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Violations in hiring Indian nurses sent to prosecution

MP Adasani reiterates rejection of fee hikes, taxes

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah has referred alleged violations and corruption in the appointment of Indian nurses in the ministry to the public prosecution for legal investigations, a lawmaker said yesterday. MP Rakan Al-Nasef said on Twitter that he had sent a question to the health minister about the suspected violations involving the appointment and the minister told him that the case has been referred to the public prosecution.

Nasef said the case was raised during the grilling of a former health minister. The lawmaker claimed during the grilling that hundreds of nurses were appointed in the ministry after paying large amounts of bribes to senior ministry officials and middlemen. A court trying ministers began last week pro-

cedures for the possible trial of former health minister Ali Al-Obaidi and several former top officials over the alleged violations. It was not immediately known if the Indian nurses' case is among the cases the former officials are being investigated for.

In August this year, Kuwait Times highlighted the plight of 80 Indian nurses promised jobs in Kuwait who have been stuck here for more than two years due to paperwork and red tape. The group of nurses, all with nursing qualifications from India and recruited by health ministry officials, are living in government housing, but are unable to work because their certifications and licensing have been held up. The nurses alleged that the problem stems from corruption in the recruitment process, according to a Kuwait Times source. The source claimed that the jobs of these 80 nurses

were taken by another batch of nurses recruited through Dubai.

In April 2015, the Indian government banned the recruitment of nurses through private agencies in a bid to stop massive fee requirements and corruption. Working with the Kuwait government, it established six approved agencies that could recruit nurses for Kuwait. But at the same time, some private agencies rerouted recruitment through Dubai. That recruitment process however was not recognized by the Indian and Kuwait governments, but those nurses still bagged jobs in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said yesterday that any government plans to increase charges of public services or impose taxes will be rejected by the National Assembly. The lawmaker said that the government should instead focus

on stopping the squandering of public funds in addition to violations and achieving equality and justice in appointments and promotions. The fresh rejection comes amid reports that Kuwait has decided to delay the appointment of the five-percent value-added tax until 2021.

MP Osama Al-Shaheen yesterday praised Public Works Minister Hussam Al-Roumi for insisting on his resignation which he submitted two weeks ago over his ministry's alleged failure of facing heavy rains that lashed the country. Shaheen praised what he described as a welcome political practice and hoped it will be adopted by others. The lawmaker said that he was informed in an answer to his question that KD 20 billion has been spent on roads in the past few years.

Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheed also

said he had submitted his resignation over the outcome of an oil investigation. It was not immediately known if the resignations have been accepted. A number of lawmakers meanwhile called on Minister of State for Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri to resign because her ministry is also partly responsible for the failure in facing the rains. The minister said on Twitter yesterday that she has taken all the necessary measures regarding the issue.

The Assembly's legal and legislative committee is scheduled to discuss today several proposals for adopting summer timing in Kuwait and for amending the electoral districts. On the summer timing, MP Safa Al-Hashem proposed that the clock should be advanced two hours between April 1 and September 30 to take into account the effects of heat in the country.

US admiral found dead in Bahrain

WASHINGTON: The admiral leading US Navy operations in the Middle East was found dead Saturday in Bahrain, the military branch said, adding that no foul play was suspected in the case. Vice admiral Scott Stearney, who began his post as commander of US Naval Forces Central Command - including the US Fifth Fleet - and Combined Maritime Forces in May, was found dead at his residence in the Gulf country.

"This is devastating news for the Stearney family, for the team at Fifth Fleet and for the entire Navy. Scott Stearney was a decorated naval warrior," Admiral John Richardson, chief of naval operations, said in a statement. "At this time no foul play is suspected." He said the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Bahraini Interior Ministry were cooperating on the investigation. The Fifth Fleet's deputy commander, Rear Admiral Paul Schlise, assumed command in the wake of Stearney's death.



Scott Stearney

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Bodyguard killed after police target Lebanon ex-minister

BEIRUT: A Lebanese police raid on the home of a former minister close to the powerful Hezbollah movement left a bodyguard dead yesterday, as tensions with prime minister-designate Saad Hariri heightened. Politician Wiam Wahhab, an ally of the Syrian regime, had refused to attend an official questioning following a complaint over angry insults he made against Hariri and his parents. Footage of the diatribe sparked protests from the premier's supporters at a time when Lebanon's squabbling leaders are deadlocked over the formation of a new government.

Shots were fired during a raid by security officials on Wahhab's home in the Druze village of Jahliyyeh on Saturday, with close associate Mohammed Abu Diab ending up wounded. Abu Diab died of his injuries yesterday and was buried in the mountain village. Wahhab, a former minister of the environment, blamed the authorities for his bodyguard's death but Lebanon's Internal Security Force said the fatal shots were fired by the politician's supporters.

Wahhab said on Saturday the incident meant "civil war" but yesterday urged calm while addressing Abu Diab's funeral. "I am working to calm the atmosphere. I have (told) the guys it is forbidden to block roads or

to annoy any citizen or to open fire during the funeral," Wahhab told Al-Jadeed TV. Wahhab accused officials including Hariri of responsibility for the killing. A source close to Hariri, referring to Saturday's events, said: "These were judicial proceedings in which we had no intervention".

Wahhab has said his comments in the video, which appeared to have been shot by mobile phone at a private gathering, were "general" and not directed at Rafiq Al-Hariri. Hariri's Future Movement said last week the Hariris were being targeted by "a campaign of falsehoods" hatched by "sick minds" bent on destabilizing Lebanon and obstructing efforts to form the new government.

Hariri was nominated for his third term as prime minister in May but the long-awaited formation of a government has been delayed by six months of wrangling. The premier-designate last month accused Shiite movement Hezbollah of impeding the formation of the cabinet. Hezbollah has pushed for Sunni politicians allied to the Shiite movement but opposed to Hariri to be represented in the future cabinet. Hariri, a leading Sunni politician, has refused to give up a portfolio that would otherwise go to his own party.

Hezbollah is the only political party not to have disarmed after Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, and has backed the Syrian regime in the war-torn country next door. Government formation is often a drawn-out process in Lebanon, where a complex governing system seeks to maintain a precarious balance of power between its various political and religious communities. —Agencies



JAHLIYEH, Lebanon: Former Lebanese minister Wiam Wahhab speaks during the funeral of his bodyguard Mohammed Abu Diab in this village in Mount Lebanon yesterday. — AFP

Naik says he has not broken law

KANGAR, Malaysia: Controversial Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, wanted in his home country of India, said he has not broken any Indian law and was being targeted by the "enemies of Islam", in a rare public speech in Malaysia where he has sought refuge. Naik, 53, is facing charges of money laundering and hate speech in India, where authorities last year said he has



Zakir Naik

been "promoting enmity and hatred between different religious groups in India through public speeches and lectures".

The preacher has been living in Malaysia, where he has perma-

nent residency, since India started investigating him, but he has kept a low profile over the past year amid criticism that he is a threat to peace in multi-ethnic Malaysia. Naik said in a late Saturday speech in Kangar, capital of the north Malaysian state of Perlis, that he had never broken any Indian law.

"But because I was spreading peace, I was giving solution for humanity, all the people who don't like peace to prevail, they don't like me," he said, adding he was being targeted because of his work to spread Islam. "This doesn't go down (well with) the enemies of Islam. Be it western countries or the country I was

born in, India."

Naik has been controversial because of his puritan brand of Islam - recommending the death penalty for homosexuals and those who abandon Islam as their faith, according to media reports. In a clip on YouTube, Naik says that if Osama bin Laden "is terrorizing America the terrorist, the biggest terrorist, I am with him". Bangladesh suspended a television channel that featured his preachings after media reported that militants who attacked a Dhaka cafe killing 22 people last year were admirers of him. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack.

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PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron (center) walks in a street yesterday, a day after clashes during a protest by "yellow vests" against rising oil prices and living costs. — AFP

Jordanian ballet dancer hopes to break stereotypes

AMMAN: When Rabee Shrouf put on his first pair of ballet shoes two years ago, he knew he had found his calling. The Jordanian's lifelong dream was to be on stage and as a ballet dancer in Amman, he wanted to shatter stereotypes along the way. "When you are immersed in the world

you love, everything around you disappears," the 22-year-old said. "This is what it feels like when I'm on stage." Shrouf, who dances in his spare time while studying languages and translation at university, is one of few male dancers in Jordan, where his hobby often carries a social stigma for men. "Why did I choose ballet? Because it is a very difficult art form, one of the most difficult in the world," he said.

The youngest of six children, Shrouf grew



Rabee Shrouf

up in an artistic household. His father was a singer and musician who encouraged his performing dreams. But while confident dancing on stage, Shrouf has struggled telling people about his ballet passion, worried how it would be perceived. He has faced some pressure to pursue other interests, but has refused to give ballet up. "If you don't pursue what you love, and if you don't persist and believe in yourself, then those around you will not believe in you," he said.

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Macron surveys damage after riots, urges talks

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday surveyed the damage from a day of riots across Paris and led a crisis meeting that ended with a call for further talks with anti-government activists who have staged two weeks of protests. Macron held crisis talks with the

prime minister, interior minister and top security service officials to forge a response to the violence that left hundreds injured nationwide. Prime Minister Edouard Philippe has been asked to meet protest organizers and party leaders as part of a "constant wish for dialogue", the Elysee Palace said.

Environment Minister Francois de Rugy met representatives of the "yellow vests" last week but failed to convince them to end the protests. The government has not ruled out imposing a state of emergency to combat the protests, which

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Local

Information Minister underlines importance of Arab media awareness

FANA chief urges more active int'l role for Arab news agencies

KUWAIT: The world today is going through a critical phase of accelerated events and challenges that cannot be ignored by media, especially Arab news outlets, Kuwait's Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri said yesterday.

Arab news agencies play a major role in promoting awareness among people while also shouldering the responsibility of addressing rumors that aim to destabilize relations, as well as confronting such immoral ideals, especially from terrorizing extremist factions, Jabri said in a speech at the opening ceremony of the 46th General Assembly of the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA) Conference in Kuwait, where he represented His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

He added that media outlets could support the national development efforts and influence the citizens in taking part in these efforts through channeling their energies in the right direction to achieve maximum benefit from their ideas, which would eventually lead for a more constructive future. Minister Jabri voiced confidence that the next phase would be a new transition for Arab news agencies in various ways in terms of advancements in tools and methods.

In order to reach these goals, there must be collaborative efforts in strengthening relations through continued open dialogue and exchange of experiences among the

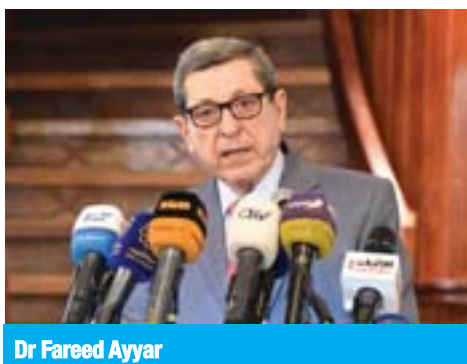


Mohammad Al-Jabri

agencies, assured Jabri. He conveyed greetings of His Highness the Prime Minister, who wished success for Arab media as this patronage comes within the framework of His Highness's keenness to promote joint Arab cooperation. Jabri welcomed the President of Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA) and Director General of Azerbaijan Press Agency (APA) Aslan Aslanov and thanked them for attending the ceremony.

More active role

Meanwhile, Secretary General of FANA Dr Fareed Ayyar called for a more active role for Arab news agencies in the international arena in order to defend the Arab identity to achieve security and stability in the world and region. The current capabilities available in the Arab agencies compared to other international and European ones are the product of weakness and con-



Dr Fareed Ayyar

tradition between aspirations and ambitions, Ayyar told the conference. He added that all news agencies are facing many dangers from social media that are intercepting in what he called a 'media tsunami' to dominate the news market and weaken the role of news agencies in delivering credible news. He suggested that the solution to this issue is to provide more freedom, finance and support as well as a priority for broadcasting to maintain its chief role. It is the duty of journalists to take the responsibility of covering trustworthy topics, or there will be no progress, he added.

He also called for emotions to be extracted from the press and to focus on fighting injustice and 'terrorism' to embrace the principle of freedom and human rights to better serve the people in understanding events that could affect their actions. He mentioned FANA's current status among international unions as an active member at



Sheikh Mubarak Al-Dualj Al-Sabah

the International Conference of News Agencies, which includes more than 130 news agencies. He added that he is assigned to head the sixth session of the international conference on "false news and policies of disinformation," which will be held in the Bulgarian capital, Sofia next year.

Ayyar also pointed to the Federation's efforts to establish a web of communications with European, Asian, and Latin American news agencies along with international and regional bodies. FANA has started implementing the training programs of all agencies cadres from their commercial and press sectors, with a promising phase of development.

Rapid developments

In his opening speech at the conference, Chairman of the FANA and Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Sheikh Mubarak Al-Dualj Al-Sabah said the meet-

ing has gained importance under rapid developments, challenges and the increasing role of media in various walks of life. He added that the press is a 'double-edged weapon' which if used in an inappropriate manner could lead to chaos and destabilization of societies. He stressed the role of FANA face challenges that seek to interrupt the development of nations and societies, especially the ones of extremist nature.

Presenting the modern and bright side of "our" societies is a way of combating these challenges on regional and international levels, he pointed out. "Even though these are tough challenges, it is not impossible or a figment of imagination for those goals to be attained," said Sheikh Mubarak, adding that success will only come through cooperation and solidarity of all institutions. He concluded by thanking His Highness the Prime Minister for his patronage of the Conference, along with Minister Jabri for supporting KUNA in this venture.

Sheikh Mubarak also said that he was grateful for ongoing talks involving news agencies from around the Arab region. "We listened to His Highness the Prime Minister's instructions over the need to establish a free media," he said in a statement, thanking the Kuwaiti premier for sponsoring the conference. Echoing His Highness the Prime Minister's remarks, he said that Arab news agencies have made 'tangible progress' in recent years, applauding their credibility and objectivity in delivering news to the general public. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with participants in the 46th FANA Conference. — KUNA

Prime Minister receives FANA conference participants

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif Palace, in presence of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, President of the Federation of Arab News Agency (FANA) as well as Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Director

General and Chairman Sheikh Mubarak Al-Dualj Al-Sabah. The reception was attended by KUNA members of the board partaking in the 46th FANA Conference. During the meeting, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak called on the officials to seize the opportunity to use media as a tool to counter extreme ideologies and spread

knowledge and valuable information. He commended the role of Arab news agencies in spreading culture throughout the region, saying that agencies played an integral part in providing news and information to the masses in an atmosphere of freedom, objectivity, and total transparency. — KUNA

Kuwait, Egypt gearing up for joint panel meeting



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti and Egyptian officials attend a preparatory meeting ahead of a joint committee event. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait and Egypt have held a preparatory meeting ahead of a joint committee event due in Kuwait tomorrow, under co-chairmanship of both countries' foreign ministers. The preparatory meeting was presided over by Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab World Ambassador Fahad Al-Awadhi, and attended by Kuwaiti Ambassador in Cairo Mohammad Al-

Thuwaikh, Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs Samie Al-Hamad and senior officials from several other Kuwaiti and Egyptian agencies. The officials will consider bilateral relations, ways of upgrading them to new heights in line with both sisterly nations' leaderships, as well as enduring coordination at regional and international events. — KUNA

Kuwait's relationship with EU, NATO reaches new heights

BRUSSELS: Cooperation between Kuwait and the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have reached new heights following a number of bilateral events held in Brussels in the last few days. Analysts opine that Kuwait's image as a force for peace and stability, not only in the region but globally, is now strongly entrenched in the minds of decision-makers both in the EU and NATO and they are eager to develop a strong and solid partnership with Kuwait. The untiring, persistent and continuing efforts of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in mediating to resolve the Gulf crisis and his world-wide humanitarian role has won him sincere support and praise from the 28-member EU and the 29-member NATO.

Kuwait officially opened its mission inside NATO headquarters in Brussels last week. It is the second Arab Gulf country to maintain a mission inside NATO after the UAE. The Kuwaiti mission was inaugurated by its Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah and NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Ambassador Alejandro Alvargonzalez. "This mission in NATO will contribute to strengthening the relationship between the State of Kuwait and NATO," Jarallah said after the opening ceremony.

In 2017, NATO opened its first regional center in Kuwait, considered to be the best center of the alliance outside its headquarters. Kuwait was also the first member of the Gulf Cooperation Council to join NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), which was launched in 2004 to boost cooperation with Arab Gulf countries. The meeting between Kuwait and the European Union External Action (EEA) discussed the implementation of the

Cooperation Arrangement between the EEAS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait which was signed in 2016.

