

Chelsea spoil Griezmann's debut

Goals from Tammy Abraham and Ross Barkley saw Chelsea grab a 2-1 victory against Barcelona yesterday in an exhibition match in Japan. **P15**

THE DAILY tribune



Alex Rodriguez shakes a leg during fiancée Jennifer Lopez concert **14** CELEBS

WORLD **5** US may have downed two Iranian drones: CENTCOM

His Majesty congratulates UK Premier-elect Manama

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa sent a cable of congratulations to Boris Johnson on his election as Britain's next Prime Minister after winning the Conservative Party leadership, wishing him success in bringing further progress and prosperity to the friendly United Kingdom and its people.

HM the King praised the longstanding relations between the two countries and the progress seen by various fields.

His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, also sent cables of congratulations to the newly-elected British Prime Minister.

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Boris to steer Brexit ship

Boris Johnson wins race to become UK's new prime minister

● Mr Johnson used his first address to put the UK's exit from the EU at the top of his to-do list.

● He made it clear his mission is to mobilise Britain from the doldrums.

London

Boris Johnson is to be appointed the next UK prime minister today after beating rival Jeremy Hunt in a Conservative Party leadership race dominated by the government's approach to leaving the European Union.

Mr Johnson, the former foreign secretary and mayor of London, won 92,153 votes to Mr Hunt's 46,656, a margin interpreted as mandate to shape his cabinet around influential loyalists.

A major figure in the pro-Brexit movement, he has



Boris Johnson delivers his victory speech.

billed himself as the man to finally take the UK out of the EU on October 31 – with or without a withdrawal agreement.

This hard-nosed approach has been slammed by some senior party figures and business leaders, who fear a no-deal Brexit could send the UK into a recession.

As it became clear Mr Johnson was going to win, a number

of Remain supporting ministers resigned to signal their objections to his approach.

Outgoing premier Theresa May, who has been in the job since 2016, is stepping down after her withdrawal agreement negotiated with the EU was rejected three times by parliament. Mr Johnson has said his preference is to agree a new deal with Brussels – who have reiterated this would not be possible.

Mr Johnson, the overwhelming favourite from the start, has gained the support of the Eurosceptic right-wing side of the Conservative's and a handful more moderate elements of the party.

He will officially become prime minister on Wednesday after meeting with Queen Elizabeth and selecting his new cabinet.

Mr Johnson used his first address to put the UK's exit from the EU at the top of his to-do list and reminded his followers that the larger battle was to keep Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party out of government. "We know the mantra of the campaign that

has just gone by, it is deliver Brexit, unite the country and defeat Jeremy Corbyn, and that is what we are going to do."

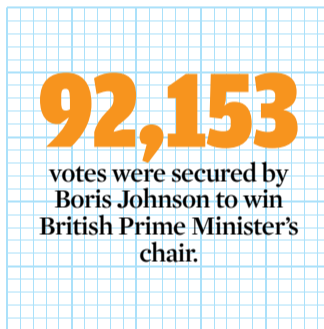
He did so while acknowledging the doubters still harboured reservations. "I know that there will be people around the place who will question the wisdom of your decision," he said. "There may even be some people here who still wonder what they have done."

However, he made it clear his mission was to mobilise Britain from the doldrums.

Mr Johnson said it had been pointed out that his campaign message of "deliver, unite and defeat" had its drawbacks, because it spelt out the acronym 'dud.' But the incoming prime minister countered that it was missing the final word of "energise," spelling out the word 'Dude' in a possible reference to the 1992 film Wayne's World.

"Dude, we are going to energise the country," Mr Johnson said. "The campaign is over and the work begins."

Contd on Page 11



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Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al Khalifa yesterday received Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Bahrain, Dr Abdullah bin Abdul-Malik Al Shaikh, in the presence of Defence Minister General Abdullah Al Nuaimi, and Chief-of-Chief General Diyab bin Saqr Al Nuaimi. The BDF Commander-in-Chief praised the constantly developing firm brotherly relations between the two countries nurtured by their wise leaderships in the various fields.

BACA president congratulated

Manama

Shura Council Chairman, Ali Saleh Al Saleh, has congratulated the President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA), Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, on being awarded the Arab Heritage Personality of 2019 during the opening of the first Arab Tourism and Heritage Forum, organised by the Arab Centre for Tourism Media, on the sidelines of the Salalah Tourism Festival in Oman.

In his cable, the Shura Council chairman said that the honouring is in recognition of Shaikha Mai's efforts to strengthen the inter-relation between the culture and tourism sectors, establish a cultural infrastructure, protect and highlight human heritage for the sake of sustainable devel-



Shaikha Mai

opment, which, he said, has contributed to enhancing Bahrain's cultural role at the international level.

He also praised Shaikha Mai's clear contributions to reviving many heritage sites in Bahrain and inscribing them on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Mr Al Saleh expressed pride in BACA President's achievement, highlighting her efforts to devise and implement plans to preserve the Kingdom's national heritage, keenness to activate cultural exchange and dialogue among civilisations, as well as effective participation in international conferences and gatherings.

He wished Shaikha Mai further success in serving the nation, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

Bahrain backs Britain

Kingdom expresses solidarity with the UK against Iranian stances

Manama

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, yesterday received a phone call from the UK Minister of State for the Middle East at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Dr Andrew Murrison.

The minister expressed his sincere congratulations to Dr Murrison, on his appointment as Minister of State for the Middle East at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, wishing him every success in carrying out his duties.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs noted the distinguished and

proceeding path of the close historic friendly relations between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Kingdom, in addition to its diversity that includes all aspects of political, economic, security and other areas.

"The strong relations underline the depth of bilateral co-op-

eration and promote the common interests of the two friendly countries and peoples, affirming the keenness of the Kingdom to continue consultations and joint co-ordination on various regional and international issues."

Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa reiterated Bahrain's condemnation of Iran's detention of a UK tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, stressing Bahrain's strong solidarity with the United Kingdom against those who threaten its security, and strong rejection of Iran's repeated practices that threaten the safety of maritime navigation and undermine international peace and security.

Dr Andrew Murrison expressed his sincere thanks and appreciation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his pride in the friendly relations between the Kingdom of Bah-



We strongly reject Iran's repeated practices that threaten the safety of maritime navigation.

SHAIKH KHALID

rain and the United Kingdom and the progress it is witnessing at various levels, wishing the Kingdom of Bahrain continued advancement and prosperity.

In a related development, Saudi Arabia said that Iran's inter-

ception of commercial vessels, including its seizure of a British tanker, in Gulf waters was a violation of international law and urged the global community to deter such actions.

"Any disruption of the freedom of international maritime traffic is considered a violation of international law and the international community must do what is necessary to reject it and deter it," the Saudi cabinet said in a statement carried on state media.

Iran said on Friday it had seized Britain's Stena Impero tanker, which had been heading to a port in Saudi Arabia and suddenly changed course after passing through the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf.

Britain described the seizure as an act of "state piracy" and called for a European-led naval mission to ensure safe shipping through the world's most important oil artery.

See Page 6

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Iran seized Britain's Stena Impero tanker on Friday.

OIC Chief condemns Mogadishu bombing

Jeddah

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned roundly the car bomb terrorist attack on July 22, near a checkpoint in Somalia capital Mogadishu, on the road lead-

ing to Mogadishu international airport.

A number of innocent people were killed and several injured.

Secretary-General Dr Yousef Al Othaimen extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved families of the vic-

tims and to the government and people of Somalia, and his wishes for prompt recovery to the wounded.

The OIC, he reaffirmed, is unwavering in its support to the Somali government against all forms of terrorism.

Horror movie 'screened' at summer camp for children

Parents upset over the unscrupulous act; seeks action

● The organising committee of the camp is now under scrutiny.

● Many summer camps are being held for the children of different ages, across the Kingdom.

TDI | Manama
Mohammed Zafran

A summer camp has stirred up controversy after a horror movie was allegedly screened for children as young as five years old.

According to legal norms, horror movies can only be screened for those older than 17 and the movie screened was R-rated.

The organising committee of the camp is now under scrutiny after parents of many children became upset over the movie screening.

However, it is learnt that the organisers, instead of apologising removed the complaining parent's ward from the camp.

Speaking to Tribune, one of the disgruntled parents, said: "My son has been participating in the summer camp for the past few years and we have always been happy with the previous organising committees of the camp.

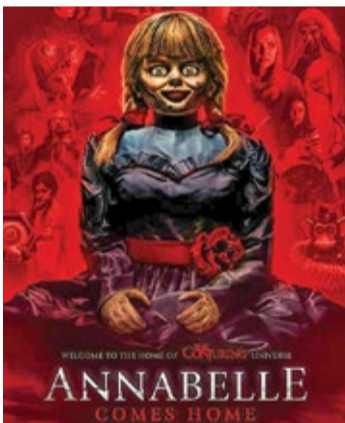


Summer camps are intended to offer lessons in new areas to children.

"However, what happened this year is deplorable. They aired a horror movie for young children to watch. The movie 'Annabelle' was screened for children as young as five years old.

"The camp was for children between the age of 5 and 15. When I questioned them about this they said that the children were given the choice to watch or not.

"This was ridiculous because children obviously want to watch movies and they would



A poster of the horror movie 'Annabelle'.

not think that a scary movie may affect their mental health," said the parent, who did not want to disclose her name.

"As a parent, I mentioned this issue on the camp's WhatsApp group. The group comprised all parents and many were upset about it.

"One of the organisers assured me that this would not happen again. However, to my surprise when my son attended camp four days later he was publicly humiliated by a sports teacher and was asked why his mom

Children obviously want to watch movies and they would not think that a scary movie may affect their mental health.

PARENT

wrote the complaint on the group chat.

"He was also told that the camp was the best summer camp in the Kingdom and was asked to leave if he doesn't like it. When I questioned the teacher, he refused to answer," she said.

"When I wrote this on WhatsApp group, demanding an apology from the teacher, I was blocked from the group. Later, I received a call from the camp reception office, informing me that I could collect 50 per cent of the fee paid for the camp.

"My son, 11 years old, was unwilling to attend that camp after becoming extremely nervous. He was too much scared after watching the horror movie. I am worried about kids who are much younger than him."

"I want authorities to take action as children should not be made to watch movies whose contents are not appropriate for their age."

Many summer camps are being held for the children of different ages, across the Kingdom.

House support for SMEs stressed Manama

Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Fawzia Zainal, yesterday received a delegation comprising chairman and members of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Development Society.

The Speaker praised the SME's role in stimulating the local economy, noting Bahrain's interest in providing support and facilitations to the new business owners of the youth in this vital area to contribute to achieving the sustainable development goals.

Ms Zainal confirmed the parliament's keenness to support the same enterprises by issuing legislation to keep pace with Bahrain's economic vision 2030.

Earlier, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) hailed the stances of His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa for backing the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which play a vital role in spurring growth and supporting the national economy.

Speaking on behalf of the trade and industrial community, BCCI Chairman Sameer Abdulla Nass, he commended HRH the Premier's move, which will impact positively on small and medium businesses that represent the backbone of the national economy.

"HRH the Premier's directives will enable this vital and important sector to play its pivotal role in spurring growth and supporting all national economic sectors," he said, stressed the ability of the private sector to contribute to Bahrain's development momentum.

Minister reviews progress on Ma'aameer Waterfront Development Project

Manama

The Minister of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning, Essam Khalaf paid an inspection visit to check the progress on Ma'aameer Waterfront Development Project yesterday.

He was accompanied by Assistant Undersecretary of Joint Municipality Services, Wael Al Mubarak, General Director of Capital Municipality, Shawqiya Homaidan and Roads, Projects and Maintenance Director, Sayed Bader Alawi.

Mr Khalaf listened to an update on the stages of the project which includes developing Ma'aameer's waterfront, and constructing an entrance to the waterfront by paving a service road for the coast with direction signs for visitors.

He instructed to work on the



Mr Khalaf along with Works Ministry officials review the project progress.

beauty aesthetic of Ma'aameer Coast by planting trees on the sides, floor implementation, providing seats for the coast and walkway visitors, as well as providing some recreational games

The project is considered an effort to achieve sustainable urban development.

MR KHALAF

for children and a number of sports activities in the space next to the waterfront.

The Works Minister stated that the Ma'aameer Waterfront Development Project is part of the Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning's determination to create waterfront and greenery projects for the public.

He added: "The ministry assures that this project extends for 720 meters, as long as the village's front, as a recreational

project, and at the same time it allows physical exercise with the walkway as well as other sports activities."

Mr Khalaf said that the waterfront will be linked with the surrounding roads network to facilitate arrival for visitors. "Approvals for constructing the road have been accepted and work is in progress."

The minister explained that the lightning used in the walkway will be powered by solar energy, as part of the ministry's approach to renewable energy in its current and future projects.

