conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, relief agencies say, and has triggered what the UN describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. The UN children's agency UNICEF describes the conflict as "a living hell" for children, with 1.8 million under-fives suffering severe malnutrition. In September 2019, the United States says it is in talks with the Houthis, seeking to end the war. The negotiations open a direct channel between President Donald Trump's administration and the Houthis amid the threat of a broader regional conflict with Iran.

Peace initiative

On September 20, the Houthis unexpectedly announce that they plan to halt all attacks on Saudi Arabia as part of an initiative to end the devastating conflict. It follows twin attacks on Saudi oil installations, claimed by the Houthis, that knocked out half of the kingdom's production. — AFP

No place to call home: Refugees from rising seas

MONACO: Most refugees fleeing persecution, famine or civil strife dream of one thing: going home some day. But when rising seas displace hundreds of millions of people - a near certainty, scientists say - it will be an exodus with no hope of return. "With sea level rise, we are talking about migrations without the option for a round-trip," Francois Gemenne, an expert on the intersection between geopolitics and the environment, and director of the Hugo Observatory in Liege, Belgium said.

The global ocean waterline has crept up 15 to 20 centimeters since 1900, a direct effect of climate change. Until recently, that added volume was mostly due to water expanding as it warms. Today, however, meltwater from glaciers and especially ice sheets atop Greenland and Antarctica has become the main driver. The pace of sea level rise has also picked up, increasing nearly three-fold in the last decade compared to the previous century, a landmark UN assessment of oceans and Earth's frozen spaces to be unveiled next week will report. How high the oceans will be lifted by 2100 depends mainly on how much Earth heats up. If humanity caps global warming at two degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels - the cornerstone goal of the Paris climate treaty - seas will rise by about half-a-metre, according to a draft of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report seen by AFP.

A 3C or 4C world in which efforts to curb greenhouse emissions have fallen short will likely see an increase closer to a meter, enough to wreak havoc in dozens of coastal megacities and render many island nations uninhabitable. "Some small islands in the Pacific and Indian Ocean are merely one to two meters above sea level," Carlos Fuller, lead climate negotiator for the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) said. "A 1.2 meter rise would totally submerge these states." But even these dire impacts are a trickle compared to the torrent to come because ice sheets will continue to shed mass for hundreds of years, scientists warn. In the 22nd century, the pace of sea-level rise is likely to jump 100-fold from 3.6 millimeters per year today to several centimeters annually. — AFP

International

Twitter closes thousands of fake news accounts for spreading misinformation

Move is the latest in a series of actions by social media giants

WASHINGTON: Twitter has shut down thousands of accounts worldwide for spreading misinformation, including some artificially amplifying pro-Saudi messaging as part of a regional propaganda war. The move affected pro-Saudi accounts coming from Egypt and the United Arab Emirates directed at Qatar and Yemen, Twitter said, as well as others from China seeking to sow discord among protesters in Hong Kong.

Additional fake accounts were suspended in Spain and Ecuador, Twitter's safety team said. The move is the latest in a series of actions by social media giants such as Facebook and Twitter cracking down on manipulation, often by state-controlled entities disguising their identities. It follows similar moves by Facebook last month removing fake accounts based in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE for posting misinformation about Middle East hotspots and others involved in "coordinated inauthentic behavior" focused on Hong Kong.

Royal Saudi account canceled

Twitter removed 273 accounts working in concert in "a multi-faceted information operation" to target Saudi rivals Qatar and Iran among other countries, as well as amplify pro-Saudi government messaging. These accounts were "created and managed" by DotDev, a tech-

nology company based in the UAE and Egypt. DotDev did not respond to an AFP request for comment.

Saudi Arabia, along with the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt, has enforced an economic boycott of Qatar since June 2017, accusing the Gulf nation of links to extremist groups and being too close to Iran. Twitter also notably shut down the account of Saudi royal court adviser Saud al-Qahtani. The close confidante of Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who ran Riyadh's media center and managed an electronic army unabashedly defending its image, was implicated in the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018 but was never formally charged.

Twitter also suspended a separate group of 4,258 accounts operating from the UAE, with messaging mainly targeting Qatar and Yemen. "These accounts were often employing false personae and tweeting about regional issues," such as the war in Yemen and main agitators in the conflict, Iran-linked Houthi rebels, Twitter's statement said.

The UAE is a key partner in the Saudi-led military coalition fighting the Houthis in Yemen in a five-year conflict that has devastated the country. Six accounts linked to Saudi Arabia's state-run media were also flagged by Twitter for being "engaged in coordinated efforts to amplify messaging that was beneficial to the

Saudi government," Twitter said. Twitter noted the accounts had posed as "independent journalistic outlets while tweeting narratives favorable to the Saudi government".

Hong Kong protests targeted

Twitter identified 4,302 accounts based in China "attempting to sow discord about the protest movement in Hong Kong." This follows the identification in August of more than 200,000 fake accounts in China engaged in fueling public discord in Hong Kong. Twitter and Facebook are both banned in mainland China. Hong Kong has seen months of unrest as citizens protest what they say is an erosion of freedoms under Beijing's tightening grip. While Beijing has not intervened directly, its powerful media machine has steadily ramped up a war of words.

The moves to silence Chinese-run accounts on Twitter and Facebook were greeted with protests and claims of hypocrisy in the mainland, with posters taking to the authorized-and tightly controlled-Weibo platform. Twitter said it removed 259 accounts operated by the conservative Partido Popular that were "active for a relatively short period, and consisted primarily of fake accounts engaging in spamming or retweet behavior to increase engagement." And in Ecuador, 1,019 accounts tied to the ruling center-left PAIS



CALIFORNIA: A Facebook sign is seen at the main entrance of Facebook's new headquarters in Menlo Park in California. — AFP

Alliance "composed largely of fake accounts" were deleted. In another development, Facebook said it suspended "tens of thousands" of apps on its platform as a result of a privacy practices review launched following a scandal involving Cambridge Analytica. — Agencies

News in brief

Explosive find: Cocaine in rocket

CAYENNE: A stash of cocaine has been found in a ship used to transport rocket elements to and from the European spaceport at Kourou in French Guiana, South America, officials announced. The surprise load was uncovered when the cargo ship, which normally carries stages of Europe's Ariane, Soyuz and Vega rockets, was preparing to depart the Paracabou port on August 5, destined for France, Samuel Finielz, prosecutor of French Guiana's capital Cayenne said. As the cargo was being maneuvered, a container fixed discreetly to the vessel's hull fell into the water. "There was just under eight kilos of cocaine inside," Finielz said. A source close to the investigation described the incident as "not at all usual", and said the cargo of merchant vessels - unlike that of cruise ships - was usually very well monitored. — AFP

Pakistan frees Pashtun PMs

PESHAWAR: Two Pakistani parliamentarians and human rights campaigners were released on bail in the northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after four months in detention, their lawyer said yesterday. The two lawmakers, Ali Wazir and Mohsin Dawar, along with several activists of the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM), were arrested after a deadly clash between troops and activists at a security post in northern Pakistan in May. "Both the parliamentarians were released from Haripur jail after midnight," Tariq Afghan, the lawyer for the two leaders said. PTM campaigns against alleged extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances of Pashtuns and other ethnic minorities. It emerged last year after the killing of an ethnic Pashtun man by police in the southern city of Karachi, which led to nationwide protests and turned the issue of alleged state violence against Pashtuns into a national debate. — Reuters

Attack kills 12 in holy city

KARBALA: Twelve civilians were killed Friday in a bomb blast on a bus at the northern edge of the Iraqi Shiite holy city of Karbala, medical officials said. "Twelve civilians have been killed and five wounded in an explosion on a bus at the main checkpoint for the northern entrance to Karbala", the city's health authorities said, adding the victims included women and children. Security forces arrived quickly to the scene of the attack, which was not immediately claimed. Attacks have been rare in Karbala in recent years, but sleeper cells of the Islamic State group, which Iraq declared victory against in late 2017, continue to carry out attacks across the country. — AFP

Mob kills police commissioner

BAMAKO: A Malian police commissioner was killed by a mob that accused him of links with bandits, the security ministry said. Protesters besieged a police station in the central town of Niono, accusing the police commissioner of abuses. "A horde of people armed with projectiles of all kinds ransacked the station and attacked the staff," the ministry's statement said. As police withdrew, Issiaka Toukara was "caught and killed by protesters", it added. A protester also died and a number of people on both sides were injured. "Since his appointment, there have been more motorcycle thefts, robberies and looting," protester Issiaka Sanogo alleged. — AFP

8 Islamic State fighters killed

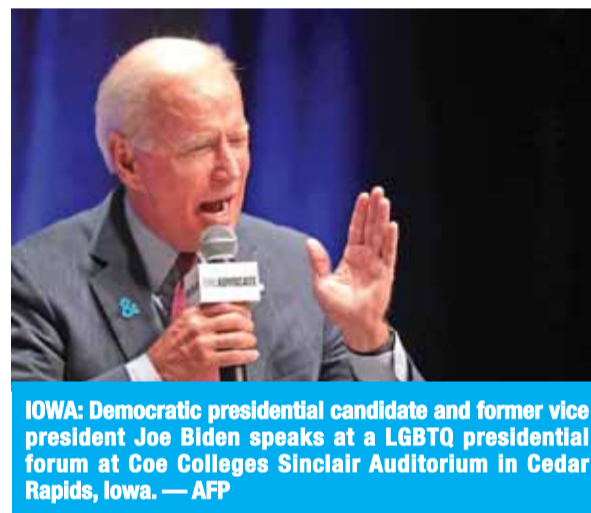
WASHINGTON: Eight suspected Islamic State fighters were killed in a US airstrike in the southwestern desert of Libya, the US military command in Africa said yesterday. The raid was carried out a day earlier near Marzouk, an oasis some 600 miles south of the capital Tripoli, according to a statement released by Africom. It said that its initial assessment indicated there had been no civilian casualties. US forces, in coordination with the Libyan government, "conducted this airstrike to eliminate terrorist leaders and fighters and to disrupt terrorist activity," said Africom command Stephen Townsend, according to the statement. "We will not allow them to use the current conflict in Libya as protection," he said. — AFP

UN: 1,500 flee homes in South Africa amid xenophobic violence

GENEVA: At least 1,500 foreign nationals have been forced to flee their homes in South Africa amid a surge in deadly xenophobic violence in the country, the United Nations said Friday. The UN refugee agency voiced alarm at the violence, which reportedly killed at least 12 people - both foreign nationals and South Africans - and around Johannesburg earlier this month in a spate of attacks against foreigners fuelled by soaring unemployment and poverty.

"At least 1,500 foreign nationals, predominantly migrants but also refugees and asylum-seekers, have been forced to flee their homes," UNHCR spokesman Charlie Yaxley told reporters in Geneva. He said the agency's staff had in recent weeks received "a significant increase in calls to our telephone hotlines, with people reporting that their homes and businesses have been looted, buildings and property have been set on fire."

They were also receiving reports of "increased gang



IOWA: Democratic presidential candidate and former vice president Joe Biden speaks at a LGBTQ presidential forum at Coe College's Sinclair Auditorium in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. — AFP

activity on the streets and rising incidents of sexual and gender-based violence," he said. South Africa, the continent's second largest economy, is a major destination for other African migrants. But they are often targeted by some locals who blame them for a lack of jobs. "Many refugees are now too afraid to go to work or carry out their day-to-day trade, despite having no alternative

sources of income," Yaxley said. Over the past two weeks, some 500 Nigerians have been repatriated amid the attacks in Johannesburg, including many directed at Nigerian-owned businesses and properties. And according to the UN, some 800 people, mainly from Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, have sought safety in community halls in Kettlehong. "Many wish to return home, saying they no longer feel safe in South Africa," Yaxley said.

UNHCR, he said, was strengthening its response and operational presence in South Africa to work with the government and other partners to help ensure the refugees' safety. "We are deploying additional staff and resources, including relief items, emergency shelter, psycho-social care, legal assistance and support with recovery of lost livelihoods," he said, adding that experts in child protection and sexual and gender-based violence were also being deployed.

Authorities in South Africa must "take every possible measure to ensure people's safety and welfare," Yaxley said. "No effort should be spared to quell the violence and enforce rule of law," he said, insisting that perpetrators should be held to account. He also called on "those with a voice in the public domain ... to ensure their language does not further inflame the situation." Foreigners, he said, must "not become scapegoats for complex socioeconomic challenges." — AFP



VIENNA: A man reads a newspaper in a cafe in the city center of Vienna, Austria yesterday. — AFP

Fuelling populism, influencing votes: Austria's tabloid

VIENNA: The "Ibiza-gate" corruption scandal cost Austria's far-right its place in government, but also the tacit support of the country's most powerful newspaper, the tabloid Kronen Zeitung. With the Freedom Party (FPÖ) vying to form a coalition government again after snap polls on September 29, the party founded by former Nazis in the 1950s can hardly afford the ill-will of the tabloid read by a third of adults in the small Alpine country. "No one can rule without the Krone," the German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung wrote recently.

The Sueddeutsche Zeitung, together with German weekly Der Spiegel, broke the "Ibiza-gate" scandal when they published hidden camera footage in May that brought down the government, leading to the fresh elections to be set. In the recordings, filmed on the Spanish resort island of Ibiza, FPÖ leader Heinz-Christian Strache appears to offer contracts to a fake baker in exchange for campaign help. He also outlines a plan how the woman, who remained off camera but claimed to be the niece of a Russian oligarch, could take control of the Kronen Zeitung. Strache resigned from his posts as party leader and Austrian vice-chancellor. The remarks also caused an outcry among the central European country's media.

Tool of power

Even though the Krone spreads messages similar to those of the far-right party, including stoking fear of immigrants and mistrust of EU institutions, the paper prides itself on "not being among those that can be bought" with its sole loyalty to its readers. In the "Ibiza-gate" aftermath Kronen Zeitung - The Crown Newspaper - published several headlines slamming Strache in a "never seen" reaction, according to Raimund Loew, a veteran journalist working for Austria's public television. But how did the newspaper, which celebrated sixty years since its founding this year,

become such a tool of power? "A third of Austrian adults read the Krone every day. Its readership is larger than that of the other five dailies combined," says political scientist Fritz Plasser, who has conducted several studies on the tabloid. Even with a declining circulation in recent years, it sells some 700,000 copies in Austria every day, servicing two million readers, out of the country's 8.8 million inhabitants. Plasser says the Krone "accelerated the rise of populism" in Austria. "The Krone was the first newspaper to touch emotions... and so connect to its readers," Plasser tells AFP. "This influence has rubbed off on politicians who have adopted the emotional strategy to reach the wider public."

Rise of the far-right

In Austria, the far-right's influence post-World War II started before similar anti-establishments movements found their foothold in other European democracies. The FPÖ - under controversial but charismatic leader Joerg Haider - already governed Austria in a coalition from 2000 until 2002. "The rise of Joerg Haider and the FPÖ since 1986 (when Haider took over the party) is inseparable from the Kronen Zeitung," Andreas Moelzer, an FPÖ leader, said a few years ago. The Krone also allowed one writer to publish prose with antisemitic hints in its pages. He wrote for the tabloid until 2012. "Over the years we have written positively about the FPÖ... but I also remember a lot of critical articles", Kronen Zeitung editor-in-chief Klaus Herrmann told the Standard daily in an interview at the end of May after "Ibiza-gate". The Krone's political preferences have indeed fluctuated, in line with those of Hans Dichand, who led the tabloid for half a century until his death in 2010 and thought of it as "the people's voice", which could make and unmake chancellors. The one constant has remained the paper's anti-immigration rhetoric - the FPÖ's main platform - impossible to miss in its screaming headlines and striking photos. According to media watchdog kobukat, 89 percent of alleged sex offenders singled out in newspaper articles in 2017 were foreigners, while they made up only some 40 percent in police statistics at the same time. In 2018, as in previous years, the newspaper once again committed the highest number of code of ethics breaches, according to the Austrian Press Council. Its editor has promised the newspaper will be "even more cautious" and "more honest" after "Ibiza-gate". — AFP

Whistleblower and Trump's phone call

WASHINGTON: A mysterious whistleblower, a telephone call between President Donald Trump and a foreign leader, and military aid to Ukraine. Here's what we know about the latest political firestorm swirling around Washington:

Whistleblower

On August 12, an unknown whistleblower in the US intelligence community filed a complaint with Michael Atkinson, the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community (ICIG), regarding a matter of "urgent concern." The identity of the whistleblower and the nature of the complaint have not been publicly revealed. After reviewing the complaint, Atkinson determined it was "credible" and forwarded it on August 26 to the acting Director of National Intelligence, Joseph Maguire, a Trump appointee. The Democratic-led House Intelligence Committee is demanding that the whistleblower's complaint be turned over but Maguire has declined to share it. According to The Washington Post, the complaint concerned a "promise" Trump made in a recent phone call with a foreign leader.

Phone call

The phone call in question, according to US media reports, was a July 25 conversation between Trump and Ukraine's newly elected President Volodymyr Zelensky. According to The Wall Street Journal, Trump repeatedly pressured Zelensky in the call to investigate Hunter Biden, the son of Joe Biden, Trump's main potential 2020 reelection rival. Hunter Biden in 2014 joined the board of Burisma Holdings, a Ukrainian gas firm accused of corrupt practices, but he has not been personally accused of any wrongdoing. The Journal said Trump urged Zelensky "about eight times" during the call to work with Rudy Giuliani, his personal attorney, on a probe into Hunter Biden.

At the time of the conversation, the United States was holding up \$250 million in military aid for Ukraine, but the Journal said Trump did not mention the assistance during the conversation. Three committees in the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives have demanded that the White House turn over a transcript of the call. The committees claim it may include evidence of Trump and Giuliani's efforts to "improperly pressure" Ukraine to help his reelection bid. They accused Trump and Giuliani of trying to coerce Ukraine, in exchange for military assistance, into conducting a "politically motivated" investigation into Hunter Biden. "If the President is trying to pressure Ukraine into choosing between defending itself from Russian aggression without US assistance or leveraging its judicial system to serve the ends of the Trump campaign, this would represent a staggering abuse of power," the Democratic committee chairmen said. — AFP

International

Used and abused: Oceans key to fighting climate change

Humanity must heal oceans made sick by climate change

PARIS: Humanity must heal oceans made sick by climate change and pollution to protect marine life and to save itself, experts warned days before the release of a major UN report. By absorbing a quarter of manmade CO2 and soaking up more than 90 percent of the heat generated by greenhouse gases, oceans keep the population alive - but at a terrible cost, according to a draft of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) assessment seen by AFP.

Seas have grown acidic, potentially undermining their capacity to draw down CO2. Warmer surface water has expanded the force and range of deadly tropical storms. Marine heatwaves are wiping out coral reefs, and accelerating the melt-off of glaciers and ice sheets driving sea level rise.

"The last book of the Bible talks about the four horseman of the Apocalypse," said Dan Laffoley, strategic lead for ocean protection at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. "For the oceans, the lead horseman is surface warming," he told AFP. "The three others are ocean heating, loss of oxygen and acidification." There are at least three types of actions humans can take to help repair the damage and ensure that oceans don't turn from friend to foe, scientists say.

Restoration, Protection

Less than seven percent of oceans - which cover 70 percent of Earth's surface - benefit from some form of regional or national protection, often with minimal enforcement. Ocean advocates and experts say the area safeguarded must be vastly expanded. "We need to protect 30 percent of the ocean by 2030," said Lisa Speer, director of the international oceans program at the National Resources Defense Council in Washington DC. "This cannot be achieved without a high seas agreement," she added. UN negotiations for a treaty to regulate

exploitation of the high seas - waters beyond national jurisdiction covering nearly half the planet - began last fall, and could take years to complete.

At the same time, regions not included in marine parks or conservation areas "must be managed in a cautious and durable way," Tom Dillon, Vice President of Pew Charitable Trust said. Restoring coastal mangroves and seagrass meadows, meanwhile, would draw down CO2 emissions, and shield coastal communities from storm surges as a bonus. These "blue carbon" ecosystems could potentially stock just under a billion tons of CO2 per year, about two percent of current emissions, according to the UN report.

Renewable energy

Off-shore and ocean-based renewable energy - including wind, wave, tidal, currents and solar - could meet a significant slice of future energy demand, numerous studies have shown. Such schemes are mostly experimental and thus costly per unit of energy generated, but economies-of-scale are possible. Floating wind farms, for example, fuelled by high wind speed over the open ocean could eventually generate more electricity than those on land, Carnegie Institution for Science researchers reported in PNAS.

In winter, North Atlantic wind farms "could provide sufficient energy to meet all of civilization's current needs," the authors said. "That's a bit of fantasy, but it makes the point that these technologies have not been sufficiently developed," said Jean-Pierre Gattuso, a senior scientist at France's National Centre for Scientific Research. There are several ready to be scaled up, he said.

Geoengineering

The failure of humanity to draw down planet-warming greenhouse gases - which continue to rise year-on-year - has opened the door to other ideas once thought risky or



ALASKA: Tommy Swan (left) and Rhonda Norton take to the bank of a river as they hunt for caribou along the Wulik river in Kivalina, Alaska. The hunters in the village have seen the migration patterns of fish, caribou, seal and whale that they need for the long winter months change due to the warming weather. — AFP

far-fetched, such as injecting particles into the upper atmosphere to deflect the Sun's radiation. Some geoengineering schemes to cool Earth's surface or reduce CO2 are ocean-based. One that has been tested with inconclusive results involves sowing the open ocean with iron to create phytoplankton colonies that absorb CO2 as they photosynthesize. When the tiny creatures die, they drag the CO2 into the inky depths.

Another scheme would brighten mirror-like marine

clouds to reflect sunlight back into space. Spreading long-lasting white foam across vast expanses of open water would - in theory - have the same effect. Scientists from Princeton and Beijing Normal University recently costed a plan to build an underwater barrier in front of an Antarctic glacier the size of England to help prevent warm ocean water from eroding its underbelly, thus preventing the glacier from slipping into the sea. The price tag was several hundred billion dollars. — AFP

Activists get down and dirty clearing rubbish on mass cleanup day

SYDNEY: Thousands of activists fanned out across beaches and rivers throughout Asia yesterday, picking up rubbish and drawing attention to the amount of trash that is dumped worldwide, a day after millions marched to urge world leaders to act on climate change. The volunteers turned out for World Cleanup Day - an initiative that has got millions into the streets and cleaning up litter across the globe since it began just over a decade ago.

The Pacific island nation of Fiji swung into action early, with people scouring palm-fringed beaches for rubbish, heaving discarded car tyres and engine parts from the coast just west of the capital Suva. On Australia's Bondi beach activists sifted through the sand, carting off bits of plastic and cigarette butts. In the Philippines, some 10,000 people swept across a long stretch of beach on heavily polluted Manila Bay, clutching sacks filled with rubbish. Plastic pollution is a major problem across Southeast Asia, but particularly in the Philippines, which - along with China, Vietnam and Indonesia - is frequently listed among the world's worst offenders.

"It's for us to help the environment, especially here in Manila, there's a lot of garbage," Mae Angela Areglado, a 20-year-old student told AFP as she pitched in with the cleanup - held right next to the city's huge Baseco slum. "Plastic is affecting the marine life because they think that



SYDNEY: Bondi cleanup day co-ordinator Julie Montedoro, 29 (left) and Isabel Young Perez, 32 (right) take part in a beach cleanup on Bondi beach in Sydney. — AFP

is food", she added. The mass cleanup is coordinated by the Let's Do It Foundation, which aims to "connect and empower people and organizations around the world to make our planet waste free", according to its website. It attracted around 1,400 volunteers in Vietnam's capital Hanoi, where they scoured different areas of the city for litter under

the scorching sun. "Although our actions are very small - like cleaning trash from the sidewalk - it could spread a meaningful message," 18-year-old Hoang Thi Hoan told AFP, as motorists zipped by on a busy street. In China, a group of about 30 gathered by the Xiaotaihou River in Beijing to pick up rubbish along the manmade waterway. — AFP

'Millions' protest in youth-led global climate strike

NEW YORK: Masses of children skipped school to join a global strike against climate change that teen activist Greta Thunberg said was "only the beginning," ahead of a UN youth summit she will participate in yesterday. Some four million people filled city streets around the world, organizers said, in what was billed as the biggest ever protest against the threat posed to the planet by rising temperatures. Youngsters and adults alike chanted slogans and waved placards in demonstrations that started in Asia and the Pacific, spread across Africa, Europe and Latin America, before culminating in the United States where Thunberg rallied.

"Change is coming whether they like it or not," said Thunberg, hitting out at skeptics as she wrapped up the massive day of action in New York, where she said that 250,000 protested. Strike organizers 350.org said Friday's rallies were the start of 5,800 protests across 163 countries over the next week. From Berlin to Boston, Kampala to Kiribati, Seoul to Sao Paulo, protesters brandished signs with slogans including "There is no planet B" and "Make The Earth Great Again."

In New York's Battery Park, tens of thousands of supporters gave Thunberg a rockstar reception, chanting her name as she called on leaders to act now to curb gas emissions. "Why should we study for a future that is being taken away from us?" She asked. "We demand a safe future. Is that really too much to ask?" Yesterday, she and 500 other youth environmentalists from around the world will take part in the first-ever Youth Climate Summit. Then on Monday, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has convened a Climate Action Summit where more than 60 world leaders will take to the podium to present greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

Events began Friday in the deluge-threatened Pacific Islands of Vanuatu, the Solomons and Kiribati, where children chanted: "We are not sinking, we are fighting." The defiance reverberated across the globe as kids closed their textbooks in a collective call to action. — AFP

After faulting army, Pakistan women's activist flees to US

WASHINGTON: Gulalai Ismail's campaigns to empower Pakistani girls have won her international awards and recognition as one of her country's foremost activists. But when she spoke out against sexual violence and disappearances allegedly carried out by the army in northwestern Pakistan, her fortunes quickly changed.

The 32-year-old said she feared for her life. After four months on the run, she succeeded in eluding a vast hunt and has turned up in the United States, where she is seeking asylum. Ismail said she never sought to become an overseas dissident but sees a closing of the political space in Pakistan, where the army has remained the dominant power-broker for most of the country's history. "I never wanted to leave Pakistan," she told AFP in an interview in Washington. "I believe that I can better work towards democracy and civil supremacy and peace in Pakistan."

But she concluded she would be more effective abroad, saying: "If I had ended up in prison and tortured for many years, my voice would have been silenced." Ismail, who speaks with poise and passion though she remains afraid, believed she posed a special threat as a vocal woman. "When a man stands up, he is mostly against the state oppression," she said. "But when a woman stands up, she is fighting oppression on many levels - fighting cultural norms, fighting the patriarchy and the state oppression."

Taking up an unpopular cause

Ismail was still a teenager when she co-founded Aware Girls in 2002, which promotes gender equality in the deeply conservative northwestern district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In 2017, she won the prestigious Anna Politkovskaya Award for human rights advocacy. The year before, she was honored for conflict prevention by France's Chirac Foundation and has been welcomed by former first lady Michelle Obama. But she came under greater scrutiny last year when she started speaking in support of the Pashtun Protection Movement, which defends the rights of the Pashtun tribal population in the northwest.