In a lengthy statement, the EEAS said the meeting "marks a new chapter in this important relationship, particularly when combined with the EU's declared intention of opening a delegation in Kuwait City, foreseen for 2019." Meanwhile, Jarallah said that the meeting was "positive and very fruitful." Both sides also agreed to continue working together to promote non-violent solutions to conflicts. Observers note that like the EU, Kuwait is emerging as a significant soft power trying to resolve disputes and crises through dialogue, diplomacy and humanitarian assistance and not by military force. EU-Kuwait senior officials meetings will be held annually with the next meeting taking place in 2019 in Kuwait.

Moreover, bilateral relations and the region's latest developments were the focus of a meeting on November 29 between chief of Kuwait National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah and NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller. This came on the sideline of Sheikh Thamer's attendance of a conference marking the 60th anniversary of establishing the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Program. Sheikh Thamer proposed to NATO holding a ceremony next year to mark the 15th anniversary of the establishment of ICI. The Bureau's head of information security Sheikh Fawaz Mishal Al-Sabah delivered a speech on Kuwaiti-NATO relations and the role of the SPS in supporting ICI activities in Kuwait. EU and NATO officials are united in their view that Kuwait's ambassador in Brussels Jassem Al-Budaiwi is the force behind the tremendous upsurge and



BRUSSELS: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and other officials take a group photo on the sidelines of the first senior officials meeting between the European Union and the State of Kuwait. — KUNA

strengthening of bilateral relations.

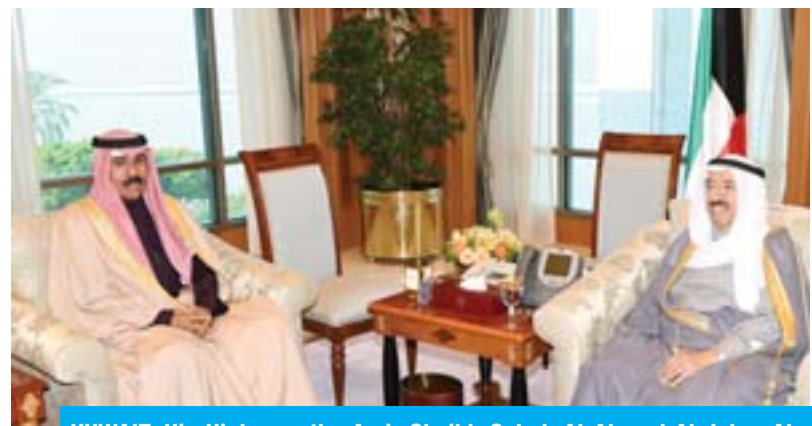
In a related development, Deputy Director General and Editor-in-Chief of KUNA Saad Al-Ali concluded his first visit to the Belgian capital on November 23, after holding three days of discussions with top NATO media officials, the EU and Belgium. He met with spokespersons of NATO, the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Belgian foreign ministry to boost media cooperation with the EU and

NATO. After the inauguration of the NATO regional center in Kuwait in 2017, the public and media interest in the Gulf country have grown to learn more about NATO. Al underlined that the opening of the EU mission in Kuwait next year will further develop ties between the two sides. The year 2018 is ending on a very positive tone in EU-Kuwait and NATO-Kuwait relationship with the expectation that 2019 will see more top-level visits and a more fruitful partnership. — KUNA

Local

Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad takes Amir's permission to attend Bush's funeral

Amir congratulates Kuwaiti inventors for their patents



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His highness the Amir also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah who sought permission to attend the funeral of late former US President George HW Bush to be held in Washington, DC. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister

Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah have also been received by His Highness the Amir.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met at Seif Palace with Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak. His Highness the Crown Prince then

met Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

Kuwaiti inventors

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent cables of congratulations to Kuwaiti inventors for their patents. His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere sentiments

and congratulated Dr Mishil Al-Jarba for inventing a surgical device that works as a preventive shield from surgical mistakes, Dr Abdulmohsen Al-Turkey for inventing a machine that diagnoses people who suffer from choking in sleep, and Dr Mishary Al-Mutairi for inventing a system that cures all environmental pollution problems due to oil materials. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to the Kuwaiti inventors. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.



KUWAIT: A group picture of participants in a joint drill between the Kuwait National Guard and the British army's anti-terror squad. — National Guard photos

Official stresses importance of joint military exercises

KUWAIT: Joint military drills are crucial to ensure combat readiness and allow officers the chance to hone their skills, a Kuwaiti official said yesterday. Such exercises are also instrumental in developing the military

valor needed to preserve the nation's security, the undersecretary of Kuwait's National Guard Lieutenant General Abdulrazaq Al-Refai said while surveying a joint drill with the British army's anti-terror squad. He went

on to convey the Kuwaiti leadership's warmest greetings to the participants in the exercise, saying he was appraised of the latest endeavors involving the Kuwaiti and British militaries. — KUNA



Kuwait's National Guard with British army's anti-terror squad during a joint military drill.



Undersecretary of Kuwait's National Guard Lieutenant General Abdulrazaq Al-Refai (center) attends the drill.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the Bhutanese Ambassador to Kuwait Tshering Gyaltsen Penjor. — Defense Ministry photos

Defense Minister receives Bhutanese Ambassador

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday the Bhutanese Ambassador to Kuwait Tshering Gyaltsen Penjor. During the meeting, Penjor conveyed a message from the King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck congratulating Sheikh Nasser on his return home from a recent treatment trip, the Ministry of Defense's Directorate of Moral Guidance and

Public Relations said in a statement. Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah expressed gratitude to Bhutan's king on his brotherly feelings wishing his country permanent development and prosperity, and on his effort to strengthen bilateral ties. Meanwhile, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad received Chairman of the Social Reform Society Dr Khaled Al-Mathkour and other members of the society's board. The two sides discussed issues of common interest. — KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with members of the Social Reform Society's board.

Local

Kuwaitis to replace 508 expats in Awqaf ministry in current fiscal year

Only 1,861 out of 13,498 education ministry employees are non-Kuwaitis

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission (CSC) contacted the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs concerning its 2019-2020 budget, noting that a study had been made on the total number of Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti employees in each of the ministry's sectors. According to the CSC study, the ministry has 17,815 employees including 2,863 non-Kuwaitis, of whom 508 will be replaced by citizens in the current fiscal year.

Meanwhile, recent statistics about Ministry of Education (MoE) employees showed that the total number of employees working in various ministry departments is 13,498 including 10,031 female and 3,467 male employees; ie 74 percent and 26 percent respectively of the total number. The 2018 statistics also showed that the total number of Kuwaiti employees is 11,637 including 2,009 male and 9,628 female employees, and that non-Kuwaitis were only 1,861 including 1,458 male and 403 female employees.

Statistics showed that the majority of employees work for the public education sector with 62.3 percent of the total manpower, and that 1.9 percent of male employees hold PhD degrees, 5 percent hold masters degrees, 45.3 percent hold university degrees, 13.1 percent hold diplomas, 12.4 percent have high school certificates and that 22.2 percent have minor certificates. On the other hand, statistics showed that only 0.6 percent of female employees hold PhD degrees, 2.1 percent hold

masters degrees, 36.1 percent hold university degrees, 49.7 percent hold diplomas, 8 percent have high school certificates and 3.6 percent have minor certificates.

Concerning the total years in service, statistics showed 325 employees have been in service for 31 years or more, 7,230 are in service for 26-30 years, 1,241 for 21-25 years, 1,491 for 16-20 years while those who are in



Meteorologist refutes 'Ice Age' rumors

service for five years or less total 3,934 employees. Age-wise, statistics showed that 94 employees are 61 or older and that 337 employees are 56-60 years old. Nationality-wise, statistics showed employees include 35 GCC nationals, 1,096 Egyptians, 92 from other Arab nationalities, 616 Asians and only 12 stateless employees.

Desalination projects

In collaboration with the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW), the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP)

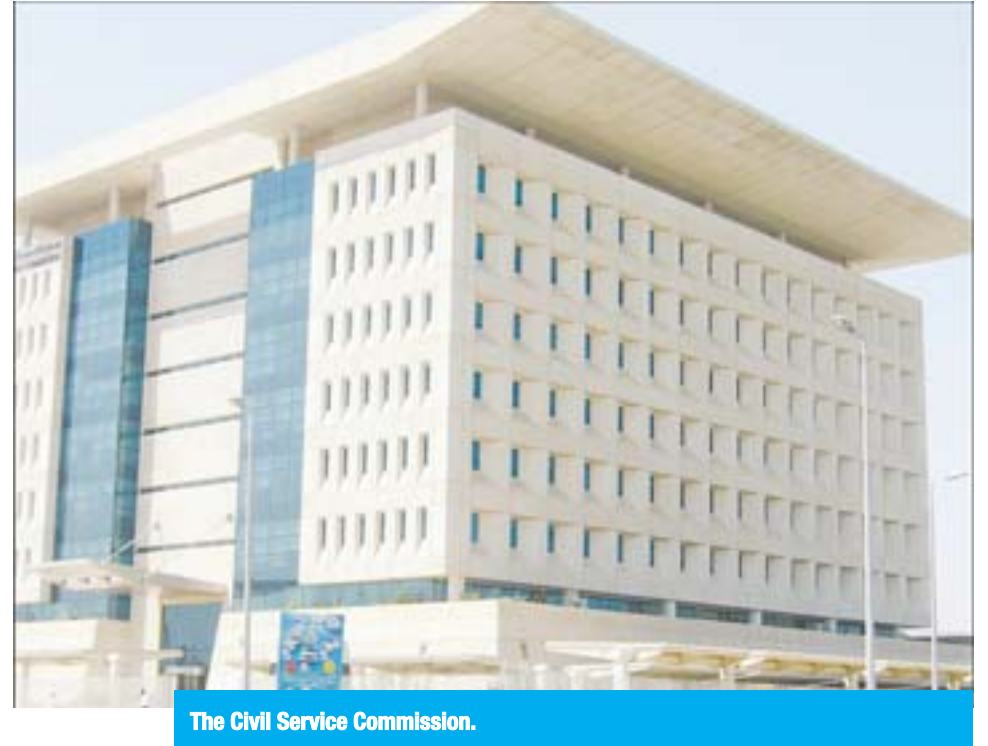
announced inviting specialized local, regional and international consultancy consortiums to file their bids for providing consultancy services for power and water desalination projects of Al-Khairan (phase one) and Al-Zour northern plant (Phases 2 and 3). Al-Zour northern plant will be built 100 km south of Kuwait City with a total capacity of 2,700 megawatts of electricity and 165 million imperial gallons of water. Khairan power plant will also be built 100 km south of Kuwait City with a capacity of 1,800 megawatts of electricity and 125 million imperial gallons of water.

Construction percentage

The Municipal Council's technical committee is scheduled to meet tomorrow to discuss a proposal by member Abdul Salam Al-Randi concerning increasing the percentage of construction in new private residential areas, in addition to allowing the construction of a fourth floor in houses smaller in area than 375 sq m.

Ice Age

Meteorologist Essa Ramadan strongly refuted a viral audio recording announcing that Earth will witness an Ice Age soon, noting that the truth is completely the opposite. Ramadan explained that according to various studies and due to global warming, Earth's temperature is increasing despite the unusual extreme winter cold and snow in areas that had never experienced such weather. "This does not mean an Ice Age is starting," he underscored, noting that Europe, America and



The Civil Service Commission.

Canada will have extremely cold winters in the coming years in addition to extremely hot summers in Europe, the Middle East and the Arabian peninsula resulting from climate change currently taking place. Ramadan added the global climate will witness severe

changes during the coming decades including hurricanes and heavy rain in some areas, while others will suffer from severe droughts. "Extreme weather is expected in areas above latitude 35 and those located south of the equator," he concluded.

local spotlight

Flying via T4



By Muna Al-Fuzal

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

For years, people have complained from traveling through Kuwait International Airport, which receives millions of travelers. So the decision to finally build a new airport came to us as a breath of fresh air. I know that the completion of the new airport will take years, but what made everyone feel a little comfortable is the opening of the new T4 passenger terminal.

The new terminal was opened this year under the patronage and presence of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The building is located north of Kuwait International Airport and covers an area of about 55,000 sq m. It was allocated for Kuwait Airways and its subsidiaries. The terminal is designed to reduce the burden and congestion from the existing building that is usually crowded, especially in the seasons of travel and holidays - and they are many indeed.

So T4, as well as Sheikh Saad Airport (T3) and the T5 passenger terminal building, will reduce pressure on Kuwait International Airport and provide better services for passengers until the new terminal (T2) is ready in 2022. The T4 project also provides new work opportunities and additional revenues of \$60 million annually. This is perfect. It is about time.

I have traveled several times since the opening of the new terminal. The first time was a pleasant experience despite the negatives that I wish will end very soon. The building is undoubtedly massive and able to accommodate large numbers of passengers and cars. There are support services provided by staff who are ready to help passengers, which is indeed a good gesture. Yet, I looked around for money exchange shops and failed to find one. I wanted to have a decent lunch, but I only found some cafes scattered around, and some had no seats or tables.

I did not want coffee or sandwiches and wanted to eat a proper lunch, so I went to the first class and business class lounge, which in most countries accept credit card holders, but they told me that I must be a first class or business class passenger to enter the lounge. Worldwide, you can enter these halls by using your credit card, but the female employee did not have any instructions on what to do in such cases. I believe this is an issue that needs to be resolved and clarified soon. I decided to sit outside and luckily, I did not wait for long until the gate opened.

Recently, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation announced the signing of a contract for the new passenger terminal for the implementation, investment and maintenance of shops with a well-known and reputable local company. I was thrilled to see this report. I believe that the new terminal is spacious, and the staff is nice as well, which makes traveling on Kuwait Airways easy and convenient. But the absence of some shops that are essentially needed by travelers is a matter of urgency, and since the tender has been finalized, I wish the civil aviation administration will work quickly with the local company in opening the required facilities soon to make the travel experience complete.

1,569 used tires for sale busted during crackdown

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Four stores were caught selling used tires of various types at Naayem scrap area, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said yesterday, noting that 1,569 used tires were found for sale in violation of law 216/2014. The

ministry asked consumers to call the hotline 135 in case of any violations.

In other news, Andalus Co-op Society's board of directors organized a joint campaign in coordination with the Andalus municipal center. The municipality's head of cleanliness Yousuf Al-Mutairi and inspector Ahmad Al-Mutairi supervised the campaign. The Co-op's Chairman Athbi Aba Al-Khail and board member Nasser Ashkanani Aba Al-Khail said that the campaign was launched with the spirit of cooperation to fight the effects of the recent rainstorms and remove loose gravel from the streets. He thanked Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi for his cooperation.

Unexploded landmines exist in Sabah Al-Ahmad Natural Reserve

KUWAIT: Unexploded landmines may still exist in Sabah Al-Ahmad Natural Reserve (SANR), therefore, people should take extra precaution and report any suspicious objects to the authorities, Chairperson of the Kuwait Voluntary Work Center (KVWC) Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said yesterday. In a statement on the sideline of an operation dismantling a recently discovered



KUWAIT: Interior and defense ministry personnel sweep an area at Sabah Al-Ahmad Natural Reserve in search for landmines. — KUNA

landmine, Sheikha Amthal Al-Ahmad warned trespassers of landmines or ordnance that might go off due to intrusive activities at the Reserve. KVWC will not hesitate to prosecute trespassers through environmental law with the support of Environment Public Authority and the Ministry of Interior, she affirmed. — KUNA

Don't leave maid at recruitment office: Interior Ministry

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Sponsors are advised to refer to the Interior Ministry's domestic help department to settle any dispute over their contracts with domestic helpers, and avoid leaving the helper at the recruitment office. This came in a statement the department released yesterday and in which it noted that it carried out several inspections of domestic help offices, resulting in the arrest of several violators, while some offices were cited for harboring runaway domestic helpers. The department said it will continue its campaigns to check unlicensed offices.

King Fahd Road fire

Mishref firemen put out a fire in a vehicle on King Fahd Road. No injuries were reported in the incident. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.

GIC ISO certificate

Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Lt General Khalid Rakan Al-Mikrad received the GIC ISO certificate, in presence of several officials from the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET). Mikrad lauded the efforts of the planning and training team and their determination to get the quality certificate. He congratulated all those who worked on getting the ISO certificate from an international organization. He said the certificate provides confidence to any establishment that receives it. "We will keep on working so that the rest of sectors get the same accreditation," he said.