He also explained that the Ma'aameer Waterfront Development Project is considered an effort to achieve sustainable urban development by providing municipal projects that contribute to improving the urban environment for the area.



National Guard Commander, General HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa, yesterday received the Religious Adviser to the National Guard's Hajj mission, Dr Shaikh Rashid bin Mohammed Al Hajeri, along with members of the mission, before their departure to the Holy Lands to perform pilgrimage. National Guard Commander's Office Director, Major-General Abdulrahman Al Saad, and Head of the Commander's Court Division, Colonel Mohammed Abdulla Rabiae, were present. The National Guard Commander welcomed the members of the mission, and urged them to co-operate among themselves and with other pilgrims, adhere to the tolerant precepts of the Islamic religion, and represent the Kingdom and the National Guard in the best way.

Gulf Air welcomes new batch of Bahraini pilots

The company says it is committed to invest in Bahraini workforce



The new batch of Bahraini pilots with Captain Waleed Al Alawi.

● The airline has established a tailored programme through which it recruits and trains Bahrainis to become aviation professionals.

● All pilots have to undergo a challenging screening process before joining the company.

Manama

Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, continues moving forward in keeping Bahrainisation at the core of its recruitment strategy by welcoming a new batch of Bahraini pilots who have recently began operating flights after completing all the necessary vigorous ground and base training courses, the airline said in a statement issued.

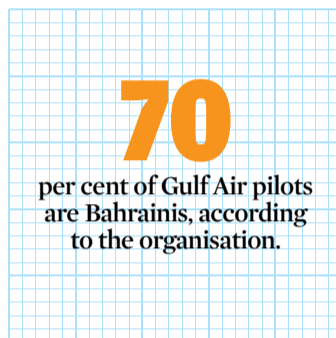
The new batch of pilots will join the national carrier from

a number of neighbouring regional airlines to be part of their national carrier and serve the Kingdom of Bahrain, the statement added.

Gulf Air's Deputy Chief Executive Officer Captain Waleed Al Alawi congratulated the airline's new pilots for passing the selection process, and noted: "With more than 70 per cent of our pilots being Bahrainis, this is a major milestone for us to be a leader amongst carriers from our neighbouring countries by having local, specialised and professional talents representing our glorious Kingdom in the skies. Gulf Air continues to takes pride in being a corporate leader in Bahrainisation in the Kingdom."

The airline's news pilots are: Captain Aref Al Mulla, first officers: Ali Hussain, Khalifa Daleem, Khaled Al Setrawi and Husain Ismail and second officers: Khaled Bubshait and Ali Al Nuaimi.

"I am very happy to join Gulf Air and be one of its ambassadors in the skies. I have worked in regional airlines in neighbouring countries, but nothing



compares returning home and working with my country's national carrier. Being close to my family and friends is amazing," commented Captain Aref Al Mulla.

Overwhelmed with the new assignment, Khalid Al Satri said: "It feels great to be amongst this group of Bahraini pilots joining Gulf Air together on the same time. We thank the airline and its management for giving us this opportunity to return home and be the future captains of Gulf Air."

The company said that it prides itself with its legacy and long experience in aviation; as the airline selects only the top pilot contenders based on their

performance; and in compliance with the high standards that Gulf Air has set for its pilots and with the Bahrain Civil Aviation Affairs safety regulations.

"Safety and security issues are important elements for the national carrier in selecting its pilots, as they undergo a very challenging screening process includes a technical assessment, followed by a comprehensive technical interview.

"Gulf Air is committed to invest in its Bahraini workforce and their career development and as such, it continues to provide opportunities for Bahraini nationals to take over senior positions in the company with 90 per cent of employees that are based at the headquarters in Muharraq being Bahraini along with nearly 70pc of its pilots."

The airline has established a tailored programme through which it recruits and trains Bahrainis to become aviation professionals and continue Bahrain's legacy of being a long-standing reliable source of aviation industry professionals who have served the national carrier and other regional airlines.

Centre denounces Jazeera attempts to incite hatred

● Bahraini families continued to pledge allegiance to His Majesty and the Kingdom's leadership.

Manama

Al Ajam Grand Community Centre condemned the desperate attempts of Qatari channel Al Jazeera to drive wedges and incite sectarianism among the Bahraini people.

It asserted standing one rank under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, affirming support to his policy which is based on noble civilisational principles aimed at achieving the aspirations of the Bahraini people.

In a statement, Al Ajam Grand Community Centre asserted that the despicable campaigns by the Qatari media have strengthened unity of the Bahraini people and their resolve to carry on with the march of growth and prosperity spearheaded by HM the King.

It stressed that Bahrain is immune against all plots to jeopardise its social fabric and unity thanks to the will of the Bahraini people.

Meanwhile, Bahraini families continued to pledge allegiance to His Majesty and the Kingdom's leadership.

The families and tribes of Al Khulafi, Higris, Sharih bin Saif Al Dosary, Salman bin Khalid Al Subaei, (family of the late) Abdulkareem Ali Khashfi, Al Wazzan, Al Qahtani, Al Berdouli, and Al Tameemi, reiterated their strong unwavering allegiance and loyalty to

”
The despicable campaigns by the Qatari media have strengthened unity of the Bahraini people and their resolve to carry on with the march of growth and prosperity spearheaded by HM the King.

AL AJAM GRAND COMMUNITY CENTRE

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, HRH Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, and vowed to defend our immaculate homeland under the leadership of His Majesty the King.

They strongly condemned Qatar-fabricated lies aimed to sow sedition within the united Bahraini people who have reiterated their firm unflinching loyalty to the Kingdom's historic leadership.

They strongly denounced Qatar's Al Jazeera channel attempts to undermine the Kingdom's security and stability airing its so-called "What is hidden is more immense!" programme, which was an

abject failure after its staff became devoid of any of the ethics and rules of professional media in a bid to mislead the public opinion through such blatant lies and false allegations that have been exposed to the whole world.

SCW holds meeting for voluntary retirees

Manama

The Supreme Council for Women (SCW) organised, in co-operation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), an introductory meeting for the beneficiaries of the National Guidance Programme for Bahraini Women.

The programme aims to ensure easy transition from the public sector to the private one for the women beneficiaries of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

It also aims to encourage them to join the entrepreneurship field through starting their own inno-

vative enterprises, or choose any other options or opportunities provided by the labour market.

The meeting highlighted UNIDO's role in supporting and boosting entrepreneurship.

UNIDO's Investment Promotion Expert, Afif Barhoumi, gave a presentation about achieving sustainable development through entrepreneurship and innovation, highlighting the programmes of the Arab International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Investment (AICEI) at the institutional and entrepreneurial level.

He also shed light on the Entrepreneurship Development and Investment Promotion (EDIP)



The meeting highlighted UNIDO's role in supporting and boosting entrepreneurship.

Programme, and its assistance services.

The meeting also highlighted Bahraini women's success stories,

the main investment opportunities available for them and the

challenges they have faced during their entrepreneurial career, in addition to ways to take advantage of the available opportunities and enhance co-operation with entrepreneurship-supporting sides.

The National Guidance Programme for Bahraini Women is in line with the decision taken by the SCW, based on the directives of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of HM the King and SCW President, during its meeting on September 10, 2018, to support the government's initiative to implement the Fiscal Balance Programme.

'We're proud of the military role in Yemen'

Dubai

The United Arab Emirates has announced that it is not withdrawing completely from Yemen, despite a reduction in the number of its troops deployed in the war-torn country.

Writing in an opinion piece published in the Washington Post yesterday, UAE

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash made it clear that the UAE and the rest of the coalition "are not leaving" Yemen.

"While we will operate differently," explained Gargash, "our military presence will remain. In accordance with international law, we will continue to advise and assist local Yemen forces."

The move to reduce the UAE's mili-

tary presence to one of an advise and assist role is, as Gargash stressed in the Post, to allow the crisis in Yemen to be solved through a political solution rather than a purely military one.

"As the United Arab Emirates draws down and redeploys its forces in Yemen, we do so in the same way we began, with eyes wide open," he said.

"There was no easy victory and there

will be no easy peace... But now is the time to double down on the political process."

The minister added that the UAE's move should be seen by the Houthis as a "confidence-building measure to create new momentum to end the conflict".

Throughout the four-year conflict in Yemen, which erupted in 2015, tens of thousands of people have been killed.

Moreover, a famine has ravaged the country while aid has been prevented from reaching much of the population, leading to what the UN has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

As part of the Saudi-led coalition, the UAE has played a key role in the conflict by providing military support and involving the effective use of its Special Forces.

WORLD

Former Chinese premier Li Peng dies at 90: Xinhua

Beijing, China

Former Chinese premier Li Peng -- known as the "Butcher of Beijing" for his role in the Tiananmen Square crackdown -- has died aged 90, state broadcaster Xinhua said yesterday.

The former chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee died of an unspecified illness in Beijing on Monday, Xinhua said.

The ex-premier had previously battled bladder cancer.

Li gained notoriety worldwide as one of the key architects of the brutal breakup of mass pro-democracy demonstrations in the capital on June 4, 1989, and stayed at the top of the Communist regime for more than a decade, while remaining a hated symbol of the repression until his death.

After vast crowds of students, workers and others had been encamped for weeks in Tiananmen Square to demand change, Li proclaimed martial law on May 20, 1989.

Two weeks later, on the night of June 3-4, the military put a bloody end to the protests, killing hundreds of unarmed civilians -- by some estimates more than 1,000.



National People's Congress (NPC) Chairman Li Peng making his final address at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

Though the decision to send in the troops was a collective one, Li was widely held responsible for the bloody crackdown.

Li afterwards frequently defending the decision to fire on the demonstrators as a "necessary" step.

"Without these measures China would have faced a situation worse than in the former Soviet Union or Eastern Europe," he said on a tour of Austria in 1994 as his international pariah status started to wear off.

Sri Lanka orders return of smuggled British garbage



Customs officials inspect the load of a container at a port in Colombo.

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka customs yesterday ordered the return of container loads of hazardous mortuary and clinical waste illegally imported into the island from Britain under the cover of metal recycling.

Customs officials said the racket dating back to 2017 was uncovered after the Colombo port complained last week that an importer had abandoned 111 containers which were emanating a huge stink.

A total of 241 containers had been imported since 2017 and 130 of them had been taken to a free-trade zone ostensibly for recycling and re-export, customs spokesman Sunil Jayaratne said.

"We are taking immediate action to order the re-export of the 111 containers abandoned at the port," Jayaratne said.

"The other 130 which had already been cleared from the port will be dealt under environmental and other laws."

He said the 130 containers

were stuffed with used mattresses and plastic and clinical waste imported in violation of international laws governing the shipping of hazardous material.

A Sri Lankan businessman who imported the containers would be liable for criminal prosecution if he failed to re-export them to Britain, from where they originated, Jayaratne said.

An official at the finance ministry, which is responsible for the customs department, said it would take up the issue with British authorities for exporting hazardous cargo without first checking if Sri Lanka was willing to accept it.

The 111 containers are believed to contain mortuary waste including human organs and had been unloaded and exposed to the elements for the past two years.

The 130 containers taken to a free-trade zone near Colombo International Airport were contaminating water and polluting the air in the area.

US may have downed two Iranian drones: CENTCOM

Washington, United States

A US warship may have brought down two Iranian drones in a stand-off in the Gulf last week that Iran has disputed, the commander of regional forces said yesterday.

"We are confident we brought down one drone, we may have brought down a second," General Kenneth McKenzie, the CENTCOM commander, told CBS news in an interview aboard the USS Boxer, the vessel at the center of the incident.

"As always it was a complex tactical picture, we believe two drones. We believe two drones were successfully -- there may have been more that we are not aware of -- those are the two that we engaged successfully," McKenzie said.

CBS said the drones were reportedly brought down by an electronic signal or pulse that disabled their flight controls. One drone disappeared from US military radars while the second was seen hitting the water.

Iran, which last month shot down a US Predator drone that it said had ventured into its airspace, has denied that it lost any of its own unmanned aerial vehicles, after President Donald Trump announced that the USS Boxer had downed one.

Amid soaring tensions in the region, Trump said he had called off strikes against Iran at the last minute in response to the destruction of the US drone.

A series of attacks on oil tankers in the strategically vital waterway, as well as Iran's seizure of a British-flagged tanker in retaliation for Britain impounding one of its own vessels in Gibraltar, have turned the Gulf into a powder keg.