Quoting witnesses, Ismail said the army crackdown on Pashtun militants near the border with Afghanistan had led to frequent disappearances as well as sexual assaults. Most women stay silent due to stigma, she said, but when a boy came forward about how security forces were barg-



WASHINGTON: Pakistani dissident and feminist Gulalai Ismail speaks during an interview with AFP in Washington, DC. — AFP

ing into their home and harassing his mother, she went to investigate. "Dozens of women had come to tell us that the incident of sexual harassment was not unique. It is systematic. It had been happening for years."

Eluding intense search

Ismail was detained briefly in 2018 but her fears mounted in February when she was taken into custody for two days after attempting to hold a news conference. She said that she was held in a cold, dirty room with a urine-soaked sheet on the ground. She said she was denied food and water, with other female inmates warned against talking to the "high-profile terrorist." In May, police filed a complaint against Ismail under an anti-terrorism law after she spoke out about the rape and murder of a 10-year-old girl. Ismail declined to discuss how she escaped Pakistan, saying she did not want to put others at risk. Authorities widely circulated her name to seek her arrest, with airport authorities told not to let her leave. "There were videos created online by military trolls which were clearly saying that the moment I'm in custody they will teach me a lesson, I spoke about the issue of rape - now they will 'teach me' what rape is," she said.

She said security forces roughed up both her driver and a friend who she said was handcuffed, beaten and administered electric shocks for 14 hours in a bid to extract information on her whereabouts. Ismail is living for now with her sister in New York. She said her initial fears of being sent back to Pakistan, a historic ally of the United States, were eased after she held meetings in Washington at the State Department and with staff of lawmakers including Chuck Schumer, who represents New York and is the top Democrat in the Senate. — AFP

Germany commits 100 billion euros for climate as protests heat up

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced Friday a sweeping climate protection plan worth at least 100 billion euros by 2030, as hundreds of thousands protested for action against global warming. Merkel's coalition government, after marathon overnight talks, sealed a deal to tackle emissions in the energy and industrial sectors, boost zero tailpipe emission electric vehicles, and get passengers out of planes and onto trains. Emission trading will discourage fossil fuel use, 86 billion euros will be ploughed into railway infrastructure, and cities will test 365-euro annual tickets for public transport. By 2030 "a three-digit billion euro figure will be made available for climate protection and the energy transition," said a summary of the sweeping package. The government, which has faced international pressure to invest its huge annual budget surpluses, said the extra spending will help to "support the economy" without affecting its plans to keep the budget balanced.

'Unite behind science'

As the politicians emerged red-eyed from their overnight talks, protesters were out in the streets bearing posters with slogans like "make rainforests great again" or "I want a hot date, not a hot planet". In the biggest global wave to date of the Fridays for Future climate strikes started by Swedish teen Greta Thunberg, protest action was held in 575 sites across Germany. Vice Chancellor Olaf Scholz admitted at a press conference that "Friday for Futures jolted us into action". Merkel too noted that "if there is something that impressed me, then I have to say as a scientist that it is when Greta Thunberg said 'unite behind the science'." Environmental groups, however, ripped into the climate plan. "What we have today is not a breakthrough, but a scandal," wrote Luisa Neubauer, a key figure in the school strike movement. The co-leader of the Greens, Annalena Baerbock, also slammed the plan as "slow, lax and non-binding". But SPD leader Malu Dreyer defended what she called a comprehensive package that ramps up investments in green infrastructure while helping the less well-off cope with the transition. "It is important for us to meet climate targets, but it is also important that we stick together as a society."

Rising stakes

After two blistering summers and weekly school strikes, climate has shot to the top of the political agenda in the EU's biggest economy. For Merkel's coalition government, the stakes are also rising. With the economy already projected to slide into recession in the third quarter, balancing the interests of its crucial export industries while not alienating young voters with their green demands has proved to be a tough balancing act. Germany is set to miss its climate targets for next year but has committed itself to meeting the 2030 goal of a 55-percent cut in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels. The export powerhouse accounts for around two percent of the worldwide emissions blamed for heating the Earth's atmosphere, melting ice caps, rising sea levels and intensifying violent weather events.

'Life-destroying crisis'

Merkel was once known as the "climate chancellor" as she pushed forward a green energy transition that vastly increased clean renewables such as wind and solar power. However, many of those gains have been eroded by an increased reliance on dirty coal, in part to offset the phase-out by 2022 of nuclear power that Merkel decided after Japan's 2011 Fukushima disaster.

Her government this year announced a coal phase-out by 2038, but faces local opposition from mining regions, especially in the ex-communist east, where the far-right AfD party has capitalized on fears over job losses. Car-mad Germany has also lagged badly behind in the transport sector, where state-coddled auto giants VW, Daimler and BMW have long focused on gas-guzzling SUVs more than hybrid or zero-emission electric cars. — AFP

Analysis

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Washington Watch

Only way Israelis can form a govt: Betrayal

By Dr James J Zogby

As expected, the outcome of Israel's second national election was as murky as the first round in April. During the next few weeks, Israeli leaders will be engaged in negotiations in an effort to form a government. The double-dealings and the betrayals that will need to occur for them to form a governing coalition will make "House of Cards" look like a tea party.

The reasons for this are simple. The results of the election were close and inconclusive with no grouping, neither the one led by Prime Minister Netanyahu nor that of the main opposition led by former General Benny Gantz, in a position to easily cobble together the 61 Knesset seats needed to form a majority. In addition, there's the fact that all of the major players have made, and continue to affirm, principled pledges which, if honored, will make creating a governing coalition impossible. Hence, either there are betrayals of pledges or partners or there will be no new government.

What follows is the state of play and the pledges made by all of the principled actors. Gantz's Blue and White coalition won 33 seats. The two "left" parties with whom he can align won 11 seats (seven for Labor-Gesher and six for the Democratic Union). This only gives Gantz a total of 44 seats.

While most analysts also incorrectly add to Gantz's total the 13 seats held by Joint Union (made up of four parties representing the Palestinian citizens of Israel), this will not occur for two reasons. Gantz made a pledge not to form a government "dependent on the Arabs". And, for their part, the Arab parties have said that while they would not vote against a Gantz-led government, if it meant ending Netanyahu's rule, but they would only consider joining a governing coalition on the condition that it was committed to full equality for the Arab citizens of Israel and ending the occupation. These are conditions to which Gantz is ideologically opposed. Gantz might also seek to include the 17 seats held by the two ultra-religious parties since this would give him the 61 he needs to form a majority. But Blue and White ran on a decidedly secular platform and he would find it difficult to add the religious parties who would demand that the government continue to provide funding for their institutions and uphold a number of restrictive religious prohibitions. This would put Gantz at loggerheads with the secular nationalist voters who formed his support base.

Since many of the Blue and White leadership were originally connected to Likud, it might appear logical for Gantz to turn to Likud, which won 31 seats in this election, in order to form a national unity government of the right. But here too, there are problems.

In the lead up to negotiations, Likud's leader, Benjamin Netanyahu secured a pledge from his partners (the two ultra-religious religious parties and the right-wing nationalist party, Yamina, which holds seven seats) that they would remain united and negotiate as an unbreakable union, under Netanyahu's leadership. If this unity is upheld, it effectively rules out any partnership with Gantz who has insisted that he would not form a government on Netanyahu's terms and certainly not with Netanyahu as the Prime Minister. In addition, if the Likud-led grouping maintains its unity, this would require Gantz accepting the religious parties and their demands.

Now while Gantz can claim the right to lead efforts to form the next government, since his Blue and White coalition won the most seats (33), Netanyahu, despite only winning 31 seats, is claiming that because he is entering the negotiations with a stronger hand, since his base of support is larger (a total of 55 Knesset seats - his 31, the religious parties' 17, and Yamina's seven), he should be the one to set the terms. This is, of course, out of the question for Gantz, since he has ruled out joining a government under Netanyahu and he will not form a government with the religious parties and their requirements.

If this seems murky, it's because it is. And so Israelis are left with either a third election or watching their leaders betraying their partners and their pledges. Seventeen members of the Likud might choose to betray Netanyahu, by dumping him as their leader and joining a Gantz-led government. This might occur if negotiations continue past the October date when the attorney general has said he will begin proceedings that, in all likelihood, will lead to Netanyahu being indicted for crimes of corruption, bribery, and betrayal of the public trust. There is also the possibility that Netanyahu could convince Avigdor Lieberman to rejoin his Likud government. The eight seats held by Lieberman's Yisrael Beitenu party would give Netanyahu 63 seats. But this would require Lieberman breaking his pledge not to join any government that is subservient to the demands of the religious parties. He's done it before, and if Netanyahu's offer/bribe is good enough, he might betray his pledge and do it again.

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

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Iranian visitors walk past a Khordad-3 air defense system at Tehran's Islamic Revolution and Holy Defense museum during the unveiling yesterday of an exhibition of what Iran says are US and other drones captured in its territory. — AFP

Attack shows how Iran sees new Mideast game

If Iran's government was truly behind last weekend's cruise missile and drone attack on Saudi Arabia's energy infrastructure, it has put its potential foes across the Middle East in an awkward, uncomfortable position. Like suspected mine attacks on tanker shipping in the Gulf earlier in the year, the strike - which initially sent energy prices spiking - showed just how little those who ordered it care for the norms of international engagement, even by the standards of the restive Middle East.

That's not a surprise: Both Iran and its enemies, particularly Israel and increasingly Saudi Arabia, have been fighting a shadow war on and off for years. This attack, however, marked a serious escalation - particularly if US officials are correct when they say the missiles were launched from inside Iranian territory.

Perhaps predictably, President Donald Trump's response was bellicose in flavor, warning the United States was "locked and loaded" but putting the decision on whether or not it should strike firmly in Saudi Arabia's court. So far, Riyadh has shown little enthusiasm for that - it appears increasingly bogged down in a controversial, messy war in Yemen, and neither it nor Washington wants shooting in the Gulf. Amongst those in power in Tehran, the calculations appear more mixed. Outside experts increasingly suspect hardliners believe that since Trump tore up the Iran nuclear deal, they have less to lose. Even if the United States were to launch military action, it would almost certainly only be limited. Trump has made clear his opposition to major Mideast wars, and the departure of National Security Adviser John Bolton removes the only senior U.S. figure who backed them.

Interventions

With China rising and Russia reasserting itself, the United States is now much less Mideast-focused - and also less dependent on its oil. The end of the era of Iraq-

style interventions is broadly positive - not least because it had fuelled Tehran's appetite for a nuclear program. That had itself proved destabilizing, including increasing the risk of Israeli military action, and prompted the Obama administration's focus on a nuclear deal to stop it.

That approach was dramatically ditched by Trump, who tore up the Iran deal with no apparent concept of what to replace it with. Powerful forces in Tehran were already pursuing an agenda of destabilising the region with covert action. The new US approach handed them a chance for ascendancy in Iran's unending internal battle for domestic power, and removed what constraints they had once felt.

Particularly over the last decade, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps - and particularly its foreign-facing Quds Force under Major General Qassem Soleimani - has revelled in deniable actions across the Middle East and beyond. Those actions included supporting insurgents attacking US and British forces in Iraq, Houthi rebels in Yemen and backing Bashar Al-Assad's government as it battle for control of Syria. That had fuelled some calls in Washington for the IRGC to be listed as a banned terror group - but doing so, as the Trump administration did earlier this year, seems just to have increased its appetite for action.

Iran has long had a sophisticated missile program, and has been testing drones and supplying them to regional allies such as Hezbollah for years. This attack, however, showed significant recent progress. That the missiles were reportedly able to evade Saudi air defenses by flying behind them demonstrates striking sophistication.

Houthis

Yemen's Houthis dispute US claims the missiles and drones came from within Iranian territory, saying they were launched from within Yemen itself. Whatever the truth, the attack clearly represents a leap forward in both

technology and the appetite to use it. So far, damage to facilities belonging to Saudi oil firm Aramco appears limited - Saudi authorities say full production will shortly be resumed. That's unlikely to bother anyone in Tehran significantly. They may well not have been looking for a knock-out blow, but have demonstrated their ability to strike the most sensitive facilities in Saudi Arabia without warning. Other potential foes, including United Arab Emirates and Israel, will have noted that with some alarm.

Such behavior, the United States and its allies clearly believe, must not be without consequences - and Tehran should be braced for another round of sanctions. Much of the challenge here, however, is keeping the hope of diplomacy alive, giving Iran incentives to moderate its behavior and regain admittance to the wider international community.

That, after all, was the strategy favored by the Obama administration - and then ripped up by Trump without any discernible alternative. In a particularly counterproductive step, the United States then moved this year to sanction even relatively moderate members of the government in Tehran, including Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif, its chief negotiator for the nuclear deal.

Without appetite for military action, boosting diplomatic efforts may be the only option - and European states in particular have been desperate to keep such options open. That included President Emmanuel Macron inviting Foreign Minister Zarif to the G7 summit this summer, much to the irritation of Trump and the US delegation.

Nevertheless, US appetite for a new deal may quietly be increasing. Trump's new pick for National Security Adviser, former US chief hostage negotiator Robert O'Brien, has a very different background from the mercenary Bolton. The next US presidential election is barely a year away, and the current incumbent of the White House would rather have a reputation than for stopping wars than starting them. — Reuters

Hands off our cultural heritage, say world's indigenous people

From disappearing languages to selfie-taking tourists at sacred sites, preserving native cultural heritage has become a race against the clock, indigenous groups said. The suicide of an indigenous rights activist protesting against Russia's language policies has highlighted the cultural threats native communities face across the globe as they fight for their land and survival, campaigners and researchers warned. According to local authorities, a man died last week after setting himself on fire outside the regional parliament in Izhevsk, the capital of the so-called Udmurt Republic in western Russia.

Indigenous groups said the man, whom local media identified as 79-year-old Albert Razin, carried out the act in protest over a recent law that they said favours the study of Russian over native tongues. Images shared on social media showed Razin holding signs

reading "If my language dies tomorrow, then I'm ready to die today" and "Do I have a Fatherland?" as he stood outside the parliament building. More than 40 percent of the estimated 6,000 languages spoken around the world are at risk of disappearing, and most of them are indigenous tongues, according to the United Nations.

Sophie Grig, a senior researcher with the British-based indigenous rights group Survival International, said when a language is lost, the entire community that spoke it also risks disappearing. "(Language) holds the key to the wealth of knowledge a people has about their past, their land, their livelihoods and ways of understanding the world," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "When it is lost, the tribe's future is imperilled." Indigenous knowledge and land rights could be crucial in global efforts to curb global warming, according to a special report by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Cultural threats

The extinction of a community's native languages can also lead to the loss of its claims over the land it occupies, indigenous rights experts say. And indigenous communities already have a tenuous hold on the land they live and work on. Up to 2.5 billion people depend on

indigenous and community lands, which make up more than half of all land globally, but they legally own just 10 percent. Along with fighting for their languages and land, indigenous groups also regularly find themselves defending their culture, language and knowledge against what they see as cultural appropriation by businesses.

Last week, Air New Zealand angered indigenous Maori when it sought to trademark a logo with the phrase "kia ora", which means "good health" and is commonly used to say "hello". Similarly, Mexican indigenous communities have protested the use of their traditional designs by international fashion labels, while Indians have challenged attempts to patent traditional items such as turmeric and neem. In Australia, Aboriginal groups are pushing back against public access to heritage sites like mountains and beaches, in an attempt to preserve areas of historical and spiritual importance.

For native communities in Russia, language is one of the main issues of concern, said Rodion Sulyandziga, director of the Russia-based Centre for Support of Indigenous Peoples of the North (CSIPN). Udmurt, which is one of more than 100 tongues spoken across Russia, is spoken by about 400,000 people, according to UNESCO. And it is listed among the dozens of Russian languages that the U.N. cultural agency says are at risk of disappearing. — Reuters

How auto supplier Harman learned to fight cyber carjackers

When researchers remotely hacked a Jeep Cherokee in 2015, slowing it to a crawl in the middle of a US highway, the portal the hackers used was an infotainment system made by supplier Harman International. Harman, now part of Samsung Electronics, has since developed its own cybersecurity product, and bought Israel-based cybersecurity company TowerSec for \$70 million to help it overhaul manufacturing processes and scrutinize third-party supplier software.

The expensive efforts have prevented another public breach and helped it become a key player in automotive cybersecurity, but they show the strain suppliers and automakers face in dealing with this new dimension of automotive technology. "At the end of the day, automotive is a very competitive business with small margins. If a competitor wants to eat the cost to win the business, you have to do the same thing," said Geoffrey Wood, Harman's

director of cybersecurity business development, who joined the company in late 2016.

The automotive cybersecurity market has seen exponential growth. While global revenue was at around \$16 billion in 2017, it is expected to reach \$2.3 billion in 2025, according to IHS Markit, driven by Harman, Garrett Motion Inc, German suppliers Continental AG, Robert Bosch and a range of smaller U.S. and Israeli companies. Securing cars from hackers is a complex task for these companies. Modern vehicles run on 100 million lines of code, are equipped with hundreds of different technologies and can have up to 150 electronic control units using various operating systems.

Unlike consumer electronics, cars can stay in use for decades, long after operating systems and component software cease being supported through updates that patch vulnerabilities - a challenge the industry is still grappling with. Automotive cybersecurity requirements now number in the hundreds of pages from just a page five years ago, according to interviews with a dozen automotive cybersecurity professionals.

For its 2024 vehicles under development at BMW AG, for example, suppliers are required to ensure that driving system control units have no direct connection to customers' internet-connected devices, said Michael Gruffke, head of security system functions at BMW, which sources

parts from Harman. Small auto suppliers with thin profit margins are often the weakest link for hacks, said Rotem Bar, a cybersecurity professional until recently at Israeli company CyMotive which has partnered with German automaker Volkswagen AG.

But automakers typically still hand off testing and ensuring the security of data systems to their subcontractors, industry experts said. "It's really shifting the burden onto the suppliers because the automaker is not able to test and verify everything along the supply chain," said Dennis Kengo Oka, senior solutions architect at Synopsys Inc, who conducts research on automotive cybersecurity.

At BMW, more than 70 percent of the components in its vehicles are manufactured by suppliers. "We therefore must expect our partners to take responsibility for implementing cybersecurity in respective deliveries," the automaker said in a statement. General Motors said in a statement that it handles "a significant amount of work" related to security and testing without passing the expense to its supply chain partners. Ford Motor Co and Fiat Chrysler did not respond to requests for comment. Volkswagen and Daimler AG declined to comment.

Harman saw its Jeep hack experience as a viable business opportunity: The supplier today sells cybersecurity software that allows automakers to monitor their fleets and provide over-the-air software updates. — Reuters

Business

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14 Qatar Airways reports strong growth in overall revenue for 2018-19, up by 14%



CBK's international conference to highlight fintech innovations

Int'l Banking Conference: 'Shaping the Future' tomorrow • Over 45 participants to attend 'Fintech Exhibition'

KUWAIT: Held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) will host "the International Banking Conference: Shaping the Future" tomorrow (September 23, 2019) at the Four Seasons Hotel. More than forty five participant including over 25 fintechs will showcase their capabilities at the exhibition accompanying the conference. The exhibition is officially sponsored by Zain.

As well as welcoming top executives and officials from mainstream banking, the conference will provide delegates with an opportunity to learn first-hand about the fintech innovations that are reshaping financial services in the region.

In this respect, Central Bank Governor Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel said, "We welcome the participation of the local banks, telecommunication companies and the fintechs from Kuwait and the GCC in the exhibition. Fintech has a strong appeal to various segments of societies, for it caters for the needs of the unbanked people, and meets clients' expectations. The demand for fintech is not only reshaping the banking industry's landscape, but has a role in setting elevated expectations of a frictionless experience. Therefore, the harnessing of innovative technologies is a key success factor for banks going forwards, or they may face the risk of becoming irrelevant."

Dr Al-Hashel added, "CBK provides an enabling regulatory framework which balances the support of innovation, while ensuring customer protection and responsible operation of all players. In fact, among the exhibitors are some of the participants in the CBK's Regulatory Sandbox."

By staging the Fintech Exhibition, the Central Bank of Kuwait will help fledgling and longer established fintech companies



connect with policymakers, government leaders and top executives from the financial services sector.

Fintechs will be showcasing their diverse products from alternative lending and crowdfunding, artificial Intelligence, blockchain, digital banking, digital payments and wallets, E-KYC, insurance to

property management. Additionally, they will be hailing from all GCC countries: Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, in addition to some other countries.

Besides fintech companies, institutional presence in the exhibition will be represented by all local banks who will be presenting their digital transformation along

with current and upcoming innovative services. Additionally, two leading regional telecom companies, Zain and Viva, will be showcasing their fintech initiatives in the Arab region. In addition to the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences will also be part of the exhibition showcasing fintech related training and studies. Having all these organizations under one roof with the regulator, is a message that all stakeholders need to collectively work together in shaping the future.

Aside from the Fintech Exhibition, the Conference packs an agenda that will explore the biggest themes that will shape the global banking industry for years to come. Experts, including policy makers and key banking executives will examine the economic and social challenges facing the banking sector and the opportunities and competitive threats posed by technological



Dr Mohammad Y Al-Hashel

innovation, laying out a vision for how the banking sector can thrive and better support sustainable economic development.

Amongst the fintech exhibitors are the below listed:

AION Digital	Ajar online
Bank Buddy	Beehive
Benefit	Bookeey Wallet
Cwallet	Deposit Book
Dezzex Technologies	Eazy
Fenergo	FinFirst
FRM Tech Labs	MaktApp
My Fatoorah	NEO
Norbloc AB	NOWMONEY
One Global Co.	Qchain
Republic	Sadad
TAP	Thawani
Upayment	Viva/STC Pay
Zain Cash	

Gulf Bank sponsors annual CBK International Banking Conference

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is sponsoring the inaugural International Banking Conference "Shaping the Future" organized by the Central Bank of Kuwait and held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The event will take place tomorrow (September 23, 2019) at the Four Seasons Hotel in Kuwait City.

Gulf Bank Chairman Omar Kutayba Alghanim will participate in the first session of the conference, titled "Global Economy in Retrospect: Emerging Trends and Challenges." A consortium of economy leaders will join him, including Governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency Dr Ahmed Al-Khulaifi, and the Governor of the



Omar Kutayba Alghanim

ministers and policy makers, governors of central banks, heads of regulatory and supervisory bodies, international organizations, representatives of international standard-setting bodies, international rating agencies, CEOs, other leading industry stakeholders, and representatives of financial technology companies from around the world.

The agenda will tackle the economic and social challenges facing the banking sector and the opportunities and threats posed by technological innovation, laying out a vision for how the industry can thrive and better support sustainable economic development.

In addition to this, a Fintech Exhibition will accompany the conference that will include 40 exhibitors from leading financial Institutions, telecommunications and fintech innovators from the region and internationally. As a sponsor at the Fintech Exhibition, Gulf Bank will also be showcasing its latest investment and financial service technologies, including Wise, an advisory and portfolio management service for long-term investments. As a financial investment tool, Wise offers users an investment experience that is completely digital, with the ability to register and monitor investments online.

Digital innovation is always at the forefront of Gulf Bank's service offering, with the Bank launching two new, innovative services this year: Selfpay and E-loan. Selfpay is an easy and convenient way to transfer payments from individuals and groups instantly. Gulf Bank also introduced E-loan, an innovative service that allows customers to seamlessly apply for consumer loans through the app or website. Gulf Bank's mobile and online banking services add a new level of daily convenience for Gulf Bank clients, granting them the ability to pay their phone bills and installments anytime, anywhere. Gulf Bank customers can also transfer funds locally and internationally faster and easier than ever. In an effort to further enhance its digital experience, Gulf Bank also makes it possible to purchase e-vouchers, including iTunes and Google Play gift cards, through the app.

Aramco has emerged from attacks 'stronger than ever': CEO

RIYADH: Saudi Aramco has emerged from attacks on its oil facilities "stronger than ever", Chief Executive Amin Nasser told employees in a message, adding that full oil production would resume by the end of this month. The Sept 14 attacks on the Abqaiq and Khurais plants, some of the kingdom's biggest, caused raging fires and significant damage that halved the crude output of the world's top oil exporter, by shutting down 5.7 million barrels per day of production.

"The fires that were intended to destroy Saudi Aramco had an unintended consequence: they galvanized 70,000 of us around a mission to rebound quickly and confidently, and Saudi Aramco has come out of this incident stronger than ever," Nasser said in the internal message, on the occasion of the Saudi national day, to be celebrated on Sept. 23.

"Every second counts in moments like these, and had we not acted quickly to contain the fires and undertake rapid restoration efforts, the impact on the oil market and the global economy would have been far more devastating." Six days after the assault, which hit at the heart of the Saudi energy industry and intensified a decades-long struggle with arch-rival Iran, the state oil giant Aramco invited reporters on Friday to observe the damage and the repair efforts.

Thousands of employees and contractors have been pulled from other projects to work around the clock to bring production back. Aramco is shipping equipment from the United States and Europe to rebuild the damaged facilities, Aramco officials told reporters.

Aramco already brought back part of the lost production and will return to pre-attacks level end of September, Nasser said. "Not a single shipment to our international customers has been missed or cancelled as a result of the attacks, and we will continue to fulfill our mission of providing the energy the world needs," he said in the message, seen by Reuters.

Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said on Tuesday that Saudi Arabia had used its reserves to maintain oil supply flows to customers abroad and inside the kingdom. — Reuters



A partial view of Saudi Aramco's Abqaiq oil processing plant. — AFP

Omar Alghanim to discuss emerging economic trends and challenges

Central Bank of Jordan, Dr. Ziad Fariz. The session will address unconventional monetary policies and the ways in which low interest rates have led to a significant rise in global debt. Topics of discussion also include the impact that factors such as geopolitical challenges, trade disputes, fluctuations in oil prices and currency exchanges, and financial technologies have had on the banking industry. The speakers will also discuss future prospects for the global economy, as well as the tools currently available to take on these future challenges.

The conference will attract a wide range of senior-level participation from among the global and financial industry stakeholders and thought leaders, including

Business

UK travel firm Thomas Cook in race to ward off collapse

Travel company seeks \$250 million in emergency capital

LONDON: Embattled UK travel firm Thomas Cook on Friday sought a further emergency capital injection, seeking to stave off a collapse that could trigger Britain's largest repatriation since World War II. Thomas Cook said in a statement that it needed £200 million (\$250 million, 227 million euros) — in addition to the £900-million rescue deal secured last month that handed control of its tour operator business to Chinese peer Fosun.

Sources said a collapse of the group, which some reports said could come as soon as the weekend, would mean the repatriation of 600,000 tourists, including 150,000 seeking government help returning to the UK. "We can confirm that a contingency plan exists to deal with this situation," Richard Taylor, spokesman for Britain's Civil Aviation Authority told AFP.

"We cannot discuss the details of this plan but we have run similar operations in the past."

The 178-year-old company has approached a range of potential investors including the UK government, a source close to the matter told AFP, confirming a report in the Financial Times.

Two years ago, the collapse of Monarch Airlines prompted the British government to take emergency action to return 110,000 stranded passengers, costing taxpayers some £60 million on hiring planes.