Snapchat offender arrested

KUWAIT: Criminal detectives identified a Snapchat user who insulted and defamed an expat due to previous differences. A source said an expat went to a police station in Hawally and complained against the Snapchat user for ridiculing and defaming him. Detectives, after identifying the suspect - a citizen - went to his house and arrested him. He confessed to making the videos and was detained.

Jahra accident

A woman driving a car in Jahra ran over a pedestrian and accused him of 'throwing himself' in front of her moving vehicle. The woman, a bedoon, said she was surprised by the victim and attempted to avoid him, but could not. The man, Indian, sustained fractures and bruises, and was taken to hospital by paramedics who arrived to the scene with police after the accident was reported. Police are waiting for the man's condition to improve in order to get his side of the story.

Marijuana parcel

Customs officers at the postal parcels center discovered a large quantity of marijuana inside a parcel that arrived from an Asian country and addressed to an Asian man. An arrest warrant was issued against the suspect. — Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

In my view

Well done Mr President Trump

By Marine Engineer Naif Aldhfeery

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I am a staunch advocate of US President Donald Trump's recent decisions and resolutions regarding the restriction and control of the influx of the illegal immigration into American territories as well as banning or scrapping the birthright citizenship.

President Trump realized the fact of the risk of foreign immigrant's heavy burden on the American economy and national security. In my opinion, uncontrolled immigration must be vehemently stopped and prohibited by countries' rules and regulations, as it would create financial, social and cultural imbalances and implications.

Most of the immigrants are driven or motivated by financial and materialistic ends and ambitions when seeking political asylum in countries where luxury style of life is provided and augmented. The influx or deluge of illegal immigrants induces various complicated and intertwined problems such as increase of the unemployment rate, which involves social and financial complications such as the decline of the standard of living and other associated consequences. Meanwhile, uncontrolled immigration leads to fast-growing population, which is another dilemma to be faced by hosting countries.

No matter how strong or stubborn the country's economy is, it will collapse or become fragile under the heavy burden of growing population, as well as consumer materialistic and service demands. No matter how perfect the administration's standard and sound organization of any state might be, the uncontrolled population growth will be the destructive tool to bring it down.

The second most important issue President Trump is focusing on is the banning or barring of the birthright citizenship; an act which is going to be applauded and commended by indigenous Americans. In my opinion, naturalization is an act of blunder and an irrational decision irrespective of the long period of time the person had been staying in the hosting country. Logic and reason do not support the idea of naturalizing expatriates who historically, geographically, culturally as well as genetically do not belong to the country of their residence.

Naturalization will not create loyalty and patriotism as thought by some American and Western European visionaries and lawmakers. America and Western countries decided out of good intentions, good faith as well as humanitarian motives to grant their citizenships to immigrants who stayed five years and above in their regional territories. In my opinion, this generous gesture should not have had been done even if the expatriate stayed there for their entire lives, because naturalized people will remain attached tenaciously to their historical and traditional heritage and pass the same to their coming generations, as they will strive to bring them back to the culture they originally belong to. Such situation will create social ostracism, ethnic strife, religious conflicts as well as invidious distinctions.

In my opinion, immigrants and expatriates could be granted permanent residence only subject to the rules and regulations of the concerned country, where they can have a secure job under fair conditions that benefit both parties and are subject to the available vacancies and the dire need of the country of residence, with no binding commitment on the hosting country to provide peculiar services which it is obliged to provide to its indigenous or genuine citizens.

President Trump has set forth an exemplary approach to save and secure his country. It is advisable for the Western European countries and others to follow suit on President Trump's brilliant trend. Remember always that your lenient and soft rules and regulations in that respect will fire back on you if they are not reconsidered and revised. Regarding the aforementioned subject, the same concept is applicable to Kuwait. My advice to our government is to be ultra-conservative and should not go much far in granting Kuwaiti citizenship to applicants of other countries' citizens. We are a small country of limited area, single source of income and a small population of egalitarian society structure. I cannot trust any person who is ready to abdicate his country's citizenship or passport for the sake of gaining another foreign country's citizenship or passport, which to me means a kind of wavering and switching of loyalty and belonging.

During the barbaric Iraqi invasion of our beloved country Kuwait, some Kuwaiti citizenship documents were found disposed off in garbage containers across the streets, while other holders bashfully and ungratefully handed them to Kuwaiti embassies and consulates abroad. Some holders did not even condemn the invasion and showed indifference to what happened to the country they held its citizenship. The Kuwaiti citizenship is a tax-free document associated with other lucrative privileges which makes many people of other countries to long for it. Gentlemen, remember that our small state of Kuwait is a rentier country where citizens' well-being and welfare is being taken care of by our esteemed government from cradle to grave, therefore any attempt of tampering with the demographic structure of our society will definitely re-bound negatively on our country's stability and national security. Gentlemen, remember always that blood is thicker than water.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A picture of Kuwait City's skyline during the early evening hours. — Photo by Mustafa Al-Bader (KUNA)

UN official hails Kuwait's care for disabled bedoons

KUWAIT: The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities Catalina Devandas Aguilar expressed appreciation for Kuwait's efforts to improve the situation of persons with disabilities. This came in a press statement issued by the Central System for the Remedy of Situations of Illegal Residents (CARIRS) yesterday, during its Chairman Saleh Al-Fadhlah's meeting

with the visiting UN official.

During the meeting, Fadhlah presented statistics on the total services provided by Kuwait to bedoons (stateless residents), including the disabled. The Kuwaiti society has a long history of values of solidarity and compassion with all needy groups, Fadhlah said. This meeting came within the framework of the openness and transparency policy adopted by CARIRS, in communicating with international organizations, in addition to its keenness to follow up programs and initiatives aimed at protecting the rights of persons with disabilities to ensure the best means of integrating this category in all areas of society. The meeting was attended by a number of CARIRS leaders, in addition to Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs and Head of Human Rights Office at the Foreign Ministry Talal Al-Mutairi. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Chairman of the Central System for the Remedy of Situations of Illegal Residents (CARIRS) Saleh Fadhlah meets with UN official Catalina Devandas Aguilar. — KUNA

People with special needs involved in 5-year development plan

KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh said yesterday that Kuwait's five-year development plan did neglect people with special needs. This came in a statement marking the International Day of Disabled, held on December 3 every year, designated by the UN in 1992 to support people with special needs.

The development plan aims to strengthen human capital through programs dedicated to serve this category of people, she said, noting that the Public Authority of the Disabled included a number of projects meant to make more care of people with



Hind Al-Sabeeh

special needs and to develop services provided to them. Kuwait is urging its public and private sectors to provide all needs and care in addition to rehabilitation, and rights of equality to people with special needs, she stressed.

Kuwait is also keen to implement Law No 8/2010 for the care of the disabled through cooperation between Public Authority of the Disabled and the Ministry of the Interior to punish those who illegally use the parking spaces of people with special needs, in addition to exemption of disabled people from fees and other articles of the law. The Public Authority of the Disabled is also keen to study all special needs outputs, to ensure rehabilitation and training, which ensures including them in the labor market, she added. — KUNA

The Arab Open University - Kuwait



The Arab Open University in Kuwait announces the opening of admission for the Second semester of the academic year 2018/2019.

Online Admission Period:-

The admission period will open on 11/11/2018, Students may apply through www.aou.edu.kw.

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1. High school percentage of 60% or 2.00 GPA or above.
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Graduates from AOU will obtain two bachelor degrees; one is locally accredited from Ministry Of Higher Education in Kuwait and the other one is accredited from UK.

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International

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2018



A high-five from Putin and a G20 awkward photo

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With the jihadists gone, booze is back in Iraq's Mosul



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis speaks after lighting a candle for aid and solidarity for the people of Syria during his Sunday Angelus prayer yesterday. — AFP

Pope lights candle for Syria children

Argentinean woman leaves Syria after 2-year 'kidnap' ordeal

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis lit a candle at the Vatican yesterday for victims of conflicts around the world, and in particular the children of war-torn Syria. "Advent is a time of hope. Right now, my hope is for peace for the children of Syria, tormented by a war that has lasted eight years," he said after the Angelus prayer. "I am lighting a candle along with the many Syrian children and believers across the world who are lighting theirs," he said, as he put match to wick in the window of the papal apartment, which overlooks Saint Peter's Square.

"Let these flames of hope dispel the shadows of war!" the pontiff said. "May the flame of hope also reach all those who are victims of conflicts and tensions around the world, near and far". The "Candles for Peace in Syria" Christmas initiative was launched Sunday by Aid to the Church in Need, a Catholic charity.

The tall candle, which rocked slightly in the wind on the papal windowsill, was decorated by a local craftsman from the Bab Touma quarter of Damascus in Syria and bore the photos of some 40 children, most of them from Aleppo. Syria's war has killed more than 360,000 and displaced millions, with over 13 million people in the country in need of humanitarian aid. The UN Children's Fund warned last month that a funding gap

and the start of winter could leave nearly one million children, including Syrians, "out in the cold" and prone to dangerous diseases in the Middle East and North Africa.

2-year 'kidnap' ordeal

Meanwhile, a 54-year-old Argentinean woman who was lured into war-racked Syria two years ago on a marriage promise was finally on her way home on Saturday, a Syrian rebel official said. History teacher Nancy Roxana Papa had accepted the invitation of a Syrian man she had met online three years earlier and travelled to Turkey in 2016, before entering Syria. "She returned to Turkey on Saturday after the required legal documents... were completed" for her entry into Turkish territory, said Bassam Sahiouni, an official from the local rebel authority in Idlib province.

On October 30, the "Salvation Government"—set up in rebel-held Idlib by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) jihadist group—handed Papa over to the Humanitarian Relief Foundation, a Turkish non-governmental organization, at the Bab al-Hawa border post. She then had to remain in Syria for over a month to await completion of administrative and legal procedures for her repatriation. The Argentinean teacher had appeared on October 30

at a news conference organized by HTS at the border, where she thanked her country's diplomatic services, the Turkish authorities and the "Salvation Government". "You saved my life," she said that day, drying her tears after Sahiouni explained the circumstances of her misadventure.

Sahiouni had given an account of the teacher's apparent ordeal at the news conference. She met the man posing as her future husband in a hotel in Turkey and "he told her they would go to Syria to greet his parents," the rebel official said. She entered Syria illegally in 2016 and was immediately kidnapped by a gang that was waiting for her on the other side of the border and contacted her daughter to demand a ransom, Sahiouni said. He added that she managed to escape from her captors after a year and survived in the war-torn area by staying with residents and moving from home to home.

The "Salvation Government" sought to address the case earlier this year and tried without success to contact Argentina's foreign ministry, before the Humanitarian Relief Foundation eventually dealt with her situation, Sahiouni said. Last year, HTS reunited a Belgian girl with her mother, after the death of the four-year-old's father, a radicalized criminal who had



Nancy Roxana Papa, a 54-year-old Argentinean woman who was recently released after being kidnapped since 2016, speaks to the press at the Bab Al-Hawa crossing with Turkey. — AFP

entered Syria with the child in May 2017. In February 2018, the same authorities handed over to Turkish officials two Canadian nationals who were held for several weeks after entering Syria for obscure family reasons.—Agencies



JAKARTA: Thousands of Indonesian Islamists attend a rally in Jakarta yesterday, to commemorate the second anniversary of a demonstration which led to the fall of Jakarta's then Christian governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama. — AFP

Islamists march in Jakarta ahead of elections

JAKARTA: Around 100,000 people marched in Indonesia's capital yesterday to mark two years since a demonstration that led to the fall of Jakarta's Christian ex-governor, as presidential candidates seek to rally support ahead of next year's general election. Former governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama was voted out of office and later jailed for two years for blasphemy following the 2016 protests, in a case seen as an example of rising religious intolerance in Muslim-majority Indonesia. Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, has seen its reputation for pluralism eroded by a surge in attacks on minorities.

Analysts say identity politics and rising intolerance are likely to feature prominently—along with the economy—in campaigning for next April's general election across the sprawling Southeast Asian archipelago. Yesterday, some

100,000 people joined the peaceful rally, with 23,000 officers securing the event, Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono told AFP. The demonstrators—many dressed in white and carrying Islamic flags—gathered at the National Monument, where former general and presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto spoke.

Subianto supported the rally that led to Purnama's ouster in December 2016, and analysts say yesterday's rally may have been politically motivated to boost his chance of winning the presidential elections set for April. He will face President Joko Widodo, who has chosen conservative cleric Ma'ruf Amin as his vice presidential candidate, a move analysts think will bolster the president's Islamic credentials. Widodo also supported the 2016 rally, known as "212 demonstration" after the date when it was held—the second of December.—AFP

How rebels survived Saudi-led onslaught

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners predicted a quick victory when they launched a military intervention in Yemen in 2015 to support the ousted government. But more than three-and-a-half years later the Houthi rebels remain undefeated and the conflict is a quagmire that has set off a major humanitarian crisis. Here is a look at how the outgunned rebels have clung on:

Who are the Houthis?

The Houthis come from the minority Zaidi Shiite sect of Islam and have their traditional stronghold in the mountainous north of Yemen. The movement, which takes its name from late spiritual leader Badreddin al-Houthi and his son Hussein, rose up in the 1990s over alleged sectarian discrimination. Between 2004 and 2010, the Houthis fought six wars against Yemen's then-government and battled Saudi Arabia in 2009-2010 after storming over the border.

Officially calling themselves the Ansarullah (Supporters of God), the Houthis took part in the Arab Spring protests that forced veteran ruler Ali Abdullah Saleh from office in 2012. In the chaos that followed they later sided with former foe Saleh and together ousted the internationally-recognized government of Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi that had taken power. The rebel takeover of capital Sanaa set off the Saudi-led intervention in March 2015. The Houthis later fell out dramatically with Saleh and killed the former president in December 2017.

Does Iran support the Houthis?

The war in Yemen is viewed by many as a front in the broader struggle between regional titans Saudi Arabia and Iran that has heated up under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh. The Saudis and their ally the United States say Shiite Iran provides military support to the rebels, including components for ballistic missiles that have been fired over the Saudi border.

Tehran denies the accusation and insists its backing for

the Houthis is purely political. Brigadier Jamal Al-Moammari, a former Yemeni air force officer, told AFP that Iranian arms, experts and "equipment to develop ballistic missiles" arrived in 2015. Security analyst Aleksandar Mitreski says Iran helps the Houthis both directly and indirectly. "Where and when possible, Iran supplies the rebels with equipment and training for the Houthis to remain a formidable opponent," he said. The Saudi-led coalition has claimed that members of Iran-backed Lebanese militia Hezbollah were also killed in Yemen while training the Houthis. Hezbollah has denied this.

Arms taken from government?

Despite the allegations over Iranian support, it appears that the bulk of the Houthi's weaponry comes from looted official stockpiles. Brigadier Abdo Majli, a spokesman for pro-government forces, told AFP that "90 percent of Houthi arms came from the Yemeni army depots" taken along with Sanaa in 2014. Majli said that despite coalition warplanes destroying some of the weapons the Houthis had managed to "hide them in secret stores" in their northern strongholds. The rebel's impressive arsenal has been on display in the latest battles for the key port city of Hodeida as they deployed tanks to halt the advance of pro-government forces. The Houthis have also laid a large number of landmines and manufacture some of their own weapons, including rockets and reportedly even drones.

Local backing?

The Houthis have benefited from home advantage and local alliances as they have faced off against some of the best equipped militaries in the region. Despite hailing from northern Yemen, they know the rest of the country and the terrain very well, said analyst Mitreski. "Aside from geography, what aids the rebels is cooperation with local tribes. Yemen remains a fragmented society along tribal lines, and the rebels capitalize on that," he said. "Local tribal support goes a long way in this conflict." The International Crisis Group said in a report in November that the Saudi-led coalition has underestimated the resilience of the Houthis. "The Houthis are resourceful, committed, experienced and ruthless, and that the core fighters are likely to fight until the last man if called upon to do so," the group said.—AFP

International

Britain's Labor threatens PM May with new Brexit hurdle

Hopes for second Brexit referendum reach fever pitch

LONDON: Britain's main opposition Labor Party said yesterday it would press for contempt proceedings against the government if Prime Minister Theresa May fails to produce the full legal advice she has received on her Brexit deal. The threat is yet another hurdle May must clear before parliament votes on Dec. 11 on her deal for Britain's exit from the European Union, its biggest shift in foreign and trade policy for more than 40 years.

With the odds looking stacked against her, May is touring the country and media studios to try to win over critics including both eurosceptics and europhiles who say the deal will leave Britain a diminished state, still linked economically to the EU but no longer with a say over the rules. May often says her deal will protect jobs and end free movement. She hopes her argument that it is the only feasible deal with the EU and that voting it down will raise the risks of a "no-deal" Brexit or no Brexit at all will concentrate minds.