US Marine Corps General Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr. (2nd-R), commander of the US Central Command (CENTCOM) is shown by coalition spokesman Colonel Turki bin Saleh al-Malki (C-R) reportedly Iranian weapons seized by Saudi forces from Yemen's Huthi rebels, during his visit to a military base in al-Kharj in central Saudi Arabia

"We are confident we brought down one drone, we may have brought down a second. As always it was a complex tactical picture, we believe two drones. We believe two drones were successfully -- there may have been more that we are not aware of -- those are the two that we engaged successfully"

GENERAL KENNETH MCKENZIE, THE CENTCOM COMMANDER, TOLD CBS NEWS

Iranian envoy holds talks in Paris

Paris, France

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian yesterday held talks in Paris with a senior Iranian envoy, as France presses for diplomacy to overcome an upsurge in tensions with the Islamic Republic.

Le Drian told the French parliament he had met Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who Iranian media said brought an unspecified message from President Hassan Rouhani for French counterpart Emmanuel Macron.

"We are now pushing Iran to return to the Vienna agreement," Le Drian said. "I met earlier with President Rouhani's special envoy to tell him that."

Paris has engaged in intense diplomacy to seek to solve the current escalation diplomatically, with Macron's foreign policy advisor Emmanuel Bonne twice visiting Tehran.

In a ramping up of tensions, Iran seized the British-flagged tanker Stena Impero on Friday in the Gulf's strategic Strait of Hormuz.

"We need to put in place as process of de-escalation to reduce the tensions," said Le Drian.

He also said Britain, France and Germany were working on an observation mission for the Gulf. British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt on Monday said a European-led protection force was planned for shipping in the Gulf.

Cristiano Ronaldo will not face rape charges in Nevada

Los Angeles, United States

Juventus star Cristiano Ronaldo will not face any charges over an alleged rape in the US state of Nevada a decade ago, prosecutors said yesterday.

The Clark County District Attorney's Office said it had declined to prosecute the Portuguese star because it "cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt" that a sexual assault occurred.

Kathryn Mayorga, a former model, has claimed that Ronaldo raped her in a Las Vegas hotel in 2009.

The former Manchester United and Real Madrid star reached a financial settlement with her following the incident but has denied allegations of sexual assault.

The district attorney's office

said it had received a report from Mayorga -- who it identified only as "V" -- on June 13, 2009, reporting that she had been the victim of a sexual assault.

Police were unable to conduct an investigation at the time because she declined to say who assaulted her or where it occurred, the office said in a statement, but Mayorga contacted police in August of last year to ask that the case be reopened, at which point she named Ronaldo as the alleged assailant.

"Based upon a review of the information present -

ed at this time, the allegations of sexual assault against Cristiano Ronaldo cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt," prosecutors said. "Therefore, no charges will be forthcoming."

Ronaldo is widely considered one of the greatest footballers in the history of the game, having won the Champions League title five times -- once with Manchester United and four times with Real Madrid.

He also led Portugal to the Euro 2016 title in France.



European-led Gulf force on way

● **Hunt told Parliament that the protection force “will not be part of the US maximum pressure policy on Iran**

● **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps seized the Stena Impero on Friday**

● **Iran impounded the tanker after claiming it failed to respond to distress calls and turned off its transponder after hitting a fishing boat**

● **Britain has said there was no evidence of a collision and said the vessel was in Omani waters, with its transponder switched on**

● **Iranian authorities have said the crew of the British-flagged tanker -- 18 Indians, including the captain, three Russians, a Latvian and a Filipino -- are all in good health**

London, United Kingdom

Britain on Monday said it was planning a European-led protection force for shipping in the Gulf after Iranian authorities seized a British-flagged tanker in a dramatic escalation of tensions in the region.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt condemned Iran's actions as “state piracy” while at the same time emphasising that Britain did not want confrontation.

“We will seek to establish this mission as quickly as possible,” Hunt said, adding that a second warship that Britain has sent to the region would arrive by July 29.

In a ramping up of tensions, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps seized the Stena Impero on Friday in the Gulf's strategic Strait of Hor-



An image grab taken from a broadcast by Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) shows crew members of the British-flagged tanker Stena Impero, after it was seized by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps



“**We will seek to establish this mission as quickly as possible. A second warship that Britain has sent to the region would arrive by July 29.**”

FOREIGN SECRETARY JEREMY HUNT

muz.

The move came two weeks after British authorities seized an Iranian tanker off its overseas territory of Gibraltar on suspicion of breaching EU sanctions against Syria against a backdrop of brinkmanship between Washington and Tehran.

On Mon-

day, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said his country is not seeking confrontation with Britain in a message directed at its likely incoming leader Boris Johnson.

“It is very important for Boris Johnson as he enters 10 Downing Street to understand that Iran does not seek confrontation, that Iran wants normal relations based on mutual respect,” Zarif told reporters during a visit to Nicaragua.

He also accused Britain “of doing the bidding for the

Trump administration”.

Hunt told Parliament that the protection force “will not be part of the US maximum pressure policy on Iran because we remain committed to preserving the Iran nuclear agreement”.

The United States pulled out of the nuclear deal last year.

Protection measures

Iran impounded the tanker after claiming it failed to respond to distress calls and turned off its transponder after hitting a fishing boat.

However, Britain has said there was no evidence of a collision and said the vessel was in Omani waters, with its transponder switched on.

The EU has already expressed its “deep concern” at the move and on Monday German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said: “We don't want any further escalation.”

There have been a number of attacks on tankers in the Strait of Hormuz since May, when the United States boosted its military presence in response to what it called indications of a

“credible threat” from Iran.

The British government had warned its ships to avoid the shipping channel, a chokepoint for about a third of the world's sea-borne oil.

Hunt said the volume of shipping made it impossible to protect every vessel individually.

Questions are being asked in London about why the government was not more proactive in protecting ships after the Gibraltar incident, which provoked fury and a threat of retaliation in Tehran.

The stand-off comes at a sensitive time for Britain, with Prime Minister Theresa May stepping down on Wednesday over her failure to deliver Brexit.

Release Gibraltar ship

Iranian authorities have said the crew of the British-flagged tanker -- 18 Indians, including the captain, three Russians, a Latvian and a Filipino -- are all in good health.

The fate of the Stena Impero depends on an investigation into its alleged breach of international maritime rules,

they added.

The incident on Friday began hours after a court in the tiny British territory of Gibraltar extended by 30 days the detention of the Iranian-chartered tanker, Grace 1, which was seized on July 4.

“To all the countries that are calling on Iran to release the tanker, we ask them to tell Britain the same thing,” the Iranian spokesman said on Monday.

Hunt has said Britain wants sufficient guarantees that the oil was not bound for Syria.

The incidents come amid escalating tensions between Tehran and Washington, which have left European nations caught in the middle.

In May 2018, President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the landmark 2015 deal that put curbs on Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief.

Britain, France and Germany were also signatories and have been trying to keep the deal alive.

The US administration reimposed tough sanctions on Iran, which has retaliated by increasing its enrichment of uranium beyond limits set in the nuclear accord. Last month, Trump called off air strikes against Iran at the last minute after Tehran downed a US drone.



Iranian Revolutionary Guards patrolling around the British-flagged tanker Stena Impero as it's anchored off the Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas

British-Iranian woman transferred back to Tehran prison

London, United Kingdom

A British-Iranian mother jailed in Tehran since 2016 has been returned to prison after being held in the mental ward of a public hospital for nearly a week, her husband said Monday.

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was kept chained and under heavy guard for six days which she says

left her “broken”, according to her husband Richard Ratcliffe.

The 40-year-old detainee, who is serving a five-year term for sedition, was returned to Tehran's notorious Evin prison -- used to hold political prisoners -- on Saturday, he said.

She was then allowed to see her mother and five-year-old

daughter Gabriella the following day, Ratcliffe added.

“I am all right, broken, but I survived,” Zaghari-Ratcliffe said, in comments relayed by her husband in a lengthy statement detailing her detention in the psychiatric ward.

“I wasn't allowed to leave the room, as I was chained to the

bed. It was proper torture.

“I am relieved I am back to prison,” she added.

Ratcliffe, who has spent the last three years doggedly campaigning for his wife's release, said he hoped Iranian medical officials might now consider releasing her on health grounds.

“The whole experience was

deeply traumatising,” he said of her transfer to the mental unit.

“Her lawyer will be pressing the Health Commission to finally rule that Nazanin is not fit to stay in prison and can be granted unconditional release.”

Zaghari-Ratcliffe was arrested in April 2016 as she was leav-

ing Iran after taking their then 22-month-old daughter to visit her family.

She was sentenced to five years for allegedly trying to topple the Iranian government.

A project manager with the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the media group's philanthropic arm, she denies all charges.

US finally gets a new Pentagon chief as Senate confirms Esper



Mark Esper

Washington, United States

The US Senate yesterday confirmed former soldier Mark Esper as secretary of defense, filling America's longest-ever Pentagon leadership vacuum as Washington faces mounting tensions with Iran and struggles to end its long war in Afghanistan.

President Donald Trump's second Defense Department chief will take over nearly seven months after the shock departure of Jim Mattis, the deeply respected career US Marine who broke with Trump over policy towards the Middle East and Afghanistan.

Two others were made acting defense secretary this year to fill the void -- including Patrick Shanahan, who served a six-month temporary stint but resigned for family reasons in June and withdrew from consideration for the full-time top post.

Esper sailed through the confirmation process in lightning speed. He earned broad bipartisan support and was confirmed by a vote of 90 to 8.

He is expected to take his oath of office later Tuesday, according to the Pentagon.

Esper's confirmation brings ballast to a Pentagon destabilized by the leadership revolving door since late December, and as the world's primary military power is engaged in two wars -- in Syria and Afghanistan -- and being tested by Tehran.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, the top Republican in Congress, hailed Esper, who served a two-year stint as secretary of the US Army beginning in 2017, as "a thoroughly well prepared nominee" who has the respect of the national security community and can hit the ground running.

Russia denies S.Korean airspace violation

● Moscow said two South Korean jets on Tuesday approached the Russian aircraft

Moscow, Russia

Moscow denied yesterday that its aircraft had violated South Korean airspace, saying its jets had carried out planned drills over international waters.

"Two Tu-95 strategic bombers of Russia's aerospace forces carried out a planned flight in the airspace above the neutral waters of the Sea of Japan," the defence ministry said in a statement.

It also denied that the South Korean planes fired warning shots.

Moscow said two South Korean jets on Tuesday approached the Russian aircraft near the easternmost islets of Dokdo, disputed islands controlled by the South but claimed by Japan where they are known as Takeshima.

The South Korean aircraft carried out "unprofessional manoeuvres" by crossing the



South Korea's Air Force scrambled fighter jets and fired warning shots at Russia bombers

Russian jets' flight path and "threatening their safety," the ministry said, adding that the South Korean crews did not contact their Russian counterparts.

Russia said its bombers did not veer off course and were more than 25 kilometers (15 miles) away from the islands.

"It was not the first time that South Korean pilots tried to unsuccessfully interfere with the flights of the Russian aviation forces above the neutral waters of the Sea of Japan," the ministry said in a statement.

Officials in South Korea said it was the first time a Russian plane had violated South Korean airspace.

South Korea's Air Force scrambled fighter jets and fired warning shots, an official at the Joint Chiefs of Staff said.

But Moscow said that there was no "warning fire" from South Korea otherwise the Russian jets would have retaliated.

"Had the Russian pilots felt under threat the response would not have been long in coming," the statement said.

Trump praises Pakistan's role in 'progress' on Afghan peace



US President Donald Trump shakes hands with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan (L) during a meeting in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, DC

● Trump warned he could end the conflict in a matter of days through force and "Afghanistan would be wiped off the face of the Earth"

Washington, United States

President Donald Trump on Monday hailed Pakistan's help in advancing peace talks in Afghanistan, a marked shift in tone as the United States seeks an accord with the Taliban to end almost 18 years of war.

Speaking from the Oval Office alongside Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, Trump also warned he could end the conflict in a matter of days through force and "Af-

ghanistan would be wiped off the face of the Earth," but preferred dialogue.

Pakistan was the Taliban's chief sponsor when it took power in neighbouring Afghanistan during the 1990s.

Its influence over the group, which has waged an insurgency since it was ousted from power by US-led forces in 2001, is seen as key in facilitating a political settlement with the government of President Ashraf Ghani.

"We've made a lot of progress over the last couple of weeks, and Pakistan has helped us with that progress," said Trump.

"A lot of things are happening for the United States, and I think a lot of great things are going to be happening for Pakistan under your leadership," he added as he turned to face his counterpart.

Van with \$140m of meth smashes into police car

Sydney, Australia

Australian authorities have uncovered a US\$140 million stash of amphetamines after an alleged criminal's run-in with the law saw his drug-filled van crash into an officer's car outside a police station.

Security camera footage released on Tuesday showed a white van ploughing into the front of a vehicle parked outside a suburban Sydney police station before speeding off down the street.

Police said the alleged 26-year-old driver was pulled over about an hour later, less than a 10-minute drive away from the accident scene.