The government at the time described it as Britain's "biggest-ever peacetime repatriation".

'Risk of collapsing'

A fresh recapitalization for Thomas Cook "is expected to result in existing shareholders' interests being significantly diluted, with significant risk of no recovery", the company said Friday.

Shares in Thomas Cook, which have collapsed already in recent months, lost around 23 percent of their value on Friday, standing at just 3.4 pence. "The travel group is at risk of collapsing if it doesn't receive the financing," noted David Madden, analyst at trading group CMC Markets UK.

Thousands of workers could also lose their jobs, with Thomas Cook employing about 22,000 staff worldwide, including 9,000 in Britain.

Fosun, which was already the biggest shareholder in Thomas Cook, agreed last month to inject £450 million into the business. In return, the Hong Kong-listed conglomerate acquired a 75-percent stake in Thomas Cook's tour operating division and 25-percent of its airline unit.

Creditors and banks agreed to inject another £450 million under the recapitalization plan announced in August, converting their debt in exchange for a 75-percent stake in the airline and 25 percent of the tour operating unit.

Announcing Friday the need for more funds, Thomas Cook said: "Discussions to agree final terms on the recapitalization and reorganization of the company are continuing between the company and a range of stakeholders, including its largest shareholder, Fosun Tourism Group."

Thomas Cook in May revealed that first-half losses widened on a major write-down, caused in part by Brexit uncertainty that delayed summer holiday bookings. The group, which has around 600 stores across the UK, has also come under pressure from fierce online competition. —AFP



LONDON: In this file photo, pedestrians walk past a branch of a Thomas Cook travel agent's shop in London. Tour operator Thomas Cook has confirmed it is seeking £200 million in extra funding as it attempts to prevent a collapse. —AFP

In IMF talks, Ukraine leader promises probe into banking abuses

KIEV: Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday at a meeting with the International Monetary Fund promised to safeguard the central bank's independence and supported a comprehensive investigation of abuses in the banking sector. Zelenskyy's reassurances come after a turbulent few days in Ukraine where the central bank said reformers in the country were being subjected to "terror" after a property belonging to a former central bank governor was set ablaze.

IMF officials are visiting Ukraine for talks on a new loans-for-reforms program to replace a \$3.9 billion stand-by deal that expires next year. The exact terms and size of the new program have not been publicly disclosed yet, but a senior central bank official previously said the size could be \$6 billion.

IMF loans have helped stabilise Ukraine after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the outbreak of fighting in the eastern Donbass region that has killed more than 13,000 people.

A statement published on the presidential website also said Zelenskyy and senior IMF officials discussed PrivatBank, Ukraine's largest lender, and energy sector reforms. "I assure my full support for structural reforms in the economy, independence of the National Bank and the comprehensive investigation of abuses in the banking sector," Zelenskyy said according to the statement. He did not specify which abuses he was referring to.

The IMF has not commented on its talks with the government so far.

PrivatBank was taken into state hands against the wishes of its ex-owner, Ihor Kolomoisky, in 2016 and its fortunes are closely watched by investors because the IMF could freeze aid if the nationalisation is reversed. Zelenskyy, who has longstanding business ties with Kolomoisky, has demanded an investigation after the home of former Central Bank Governor Valeria Gontareva, responsible for nationalising the bank, was torched in a night-time attack. —Reuters

BA to operate reduced Sept 27 service as pilots call off strike

LONDON: British Airways said Friday it would operate about half its scheduled flights on September 27 after its pilots called off a planned third strike. The British carrier had originally expected to cancel all flights and propose passengers affected either reimbursement or a fresh reservation. The BALPA pilots union had Wednesday cancelled the latest walkout after two which last week cost the company dear while urging both sides get together for talks on resolving a pay dispute. With the latest strike now off BA is trying to reprogram services for next Friday but said in a statement seen by AFP it will be unable to operate a normal service. The carrier did not say whether talks had resumed with the unions.

Urging "cool heads and pragmatism" BALPA had Wednesday warned the firm

that if new negotiations were not forthcoming it reserved the right to call more stoppages. Analysts say the carrier's reputation has been dented after pilots walked out for the first time in the company's 100-year history, sparked by a bitter and long-running feud over pay. BA faced the embarrassment of grounding its entire UK fleet on September 9 and 10, causing the cancellation of about 1,600 flights.

The move sparked chaos for about 200,000 passengers due to fly in and out of London's Gatwick and Heathrow airports. Disruption continued into September 11 as many aircraft and pilots were in the wrong place to resume immediately. BALPA, which estimates that last week's 48-hour strike cost the airline £80 million (\$98 million), rejected a July proposal for an 11.5 percent pay rise over three years.

BALPA meanwhile called off five days of strikes planned for later this month as part of a disagreement with Irish low-cost carrier Ryanair. The union said that despite an "acrimonious" relationship with Ryanair, which it said was "electing to punish pilots" by withdrawing travel benefits, BALPA wanted "meaningful negotiations." The union stated that "UK



LONDON: A British Airways aeroplane takes off from the runway at Heathrow Airport's Terminal 5 in west London. —AFP

pilot representatives consulted striking members yesterday (Thursday) and agreed to suspend any further strikes in order to pave the way for meaningful negotiations under the auspices of the UK conciliation service, ACAS."

In a statement, Ryanair called on the union to resume talks but said that "BALPA offer no reason for their repeated refusal to take up these invitations." Previous strikes by Ryanair's British pilots did not cause major disruption. —AFP

FB suspends 'thousands' of apps in privacy review

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook said Friday it suspended "tens of thousands" of apps on its platform as a result of a privacy practices review launched following a scandal involving Cambridge Analytica. The review started in 2018 after revelations that the political consultancy hijacked personal data on millions of Facebook users, and it included attorneys, external investigators, data scientists, engineers, policy specialists and others, according to a Facebook statement.

The suspensions are "not necessarily an indication that these apps were posing a threat to people," said vice president of partnerships Ime Archibong, adding that some developers "did not respond to our request

for information." Archibong said the investigation "has addressed millions of apps. Of those, tens of thousands have been suspended for a variety of reasons while we continue to investigate." The suspected apps were associated with about 400 developers, and many of the software programs were still in testing phases, according to Facebook. The huge social network became the subject of intense scrutiny after acknowledging in 2018 that Cambridge Analytica misappropriated personal data on tens of millions of Facebook users as part of its work for Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

Subsequently, Facebook said it would review all apps on the platform to determine how they used data and if they respect its privacy rules. "In a few cases, we have banned apps completely," Archibong said.

Bans can be caused by violations including inappropriately sharing data obtained from Facebook or making data publicly available without protecting people's identities, according to the social network.

App crackdown
"One app banned was called myPersonality, which shared information with researchers and companies with only limited protections in place, and then refused our request to participate in an audit," Archibong said. A year ago, Facebook said it had banned some 400 apps including one called myPersonality, which according to Archibong "shared information with researchers and companies with only limited protections in place," and refused to accept an audit. Facebook said a recent agreement on privacy with the US Federal Trade Commission—which included a record \$5 billion fine—calls for additional oversight on app developers.

"It requires developers to annually certify compliance with our policies," Archibong said. "Any developer that doesn't go along with these requirements will be held accountable." Facebook earlier this year filed a lawsuit against South Korean data analytics firm Lawkave in California to make sure it isn't breaking the leading social network's rules. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.		Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd		BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES		Rate for Transfer		CURRENCY		
US Dollar Transfer	304.550	US Dollar	304.190	Europe	BUY SELL	
Euro	339.270	Canadian Dollar	230.813	British Pound	0.373616	0.387518
Sterling Pound	384.800	Sterling Pound	373.865	Czech Korune	0.004993	0.014293
Canadian dollar	231.950	Euro	337.075	Danish Krone	0.041045	0.046045
Turkish lira	53.380	Swiss Frank	301.815	Euro	0.328602	0.342302
Swiss Franc	311.400	Bahrain Dinar	808.955	Georgian Lari	0.132109	0.132109
US Dollar Buying	297.250	UAE Dirhams	83.220	Hungarian 0.001148	0.001338	
ASIAN COUNTRIES		Qatar Riyals	84.460	Norwegian Krone	0.029902	0.035102
Japanese Yen	2.832	Saudi Riyals	82.015	Romanian Leu	0.065272	0.082122
Indian Rupees	4.295	Jordanian Dinar	430.328	Russian ruble	0.004580	0.004580
Pakistani Rupees	1.961	Egyptian Pound	18.398	Slovakia	0.009106	0.019106
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.679	Sri Lankan Rupees	1.683	Swedish Krona	0.027462	0.032463
Nepali Rupees	2.673	Indian Rupees	4.233	Swiss Franc	0.301385	0.312385
Singapore Dollar	223.400	Pakistani Rupees	1.944	Australasia		
Hongkong Dollar	38.878	Bangladesh Taka	3.602	Australian Dollar	0.198314	0.210314
Bangladesh Taka	3.593	Philippines Peso	5.861	New Zealand Dollar	0.184818	0.194318
Philippine Peso	5.856	Cyprus pound	18.097	America		
Thai Bhat	10.013	Japanese Yen	3.850	Canadian Dollar	0.224581	0.233561
Malaysian ringgit	77.890	ARAB COUNTRIES		US Dollars	0.300450	0.305750
		Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.500	US Dollars Mint	0.300950	0.305750
				Asia		
				Bangladesh Taka	0.002933	0.003734
				Chinese Yuan	0.041569	0.045069
				Hong Kong Dollar	0.036855	0.039705
				Indian Rupee	0.003692	0.004464
				Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
				Japanese Yen	0.002746	0.002926
				Korean Won	0.000245	0.000260
				Malaysian Ringgit	0.069394	0.075394
				Nepalese Rupee	0.002649	0.002989
				Pakistan Rupee	0.001341	0.002111
				Philippine Peso	0.005740	0.006040
				Singapore Dollar	0.216223	0.226223
				Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001319	0.001899
				Taiwan	0.009702	0.009882
				Thai Bhat	0.009650	0.010200
				Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013
				Arab		
				Bahraini Dinar	0.801672	0.809732
				Egyptian Pound	0.018646	0.022006
				Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
				Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
				Jordanian Dinar	0.424644	0.433644
				Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
				Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
				Moroccan Dirhams	0.021390	0.045390
				Omani Riyal	0.785908	0.783909
				Qatar Riyal	0.082986	0.083830
				Saudi Riyal	0.080127	0.081427
				Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
				Tunisian Dinar	0.102558	0.110558
				Turkish Lira	0.046495	0.056340
				UAE Dirhams	0.082284	0.083112
				Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

Business

Warba Bank's sukuk receives huge demand from investors

Bank prices sukuk worth \$500m, to be listed on NASDAQ Dubai, Irish Stock Exchange

KUWAIT: Warba Bank announced that it has priced \$500 million senior unsecured sukuk, structured on the Sharia concept of Wakala, from its \$2.0 billion Trust Certificate Issuance Program on 17 September 2019. It is the inaugural tap of the senior sukuk market by a Kuwaiti financial institution and serves as a benchmark for future issuers. The sukuk will be listed on Nasdaq Dubai and the Irish Stock Exchange.

Warba Bank's Chief Executive Officer Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, said that the five year sukuk was priced at 135 basis points above five year US dollar mid-swap resulting in an all-in rate of 2.982 percent. The issue was oversubscribed by a very impressive 6.31 times, garnering orders totaling \$3.154 billion. According to Al-Ghanem the positive response the bank received reflected investor confidence in the performance of the bank and its strategy which includes an aggressive push into the digital banking sector. It was also an endorsement of their confidence in the soundness of the Kuwaiti banking system which is regulated by the Central Bank of Kuwait and the strength and stability of the State of Kuwait.

Al-Ghanem, who led the Bank's delegation to meet investors in Hong Kong, Singapore, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and London recently confirmed that Sukuk attracted a wide range of investors who expressed a high degree of confidence in the bank. "This was reflected in the extremely high level of interest in our sukuk and the very competitive pricing achieved". Al-Ghanem further stressed that domestic and international investors' confidence was driven by the success the bank has realized in recent years, making it a very

- Investors' derived confidence from the bank's successful track record making it a safe and attractive investment proposition.
- Proud of our achievement as it is not only a success for Warba Bank but also for the Islamic financial industry and the sound investment atmosphere in Kuwait.
- The sukuk was priced at 135 basis points above five-year US dollar mid-swap rate.
- The sukuk was oversubscribed by a very impressive 6.31 times, reflecting the Bank's positive performance and achievements.

attractive target for investors.

He continued: "We are proud of this achievement as it is not only a success for Warba Bank but also for the Islamic financial industry, and the sound investment atmosphere prevailing in the State of Kuwait. These factors attracted a wide range of investors who recognized the very favorable investment opportunity offered by Warba Bank's sukuk."

Al-Ghanem also added: "Subscription of Warba Bank Sukuk is a good investment opportunity, based on the bank performance in the last three years, its good growth rate in terms of asset and deposit growth, high operating profit and increasing market share, in addition to digital banking innovations that has resulted in an unprecedented posi-

tive reception from customer. It should also be noted that investment decisions in the sukuk are also premised on the anticipation of more positive results in the future borne by the numerous investments the bank is making".

Al-Ghanem also praised the ratings and awards obtained by the bank from numerous international institutions as well as the positive reports published from time to time about the bank. Warba Bank has garnered a number of local and regional awards such as the "Elite Quality Recognition 2018" award from J.P. Morgan Chase for excellence in banking operations - for the quality of operations in straight through processing for the transfer of funds of 99.0 percent in the classification MT103 and 99.7 percent

in the classification of MT202. The Bank also won two prestigious awards from IFN magazine for "Structured Finance Deal of the Year" for the completion of the first sukuk transaction related to Sharia compliant financing in the aviation sector (Shaheen SPV) and "Cross Border Deal of the Year" for leading a syndicated financing arrangement of Byrne Equipment Rental LLC with the value of USD 91.0 million.

Al-Ghanem pointed out that all indicators illustrate the continued and sustainable growth in demand for Islamic finance and investment instruments following impressive growth rates the last two decades. "All expectations are for a continuation of the same positive growth pace" he said.

In conclusion, Al-Ghanem expressed his appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait's Capital Markets Authority for supporting the establishment of the Bank's Sukuk Program and granting the requisite approvals. He also extended appreciation to the Bank's Board of Directors and Sharia Board for their visionary leadership and guidance which enabled the success of the transaction.



Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem

Amid crippling sanctions, Cuba deploys oxen to overcome fuel crisis

HAVANA: Cuba is deploying oxen to replace tractors, using wood instead of gas at many state bakeries and advising citizens to save electricity by making the most of daylight as it grapples with an acute fuel shortage amid US sanctions.

The government says it is prioritizing what little fuel it has this month to sustain critical services such as hospitals and sectors such as tourism, which generate much-needed hard currency. In other areas, it is seeking alternatives or scaling down. Some cement factories have decreased production, the construction minister told a state broadcaster this week. A large steel factory in Havana has stopped operating altogether, a worker there told Reuters.

Supervisors at two large hotel construction sites in Havana said building brigades from outside the city had been ordered to stay home because of a lack of fuel for transport and for operating machinery at full capacity. The sites were operating with one shift instead of two or three.

Other branches of the dominant state sector also told workers to stay home until further notice because of drastic cuts in public transport. "If they don't need me right now, then I'd far rather not have to fight to catch a ride from a bus stop overflowing with people, especially given this heat," said Rosario, 32, who said her employer had sent her home with her full salary.

She declined to give her full name for

fear of retribution. Some state workplaces, universities and schools have simply cut hours to save electricity and provide some relief to public transport at peak commuting hours.

Cuba's Communist government last week announced that US sanctions on oil shipments to the island meant it had not secured enough for September. Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said on Friday the intensity and scale of the sanctions were "unprecedented," speaking at a news conference on the cost of the more than 50-year-old US embargo ahead of a United Nations General Assembly vote on it.

For 27 years, the UNGA has called for an end to the embargo in the annual vote. President Miguel Diaz-Canel has said the fuel shortage does not spell a return to the depths of the crisis Cuba suffered in the 1990s after the collapse of its former benefactor, the Soviet Union. Sufficient fuel shipments have been secured for next month.

Pavel Vidal, a former Cuban central bank economist who teaches at Colombia's Universidad Javeriana Cali, said a rare advantage of a centrally planned economy like Cuba's is that it enables the government to "orientate what little resources it has to the country's essential priorities" in a crisis.

Ever worsening austerity?

Many Cubans fear the government is bracing for the economic situation to remain dire or worsen.

Diaz-Canel has repeatedly said Cuba could learn from the energy efficiency measures and should seek to keep some in place after the crisis is over. "It's just not clear how things will get better given the uncertain circumstances," said Pablo



HAVANA: People queue to buy fuel at a gas station in Havana. Cuban President Miguel Diaz Canel blamed the United States for Cuba's fuel shortage. —AFP

Ramirez, 57, as he waited in line at a gas station in the hope of a fuel delivery.

Queues at gas stations in Havana snake for blocks, with some Cubans even sleeping in their cars overnight to have a chance of filling up. Ramirez said his family needed their car to buy produce for their restaurant. "It's just very tiring and frustrating," he said.

The government has implemented austerity measures since 2016 because of a decline in cheap oil shipments from ally Venezuela and the Trump administration's tightening of US sanctions. But previous measures have not been as severe. "We have adopted measures like including around 4,000 yoke of oxen in the sugar cane work and production of food," Julio García Pérez, president of state-run sugar monopoly Azcuba, told

state-run media. Agriculture Minister Gustavo Rodriguez Rollero said on Wednesday that irrigation equipment was being turned off at times of peak electricity usage to reduce the burden on the power grid.

Diaz-Canel has said he hopes to avoid the long power outages that characterized the euphemistically named "special period" of the 1990s, but if they are required, they will be announced in advance.

Ordinary Cubans, meanwhile, are handling the shortages as best they can.

"I'm thinking of getting a bike," said schoolteacher Yanet Sanchez, 27, after waiting for three hours to get from central Havana to her western neighborhood by bus, a trip that should take just 20 minutes. —Reuters

US Fed divided on policy amid trade war uncertainty

WASHINGTON: US central bankers appear increasingly divided on the best course to preserve economic expansion, without fueling dangerous speculative behavior on financial markets.

Meanwhile, amid concerns authorities were letting short-term interest rates slip out of control, the New York Federal Reserve Bank announced more aggressive steps to pump billions into the economy's financial plumbing over the next three weeks to alleviate a cash crunch.

Federal Reserve Vice Chair Richard Clarida said Friday "the center of gravity" of the central bank favored the second cut in the benchmark lending rate this year, and the Fed will

act on "a case-by-case basis" at the final two policy meetings of 2019. Still, three of the 10 voting members of the Fed's policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee dissented from Wednesday's decision to cut the benchmark borrowing rate by a quarter-point to a range of 1.75-2.0 percent.

James Bullard, president of the St Louis Federal Reserve Bank, said Friday he wanted to see a bigger rate cut to protect against rising risks of a downturn in the American economy amid trade uncertainty. A half-point cut "would provide insurance against further declines in expected inflation and a slowing economy subject to elevated downside risks."

Where in the world is inflation?

Bullard has long argued that inflation has been stuck too far below the Fed's two percent target, so the US central bank can afford to "cut the policy rate aggressively now" to boost the economy. As the Fed's preferred inflation measure rose last year, the FOMC raised interest rates four times.

But price pressures have been softening since then and inflation remains well below the target. And amid rising uncertainties the central bank in late July cut the policy lending rate for the first time in more than a decade. On the other side of the argument, Eric Rosengren of the Boston Fed and

Esther George of Kansas City, both dissented, preferring to keep the key lending rate unchanged. Rosengren said Friday that adding more stimulus to an economy that is already growing "risks further inflating the prices of risky assets and encouraging households and firms to take on too much leverage." In a speech later Friday, he put the spotlight on a particular area of risk: office sharing companies. Although he did not mention WeWork, that company is a dominant player in commercial real estate in major cities like New York and London. He worried that the contracts used in the office sharing model "may allow the co-working company to potentially walk away from unprofitable lease arrangements in an economic downturn." And that along with high debt levels "can be an amplifier that makes recessions more severe."

Meanwhile, investors and analysts have become concerned about a cash shortage in the economy's financial plumbing. While it can be explained by technical reasons, the crunch has raised doubts as to whether something has gone wrong in the Fed's management. The New York Fed-which handles the levers that control the flow of money in the system-has for the past four days had to pump billions into money markets after bank demand for cash pushed interest rates above the Fed's target. —AFP

A big fiscal splash still a step too far for Europe

LONDON: Prodded by worries about the worst global economic outlook in a decade and electorates still smarting from years of austerity, euro zone governments are starting to loosen their budgetary purse strings.

Don't expect "new deal" investment pro-

grams to transform the region's economy, however, or even the fiscal shot in the arm that European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi says is needed—at least, not until things get much worse.

"There is a shift towards talking about stimulus but there is no dramatic leap forward," said Philippe Legrain, adviser to the European Commission during the aftermath of Europe's 2009 sovereign debt crisis and author of the book "European Spring", a diagnosis of Europe's economic failings.

"There is no sense of urgency so far ... That might happen when the euro zone enters recession."

Economists now see a one-in-four chance of a euro zone recession in the com-

ing year. The possibility of a no-deal Brexit in the coming weeks or months should also be concentrating minds across the 19 countries that use the euro. Advocates of pro-growth policies are pegging their hopes on France's Emmanuel Macron emerging as the region's pre-eminent politician and incoming ECB chief Christian Lagarde doubling down on Draghi's lobbying of debt-averse northern governments.

Europe's response to the crisis of a decade ago-protracted austerity combined with massive central bank stimulus and still-unfinished banking reforms-saved the euro but has left many of its economies numbed. Euro zone growth was just 0.2 percent in the second quarter of 2019.

While the ECB's 2.6 trillion euro stimulus program may have helped kick-start a post-crisis recovery of sorts, deep cuts to public spending are blamed for exacerbating poverty and shredding Europe's welfare safety nets. Stung by the rise of anti-establishment parties across the continent, and with regional powerhouse Germany on the brink of recession, governments are starting to act.

In Angela Merkel's last months as German chancellor, politicians in Berlin are for the first time in years publicly questioning a self-imposed balanced budget rule and exploring ways to spend off-budget.

In its first budget since the "yellow vest" street protests began last year, France will

this week offer 9 billion euros of tax cuts and put on hold some earlier debt-cutting promises. "The priority now is to address the totally justified anger of those who are not making ends meet," Budget Minister Gerald Darmanin told Le Parisien daily.

Even more eye-catching was last week's announcement by the Netherlands, one of the euro zone's fiercest advocates of fiscal probity, of new spending on health and housing. An ambitious national investment fund will be launched there next year. And Italy's new government has signalled it will deliver an expansionary 2020 budget while it drums up support for its campaign to re-focus the EU's budget rules to promote growth. —Reuters

KFH-Turkey enjoys robust financial position, very high liquidity ratios

KUWAIT: Group Chief Executive Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh, emphasized that KFH-Turkey enjoys robust financial position and very strong liquidity ratios as per the regulatory authority's requirements in Turkey and Kuwait, not to mention as per the international standard Basel III.

Al-Nahedh added in a press release that the liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) at KFH-Turkey reached 323 percent according to the CBK regulations as of Q2 2019. This is in comparison with the minimum requirement of 100 percent compared to the average ratio of Turkish banks of 179 percent.

He pointed out that the capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of KFH-Turkey exceeds the authorities' requirements, indicating it reached 20.27 percent in Q2, 2019 compared to the average ratio of Turkish banks of 17.7 percent.

Al-Nahedh explained that KFH-Turkey managed to build high quality assets thanks to the huge financing opportunities in Turkey, the diversified financing portfolio of KFH-Turkey and the size of the bank as the largest Islamic bank in the country. This reflected positively on the stability of the financing portfolio and its balance against the fluctuations of Turkish Lira value. This also helped in building strong buffers against any potential negative implications.

He illustrated that KFH-Turkey is the second lowest bank in terms of non-performing financings for its financing portfolio compared to 18 local banks, praising the high coverage ratios of the NPF valued at 128 percent compared to the average ratios of Turkish banks valued at 68 percent.

Al-Nahedh added that the ratio of financing to deposit in KFH-Turkey reached only 72 percent as of Q2 2019 compared to the average ratio of Turkish banks valued at 117 percent.

He continued: "All financial indicators of KFH-Turkey are far higher than the requirements of the regulatory authorities, indicating despite the drop in the Turkish Lira value, the bank is achieving sustained and solid growth ratios. The growth ratios cover all financial areas including financing portfolio, deposits, total assets as well as the profits."

Al-Nahedh mentioned that KFH-Turkey reported net profits of TL 601 million, an increase of 25 percent for H1, 2019 as per the regulatory and accounting guidelines in Turkey. The assets size increased to reach TL 87 billion as of H1 2019.

He reiterated that KFH aligns its Group banking businesses with prudent policies and scenarios capable of dealing with any potential negative repercussions.



Mazin Al-Nahedh

Business

Qatar Airways reports strong growth in overall revenue for 2018-19, up by 14%

Group financial results demonstrate underlining robust financial health

DOHA: Qatar Airways has published its annual report for 2018-19, highlighting the airline group's success and underlying robust financial health in the face of the continued illegal airspace blockade against the State of Qatar.

Overall revenue and other operating income grew by 14 per cent annually. Passenger revenue grew by 14.3 percent with capacity (Available Seat Kilometers) growth of 13.5 per cent. Cargo revenue witnessed growth of 16.8 per cent with cargo capacity (Available Ton Kilometers) growing 11.8 per cent annually. Executive jet revenue also witnessed substantial growth of 18.4 per cent in comparison to previous year.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar Al-Baker said: "2018-19 was a year of achievement in the face of adversity for Qatar Airways. Despite facing challenges that are unparalleled in the airline industry, I am very proud that we have grown our fleet, expanded our network and seen overall revenue increase to QAR 48 billion (\$13.2 billion), a rise of 14 percent. Passenger numbers are up, capacity as measured by available seat kilometers has risen and our Cargo business is now the largest in the world."

"2018-19 was nonetheless a challenging year and while it is disappointing that Group has registered a net loss of QAR 2.3 billion (\$639 million) - attributable to the loss of mature routes, higher fuel costs and foreign exchange fluctuations - the underlying fundamentals of our business remain extremely robust."

"Our success is due to an unwavering belief in our strategy to give our passengers the very best, backed by the perseverance and hard work of our staff. I look

forward to 2019-2020 with optimism and confidence that our growth will continue and we will serve even more countries around the world."

The airline launched 11 new destinations during the fiscal year 2019 and has now added a total of 31 (as at 1 September 2019) since the start of the illegal blockade, growing its network to over 160 gateways around the world.

The airline's fleet grew by 25 aircraft to a point where it welcomed its 250th aircraft in March 2019. With more than 300 aircraft worth more than \$85 billion on order (including options and Letters of Intent) the group has the capacity to continue its ambitious but sustainable network expansion strategy. During the financial year, the Group further built its investment portfolio by acquiring five percent of the total issued share capital of China Southern Airlines. This shareholding sits alongside its existing holdings in airlines such as Air Italy, Cathay Pacific, IAG, JetSuite and LATAM.