Labor has said it will vote against the deal. Yesterday its Brexit spokesman, Keir Starmer, increased the pressure on May by saying Labor would start contempt proceedings against the government if it did not publish its legal advice. He also said Labor would seek a vote of no confidence in the government if she lost the vote, a widely forecast outcome. "In nine days time, parliament has got to take probably the most important decision it has taken for a generation and it's obviously important that we know the full legal implications of what the prime minister wants us to sign up to," Starmer said.

"I don't want to go down this path ... (but) if they don't

produce it tomorrow then we will start contempt proceedings. This would be a collision course between the government and parliament," he told Sky News. British media said the contempt move was also supported by the small Northern Irish party which props up May's minority government, underlining her precarious position in parliament. The government has promised to give lawmakers access to the legal analysis of the Brexit deal and Attorney General Geoffrey Cox will make a statement to parliament today. Opposition parties suspect it will only offer a summary of that advice.

"This is an unprecedented situation and that's why we've got an unprecedented situation just tomorrow when the attorney general will be making a statement to parliament," Conservative Party Chairman Brandon Lewis told Sky News. "And I would hope again that

when colleagues hear what the attorney general has to say, they will be satisfied that the government has delivered on what it said it would do." Under parliamentary rules, it is up to the speaker to decide whether to allow a contempt motion to be voted upon. If it passes, it would then be referred to a committee which would rule on whether contempt had taken place. If so, it would then recommend a punishment which lawmakers must agree.



Party presses for contempt proceedings

Second referendum

Meanwhile, hopes for a second referendum on EU membership are rising in Britain amid heightened uncertainty over Brexit, but big hurdles remain from the timing to legal complexities on both sides of the Channel. Prime Minister Theresa May is struggling to convince British lawmakers to back her Brexit deal-formally signed off by EU leaders last weekend-in a key vote in parliament on December 11. If, as widely expected, it is voted down, what happens next remains highly uncertain. But the backers of a so-called "People's Vote" argue it opens up an opportunity to ask Britons to think again.

"There is a growing momentum behind the campaign for a second referendum," said Constantine Fraser, an analyst research consultancy TS Lombard. "It will become a serious option on the table if, or more likely when, Theresa May's deal is voted down. "I wouldn't say it's a probability, but it's a likelihood that's growing fast." Second referendum call 'inevitable' -In the latest instance of second referendum activism, the pro-EU Best for Britain group on Saturday launched a new advertising campaign on vans targeting the districts of "key MPs like Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn".

The support of the opposition party, which has delivered

mixed messages on the issue-arguing for all options to be left on the table-is seen as crucial to force another poll. John McDonnell, Labor's finance spokesman, fuelled hopes the leadership was moving closer to the idea by saying Tuesday it was "inevitable" the party would support a second poll if it could not force a general election. The hopes of second referendum advocates were further strengthened by EU President Donald Tusk on Friday. Speaking at the G20 summit in Buenos Aires, Tusk said a rejection of the deal by the British parliament would leave just two options-"no deal or no Brexit at all".

'It's not impossible'

There are significant structural barriers to a second vote, according to analysts. "You would need the government to actually table a proposal, have a vote in favor of it, which would require cross-party support," Nick Wright, a fellow in EU politics at University College London said. May has repeatedly ruled out halting Brexit or holding another vote, and it would be hard without her support. "It's not impossible," noted Fraser. "If it becomes clear that there's political pressure for it in parliament, the government may have no other option politically." A cross-party group of MPs on Thursday laid down an amendment to May's EU withdrawal legislation in a bid to stop a no-deal Brexit emerging as the default fallback option. The proposed amendment would hand power to lawmakers if her plan is rejected in the House of Commons-and could potentially provide a legislative pathway for a referendum. Labor's Shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer said it had his "full support", tweeting it was a "great amendment".—Agencies

With militants gone, booze is back in Mosul

MOSUL: Rows of yellow-labeled whiskey bottles sit alongside imported French wines, while cans of Korean beer chill in the fridge: with Iraq's Mosul free of jihadists, the booze is back. The city spent three years under the iron-fisted rule of the Islamic State group, which punished those caught drinking alcohol with public lashings or worse.

But more than a year since Iraqi forces ousted the jihadists from Mosul, liquor stores are flourishing. The western commercial district of Al-Duwasa is home to several modest outlets, including Khairallah Tobey's. The enterprising 21-year-old bounced between well-stocked shelves, pulling down bottles of beer priced at an affordable 1,500 Iraqi dinars-just over a dollar. "Our sales are good right now," said Tobey, a member of Iraq's Yazidi minority. Owners of Mosul's bottle shops are all Yazidi or Christian, as Iraq does not grant alcohol licenses to Muslim citizens.

But under IS, which violently enforced a strict interpretation of Islamic law when it overran Mosul in 2014, everyone was banned from selling, buying, or drinking alcohol. Booze never completely disappeared from the city-its residents found ways to smuggle in the devil's drink-but it was expensive and dangerous. With Mosul back under government control since July 2017, liquor stores are now back in the open. "At work, I feel relaxed and not afraid or nervous at all, thanks to the security and freedom now present in Mosul," Tobey told AFP.

'Openly, without fear'

Across the Tigris river in the city's east, vendor Abu Rayan said he has had the last laugh. "I opened up my shop again just to spite Daesh, after it kicked us out of the city and confiscated

our property and money," he said, using an Arabic acronym for IS. Islam forbids the consumption of alcohol, but drinking has remained commonplace across Muslim-majority Iraq.

Two years ago, the country's presidency shot down a draft bill in parliament that proposed a ban on the production, sale, and import of alcoholic drinks. There are no restrictions on consuming alcohol in Mosul, but those who sell, buy and drink it take certain precautions. Most shops keep their signs relatively discrete, hanging just a few posters advertising Turkish beer Efes or its Korean counterpart Cass to help customers find the store. Bottles are always packed in opaque black bags, and when they are cracked open, it's typically out of public view-usually a spot on the Tigris river late at night or in the privacy of a home.

Not everyone in Mosul is thrilled with the city's burgeoning booze sector. Some residents have demanded liquor stores be shut for religious reasons or to protect young people. But others say doing so would be a violation of individual rights. "Drinking wine is a personal freedom that is allowed by the law. It has nothing to do with the difficult circumstances that this city has gone through," says Ali Hassan, who paints homes. He has heard stories of a different Mosul in the 1960s and 1970s, when people visited bars, clubs, and liquor stores across the city. "They drank openly and without fear," says Hassan, 33.

Regulation for revenue?

Soon after this golden age, Iraq's troubles began. A string of conflicts in the 1980s was followed by an international embargo that brought shortages of most goods. Then, in 2003, the US-led invasion of Iraq toppled strongman Saddam Hussein-but paved the way for the rise of religious militias across the country, including in Mosul. As extremists gained traction, they targeted liquor stores with gun and grenade attacks. Now, Mosul may have the opposite problem-too many unlicensed liquor stores are opening up, which has worried authorities and angered those shopkeepers who do have the right paperwork. "We've received more than 100 requests for licenses, and so far 25 have been issued," said regional official Zuhair Al-Aaraji. —AFP



ZARQA: Firas Haddad, marketing manager of Eagle Distilleries, checks on the vats at the Eagle Distilleries in Zarqa, 30 kilometers east of Amman. —AFP

Iraq. Mafrq is one of the most fertile regions of Jordan with soil rich in basalt that was formed by volcanic activity tens of thousands of years ago. It lies 840 metres (2,800 feet) above sea level, is rich in underground water and enjoys sunshine 330 days a year, said Haddad. All this makes for "exceptional" wine, he said. The Haddads have set up the "Wine Experience" in the heart of Amman touted as Jordan's first wine tasting lounge, and like the Zumots organize vineyard tours.

Tourists visiting the lounge, like Peggy from Australia and Frederic from France, were "surprised" that Jordan produces wine. Both noted the high price tags. All alcoholic drinks, whether they are imported or domestically-produced, are subject to taxes that exceed 300 percent, while even items used in the production process face substantial duties. "Customs duties are exorbitant and because of that (our) wine is expensive. The cheapest bottle sells for between 15-20 euros," or \$20 to \$25, said Zumot. His company exports only "small quantities" to Europe and some Arab countries, including Iraq, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, he said, citing high shipping costs.

'A passion, an art'

Jordan River produces 500,000 bottles of wine annually, 90 percent of which is sold domestically, said Haddad. For now, very little is sent abroad. "A few months ago, we sent a shipment to Australia. Another one is on its way to California," he said, adding he also expects to export his wine soon to Paris. The Jordan River wine has won 96 awards, while the Saint George has clinched 23 prizes. "Wine is not just an industry, it's a passion, an art," said Alaa Mansur, production manager at the Haddad winery. —AFP

From Biblical to revival: Jordan's viticulturists

AMMAN: Two Jordanian families aim to put wine from their desert land on the world viticultural map, reviving an age-old tradition that some suggest has Biblical heritage. Wine lovers like to say that the wine Jesus Christ served to his disciples at the Last Supper came from the northern town of Umm Qais in modern-day Jordan, to signify how old the country's wine-making tradition is.

"Wine was produced in Jordan more than 2,000 years ago but then it disappeared for centuries," said Omar Zumot, who studied winemaking in France, and now manages the Saint George winery in an eastern suburb of Amman. "It's our responsibility to relaunch it," he said. The Zumots and their main competitors, the Haddads, belong to Jordan's Christian minority in a Muslim-majority kingdom, where the sale of alcohol is legal. "We began to produce wine in 1996 and today we produce 400,000 litres a year," Zumot said, during a tour of his winery, which makes a range of organic wines that are aged in 700 French oak barrels before being bottled.

"We're only at the start of the road but my dream is to put Jordanian wines on the map," Firas Haddad, marketing manager of Eagle Distilleries, home of the award-winning Jordan River wine, shares that dream. "We set up the first winery in 1975. We used to produce just two kinds of wines, white and red from grapes that we brought from Suweida in (neighbouring) Syria," he said. Today, the company based in Zarqa, near Amman, produces wine from 45 varieties of grapes, most of them from vines brought to Jordan from France, Italy and Spain, he said.

Ancient winemaking

Swiss archaeologist Ueli Bellwald said that winemaking in Jordan goes back much further than the time of Christ. "Winemaking in Jordan does not date back only 2,000 years," said Bellwald, who has been working on digs in the ancient Nabatean city of Petra for nearly three decades. Wine production started in the Nabatean kingdom "in the middle of the first century BC" and reached a peak during the Roman and Byzantine periods, "based on the enormous number of wine presses from these times", he said. According to Bellwald, as many as 82 wine presses have been discovered in the Beidha-Bajaia area of Petra in southern Jordan. "There were even winemaking facilities of industrial scale," he said.

Basalt, water, sunshine

Both the Haddads and the Zumots have vineyards in the northeastern Mafrq province neighbouring Syria and

A high-five from Putin and a G20 awkward photo

BUENOS AIRES: Russian President Vladimir Putin walked up to Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at a summit of G20 world leaders, high-fived him and then shook his hand heartily. Moments earlier the prince had been pictured on the far edge of the traditional "family portrait" photograph, ignored by other leaders. The two moments captured the dilemma facing world leaders at the Group of 20 summit in Buenos Aires this weekend: How to deal with the crown prince, who is dogged by controversy over the murder of a Saudi journalist but is also de facto leader of a rich, oil-producing kingdom that is a major global investor.

To be sure Putin's exuberant greeting of the prince was seen as

over the top and promptly went viral. But, while leaders appeared to ignore Prince Mohammed on stage during the "family photo," many went on to have closed-door bilateral meetings with him during the two-day summit. The Saudi government media office, in a statement responding to an earlier Reuters story about Prince Mohammed being sidelined in the photo, said he was standing "in the same proximity to the centre of the group" as in a similar photo at the G20 summit in China two years ago.

The crown prince, facing a global outcry over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul two months ago, had conversations with at least 12 world leaders. Three of them, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, British Prime Minister Theresa May and French President Emmanuel Macron, said publicly they had pressed Prince Mohammed for a full investigation into the murder. Saudi Arabia has said the prince had no prior knowledge of Khashoggi's murder. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has said the killing was ordered by the highest level of Saudi leadership but probably not King Salman, putting the spotlight instead on the 33-year-old crown prince. —Reuters



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International

France's president learns the hard way: Green taxes carry political risks

Leaders elsewhere wary of backlash over such taxes

PARIS: When Emmanuel Macron rose to power, he put the environment at the heart of his agenda. Eighteen months later, anger over those policies has stoked protests that are a huge challenge for the French president. Rioters torched cars and buildings in central Paris on Saturday following two weeks of protests caused partly by higher fuel taxes which Macron says are needed to fight climate change. Some protesters called for him to resign.

Macron's plight illustrates a conundrum: How do political leaders' introduce policies that will do long-term good for the environment without inflicting extra costs on voters that may damage their chances of re-election? It is a question facing leaders across the world as delegates hold talks in the Polish city of Katowice this week to try to produce a "rule book" to flesh out details of the 2015 Paris Agreement on fighting climate change.

"Clearly, countries where inequalities are the highest are the ones where these kinds of push-backs are mostly likely," Francois Gemenne, a specialist in environmental geopolitics at SciencesPo university in Paris, said of the political risks. Naming Italy, the United States and Britain as countries where environmental moves could risk a voter backlash, he said: "I guess it's one of the reasons why populist leaders tend to be very sceptical about climate change and environmental measures." The protests in France have inspired a similar movement in neighboring Belgium, where protesters took to the streets on Friday.

There have also been small-scale protests in Canada over Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's plan to impose a federal carbon tax on provinces unwilling to combat climate change. What was once widely seen by governments as a win-win transition to cleaner energies now looks more like causing short-term costs with huge social disruption, followed by possible long-run gains. Another challenge facing leaders is over how they use

the proceeds from policies intended to help the environment: Should money raised from carbon taxes be used directly to combat climate change, or to plug holes in national accounts?

Carbon taxes

Macron said after the latest protests in Paris that he would convene ministers to discuss the crisis on his return from a G20 summit in Argentina. Prime Minister Edouard Philippe cancelled plans to go to Katowice for the climate change summit. Macron introduced new carbon taxes to urge motorists to change behavior and protect the environment.

Macron has watered down some of his campaign pledges on the environment since he took office, and his popular environment minister quit in August over the sluggishness of progress. But he has shown little willingness to compromise in the face of the protests. The fuel tax is accompanied by other measures including incentives to encourage people to buy electric vehicles. Unveiling a medium-term energy plan for France last week, he held out an olive branch by saying he would review fuel prices each quarter, but said the carbon taxes would stay.

His goal is for France to cut carbon emissions by 40 percent by 2030 and boost the use of cleaner energies at the same time. Emissions are currently rising and 75 percent of energy use in France originates from fossil fuels. "When we talk about the actions of the nation in response to the challenges of climate change, we have to say that we have done little," he said. Macron has also said he will fight to try to save the Paris climate agreement, which aims to keep global temperature rises to between 1.5 and 2 degrees Celsius, a critical threshold. Scientists are increasingly concerned that countries are falling short on their targets and must be more ambitious. Yet citizens are worried about their immediate lives.



PARIS: A picture shows burned cars in a street of Paris yesterday in Paris - a day after clashes during a protest of Yellow vests (Gilets jaunes) against rising oil prices and living costs. —AFP

President faces protests over fuel tax increase



'Policies of transition'

In Canada, addressing the question of how governments use the money raised from carbon taxes, Trudeau's government has promised to return the money collected from the provinces directly to taxpayers. But in France most of the revenue generated will be used to tackle the national budget deficit, increasing anger at Macron, who left-wing opponents call the "president of the rich". Of the 34 billion euros (\$38.71 billion) the French government will raise on fuel taxes in 2018, a sum of only 7.2 billion euros is earmarked for environmental measures. Simon Dalby, a specialist in the political economy of climate change at Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada, says carbon

taxes should be part of wider measures to alter how people live, including better, greener transport and buildings.

"It is all about policies for transition to a post-fossil-fuel world, something that needs to be done quickly if the worst of the predicted climate disruptions are to be avoided in the coming decades," he said. Gemenne said the protests in France were unlikely to go away soon, and may emerge in other countries as they take more determined action on emissions. The danger, he said, was inaction, or acting too late to prevent global warming. At the same time, politicians need to be able to show they were acting fairly and equitably. —Reuters

Obrador sworn in as Mexican new president

MEXICO CITY: Anti-establishment leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador vowed a "deep and radical" change in Mexico as he swore in as the country's president Saturday, after winning a landslide election victory. The leader, widely known by his initials as "AMLO," took the oath of office and donned the presidential sash before Congress—where the coalition led by the upstart party he founded four years ago, Morena, now has strong majorities in both houses. Ending 89 years of government by the same two parties, Lopez Obrador surged to victory in the July 1 elections promising a new approach to issues fueling widespread outrage: crime, poverty and corruption.