The van was said to be packed with moving boxes containing 237 kilograms (523 pounds) of methylamphetamine, an illegal drug commonly known as "ice",



The van was said to be packed with moving boxes containing 237 kilograms (523 pounds) of methylamphetamine

with a total estimated street value of AUS\$200 million.

Australia has a growing problem with meth, with a government report released last year showing the country has proportionally more users than most nations. The van driver

has been charged with large commercial drug supply, negligent driving, and not giving particulars to police.

He was due to appear in a Sydney court later on Tuesday. No one was injured in the incident.

Kuwait receives \$270 million in war reparations

Geneva, Switzerland

Kuwait has received another \$270 million in compensation for Iraq's 1990 invasion, the UN said yesterday, as it aims to wrap up reparations more than a decade after Saddam Hussein's death.

The United Nations Compensation Commission was set up in 1991, the same year that a US-led coalition drove former Iraqi dictator Hussein's forces out of Kuwait.

The commission has been authorised to pay out \$52.4 billion (46.8 billion euros) to individuals, corporations, government bod-

ies and other organisations that incurred losses directly caused by the Iraqi leader's incursion and occupation of Kuwait.

The funds come from a levy on the sale of Iraqi oil and petroleum products.

With the latest payment, the commission said it had paid out a total of \$48.7 billion, leaving \$3.7 billion left to be distributed.

Those funds are tied to a single claim submitted by the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation losses in oil production and damage to oil field assets, the commission said in a statement.

Facebook to fix kids app flaw allowing chats with strangers

San Francisco, United States

Facebook acknowledged yesterday that a flaw in its Messenger Kids service allowed children get into group chats with people who were not approved by their parents.

The leading social network said it has been shutting down the group chats involved and notifying thousands of parents that their children many have unintentionally connected with strangers.

"We recently notified some parents of Messenger Kids account users about a technical error that we detected affecting a small number of group chats," Facebook said in response to an AFP inquiry.

"We turned off the affected chats and provided parents with



Representative picture

additional resources on Messenger Kids and online safety."

Technology news website The Verge first reported on the development, publishing a copy of an alert informing parents that the flaw allowed a child's friend to create a group chat involving people who were not on their child's list of approved connections.

Group chat involvement was still limited by restrictions set by the parents of whoever got it going.

Facebook in December 2017 introduced a version of its Messenger application designed to let children between six and 12 years old connect with others under parental supervision. No in-app purchases are allowed. The social media giant said at

the time that it created the app as a safe environment because many children had been going online without safeguards.

Facebook's rules require that children be at least 13 to create an account.

The slip comes as Facebook works to rebuild the trust of users and regulators, and could prompt scrutiny as to whether the leading social network violated law regarding the privacy of children.

It also comes as the California-based internet giant continues to deal with the aftermath of revelations that personal data on tens of millions of users was hijacked by the political consultancy Cambridge Analytica, which was working on the Donald Trump campaign in 2016.

Trump's 'go home' comments to harm Republicans

Members of the GOP must now must adopt or accommodate the US president's racial attitudes – or leave

HUSSEIN IBISH

Donald Trump is determined to make 2020 the "send her back" election. That ugly taunt is shaping up to be the defining slogan of his campaign.

The US president has moved dramatically to solidify his position as the champion of white Christian Americans. Moreover, he is forcing many apprehensive Republicans to go beyond coded dogwhistles and embrace his openly strident white nationalism.

Mr Trump has looking for a target to replace his 2016 opponent, Hillary Clinton.

Last week, he found them in a squabble between House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and four newly elected Democratic congresswomen, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib and Ayanna Pressley.

Ms Pelosi dismissed challenges to her authority and the Democratic Party leadership by these young left-wing lawmakers. They in turn accused her of marginalising women of colour.

Mr Trump immediately smelled blood.

Despite being no fan of Ms Pelosi, Mr Trump insisted that she is not a racist, even though the young Democrats never directly accused her of that. He even seemed to be using her as a proxy for himself.

The four women are ideal targets for his politics of rage: they are stridently left wing, young, female, non-white, and, best of all for his purposes, in the cases of Ms Omar and Ms Tlaib, Muslim.

That places them far outside the normative American identity Mr Trump believes to be under attack. They typify the diverse new socie-



President Trump said that Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley

ty he hates and fears.

He unleashed a series of largely false Twitter attacks against them, even demanding they "go back" to "the countries" they came from, though only Ms Omar is an immigrant.

The age-old taunt of "go back to where you came from" is the quintessence of US intolerance.

Mr Trump's own Equal Opportunity Employment Commission

identifies this as an exemplary form of unlawful harassment based on national origin.

In the private sector, anyone saying this would be immediately sacked. It has been unacceptable for decades.

At a North Carolina rally on Thursday, the president denounced the congresswomen as

"anti-American," despite his own extraordinary history of denounc-

US should explore new frontiers

RASHMEE LALL

Space, the final frontier, is having a bit of a moment. This year marks the 50th anniversary of man's first Moon landing. Accordingly, nostalgia for the Apollo 11 mission is everywhere – on TV, in newspapers and magazines, and in an immersive app that promises that "we can all take part in the famous mission", via augmented reality.

Space is also featuring heavily in the pronouncements of politicians. From India to Britain and the US, space exploration is being used to convey ambition, adventurousness and heroism.

After the successful launch on Monday of Chandrayaan 2, India's most ambitious Moon mission ever, prime minister Narendra Modi tweeted that it illustrated "the determination of 130 crore (1.3 billion) Indians to scale new frontiers of science".

Over in Britain, on the cusp of his elevation to the office of prime minister, Boris Johnson wrote a column comparing Brexit to the first Moon landing. "If they could use hand-knitted computer code to make a frictionless re-entry to Earth's atmosphere in 1969," he said in reference to the relatively primitive technology available to the US at the time, "we can solve the problem of frictionless trade at the Northern Irish border... It is time this country recovered



Buzz Aldrin descends a ladder onto the lunar surface during the Apollo 11 mission.

some of its can-do spirit."

And on July 4, US Independence Day, Donald Trump promised that his country would be "back on the Moon very soon". He added that "some day soon, we will plant the American flag on Mars".

There are numerous problems with both Mr Johnson and Mr Trump's assertions. Brexit is not

comparable to a Moon landing, in technical or political terms. As for Mr Trump's attempt to conjure up grand visions of 21st-century American space dominance, the two key questions that arise are "how" and "why?"

It is worth noting that the US rapidly scaled back funding for its space programme within a mere three years of its histor-

ic 1969 lunar triumph. Having demonstrated its technological prowess by beating the USSR to earth's closest cosmic neighbour, the US moved on to other Cold War priorities.

Fifty years on, the reasons remain valid. Space missions are enormously expensive. Most countries find it hard to justify the cost. Other than China,

India and the UAE, which are all achieving national firsts and exploring a number of practical and scientific possibilities with their missions, governments are not particularly keen to commit resources to launching humans into space.

Accordingly, Japan's plans to explore the moon seem to hinge on Toyota, its largest carmaker,

President Donald Trump's pledge to put a man back on the Moon only looks to the past

1983

George Brett batting for the Kansas City Royals against the New York Yankees, has a game-winning home run nullified in the "Pine Tar Incident".

1987

Hulda Crooks, at 91 years of age, climbed Mt. Fuji. Crooks became the oldest person to climb Japan's highest peak.

1998

Russell Eugene Weston Jr. bursts into the United States Capitol and opens fire killing two police officers. He is later ruled to be incompetent to stand trial.



2001

Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the last Tsar of Bulgaria when he was a child, is sworn in as Prime Minister of Bulgaria, becoming the first monarch in history to regain political power through democratic election to a different office.



Ayanna Pressley should "go back" to their home countries.

ing other presidents, the FBI, CIA, Congress, courts, the press and many other core national institutions – not to mention his fawning over such hostile dictators as Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un. When he targeted Ms Omar, the crowd erupted in chants of "send her back," echoing the campaign mantra "lock her up" which was used against Mrs Clinton. The president beamed.

Mr Trump and his base evidently believe that only they are "real Americans," entitled to howl about everything they dislike, while people of colour are citizens only under the sufferance of white Christian Americans and cannot assert contrary views without being treasonous. Congressional Republicans publicly defended the president but privately expressed alarm at

the depth of the racism beginning to characterise his re-election campaign. They are used to Mr Trump's antics, but were taken aback to see them taken up by large crowds and redefining the party ethos. They convinced Mr Trump to claim he did not like the chant and that he moved quickly to stop it, although video evidence refutes that.

Mr Trump wants to run against these women as a proxy for all the social and demographic changes he and his supporters so fear. And until the Democrats have a nominee, he can pretend that he is.

This limited retreat lasted less than 24 hours.

By Friday, Mr Trump was back to extolling the "tremendous patriotism" of the crowd and retweeting comments by a notorious British anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim extremist praising the chant.

This clarifies several things. Mr Trump and the Republican Party are running the next election mainly on race, championing white Christian Americans against others.

The uneasy coexistence of the traditional, conservative Republican Party and Mr Trump's essentially white nationalist movement is over. Republicans now must adopt or accommodate his racial attitudes or, like the Palestinian-American congressman Justin Amash, leave the party on principle.

Most Republican officials want Mr Trump to run his campaign on the current strength of the US economy. But the truth is that he inherited sustained growth from Barack Obama, and it could slow, or even tank, in coming months.

Besides, Mr Trump is clearly determined to double down on the racial politics that secured his 2016 victory.

This is the game he wants to play and, at this stage, the genie probably cannot be put back in the bottle. Expect to hear regular chants of "send her back" from now on.

Some Democrats, like the young congresswomen, may also welcome an identity-based fight. Unlike Ms Pelosi, who is fixated on defeating Mr Trump in 2020, Ms Ocasio-Cortez, Ms Omar, Ms Tlaib and Ms Pressley have a much longer-term agenda to push their party to the left and secure control of it. For them, 2020 is just the start.

But to defeat Mr Trump, Democrats should avoid fighting on his terms. Far better to focus on the interests of all middle and working-class voters, for example regarding healthcare and income.

Mr Trump is determined to bitterly divide the country. His eventual opponent's best bet is uniting it with a programme to improve the lives of ordinary people and counter tribal chauvinism with genuine, inclusive patriotism.

Naturally, Mr Trump wants to run against these women as a proxy for all the social and demographic changes he and his supporters so fear. And until the Democrats have a nominee, he can pretend that he is.

Eventually he will face a real adversary who cannot be told to "go back to the country you came from". And with the right approach, that person should be able to send him back to Manhattan.

CIVILIAN'S TRIBUNE

Philippines' reforestation success is unparalleled



The most outstanding example of reforestation is Philippines, an archipelago of 7,100 islands, with a total land area of 3,00,000 sq km and a population of 104 million people. Way back in 1900, about 65 per cent of its land mass was covered in forest canopy. Large-scale commercial deforestation continued after that, so by 1987, it was reduced to 21pc. The government thereafter committed itself to steady reforestation, and by 2010, the forest covered 26pc. It has now introduced a remarkable pro-

gramme in which it makes it mandatory for each elementary, high school and college student to plant 10 trees before graduating. The sites where they plant and the location-appropriate plant are advised to them. Many educational experts have stressed on the need to utilise the educational system as an avenue for propagating ethical and sustainable use of natural resources among youth to ensure the cultivation of a socially responsible and conscious citizenry.

Gloria Santamaria

...s in space

America's 21st-century moonshot is not the moon. Now is the time for the US to open up new frontiers, not return to the old.

tem. Unsurprisingly then, Lori Garver, former deputy Nasa administrator, recently declared "Let's not repeat the past. Let's try to save our future."

This is not to discount the possibility of resource generation from space, which many countries and private companies are eyeing. Platinum and other rare metals could lie beneath the moon's surface. There is talk of solar energy farms on mountain tops at one of the lunar poles. Entrepreneurs dream of producing drinking water from lunar ice. Some have theorised that lunar water harvests will enable human beings to use the moon as a launch pad for missions deeper into space.

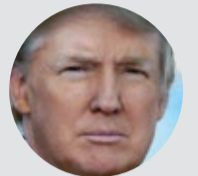
All of this is hypothetical and far in the future. It's fine for countries such as China and India to run inexpensive and efficient space programmes. Both want to showcase their abilities and promote the status of engineering and scientific development at home. These are desirable objectives for developing economies. Some of the same calculations will also be at work in plans for the first Emirati astronaut's voyage in September.

But why should the US want to return to the moon? America's 21st-century moonshot is not the moon. Now is the time for the US to open up new frontiers, not return to the old.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



When we rip down and totally replace a badly broken and dilapidated Barrier on the Southern Border, something which cannot do the job, the Fake News Media gives us zero credit for building a new Wall. We have replaced many miles of old Barrier with powerful new Walls!