Overall, QR Group invested QAR 16.1 billion (\$4.4 billion) in acquisition of aircraft and other assets as well as acquisition of shares of international airlines during the year.

2018-19 was also a year where the airline won dozens of awards, including the 'Skytrax World's Best Business Class' and 'Best Airline In The Middle East', Trip Advisor's 'World's Best Business Class' and Business Travellers' 'Best Long-Haul Airline', 'Best Business Class', among many others.

Qatar Airways Group's sponsorship with FIFA remained the core of its sponsorship portfolio and 2018 produced the undoubted highlight of the sport-



ing calendar at the FIFA World Cup in Russia. Alongside the addition of multi-year partnerships with Bayern Munchen AG, AS Roma, Boca Juniors and

Brooklyn Nets, sports sponsorships remain a key pillar to augment the airline's commitment to bring people and communities together from across the globe.

Ahli United Bank congratulates winners of Al-Hassad draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced on September 18 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 of winners. Al-Hassad has over 850 prizes over a 12-month period.

The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Fatheyah Faisal Abdulqader.

Twenty other winners won prizes of KD 1,000. They are: Ahmed Abbas Abdulla, Manal Abdulla Al-Hajri, Soodah Naser Azran, Mai Salah Alfalal, Ibrahim Abdulaziz Ibrahim, Samerah Abdulla Abdulredha, Simin Ezar Ali, Fatimah J A Albasharah, Ahmad Mohammad Al-Jouhari, Mohammed Saleh Almuttari, Mohd Ali Al-Amir, Jahan Ali Ahmad, Ishaq Ali Ahmed, Ali Ahmed Almutawa, Mohd A. Ali Ali, Fatima A. Hussain Jassim, Amina Abdulameer Hasan, A. Karim Hasan Abdulla, Nawal Mohamed Al-Sendi, Diana A Karim Ahmed.

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. Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 4 quarterly mega prizes of KD 250,000 that will help the lucky winners achieve their dreams and aspirations in addition the monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000.



KFH, DISC ink partnership to promote employee wellness

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) signed a partnership agreement with the highly regarded Diversified Integrated Sports Clinic (DISC), one of the leading rehabilitation and wellness clinics in Kuwait. This comes as part of the Bank's wellbeing strategy for KFH Staff and in efforts to create a more dynamic, effective and efficient working environment. "Employee health and wellbeing is now a business value of strategic importance and is fast becoming a source of competitive advantage. Here at KFH we believe there is a clear and direct relationship between our employees' wellbeing and our organizational performance", said Frederick Carstens - Group Chief Human Resources Officer at KFH.

Carstens' statement was made on the sidelines of the signing ceremony that took place at KFH's premises in the presence of Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh and Managing Director at Diversified Integrated Sports

Clinic (DISC) Talal Al-Nafisi.

Carstens added: "We are sure that optimal engagement is only possible when the two, wellbeing and health are positively aligned. Adopting and implementing health programs in the workplace is very important for employees and the business as this helps to improve the overall happiness and productivity."

He said: "We are delighted and honored to sign the partnership agreement with DISC and we are looking forward to further corporate wellness", indicating the partnership with DISC confirms that KFH is on track of successfully implementing their wellbeing strategy for KFH Staff. Carstens pointed out that KFH has launched several initiatives that have already started earlier in the year focusing on employee health and wellbeing, and on the view that Better Health Leads to a Better Life, and a healthier organization.

Meanwhile, Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh said that the partnership agreement with DISC, a successful Kuwaiti company, is part of the Bank's social responsibility strategy. It reflects the keenness of the Bank in empowering the youth and supporting their initiatives.

He explained that KFH has a long track record of achievements towards



KUWAIT: (From Right), Talal Al-Nafisi, Frederick Carstens and Yousef Al-Ruwaieh inking the partnership agreement

the national youth and their initiatives, expressing pride in the Kuwaiti entrepreneurs while encouraging Kuwait's entrepreneurial ecosystem. He confirmed KFH support to all initiatives that are of interest to the society.

Managing Director at (DISC) Talal Al-Nafisi expressed his appreciation for the valued partnership with KFH, looking forward to continuing collaborations. He praised KFH efforts in creating a healthy culture among staff and hailed its leading role in supporting the youth and optimally assuming the social responsibility.

He added that DISC do not only focus on injuries and rehabilitation but also on home and office ergonomic assessments. It is worth noting that by inking this partnership agreement, DISC holds regular workshops and preventative sessions for KFH staff to teach them about physical activity guidelines, health advice and injury prevention strategies. DISC organized two lectures entitled "Ergonomic & Posture at Work", in KFH's Shuwaikh Showroom for KFH Staff, and will continue organizing more lectures and physiotherapy sessions as part of the partnership agreement.

VIVA participates in Int'l Banking Conference: 'Shaping the Future'

KUWAIT: VIVA, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers and enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, is participating in the International Banking Conference "Shaping the Future" organized by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) that will be held tomorrow, under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, at the Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait.

VIVA as a subsidiary of STC Group, the world-class digital leader in the MENA region, offering innovative solutions, and a key player in the digital transformation of the region, will participate through a special booth at the Fintech exhibition. VIVA's enterprise team will showcase the latest enterprise solutions for companies

and SMEs, including cyber security, unified solutions, which help them to grow and develop their projects and businesses and facilitate their transactions. In addition, STC Pay, investment arm of STC, will also participate in the exhibition by displaying its consumer digital services that include peer-to-peer transactions, local bank transfers, international transfers, and online payments anytime anywhere, as well as enterprise digital services, such as facilitating their sales and financial transactions, enabling them to manage their operations freely and safely and review their financial records.

On this occasion, VIVA's CEO Eng. Maziad Bin Naser Al-Harbi, said: "As a leader and key player in the telecommunications arena, we are keen to participate in this prominent global conference with our sister company STC Pay, to be an influential partner in the digital transformation process. This will reflect VIVA's leadership position in delivering the best digital solutions to the Kuwaiti market such as FinTech, Cloud Services, Internet of Things (IoT) and Data Analytics. Our strategic plans tie in closely to incorporate and support the vision of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for Kuwait 2035, in positioning Kuwait as a major financial and commercial hub in the region."

The conference will feature senior-level participants from among the global and financial industry stakehold-

ers and thought leaders, including ministers and policy makers, governors of central banks, heads of regulatory and supervisory bodies, international organizations, representatives of international standard-setting bodies, international rating agencies, CEOs, other leading industry stakeholders, and representatives of financial technology companies from around the world.

The conference will address the economic and social challenges facing the banking sector and the opportunities and threats posed by technological innovation, laying out a vision for how the industry can thrive and better support sustainable economic development, changes in the technological landscape and the increasing competition from FinTech companies. The Exhibition that will include 40 exhibitors representing leading financial Institutions, telecommunications and Fintech innovators, regionally and globally.



Maziad Al-Harbi

AUB sponsors Int'l Banking Conference 'Shaping the Future'

KUWAIT: Held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) will stage the inaugural CBK International Banking Conference tomorrow (September 23).

The Conference will attract wide range of senior-level participation from among the global and financial industry stakeholders and thought leaders, including ministers and policy makers, governors of central banks, heads of regulatory and supervisory

bodies, international organizations, representatives of international standard-setting bodies, international rating agencies, CEOs, other leading industry stakeholders, and representatives of financial technology companies from around the world.

In this respect, Tareq Muhmood, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Ahli United Bank said: "We are delighted to participate in this conference which is a strategic initiative by the Central Bank of Kuwait to highlight several critical points for the future of the banking sector in light of the accelerated technological changes and developments that pose many challenges to the banking sector and, at the same time, hold many opportunities that banks can take advantage of in a concrete and realistic way".

Muhmood added: "Ahli United Bank is keen to participate in such events that bring together bankers and technical experts from different countries of the world to discuss all the latest developments in the banking area in the FinTech era,

where AUB has a number of contributions in the field of digital transformation in the banking sector through a full range of solutions for private, retail and corporate banking, covering all business and activities of the bank, including the only application of its kind in Kuwaiti banks for smartphones and computers for corporate banking (AUB B2B) which includes all corporate-related services and products".

The conference is scheduled to be held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Kuwait City, the agenda will tackle the economic and social challenges facing the banking sector and the opportunities and threats posed by technological innovation, laying out a vision for how the industry can thrive and better support sustainable economic development.

In addition to this, a Fintech Exhibition will accompany the Conference that will include 40 Exhibitors from Leading financial Institutions, telecommunications and fintech innovators from the region and internationally.

What's On

Born to lead: Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah

By Shane McGinley

Waiting in one of the reception rooms in The White Palace in Kuwait City, it is hard not to notice a huge painting hung on one of the room's walls. The image is of an Arabic woman sitting at a desk writing by candlelight as she looks over at a man standing proudly holding the reins of an impressive horse. When Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah enters the room I ask him, is there a story behind the epic piece of artwork?

He informs me it is a portrait of his parents. His father was a senior officer in the military and his mother was a well-respected writer who earned a doctorate in Economics from Cambridge University. On the plane over for the interview, I wondered what it must be like to be born a prince, into such immediate wealth, attention and responsibility, with all the heritage, tradition and expectation that comes with it.

We have hotels in five of the GCC countries. We are looking to build two new hotels in Saudi Arabia. When did Sheikh Mubarak first realize he had been born into Kuwait's royal family and his life was going to be quite different? "I have been brought up in this way," he says, looking initially confused by the question. "My father had a long history in Kuwait," he adds before thinking more closely about the question.

"There has always been a burden on one's back," he says, adding that his motto, and that of his father before him, was that 'you serve to lead'. "There is a sense of duty, be it in the family, as an officer or a gentleman," he says. "That is very important, to have it as part of a family and an intricate part of one's life." The Kuwaiti sheikh's early academic career saw him undertake training at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, a popular breeding ground for Arab and European royalty.

Following a stint in the Kuwait Armed Forces, he earned an undergraduate degree in Politics with Economics from the University of Buckingham and a Master's Degree in International Relations from Cambridge University. His time spent in the United Kingdom served him well as it was there that he noticed the proliferation of budget and midscale hotels. When he returned to the Middle East he set out to replicate this trend and is widely acknowledged as one of the first hoteliers to introduce this new hospitality offering to the region more than a decade ago.

During our chat, which is the second time I have met him in a little less than a decade, the sheikh is suffering with a bad flu and sipping on a hot drink - and apologizing repeatedly that he is not really up to being interviewed but will push on anyway - but there are a number of obvious traits about the founder and chairman of Action Hotels Company (AHC), one of the region's most successful and popular home-grown hotel groups. He is always soft spoken and modest in his assessment of his successes, but he is always extremely direct and straight talking, never one to sugar-coat the truth or shy away from giving an honest assessment of the market or economic conditions. And our latest cover interview with him is no different.

Soft year

"2018 was generally a soft year for the hotel industry," he says when I ask him for an assessment of how the past year has gone. "We have hotels in five of the GCC countries. We are looking to build two new hotels in Saudi Arabia," he adds. "We are stable now, we are not developing very much... We're trying to enhance the operations," he says, before taking aim at his first target for assessment: the hotel operators. "The problem that we have today is with operators... They're becoming too big." He cites Marriott's acquisition of Starwood for \$13.6bn in 2016 as an example, with the merger creating the world's largest hotel company with over 5,700 properties and 1.1 million rooms, representing 30 leading brands from the moderate-tier to luxury in over 110 countries.

Sheikh Mubarak believes such epic deals are bad for



Sheikh Mubarak wins the Businessman of the Year honors at the Arabian Business Awards in Kuwait.



CEO Christophe Landais

hotel developers. I think Kuwait is still a conservative society. We are liberal in ways but we respect our traditions "Basically, if you're an owner today, you're worried because they have so many rooms to fill, are they [the operators] going to service you as an owner properly? They become like 'the Walmart of brands'. They don't want to manage anymore, they want to franchise or they want to focus on the big ticket five-star luxury brands where they make the most fees," he says.

"They're becoming only operators of brands and making fees... that is worrying for an owner. Do they have enough personnel to manage this? That's our problem... Do they have enough general managers to run the hotels? Today operators need to focus on people, not on brands. They are buying brands and not following the people and this is the biggest problem we have," he believes. According to its website, Action Hotels has 13 hotels across the Middle East and Australia and two in the pipeline. Its current operator partners are Accor Hotels, InterContinental Hotels Group and Louvre Hotels Group.

Dropping operators

With the proliferation of more and more brands, the sheikh says he has never shied away from renegotiating contracts with operators if they are not delivering, or even switching to another one if the revenues are not up to scratch. "We have done that, yes of course," he says, almost surprised by the question. "I cannot discuss the details. We have done that in the past, yes. If you don't perform, subject to the contract between us, yes you can change them." So how much leeway do hotel owners have to scrap an operator if they are not happy with them?

"It depends on the contractual agreement between the two parties," he says. "But usually if they underperform contractually, we will remove them. You have a right to remove them and this happens." While Sheikh Mubarak is considered one of the main pioneers in the midmarket hotel sector in the region, he does acknowledge that what is considered midmarket in the Gulf is often not the same as that internationally. "We enhance a lot of these brands. The Courtyard Marriott brand in the US is not like the Courtyard Marriott brand in Kuwait, for example. The ibis Red is not like the ibis Red in Europe, it is much higher [standard] here than it is in Europe."

For example, he points out that mid-market hotels overseas often don't have minibars, but in this climate having fridges in rooms is a necessity, especially if people take medication that needs to be chilled. Although, he smiles and then laughs that "fridges don't make money". One area his mid-market hotels don't bend the rules on is room service, which he says would be a costly step too far. "We don't have room service, because, if you think about it, if everyone is to have room service in their room you need 10 people to cater to that."

Online oligopoly

The surge in the development of technology and online digitalization has also changed the environment, and not necessarily for the betterment. I am very keen to expand into Europe, especially the UK and Germany - the two main markets for midscale hotels. "People like Booking.com take like 20 percent," he says. "Owners are losing out and operators are losing out. This is why a lot of them are building loyalty programs," he argues, but acknowledges that you can't ignore the big online booking agents as there is little alternative in the current economic climate.

"No, you have to [use them]. You have no choice. They have an oligopoly for sure," he adds. So, going forward, the sheikh is not afraid to admit that the group had to make some changes in the last year and his priorities have changed. "Our goal was to build a certain number of rooms. This plan changed because of the economic situation in the region and also the geopolitical concerns. We've had some headwinds, of course, which affected our business."

"Now we are restructuring the business to focus on



operations and moving towards franchise, as opposed to management contracts. We are trying to enhance and see how we can add value to delivering better results in the short-term. In the mid-term we would be looking to selectively develop in the region, not drastically as we have shelved a few projects," he adds.

Two major events have occurred to change the business. Firstly, the hospitality company listed on the London Stock Exchange's (LSE) Alternative Investment Market in 2013, but late last year the parent company, Action Group, decided to delist and it is now 100 percent private again. The hotelier also has a new senior executive, with Christophe Landais unveiled as CEO in June this year. Landais is a former managing director and chief operating officer of Accor in the Middle East, brings more than 30 years' experience in executive hospitality management. He will direct the group's strategy to bring the company's portfolio to a total of 2,256 rooms in the not to distant future.

The sheikh describes Landais as "a perfect fit" for the role. "Christophe has spent many years in the hospitality sector holding executive positions, including at Accor in the region. This gives him a deep understanding of AHC's philosophy, anchored in satisfying the underserved growing demand for economy and midscale hotels," he says.

Regional outlook

But the hospitality outlook for the region is mixed, the chairman admits. Kuwait and Bahrain, he says, have seen a bit of a drop as the emergence of Saudi Arabia and the development of the kingdom's domestic tourism market has seen a fall in the number of Saudis going abroad. However, large-scale development plans, such as airport infrastructure upgrades in both countries, will should spur a resurgence in tourists to both markets, he says. But there is one market he is concerned about. "The UAE, I am a bit worried, even with the Expo coming, they have a big supply problem. Occupancy is generally high but rates and RevPAR [revenue per available room] has dropped considerably," he says.

Sheikh Mubarak has every justification to be worried. The latest data from research company ValuStrat found that the number of hotel rooms in Dubai is set to increase from 93,734 in May this year to close to 130,000 by the end of the year if all projections and launches announced are delivered, an increase of nearly 40 percent. At the same time, the number of international guests has remained stable at just over 7 million, average occupancy rates have dropped 5 percent to 77 percent and RevPAR has dropped 15.6 percent year-on-year.

Despite that, the ValuStrat report says the opening of the 17,000-seater Coca Cola Arena is likely to spur more local and regional events, which will have a positive impact. The sheikh is confident that Expo 2020 Dubai will have a positive impact and not just with the projected 11 million overseas visitors but the teams coming to manage preparations for the event. "I think Expo 2020 is a good thing as you will have one year of clientele coming around versus something where you only have one or two weeks. Before you will have people coming for preparations, each pavilion will have hundreds of people doing it," he says.

Entertainment City

Looking at his home market, when I interviewed the sheikh nearly a decade ago he was of the opinion that the Kuwait government needed to do more to promote the country and develop attractions to bring in international visitors. "We are a very liberal country and no different from any other GCC state, but we are not promoted. The lack of infrastructure... is not there to attract tourists to be a hub," he said at the time.

Looking at the market now, he is pleased that this is starting to take place, citing two major recent advances. The first is the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Cultural Centre, which opened two years ago and has hosted an array of international musical guests, including the British Philharmonic Orchestra. This summer the government also announced plans for Entertainment City, which will include a variety of attractions for local and regional visitors.

But the sheikh admits that Kuwait is not trying to compete with Dubai or Saudi Arabia on the international entertainment scene and is keen to offer something a bit different. "I think Kuwait is still a conservative society. We are liberal in ways but we respect our traditions. It gives us a distinct combination. Not everyone wants to go to Dubai. [Kuwait] is a micro economy in some ways, it is not on a global scale," he says.

Aussie rules

Looking to the future, while the Gulf market is challenging, opportunities in Australia, which the company entered a few years ago, is doing well. There had been rumors that the company would follow its listing in London with a listing on the Australian Stock Exchange. While the sheikh says this is unlikely, he does admit that there will be some news coming soon about his operations in the southern hemisphere.

"We are looking at something in Australia, not listing, but we are looking at doing something. We are looking at partners to create some sort of a vehicle. Maybe combining our assets with other assets into some kind of a vehicle. We are open to discussions," he says. So will an announcement be coming this year? "I can't say anything yet," he says, becoming uncharacteristically coy.

But international markets are certainly on his radar, especially Europe. "The UK is an interesting market... I would like to look at that market more but we don't have any good local knowledge there, I would like to enter the midscale market in Europe now in a big way," he says. "Germany is a stable economy. The culture of midscale is very big there, the Germans like value for money. I am very keen to expand into Europe, especially the UK and Germany - the two main markets for midscale hotels." As we wrap up the interview, I let the sheikh retire with his hot drink but I am sure we will be hearing a lot more from him in the coming months, especially when it comes to his international aspirations. — Arabian Business



Health & Science

French drugmaker, watchdog on trial for diabetes pill deaths

PARIS: France's medicines watchdog will join a pharma firm in the dock tomorrow on fraud and negligence charges linked to the deaths of multiple people prescribed a diabetes pill for weight loss despite safety concerns. At least 500 people are thought to have died of heart valve problems in France after taking the drug, Mediator, in a major health scandal that became the subject of a 2016 French movie called "150 Milligrams".

Legal experts have concluded the drug may cause as many as 2,100 deaths in the long term. The criminal trial, with 12 individuals in the dock, will focus on 91 victims, four of them deceased, for whom lawyers believe a link can be shown between their illness and Mediator.

The medicine was on the market for 33 years, and used by about five million people. Though initially intended for overweight people with diabetes, it was widely prescribed to healthy individuals as an appetite suppressant. Safety alerts were first flagged in the mid-1990s, but the drug was only banned in France in 2009 — long after being outlawed in the United States, Spain and Italy.

Victims "want to understand how this medicine could have been left on the market for so long," said Charles Joseph-Oudin, who will represent about 250 complainants in the trial expected to run for six months in the Paris criminal court. Drug manufacturer Servier and nine subsidiaries are charged with fraud for

allegedly concealing Mediator's risks, while the ANSM drug watchdog is being pursued for negligence and allegedly dragging its feet in suspending the drug.

'Selling poison'

At the end of the trial, both risk a fine or an order to compensate victims. "Servier knew that it was selling poison," said 71-year-old Joy Ercole, who took Mediator for six months ten years ago, and said she suffered heart damage as a result. "The unlucky ones, like me, are condemned to a slow death. My life is ruined." Francois de Castro, a lawyer for Servier, said the company was "keen to come and explain that they did not identify the risk before 2009." Pulmonologist Irene Frachon had alerted French health authorities of heart problems among patients who had taken the drug. She published a book in 2010, which became the basis for a documentary movie.

In 2015, a civil court found Servier negligent for having left "defective" medicine on the market.

It ruled that in 2003 and 2006, when the medicine was prescribed to two claimants, "the state of scientific knowledge meant the risks of pulmonary hypertension" and heart valve damage "could not be ignored". The ANSM, then known as Afssaps, in 2010 linked at least 500 deaths to Mediator.

Victims have submitted nearly 10,500

claims for compensation from Servier, and many have accepted payment in return for not taking part in criminal proceedings.

'Unpunished'

Servier's website states it has made offers of compensation to more than 3,700 sickened people for a total amount of 164.4 million euros (\$182 million), of which 131.8 million euros have been paid out.

The amounts range from a few thousand euros per person to a million euros in one case. About 100 witnesses are expected to take the stand, including Frachon, who told AFP ahead of the trial it was time for justice to be served. "We cannot live in a society where white collar crime goes unpunished," she said. The trial will happen in the absence of a key protagonist: company founder Jacques Servier who died aged 92 in 2014.

The 12 individuals on trial include Servier's former number two Jean-Philippe Seta, doctors who were members of Afssaps commissions but were also paid as consultants for pharma companies, and former senator Marie-Therese Hermange who is accused of producing a report that was favorable to Servier.

France has seen its share of medical scandals. These include 36 baby deaths in the 1970s linked to a contaminated talcum powder, HIV-contaminated blood given to



Pulmonologist Irene Frachon first alerted French health authorities of heart problems among patients who had taken the drug. — AFP

haemophiliacs in the 1980s, and the recent discovery that a popular brand of breast implants contained a cheap, industrial-grade-not medical-grade-silicone gel. — AFP

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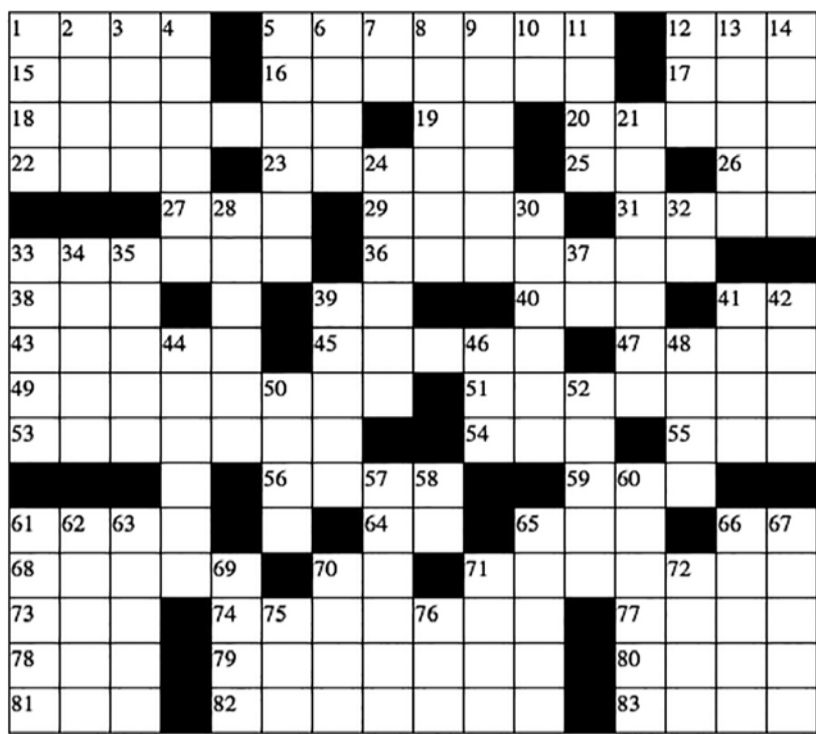
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ACROSS

- Having the slant of a bevel.
- An amino acid that does not occur in proteins but is found in the muscle tissue of vertebrates both in the free form and as phosphocreatine.
- (Roman mythology) Goddess of abundance and fertility.
- A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.
- Severely simple.
- The syllable naming the sixth (submedian) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
- Look down on with disdain.
- A state in east central United States.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
- (Norse mythology) The chief race of gods living at Asgard.
- The ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a circle.
- The fifth day of the week.
- Black tropical American cuckoo.
- A city in northwestern Syria.
- Very dark black.
- Unwind or untwist.
- Tropical American feather palm having a swollen spiny trunk and edible nuts.
- Complete for something.
- A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- An act that exploits or victimizes someone.
- An unbroken or imperfectly broken mus-tang.
- Wearing or provided with clothing.
- The mints.
- A town in northern Egypt.
- A habitual liar (after a New Testament character who was struck dead for lying).
- An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
- (informal) Roused to anger.
- A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- An established custom.
- Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
- Web-footed diving seabirds of northern seas.
- A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
- United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
- Cast again.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- Used of a single unit or thing.
- A benign epithelial tumor of glandular origin.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.