But not everyone is persuaded: critics say the sharp-tongued, silver-haired leader has a radical and authoritarian streak. And despite his promises of business-friendly policies, Mexican stocks and the peso have plunged in recent weeks. That did not stop Lopez Obrador, 65, from doubling down on his promise of a sweeping "transformation" as he started his six-year term. "It might seem pretentious or exaggerated to say it, but today is not just the start of a new government. It is the start of a political regime change," he said, the presidential sash newly draped over his dark suit and burgundy red tie. "We will carry out a peaceful and orderly but also deep and radical transformation."

Change in style

After the traditional swearing-in ceremony, Lopez Obrador climbed in his white Volkswagen Jetta—his car of choice—and headed to Mexico City's central square, the Zocalo, for a colorful second ceremony of his own design. There, indigenous shamans purified him with incense and flowers, and presented him with a symbolic chieftain's staff. "I reaffirm my commitment not to lie, rob or betray the Mexican people," he said, clutching the long wooden staff.

Jose Angel Mejia, 38, was among the tens of thousands of people who gathered to fete the new president. "It's a historic day, I still can't believe it," he said, raising his eight-year-old son's arm in the air in celebration. "We're going to have a change at last." The new president inherits a sticky set of problems from his unpopular predecessor, Enrique Pena Nieto. They include deeply entrenched corruption, gruesome violence fueled by the war on drug cartels, and the caravan of 6,000 Central American migrants camped at the US-Mexican border—not to mention the minefield that diplomacy with Mexico's giant northern neighbor has become under President Donald Trump. Lopez Obrador, a former protest leader and Mexico City mayor, has been short on specifics regarding his plans for all of the above. What he is promising, first and foremost, is a presidency like no other in Mexican history. Vowing to lead his anti-corruption, pro-austerity drive by example, he has forsworn the presidential residence, jet and security detail, and cut his own salary by 60 percent. In a sign of the times, the sumptuous presidential residence, Los Pinos, was opened to the public Saturday as a cultural center.

Lopez Obrador's inaugural address largely repeated the sweeping but vague promises of his campaign. He resumed his attempts to soothe the markets with promises of balanced budgets and pro-investment policies. But he also attacked Mexico's "neoliberal" economic model as "a disaster" and railed against Pena Nieto's landmark privatization of the energy sector. Lopez Obrador has caused jitters over the future of Latin America's second-largest economy with decisions such as the one to cancel a new \$13-billion airport for Mexico City that was already one-third complete. The day's guest list included a host of regional presidents—among them crisis-torn Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro, who was met with protests from Mexico's conservative opposition. —AFP

Escobar's dark legacy refuses to die 25 years on

MEDELLIN: Twenty-five years after he was gunned down by police, Pablo Escobar's legacy refuses to die in Medellin, the Colombian city where he ran his cocaine empire with a mix of brutality and largesse. Even as city officials prepare to demolish the bunker-like mansion where the late drug lord lived, in the neighborhood that bears his name residents who live in homes he built for them are planning heartfelt tributes to mark Sunday's anniversary.

Escobar was killed in a rooftop shootout in Medellin on December 2, 1993 - one day after his 44th birthday, and five months after he appeared on Forbes magazine's list of the world's richest people for the seventh straight time. His eight-storey mansion, the Monaco, a symbol of the decadent opulence of the Colombian mafia in the 1980s and 90s, has fallen into disrepair in the years since his death.

Its battered frame still bears the scars of Colombia's first car bombing, in 1988, the start of a bloody war between the country's rival cartels. The hulking white building is slated to be demolished in February, in a public implosion complete with stands for viewers to watch. "The Monaco has become an anti-symbol, in a place where some people are outspoken defenders of crime and terrorism," says Manuel Villa, the city hall secretary who

will perform the official countdown to the detonation. "We don't want any more children saying they want to be Pablo Escobar when they grow up."

The mansion, a top tourist attraction in Medellin's upscale El Poblado neighborhood, will be replaced by a public park dedicated to the thousands of people killed in Colombia by "narcoterrorism"—the no-holds-barred war the cartels waged on each other and the state in the 1980s and '90s. The park will cost an estimated \$2.5 million. Renovating and reinforcing the crumbling mansion would have cost \$11 million, according to the city. "It will be painful" to tear it down, says Villa, "but it's the only way we can heal our wounds."

Deep divide

Colombian society remains deeply divided over the legacy of Escobar and other drug barons. Angela Zuluaga is one of those who wants to wipe out the country's lingering "narco culture." She was an unborn baby in her mother's womb when Escobar hitmen assassinated her father, a judge, for issuing an arrest warrant against his boss. Her mother was wounded in the October 1986 attack. "Creating a space to remember the victims means having a space where we attempt to symbolically compensate those of us who have suffered from the scourge of narcoterrorism," she says. According to Medellin officials, Colombia's drug violence killed 46,612 people from 1983 to 1994.

Sticky history

On the other side of this cultural divide, Luz Maria Escobar is changing the tombstone at her brother's grave ahead of the

Putin briefs Trump over Ukraine as EU leaders up pressure

BUENOS AIRES: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Saturday he briefed his US counterpart Donald Trump on the Ukraine crisis as he came under pressure over Moscow's robust foreign policy at the G20 summit in Argentina. Putin said he explained Moscow's position to Trump when the leaders met briefly at a summit dinner Friday.

"We spoke standing up. I replied to his questions about the incident in the Black Sea," Putin told reporters at the end of the summit. Putin strode into the summit under a cloud, having drawn outrage from Europe over last week's incident in which his navy detained three Ukrainian ships and 24 sailors—causing Trump to abruptly cancel their scheduled meeting. Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko kept up the pressure from Kiev, saying Putin had refused to take his calls since the crisis started.

He said that when the incident happened, he instructed his office to set up a call with the Kremlin leader to say "we are

ready for this negotiation to de-escalate... and unfortunately, until now, Putin did not answer my request for a direct phone conversation." Poroshenko told France 24 in an interview that Ukraine would try to resolve the standoff diplomatically but insisted Russian forces withdraw from Crimea, and return its ships and sailors "captured illegally in the neutral waters of the Black Sea." German Chancellor Angela Merkel took Putin to task at length over the naval spat, a day after French President Emmanuel Macron urged him to "de-escalate" the crisis.

Merkel used breakfast with Putin on the sidelines of the G20 summit to voice her "concern" over the tensions in the Kerch Strait off Russian-annexed Crimea. "Of course, we talked about the situation in the Sea of Azov, because it is important to avoid any aggravation," Merkel said in Buenos Aires. Macron raised his concerns with the Russian leader at one of his first bilateral meetings, pressing him "to make the necessary gestures so that there is a de-escalation," said a French official. Both European countries are members of the "Normandy Four" group with Moscow and Kiev, set up to resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine involving Russian-backed rebels.

Merkel said she had also discussed



MEDELLIN: Tourists visit the Monaco building, which was once home to Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar, in Medellin, Colombia. —AFP

anniversary of his death, as a crowd of tourists looks on. Tearfully, she reads the new inscription: "Beyond the legend you symbolize today, few know the true essence of your life." Moved, a young woman from Puerto Rico asks if she can give her a hug. Luz Maria acknowledges her brother made mistakes, but opposes the city's plan to get rid of his home. "Tearing down the Monaco isn't going to demolish Pablo's history," she says.

Escobar was 'like God'

Escobar is remembered as the "Colombian Robin Hood" in the neighborhood that bears his name, where he

donated 443 houses to formerly homeless people who lived and scavenged at the local dump. "I see him like a second God," says one resident, Maria Eugenia Castano, 44, as she lights a candle at an altar that bears Escobar's photograph. "To me, God is first, and then him." At the nearby El Patron beauty salon, which sells, along with haircuts, a plethora of merchandise stamped with Escobar's image, stylist Yamile Zapata sums up the contradictions of the late cocaine king's memory. "Pablo will confuse you," she says. "If you want to look at the good side, he was very good. If you want to look at the bad, he was very bad." —AFP



KIEV: Ukrainian soldiers stand in front of huge Soviet-era arch in Kiev yesterday, symbolizing Ukraine and Russia's friendship and union, where an unknown artist added a crack following recent tensions. —AFP

Syria with Putin, "especially ... the Idlib region," where a fragile ceasefire has been negotiated between rebels and Syrian army forces backed by Moscow. Her main focus, however, was on the situation in Ukraine. "I want to make it quite clear, though, that free shipping to the Sea of Azov must be guaranteed to the Ukrainian

coasts and cities. There is a basic contractual agreement from 2003 on this. Russia must comply with this basis," she said. Away from the summit, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said Moscow had shown "brazen contempt" for a deal "that allowed both Russian and Ukrainian ships free passage." —AFP

International

'Alarm sounded', nations urged to act at UN climate conference

Impending environmental disaster still ringing

KATOWICE: With the direst warnings yet of impending environmental disaster still ringing in their ears, representatives from nearly 200 nations gather yesterday in Poland to firm up their plan to prevent catastrophic climate change. The UN climate summit comes at a crucial juncture in mankind's response to planetary warming. The smaller, poorer nations that will bare its devastating brunt are pushing for richer states to make good on the promises they made in the 2015 Paris agreement. In Paris three years ago, countries committed to limit global temperature rises to well below two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), and to the safer cap of 1.5C if at all possible.

But with only a single degree Celsius of warming so far, the world has already seen a crescendo of deadly wildfires, heatwaves and hurricanes made more destructive by rising seas. Johan Rockstrom, designated director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said the talks in the Silesian mining city of Katowice were crucial in nailing down how the Paris promises will work in practice. Delegates at the COP24 talks "cannot and will not discuss if governments worldwide must achieve rapid greenhouse gas emission reductions to limit climate risks—but how they can do this," he said.

In Katowice, nations must agree to a rulebook palatable to all 183 states who have ratified the Paris deal. This is far from a given: the dust is still settling from US President Donald Trump's decision to ditch the Paris accord. G20 leaders on Saturday agreed a final communique after their summit in Buenos Aires, declaring that the Paris Agreement was "irreversible". But it said the US "reiterates its decision to withdraw" from the landmark accord. Even solid progress in Katowice on the Paris goals

may not be enough to prevent runaway global warming, as a series of major climate reports have outlined.

'Failure will be catastrophic'

Just this week, the UN's environment program said the voluntary national contributions agreed in Paris would have to triple if the world was to cap global warming below 2C. For 1.5C, they must increase fivefold. A group of over 90 independent climate scientists in October said fossil fuel use must be slashed by half in the next 12 years if we have any hope of hitting the 1.5C target. While the data are clear, a global political consensus over how to tackle climate change remains elusive.

Laurence Tubiana is CEO of the European Climate Foundation and, as France's top negotiator, one of the main architects of the 2015 treaty. "Katowice may show us if there will be any domino effect" following the US withdrawal, she told AFP. Brazil's strongman president-elect Jair Bolsonaro, for one, has promised to follow the American lead during his campaign. Even the most strident climate warnings—spiraling temperatures, global sea-level rises, mass crop failures—are something that many developed nations will only have to tackle in future.

But many other countries are already dealing with the droughts, higher seas and catastrophic storms climate change is exacerbating right now. "A failure to act now risks pushing us beyond a point of no return with catastrophic consequences for life as we know it," said Amjad Abdulla, chief negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, of the UN talks. And Gebru Jember Endalew, chair of the Least Developed Nations group of negotiators at the COP24, said "international cooperation is the only way to address the global threat of climate change." — AFP



KATOWICE: Polish Secretary of State in the Ministry of Environment, Government Plenipotentiary for COP24 Presidency Michał Kurtyka (on screen) speaks during the inaugural session at the 24th Conference yesterday in Katowice, Poland. — AFP

The Paris climate treaty: Snapshot

PARIS: The 2015 Paris Agreement is the first pact under which all nations commit to taking actions to curb global warming, caused mainly by emissions from burning coal, oil and gas. Key facts about the agreement:

The climate club

A total of 196 governments, including the Palestinian Authority, have endorsed the landmark deal and 183 have officially ratified it as of December 1. International agreements can be signed, but only become binding through ratification. The accord—which becomes operational in 2020 — entered into force in November 2016 when it crossed the threshold of 55 ratifying parties representing at least 55 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. The world's top carbon polluters, in descending order, are China, the United States, the European Union, and India. The biggest polluter not to have ratified the deal is Russia, which ranks 5th. Turkey and Iran have also failed to ratify.

Exit strategy

The agreement allows parties to quit, but notice can be given only three years after entry into force. Withdrawal would take effect a year later. In June 2017, US President Donald Trump announced that the United States would pull out. Under treaty rules, that cannot formally take place until November 4, the day after the next US presidential election. A country can also withdraw from the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) under whose authority the deal was negotiated. Withdrawal takes effect a year after notification, which can be given at any time.

The goal

Nations have agreed to hold global warming to "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-Industrial Revolution levels, and

to strive for a lower limit of 1.5C, if possible. A major report from the UN's science advisory body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), concluded in October that the 1.5C cap is technically feasible but would require a rapid and wholesale transformation of the global economy. Even the two-degree ceiling is a huge challenge, according to the IPCC, which calculated that emissions must drop 40-to-70 percent by 2050 (compared to 2010 levels) to hit that target. Signatories have undertaken to ensure that global emissions peak "as soon as possible". They rose in 2017, and are on track to go up again this year. Voluntary national pledges annexed to the treaty would see the planet warm by at least 3C, a recipe for catastrophic floods, heatwaves, drought and storm surges made worse by sea level rise, say scientists.

Tracking progress

Starting in 2020, countries will take stock every five years of their collective progress in curbing global warming, with an eye toward boosting national efforts to cut emissions. Most current pledges extend to 2030, with a few—including the plan submitted by the United States under Barack Obama—running to 2025. But faced with the inadequacy of those pledges and dire warnings from climate scientists that emissions must peak and sharply decline as soon as possible, nations are under pressure to enhance their carbon-cutting commitments sooner.

Financing

Rich countries are required to provide funding to help developing nations make the costly shift to clean energy, and to shore up defenses against climate impacts. The treaty mandates climate aid of \$100 billion (88 billion euros) per year starting in 2020. A running tally published last week by the UN showed that climate finance is roughly on track to hit that total, but disagreements remain over the sources of funding and how much will be earmarked for adapting to climate change. Importantly, one of the Paris Agreement's long-term goals is to make all finance flows consistent with low-carbon and climate-ready economic development, which will be measured in trillions, not billions. — AFP

For Poland's mining region, coal remains a way of life

KNUROW: "It's a family thing. My father, my grandfather were miners, so I am," says Arkadiusz Wojcik at a coal mine in the southern Polish town of Knurów. Defying the danger to life and limb of descending into the mine on a daily basis, Poland's coal miners still pass down the job from father to son. The occupation may be on its way out in much of the West, but in Poland's Silesian coal country it is thriving thanks to high wages and support from a government that refuses to decarbonize the economy.

In Brussels, Berlin and Paris, coal is the enemy. It produces the carbon dioxide blamed for the planet's rising temperatures. In Poland however, coal is a way of life, with no signs of changing. "Here in Silesia, it's a tradition," says Wojcik, 36, after working a night shift 650 meters underground. The Knurów mine is operational day and night, with the schedule divided into four shifts. But one thing is constant: the risk. "Of course we get scared. Accidents happen, it's part of the job," Radoslaw Ruminski says, after exiting a mine lift.

"But we don't think about it every day when we go underground," the

37-year-old tells AFP. So far this year, 21 miners have died on the job in Poland. Last year, there were 15 deaths, while in 2014 — a particularly grim year — 30 miners lost their lives. To offset the danger, there is money. "Above all, it's the salary that motivated me because it is higher than in other sectors," says miner Kamil Ganko. The 33-year-old machine operator refused to reveal how much he makes, but coal miners can earn up to 1,600 euros (\$1,800) in take-home pay per month. That is about double the average Polish wage of 813 euros net.

'No other jobs'

Miners are also entitled to various perks left over from the communist era, including two extra months of salary each year: one in December on the feast day of Saint Barbara, who is the patron saint of miners, and another in February. Each miner also gets to take home eight tons of coal every year — a considerable bonus in a region where many households depend on the fossil fuel for heat. A final benefit is the right to an early retirement after 25 years of toiling away underground.