@realDonaldTrump

02



Congratulations to Prime Minister @narendramodi and #ISRO for the successful launch of #Chandrayaan2. Incredible work by the two women leading the expedition and their team at #ISRO. We in the region are tremendously proud of the milestone reached by our friend and neighbor India.

@PresRajapaksa

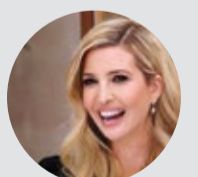
03



Congrats to @ISRO on the launch of Chandrayaan 2, a mission to study the Moon. We're proud to support your mission comms using our Deep Space Network and look forward to what you learn about the lunar South pole where we will send astronauts on our #Artemis mission in a few years

@NASA

04



50 years after the Apollo 11 moon landing, I'm excited to visit Lockheed Martin apprenticeship programs in Littleton, Colorado to learn how the company is preparing students and workers for the next frontier! #Pledge-toAmericasWorkers

@IvankaTrump

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

business

US sanctions on Chinese oil trader 'illegal': Beijing

Beijing, China

China yesterday called US sanctions against Chinese companies "illegal", a day after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced he was putting a leading oil importer on a blacklist.

Pompeo said Monday that the US was imposing sanctions on Zhuhai Zhenrong and its chief executive Li Youmin as part of a "maximum pressure campaign" for trading in Iranian crude oil.

"They violated US law by accepting crude oil," he said.

But Beijing said Tuesday it has "consistently and resolutely opposed unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States," slamming the sanctions as "illegal".

"The Chinese side has expressed firm opposition and strong condemnation of the relevant US authorities that have sanctioned Chinese enterprises," said foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying at a regular press briefing.

"The Chinese side has repeatedly stressed that energy cooperation between Iran and the international community, which includes China, falls within the framework of international law and is reasonable and legitimate, and must be respected and protected."

Pompeo's announcement over the sanctions was the latest move by Washington to ratchet up economic pressure on Tehran over its alleged military activities in the



We strongly urge the US to immediately correct wrong practices and stop illegal sanctions against Chinese companies and individuals. China will take all necessary measures to firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of its enterprises and individuals

HUA CHUNYING

Middle East and its nuclear programme by taking aim at business partners.

But Hua said the US was disregarding "the legitimate rights and interests of all parties".

Between them, Zhuhai Zhenrong and Chinese state refiner Sinopec are responsible for nearly all the Iranian crude that China imports.

NBB names Subah Abdullatif Al Zayani head of retail banking

TDI | Manama

The National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) yesterday named Subah Abdullatif Al Zayani as its Head of Retail Banking.

Al Zayani brings to NBB more than 12 years of retail banking experience having held several senior positions at some of Bahrain's largest local and regional banks. Most recently, he served as Deputy Head of Retail Banking at Kuwait Finance House-Bahrain.

Commenting on the appointment, Jean-Christophe Durand, CEO of NBB, said, "We are pleased to have brought on board such a well-established senior Bahraini banker who knows and understands the needs of our customers, both in the local market and beyond, and how we must effectively continue to evolve and improve the way we cater for them."

Al Zayani added, "With a strong team in place and a vision and strategy that puts customers at its heart, I am confident that we can continue to enhance the value proposition that keeps NBB at the forefront. This includes further diversifying our product and



I am confident that we can continue to enhance the value proposition that keeps NBB at the forefront

SUBAH ABDULLATIF AL ZAYANI

service offering, strengthening efficiency and fast-tracking the adoption of modern, digital services – all of which continue to make banking more rewarding and seamless for customers of NBB."

CEO: Mumtalakat to continue investing in education sector

TDI | Manama

Mahmood H. Alkooheji, CEO of Mumtalakat yesterday stressed the need to continue investing in Bahrain's education sector saying, "investing in education is an investment in the Kingdom's economy and future."

"This is why we chose to invest in Elm - to address the increasing demand for education and help build a more productive and prosperous society," he said.

Alkooheji was speaking to the President of AUBH, Dr Susan E. Saxton visiting Mumtalakat to discuss the ongoing preparation of the American University of Bahrain (AUBH) to welcome its inaugural students.

Mumtalakat is an investor in the Bahrain-based Elm Education platform (Elm), established for developing the education sector in Bahrain and the Middle East and North Africa region, through which AUBH will be operated.

AUBH is the first purpose-built, American-style university in the Kingdom. Located in Riffa, the campus occupies a 75,000 square metre plot and features modern classrooms, labs, a state-of-the-art auditorium, student commons and athletic facilities.

The University, designed to cater for up to 4,000 students, is slated to open its doors in September with the introduction of dedicated Colleges of Engineering, Architecture & Design, and Business & Management.

Speaking to the President of AUBH, Dr Susan E. Saxton,



Dr Susan E. Saxton, the President of AUBH with Mahmood H. Alkooheji, the CEO of Mumtalakat

Alkooheji pointed out that the private higher education institutions account for only one-third of total enrolments in the Kingdom while "the demand for higher education continues to grow at 6pc."

Elm, Alkooheji said, will continue to seek additional investments in the education sector in Bahrain and the wider MENA region. "On average globally, each

additional year of education a child receives increases his or her adult earnings by about 10 per cent."

Commenting on the AUBH's preparations to welcome its inaugural students, Dr Susan E. Saxton told Alkooheji: "With a strong emphasis on graduate outcomes and employability, AUBH combines dynamic instruction, quality faculty,

state-of-the-art premises and socially-active campus life to cultivate a future generation of well-rounded, confident professionals who will thrive in a competitive global environment."

Elm has also entered into a joint venture with a prominent operator of American curriculum K12 schools, to co-own and operate an American curriculum school in Bahrain.

eazyNet welcomes GPS as latest member



Officials following the deal signing held at Eazy's headquarters in Manama

TDI | Manama

Eazy Financial Services (Eazy), a Bahraini Fin-Tech company and provider of the first biometric payment network in the region, has signed a strategic partnership agreement with Global Payment Services (GPS) adding GPS to eazyNet's Biometric Payment Network.

GPS is one of the leading Third

Party Processors specialised in outsourcing electronic payment services globally and in the MENA region.

This comes in line with Eazy's efforts to enable eazyNet customers to conduct facilitated payments, and benefit from using fingerprint authentication to complete payments in the Kingdom of Bahrain and abroad.

The signing ceremony, held at Eazy's headquarters in Manama, was attended by Nayef Tawfiq Al Alawi, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Board Member at Eazy, Ali Arab, CEO of GPS, alongside several members of the Board and executive team from both Companies.

Over the coming months, Eazy, in collaboration with GPS,

will offer premium solutions and financial products to the banking sector through eazyNet.

The deal enables GPS's banking customers to perform transactions including cash withdrawals and purchases at any Point-of-Sale, both in the Kingdom of Bahrain and abroad, through the fingerprint authentication system (eazyNet).

Boris takes the Brexit Baton

● **Johnson defeated Hunt by 92,153 votes to 46,656 votes cast by members of the Conservative party. He will officially replace outgoing Prime Minister Theresa May on Wednesday**

London, United Kingdom

British business leaders yesterday urged incoming prime minister Boris Johnson to avoid taking the country out of the European Union without a Brexit deal.

Johnson has said he will seek a new divorce agreement with Brussels but will leave without one if that is the only way to keep to the latest October 31 exit deadline.

"The new prime minister must not underestimate the benefits of a good deal," said Carolyn Fairbairn, director general of the Confederation of British Industry, Britain's biggest employers' organisation which represents some 190,000 businesses.

"It will unlock new investment and confidence in factories and boardrooms across the country. Business will back you across Europe to help get there."

The British Chambers of Commerce, which also represents thousands of firms, urged Johnson to spell out how he would avoid a chaotic no-deal Brexit.

"The message to Boris John-



Leadership contender Jeremy Hunt (L) shakes hands to congratulate new Conservative Party leader and incoming prime minister Boris Johnson (R) as the results of the leadership contest are announced at an event in central London



Ongoing Brexit uncertainty is depressing business activity, but the financial and related professional services industry remains very clear that a no-deal Brexit is still the worst of all outcomes. We hope the new prime minister can find an economically viable way through the ongoing political impasse in parliament and with the EU 27

CHIEF EXECUTIVE MILES CELIC

THE CITYUK

son from business communities is over -- and we need you to get around the UK couldn't be simpler: the time for campaigning

"Companies need to know, in concrete terms, what your government will do to avoid a messy, disorderly Brexit on October 31, which would bring pain to communities across the UK and disruption to our trade around the world."

Johnson was elected leader of the governing Conservative Party on Tuesday and will take over as prime minister on Wednesday.

He replaces Theresa May, who quit after trying and failing to get her deal with Brussels through the British parliament, forcing her to delay Brexit twice.

He will be great!: Trump

Congratulations to Boris Johnson on becoming the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. He will be great!" He's a different kind of a guy, but they say I'm a different kind of a guy too. We get along well. I think we'll have a very good relationship



Congrats to Boris

Congratulations to Boris Johnson for being nominated as prime minister," the incoming head of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen said in Paris. "I am looking forward to having a good working relationship with him."



Ready to rework

"We look forward to working constructively with PM Boris Johnson when he takes office, to facilitate the ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement and achieve an orderly Brexit," said EU negotiator Michel Barnier. "We are ready also to rework the agreed declaration on a new partnership in line with EUCO guidelines."



The bankers' friend

"Boris Johnson has won the support of fewer than 100,000 unrepresentative Conservative Party members by promising tax cuts for the richest, presenting himself as the bankers' friend, and pushing for a damaging No Deal Brexit," said Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the main opposition Labour Party. "But he hasn't won the support of our country," he said on Twitter.



It's 'do or die'

I wish Boris Johnson well as prime minister with his 'do or die' pledge to deliver Brexit on October 31," said Britain's Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage. "It is 'do or die' not just for Brexit but for the future of the Conservative party too. Does he have the courage to deliver for the country?"



Carrie: Britain's new 'first girlfriend'

London, United Kingdom

Boris Johnson will enter Downing Street as British prime minister for the first time today amid speculation over whether his far younger girlfriend, Carrie Symonds, will accompany him.

Twice-married Johnson, 55 -- declared the Conservative Party's new leader on Tuesday and now set to be confirmed as premier by Queen Elizabeth II -- is dating the party's 31-year-old former director of communications.

Symonds is an avid environmental campaigner and previously worked on his re-election campaign as London mayor in 2012.

The two have been a public, but largely discreet, couple since the serial philanderer split last year from his wife of 26 years.

In the run-up to Johnson's takeover, British newspapers have been rife with rumours over Symonds' future role as the nation's "first girlfriend" and whether she will also live at his 10 Downing Street headquarters. He refused to discuss the matter on several occasions during the campaign.

The couple are believed to have been living together in south London after Johnson and now estranged wife Marina Wheeler, 55, confirmed their separation last Sep-



Carrie Symonds (Courtesy of the Sun)

tember. Symonds was thrown into the spotlight in June when neighbours there called the police after they overheard her screaming at him during a late-night row.

Symonds yelled "get off me" and "get out" amid the sound of things being smashed, according to a recording made by one neighbour and given to The Guardian.

The couple have reportedly not been living at the residence since the incident.

Attempted smear

Symonds is the daughter of Matthew Symonds, a co-founder of *The Independent* newspaper, and Josephine McAfee, a former lawyer there with whom he had an extra-marital affair.

She grew up in southwest London, attending the exclusive Godolphin and Latymer private school before studying theatre studies and history of art at Warwick University in central England.

Symonds began working for the Conservatives in 2010 as a marketing director for MP Zac Goldsmith, and first came into contact with Johnson by working on his mayoral campaign.

She went on to hold various press jobs at party headquarters, including director of communications, but left that role last year.

The Daily Mail reported earlier this month that she had quit after being accused of unau-

thorised expenses and leaking stories to the media that were damaging to outgoing prime minister Theresa May.

'Introduced gradually'

The new prime minister's aides are said to be divided on how to handle the relationship -- and whether Johnson should pose for photos with Symonds when he first enters Downing Street.

Johnson had four children with now-estranged wife Wheeler -- his eldest daughter is just five years younger than Symonds -- as well as a daughter resulting from a 2009 fling.

During a court battle relating to that birth, it was alleged he had had another child out of wedlock, but it remains unclear and Johnson has refused to comment.

He and Symonds are reportedly set to wed next year once he has divorced, with some advisers reportedly advocating she keep a low profile until then.

"We are struggling with this," *The Daily Mail* quoted one source as saying.

"Some say it would be inappropriate for her to be on the steps holding his arm. She should be introduced gradually."

Johnson will be the first unmarried prime minister since Edward Heath in 1970.

If the pair were to marry, he would become the first British prime minister to wed while in office for 250 years.