DOWN

- A South American shrub whose leaves are chewed by natives of the Andes.
- On, to, or at the top.
- The Fate who spins the thread of life.
- Type genus of the Tetraonidae.
- A medieval hood of mail suspended from a basinet to protect the head and neck.
- Any character from an ancient Germanic alphabet used in Scandinavia from the 3rd century to the Middle Ages.
- A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.
- King of the Huns.
- Small often spiny insectivorous mammal of Madagascar.
- A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
- A less than average tide occurring at the first and third quarters of the moon.
- Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- (British) An abbreviation of pantomime.
- United States artist whose work reflected social and political themes (1898-1969).
- A disease of plants characterized by the gradual dying of the young shoots starting at the tips and progressing to the larger branches.
- A river in western Europe that rises in northern France and flows generally east into Belgium where it joins the Neuse at Namur.
- Large Indian antelope.
- The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- The seventh month of the civil year.
- Tropical American trees with palmately compound leaves and showy bell-shaped flowers.
- A hard brittle gray polyvalent metallic element that resembles iron but is not magnetic.
- Lower in esteem.
- God of death.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Grandson of Amaterasu and first ruler of Japan.
- A committee in the executive branch of government that advises the president on foreign and military and national security.
- A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
- A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
- A village of huts for native Africans in southern Africa.
- Something done (usually as opposed to something said).
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
- A switch made from the stems of the rat-tan palms.
- A poplar that is widely cultivated in the United States.
- English monk and scholar (672-735).
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Fleshy spore-bearing inner mass of e.g. a puffball or stinkhorn.
- A village in eastern Ireland (northwest of Dublin).
- The highest level or degree attainable.
- Not agitated.
- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- Having leadership guidance.
- Two items of the same kind.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Expect support and goodwill from those around you today; this is a time of cooperation and getting things accomplished on a large scale. Planting of trees, bushes and perhaps a few winter vegetables can all be done in a small amount of time, particularly when several people work together. Perhaps the plants have been decided upon but each contributor might like his or her own little piece of garden to care for this winter, therefore promoting the whole picture. Projects are more interesting and satisfying when each person has an interest in the outcome: yum.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Consider the needs of others as you work on your financial plans. Losing sight of the practical and mundane can make you very artistic, but may not be so good for the bankbook. There is a need for caution and practicality on the material and financial level. Use your influence when it comes to teaching others what you have learned—especially the young people in your life. If you need any professional advice, today and tomorrow will be the best days to seek your answers. You will find the remainder of this month to be rather social. There are opportunities to attend reunions, homecomings, socials and gatherings of all sorts, particularly this week.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This morning will bring with it good luck and positive opportunities. If you are not learning about better nutrition, today and tomorrow are good times to begin. Normally, you are a very eager person—you may be encouraged to push beyond your strengths or be inclined to tax yourself this day. You could be a bit pushy about your own belief system or style of doing things—careful. If you do not get your message across the first time, make it a point to take a step back, in order to see issues from a different perspective. There is a lot of energy and drive available to accomplish whatever you want to accomplish today. Expect a sense of support from those around you. Talking with a friend this evening may give you a new investment idea.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your mind is quite clear and natural. Ideas are flowing and come with ease. You can talk, talk and talk. Decisions and new beginnings are possible at this time; for the next three days try to avoid rash decisions. Running to and fro with no set plan or ideas can cause problems, physically and mentally. Any group activity will have much success. Perhaps a garage sale, auction or bazaar is in the works and can be planned now. You can grab attention or profit at this time. This is a day you should find everything running in a smooth manner. Working with—rather than against—the flow should be easy to do.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Circumstances may block you or bring you to a standstill. Fortunately, this is what makes today lucky—because you stay in one place longer than usual, amazingly, the good luck comes to you. You have a sense of serenity and inner harmony. You attract others to you because of your good attitude. Spiritual concerns achieve an added importance now. You could be tempted to overindulge in food and drink later today when friends include you in some sort of commemoration. You enjoy the work you do to help build family relations; however, now it is time to create a little area for yourself so that you can create and enjoy your own private space. Some form of music, laughter and exercise is in order this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Obtaining and exchanging information takes on more emotional significance now. Being more involved with neighbors or siblings satisfies a deep emotional need. Communicating feelings becomes important. You may be able to enjoy and value your own life situation or feel especially kind toward a friend or loved one. Someone may compliment you on your tastes or belongings. You are in a great mood of self-enjoyment and can appreciate your own better qualities. You may see value in or feel love for an older person or someone in authority. Getting away from the old routine may help you with a love relationship now.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Put a closure on any old business or personal concerns today. Events may make it easy for you to just enjoy the day. Independence, originality and eccentricity are in the forefront now. Your home environment, friends and surroundings in general receive attention and encouragement. Your work or career is in real harmony with the rest of your life. Shopping and collecting things of beauty and value play a big role in your life. Provided you do not spend it all on the fancy things that catch your eye, this can be a financially favorable period. Visiting with friends takes priority today and you may find yourself arranging for a get-together this evening that may include a barbecue. Laughter and a lighthearted frame of mind keep your spirits positive.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Encourage your mate—it will benefit you! A natural transformation of your values and the way you appreciate and love is taking place. You may cease to waste time and money acquiring that which is worthless and may develop an eye for that which is lasting and worthwhile. Emotional beginnings, a fresh start, perhaps the establishment of new habit patterns—make sure they are good ones—because they will set the tone for you for quite some time to come! Your friends and family will support what you do; you may have to make a gentle effort to stand alone. Perhaps a new you is budding. Whatever you decide to do will have the support that you need.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Easy does it; there could be a tendency to act suddenly, without thought or consideration. Give yourself time to think through the options as they occur today. Perhaps you can work in the yard or enjoy a bicycle trip with a friend. Many of your professional and personal dreams are near the realm of possibility and you are happy with your accomplishments. A kind of midas touch is signaled by the new cycle now dawning in your life. Prosperity and security take center stage in your thoughts; a gentle but committed conservatism brings you all kinds of good things.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your loved ones may have plans for the day that do not include you. You may remember that you wanted to go in a different direction anyway—so the feeling of being left out does not last long. Your own plans keep you busy and the day moves rather quickly. Emotional beginnings, a fresh start, perhaps the establishment of new habit patterns will set the tone for you for quite some time to come! Your creative abilities are primed and ready for whatever project you have in mind. Whatever you decide to do will have your own personal signature. Someone is impressed with the progress you have made in such a short amount of time—celebrations are in order.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Take advantage of this weekend by planning fun things to do. If others are busy, take this opportunity to play! Busy yourself with one of the many hobbies you have. Do not push issues. This is certainly an unusual time—you may be ready to move forward with tough decisions. You know how, what and where you want to navigate. You will notice that the energies around you work with you, instead of against you, for a change. There are positive new beginnings in connection with family and friends.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Faith, optimism and a yearning to explore all kinds of new horizons are some of the focal points in your life at this time. Take a little trip today. Enjoy getting away from your regular routine. Travel and education are ways to expand your life experiences and open new doors of opportunity. Religious, philosophical and cultural matters are likely to have a special appeal now; transmitting ideas on a broader scale brings gain. Support and recognition from family and friends are available. You feel at home in the world and it takes care of you. You could have deep insight into your own feelings and inner spiritual nature. There is some open time this evening to express your thoughts in some most creative ways, through poetry or music.

Wordsearch Puzzle

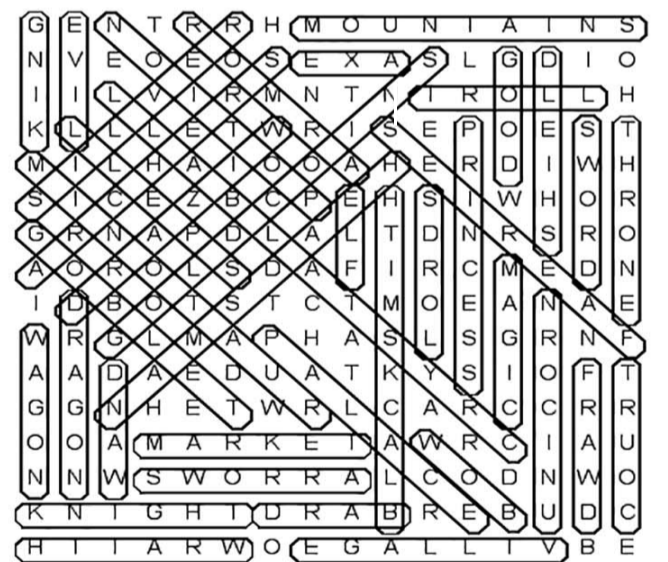
Farm

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a common farm animal.



- | | | | |
|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| BALER | FARMER | HOUSE | SOWING SEED |
| BARN | FENCE | LIVESTOCK | STABLES |
| BUTTER | FERTILIZER | MILK | TRACTOR |
| CAT | GOATS | PASTURE | TROUGH |
| CHEESE | GRAIN | PIG | TURKEYS |
| CORN | HARROW | PLOW | WEATHERVANE |
| COW | HARVEST | PRODUCE | WEEDS |
| CREAM | HAY | ROOSTER | WELL |
| DAIRY | HEN | SEEDS | WHEAT |
| DOG | HORSE | SOIL | |

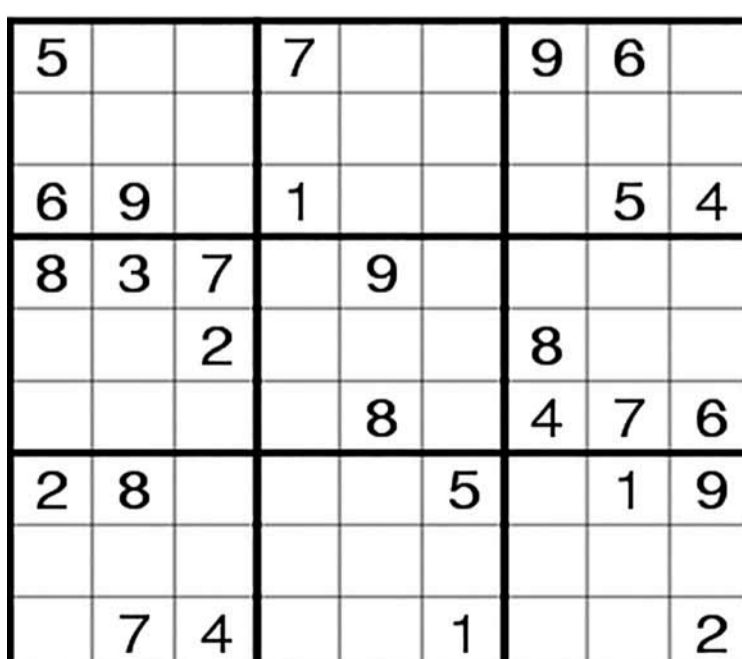
Fantasy World 2



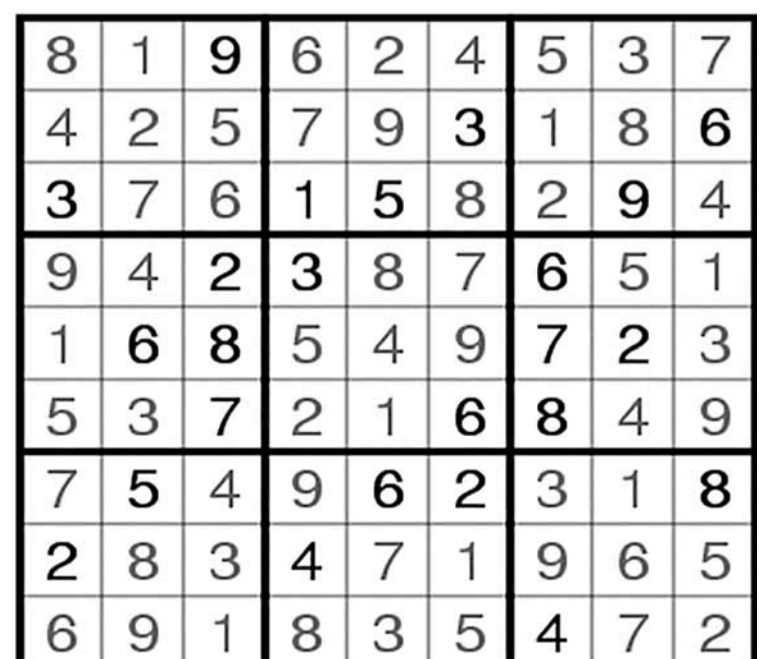
- | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-----------|---------|
| ARCHERS | DWARF | LORDS | SPELL |
| ARMOR | ELF | MAGIC | SWORD |
| ARROWS | EVIL | MARKET | THRONE |
| AXE | FAERIES | MINOTAUR | TROLL |
| BARD | GOBLET | MOUNTAINS | UNICORN |
| BLACKSMITH | GOLD COINS | PALACE | VILLAGE |
| BOW | GOOD | POTION | WAGON |
| COURT | HEADSMAN | PRINCESS | WAND |
| CRYSTAL BALL | KING | SHIELD | WIZARD |
| DRAGON | KNIGHT | SILVER | WRAITH |

The hidden message is: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

Daily Sudoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2019



Models present creations for Marras' Women's Spring Summer 2020 collection in Milan. — AFP

Indian watchdog clamps down on flight crew TikTok videos

India's aviation regulator has told airlines to crack down on the behavior of flight crew after several videos on popular Chinese video app TikTok showed crew members singing and dancing while on duty, a senior official told Reuters. The warning from the watchdog comes after it found growing examples of social media posts, especially on TikTok, featuring flight attendants grooving to popular tunes or lip-syncing movie dialogues while inside an aircraft.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has directed all airlines to rein in such behavior and will soon seek a compliance report, said a senior official at the department. "We have issued instructions and told them these are unbecoming," a DGCA official said, adding a letter had also been sent to airlines about "theatrical performances" by crew members that could put passenger safety at risk.

A TikTok video showing a SpiceJet cabin crew member smiling and walking down the aisle of an airplane full of passengers was reported by local Indian media this week, drawing criticism from people on social media. SpiceJet Ltd said in a statement on Friday that its crew members were strictly prohibited from shooting pictures or videos onboard and it took strict action against violators. AirAsia India said it ensured its staff adhered to strict internal guidelines for social media usage.

IndiGo said it had received the communication from the regulator and would take appropriate action where required. Vistara said expectations on employees' use of social

media were clearly laid out in its social media guidelines and in the training provided. Owned by China's ByteDance, TikTok is one of the world's most popular apps. It has become a sensation in India, where it has been downloaded more than 350 million times, according to analytics firm Sensor Tower.

The app allows users to post short videos with special effects. Hashtags such as #crewlife, #flightattendant are often used for videos involving airline crew and have around 170 million views on the platform. This week, Reuters found dozens of videos that showed crew from airlines such as IndiGo, AirAsia India and Vistara, part-owned by Singapore Airlines, singing, dancing or ramp walking along an aircraft's aisle.

TikTok did not respond to a request for comment. One TikTok video from a user, who identified herself as "#Dancer #cabincrew #indigo", showed her and another flight attendant wearing uniform and dancing to a Bollywood song inside a plane and blowing a kiss to the camera. In another video, a TikTok user wearing a shirt with a Vistara logo and a fluorescent safety jacket on top is seen dancing to a popular DJ Snake song on an airport apron, with a plane seen in the background.

Earlier this week, Vistara's chief commercial officer Sanjiv Kapoor told staff in an internal email that posting photos inside or outside aircraft that don't meet the company's guidelines was not permitted, and only smart and classy photos that showed the airline in a positive light were allowed. "But goofy/immature/tacky/cheap 'tiktok type' photos and videos are strictly prohibited," Kapoor wrote in his e-mail, seen by Reuters, while also referring to the regulator's recent notice.—Reuters

DIRECTOR'S CUT: THE AFGHAN WOMAN MAKING WAVES AT ALL-MALE FILM BOARD

In the dilapidated offices of Afghanistan's state-run film board, where old movie reels are stacked in rusting canisters, Sahraa Karimi heads the all-male team she hopes will help drag the nation's cinema from the lingering shadow of Taleban rule. "It is a very difficult position to be in, because I came to an office that had almost nothing, destroyed, so I need to build it again," said Karimi, a 36-year-old movie director whose female-led picture "Hava, Maryam, Aysha" premiered this month at the Venice Film Festival.

During its 1970s heyday, Afghanistan's film industry was vibrant: a slew of movies—including the hit "Mardha Ra Qawl Ast" (Men keep their promises) — dealt with themes of love, romance and power relations. But all that ended after the Soviet invasion of 1979, as filmmakers were pushed into propaganda, and the arrival of the Taleban—who banned film and music under their savage rule of 1996-2001. The Islamist hardliners systematically destroyed movie reels and music tapes, smashed television sets, and anyone caught watching films faced harsh punishments including flogging.

After the Taleban's ouster, the formerly prestigious Afghan Film board was resurrected but it has long languished, largely neglected, with a string of directors and leaders accused of incompetency. At its Kabul offices, vital documents have been tossed in the trash and its all male staff—some of whom once hid precious movie reels from the Taleban—now appear to

lack motivation. "It is very challenging, but I am a person who welcomes challenges," Karimi said of the role she began in May at Afghan Film, becoming the first woman at the helm of the national film agency. Since then, she has pushed projects aiming to bring Afghanistan's once-dynamic film industry back to life.

First film festival

Among them was a 10-day film festival where about 100 feature and documentary movies

must also take the lead in cinema's revival in Afghanistan. "I told them that you don't need to stay in your office from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, you should go outside, you should sit under trees, you should talk to each other about everything and generate ideas," she said.

The director, who opened a cafe in the building's courtyard so they would have a place to brainstorm, leads by example. Her film at Venice—which has been endorsed by Angelina Jolie—chronicles the lives of three Afghan women

"It is very challenging"

were screened at four venues across Kabul, including at Afghan Film. The films exposed hundreds of Afghans to some of their country's cinema classics, with many seeing films for the first time. "The film festival is a great idea, because for a long time, cinemas were closed and no good movies were made," said 21-year-old festival-goer Atefa Essari. "We didn't know our filmmakers because most of them were abroad. It is a great idea to see Afghan movies inside Afghanistan again."

Afghan Film has also recently digitized hundreds of hours of footage that includes movies and documentaries of Afghanistan before it was ravaged by violence. Karimi, who has a doctorate in film, told AFP that the film board's staff

from various social backgrounds and the tough choices they face. But many Afghans are still afraid the newfound freedoms people in cities like Kabul often enjoy could be taken away.

Taleban and US negotiators were until recently on the brink of a deal that would have seen the US military cut its troop presence in return for various Taleban commitments. Despite a breakdown in talks, many Afghans are convinced the Taleban will come roaring back into power. "They will come ... but we are not going to give up and we will fight," Karimi said.—AFP



In this photo movie director Sahraa Karimi, right, takes part in an interview with AFP during the Afghan Film Festival in Kabul.





In this file photo, from left, Dominique Jackson, Janet Mock, Billy Porter, Steven Canales, MJ Rodriguez, Our Lady J and Indya Moore arrive for Paley Center for Media's 2019 PaleyFest LA panel and screening of 'Pose' at the Dolby Theater in Hollywood. — AFP photos



In this file photo Laverne Cox arrives for the opening ceremony of WorldPride 2019 at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York.



In this file photo US actor Nico Tortorella attends the first Comedy Central, Paramount Network and TV Land Press Day, in Los Angeles, California.

LGBTQ CHARACTERS AND SHOWS IN FOCUS AT EMMYS

The Emmy Awards today will shine the spotlight on LGBTQ talent, with several queer artists and shows featuring gay, lesbian and transgender characters among the nominees, highlighting Hollywood's efforts to close the diversity gap. The strong representation at this year's Emmys reflects the LGBTQ community's growing power in Hollywood—and the huge strides the industry has made in bringing those issues to the small screen.

It also represents the growing ability of streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu and Amazon to produce shows that reflect seismic changes in American society. "The number of LGBTQ nominees at this year's Emmy Awards is a sign that things are starting to change in Hollywood," said Sarah Kate Ellis, president and CEO of GLAAD, an advocacy group that monitors diversity in the media, including on television.

Groundbreaking FX series "Pose," which explores New York's underground ballroom culture in the 1980s, featured the largest cast of transgender actors in regular series roles when it premiered last year. It's up for best drama series honors, and star Billy Porter is the first openly gay black man nominated for best lead actor in a drama. Transgender actress Laverne Cox earned her third nomination this year for her recurring role on breakout Netflix series "Orange Is the New Black."

“ Things are starting to change in Hollywood ”

Also vying for Emmys glory is gay actor Ben Whishaw ("A Very English Scandal") and lesbian actress Fiona Shaw, a double nominee for her work on "Killing Eve" and "Fleabag." In a ceremony ahead of Sunday's main gala, Australian comic Hannah Gadsby won an Emmy for best writing on a variety special for her runaway hit "Nanette." Several other artists from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community, including television host Ellen DeGeneres—one of Hollywood's first openly gay celebrities—also secured nods.

"With nominations for series like 'Pose' and 'Special,' and for performances from Hannah Gadsby, Laverne Cox, Billy Porter, and many more, we are seeing the diversity of LGBTQ people not only represented in mainstream media, but also celebrated," Ellis told AFP. "These shows and performances are certainly connecting with audiences everywhere, and that is something that can no longer be ignored within the entertainment industry."

Increased representation

According to GLAAD's 2018 annual report, the number of LGBTQ characters on television hit a record high last year, with 8.8 percent of the 857 characters appearing on primetime television shows identified as on the gay, trans or queer spectrum. Television got its first trans superhero in 2018 in the form of actress Nicole Maines, who featured as Dreamer on the CW series "Supergirl." But despite the remarkable advances made for better representation on television, LGBTQ advocates say there is still room for improvement.

A new study published this week by the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) said that in order for Hollywood to be a more inclusive and diverse industry, companies need to adopt new strategies focused on hiring, sponsoring and promoting minorities and women. "Despite

audience yearnings for change, the history of diversity efforts in Hollywood suggests that the industry's diversity problem will not simply correct itself," said the report drafted by the authors of UCLA's annual Hollywood Diversity Report.

"The path forward must be paved with intentions - by industry decision-makers who actively embrace the means necessary for achieving the end of a more inclusive creative space." Nico Tortorella, who stars on the TV Land series "Younger" and identifies as non-binary, said while LGBTQ issues have become more common themes on TV shows, that did not necessarily reflect an overall change in society.

"There's a big difference between society as a whole and what's going on in social media," Tortorella told Variety magazine, which recently published a special issue on the state of LGBT inclusion in Hollywood. "It's a confusing time, that's for sure," said Tortorella, who will soon star in a new "Walking Dead" spin-off. "In terms of representation in Hollywood, yes, it's getting better. But a lot of characters we write for queer people are still determined by the violence they experience."—AFP

This photo taken on July 24, 2019 in Paris shows the logo of the US social networking application Tinder on the screen of a tablet. — AFP



Tinder users get 'apocalyptic' reality show on date experience

If dating were not scary enough already, users of the Tinder app will now be able to simulate the experience with an interactive reality show where they choose partners for a character just before the end of the world. Tinder's "Swipe Night" is set to debut in the US on October 6, the dating app said, describing it as an "apocalyptic adventure" that will let members play leading roles and make quick moral choices as a group of friends face the end of the world.

The app dating service, known for its "swipe" feature on the profiles of prospective partners, said it hopes the interactive show will help users who face their own thorny decisions on finding a mate in an uncertain world. "Let's face it, if we knew the world was ending, we wouldn't want to go it alone," Tinder said in a blog post Friday announcing the new feature. "We can't think of a better way to break the ice than over emojis and the apocalypse."

"Swipe Night" is described as "a first-person, apocalyptic adventure where at key turning points" Tinder members decide what happens next. The show follows a group of friends played by actors Angela Wong Carbone, Jordan Christian Hearn and Shea Gabor and asks users to guide them through "moral dilemmas and practical choices." A new episode of "Swipe Night" will air each Sunday in October, streaming live inside the app.

"Seven years ago, Tinder revolutionized the way we meet with the invention of its swipe feature," said chief executive Elie Seidman. "Now, with Swipe Night, we're proud to be pushing the envelope again." Tinder users interacting with the production will make moral and practical decisions regarding characters, influencing the storyline and feeding choices into dating profiles at the service, the company said.

The new feature is the first venture into original media for Tinder, which has gained a reputation for casual "hook-ups" rather than lasting relationships. The interactive feature has also been used by Netflix which recently released a Black Mirror episode called "Bandersnatch" that lets viewers make choices that influence the story.—AFP

S Korea's Oscar-tipped 'Parasite' sets French box office record

The South Korean satire "Parasite" has become the most successful Cannes-winning film at the French box office in 15 years, new figures show. Director Bong Joon-ho became the first Korean to lift the Palme d'Or in May for his brilliant class war black comedy, and is an early favourite to lift the best foreign language movie Oscar. More than 1.6 million people have paid to see the film in France so far, according to the site CBO box office, a feat not achieved by a Cannes-winner since Michael Moore's incendiary documentary, "Fahrenheit 9/11", in 2004.

After ecstatic reviews at the Toronto and Telluride festivals this month, Vanity Fair said it "has everything that a (Oscar) best-picture front-runner could possibly need. Except the English language." Even so critic Katey Rich said lightning could strike twice and it could yet follow the Mexican film "Roma", which became the first non-English language film ever to be nominated for best picture last year. It went on to win three Oscars, including best foreign language film and best director for its maker Alfonso Cuarón.

'How far can it go?'

She predicted that Bong's exhilarating story about a family of clever underclass scammers was virtually guaranteed a clutch of nominations. "The question now is how much further it can go," said Rich. "It's hard to imagine that Academy voters won't feel the same pull that festival audiences have... It's even harder to imagine that anyone who starts watching 'Parasite' could stop: the film's propulsive energy sweeps all the way through to its towering conclusion," she added.

If it does get an Oscar nomination, it will make history as the first South Korean film to do so. The rights to "Parasite" were already sold to distributors in 192 countries even before its premiere in Cannes—a record for a Korean film. Bong, 49, best known for the cult hits "The Host", "Snowpiercer" and "Okja", is one of a rising wave of Korean directors including Park Chan-wook ("The Handmaiden") and Lee Chang-dong ("Burning").

Only two Palme d'Or-winning films have sold more than one million tickets in France since Moore's indictment of George W Bush's foreign policy after the September 11 attacks-Laurent Cantet's school-set "The Class" in 2008 and Abdellatif Kechiche's highly controversial lesbian love story, "Blue Is the Warmest Color" in 2013.—AFP



In this photo taken on Sept 7, 2019 actress/singer Jennifer Lopez arrives for the premiere of "Hustlers" during the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival Day 3. — AFP

Malaysia bans hit stripper movie 'Hustlers'

Malaysia has banned the hit Jennifer Lopez movie "Hustlers", authorities said Friday, criticizing the film about strippers as packed with "obscene content" not suitable for cinema-goers in the conservative country. The star-studded movie-billed as a female "Wolf of Wall Street"—is about how New York strippers turned the tables on wealthy businessmen during the financial crisis.

The real-life tale depicts how a group of women resorted to increasingly criminal tactics, such as spiking men's drinks before emptying their bank accounts, as the stock market crash hit strip club receipts. But Malaysia's Film Censorship Board banned the movie from cinemas, saying it would have to make so many cuts to racy scenes there would be barely anything left to screen. "This film contains too many scenes with too much excessive obscene content, and is not suitable for public screening," the board's chairman Mohamad Zamri Abdul Aziz told AFP.

"We can see women's breasts and men's private parts. There are also erotic dances which are too much, and scenes (with drugs)." Square Box Pictures, the film's distributor in Malaysia, confirmed the ban in an Instagram post: "We deeply apologize for the inconveniences caused to our beloved followers, fans of the movie, medias and partners." The film had reportedly been due for release at cinemas Thursday.

It is common for censors in the Muslim-majority country to ban films entirely or cut scenes related to subjects they deem sensitive. Other films that were banned from Malaysian cinemas include "The Shawshank Redemption" and children's movie "Barney's Great Adventure". Earlier this year censors cut gay sex scenes from "Rocketman", the movie musical based on the life of British singer Elton John, sparking anger from art critics.—AFP



Paris showgirls ride out feminist wave with fitness tips

How can Paris cabarets, with their near-identical lines of statuesque, scantily-clad showgirls and cancan dancers, adapt in the age of #MeToo? With yoga, body positive imagery and a new emphasis on what is known as wokeness-or being socially aware-as well as the athleticism of their performers, it appears. The Lido club on the Champs Elysees has become the latest to try to give its version of the traditional French cabaret a 21st-century makeover.