But for some, even that is too late. "My husband died just eight months before he was supposed to retire," says Agata Kowalczyk, who runs the Association of Widows and Orphans of Miners. "The mine manager and a psychologist paid me a visit to deliver the bad news," she tells AFP. Despite her husband's death, their sons have not turned their backs on the work. "Two of my four sons continue to work at the mine. The eldest works

down below. He's the foreman and likes the night shift", when the pay is higher, she says. "There are no other jobs here. No other big employers. What would the thousands of miners do? For now there's no alternative in Silesia," she adds.

Coal sponsors climate talks

Knurów is one of four mines belonging to the state-owned JSW company, which is the EU's largest producer of high-quality coking coal — a resource destined for the steel industry. Listed on the stock exchange, JSW has around 27,000 employees, making it one of the biggest employers in Poland. The company currently has its eye on two more ore deposits to increase the production of coal, most of which is exported to other European markets. JSW is also one of the main sponsors of the UN's COP 24 global climate summit, which opens this weekend in the Polish coal city of Katowice.

Though many mines have been shuttered over the years and continue to close, "the sector could use at least 15,000 more workers," says Kazimierz Grajcarek, who was once responsible for miners at the Solidarity trade union. "It's undergoing a revival," he tells AFP, saying that the sector is attracting many workers from Ukraine as well as a handful from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and even Spain. "The EU wants Poland to close its mines. But what then? In Poland we have no wind or sun," he says, refuting the progress, admittedly small but real, in wind and solar power. — AFP

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Analysis

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In Louisiana, an appetite for oysters shields retreating shores

Brendan Causgrove's first encounter with an oyster did not go well. He choked on the plump specimen at the bottom of a hard-alcohol shot after knocking it back. Now the manager of a smart New Orleans restaurant whose menu features 13 kinds of oysters, the 37-year-old describes them as if they were fine wine - "herbaceous", "buttery" or "briny". His fervor also means Seaworthy is among 19 restaurants in this coastal US city that have joined an oyster-shell recycling program aiming to help save the state's shrinking shoreline.

The nerve center of the push to turn good food into a good deed for the environment is a fourth-floor office suite in Mid-City, a 10-minute drive from New Orleans' French Quarter, known to some as the oyster capital of the world. Since 2014, Deborah Abibou and her small team at the non-profit Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana have recycled 3.5 million kg of oyster shells, which they have returned to the water in the form of manmade reefs.

The aim is to stop Louisiana's shoreline crumbling away at the current rate of a football field every 100 minutes. Early each weekday morning, a recycling truck zig zags through the city to pick up the mollusk shells from restaurants. The shells are then left to dry in the sun for six months, to kill off any bacteria, before being put into cages that are planted on bare seafloors or riverbeds to form protective walls. The brand new reefs offer an inviting home for oysters.

But to humans, the "living shorelines", which grow as they attract oyster larvae, serve as robust buffers that dissipate wave energy, prevent coastal erosion, and trap sediment that can build up new land, said Abibou. Those benefits are boosting the popularity of manmade oyster reefs as a natural alternative to hard infrastructure like seawalls, which are often made with cement, said Alex Kolkler, a professor at Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium. There is no national database tracking the total mileage of oyster-shell coastal protection projects, experts say.

But Bryan DeAngelis, a program coordinator at The Nature Conservancy (TNC), said there are signs the technique is entering the mainstream. Just in Louisiana, 10 km of protective oyster reefs have been set up with TNC's help, he said. In New York City, nearly three-quarters of a mile of breakwaters seeded with oysters are in the works off the coast. And last year, the US Army Corps of Engineers created a nationwide permit that allows "living shorelines", encompassing oyster reefs.

Sacred site

The dangers of failing to arm the coast against creeping waters are especially real for communities whose lives are tied to the disappearing land. Authorities fear Louisiana, which has already lost more than 1,800 square miles (4,700 sq km) of land since the 1930s, will cede another 2,250 square miles over the next half century. Declaring a coastal "state of emergency" last year, the state's governor said natural and human factors had contributed to the problem, including the effects of climate change, sea-level rise, subsidence, hurricanes, storm surges and flooding.

In Pointe-aux-Chenes, a village on the frontier of solid land and marshland, where locally caught crabs, oysters and fish have fed a small native American community, the water has turned from friend to foe since eating away at a sacred site. Ancestors of the Pointe-aux-Chien Indian Tribe settled here "before America", said member Donald Dardar. In the wetlands outside town, a 10-foot (3-m) mound stands shrouded in dense vegetation, said to be a burial or ceremonial ground, according to the 63-year-old with leathery skin and piercing green eyes. "So we respect it, stay off of it," he said.

But the mound, where dusty pieces of broken pottery have been found, is now at risk of being washed away from one side, flanked by a canal or bayou. Dug decades ago for transportation, the channel has widened over the years, gobbling about a quarter of the site in 10 years, said Dardar. Two years ago, the shrimp fisherman decided to act. "It's just part of history that I don't want to see washed away," he said. He looked into building a wall to protect the mound and secured a government grant of nearly \$70,000 for an oyster reef. If all goes well, tribe members will hoist 8,400 bags of oyster shells, each weighing some 35 pounds, into their boats next February. Volunteers will then help plunge them into the bayou's muddy waters to form a half-a-mile barrier.

But not all is plain sailing. At a recent meeting, tribe members expressed frustration at red tape holding things back. "It still bothers me big time right now because it's taking so long to get this going and protect (the site)," said Dardar. An environmental assessment took a year to complete and some permits have still to come through, said the CRCL's Abibou. Getting the necessary approvals to install oyster reefs has slowed down projects across the United States, said Pete Malinowski, head of the Billion Oyster Project, a non-profit that restores reefs in New York.

Rules vary by state, but initiatives often hit bureaucratic barriers because oyster reefs are regulated as a food product rather than in their new role as an ecological tool. — Reuters



Stunned Parisians clean up posh district

Workmen cleared away burnt hulks of cars, scrubbed the defaced Arc de Triomphe monument and replaced the shattered windows of luxury boutiques in Paris yesterday after the worst riots in the center of the capital in half a century. Several thousand riot police were overwhelmed on Saturday as they fought running battles with protesters in the shadows of some of Paris' fabled landmarks and through its fanciest shopping districts. More than 400 people were arrested and more than 100 injured, shocking Parisians and tourists alike.

At the base of the 19th-century Arc de Triomphe, police kept the public back as cleanup crews set about erasing graffiti, much of it targeting President Emmanuel Macron and some exuding anarchist sentiment such as, "Overthrow the bourgeoisie!" "I've worked on monuments around Paris for 20 years and I've never seen anything like this at the Arc de Triomphe. It was carnage," a Paris City Hall official overseeing the cleanup said as his team worked on a graffiti reading "Macron resign". Lasting damage might be caused if crews are forced to erode the arch's stonework to render it clean, he said.

Authorities were caught off-guard by the escalation in violence after two weeks of nationwide unrest against fuel

taxes and high living costs, known as the "yellow vest" movement after the fluorescent jackets worn by the protesters. On the Rue Royale in the heart of Paris, half a dozen laborers gingerly replaced glass panes on the front of a Dior store. Next door, a Chanel employee vacuumed shards of glass from the floor, while carpenters removed the plywood panels that had been protecting a Gucci shop. The government said it would consider a state of emergency in the face of unrest across the country. The violence in Paris was the worst in the elegant center of the capital since the May 1968 student uprising that brought France to its knees.

'Maybe the army should intervene'

"We're already afraid of what's going to happen next week. The violence is escalating at an exponential rate," said Claude, a well-heeled woman who lives next to the Belle Arme brasserie that was set ablaze. "The state is losing control. They cannot let this happen. Maybe the army should intervene." Parisians and tourists surveyed the aftermath, capturing the moment on smartphones as the capital digested the chaos that now poses a serious challenge to Macron's presidency.

"Macron has a problem on his hands. Everyone's fed up. He's got to listen more," said Amaya Fuster, eyeing graffiti daubed on a Printemps department store window that read: "There's enough money in the coffers of businessmen. Share the riches!" Authorities said violent groups from the far right and far left as well as "thugs" from the suburbs had infiltrated the yellow vests movement in Paris on Saturday.

There were signs that some of the hardcore trouble-makers were part of the anarchist and anti-capitalist movement: Banks, insurance companies, upmarket private homes and cafes and glitzy boutiques were among the properties smashed up and looted. The protests are taking a toll on the economy. On Saturday, boulevards that should have been packed with tourists and Christmas shoppers resembled battle zones, as smoke and tear gas hung in the air and debris littered the ground. Hotels and department stores in the capital stand to lose millions.

"We thought, 'Oh, that's our holiday over,'" said Yao Lei, a Chinese tourist from Shanghai who arrived in Paris at dawn and had received video images of the chaos on his flight. "We're here to shop but we wondered if we'd have to go straight to Milan instead." — Reuters

Dem hopefuls slowly lift veil on challenging Trump in 2020

As US President Donald Trump faces intensifying scrutiny about possible connections to Russia, opposition Democrats are looking to 2020, and who might challenge the controversial leader for his job. They have published new books and made repeat visits to early-voting states - traditional steps towards a White House bid. Several have publicly expressed interest in running. "I'm considering it," goes the refrain.

Others are keeping mum for now. But with the first primary votes 14 months away, time is of the essence, and deciding late risks the best potential advisors - and donors - aligning elsewhere. Trump is clearly eager to take on challengers. "I dream about them," he said recently. The potential 2020 Democratic field is vast - too vast, some strategists worry. Meanwhile, some see it as a sign of party strength before waging campaign war.

The old guard

Joe Biden: Riding his fame and gaining sympathy over his son's death from cancer, the former vice president handily leads 2020 polls. But after eight years in the White House and a lengthy Senate career, Biden, 76, acknowledges that age is a "legitimate" election issue.

Bernie Sanders: Hillary Clinton's unexpectedly strong 2016 challenger has signaled his 2020 interest. The 77-year-old liberal US senator said he is studying whether he is the "best candidate" to beat Trump before launching a campaign.

Clinton and John Kerry: Both former secretaries of state lost their presidential bids, but they have delivered barely-cryptic messages about possible returns to politics.

The star of the moment

Beto O'Rourke: This 46-year-old progressive Texas congressman is suddenly the talk of the trail. While he lost his Senate race this month, O'Rourke gained an intangible asset: Name recognition. He built a national grassroots structure that reached millions, inspired an army of volunteers and won over independent voters - all critical for a modern-day successful campaign.

The wave of enthusiasm for the former punk rocker did not crash with his Senate defeat. Instead, he is routinely mentioned in 2020 analysis, and this week O'Rourke opened the door by acknowledging he is thinking about a presidential bid. Some are not waiting for him to decide. A group called Draft Beto 2020, founded by Democratic strategists, launched this week to draw support.

The senators

Sherrod Brown: Often removed from the political spot-



In this photo taken on Nov 06, 2018, US Senator Elizabeth Warren addresses the audience during the Massachusetts Democratic coordinated campaign election night celebration at the Fairmont Copley Hotel in Boston. — AFP

light, Brown acknowledged his presidential interest after the November 6 midterms. His left-leaning policies on workers' rights and international trade played well in his Ohio, the quintessential Midwestern swing state where he resoundingly won re-election. Trump took notice, accusing Brown of failing to prevent the job cuts recently announced by General Motors.

Elizabeth Warren: The senator from Massachusetts still dodges questions about 2020 but the mystery is fading. On Thursday she outlined her foreign policy vision, and she regularly clashes with Trump on Twitter.

Cory Booker and Kamala Harris: The first-term Senate Democrats are popular progressives. Each this year has visited Iowa, the state that votes first in the nominations process, and other early voting states. Harris and Booker, both of whom are black, are from California and New Jersey respectively, coastal states often associated with progressive elites, putting them at risk of a poor showing in heartland and southern states.

Senator Amy Klobuchar overwhelmingly won re-election in the Midwestern state of Minnesota, placing her in good standing should she announce a run. Other senators mulling bids include Oregon's Jeff Merkley, New York's Kirsten Gillibrand, and Mark Warner of Virginia.

The billionaires

Michael Bloomberg: Like Trump, Bloomberg is a confi-

dent New York billionaire. The ex-mayor has spent millions helping Democrats win in the midterms. But Trump brushed him aside as a serious 2020 candidate this week, saying he would "love to run against Little Michael".

Oprah Winfrey: The television queen has denied interest in running, but her name keeps appearing on 2020 lists.

Financier-turned-environmental activist Tom Steyer, who has called for Trump's impeachment, is a potential candidate, as is Howard Schultz, the former chief executive of Starbucks.

The outsiders

With no heir apparent, the Democratic nomination fight will be sprawling. It could include governors like Montana's Steve Bullock, congressmen such as 40-year-old Seth Moulton, and Obama-era officials like ex-housing secretary Julian Castro - among others:

Michael Avenatti: The brash anti-Trump lawyer for porn star Stormy Daniels is "seriously" interested in a White House bid.

Richard Ojeda: The West Virginia military veteran who pumps iron, supports coal and once voted for Trump recently declared his candidacy.

John Delaney: The Maryland congressman became the first to announce his presidential campaign, in 2017, and has visited all 99 Iowa counties. He remains relatively unknown. — AFP

Business

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12 May gets Brexit deal signed off at EU Council, but hurdles remain**13** Oil selloff triggers investor woes despite earnings improvement**14** Gulf Bank continues to strengthen Fikra program for entrepreneurs

BUENOS AIRES: US President Donald Trump (right) and China's President Xi Jinping (left), along with members of their delegations, have a dinner meeting at the end of the G20 Leaders' Summit on Saturday. — AFP

US, China agree trade war ceasefire

Trump, Xi meet; no escalated tariffs on Jan 1

BUENOS AIRES: China and the United States agreed to a ceasefire in their bitter trade war on Saturday after high-stakes talks in Argentina between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, including no escalated tariffs on Jan 1.

Trump will leave tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports at 10 percent at the beginning of the new year, agreeing to not raise them to 25 percent "at this time", the White House said in a statement.

"China will agree to purchase a not yet agreed upon, but very substantial, amount of agricultural, energy, industrial, and other product from the United States to reduce the trade imbalance between our two countries," it said. "China has agreed to start purchasing agricultural product from our farmers immediately." The two leaders also agreed to immediately start talks on structural changes with respect to forced technology transfers, intellectual property protection, non-tariff barriers, cyber intrusions and cyber theft, services and agriculture, the White House said.

Both countries agreed they will try to have this "transaction" completed within the next 90 days, but if this does not happen then the 10 percent tariffs will be raised to 25 percent, it added.

The Chinese government's top diplomat, State Councillor Wang Yi, said the negotiations were conducted in a "friendly and candid atmosphere". "The two presidents agreed that the two sides can and must get bilateral relations right," Wang told reporters, adding they agreed to further exchanges at appropriate times.

"Discussion on economic and trade issues was very positive and constructive. The two heads of state reached consensus to halt the mutual increase of new tariffs," Wang said.

"China is willing to increase imports in accordance

with the needs of its domestic market and the people's needs, including marketable products from the United States, to gradually ease the imbalance in two-way trade." "The two sides agreed to mutually open their markets, and as China advances a new round of reforms, the United States' legitimate concerns can be progressively resolved."

Talks to continue

The two sides would "step up negotiations" toward full elimination of all additional tariffs, Wang said. The announcements came after Trump and Xi sat down with their aides for a working dinner at the end of a two-day gathering of world leaders in Buenos Aires, their dispute having unnerved global financial markets and weighed on the world economy.

After the 2-1/2 hour meeting, White House chief economist Larry Kudlow told reporters the talks went "very well," but offered no specifics as he boarded Air Force One headed home to Washington with Trump. China's goal was to persuade Trump to abandon plans to raise tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods to 25 percent in January, from 10 percent at present. Trump had threatened to do that, and possibly add tariffs on \$267 billion of imports, if there was no progress in the talks.

With the United States and China clashing over commerce, financial markets will take their lead from the results of the talks, widely seen as the most important meeting of US and Chinese leaders in years.

The encounter came shortly after the Group of 20 industrialized nations backed an overhaul of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which regulates international trade disputes, marking a victory for Trump, a sharp critic of the organization.

Trump told Xi at the start of their meeting he hoped

they would achieve "something great" on trade for both countries. He struck a positive note as he sat across from Xi, despite the US president's earlier threats to impose new tariffs on Chinese imports as early as the next year. He suggested that the "incredible relationship" he and Xi had established would be "the very primary reason" they could make progress on trade.

Restricted category

Xi told Trump that only through cooperation could the United States and China serve the interest of peace and prosperity. Washington and Beijing have also increasingly been at odds over security in the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, Trump again raised with Xi his concern about the synthetic opioid fentanyl being sent from China to the United States, urging the Chinese leader to place it in a "restricted category" of drugs that would criminalize it.