Pound wobbles

Key figures around 1415 GMT

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Pound/dollar: | ▼ at \$1.2456 from \$1.2476 at 2100 GMT |
| Pound/euro: | ▼ at 89.62 pence from 89.85 pence |
| Euro/dollar: | ▼ at \$1.1157 from \$1.1209 |
| Dollar/yen: | ▲ at 108.13 yen from 107.87 yen |
| London - FTSE 100: | ▲ 0.7pc at 7,565.06 points |
| Frankfurt - DAX 30: | ▲ 1.7pc at 12,501.01 |
| Paris - CAC 40: | ▲ 1.1pc at 5,625.49 |
| Tokyo - Nikkei 225: | ▲ 1.0pc at 21,620.88 (close) |
| Hong Kong - Hang Seng: | ▲ 0.3pc at 28,466.48 (close) |
| Shanghai - Composite: | ▲ 0.5pc at 2,899.94 (close) |
| New York - Dow: | ▲ 0.2pc at 27,227.10 |
| Brent North Sea crude: | ▲ at \$63.22 per barrel |
| West Texas Intermediate: | ▲ at \$56.25 |

London, United Kingdom

The pound bounced briefly higher yesterday before falling back again after arch-Brexititeer Boris Johnson was announced as Britain's next prime minister.

Markets had widely expected the results and the pound got a brief boost once they were announced before slipping lower again to \$1.24 in afternoon London trade.

Meanwhile, the pound's slump against other major currencies helped boost the London stock market and the gains held into the afternoon.

Asian stocks climb

Elsewhere, Asian stock mar-

kets had risen earlier in the day, tracking overnight gains on Wall Street.

As trading got underway in the US on Tuesday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average headed gently higher on a batch of mostly solid earnings reports and a budget agreement between congressional leaders and the White House.

Traders are now focusing on an upcoming Federal Reserve policy meeting at which the US central bank is expected to cut interest rates, with the main question being the size of the cut.

On oil markets, prices were essentially unchanged while traders kept tabs on the rumbling Iran crisis.

IMF cuts Mideast growth projections

● The latest forecast was once again full of downgrades, with small downward revisions for Germany and Japan, but much larger cuts for Brazil, Mexico, Russia, India and South Africa

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

The International Monetary Fund yesterday slashed its economic growth forecast for the Middle East and North Africa to the worst level in more than a decade over Iran sanctions and regional unrest.

In its World Economic Outlook update, the global lender projected economic growth for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan this year would be 1.0 per cent, its worst since the IMF put them in one group in 2009.

The downgrade, the fifth in a year, is a half percentage point lower than its April projection.

The reduction is in large part due to a change in the IMF's forecast for Iran's growth "owing to the crippling effect of tighter US sanctions," the lender said.

"Civil strife across other economies, including Syria and Yemen, add to the difficult outlook for the region."

The price of oil, the main driv-

er for revenues in the region, will also impact growth, the IMF added.

In 2018, the region saw 1.6pc growth, down from 2.1pc in the previous year.

The IMF in April projected Iran's economy will shrink by a steep 6.0pc this year, its worst performance since it contracted by 7.7pc in 2012.

The new report provided no updated figures on the Iranian economy, the second largest in the region behind Saudi Arabia, but other reports predicted a deeper recession in the Islamic republic.

One report jointly prepared by the London-based Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and Oxford Economics, released early this week, said Iran's economy is expected to shrink by 7.0pc this year.

The report also predicted regional growth to be just 0.6pc due to Iran sanctions and instability in the region.

US sanctions on Iranian oil exports were renewed in May and aim to halt Tehran's overseas crude sales, which provide key revenues to the Islamic republic.

The IMF also attributed the lower growth projections to rising US-Iran tensions centred on recent incidents in the Gulf and unrest in several Arab nations.

"Civil strife in many countries raises the risks of horrific humanitarian costs, migration strains in neighbouring countries, and, together with geopolitical tensions, higher volatility

IMF economic growth forecasts

| | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|------------|------------|
| World | 3.2 (-0.1) | 3.5 (-0.1) |
| Advanced economies | 1.9 (0.1) | 1.7 (0.0) |
| United States | 2.6 (0.3) | 1.9 (0.0) |
| Euro area | 1.3 (0.0) | 1.6 (0.1) |
| Germany | 0.7 (-0.1) | 1.7 (0.3) |
| France | 1.3 (0.0) | 1.4 (0.0) |
| Italy | 0.1 (0.0) | 0.8 (-0.1) |
| Spain | 2.3 (0.2) | 1.9 (0.0) |
| Japan | 0.9 (-0.1) | 0.4 (-0.1) |
| Britain | 1.3 (0.1) | 1.4 (0.0) |
| Canada | 1.5 (0.0) | 1.9 (0.0) |
| Emerging & developing economies 4.1 (-0.3) | | 4.7 (-0.1) |
| Russia | 1.2 (-0.4) | 1.9 (0.2) |
| Developing Asia | 6.2 (-0.1) | 6.2 (-0.1) |
| China | 6.2 (-0.1) | 6.0 (-0.1) |
| India | 7.0 (-0.3) | 7.2 (-0.3) |
| Latin America & Caribbean | 0.6 (-0.8) | 2.3 (-0.1) |
| Brazil | 0.8 (-1.3) | 2.4 (-0.1) |
| Mexico | 0.9 (-0.7) | 1.9 (0.0) |
| Middle East & North Africa | 1.0 (-0.5) | 3.0 (-0.2) |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 3.4 (-0.1) | 3.6 (-0.1) |
| South Africa | 0.7 (-0.5) | 1.1 (-0.4) |
| World Trade Volume | 2.5 (-0.9) | 3.7 (-0.2) |

in commodity markets," the IMF said.

The IMF raised its forecasts for Saudi economic growth this year by 0.1 percentage points, to 1.9pc, and to 3.0pc in 2020.

It attributed the boost to the development of the kingdom's

non-oil-related sectors.

The world's largest oil exporter has substantially cut power and fuel subsidies as well as imposed fees on expatriates and a five-percent value added tax as part of a reform programme to decrease dependence on oil.

Warns of 'precarious' 2020

Washington, United States

Global trade tensions and continued uncertainty are sapping the strength of the world economy, which faces a "precarious" 2020, the International Monetary Fund warned yesterday.

Trade conflicts are undercutting investment, and the IMF urged countries not to use tariffs in place of negotiations.

In its quarterly update of its World Economic Outlook the IMF trimmed the global forecast issued in April by 0.1 this year and next, with growth expected to hit 3.2 per cent in 2019 and 3.5pc in 2020. But the report sounded the alarm, saying things could easily go wrong.

"The projected growth pick-up in 2020 is precarious" and presumes there will be "stabilization in currently stressed emerging market and developing economies and progress toward resolving trade policy differences," the IMF said.

However, the United States, which is at the center of most of the trade tensions, saw one of the rare upgrades in the report, as it got a short-term boost from growth in the early part of the year.

The IMF raised the US GDP forecast by three-tenths to 2.6pc for 2019, but weakening demand, in part due to the trade

conflicts and tariffs, points to "slowing momentum over the rest of the year."

The US economy is then expected to slow to 1.9pc in 2020.

China, which is the main target of US trade actions, was already experiencing a slowdown. But "the negative effects of escalating tariffs and weakening external demand have added pressure," the report said.

The report downgraded Chinese growth by a tenth this year and next, to 6.2pc and 6.0pc.

Avoid policy missteps

The IMF cautioned that there are an abundance of "potential triggers" for the situation to turn negative quickly, including the possibility of more US tariffs on China or on European autos, as well as a no-deal Brexit and the high debt levels.

"While the tensions abated in June, durable agreements to resolve differences remain subject to possibly protracted and difficult negotiations," the report said.

The latest forecast was once again full of downgrades, with small downward revisions for Germany and Japan, but much larger cuts for Brazil, Mexico, Russia, India and South Africa -- countries that were the engine for global growth in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.



The last raffle draw winner of "Sparkling summer" campaign, Hasmat Mutaleb, receiving the prize of 100gm Gold Bar from Mohammed Rafeek - branch head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds in the presence of other officials from Malabar Gold & Diamonds

Ahli United Bank honours top staff pacesetters



AUB's Group CEO & Managing Director Adel El-Labban congratulated the six winning finalists at the event held at AUB's headquarters in Bahrain

TDT | Manama

Ahli United Bank held an award ceremony to honour the winners of the first edition of innovate@AUB.

The initiative aims at engaging employees in driving innovation and empowering them to ideate and test new solutions to support organic growth and better deliver on customers' needs and expectations.

AUB's Group CEO & Managing Director Adel El-Labban congratulated the six winning finalists at the event held at AUB's headquarters in Bahrain in conjunction with parallel ceremonies beamed live by video conferencing from sister banks in Kuwait, Egypt and the UK.

Launched earlier in the year, 'innovate@AUB' is an ongoing and open opportunity platform for all AUB staff to present new

ideas and approaches which have the potential to transform the way AUB does business and serves customers.

The first edition attracted over 90 entries from across AUB's regional network, with six proposals making it to the winning podium.

Addressing attendees at this pan-Group event, El-Labban said: "As an idea-driven bank, it is exciting to recognise forward-thinking colleagues who are driving positive change and moving AUB forward. All participants are winners through their pro-active contribution."

"This initiative is part of AUB's ongoing plans to remain financially agile and digitally relevant as we continue to build on our strengths in adapting to the ever-changing banking landscape and in staying ahead of the competitive and technological curve," said El-Labban.

CAMPUS **campus**

Minister inspect procedures to join Abdullah bin Khalid College

TDT | Manama

Following the directives issued by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to establish the Abdullah Bin Khalid College for Islamic Studies, the General Secretariat of Higher Education at the Ministry of Education has started receiving students wishing to enroll in this college to study the bachelors program in Sharia and Science Of the graduates of the academic year 2018/2019 from the religious and Jafari institutes and from public and private schools whose cumulative rates are not less than 80% or equivalent.



Dr. Majid Al Nuaimi, Minister of Education during his visit

Dr. Majid Al Nuaimi, Minister of Education and Chairman of the Higher Education Council made an inspecting visit to the registration place at the ministry s Hall in Isa

Town, met a number of students and their parents, and reassured the progress of the registration process in this college.



Minister of Education Dr. Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi, with MP Dr. Sawsan Kamal as they discuss the educational services provided by the ministry and the developmental and construction projects to be implemented during the coming period. Kefaya Al Anzoor Director of Organizations & Committees Affairs also attended the meeting



Minister of Education Dr. Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi during a meeting with MP Fadhel Al Sawad. During the meeting, the Minister presented the services provided by the Ministry to citizens and the future programs. The Minister also discussed with the MP a number of topics related to educational services in his constituency. Kefaya Al Anzoor Director of Organizations & Committees Affairs also attended



Minister of Education Dr. Majid Al Nuaimi with MP Ahmed Al Salloom during a meeting. It was also attended by Jaffar Al-Shaikh Assistant Undersecretary for Special and Continuing Education, and Kefaya Al Anzoor Director of Organizations & Committees Affairs



Minister of Education Dr. Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi during a meeting with MP S. Falah Hashim. Minister briefed him on the educational services provided by the Ministry and the construction programs to be implemented in the Northern Governorate. Kefaya Al Anzoor Director of Organizations & Committees Affairs also attended

AUBH campus nears completion

The American University of Bahrain campus will be ready to welcome its inaugural students in September 2019

TDT | Manama

With over 95 per cent of construction completed, Bahrain's first purpose-built American-style campus will soon be home to the new American University of Bahrain (AUBH).

The University's main structures have been completed and the internal furnishings are currently being installed. The University will be ready for full handover in early August. The brand new, state-of-the-art campus mirrors those found in the best American universities and is designed to foster interaction and collaboration among students, faculty and the community.

The AUBH campus is located in Riffa, with easy access from two main highways and conveniently located near many restaurants and stores. Built on a 75,000 square meter plot of land with building structures totalling approximately 21,500 square meters, the campus was designed by US-based global master-planners and architects Ayers Saint Gross (ASG). ASG is globally renowned for designing many prominent US university campuses with a stu-

dent-centric focus.

The campus buildings form a welcoming, aesthetically pleasing, and open design that encourages interaction and recreation. Its innovative and ergonomic design complements the magnificent and sweeping structures to enhance the learning and social experience for the student and faculty communities alike. Water designs adorn the campus's landscape, creating a learning oasis with lush green colours in the middle of the desert.

The modern-structured buildings include a Welcome Centre for Administration and Student Services, an "Academic Quad" with four dedicated three-story academic buildings, one for each College. The campus also boasts a Sports Centre with a full gym and basketball court, an outdoor Football Field, and a Student Commons where students will enjoy social time outside of the classroom. The academic buildings house fully-equipped interdisciplinary labs and studios, high-tech lecture halls and classrooms, seminar and case study rooms, an extensive and innovative library, and a grand auditorium built for over 250 visitors.