'You can't just be a naked lady'
"You can't just be a 'naked lady' to do one hour and 40 minutes of a show," she told AFP. Victoria, the British-born "captain" of the Bluebell Girls chorus line, said she "felt very strong" every time she went out on stage. "It is really important for us—especially in this new show—to show female empowerment. Yes we are topless, but it's the female form and it's beautiful and it is to be celebrated. "We are powerful and we are strong and we all feel very strong when we perform," she added.

"It's about confidence. We all really take care of ourselves and I'm very much into yoga, body confidence and feeling good in yourself," added the dancer. The Lido has thrown open its doors for a limited period so the public can join its boot camp. Victoria also shares her eating and well-being tips—eggs on toast for breakfast washed down with a spinach, cucumber, celery and apple smoothie and lots of thankfulness.

Her secret, she says, to surviving 12 shows a week is yoga, which along with pilates and "body pump", is the backbone of the boot camp offering to the public. The men and women taking part also get a chance to participate in an extract from the Lido's current show, "Paris Merveilles" (Paris Marvels).

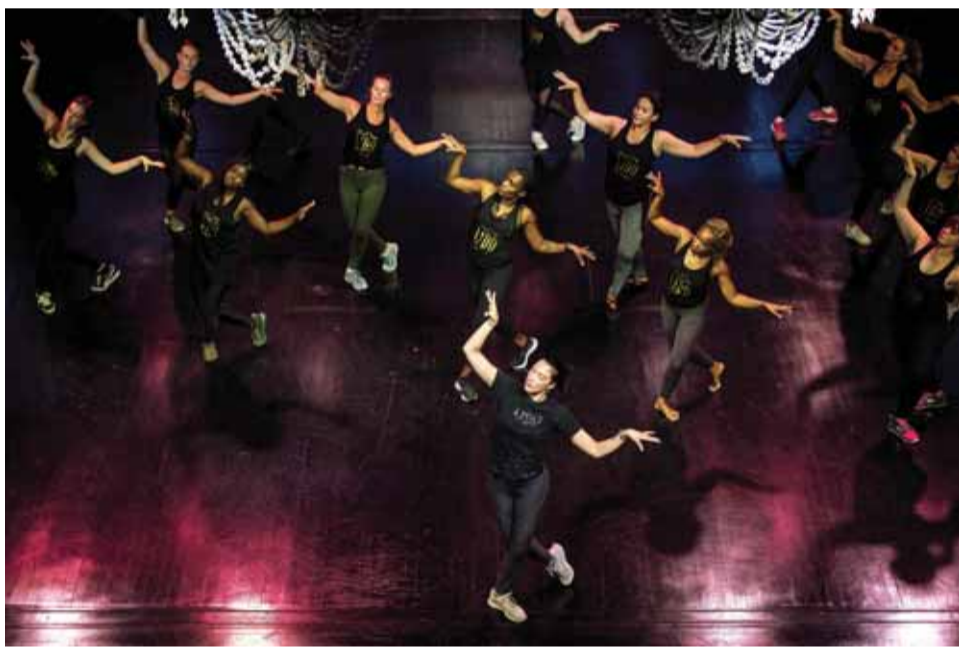
'I never hesitated'
"To me, regardless of where we are dancing, a career in dance is what we all trained for and it's what we all want," Victoria said. The 33-year-old said she had never had a second thought about becoming a chorus girl, with some of her teachers also pointing her that way from an early age. "I only ever saw cabaret and the showgirl world as something glamorous and beautiful and something to be celebrated," she said.

"So I never hesitated for a second."
The troupe was founded in 1932 by the Irish dancer and choreographer, Margaret Kelly, when she was only 22. Her heroics during the German Occupation, when she hid her Jewish husband, a stateless pianist and composer who worked at the Folies Bergere, inspired Francois Truffaut's film, "The Last Metro", and the BBC drama series, "Bluebell". While the Lido claims that it "loves diversity in body and character", its long-legged dancers have to be at least 1.75 meters to make the cut as a Bluebell girl. But the women taking part in the cabaret's boot camp do come in all shapes, sizes and colors. For several, the classes were not just about upping their fitness but also about being able to walk "this mythic stage". "It's now or never," one joked said.—AFP

Participants perform during a 'bootcamp' workshop conducted by Lido dancer Victoria on the stage of the Lido cabaret in Paris. — AFP photos



Dancers perform on stage during a show at the Lido cabaret in Paris.



"We are powerful, we are strong"

As the mammy of them all, the Moulin Rouge, approaches its 130th birthday, the Lido has come up with its own "boot camp" exercise program, with its Bluebell chorus girls and boys sharing their fitness and well-being tips. The Lido's younger, edgier rival, Crazy Horse, gave over its stage in June to the "bionic artist" and amputee Viktoria Modesta after firmly rejecting claims that its shows were all about objectifying women. Meanwhile, the smaller Paradis Latin has taken to sending men out topless to flex their muscles, in among its drag acts, cancan dancers and a unicyclist waiter who juggles champagne bottles. Franco Dragone, the former Cirque du Soleil stalwart who controversially shook up the Lido's show in 2015, said he wanted to change the whole tone. "I wanted to show that women were not objects, and that the Bluebell Girls were taking power," insisted the Belgian director. "Even if you are topless for a few numbers, we are high level athletes," said Alicia, a former ballet dancer, and one of the seven coaches who leads the Lido's tough daily regime.



Lara Maiklem, a mudlark poses on the banks of the river Thames in central London. — AFP photos



Lara Maiklem, a mudlark shows historic items she has found at low tide along the river Thames in central London.

'Mudlarks' unearth the past on London's riverbanks

Trudging her way along the muddy banks of the River Thames, Lara Maiklem spots a 16th-century clothes-pin which she wipes and adds to a row of others puncturing her coat pocket. She treasures these handcrafted metal pins and other discoveries along the shore for the insight they give into those who walked there before her.

"Mudlarks" have scoured the foreshores of London's rivers for centuries, searching out lost or discarded items to sell, and the tradition lives on today in a small band of devotees. Over the past two decades, 48-year-old Maiklem has found pottery, a silver coin from the 1600s from the era of king Charles I, ivory combs and 18th-century clay pipes, some still bearing the makers' fingerprints. "These little snapshots of everyday London life, that you find coming out of the mud, every tide—it's like a giant history book," said Maiklem, who works in the publishing industry.

'Things lost along the way'

Many of the rivers, streams and brooks that cut through London have been built over and lost but the Thames remains at its heart, its tidal waters leaving evidence of centuries of life, work and death on the shore. "It's a treasure hunt," she told AFP, walking with her head down, eyes glued to the ground. One of her most valuable finds was a Tudor gold aglet—the metal tip of a shoelace, which, as a gold item more than 300 years old, she was required by law to declare to the authorities.

The weirdest thing? A sawn-off shotgun, with the bullets still inside. She has also found human remains, which must be reported to the police. Maiklem says she never sells what she finds, and it is the "historical contact" that she loves. Among her favorite finds are bent sixpence coins from the 17th and 18th centuries, thrown into the river as love tokens for those who could not afford a ring. "People who have been forgotten by history, who didn't leave anything of themselves other than the things they lost along the way—this is what they left behind of themselves," she said.

Instagram, museum interest

Maiklem has just published a book, "Mudlarking", and also chronicles her finds on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram-part of a thriving social media community of mudlarks. "When I don't know what something is and I post it, I'm always blown away by the knowledge that comes back," she said. Mudlarks also work with the Museum of London to help identify and preserve their finds, with some currently on display at its "Secret Rivers" exhibition. "The Thames is the city's longest archaeological site, but it is vulnerable, it is fragile, and the mudlarks do excellent work at recording and helping to save that information," curator Kate Sumnall told AFP.—AFP

Performance artist Marina Abramovic returns to native Belgrade for retrospective

The boundary-pushing performance artist Marina Abramovic returned to Belgrade yesterday to inaugurate the final exhibition of a major touring retrospective, marking her first professional homecoming in nearly 50 years. Dressed in black, the 72-year-old invited reporters to Belgrade's Contemporary Art Museum at dawn for the "symbolic cleansing of her career".

The retrospective, titled "The Cleaner", exhibits more than 100 works from Abramovic's past 50 years of provocative performances, many of which saw the artist put her own body on the line. "You know for me it's very emotional to be here, and it's not easy, there's lots of nostalgia, lots of memories that are forgotten," she said of her return to the Serbian capital, a place she said shaped her outlook as an artist. "I learned three things here: from my grandmother I learned spirituality..from my father I learned bravery, and from my mother willpower and discipline," she said.

The exhibition, which has been touring Europe since 2017, features photo montages and video reels replaying

many of Abramovic's most daring works, including one where she laid out a table of 72 objects, among which figured scissors and a loaded gun, and invited spectators to use them on her "as desired". Another piece from 1997, titled Balkan Baroque, saw her sit and clean 1,000 beef bones while singing folk songs from her youth, earning her a Golden Lion award at the Venice Biennale.

Young Serbian artists also re-enacted some performances live on Saturday, including one in which a naked man and woman stand inside a doorway, forcing museum-goers to squeeze past their bodies. Doling out advice for youth, the artist said: "It is very important to follow your heart, your ideas, without compromising." "To live for your art, which requires a lot of sacrifice," she added. At the start of the exhibition, Abramovic briefly sat down to re-enact a 2010 performance in New York named "The Artist is Present".

That three-month-long piece saw her sit silently, without moving, for seven hours a day, six days a week, as visitors took turns sitting across her. Asked if she would use her fame to bring more support to Serbian artists, Abramovic said: "I am not a politician, but an artist, and I believe that this exhibit will show politicians that investing in culture will bring it to higher levels." The exhibit will be open in Belgrade until January 20, 2020.—AFP



Visitors look at a part of the exhibition by the performance artist Marina Abramovic at the Museum of Modern Art in Belgrade, where she opened a retrospective exhibition, called 'The Cleaner'. — AFP photos





Models walk with posters during a fashion show by former FARC combatants in Bogota. — AFP photos

TAILORING PEACE: COLOMBIAN EX-REBELS TURN TO FASHION

Once dressed to kill as they stalked the Colombian jungle, a group of young former FARC rebels have shed their camouflage fatigues, boots and guns to help ease their way back into society following a 2016 peace deal. The ex-guerrillas held a fashion show in Bogota this week, with colorful outfits and overt messages of peace pressed into service in the battle for Colombian hearts and minds, as the peace deal frays at the edges.

"This fashion parade is aimed at showing the clothes we make, and to demonstrate to Colombia our commitment to peace," said former rebel Gonzalo Beltran, who has swapped his automatic rifle for a needle and thread. The peace deal between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and the government of then-president Juan Manuel Santos has come under increasing strain since the election of Santos's conservative successor Ivan Duque.

Duque was elected last year on promises to renegotiate the peace accord on the grounds that it was too lenient toward ex-fighters guilty of serious crimes. And last month, the man who negotiated and signed the deal on behalf of FARC, Ivan Marquez, announced he and dozens of followers were returning to arms. The FARC hardliners accuse the government of betraying the accord and failing to deliver rural reform.

We're complying

Entitled "Pazarela"—a play on the Spanish word for peace, "paz", and catwalk, "pasarela"—

Wednesday night's fashion parade took place to the beat of electronic music. A dozen models—students and former combatants—strutted in front of 200 spectators to show off the first fashion collection designed in one of the country's 26 rebel reintegration zones. "We're complying" was scrawled on a banner carried by a young woman dressed in a yellow kimono. Other signs drove home the message: "Everyone for Peace", "Nothing for War" and "Fashion is a political act".

"Fashion is a political act"

Designer Angela Maria Herrera worked with around 30 former fighters from Colombia's mountainous Icononzo area. "Our clothes carry messages of peace. Some were made by ex-combatants, but tailored by victims of violence, so the message of reconciliation is intrinsic." Former guerrilla Melina Reyes presented a flowered dress, carrying a sign calling on the government to fulfill its promises under the deal. "These are the clothes we are making, men and women who are betting on peace, that left their rifles behind, who said 'no' to the war, and want to continue like this," she said.

Jungle fashion

The private Andean University of Bogota hosted the fashion event to mark the International Day of Peace on September 21. Event organizer Leonardo Gonzalez said it underlined the young people around him "do not want to return to war." The United Nations says although a "vast majority" of about



13,000 former FARC combatants and their civilian collaborators remain committed to peace, the return to arms of some factions—and the thousands who never disarmed at all—is undermining efforts to overcome more than half a century of conflict.

Reyes wants to turn the page and says fashion provides her with an opportunity to put into practice a talent acquired in the jungle. "We altered the clothes we were given because they were standard sizes, too big for some of us, and too tight for others," another woman said. "We also started the idea of fashion in the ranks of the guerrillas," she said, laughing. "We were stylists, the tailors of the guerrilla movement." —AFP



Fendi lets the sunshine in with *Milan show*

Dawn rays transformed the habitually grey skies of Milan Thursday as luxury fashion brand Fendi sent its latest collection down the runway under a vast rising sun. It was Silvia Venturini Fendi's first show following the death of fashion legend Karl Lagerfeld in February, and her ready to wear debut featured quilted coats, skirts and jackets in pastels as well as vintage florals.

Fendi described it as a "very emotional" moment, adding that Lagerfeld's 54 years with the house had shaped its DNA. The German designer began collaborating with the fashion brand in 1965, staying a record time at the helm. "The sunny setting evokes the start of a new day, new pages to be written, but also captures the enthusiasm of a summer day," Fendi said backstage.

To the tune of "Let the Sunshine in", from the 1967 musical "Hair", the models sashayed down

the catwalk in sheer tops, large mesh cardigans, sequined dresses, colorful fur coats and printed tights. Top models including Bella Hadid, Kendall Jenner, Kaia Gerber and Gigi Hadid strutted their stuff, with fashionistas spotting a move away from Fendi's previous sleek hair and make-up to messy ponytails, space buns and glittering eyes.

"Lagerfeld's teachings, over so many years, have been taken to heart by everyone, of this entire family which learned to work with him," Fendi CEO Serge Brunschwig told AFP on the sidelines of the show. "But he also taught us to do it without him, as all great masters do, so we carry on, happily," he said.—AFP



Models present creations during the Fendi Spring Summer 2020 fashion show in Milan. — AFP photos

Classifieds

Sunday, September 22, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate north westerly wind changing to south easterly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 21/09/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	41 °C	29 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	41 °C	22 °C			
ABDALY	42 °C	22 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	43 °C	29 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C			
SALMIYAH	36 °C	29 °C			
AHMADI	38 °C	30 °C			
NUWAISIB	41 °C	25 °C			
WAFRA	43 °C	22 °C			
SALMY	42 °C	27 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	09/22	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	43 °C	24 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 26 km/h
Monday	09/23	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	44 °C	25 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 26 km/h
Tuesday	09/24	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	44 °C	24 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Wednesday	09/25	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	45 °C	23 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 24 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:16
Sunrise	05:35
Zuhr	11:41
Asr	15:09
Sunset	17:47
Isha	19:03

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	44 °C
MIN. Temp.	26 °C
MAX. RH	59 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	NW 60 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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
Khaldiya	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

I, RAJARAPU RAJAM, have changed my name from KAR-RERAJAM to RAJARAPU RAJAM, hereafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5593) 20-9-2019

I, RALLAPALLI NAGARAJA NAIDU, have changed my name from MADDOIPATLA NAGARAJA to RALLAPALLI NAGARAJA NAIDU, hereafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5591)

I, Syed Darbar (new name) S/o Syed Siddiq Hussain D/N

16/517-6 Ghouse Nagar, Kadapa YSR (Dist) A.P. Siddi Darbar Vali (old name) name changed to Syed Darbar. Passport No. P9484709. (C 5592)

I, MARIA MAGDALENE holder of Indian Passport No. Z1846245 having permanent address Maharashtra, India and Pin Code - 4000053, residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: MARIA MAGDALENE JESSIE and surname: VAL-LADARES. (C 5676) 19-9-2019

Automated enquiry about the
 Civild card is **1889988**

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

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) **DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Arrival Flights on Sunday 22/9/2019				Departure Flights on Sunday 22/9/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	MSC	502	Alexandria	00:10
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	713	Sohag	00:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	JZR	707	Luxor	00:20
JZR	130D	Dubai	00:20	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:40
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	MEA	8962	Madinah	00:45
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	723	Alexandria	01:05
AHY	119	Baku	00:55	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	JZR	409	Delhi	01:10
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KAC	677	Dubai	01:40
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	2707	Madinah	01:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	AHY	120	Baku	01:55
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
JZR	726	Alexandria	01:55	JZR	111	Doha	02:10
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:50
MSR	3035	Sohag	02:25	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	MSR	3036	Cairo	03:25
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	THY	769	Istanbul	03:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
PGT	856	Istanbul	03:10	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:20
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	PGT	857	Istanbul	04:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	JZR	1735	Cairo	04:40
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:00
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15
JZR	1738	Cairo	04:45	KAC	103	London	05:20
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	JZR	703	Asyut	05:30
THY	1414	Tripzon	05:05	KAC	737	Cairo	05:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	KAC	563	Dubai	06:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	FDB	070	Istanbul	06:00
IGO	1759	Delhi	05:10	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	IGO	1760	Delhi	06:10
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	RJA	649	Amman	07:00
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	JZR	251	Amman	07:10
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	121	Dubai	07:15
JZR	708	Luxor	06:15	JZR	113	Doha	07:30
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	KAC	165	Rome	08:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	BAW	156	London	08:00
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	IGO	1767	Mumbai	08:10
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	177	Vienna	08:45
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50
QTR	8511	Doha	07:10	KAC	501	Beirut	08:50
KAC	2708	Madinah	07:15	KAC	561	Amman	08:55
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	KAC	117	New York	09:05
JZR	724	Alexandria	07:50	KAC	791	Madinah	09:10
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	QTR	8512	Doha	09:10
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	QTR	1085	Doha	09:10
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	161	Geneva	09:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	JZR	601	Baku	09:20
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	691	Muscat	09:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	741	Dammam	09:40
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	JZR	731	Cairo	09:45
SAW	703	Damascus	10:00	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	JZR	301	Istanbul	09:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
SAW	707	Damascus	10:40	OMA	642	Muscat	10:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	101	London	10:05
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	QTR	1071	Doha	10:30
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	617	Doha	10:40
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:40
JZR	114	Doha	11:10	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
IGO	1755	CNN	11:30	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	SVA	513	Riyadh	10:55
JZR	704	Asyut	11:55	SAW	704	Damascus	11:00
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	KAC	157	Istanbul	11:15
JZR	738	Cairo	12:20	JZR	701	Asyut	11:20
				KNE	234	Riyadh	23:45

Trudeau pledges rifle ban, pivots campaign amid blackface scandal

TORONTO: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, embroiled in a blackface picture scandal, on Friday pledged to ban military-style assault rifles in the country's most ethnically diverse city in a bid to get his campaign back on issue. Trudeau was campaigning in Toronto with less than five weeks to go before his Liberals fight an Oct 21 national election and two days after at least two bombshell images of him in blackface emerged, as well as a video showing him with blacked-up face and body wearing a curly-haired wig.

The scandal over the pictures, which could help propel the rival Conservative Party into power, continues to dominate headlines both at home and abroad. US President Donald Trump, who has clashed with Trudeau in the past, said in the Oval Office on Friday, "I'm surprised and I was more surprised when I saw the number of times."

Trudeau, 47, sidestepped questions both about Trump's comments and whether the affair had damaged Canada's

image abroad, repeating that he was very sorry for what he had done when younger. The first picture that emerged showed Trudeau with his face blackened at a 2001 "Arabian Nights" party when he was a 29-year-old teacher at a Vancouver private school. The picture was published by Time magazine on Wednesday.

Liberals need to hang onto Toronto, Canada's largest city, to have any chance of retaining power. The city has faced a recent escalation in gun violence, which is why Trudeau made his gun ban announcement there. "Thoughts and prayers aren't going to cut it," Trudeau told a news conference. "We know you do not need a military-grade assault weapon, one designed to kill the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time, to take down a deer."

This month, a 17-year-old was killed by gunfire and five other people were wounded in a community just outside of Toronto. Two days later another person was killed in a shooting on a major highway. At least

four members of Trudeau's Cabinet turned up at the announcement to show their support, including Finance Minister Bill Morneau and Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland who stood among some two dozen legislators and candidates. Trudeau shook hands or hugged every Liberal on the stage at the end of the event.

In an interview with Reuters on Friday, Freeland said the ban of military assault rifles was "a really important step" and that she was "really glad to serve in a government that is campaigning on that as part of our platform, and I'm proud to be on the PM's team". "I have tremendous confidence in Justin Trudeau as the leader, as the prime minister," said Freeland, who is a key ally of Trudeau's and one of his most visible ministers - comments showing that the prime minister's team is squarely behind him.

Earlier in the day, Trudeau walked down the street in Toronto's Danforth district, where the sitting Liberal member of parlia-

ment faces a tough fight. Most of the people he met seemed delighted to meet him, including a young woman who embraced him four times and posed for a selfie. Stay-at-home father Stu Simmons said the blackface photo was not important as long as Trudeau did his job. "I dressed up as The Hulk when I was 18 and no one's going to get mad at me about that, except perhaps the Martians," he told Reuters.

Not everyone was welcoming. "Where's your black face, man?" one woman shouted at Trudeau. "Good morning," he replied. Liberals said that while the scandal is politically damaging, voters will ultimately be more interested in concrete measures such as the new gun rules. Those announced on Friday include a buyback program for all legally purchased assault rifles, and a Liberal government that would also work with other levels of government to give municipalities the ability to further restrict or ban handguns.

Before the blackface images emerged

two days ago, polls showed Trudeau running head-to-head with his main rival, Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer. When asked about gun control before Trudeau's announcement, Scheer said he does not believe "blanket bans" are effective and that boosting police resources "to go after criminal and illegal firearms" works better.

Trudeau's campaign was upended when Time magazine on Wednesday published the image at the 2001 "Arabian Nights" party. Other images have since emerged, and Trudeau said on Thursday he was "wary" of ruling out the existence of even more because he could not remember those that had already come to light. On Friday, Trudeau said a video that emerged on Thursday showing him with his arms, face and even parts of his legs blackened came from a costume day when he worked as a whitewater rafting guide on the Red River in Quebec, when he was in his early 20s. — Reuters

Dozens held in Egypt after...

Continued from Page 1

The construction contractor has been posting videos from Spain that have gone viral since early September, accusing Sisi and the military of rampant corruption. The president flatly denied the allegations last week at a youth conference and sought to assure Egyptians that he "was honest and faithful" to his people and the military.

In Aly's latest video posted early Friday morning on his growing social media accounts, he urged Egyptians to head to the streets after a highly anticipated Super Cup football match between Cairo powerhouses Al Ahly and Zamalek. "No one shouted bread, freedom, social justice like in 2011, they escalated straight to 'Leave' from the first minute," Shama noted.

Thousands shared footage on social media documenting the demonstrations, which sprang up in several cities including sizeable crowds blocking traffic in Alexandria, Al-Mahalla, Damietta, Mansoura and Suez. Shama, who wrote a book on Egypt's foreign policy, said the "totally organic" nature of the small-scale protests was "unprecedented". "This is the first time people take to the streets in

many years but I am not sure it will be the last," he added.

Under the rule of general-turned-president Sisi, authorities have launched a broad crackdown on dissidents, jailing thousands of Islamists as well as secular activists and popular bloggers. Sisi led the military ouster of former Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013 and won back-to-back landslide elections after running virtually unopposed. He has regularly invoked security and stability as hallmarks of his reign in contrast to the situations in regional hot spots such as Iraq, Libya and Syria.

During last week's youth conference, Sisi again took the opportunity to warn of the dangers of protesting. On television Friday night, boisterous and pro-Sisi host Amr Adib lambasted Aly, the businessman, showing footage of him allegedly in a drunken stupor. Adib urged his fellow countrymen to "take care of the country... because the Muslim Brotherhood want to raze it to the ground".

The Islamist group, once considered one of Egypt's most organized political forces, was outlawed as a terror group in 2013 after Morsi's overthrow. Egyptians quickly took to social media to criticize Adib, a vocal backer of Mubarak during the 2011 revolution, for dismissing the protesters as "people against the country". Discontent over rising prices has been swelling in Egypt, where Sisi's government has imposed strict austerity measures since 2016 as part of a \$12-billion loan package from the International Monetary Fund. Nearly one in three Egyptians live below the poverty line on less than \$1.40 a day, according to official figures released in July. — AFP

worked with a Ukrainian natural gas company. When asked by reporters whether he discussed the Bidens with Zelensky, Trump said curtly: "It doesn't matter what I discuss."

But he did not deny having done so. Instead he urged media to "look into" Biden's involvement in Ukraine, and his comments in early 2016 in which the former US vice president said the Obama administration would freeze \$1 billion in US loan guarantees unless Kiev fire its top prosecutor. "Somebody ought to look into that," Trump said.

Biden - who leads Trump according to most polls - said the reports show the president's "willingness to abuse his power and abuse our country". "It means that he used the power and resources of the United States to pressure a sovereign nation - a partner that is still under direct assault from Russia - pushing Ukraine to subvert the rule of law in the express hope of extracting a political favor," Biden said in a statement.

Amid the swirling allegations, Giuliani told CNN Thursday that "of course I did" ask Ukraine to investigate Biden. Giuliani said he did not know whether Trump brought up Biden, but said he would have "every right" to do so. Adding yet another layer to the controversy, congressional policymakers were concerned the Trump administration had been holding back military aid to Ukraine at the time. The aid was finally released last week. Zelensky inherited an armed conflict against pro-Russian rebels that has killed nearly 13,000 in five years and caused serious economic difficulties.

Democratic lawmakers say a president conditioning foreign aid on providing dirt on a US election rival would amount to grounds for impeachment. "The president can't use US aid as a weapon to serve his own political purposes," House Democrat Seth Moulton tweeted. "This is an impeachable offense if true." Clinton herself weighed in Friday with a sharp critique. "The president asked a foreign power to help him win an election. Again," she tweeted. — AFP

fashion". He indicated at past experience, when the company secured food supplies during crises, proving that Kuwait is an example to be followed at this level in the Gulf region.

Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior Lt Gen Esam Al-Nahham affirmed Thursday that all sectors of the ministry are ready to address any eventuality. Security services are working around the clock to guard against any ramifications of the situation in the region, he said in a statement posted on the ministry's Instagram account. Nahham made the comments after chairing a senior-level security meeting where he was briefed on the preparedness of all sectors of the ministry. The meeting was part of joint action by all sectors and coordination to address the possible scenarios of the developments in the region, the statement noted.

Nahham conveyed to the leaders of the security sectors the greetings of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Interior Anas Al-Saleh, who appreciates their dedication to protecting the country's security and stability. Nahham reiterated the call for everybody to rely for news on official sources, such as the ministry's security media department, and avoid circulating rumors that could jeopardize the safety and security of the country. — KUNA

Tunisia turns the page on Ben Ali...

Continued from Page 1

dressed in white, and others in suits, they crossed a marble forecourt in the shadow of the green dome of the mosque, before entering the cemetery.