The White House said Xi, "in a wonderful humanitarian gesture", had agreed to designate fentanyl a controlled substance. Xi also said that he was open to approving the previously unapproved Qualcomm-NXP deal should it again be presented to him, the White House added.

"This was an amazing and productive meeting with unlimited possibilities for both the United States and China. It is my great honor to be working with President Xi," Trump said in the statement.

WTO reforms

Earlier on Saturday, the leaders of the world's top economies called for WTO reform in their final summit statement. Officials expressed relief that agreement on the communique was reached after negotiators worked through the night to overcome differences over lan-

guage on climate change.

The final text recognized trade as an important engine of global growth but made only a passing reference to "the current trade issues" after the US delegation won a battle to keep any mention of protectionism out of the statement. Trump has long railed against China's trade surplus with the United States, and Washington accuses Beijing of not playing fairly on trade. China calls the United States protectionist and has resisted what it views as attempts to intimidate it.

The two countries are also at odds over China's extensive claims in the South China Sea and US warship movements through the highly sensitive Taiwan Strait. In addition to tariffs on Chinese goods, Trump has imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports into the United States this year. Numerous countries have filed litigation at the WTO to contest the levies.

The United States is unhappy with what it says is the WTO's failure to hold China to account for not opening up its economy as envisioned when China joined the body in 2001. The European Union is also pushing for sweeping changes to how the WTO operates. G20 delegates said negotiations on the summit statement proceeded more smoothly than at a meeting of Asia-Pacific leaders two weeks ago, where disagreement on protectionism and unfair trading practices prevented a consensus.

European officials said a reference to refugees and migration - a sensitive issue for Trump's administration - was excised to ensure consensus. On climate change, the United States once again marked its differences with the rest of the G20 by reiterating in the statement its decision to withdraw from the Paris Agreement and its commitment to using all kinds of energy sources. — Reuters

Swiss activate plan to defend stock market against EU threat

GENEVA: Switzerland activated a plan to protect its stock market should European Union not renew the Swiss stock exchange's access to the bloc's single market.

The European Commission announced late last year that it would limit to one year its recognition of the so-called equivalence of Swiss trading platforms, which is essential to allow European banks and investors to continue to trade in the Alpine country. The deadline for the EU to grant the renewal was December 31.

In a decision that infuriated Bern, Brussels had tied the renewal to progress on simplifying Switzerland's complex bilateral ties with the EU. Earlier this week, the EU said there had not been enough progress to justify a renewal of the equivalence.

In a statement, Bern said it had no choice but to act. "The market needs clarity in order to adapt to the various scenarios in good time," Switzerland's Federal Council said in a statement. Under the plan which came into force on Friday, Switzerland is requiring all foreign

trading platforms which allow trading of Swiss shares to apply for formal "recognition" from Bern.

The measure is designed to create a way for EU based platforms to still trade shares on the Swiss exchange, even without approval from Brussels.

The plan will be voided if Brussels renews the Swiss market's equivalence status before the end of the year. "It is designed in such a way that it has no practical effect if the European Commission extends the stock market equivalence before the end of 2018," the government statement said.

It stressed that Bern "continues to believe that Switzerland meets all the conditions for unrestricted recognition by the EU."

The European Commission, which handles the negotiations with Bern for the EU, said it "taken note" of

Switzerland's decision. "We will examine and assess the situation ... and discuss possible next steps ... in the coming days and weeks," a statement added.

Some have speculated that the EU is driving a particularly hard bargain given the ongoing Brexit talks and that issue may be easier to resolve if Brexit tensions ease.

Switzerland's complex ties with Brussels are sewn together through a mixture of deals on trade, labour, migration and other issues. The Bern-Brussels relationship suffered a heavy blow in 2014 when Swiss voters backed a proposal calling for the re-introduction of migrant quotas, which could have limited the number of EU citizens working in Switzerland.

The Swiss parliament in 2016 approved a modified version of that plan to pacify EU relations. — AFP

Business

NBK Weekly Money Markets Report

May gets Brexit deal signed off at EU Council, but hurdles remain

BoE analyses the deal, compares it with the cost of 'no-deal' exit

KUWAIT: After the terms of Theresa May's Brexit deal got signed off at the European Council meeting, the British prime minister is now facing the struggle to win the House of Commons in order to kick off her plan. May has embarked on a two-week campaign to sell the historic deal, telling MPs that they risk taking the country into "more division and uncertainty" if they reject the deal. The aim of the deal is to deliver a smooth divorce, ending Britain's 45-year association with the European project. Mrs May had agreed with the European Commission president and the European Council president that both sides are to insist the deal was the only option on the table with no plan B, either it or a no-deal Brexit.

The vote will take place on the 11th of December, where the Parliament will cast its vote on the 585 page deal that the EU agreed on of which commitments run to 2030 and beyond.

The first area of agreement is the divorce bill, a financial settlement that the UK will pay to the European Union to honor its financial commitments to Brussels. The commitments consist of two aspects, UK's contribution to the EU's budget which will last till the year 2020, and payments to EU projects that the UK had already agreed to. The way that the divorce bill works is not all of the payments are due immediately.

In fact, the UK will still be paying the EU in 2064. According to the Office of Budget Responsibility, about 45 percent will be paid in the first two years, then another 48 percent will be paid by 2028, the final 7 percent will be paid between 2029 and 2064 and will be covering all of the last financial commitments such as paying towards the pension of EU staff. Using conservative assumptions, the UK Treasury is expecting a net British outlay of EUR 40bn to EUR 45 billion.

Next is the agreement on citizen rights, which maintains the existing EU residence and social security rights of more than 3mn EU citizens in the UK, and around 1mn UK nationals living on the European continent. EU citizens will be allowed to move to the UK until the end of the transition period currently set for 2020, they will be allowed to live and work in the UK and if they stay for five consecutive years, they will be allowed to stay in the UK permanently. The same is true for UK citizens living in the EU.

Perhaps one of the hardest issues that needed to be dealt with is the Irish border issue. The 496km border between Northern Ireland and Ireland has been completely open for twenty years since the signing of the Good Friday agreement brought peace to the border. Currently there are no hard crossing points on the borders, and the Brexit issue brings difficulties as both the EU and the UK will have the need to impose their own customs regulations and tariffs, a goal not easily achieved with an open border. The deal assumes a comprehensive free trade agreement to be signed

between the EU and the UK between March 29th next year, when the UK actually leaves the EU, and the end of the transition phase at the end of 2020.

This means that the free trade agreement does not need to come into force until January 2021.

During the transition phase, the UK will continue to follow EU rules and customs regulations, meaning that while we are in the transition phase the border can stay open. As reaching a free trade agreement is not an easy task, the EU insisted on having a backstop in place. The backstop means that the whole of the UK stays in the EU's customs union; unless and until the EU agrees that the UK leaving won't result in a hard border, essentially continuing the transition period indefinitely. During which Britain would leave the political institutions of the EU, losing its say over rules and decisions but continuing to apply by the EU law. This clause is one of the terms that are creating a lot of resistance to May's deal.

The Bank of England published its economic analysis of the deal, comparing it with the cost of a disorderly "no-deal" exit. Government economists had calculated that if May's deal comes forward, Britain would be 3.9 percent worse off in 15 years' time than if it had remained in the EU. While this does not sound like a good outcome, the BoE warned that in a cliff-edge Brexit where the UK crashes out of the EU with no deal and no transition, could lead to the sharpest drop in national income since the Second World War. GDP could fall as much as 10.5 percent over a 5 year period, compared to pre-referendum levels, and house prices could plummet 30 percent. This compares to a respective drop of 6.25 percent and 17 percent during the financial crisis. This has led PM May to insist that the analysis shows UK will be "better off" under her Brexit deal, as she embarks on her campaign to collect votes to support her case.

President Donald Trump has commented on May's deal saying it would benefit the EU while damaging the UK's ability to trade with the US. Trump's comments will add to the pressure on the prime minister as she attempts to win converts within the Parliament.

The pound did not bode well in light of the tensions surrounding the subject, showing that investors do not believe that a vote to back the deal is going to happen. The pound did get a short breath of air amid the BoE Brexit report, but it quickly took a downturn as the prime minister did not rule out the possibility of a no-deal Brexit during a meeting of the commons liaison committee. The Cable closed the week 0.77 percent down at 1.2751.

Fed rate hike easing

The US Federal Reserve is expected to go forward with further gradual hikes in interest rates if the US economy stays on track. Almost all policymakers had agreed on the plan as indicated in the latest minutes,



with a further quarter point rise expected at the upcoming meeting on December 19. The current Federal Fund rate is at 2-2.5 percent. Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell declared US interest rates are closing in on "neutral levels", sparking the best day for equity markets since March as investors interpreted a slowdown in the rate-rising program. Given that rates are hovering "just below" estimates of neutral, the Fed chair explained that there is "no present policy path" and that the central bank "will be paying very close attention to what incoming economic and financial data are telling us."

The comments made in New York on Wednesday came as the central bank faced increasing pressure from President Donald Trump, to hold back from further rate rises. Trump told the Washington Post that the Fed is "way off base with what they're doing", adding "so far, I am not even a little bit happy with my selection of Jay." During Powell's speech, no direct mention of Trump's criticisms was made. He did however claim that the Fed had been right to embark on gradual rate rises given that the economy was no longer benefiting from the low rates sparked by the 2008 financial crisis. The S&P 500 experienced its best day in eight months, closing 2.3 percent higher following the speech. The Dow Jones Industrial Average and the Nasdaq Composite followed the same trend, closing 2.5 percent and 2.9 percent higher respectively. The US dollar weakened, dropping 0.85 percent following the comments, and closed the market at 96.778.

Japan's manufacturing

The growth in Japan's manufacturing sector slowed to a two-year low during November, according to a preliminary reading. The flash manufacturing purchasing managers index of Nikkei-Market fell to 51.8 this month, reaching its lowest reading since November 2016. The reading is down from the 52.9 recorded in October. According to the survey, manufacturers reported weaker demand for the first time since September 2016 with new orders decreasing.

Commodities

Looking at commodities, oil prices have tumbled around 30 percent after hitting a four-year high in early October. US sanctions against Iranian supply coupled with supply losses in Venezuela and an uncertain global political environment has weighed heavy on the oil market. With continuous pressure from US President Donald Trump to increase production, the expected slowdown in oil demand growth has gutted Brent prices. The outcome of the OPEC meeting scheduled next week in Vienna remains unclear as both Russia and Saudi Arabia have revealed a willingness to cut output in an attempt to counteract the issue of oversupply. Brent crude is currently hovering around the 57.55 level, while the West Texas Intermediate is down to 50.73 from a high of 76.40 in October.

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30400 The USDKD opened at .30400 yesterday.

Putin: Russia, Saudi agree to renew oil output cuts



BUENOS AIRES: Russia's President Vladimir Putin delivers a joint press conference with Argentina's President Mauricio Macri (out of frame) at the Casa Rosada presidential house in Buenos Aires, in the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit on Saturday. —AFP

BUENOS AIRES: President Vladimir Putin said Saturday that Russia and OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia had agreed to renew a pact on oil production cuts, as crude prices slump on global markets.

Following talks at a G20 summit with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Putin said the world's two biggest exporters of crude "have agreed to extend our agreement." There was no immediate word from the Saudis, but financial markets have been expecting the deal to be renewed between the kingdom and non-OPEC member Russia as the cartel prepares to meet next week in Vienna.

Russia has for years been cooperating with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), helping to engineer a rebound after a 2014 oil price slump. But since reaching four-year highs in October, oil prices have plunged around 30 percent as worries about falling demand in a slowing world economy have taken their toll.

"We are going to work together with Saudi Arabia," Putin said in Buenos Aires, ahead of the Vienna talks. "We are going to survey together the market situation with Saudi Arabia and respond to it operationally," he said.

On Thursday, the price of New York crude ducked below \$50 per barrel for the first time in almost 14 months. The contract closed the week Friday down 52 cents at \$50.93 per barrel. —AFP

Deutsche Bank chief dismisses takeover speculation

FRANKFURT: Deutsche Bank is not at risk of a takeover, its chief executive told a German weekly paper after its shares fell to a record low on Friday in the wake of a two-day raid related to money laundering allegations.

Speculation about a possible merger has continued despite the bank's dismissal in September of reports that it could consider tie-ups with Switzerland's UBS or German peer Commerzbank.

"I don't have any indication of that," Christian Sewing told Bild am Sonntag. "We are on track to make our first profit for three years. It is only a matter of time before this progress is reflected in the share price." Sewing's remarks followed the two-day raid as part of an investigation linked to the so-called Panama Papers leak of documents

about offshore finance.

Police searched the offices of all the bank's board members, Sewing said. "But that is okay, I don't have a problem with that. I want this matter to be cleared up as soon as possible," he told the newspaper.

Investigators are looking at the activities of unidentified Deutsche Bank employees alleged to have helped clients to set up offshore firms to launder money, the Frankfurt prosecutor's office said.

"It's about two employees who, at the time, helped to work through everything surrounding the issue of the Panama Papers. In my view the presumption of innocence clearly applies until proven otherwise," Sewing told the paper.

"Since the publication of the Panama Papers in 2016 we have reviewed the whole issue and, in doing so, cooperated closely with the regulatory authorities. For us the case was concluded."

Asked whether he had made any mistakes, Sewing said: "I am at peace with myself and I am doing my job as well as I can. "Of course, I would never say that I'm not making mistakes. But if I do, I correct them as quickly as possible." —Reuters

Climate change

G20 signatories to the Paris Agreement on climate—which is all of them except the United States—pledged the "full implementation" of the pact, which they called "irreversible." They also took note, without further pledges, of UN scientists' call for a more ambitious target of reducing warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

But the United States reiterated its withdrawal from the agreement, "and affirms its strong commitment to economic growth and energy access and security."

Trade

Bowing to the view of Trump's administration, the G20 said that multilateral trade was "falling short of its objectives" on promoting growth and job creation. It called for reforms of



FRANKFURT: A red illuminated bollard is pictured in front of Deutsche Bank's headquarters in Frankfurt. —AFP

the World Trade Organization "to improve its functioning," saying progress would be reviewed at next year's summit in Japan.

IMF

Calling the International Monetary Fund crucial to the global safety net, the G20 pledged to provide adequate funding and to meet a goal of finalizing new national quotas in time for the global lender's spring 2019 meetings. The quotas determined each member's voting rights. Major emerging economies in the G20 such as China and India have been pressing for a bigger say at the IMF.

Corruption

The G20 "committed to prevent and fight corruption and lead by example," promising action from 2019 through 2021 on cleaning up state-run enterprises.

Gender inequality

The G20 recommitted to a four-year-old goal of reducing the gender gap in the labor force by 25 percent by 2025. It supported doing more, including increasing efforts to bring education to girls.

Future of work

Noting that new technologies will transform the nature of labor, the G20 called for "an inclusive, fair and sustainable" future of work, with retraining of workers where needed.

Infrastructure

Calling infrastructure a key driver of global growth, the G20 called for greater standardization in contract-making to encourage more private capital. —AFP

Key points from the Group of 20

BUENOS AIRES: G20 leaders on Saturday found the minimum common ground on the global economy at a summit in Buenos Aires with a closing communiqué that left divisions on clear display.

The statement offered virtually no concrete promises and, under pressure from US President Donald Trump, avoided language on fighting protectionism and acknowledged Washington's disagreement on battling climate change. Here are key points from the communiqué by the Group of 20, which accounts for more than four-fifths of the global economy, after the two-day summit:

Business

KAMCO GCC Markets Monthly Report

Oil selloff triggers investor woes despite earnings improvement

Kuwait benchmarks perform well in November

KUWAIT: A steep decline in oil prices during November-18 dampened investor sentiment during the month resulting in mixed performance of GCC markets. Kuwait recorded the best monthly performance followed by Bahrain and Qatar, while Dubai recorded the worst monthly performance declining for the fourth consecutive month which pushed the benchmark's YTD-18 decline to 21 percent. In addition, despite a late month reversal, Saudi Arabia also declined by 2.6 percent, led primarily by weak oil prices. Consequently, the aggregate GCC index declined by close to 1.5 percent during the month, although it remains in the positive territory in terms of YTD-18 returns that stood at 11 percent.

The oil price decline was led by continued oversupply concerns and declining confidence in near term oil demand which resulted in one of the biggest monthly drops for oil prices since 2008. Weak oil prices have also increased the probability of an extension to the oil production cut agreement by the OPEC+ producers. On the other hand, global equity markets were largely positive with the MSCI World Index gaining 2.7 percent during the month led by mid-single digit gains in Emerging Markets and Asian exchanges.