Dr. Susan E. Saxton, Founding President of AUBH expressed her pleasure with achieving this milestone, "We are excited to see our beautiful campus come to life and to welcome the inaugural class of 2019 in September. The AUBH campus is unique in so many ways; we want to bring a truly American-style experience to the region and establish a model of international quality standards that will support the students' life-long educational journey."

"AUBH was created to support the Kingdom's efforts in up-scaling the country's academic quality and advancing its status as an educational role model for the Arab region; in this regard, we designed a campus that would support educational excellence and assist students in excelling to great heights in their chosen profession," she added.

Senior Associate at Ayers Saint Gross Architectural Firm, Michelle Moseley, said, "It give us great pleasure to work on this first-of-a-kind university in the Kingdom of Bahrain and bring the American-style campus to life. Inspired by the culture of the region, our aim was to create an environment that would enhance the student experience and create a space for students, faculty and staff to connect."

Environment and sustainability played a major role in the campus design. The physical layout of the campus was taken into consideration to reduce energy consumption and respond to local environmental conditions. Green spaces are a very prominent feature across the campus with over 400 trees with 12 different species, to provide a variety of colors and textures. In addition, over 9,000 square meters of shrubs, groundcover and grass will be planted on the University premises.



A graphic image of AUBH Campus

celebs

Jennifer Lopez and Alex Rodriguez



Alex Rodriguez shakes a leg during fiancée Jennifer Lopez concert

Los Angeles

While American singer-actor Jennifer Lopez performed live at the Philadelphia for 'Its My Party' concert tour, her fiancée Alex Rodriguez showed off some dance moves in the front row with his daughters. According to US Weekly, Alex can be seen dancing with his daughters, Natasha, 14, and Ella, 11, and the singer's daughter, Emme, 11. A video taken at the concert on Saturday showed him jumping up and down as his bride-to-be sings her hit number "Dance Again." The 43-year-old former New York Yankees star also showed his support for the 49-year-old

singer in one of her recent YouTube uploads. In that video, Alex reassured the pop star after what she called a "tough" show. "It was the best show I've seen so far," he said, complimenting his fiancée and her backup performers. "You guys killed it! And you showed why you're a champion, baby. You were down and you still came back up and had the best show." He continued: "You don't see how great you are. You really have no idea. Baby, nobody's looking at steps. People are looking at how beautiful you look and how great you sound."



Selena Gomez parties with friends in Italy to celebrate her 27th birthday

Los Angeles

Selena Gomez

American pop singer Selena Gomez turned 27 today and she is celebrating the special day by travelling to Italy with her close friends. According to E-News, after serving as the maid of honour at her cousin Priscilla DeLeon's wedding in Texas over the weekend, Gomez flew overseas for a birthday trip. Photos show the 'Wizards of Waverly Place' star strolling on the streets of Rome with her friends, including producer Andrea Iervolino, on Monday were seen making noise around the social media. The singer was seen wearing a flowing green dress and having lunch at restaurant Pierluigi in the Italian city. A source told E! News that, "Selena arrived for lunch with a group of friends. The table shared several dishes such as raw fish, tagliatelle

with lobster, pasta with vodka sauce and various salads." "They were chatting and laughing the entire time," the insider continues. "No candles, cards or cake, but they did have a dessert of ice cream and tiramisu." The 'Wolves' singer has been receiving a lot of birthday wishes from her friends and fellow celebrities on social media. "We can all agree today is a national holiday, Happy birthday Selena Gomez," Ryan Seacrest wrote on Instagram alongside a picture with the singer. "I just love her a lot and her life has made a profound impact on mine and anyone who knows her. Happy birthday, angel!" the pop-singer's BFF Courtney Lopez wrote on social media. Gomez, who stepped away from the spotlight in 2018, recently opened up about spending quality time with herself. "Last year, I took a lot of time off," Gomez shared on Coach's Dream It Real podcast. "I think that I needed a moment to myself because I do feel like I was growing and changing."

R. Kelly to remain in custody while travelling to New York

Los Angeles

Singer-songwriter R. Kelly, who is currently being held without bond in Chicago, has been ordered to remain in custody while travelling to New York City, where he will face a separate indictment alleging the sexual abuse of underage and minor girls. According to the Chicago Tribune, as cited by People, Kelly will be transported to a federal courthouse in Brooklyn for his August 2 court hearing, after which he will be returned to Chicago, ahead of a separate hearing, which is scheduled for September.



R. Kelly

Margot Robbie is 'perfect casting' for 'Once Upon A Time in Hollywood': Quentin Tarantino

Los Angeles

Just a few days before the release of his ninth directorial 'Once Upon A Time in Hollywood', filmmaker Quentin Tarantino opened up about his fondness for actor Margot Robbie, who was his first choice for the film. "One of the luckiest things that happened to me in the course of making the movie was to make it right now and have Margot out there. I mean, she was such perfect casting that I didn't have a second choice," Entertainment Weekly quoted the director as saying.



Margot Robbie

Britney Spears, Sam Asghari attend 'Once Upon A Time in Hollywood' premier

Los Angeles

After the two spent some great time together in Miami in June, Britney Spears and Sam Asghari made an appearance at the 'Once Upon A Time in Hollywood' premiere on Monday night. This comes as the couple's very first appearance together at a premiere.

Spears who recovered after being admitted at a mental health facility seemed to be doing fine. She was wearing a stunning scarlet red bodycon dress with a tiny cutout in the middle. Adding more glam to her look was a glittery silver choker necklace and a pair of chunky black heels. Asghari donned a Navajo white suit with a black tie to break the monotony. The couple happily posed for photos on the red carpet. Sharing the picture on her Instagram handle, Spears wrote, "Our first premiere."



Britney Spears and Sam Asghari

Mariah Carey returns to CAA after four years

Los Angeles

American singer-songwriter Mariah Carey is back with her previous music agency Creative artist agency (CAA) for worldwide after a span of four years. In 2015, Carey had moved to United Talent Agency (UTA) from CAA. According to Variety, the five-time Grammy award winner has released some of the best-selling albums of all time, including 'Music Box,' in her thirty-year career. 'Music Box' reportedly raked in more than 28 million in sales, while 'Daydream' was Carey's highest-selling album. Her other albums, including her self-titled debut album 'Mariah Carey,' 'Emotions,' 'The Emancipation of Mimi,' 'E=MC2' and 'Caution' also have chart-topping singles. The 49-year-old singer's hit single 'All I Want for Christmas is You,' from her 1994 holiday album 'Merry Christmas,' re-enters the charts every holiday season, even setting a Spotify one-day streaming record last New Year's Eve with 10.8 million plays. The hit is just one of many records the pop-star has achieved. She became the solo artist with the most No. 1s in chart history on the Billboard Hot 100, and has also spent a record 79 weeks at No. 1 on the Hot 100 throughout her career, which is more than any other artist in the entire U.S. history.

Scarlett Johansson flashes engagement ring for first time



Scarlett Johansson

Los Angeles

Scarlett Johansson flaunted her engagement ring during her latest comic-con appearance, and it is as blingy as it can get! The 34-year-old Hollywood star, for the first time, showed off her bond stone flitted on her finger by fiancé Colin Jost, during a Marvel event. Dressed in black and white David Koma pantsuit coupled with Gianvito Rossi PVC pumps and the bling on her engagement finger, the 'Black Widow' star looked absolutely fabulous, reports People. After dating for over two years, Johansson and Jost got engaged in May. In May 2017, the duo was seen getting cozy at the 'Saturday Night Live' season 42 wrap-up party. A source told E! News at the time that they were "hooking up" and it had "been going on for a bit" at that point. The two made their official debut as a couple at the American Museum of Natural History Museum Gala on December 2017.

Markella to star in 'Lord of the Rings'

Los Angeles

Actor Markella Kavenagh is the first star to join the cast of Amazon's highly-anticipated 'Lord of the Rings' series. Although the details of Kavenagh's character are being kept under wraps, according to sources, she will be playing a character named Tyra, reported Variety. Kavenagh is known for starring in the sequel series of the Australian film 'Romper Stomper' as well as for roles in the shows 'Picnic at Hanging Rock' and 'The Cry'.



Markella Kavenagh

James Cameron congratulates 'Avengers: Endgame' for beating 'Avatar' box-office record

Los Angeles

The official Twitter handle of 'Avatar' shared a picture of Iron Man who seemed to be in an 'Avatar' disguise, and wrote, "Oel Ngati Kameie, I see you Marvel - Congratulations to Avengers Endgame on becoming James Cameron the new box-office king." According to The Hollywood Reporter, 'Endgame' surpassed Avatar (2009) to become the top-grossing film of all-time at the worldwide box office, not adjusted for inflation. The Marvel super-hit film, which has earned \$2.8 billion at the global box office, achieved the remarkable feat after being re-released in theatres with roughly six minutes of new footage in a bid to surpass 'Avatar'.



Marvel chief Feige and his entire team announced the milestone late Saturday afternoon after taking the stage at San Diego Comic-Con. "A huge congratulations to the Marvel Studios and Walt Disney Studios teams, and thank you to the fans around the world who lifted Avengers: Endgame to these historic heights," Disney Studios co-chairman and chief creative officer Alan Horn said in a statement. On Friday, the film smashed the box office and collected \$2.7892 billion, \$500,000 behind 'Avatar's' \$ 2.7897 billion. As of Sunday, 'Endgame's' total was \$2.790 billion, according to Disney and as reported by The Hollywood Reporter.



Mariah Carey

SPORTS

Chelsea spoil Griezmann's debut

● **Tammy Abraham and Ross Barkley spoil Antoine Griezmann's Barcelona debut as Chelsea win in Japan**

● **Frank Lampard's side prevail 2-1 in Saitama in pre-season friendly**

AFP | Saitama, Japan

Goals from Tammy Abraham and Ross Barkley saw Chelsea grab a 2-1 victory against Barcelona yesterday in an exhibition match in Japan.

World Cup-winning French striker Antoine Griezmann and former Ajax midfielder Frenkie de Jong made their unofficial debut for the Spanish giants, pleasing some 51,126 fans who cheered every move during the star-studded game.

Chelsea striker Abraham opened the scoring in the 34th minute by pouncing on a mistake by Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets who attempted to clear the ball.

But with Chelsea midfielder Jorginho applying pressure, the ball rolled towards Abraham who only had to step past rushing goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen and gently send it into



Barcelona's Antoine Griezmann, right, in action with Chelsea's Andreas Christensen

the net.

Chelsea coach Frank Lampard was all praise for his young striker.

"Tammy, he is a goal scorer. He is hungry for goals," he said.

Despite facing a transfer ban, Lampard said Chelsea's two-game tour in Japan showed he had a "competitive" and "determined" team.

"What I have learned about

players was that they are a good strong group, a determined group. I am very happy," he said.

"There is more work to do but it's been a good trip. It's been positive in all senses," he said.

Minutes after the first goal, Chelsea midfielder Christian Pulisic showed off his speed and footwork to infiltrate the Barca defence, but his left footer went just wide.

Barcelona went on the offensive in the second half, with substitute striker Carles Perez leading the way.

But superb saves by Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga repeatedly denied Barca any attempt to equalise.

In the 55th minute Perez zipped past three Chelsea defenders but his left toe kick finish was not good enough to get past Arrizabalaga.

A few minutes later, he dashed deep into the left side to feed a high-speed cross to striker Malcom, but Arrizabalaga again denied them.

'Dangerous' Griezmann

Chelsea made it 2-0 with less than 10 minutes left as midfielder Barkley picked up a cross in front of the box and curled it into the net, with substitute keeper Neto getting a touch but unable to block it.

Just before injury time, Barcelona got a free kick just outside the box but midfielder Ivan Rakitic's shot went above the bar.

Rakitic however quickly re-deemed himself in injury time, picking up a cross and firing a lightning right footer that went deep into the net for a consolation goal for Barcelona.

Barca coach Ernesto Valverde, echoing Lampard, said the match was a good test that showed signs of excellence as well as areas to improve.



Lotto Soudal rider Caleb Ewan celebrates after crossing the finish line

Ewan wins again as Alaphilippe keeps Tour lead

● **Caleb Ewan won his second stage of the Tour with a thrilling sprint, after Jakob Fuglsang crashed out**

AFP | Nimes, France

Caleb Ewan sprinted to his second victory on the Tour de France yesterday as Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe kept the overall lead after stage 16, where Geraint Thomas fell but finished with all the main contenders.

As France experienced a heatwave defending champion Thomas mis-timed a curb and was left with a gash on his left leg after hitting the tarmac hard on the 177km run around the southern city of Nimes.

After his third fall during this Tour, Team Ineos' sports director Nicolas Portal said Thomas felt fine.

"He's OK, he needed another bike. All his left side is a bit messed up but nothing serious," he said.

"We have to refocus after the rest day," added Portal.