Some of his family were to receive condolences today in an upmarket suburb of Tunis, according to a small notice published in La Presse newspaper. The ex-leader's wife, Leila Trabesli, who has led a comfortable and discreet life in exile with daughters Nesrine and Halima - along with son Mohamed - has little incentive to return home. She faces heavy sentences for embezzlement, alongside possession of weapons, drugs and archaeological artefacts.

Ben Ali himself was sentenced several times to life in prison, including for the bloody suppression of protests in the last weeks of his autocratic rule, which killed more than 300 people. He never faced justice. "The second president of the Tunisian republic henceforth belongs to history, and history will judge him", said his Lebanese lawyer Akram Azouri.

Several trials are ongoing, notably under the auspices of the Truth and Dignity Commission, which is mandated to shine a light on violations committed between 1955 and 2013. The commission has collected witness testimo-

Iran issues 'battlefield' warning...

Continued from Page 1

RQ-4 Global Hawk that Iran downed in June, as well as an RQ-170 Sentinel captured in 2011 and still intact.

The Guards also displayed the domestically manufactured Khordad 3 air defense battery they say was used to shoot down the Global Hawk. "What are your drones doing in our airspace? We will shoot them down, shoot anything that encroaches on our airspace," said Salami. His remarks came only days after the strikes on Saudi oil facilities claimed by Yemen's Houthis, but the US says it has concluded the attack involved cruise missiles from Iran and amounted to "an act of war".

Saudi Arabia, which has been bogged down in a five-year war across its southern border in Yemen, has said Iran "unquestionably sponsored" the attacks. The kingdom says the weapons used in the attacks were Iranian-made, but it has stopped short of directly blaming its regional rival. "Sometimes they talk of military options," Salami said, apparently referring to the Americans. Yet he warned that "a limited aggression will not remain limited" as Iran was determined to respond and would "not rest until the aggressor's collapse".

The Guards' aerospace commander said the US ought to learn from its past failures and abandon its hostile rhetoric. "We've stood tall for the past 40 years and if the enemy makes a mistake, it will certainly receive a crushing response," Brigadier General Amirali Hajizadeh said.

Late Friday, the Houthis unexpectedly announced that they planned to halt all attacks on Saudi Arabia as part of a peace initiative to end their country's devastating conflict, five years after they captured the capital Sanaa. Mehdi Al-Mashat, head of the Houthis' supreme political council, announced in a speech marking the 2014 rebel seizure of Sanaa "the halt of all attacks against the territory of Saudi Arabia". He added that he hoped "the gesture would be answered by a stronger gesture" from the Saudis, according to the rebels' Al-Masirah television channel. "Pursuing war is not in anyone's interest."

Mashat said the Houthis' peace initiative was aimed at "bringing about peace through serious negotiations to achieve a comprehensive national reconciliation which does not exclude anyone". A major goal was to "preserve the blood of Yemenis and achieve a general amnesty", he added. The plan calls for rebels to "stop all attacks on Saudi territory by drones, ballistic missiles and other means", he said. He also called for the reopening of Sanaa's international airport and open access to Yemen's Red Sea port of Hodeida, a crucial entry point for imports and humanitarian aid.

Defense minister inspects air force...

Continued from Page 1

Khodhor's visit was aimed at closely inspecting the duties assumed by these units, and taking all precautionary measures, the defense ministry said in a press statement yesterday. Khodhor urged all military per-

sonnel, documents and information from official archives so that those implicated in serious abuses can be judged by special courts. Fourteen public hearings have meanwhile brought a measure of closure for relatives of the disappeared. They have also seen public testimony on the network of corruption established by Ben Ali's nephew, Imed Trabelsi, who was a pillar of the regime.

The extended family of Ben Ali's hated wife captured vast swathes of the economy, as detailed by the World Bank in a 2014 report. The global lender said that by the end of 2010, the 114 people who comprised the Ben Ali clan controlled 220 businesses that hoovered up more than a fifth of all private sector profits. When he was forced from power, hundreds of businesses and properties, along with luxury cars and jewelry hoarded by the Ben Ali family, were impounded through a state holding company.

That firm - Karama Holding - still owns 51 percent of telecom company Orange's Tunisia operations, a majority of the country's biggest cement company, and swathes of agricultural land and palaces. The Tunisian state is still far from retrieving all of the pillaged funds. One highly visible symbol of the rot that set in under Ben Ali is a collection of rusting yachts gathered at the port of Sidi Bou Said. Luxury cars and even a camper van, offered for sale last year, have failed to garner interest.

Persistent social and economic problems have fed nostalgia in some quarters for the Ben Ali era but that is a limited phenomenon. Abir Moussi, the only candidate to overtly defend the record of Ben Ali's former ruling party, came a distant ninth in last Sunday's presidential election first round with four percent of the vote. — AFP

Jubeir yesterday took a skeptical position to the announcement from Mashat. "We judge other parties by their deeds, actions and not by their words, so we will see (whether) they actually do this or not," said the Saudi minister. "And regarding what prompted them to do this... we have to do more intensive studies," he said at a press conference in Riyadh.

At a ceremony in Yemen's capital Sanaa yesterday marking the anniversary of the 2014 rebel seizure of the city, the Houthis again urged Saudi Arabia to take up the offer. Mohammed Ali Al-Houthi, head of the rebels' Higher Revolutionary Committee and an influential political figure, warned against rejecting the proposal. "If they refuse the initiative we will do them more harm," he said, adding that "any escalation will be countered by further escalation".

The United States upped the ante on Friday by announcing new sanctions against Iran's central bank, with President Donald Trump calling the measures the toughest America has ever imposed on another country. Washington has imposed a series of sanctions against Tehran since unilaterally pulling out of a landmark 2015 nuclear deal in May last year. It already maintains sweeping sanctions on Iran's central bank, but the US Treasury said Friday's designation was over the regulator's work in funding "terrorism".

Also yesterday, Iran denied its oil infrastructure had been successfully attacked by a cyber operation, after reports of disruptions to the sector online. "Contrary to Western media claims, investigations done today show no successful cyber attack was made on the country's oil installations and other crucial infrastructure," the government's cyber security office said. The statement did not specify which reports it was addressing.

On Friday, Saudi Arabia revealed extensive damage to key oil facilities following weekend aerial strikes that were blamed on Iran, but vowed to quickly restore full production even as regional tensions soar. Abqaiq was struck 18 times while nearby Khurais was hit four times in a raid that triggered multiple explosions and towering flames that took hours to extinguish, Aramco officials said. "Many critical areas of the (Abqaiq) plant were hit," an Aramco official said, pointing out the strikes had a high degree of precision.

A towering stabilization column, normally silver, had been charred black with a gaping hole blown in the shaft's base. A separator plant also appeared ravaged in the raids and was surrounded by scaffolding and white-helmeted workers. "There are 112 shift workers here in normal times. Now 6,000 workers are involved in restoration work," said Aramco official Khaled Al-Ghamdi, pointing at damaged infrastructure. Aramco said it was shipping technical equipment from the US and Europe to speed up repairs.

Aramco flew dozens of international journalists to the two sites to show it was speeding up repairs, giving rare access to the nerve center of the world's largest oil producer as it seeks to shore up investor confidence ahead of a planned initial public offering (IPO). — Agencies

sonnel to exert further efforts for the protection of the country, praying to Allah the Almighty to maintain the safety and security of the country, the statement noted.

Khodhor discussed with US Undersecretary of the Army-designate Ryan McCarthy means of mutual cooperation. Talks between the two touched upon issues of mutual significance, specifically in relation to military aspects, according to a defense ministry statement yesterday. Khodhor praised both countries' depth of bilateral relations and the two sides' keenness to further these ties. — KUNA

Kuwait raises port security, has enough...

Continued from Page 1

sufficient for six months and some of the amounts are enough for a whole year, it said in the official statement. It urged all concerned to seek information from "the right sources" before spreading it.

Kuwait Flour Mills and Bakeries Company affirmed yesterday readiness to cope "with ramifications that may emerge as a result of conditions in the region". The company has also affirmed that the national strategic stockpiles of food supplies are sufficient for four to eight months. Chief Executive Officer Mutleg Al-Zayed has said in a statement that Kuwait devotes special concern for food, assuring citizens and residents that the company has supplies, namely bread, enough to cope with possible higher demand.

All bakeries throughout Kuwait are ready to meet the demand, he said, revealing that the company has a special plan to ensure delivery of its products to the cooperative stores and sale outlets "in a satisfactory

Sports

Frantic French survive Pumas scare in Rugby World Cup nail-biter

Argentina will now likely need to beat England to avoid an early exit

TOKYO: France uncorked some champagne rugby but almost lost the plot and had to survive a last-gasp penalty before pipping Argentina 23-21 in their World Cup opener yesterday. Fly-half Romain Ntamack paced a mixed French performance with 10 points and the three-time finalists were indebted to a late Camille Lopez drop goal as they won a pulsating Pool C clash in Tokyo, leaving the Pumas staring into the abyss in the tournament's so-called 'group of death'.

Argentina, who will now likely need to beat England to avoid an early exit, almost pulled off an astonishing comeback after being sent into battle by an emotional message of support from football legend Diego Maradona.

Trailing by 17 points at half-time, they fell just short after a last-minute penalty from Emiliano Boffelli sailed just wide, allowing France to claim a crucial victory. "I thought the game was finished. I thought we'd lost the game," admitted France captain Guilhem Guirado, referring to the late penalty Australian referee Angus Gardner awarded to Argentina.

"But I am very, very proud of my boys. It was a tough game tonight but we are very happy to start the competition with a win." A cagey opening was punctuated by some bone-shuddering tackles from both sides, Argentine fly-half Nicolas Sanchez sent sprawling by prop Jefferson Poirot in a monster collision.

Lock Guido Petti Pagadizabal was a one-man wrecking crew for the Pumas in the early skirmishes and his bulldozing run led to a 15th-minute penalty that Sanchez slotted over to put the 2015 semi-finalists on the board first.

But France hit back quickly through Gael Fickou,

who showed great feet to beat two Argentina defenders and score after good work from fellow centre Virimi Vakatawa. The French extended their advantage with another sumptuous try four minutes later when flying winger Damian Penaud caused panic in Argentina's defence before flipping the ball to Antoine Dupont to crash over.

CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE

Ntamack added a pair of penalties that sent Les Bleus into half-time leading 20-3 and seemingly in control of a bruising game played in a carnival atmosphere. Many travelling fans sported colourful national garb, including a noisy group of French supporters dressed as Gallic roosters.

But Argentina were all business and came out firing in the second half as Petti Pagadizabal marked his 50th cap by trundling over from a driving lineout. Another driving maul allowed Julian Montoya to dive over before a Benjamin Urdapilleta penalty on the hour-mark made it a two-point game.

Urdapilleta stroked another three-pointer to give Argentina the lead with 12 minutes to play, completing a remarkable turnaround. But Lopez dragged France back in front with a superb drop goal in his first involvement after coming on.

Ntamack — who described the game as "stressful" — missed a late penalty before Boffelli hooked his long-range effort wide to spare France's blushes in an ill-tempered affair which boiled over after the final whistle as fighting broke out between the players.

"You dream of winning with a last-minute kick," said a crestfallen Boffelli. "We'd killed ourselves for 80 minutes but we got that one opportunity. Obviously a lot of things went through my mind and I



TOKYO: Argentina's fly-half Benjamin Urdapilleta (C) is tackled during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool C match between France and Argentina at the Tokyo Stadium in Tokyo yesterday. —AFP

didn't want to have any regrets — now I just want to forget it." Argentina head coach Mario Ledesma accused Gardner of favouring France with his decisions. "It's a shame to be refereed like a small nation," he fumed, left ruing fine margins. "We creat-

ed many opportunities, scored, missed two points, missed three points in the first half — it comes down to that." French coach Jacques Brunel shrugged: "We will definitely have to improve if we want to go deeper into the tournament." —AFP

Wallabies come from behind to beat Fiji

SAPPORO: Australia hooker Tolu Latu scored two tries in five minutes as the Wallabies came from nine points down in the second half to beat Fiji 39-21 and escape a huge upset at the Rugby World Cup yesterday.

Fiji haven't beaten Australia for 65 years — a run of 17 winless games against the two-time world champions — whose fans dominated the crowd of 36,482 at the indoor Sapporo Dome.

But that did not stop a physical team featuring several of Fiji's Olympic Sevens gold medallists going ahead 21-12 against the 2015 runners-up four minutes after half-time. Australia, rattled by Fiji's powerful running, eventually made their forward dominance count thanks to unlikely try hero Latu's double following the match-changing entry of scrum-half Will Genia.

Tries from Fiji-born backs Samu Kerevi and Marika Koroiibete then sealed Australia's comeback win. Wallaby coach Michael Cheika said he was "not going to complain at all" about the result against the "dangerous" Fiji.

"We know them very well, their players and that's what we expected.

Probably didn't expect to be as far behind!" he admitted. Australia almost scored from the opening kick-off when Reece Hodge charged down an ensuing clearance kick, only for Fiji to scramble the ball clear.

After Australia-born Fiji fly-half Ben Volavola knocked over an early penalty, a box-kick from Wallabies scrum-half Nic White allowed Fiji to counter-attack. Fiji right wing Josua Tuisova bounced off Hodge and burst through Christian Lealiifano's tackle before releasing flanker Peceli Yato for a try in the right corner.

Australia eventually made their set-piece play count in the lead-up to an 18th-minute try for Hooper, who drove over after the Wallabies pushed Fiji off their own scrum. Fiji suffered a setback when Yato went off with concussion in the 26th minute after what appeared to be an illegal no-arms tackle by Hodge. Captain Dominiko Waqaniburotu said they had asked New Zealand referee Ben O'Keefe to refer the incident to television match official Rowan Kitt but no action was taken despite World Rugby promising a crackdown on head-high challenges.

Two Volavola penalties extended Fiji's lead to 14-7. Australia's forwards then earned a penalty that led to an attacking line-out and, after the ball was worked across field, Hodge went over for a 36th-minute try in the right corner but Lealiifano could not nail the conversion.

Fiji led by two points at half-time and they were nine in front four min-



SAPPORO: Australia's hooker Silatolu Latu is tackled during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool D match between Australia and Fiji at the Sapporo Dome in Sapporo yesterday. —AFP

utes after the break. After a poor Australia pass sailed over Lealiifano's shoulder, Fiji centre Waisea Nayacalevu gathered it up and ran in from nearly half-way before flamboyantly diving between the posts.

Hodge's penalty cut Fiji's lead to 21-15 and it was no surprise when Cheika brought veteran scrum-half Genia off the bench in a bid to regain control. Playing the ball close from a succession of line-outs, Latu eventually went over from a maul for a 57th-minute try to cut the deficit to one point.

Hodge missed the conversion but Australia finally went ahead in the 62nd minute through an almost car-

bon-copy score by Latu. Matt Toomua, Australia's third goalkicker of the match, missed the conversion.

But Kerevi put the result beyond doubt in the 68th minute after the Wallaby pack drew in Fiji's forwards with Toomua kicking the conversion. Australia completed their win with a setpiece move off a line-out that ended with Koroiibete beating his man for a well-worked try.

Concussion rules mean Fiji will be without Yato for their next match against Uruguay in Kamaishi on Wednesday, with Australia playing fellow Pool D favourites Wales in Tokyo a week today. —AFP

Boks eye WCup final despite All Blacks loss

YOKOHAMA: South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus vowed to scrap all the way to the Rugby World Cup final after going down to a nail-biting 23-13 loss to New Zealand in their tough Pool B opener.

There was always going to be one big casualty in the headline match of pool play in Japan and it was the disciplined defending champions who deservedly came away with the win, outscoring the Boks two tries to one.

"They won it, I don't think we lost it. Two tries to one, they deserved to win the game," Erasmus said, left ruing a penalty count of nine to four.

"It's unbelievably well disciplined by them. That battle we lost.

"Discipline was our biggest downfall. I don't think we can really moan about anything, but just say well done to them."

Erasmus was in ebullient form, however, when asked whether his team could battle back in search of a third World Cup title after previously winning in 1995 and 2007.

"I think we can fight back," he said. "If you're grouped with New Zealand in a pool, you've got a good chance of not going undefeated through your pool."

"Then you have to fight back and get to the final for the first time not being unbeaten, so we have to go that route."

Erasmus, who has been credited with turning South African fortunes around after a few disastrous years, and appointed their first black captain in flanker Siya Kolisi, backed the All Blacks as favourites for a third successive World Cup title.

"For me New Zealand are definitely the favourites for the World Cup, they've always been and I've never had a doubt about that," said the former director of

rugby at Irish province Munster.

"We're creeping a little bit closer in challenging them, but they will have different tactical challenges from northern hemisphere teams," he said, naming England, Ireland and Wales as teams that would push New Zealand in ways the Boks had not.

Erasmus added: "We have to give all credit to New Zealand, when we had territorial and scoreboard pressure, they showed experience, they're a world-class team."

"It's a combination of them putting pressure on us and us not handling the pressure well. They were just good on their day."

"They didn't ruffle our defence, but they scored from our mistakes. They know how to ramp up the pressure as soon as they get on the scoreboard."

Turning to South Africa's coming weeks in Japan, Erasmus said they were not counting any chickens.

"Before we start mentioning quarter-finals, we have an important game against Italy along the way. I know we have Canada and Namibia, but in the last two years we've had slippery games against Italy," he said. —AFP

Thomas pulls out of cycling world championships men's time trial

LONDON: Former Tour de France champion Geraint Thomas has pulled out of the men's time trial at the cycling World Championships in Yorkshire, where huge crowds are

expected over the next nine days.

An expert time triallist, Welshman Thomas was set to feature in Wednesday's run to Harrogate but will now focus on next Sunday's road race instead.

"I've tried to get back into shape after my post-Tour break, but unfortunately I don't feel in good enough shape to perform to my best," said Thomas, who has struggled to attain the fitness level that saw him win the 2018 Tour de France.

"So the decision was made with my

coach and Matt Brammeier at British Cycling to skip the TT and commit to the team for the road race." The 2019 season has been tough on Thomas, who suffered a nasty fall in Switzerland that skewed his Tour de France defence, leaving him to fight for fitness during the Tour, where he finished an impressive runner-up to his Ineos teammate Egan Bernal.

John Archibald, who will race today's mixed gender team time trial, will now join reigning national champion Alex Dowsett in the 54-kilometre

test against the clock. GB's performance director Stephen Park said: "While it's a shame that Geraint is withdrawing from the time trial, we understand and support his decision."

"Geraint will still represent Great Britain in the road race. I have no doubt he will put in a performance that will do the team and the fans proud." Thomas remains in the six-man GB team for today's 285km road race from Leeds to Harrogate, along with Ben Swift, Owain Doull, Adam Yates, Ian Stannard and Tao Geoghegan Hart. —AFP

Italy's Parisse prepares for historic fifth World Cup

OSAKA: When Italy's Sergio Parisse runs out against Namibia today, he will join a very select band to have played five Rugby World Cups and the talismanic number eight is hoping 2019 will be the best yet.

When he first pulled on the Italy shirt, as an 18-year-old against New Zealand in 2002, he did not yet have the bald head that makes him immediately recognisable on the field but coach Conor O'Shea is in no doubt as to Parisse's place in the history of Italian rugby.

"It is difficult to put into words what Sergio brings to the team on and off the pitch," the Irishman told reporters ahead of the Namibia clash.

"The most important thing is his ability and he is probably the best Italian rugby player of all time," added O'Shea. Most observers believe that Parisse would easily earn a place in more celebrated teams than Italy, for whom he has won a staggering 140 caps, including a record 66 in the Six Nations.

His 141st cap will put him equal with Irish legend Brian O'Driscoll and behind only All Black flanker Richie McCaw, the last man to lift the Webb Ellis Cup. And his fifth World Cup will put him alongside countryman Mauro Bergamasco and Samoan legend Brian Lima.

But, as the consummate professional, Parisse is thinking only of the task ahead of him: the Pool B clash with Namibia at the Hanazono Stadium today. "I'm proud, but I haven't been thinking about this being my fifth World Cup. Honestly, I'm taking it a day and a training session at a time," said Parisse, now 36 and playing his club rugby for Toulon. "The fifth hasn't started and I hope it will be my best." Italy have a mountain to climb if they are to realise their dream of making the knock-out stages of a World Cup for the first time, drawn in the same pool as title contenders New Zealand and South Africa.

Hooker Leonardo Ghiraldini told AFP that Parisse was "a superb player, even if he is really old!" "On the pitch, his experience and quality are incredible. But he plays a big role also off the pitch — players like him are essential for a team," added Ghiraldini. He sets the example both at the training ground and in the gym. "You cannot get to a fifth World Cup without that sort of attitude," said the hooker, himself approaching the twilight of his career at 34.

And O'Shea is not ruling out a groundbreaking sixth World Cup for the Argentina-born legend, who would then be 40 years ago. "He says it is his last but I'm not sure. He will want to fight for another World Cup. I hope there will be another World Cup for Sergio," said the coach with a grin. —AFP

Sports

Braves clinch second National League East title with win over Giants

Dodgers storm back to rout Rockies 12-5

ATLANTA: Mike Foltynewicz pitched eight shutout innings, and the Atlanta Braves earned a 6-0 win over the visiting San Francisco Giants to clinch a second straight National League East title. The Braves notched their 19th division championship, tying them with the New York Yankees for the most in the majors since the divisional era started in 1969. The Yankees won their 19th title on Thursday. The victory also ensures the Braves of home-field advantage for the NL Division Series. Foltynewicz (8-5) allowed three hits and one walk while striking out seven. He won his seventh straight decision, and the Braves have won the last 12 games that he has started. Atlanta's offense was led by Ronald Acuna Jr., who was 2-for-2 with a double, a home run, two walks, three runs and two RBIs. Acuna has scored 126 runs, moving him within five of the modern-era franchise record set by Dale Murphy in 1983.

CARDINALS 2, CUBS 1

Yadier Molina had three hits, including a two-run single, and visiting St. Louis held on to defeat Chicago for its third straight win. The National League Central-leading Cardinals dealt the Cubs their fourth straight loss. Chicago trails St. Louis by five games in the division and is three games behind the Washington Nationals and two games below the Milwaukee Brewers in the wild-card race. St. Louis won despite being out 9-4. Both teams squandered offensive opportunities as the Cardinals went 1-for-11 with runners in scoring position and the Cubs were 1-for-9. Ryan Helsey (2-0) tossed one scoreless inning for the win, and Carlos Martinez got the last two outs for his 22nd save.

NATIONALS 6, MARLINS 4

Trea Turner homered twice, and Asdrubal Cabrera hit a three-run shot, leading Washington to a win at Miami. It was loss No. 100 for the Marlins, who have reached that negative milestone just two other times in franchise history, most recently in 2013. Anibal Sanchez (10-8) reached double-figure wins for the first time since 2015, allowing four runs, three earned, on six hits in five-plus innings. He had one strikeout and one walk.

BREWERS 10, PIRATES 1

Milwaukee strengthened its hold on the National League's second wild card with a home win over Pittsburgh. Chase Anderson (7-4) shut out the Pirates on three hits over six innings as the Brewers earned their sixth win in seven games. Milwaukee put the game out of reach with a four-run seventh, which featured Trent Grisham's bases-clearing triple. Adam Frazier's seventh-inning home run, his 10th of the season, produced the only run for Pittsburgh, which lost its seventh game in a row.

INDIANS 5, PHILLIES 2

Oscar Mercado had two hits, drove in two runs and scored twice to help lift Cleveland past visiting Philadelphia. Francisco Lindor contributed an RBI single and two walks, and Carlos Santana and Yasiel Puig also drove in runs for the Indians, who remained tied with Tampa Bay for the second American League wild card. Shane Bieber (15-7) bounced back from a rough outing his last time out and allowed two runs and seven hits in 7 1/3 innings. The reigning All-Star Game MVP struck out seven and didn't walk a batter.

ATHLETICS 8, RANGERS 0

Mike Fiers faced the minimum over eight innings, teaming with Chris Bassitt on a two-hit shutout as host Oakland opened a three-game series against Texas with its 11th shutout win of the season. Chad Pinder and Mark Canha belted home runs for the A's, who remained two games ahead of Tampa Bay and Cleveland in the three-team battle for the American League's two wild-card playoff spots. Texas lost its sixth straight. Fiers (15-4), who had to be pulled from his last start in the second inning because of numbness in his right hand, demonstrated he's back to full health with his 95-pitch masterpiece. He retired the last 16 batters he faced and finished with five strikeouts and no walks.

RAYS 5, RED SOX 4 (11 INNINGS)

Willy Adames singled home the winning run with two outs in the bottom of the 11th inning as Tampa Bay defeated Boston in St Petersburg, Fla. Mitch Moreland hit a pair of two-run homers for the defending World Series champion Red Sox, who were eliminated from postseason contention earlier in the night when Cleveland beat Philadelphia. Adames finished with three hits and Ji-Man Choi added two hits for the Rays. Diego Castillo tossed a scoreless 11th inning for the win.

BLUE JAYS 4, YANKEES 3

Tommy Kahnle allowed a go-ahead, two-run homer to Justin Smoak in the seventh inning, and New York opened its final home series of the season with a loss to Toronto. The Yankees fell 1 1/2 games behind Houston in the race for the best record in the majors. Smoak slugged his 22nd homer, sending a 1-1 fastball deep into the right-center-field bleachers as most of the 45,270 fans were engaged in the wave. Jason Adams (2-0) pitched a perfect inning for the win, and Ken Giles handled the ninth inning for his 21st save. Aaron Judge and Tyler Wade homered for the Yankees, who had an 11-game home winning streak against divisional foes snapped.

ASTROS 6, ANGELS 4

Carlos Correa recorded his ninth career multi-homer game, slugging one of three first-inning home runs in Houston's victory over visiting Los Angeles. Playing in just his second game since his return from a lengthy spell on the injured list, Correa became the seventh member of the Astros to reach the 20-homer plateau with his two-run shot to left off Jaime Barria (4-10) in the first. In the third, Correa homered off Barria again for a 6-1 lead. The Astros clinched at least a share of the American League West title with the victory, their sixth in succession against the Angels. Their five-run first set a pace the Angels failed to match.

DODGERS 12, ROCKIES 5

Corey Seager and A.J. Pollock each hit home runs in a seven-run fourth inning as Los Angeles rallied for a victory to improve to 7-0 at home this season against Colorado. Clayton Kershaw (15-5) recovered from a slow start to earn the victory as the Dodgers reduced their magic number to three for clinching the best record in the National League. He gave up four runs in six innings. Nolan Arenado and Charlie Blackmon hit back-to-back home runs in the first inning for the Rockies, who lost their third consecutive game. It was the fourth time in his past six starts



ATLANTA: Dallas Keuchel #60 of the Atlanta Braves dunks Mike Foltynewicz #26 of the Atlanta Braves with milk at the conclusion of an MLB game against the San Francisco Giants in which they clinched the N.L. East at SunTrust Park in Atlanta, Georgia. —AFP

Kershaw has given up a first-inning homer.

METS 8, REDS 1

Rookie Pete Alonso hit his 50th home run, and Jacob deGrom tossed seven scoreless innings for New York, which kept its postseason hopes alive with a win at Cincinnati. The Mets, who have won three straight, remained 3 1/2 games behind the Brewers in the race for the NL's second wild card. With the loss, the Reds are guaranteed their sixth straight losing season. Alonso snapped a tie with Mark McGwire for second place on the all-time rookie single-season homer list. He is two home runs behind crosstown rival Aaron Judge, who hit 52 for the Yankees in 2017.

TWINS 4, ROYALS 3

Randy Dobnak gave up one run on three hits over 5 1/3 innings to pick up his first major league win, and Marwin Gonzalez had a two-run double to lead Minnesota over Kansas City in Minneapolis. Miguel Sano tripled and drove in a run and Jorge Polanco doubled and scored a run for Minnesota, which remained four games ahead of Cleveland in the American League Central with eight games remaining. Dobnak (1-1), signed two years ago out of the United Shore Professional Baseball League (USPBL), a four-team independent league in Michigan, walked two and struck out five. Trevor May struck out the side in the ninth to earn his second save.

DIAMONDBACKS 9, PADRES 0

Merrill Kelly shut out San Diego on two hits over seven innings, and visiting Arizona scored seven times

in the eighth to pull away for the win. The victory kept alive Arizona's fading hopes for a playoff berth. The Diamondbacks trail the Brewers by five games for the second National League wild card. Kelly (12-14) walked three and struck out nine. He along with relievers Yoan Lopez and Jimmie Sherfy allowed a total of three hits and three walks while fanning 12. Josh Rojas hit a three-run double in the eighth, and Wilmer Flores added a two-run single.

WHITE SOX 10, TIGERS 1

Eloy Jimenez hit a grand slam, tripled and drove in four runs, while fellow Chicago rookie Dylan Cease tamed host Detroit over six strong innings. Yoan Moncada hit a two-run homer, Yolmer Sanchez had his first career four-hit game and Tim Anderson, who leads the majors in batting average, added two more of the White Sox's 19 hits. Cease (4-7) allowed one run on five hits. He walked two and fanned eight to end a four-start winless skid.

ORIOLES 5, MARINERS 3

Seattle's Felix Hernandez was bombed for four runs in the first inning and Baltimore went on to beat the Mariners. Hernandez (1-7), who had allowed a total of just two homers in his eight previous starts at Baltimore, was tagged for Anthony Santander's 20th, a three-run blast in the first, and Hanser Alberto's 12th, a solo shot in the fourth, in his five-inning stint. Rookie phenom Kyle Lewis had a home run and a double for the Mariners. The homer, his sixth in 10 major league games, came after a Kyle Seager two-out single in the top of the first. —Reuters

Pakistan's Hafeez out for landmark Sri Lanka tour

LAHORE: Pakistan yesterday left out veteran batsman Mohammad Hafeez for next week's series start against Sri Lanka, who are touring the country for the first time since they were targeted in a terror attack.

Hafeez, 38, was part of Pakistan's fifth-placed World Cup squad but has been kept off due to his commitments in the Caribbean Premier League, said head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq.

"He is not out of our plans," added Misbah. "Whoever is effective for the team will be included in the future." Fellow World Cup team members Hasan Ali and fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi have also been left out due to poor fitness.

Sarfraz Ahmed will lead the team in both the one-day and T20 matches. Middle order batsman Iftikhar Ahmed was recalled to the one-day squad after a four year absence. Cricket tours were suspended in Pakistan for six years after a 2009 assault on the Sri Lankan team bus that killed half a dozen police officers and wounded six members of the visiting team.

Sri Lanka agreed to the current tour after a favourable security assessment. Three one-day internationals will be played in Karachi, the first on September 27. Another three Twenty20 matches will be played in Lahore in early October.

Squad: Sarfraz Ahmed, Babar Azam, Abid Ali, Asif Ali, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Haris Sohail, Mohammad Hasnain, Iftikhar Ali, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Usman Shinwari, Wahab Riaz. —AFP

Giles considers interim coach for England's tour to New Zealand

LONDON: Ashley Giles said on Friday that England could appoint an interim head coach for their tour of New Zealand. Trevor Bayliss stepped down as England coach after the Ashes series against Australia earlier this month.

Replacing the Australian won't be easy after his impressive reign brought England their first 50-over World Cup triumph in July. England will play two Tests and five Twenty20s in New Zealand, which start on November 1 with the Test series ending in early December.

"When we go to the shortlist and interviews, it depends on their circumstances and there will be different circumstances with all these coaches, so if we have to go interim, we will," ECB director of cricket Giles told reporters on Friday.

"I'm not going to talk about who that will be now. Hopefully we won't have to, but that bit is less important than getting the right man for the next four years." England have not advertised the position, with Giles instead gathering interest before a final shortlist is drawn up.

England all-rounder Moeen takes break from Tests

LONDON: England all-rounder Moeen Ali has taken a break from Test cricket after losing out on a central contract for the longest format for the 2019-20 season following a dismal summer. The 32-year-old off-spinner and left-handed batsman lost his place in England's World Cup winning team before being dropped from the test side after the defeat in the first Ashes Test.

"There's some strong candidates out there. You'll know them, I'm not going to go through the list and who is favourite and whatever," he said. "There's some internal, some English and some very good overseas. I'm looking forward to it and it's a big appointment."

Giles was England's limited-overs head coach between November 2012 and April 2014, with Andy Flower head coach of the Test team for the majority of that time. He thinks moving forward with one head coach for both formats of cricket is the best approach, with no potential conflict over certain players needing to be rested or coaches with different styles and experience.

"I think having one voice is important, but accepting that one voice is going to need some time away from the environment and if you've got three very good assistants, it's an opportunity to develop them as leaders," Giles said.

"And again, it's a consistent voice of sorts because the players will know them, so that's how I see it." Giles also confirmed that Eoin Morgan would continue as captain of the limited-overs team, with the focus on the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia next year and has given his "full support" to Test skipper Joe Root.

It was a summer to remember for Morgan, leading England to their maiden 50-over World Cup win and although Root played a key role in that success, he was unable to reclaim the Ashes after the series finished 2-2. "We met probably about a month after the World Cup final and he wanted some time to consider his future, which is just the

"It's just to get away from it a little bit. I feel like I want to enjoy my batting and this will give me a bit of a break," Moeen told ESPNcricinfo. "I want to spend some time with the family. I've been playing for England for five years and it's been quite tough. The intensity is obviously higher in test cricket so this is just to give me a break and then we will see what happens after that."

"I'm not ruling out playing test cricket in the future. I've had long chats and thought about it quite a lot. I just want to give myself a bit of time to refresh my batteries and see where it goes after that." Ali has played 60 tests, 101 one-dayers and 25 Twenty20 internationals - scoring eight hundreds while taking 280 wickets across formats.

He has, however, retained his white-ball contract



Ashley Giles

way Morgs operates," Giles said.

"He's very sensible, very logical and thankfully he rang me a couple of weeks after that and said 'I'm absolutely fully committed to going forward and looking forward to it refreshed'."

Giles is excited for Root to work with a new head coach and create a plan to win back the Ashes in Australia for the 2021-22 series. "I think Joe needs a coach who is going to offer him a bit more structure and a bit more discipline," he said.

"I don't mean discipline with the stick, but a bit more organisation and really work with him on what the DNA of that team is going forwards and what they want to achieve, so it is a tricky balance." —AFP

and is expected to be a key member for 50-over champion England's World Twenty20 campaign in Australia next year. England's director of cricket, Ashley Giles, supported Ali's decision.

"For all the guys, not just Moeen, it's been a really challenging summer," Giles said. "A World Cup and an Ashes back-to-back has had a massive effect on many of these guys psychologically, as well as physically."

"His experience in the first (Ashes) test wasn't a great one, but that's cricket. He's been a great servant for his team. And that's why I encouraged him to leave that option open to come back. "He might just need to go away and freshen up. But he's been a really good servant for this team. And he's still relatively young." —Reuters

Sports

Wonderkid Fati: From African suburb to Barcelona's Camp Nou

Barcelona starlet Fati granted Spanish citizenship

HERRERA: Ansu Fati has made a long trip from the fields of Guinea-Bissau, where he played as a child, to Barcelona's Camp Nou stadium where the 16-year-old is playing with some of the biggest stars in the world.

Fati has made a stirring start to the season, scoring just two minutes into his full La Liga debut on a magical night when he hardly put a foot wrong in front of over 80,000 astonished Camp Nou fans who gave him a standing ovation as he left the field.

He was just seven years old when he first came to Spain and his startling talent meant he was invited to join Barcelona's prestigious youth academy 'La Masia' aged 10. It was an incredible achievement for a boy from the impoverished West African nation that has never been known for football.

Ansu Fati was granted Spanish citizenship on Friday, a government spokeswoman said, meaning he will be able to represent Spain at international level. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's cabinet approved a request made by the justice minister to give the Guinea-Bissau-born forward Spanish citizenship during its weekly meeting, the spokeswoman said.

The player qualified for citizenship because he had completed the required 10 years of residency in Spain. In August, Fati became the youngest player to score for Barcelona in La Liga and on Tuesday, the club's youngest player to play in the Champions League.

Spain's national coach Robert Moreno described Fati's full debut for Barcelona last weekend as "mind-blowing" after he scored one goal and set up another in a 5-2 win over Valencia.

His first major tournament for Spain could come at the Under-17 World Cup in Brazil, which begins on October 26 and ends on November 17. Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde said Friday it would be a "set-back" for Barca if Fati goes to the tournament, when he could miss seven games for his club.

"We will wait for him to be called up first," said Valverde. "But it would be a setback because he is a player that is contributing a lot to us at the moment."

Asked if he would try to persuade Fati to remain with Barcelona, Valverde said: "I don't think he will ask me for advice about it and I don't like giving advice very much because in football the things you know are learned by experience. Everyone has to make their own decisions."

In Sao Paulo, his home neighbourhood in the run-down suburbs of capital Bissau, the children yell "Ansu Fati, Barca player!" as they run around on ochre soil, under the tropical trees. Malam Romisio, who coached Fati as a child, told AFP how the boy used to play football wearing only socks or plastic sandals, easily dribbling the ball past bigger, stronger teammates.

When Fati made his debut with Barca's first team at the end of August, the coach switched his allegiance from Real Madrid. "If he continues like this, he will be a great player," he predicted.

In Guinea Bissau, which is one of the world's poorest and most fragile nations, Fati is a source of national pride. Born on October 31, 2002, he lived in Bissau until he was six. In the house where he grew up, Fati's uncle Djibi Fati shows photos of the footballer as a child, dressed in traditional clothes, recalling how others used to tease him for his love of bread and butter. "Every time he came back from playing football, he would ask for it," he recalls.

When he was still very small, his father, Bori Fati, went to Portugal to look for work, later settling near Seville in southwestern Spain. Bori picked olives, collected empty glasses in nightclubs and even helped build a high-speed rail track, recalls Amador Saavedra, who befriended him in Herrera, some 100 kilometres (60 miles) north of Malaga. — AFP



DORTMUND: File photo shows Dortmund's Moroccan defender Achraf Hakimi (L) and Barcelona's Guinea-Bissau forward Ansu Fati vie for the ball during the UEFA Champions League Group F football match Borussia Dortmund v FC Barcelona in Dortmund, western Germany, on Tuesday. — AFP

New England Patriots dump Brown amid NFL rape investigation

NEW YORK: The New England Patriots released Antonio Brown after just 11 days on Friday amid an ongoing NFL investigation into allegations of rape and sexual assault. Brown, who has denied the claims of rape made in a civil lawsuit in Florida, was shown the door by the Patriots after further revelations emerged in a Sports Illustrated story earlier this week.

The 31-year-old wide receiver played just one game for the Patriots before being cut, catching four passes for 56 yards and a touchdown in a 43-0 rout of the Miami Dolphins. "The New England Patriots are releasing Antonio Brown," the team said in a statement. "We appreciate the hard work of many people over the past 11 days, but we feel that it is best to move in a different direction at this time."

Brown was jettisoned by the Patriots just hours after the Super Bowl champions' coach Bill Belichick cut short a press conference after being peppered with questions about the receiver. Three days after Brown joined the

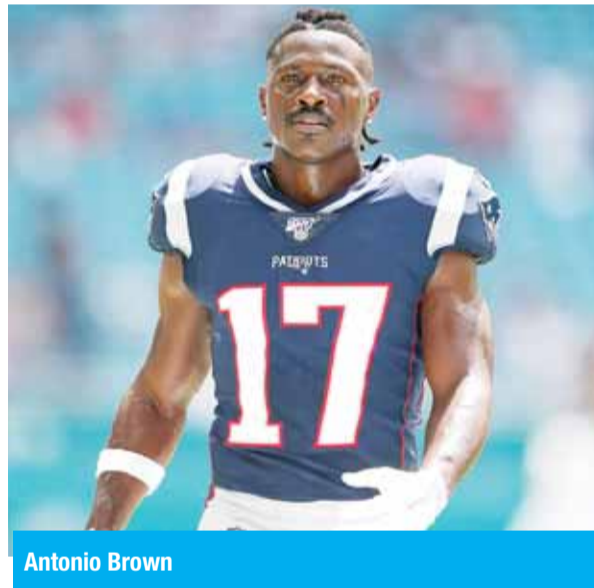
Patriots, his former trainer, Britney Taylor, filed a civil lawsuit in the US District Court in Miami accusing Brown of two incidents of sexual assault in June 2017 and rape during a May 2018 incident in Brown's Miami home.

Brown has maintained any sexual contact with Taylor was consensual and described the legal action as an extortion attempt. Brown also faced a new accusation on Friday according to a Sports Illustrated report after a woman who accused him of an unwanted sexual advance in 2017 received what she called intimidating text messages from Brown on Wednesday night, after the magazine published a story detailing her allegations.

Regardless of the outcome of Taylor's lawsuit, the NFL can take disciplinary action against Brown, and it was clear earlier Friday the Patriots had little intention of dealing with any distraction his off-field troubles might cause.

The league released a statement Friday night saying they are investigating "multiple allegations" and added Brown cannot be placed on the commissioner's exempt list because of his free agent status. "Our office is presently investigating multiple allegations, some of which are the subject of pending litigation. We have as yet made no findings regarding these issues. The investigation is ongoing and will be pursued vigorously and expeditiously."

"As long as Mr Brown is a free agent, placement on the Commissioner's exempt list is not appropriate," the



Antonio Brown

statement said. The Sports Illustrated report said the latest allegations come from a woman Brown hired to paint a mural of him in his home. A phone number he had given her matched the number that sent her text messages on Wednesday in a chain with four other numbers. — AFP

Zidane would quit Real Madrid without backing

MADRID: Zinedine Zidane believes he has the backing of Real Madrid but admits he would leave if he ever felt he had lost the club's support. Zidane has come under scrutiny after enduring his worst ever defeat as Madrid coach on Wednesday, a 3-0 loss to Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League.

The result also followed an underwhelming start in La Liga, which has seen Madrid claim two wins and two draws from games against Celta Vigo, Real Valladolid, Villarreal and Levante. After returning from Paris, Zidane gave his players the day off on Thursday, which surprised those high up at the club, according to reports in the Spanish press.

Asked if he felt like his methods were being questioned, Zidane said in a press conference on Friday: "No, not at all, the opposite. I think the club helps us all

to be strong and supports all the people that work here. "If it's ever not like that it would probably be best to leave." On his decision to give the players a day off, Zidane added: "It's not a question of whether they deserve it or not. We have to give them time off. "They need time with their families, they have to be able to rest. We have seven games in 21 days. They need time away and I understand that."

Madrid face La Liga's early frontrunners Sevilla today, when Zidane will be hoping for a response after his side's miserable performance in midweek. Since Zidane returned as coach in March, Madrid have won seven, drawn four and lost five of their matches in all competitions.

Asked if he regrets coming back, Zidane said: "No, that's easy to answer. It would be easy to say yes in what is a difficult time but it wouldn't be true. I'm happy to be back and to start again. "It's a difficult time at the moment but all I'm going to do is work harder and try to put things right. We all have to try to be together, united. "When I hear all these questions, it makes everything seem gloomy but when you win everything changes. Things look ugly at the moment but you have to keep working." — AFP

rider Marquez's hometown Cervera, can anticipate another mouth-watering duel between the pair.

"Fabio is ready to win a race and, starting next year, fight for the championship," Marquez said after last week's race. Quartararo said he was surprised by his last-ditch qualification for the front row.

"I said to myself I either fall or get on the front row, I didn't think I'd be that fast though," he said of his time on the damp track. Also on the front row is in-form Spaniard Vinales, who started San Marino on pole and came third. In the current world standings, Marquez leads Andrea Dovizioso of Ducati by 93 points with six races left to run. The off-colour Italian however placed 10th in qualifying on his Ducati yesterday.

Qualifying times

1. Marc Marquez (ESP/Honda) 1min 47.009sec, 2. Fabio Quartararo (FRA/Yamaha-SRT) at 0.327sec, 3. Maverick Vinales (ESP/Yamaha) 0.463, 4. Jack Miller (AUS/Ducati-Pramac) 0.649, 5. Aleix Espargaro (ESP/Aprilia) 0.724, 6. Valentino Rossi (ITA/Yamaha) 1.006, 7. Cal Crutchlow (GBR/Honda-LCR) 1.313, 8. Franco Morbidelli (ITA/Yamaha-SRT) 1.363, 9. Joan Mir (ESP/Suzuki) 1.449, 10. Andrea Dovizioso (ITA/Ducati) 1.599. — AFP

Man Utd look to Lingard to do his talking on the pitch

LONDON: Jesse Lingard is reportedly on the verge of a new contract at Manchester United but the midfielder is struggling for form at a club that desperately needs its attacking players to step up. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side started the season in style, sweeping Chelsea aside 4-0 at Old Trafford but have failed to score more than a single goal in each of their subsequent five matches.

They face a tricky-looking trip to West Ham today ahead of Premier League games against Arsenal and Liverpool over the coming month. The departure of Romelu Lukaku to Italy has left Solskjaer light in forward areas, with Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial expected to fill the void. New winger Daniel James has impressed, scoring three times, but until Mason Greenwood's winner against Astana in the Europa League on Thursday, those three players had scored all United's goals so far. That lends weight to fears that United do not have sufficient creativity and goal threat from midfield.

England midfielder Lingard, who came through the youth ranks at Old Trafford, divides opinion among fans and has come in for stinging criticism on social media for his poor form. He was accused of embarrassing the club even before the season started after posting a video that showed him shouting and swearing while on holiday with Rashford in Miami.

Lingard, who has 6.6 million Instagram followers and his own fashion label, J.Lingz, has reportedly been told to focus on his football by Solskjaer, with Rashford given the same advice. Whether or not he has lost his focus, the 26-year-old, who has started three of United's five Premier League matches so far, is struggling to make an impact on the pitch this season.

He has not scored or produced an assist for the club since January and impatient fans are questioning the wisdom of offering him a new deal. Solskjaer spoke up for Lingard after he was substituted during last month's defeat against Crystal Palace, saying he would "continue to be an important part (of our team)".

And England boss Gareth Southgate defended his decision to name Lingard in his squad for the recent Euro 2020 qualifiers. "I think you'd have to say I've seen him have better spells for United," Southgate said. "I think Ole has a young, energetic team, and I think Jesse's pressing and the energy he brings to that has been an important part of what they've tried to do in the first few games."

Lingard has in the past had a knack of coming up with something special when it really counts. He volleyed an extra-time winner against Crystal Palace to clinch the FA Cup in 2016 during Louis van Gaal's final game in charge and the following season he scored in the League Cup final win.

The 2017/18 season, under Jose Mourinho, was a breakthrough campaign for Lingard, who scored 13 goals for United, including some spectacular solo efforts, but last season's return was a modest five goals as the club struggled.

Manuel Pellegrini's West Ham are unbeaten since an opening-day drubbing by champions Manchester City and will be looking to repeat last year's result at the London Stadium, when they beat United 3-1. — AFP

Live		Matches on TV (Local Timings)	
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
West Ham United v Manchester United	16:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 2			
Crystal Palace FC v Wolverhampton Wanderers FC	16:00		
beIN SPORTS			
Arsenal FC v Aston Villa	18:30		
beIN SPORTS HD 1			
Chelsea FC v Liverpool	18:30		
beIN SPORTS HD 2			
SPANISH LEAGUE			
Getafe CF v Real Mallorca	13:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 3			
RCD Espanyol v Real Sociedad	15:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 3			
Valencia CF v CD Leganes	17:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 3			
Athletic de Bilbao v Deportivo Alaves	19:30		
beIN SPORTS HD 3			
Sevilla FC v Real Madrid CF	22:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 3			
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE			
US Sassuolo Calcio v spal	13:30		
beIN SPORTS			
Bologna FC v AS Roma	16:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 7			
US Lecce v SSC Napoli	16:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 4			
UC Sampdoria v Torino FC	16:00		
beIN SPORTS			
Atalanta v ACF Fiorentina	19:00		
beIN SPORTS			
SS Lazio v Parma Calcio 1913	21:45		
beIN SPORTS HD 4			
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA			
Borussia Monchengladbach v Fortuna Dusseldorf	16:30		
beIN SPORTS			
Eintracht Frankfurt v BV Borussia Dortmund	19:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 5			
FRENCH LEAGUE			
Stade Rennais v LOSC Lille	16:00		
beIN SPORTS			
SCO Angers v Saint Etienne	18:00		
beIN SPORTS			
Olympique Lyonnais v Paris Saint-Germain	22:00		
beIN SPORTS HD 6			

25 Frantic French survive Pumas scare in Rugby World Cup nail-biter



26 Braves clinch second National League East title with win over Giants



27 Wonderkid Fati: From African suburb to Barcelona's Camp Nou



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Belgian midfielder Kevin De Bruyne (R) controls the ball during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Watford at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, yesterday. — AFP

City hit eight in Watford demolition

Leicester enjoy VAR-assisted 2-1 victory over Tottenham

LONDON: Manchester City powered to their record Premier League win as the champions scored five times in the first half of an incredible 8-0 thrashing of Watford, while Leicester enjoyed a VAR-assisted 2-1 victory over Tottenham yesterday.

Inspired by Bernardo Silva's hat-trick, Pep Guardiola's side ripped woeful Watford to pieces at the Etihad Stadium, eclipsing a 7-0 success against Norwich in 2013 which stood as their previous biggest top-flight win.

Although City fell one goal short of equalling the biggest Premier League margin of victory — Manchester United's 9-0 demolition of Ipswich in 1995 — their swaggering display was the perfect way to erase the bitter taste from last weekend's shock defeat at Norwich.

Second-placed City move to within two points of leaders Liverpool, who face Chelsea at Stamford Bridge today. "When you shoot on target five times for five goals — the quality of players we had made the difference," Guardiola said.

"What I like the most is normally when it's 5-0 at half time the second half is not serious, it's boring but we did the opposite and we were more aggressive and made a very good second half.

"People still don't understand, journalists, pundits, former players, losing games is part of life. We can lose the games but the important thing is the approach and how we react." City had crushed Watford 6-0 in last season's FA Cup final and they picked up where they left off at Wembley with a goal inside the first minute at the Etihad Stadium.

Kevin De Bruyne played a superb ball in from the right, leaving David Silva with the simple task of poking home from close range for his first goal of the season. The champions doubled their lead in the seventh minute after Watford keeper Ben Foster conceded a penalty with a foul on Riyad Mahrez.

Sergio Aguero coolly slotted in the spot-kick for his eighth goal in six games this term. Guardiola had rested Raheem Sterling, but even without their star winger City were rampant and they made it three in the 12th

minute when Mahrez's free-kick hit Watford's Tom Cleverley in the head and deflected past Foster.

Astonishingly, City scored again in the 15th minute, De Bruyne's corner nodded on by Nicolas Otamendi for Bernardo to head home. By the time Otamendi finished off Aguero's cross in the 18th minute, City had established the fastest 5-0 lead in the Premier League era.

The joint biggest half-time lead in Premier League history wasn't enough for City and Bernardo struck again with a close-range finish after another flowing move in the 48th minute.

Bernardo completed his first Premier League treble on the hour with a tap-in from De Bruyne's cross. De Bruyne set City's new record mark in the Premier League when the Belgium midfielder scored the eighth in the 85th minute.

LEICESTER ON THE RISE

At the King Power Stadium, Leicester proved their credentials to gatecrash the top four as they came from behind to beat Tottenham. Harry's Kane's improvised

29th-minute opener as he stumbled before flicking home put Tottenham ahead.

However, the game swung Leicester's way after Tottenham defender Serge Aurier's goal midway through the second half was ruled out by the finest of margins for offside by VAR. The hosts built on that lift immediately as Ricardo Pereira equalised before James Maddison struck the winner from long range five minutes from time. By contrast, Tottenham have now won just two of their first seven games of the season in all competitions and Mauricio Pochettino admitted the VAR controversy had played a role in their latest flop. Pochettino bemoaned the momentum swing given to Leicester by the long stoppage in play prior to Aurier's strike being ruled out for an extremely marginal offside against Son Heung-min.

"The emotion of the game changed. The belief it gave to Leicester made things happen differently in the last 10 minutes," Pochettino said. "I'm only going to say that we all accept that system in the game and now I am not going to complain." — AFP

Coutinho, Lewandowski fire Bayern go top with Cologne rout

BERLIN: Philippe Coutinho's first Bayern Munich goal and a brace from Robert Lewandowski helped the German champions go top of the Bundesliga with a 4-0 thrashing of 10-man Cologne yesterday. Poland star striker Lewandowski put Bayern ahead with just 150 seconds gone at the Allianz Arena after Joshua Kimmich split the Cologne defence before then doubling the hosts' lead with a header from a corner at the start of the season half to take his league tally to nine in five games.

Coutinho, on loan from Barcelona, claimed his first Bundesliga goal on the hour by converting a penalty at the second attempt, after Lewandowski gave the Brazilian the chance despite being on a hat-trick.

"It was a spontaneous decision, we didn't talk about it before the game," Lewandowski said of giving Coutinho the spot-kick. "It was important for him here at the Allianz Arena, for the future and his confidence. He is a great player and we must all help him."

Kingsley Ehizibue had been shown a straight red card just before the penalty for bringing down Coutinho in the area when he was one-on-one with Cologne stopper Timo Horn.

Coutinho capped a superb display by setting up Ivan Perisic to compound Cologne's misery by slotting Bayern's fourth on 73 minutes. Bayern are top for the first time this season after the win, one point ahead of Freiburg, Schalke, Bayer Leverkusen and RB Leipzig, who can replace them with a win at Werder Bremen later.

Having also netted in the 3-0 Champions League win over Red Star Belgrade on Wednesday, Lewandowski has scored in each of Bayern's last seven games with 11 goals in all competitions.

He is the first to score in the first five Bundesliga games since Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang for Borussia Dortmund four years ago. Bayer Leverkusen bounced back from their shock Champions League defeat by Lokomotiv Moscow in mid-week with a 2-0 win over Union Berlin. —AFP



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Polish forward Robert Lewandowski (L) heads his club's second goal past Cologne's German defender Rafael Czichos during the German first division Bundesliga football match between FC Bayern Munich and 1 FC Cologne in Munich, southern Germany yesterday. — AFP