Thomas remains 1min 35sec behind Alaphilippe in the overall standings ahead of three

challenging days in the Alps.

He also tumbled after flying over a barrier in the wild atmosphere in Brussels on the opening day, and again on the road to Saint-Etienne on stage eight.

This time the 33-year-old had no problem getting back to the pack on a flat stage with no wind to split the peloton.

Ewan meanwhile was following up his victory on stage 11 at Toulouse and with Nimes melting under 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit) the Australian was favourite for a repeat performance, this time edging Italian Elia Viviani on the line.

Some fans stayed away due to the extreme afternoon heat on this southern French route, but the conditions failed to slow the peloton as it sped past the celebrated regional vineyards and olive groves.

One of the great pre-race favourites Jakob Fuglsang, the Criterium du Dauphine champion, pulled out with 25km to go after falling and hurting his hand.

Dehydration was a major issue as team cars were carrying an average of 200 water bottles, many of them with added minerals and saline with riders expected to drink 15 of the half litre bidons each.

Sri Lanka's Malinga to play T20s after quitting ODIs

AFP | Colombo

Veteran Sri Lankan pace bowler Lasith Malinga yesterday confirmed he will retire from one-day international cricket after the first match against Bangladesh but hopes to play T20 cricket.

Malinga invited fans to his farewell ODI at the R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Friday and said the cricket board agreed to his request to retire from the 50-over format of the game.

Posting a video message to his fans on his wife's Facebook page, Malinga said he felt no ill will towards officials and players who may have tried to push him out of the team.

The 35-year-old said he was sidelined by selectors two years ago but was able to prove his value to the national team at the recent World Cup

England's Roy looking to make Test grade

AFP | London

England opener Jason Roy will try to follow the batting example of Australia's David Warner when he makes his Test debut against Ireland at Lord's later this week.

Warner defied conventional wisdom by showing how an opening batsman who had first made his name in white-ball cricket could then make a success of his Test career.

The 29-year-old Roy is no red-ball novice, having played for county champions Surrey, but mainly as a middle order batsman, and he has nine first-class hundreds to his credit.

He comes into the Test set-up ahead of an Ashes series fresh from scoring 443 runs as an opener in England's triumphant World Cup campaign.

Roy will also have the boost of walking out to bat for his debut Test innings alongside his old school friend turned Surrey captain, Rory Burns.

The pair both attended Whittgift in Surrey, south-east England and Burns told reporters at Lord's on Monday: "You'd



England's Jason Roy plays a shot (file photo)

be hard-pushed to find a more naturally talented batsman than Jason.

"Even growing up as a kid you saw Jason hit the ball, strike the ball and do things other kids couldn't do.

"Over the last couple of years you've seen him rein it in, understand his game a bit more and sort of piece it all together."

Burns added: "We have seen what a wonderful player he is. Hopefully he can keep on doing that and he can translate his white-ball form into red ball.

"I've known Jason since he was 10, so to stride out in a Test

match with him will be a pretty cool feeling."

England got through 12 opening partners for Alastair Cook after Andrew Strauss retired in 2012, with Cook himself bowing out of the Test arena last year with a hundred against India at the Oval -- Surrey's headquarters.

But Australia one-day captain Aaron Finch, having seen Roy hit a match-clinching 85 that helped beat his defending champions in a World Cup semi-final this month, was well aware of the essentially straight hitter's quality.

Guardiola blasts 'false' report of Man City 'disrespect' in China

AFP | Hong Kong

Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola blasted a report in Chinese state media as "false" yesterday after the Premier League champions were accused of showing "utter disrespect" during their tour of China.

Guardiola hit out at the lengthy commentary posted on the English-language website of Xinhua, the state news agency, which said Manchester City snubbed fans and only visited China for commercial reasons.

"I don't agree but I should say too that it's false. To make a statement like this they have to know exactly what's happening in our club," Guardiola told media in Hong Kong.



David Silva talks to fans during a promotional event

"I don't understand how people can say that. Maybe one journalist is a little bit upset, I don't know why. But it's far away from what is reality," he added.

The opinion piece, which accused City of an "attitude of arrogance" and lashed out at arrangements for Chinese media, brought a sour end to a difficult tour of mainland China.

Bahrain bow to Argentina

● Bahrain put up spirited fight in Argentina loss in FIVB U21 Worlds

● Italy, Brazil secured their places in the last four

TDT | Manama

Bahrain put up a spirited fight against Argentina in a 1-3 (22-25, 19-25, 25-19, 15-25) loss yesterday night in the FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship 2019 at Shaikh Isa Sports City in Riffa.

The result was their second straight setback in Pool F of the tournament's second round, and it officially eliminated the hosts from further contention for a berth in the semi-finals.

The Argentinians, on the other hand, kept their bid alive and must win their last game today against Italy to have any chance of advancing.

The Italians, along with Brazil, have virtually secured their places in the last four after claiming their second wins yesterday in this ongoing stage.

Italy took down Asian champions Iran in the other Pool F encounter in a thrilling match that lasted over two hours, while Brazil claimed a well-deserved win over previously unbeaten Russia in Pool E. In the same group, China beat Korea in straight sets, setting up a do-or-die match-up with the Russians today for a berth in the final four.

The second round of the tournament concludes today and there is still plenty to play for



Brazil's Victor Aleksander Almeida Cardoso goes against the triple block of Russia

for all teams. The semi-finals are scheduled for Friday.

In Bahrain's loss, the home side managed to extend the match after losing the first two sets. Their rivals were too good in the end, however, and they managed to stay in the race for a semi-final place.

Argentina had the advantage in all categories in the match, including in attack (46-44), block (9-5) and serve (7-6), while also being gifted 32 points on Bahrain's errors.

Franco Medina was the top individual scorer for the Argentinians with 15 points, while Nicolas Zerba chipped in with 12. Bahrain captain Mahmood Abdulhusain led his team with 14 points, while Sayed Mohamed

Alabbar added 13.

In Italy's win, the Iranians were on the brink of forcing the tie-breaker late in the fourth set, but the Italians showed their mettle and fought back to eventually close things out for a hard-earned 3-1 (25-23, 25-22, 20-25, 31-29) triumph.

Daniele Lavia was in fine form, scoring 24 points to lead the winners. Kristian Gamba added another 16 for Italy. For Iran, Porya Yali was the top man with 20 while skipper Amirhossein Esfandiari added 17.

Italy head coach Monica Cresta commented: "It was extremely difficult to play against Iran. From the start, we knew that it was going to be tough. In the first two sets, we played well

even under pressure. In the third and fourth sets, they played absolutely better than us.

"This set that we lost against them means that we have to pay attention. It serves to make us understand that in this phase of the tournament, nothing is easy."

Meanwhile, Brazil virtually booked their final four tickets with their second straight win while handing Russia their first loss of the competition in a 3-1 (23-25, 25-22, 25-20, 25-22) decision.

Victor Aleksander Almeida Cardoso had 25 points to lead Brazil. Angellus Costa Da Silva added 13 in the win. Maksim Sapozhkov paced Russia with 22 points.

Brazil coach Giovane Gavio:

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

POOL E

Brazil bt Russia 3-1 (23-25, 25-22, 25-20, 25-22)
China bt Korea 3-0 (25-18, 25-22, 25-20)

POOL F

Italy bt Iran 3-1 (25-23, 25-22, 20-25, 31-29)
Argentina bt Bahrain 3-1 (25-22, 25-19, 19-25, 25-15)

POOL G

Canada bt Czech Republic 3-2 (25-19, 20-25, 28-26, 15-25, 17-15)
Egypt bt Puerto Rico 3-2 (25-23, 21-25, 22-25, 25-19, 15-12)

POOL H

Poland bt Tunisia 3-0 (25-21, 25-16, 25-20)
Cuba bt Morocco 3-0 (25-15, 25-22, 25-13)

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

11.30am: Korea vs Brazil, Egypt vs Canada
2pm: Russia vs China, Czech Republic vs Puerto Rico
4.30pm: Italy vs Argentina, Morocco v Tunisia
7pm: Bahrain vs Iran, Poland vs Cuba

"We played our best volleyball today. Russia is a strong team. I am very happy because we were able to play against a big team quite well."

China, meanwhile, bounced back from a loss the previous day with a resounding 3-0 (25-18, 25-22, 25-20) sweep of Korea in an all-Asian affair.

Chengcheng Xiu was the leading scorer for the Chinese with 13, while teammate Dejun Zhai had 12. Korea captain Donghyeok Im paced his spearheaded the team with 10 points.

China captain Chen Leiyang said: "The match was really good because we did many things to prepare. We played well today." Meanwhile, in the classifica-

tion groups, Canada and Egypt both needed to go the distance in five-set victories over their opponents, whereas Poland and Cuba both cruised in three-sets against theirs.

The Canadians beat the Czech Republic 3-2 (25-19, 20-25, 28-26, 15-25, 17-15) while Egypt battled back from a set down to win 3-2 (25-23, 21-25, 22-25, 25-19, 15-12) against Puerto Rico. Both matches were in Pool G.

In Pool H, Poland outclassed Tunisia 3-0 (25-21, 25-16, 25-20) to secure their place in the bracket for final rankings ninth through 12th, as did Cuba, who won Cuba bt Morocco 3-0 (25-15, 25-22, 25-13) against Morocco.

Zidane: Bale declined to play

AFP | Washington

Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane has denied disrespecting Wales star Gareth Bale as he discussed the expected transfer of the 30-year-old forward from the La Liga giants on Monday.

Speaking to reporters on the eve of Real Madrid's friendly with Arsenal at FedEx Field -- home of the NFL's Washington Redskins -- Zidane said it was Bale who chose not to play in Madrid's 3-1 friendly defeat to Bayern in Houston on Saturday. "I did not disrespect anyone, least of all Gareth," a frustrated-sounding Zidane said. "I said that the club is working to facilitate Bale's departure, nothing more."

"The other day, Gareth did not dress for the game, he did not want to because the club was negotiating his departure," he added.

Zidane had been branded a "disgrace" by Bale's agent for his comments after the Saturday match, when he said he hoped Bale's move from the club happened soon "for everyone's sake."

"He shows no respect for a player that has done so much for Real Madrid," agent Jonathan Barnett fumed.

Bale has been frozen out in Madrid by Zidane despite helping his side to a Spanish title and four Champions Leagues since arriving from Tottenham Hotspur six years ago.

His brace, including a brilliant bicycle kick, sank Liverpool in the 2018 final, but he was shunted aside by Zidane as soon as he returned to the Real bench in early March.

After Zidane's reappointment, Bale played 90 minutes in just three of the remaining 11 matches, was left out completely four times and frequently substituted when he did play.

"Today, he is a Real Madrid player," Zidane said, adding that the striker would train with the team Monday night.



De Gea keen to captain United as keeper nears new deal

Reuters | London

Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea, reported to be on the verge of agreeing a six-year contract extension, has said he would welcome being captain of the Premier League club.

De Gea, 28, has

long been linked with a move away from Old Trafford but said he wanted to help the team return to the summit of English soccer at a supporters' event in Singapore.

United's previous captain Antonio Valencia left at the end of last season and De Gea is one of several players in the frame to replace him along with Ashley Young, Juan Mata, Chris Smalling and Paul Pogba.

"I've been captain for some games. Of course it is amazing to be captain of a club like Manchester United and defend this badge," De Gea

said. "It's amazing, so of course I'll be really, really happy to captain."

"It's my ninth season, I feel like one of the most experienced players. We have to improve a lot."

"We are Manchester United, we need to fight for trophies. When you put on this badge, that's what it means -- fight for everything, give your best and bring the team again to the top."

United, who have not lost a match on their pre-season tour so far, beating Perth Glory, Leeds United and Inter Milan, take on Tottenham Hotspur in Shanghai on Thursday.



David de Gea

Arsenal's Emery admires Ceballos as they work on a signing

Reuters | Washington

Arsenal manager Unai Emery said on Monday that Real Madrid midfielder Dani Ceballos was someone he admired as the Premier League club work on bringing in one player.

The Gunners have yet to make a marquee signing in this transfer window, but British media have reported that Ceballos, 22, is close to completing a season-long loan move to London.

"We are speaking about

the possibility to sign one player, Emery said ahead of his side's final International Champions Cup match against Real in Washington D.C. yesterday. "We have different names and the club is working on that."

"Ceballos is a very good player. I know him from (Real) Betis at the beginning and Real Madrid," he added of Ceballos, who started out at Betis before moving to Madrid.

"He played very well in the Under-21s (for Spain), his national team won the (2019 European Championship) competition. He can play as a number eight or a number 10."

If Arsenal beat Real they will travel back to England with a 100% record from their United States tour.

Arsenal's youngsters have been impressive, scoring seven of the team's eight pre-season goals, but Emery plans to give the senior players more game time in the U.S. capital.



Dani Ceballos