In terms of sector performance, a majority of the industry groups declined during the month. Among the large-cap sectors, decliners included Utilities, Diversified Financials, Transportation and Materials. These declines were partially offset by marginal gains in Telecom and Banking stocks. The Banking sector remained in the positive territory during the month despite a decline in prices of key banking stocks in the UAE. Moreover, the sector continues to boast a YTD-18 return of more than 20 percent, reflecting strong balance sheets and quarterly earnings. In terms of earnings, most of the GCC exchanges reported positive y-o-y aggregate Q3-18 earnings. Growth came on the back of strong banking earnings which grew by double digits in most of the markets.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti benchmarks recorded the best monthly performance during November-18 with all the indices closing the month in the green. Gains were led by large-cap stocks as seen from the 1.6 percent gains for the Premier Market index while Main Market index recorded a gain of

0.8 percent resulting in 1.3 percent gain for the All Share Index. Large-cap stocks have also supported index gains in terms of YTD-18 performance with 10.9 percent gains for the Premier Market Index while the Main Market index declined by 2.0 percent. As a result, the All Share Index had a slightly lower gain of 5.8 percent.

Trading activity remained mixed during the month as a result of higher trades in small-cap stocks. Monthly volume increased by a third to reach 1.9 billion shares during November-18 despite a decline in monthly value traded which dropped by 8.1 percent to reach KD 284.8 million as compared to KD 309.8 million during the previous month. A'ayan Leasing & Investment topped the monthly volume chart with 160 million shares changing hands during the month followed by Gulf Petroleum Investment and Ahli United Bank - Bahrain with volumes of 124.4 million and 115.9 million, respectively. In terms of monthly value traded, KFH topped the list with KD 33.1 million worth of traded shares followed by Gulf Bank and NBK at KD 28.7 million and KD 27.2 million, respectively.

Small cap stocks dominated the monthly performance chart during the month, while prominent large-cap monthly gainers included Kuwait International Bank with a gain of 10.5 percent followed by Human Soft and Viva Kuwait with monthly gains of 9.5 percent and 8.8 percent, respectively.

Monthly gains in these stocks were led by strong y-o-y growth in Q3-18 earnings. On the decliners chart, ACICO and Heavy Engineering Industries & Shipbuilding featured with declines of 12.8 percent and 12.0 percent, respectively, followed by Mezzan Holding at 10.2 percent.

The sector performance chart was almost equally split between gainers and losers although gainers mainly included large-cap sectors. The Telecom index topped the monthly performance chart with a gain of 3.4 percent as the earnings led gains in shares of Viva Kuwait and Zain (+3.6 percent) more than offset decline reported by Ooredoo Kuwait (-3.0 percent) after the telco reported softer earnings. The Real Estate index recorded a gain of 3.0 percent and was second on the monthly list despite a drop in quarterly earnings that almost halved as compared to Q3-17.

Gain for the Banking index stood at 1.7 percent after the decline in shares of CBK (-2.0 percent) were more than offset by gain in rest of the Kuwaiti Banks. Meanwhile, earnings for the Banking sector stood strong with only CBK reporting a y-o-y drop in Q3-18 earnings while aggregate sector reported double digit earnings growth for the period. Aggregate earnings for the exchange remained almost flat with gains in Banks and Telecom earnings offset by decline in earnings for the Industrial, Consumer Services and Real Estate sectors.

Billionaire Czech PM faces more legal trouble over use of EU funds

BRUSSELS/PRAGUE: Billionaire Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis faced renewed pressure over his business dealings on Saturday after an EU legal document said he has a conflict of interest due to links to agribusiness companies that received European funds.

The document, which was seen by Reuters, could stir up political turmoil in the Central European country, where massive protests took place on Nov. 23 after the minority government survived a no-confidence vote over an alleged fraud involving EU funds.

Babis, who before becoming premier in Dec. 2017 served as finance minister since 2014, denied any wrongdoing on Saturday following media reports about the confidential document, which is meant to inform decisions by the European Commission.

The legal opinion, dated Nov. 19, said "the situation of Mr Babis qualifies as a conflict of interest," because he could "influence" decisions on the use of EU funds of which companies linked to him had benefited. It added that the alleged legal breach could require the reimbursement of some of the funds and said Babis should sever all ties to the companies involved.

Saudi Arabia (Tadawul)

The Saudi market declined for the second consecutive month in November-18 reeling under the influence of the steep decline in oil prices. The benchmark TASI Index dropped 2.6 percent during the month, the biggest monthly decline in 9 months to close at 7,703 points after a late month reversal trend failed to offset declines since the start of the month. The decline during November-18 further lowered YTD-18 gains for the market which stood at 6.6 percent. The sector performance chart also reflected the market weakness with a majority of the sectoral indices closing the month in the red. The Food & Beverage index witnessed the biggest monthly drop of 5.4 percent after quarterly earnings for the sector more than halved during Q3-18 as compared to Q3-17. Among the large-cap sectors, the Materials index dropped 4.7 percent while Telecom and Banks declined by 2.0 percent and 1.8 percent, respectively.

Quarterly earnings performance for the exchange remained flat at SAR 32.8 Bn during Q3-18. However, changes among the sectors varied with higher earnings recorded by Banks, Materials, Real Estate and Telecom offset by decline in profits recorded by Energy, Transportation, Consumer Services, Food & Beverage, Healthcare and Insurance sectors. Banking sector earnings were up by 11 percent y-o-y during Q3-18 after the listed banks in the Kingdom, with the only exception of Saudi Hollandi Bank, posted positive growth and most of them double digit y-o-y increase in Q3-18 earnings. Materials segment also posted a strong y-o-y earnings growth of 10.6 percent during Q3-18, while on the other hand, earnings for the Energy sector more than halved during Q3-18 as compared to Q3-17.

The monthly gainers chart was topped by Anaam Intl. Holding with a gain of 24.9 percent followed by Al-Sorayai Trading and Saudi Fisheries recording gains of 23.2 percent and 23 percent, respectively. Shares of Anaam went up after the company announced signing of MoU to acquire real estate and commercial assets held by the two companies. In addition, both Anaam Intl Holding and Al-Sorayai Trading reported lower losses during Q3-18. On the decliners side, three out of the top five companies were from the Materials sector including Saudi Paper Manufacturing (-16.3 percent), Methanol Chemical Co. (-14.4 percent) and Sahara Petrochemical (-12.8 percent) while Saudi Industrial Export Co. topped the chart with a decline of 26.0 percent. Shares of Saudi Paper Manufacturing declined after the company reported a steep decline in topline as well as higher y-o-y losses during Q3-18. Meanwhile shares of Sahara Petrochemical declined after a manufacturing plant at one of its subsidiary companies underwent an emergency shutdown.

Trading activity witnessed a steep drop during the month in terms of both volume and value of shares traded on the exchange. Monthly volume of shares declined by 30.3 percent to reach 2.7 Bn shares in November-18 as compared to 3.9 billion shares in the previous month. Total value traded on the exchange also dropped at an even higher pace of 35.1 percent to reach SAR 62.2 billion as compared to SAR 95.7 billion during the previous month. Alinma Bank topped the monthly volume chart with 338.7 Mn shares traded during the month followed by Dar Al-Arkan and Saudi Kayan with 200.3 million shares and 139.3 million shares, respectively. In terms of monthly value traded, SABIC topped the chart with SAR 8.1 billion worth of shares changing hands during the month followed by Alinma Bank and Al Rajhi Bank with trades worth SAR 7.1 billion and SAR 3.1 billion, respectively.

Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

After declining for two months in a row, the ADX index declined in Nov-18 and closed 2.7 percent lower m-o-m at 4770.08 points. Market breadth favored decliners, as 16 stocks gained, while 32 stocks declined. Sectoral performance barring the Services sector was negative. The Energy index was the worst performing index on the ADX, declining by 12.6 percent, driven by double digit declines in crude oil prices, as Dana Gas lost a fifth of its market capitalization, while Abu Dhabi National Energy moved down by 8.9 percent m-o-m. Investment & Financial Services names followed, as the index receded by 9.9 percent m-o-m, driven mainly by a decline in the share price of Waha Capital (-9.7 percent), while

Al Khaleej Investment lost 7.9 percent m-o-m. Real Estate index woes in the UAE continued and reflected on stock prices as well, as the index was down 7.8 percent m-o-m and was the worst performing index YTD (-26.8 percent). Within the index, Aldar (-7.5 percent), Eshraq Properties (9.2 percent) and Ras Al Khaimah Properties (-8.3 percent) saw lower levels. For the Services index which gained by 1.2 percent, larger stocks Abu Dhabi Aviation and National Corp for Tourism & Hotels saw higher levels.

In earnings releases, energy company ADNOC Distribution reported 9M-18 net profit of AED 1,682 million an increase of 28 percent y-o-y as compared to 9M-17. EBITDA grew by 33 percent y-o-y in 9M-18 to AED 2,157

million. Fuel volumes sold decreased 2.3 percent y-o-y at 7,179 million liters.

Dana Gas saw its 9M-18 revenues increase 6 percent y-o-y to AED 1,287 million from AED 1,210 million in 9M-17, on higher prices. The company's 9M-18 net profit was AED 149 million as compared to AED 458 million in 9M-17. Excluding one-off items, net profit was AED 149 million in 9M-18, as compared to a net loss of AED 22 million in 9M-17. In KRI, the company completed the debottlenecking project that is targeting a 25 percent boost to output. The company possesses a 10 year gas sales agreement with KRG to supply and sell additional quantities of gas into the local market for power generation. Separately investment company Waha Capital reported a 10.2 percent rise in net profit to AED 295.1 million in 9M-18, largely driven by the company's Private Investments business. The company's Private Investments business recorded a 16.9 percent y-o-y increase in net profit at AED 309.2 million. The business line was aided by continued robust contribution from its stake in New York-listed AerCap Holdings NV, as well as a gain of AED 64.1 million from the sale of 6.68 million AerCap shares, following their expiration from a collar hedging and financing arrangement.



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DFM Monthly Sector Performance

The DFM index declined for the fourth month in a row in Nov-18, and was the worst performing index for the month. The index declined by 4.2 percent m-o-m and closed at 2668.66 points, as the performance of sectoral indices was mostly negative. Consumer Staples was the worst performing index as the sector plunged by 19.5 percent m-o-m in Nov-18, driven mainly by a 21.6 percent decline in the share price of DNB Entertainment. The stock was down over 57 percent YTD and has been under pressure over questions of discretionary spending in Dubai.

Insurance names followed with declines of 15.3 percent m-o-m, as larger names within the index that were traded witnessed declines. Investment & Financial Services also lost ground by 13.6 percent m-o-m and were dragged down by Dubai Investment (-16.7 percent) & DFM stock (-4.3 percent). Real Estate and Construction names continued to remain under pressure, declining by 8.4 percent, as real estate prices and rents continue to move lower. Transportation was the best performing index as the index went up by 3.0 percent m-o-m, driven by Aramex, which gained by 7.8 percent. Telecoms also closed higher by 1.4 percent, as DU witnessed gains of 1.4 percent m-o-m.

In 9M-18 earnings releases, Emaar Properties reported revenues of AED 17.390 Bn for 9M-18, up 30 percent y-o-y from AED 13.35 Bn during 9M-17, led by growth achieved by Emaar Development, UAE build-to-sale property business majority owned by Emaar, as well as better performance from Emaar Malls. Emaar Development has a backlog of AED 38,527 billion, led by property sales of AED 10,030 billion for 9M-18.

Qatar Exchange

Qatar was amongst the gainers in the GCC in Nov-18, and continues to lead other regional markets YTD (+21.6 percent). The QE 20 index improved by 0.6 percent m-o-m to close at 10364.54 points in Nov-18. The Qatar All Share index which maps the broader market, closed 1.8 percent higher as compared to the previous month. Market breadth was broadly even as 25 companies receded, while 20 companies moved higher as compared to the previous month. Sectoral performance was mixed and included both gainers and losers. Heavyweight indices such as Real Estate and Banks & Financial Services indices closed in the green during the month. Real Estate was the best performing sectoral index, gaining by 10.4 percent m-o-m, driven by Ezzan Holding and Barwa Real Estate, as the stocks closed 16.4 percent and 2.2 percent higher respectively m-o-m. The Banks & Financial Services index moved higher by 2.0 percent and was driven higher by banks mainly -QNB (+2.3 percent).



PRAGUE: Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis attends a parliamentary session during a no-confidence vote for the government he leads, in Prague, Czech Republic. —Reuters

"Whilst it is for the national authorities in the first instance to take the necessary action, the Commission also has a responsibility to protect the financial interests of the Union," a spokesman said, adding that Brussels had contacted Czech authorities about the matter earlier this week. Philippe Lamberts, who leads the Greens grouping in the European Parliament, called for an immediate suspension of EU funds to the companies involved.

"The Czech Parliament and Commission cannot stand by and let this situation further denigrate the standing of the Czech government and the EU," he said in a statement. —Reuters

Commercial Bank of Qatar (+1.8 percent) and Masraf Al Rayan (+5.5 percent). After being a worst performer in Oct-18, Telecoms rebounded and gained by 9.2 percent m-o-m in Nov-18, led by a jump in Ooredoo's share price (+14.7 percent). On the decliners side, Industrials was down 2.9 percent m-o-m, as Industries Qatar (-3.2 percent), Messaeid Petrochemical (-5.0 percent) and Qatar Electricity & Water (-4.2 percent) lost ground during the month.

In corporate announcements, Qatar National Cement Company announced the production of white cement. The product is available in the form of bags weighing 50 kg at a price of QAR 25 per bag and available in bulk at a price of QAR 500 per ton. Previously the company has announced production of Slag as well to meet the local market demand in accordance with the Qatar Vision 2030. Separately, Qatari German Company for Medical Devices announced the signing of a cooperation agreement in the field of Medical Manufacturing with Al-Jazira Healthcare group for the purpose of manufacturing multiple types of medical supplies used of Qatar in order to meet the needs of the local market and in line with Qatar 2030 vision that aims for achieving self-sufficiency in this sector. In the banking sector, Qatar Islamic Bank launched the first Islamic Point of Sale (POS) & Online Payment Gateway solutions in collaboration with QPAY international.

Bahrain Bourse

The Bahrain Bourse was amongst the best performing GCC indices in Nov-18, closing in the green for the month. The Bahrain All Share Index closed at 1328.81 points and moved up by 1.1 percent m-o-m. Sectoral performance was mixed, but more sectors gained during Nov-18. The Investment index was the best performing index as the sector gained 3.9 percent m-o-m, driven by United Gulf Holding Company as its share price jumped by 29.5 percent m-o-m. Industrials also gained by 1.7 percent m-o-m, driven solely by Aluminum Bahrain, as the bellwether gained by 1.7 percent m-o-m. Gains from Batelco (+4.8 percent) and Bahrain Duty Free Complex (+1.4 percent) also ensured that the Services index moved up by 1.7 percent. Commercial Banks however declined by 0.6 percent m-o-m in Nov-18, as Al-Khaleej Commercial Bank (-8.9 percent) and Al Salam Bank (-7.1 percent) pulled down the index.

In earnings related releases for 9M-18, GFH reported consolidated revenues of \$184.62 million as compared to \$163.16 million in 9M-17, representing a growth of 13.2 percent y-o-y, primarily from revenues generated from its investment banking business. The company reported a net profit of \$103.44 million for 9M-18 representing a 18.6 percent increase from \$87.23 million in 9M-17. The increase was ascribed to continued growth and stronger contributions from the GFH's core investment banking business and other related investment income.

Telecom operator Batelco reported 9M-18 revenues of BHD 301.5 million, an increase of 9 percent y-o-y as compared to BHD 277.6 million. Revenue growth was driven by strong performance at Batelco Bahrain, Umniah in Jordan and Dhiraagu - the Group's operation in Maldives.

Muscat Securities Market

Muscat Securities Market dropped for the second consecutive month during November-18, although marginally to reach 4,412.1 points. The decline came after all the three sectoral indices declined during the month. The Industrial index dropped 1.6 percent followed by Services index at -1.5 percent while the drop in the Financial index was marginal at -0.5 percent. Within the Industrial index, gains recorded by Al Maha Ceramics (+5.1 percent) and Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles (+2.56 percent) were more than offset by declines recorded by Oman Cement (-4.43 percent) and Voltamp Energy (-2.21 percent). Ominvest (-5 percent) was the biggest decliner in the Financial sector followed by Bank Sohar (-3.2 percent) and Al-Sharqia Investment Holding (-3.2 percent). These gains were partially offset mainly by 1 percent gains in Bank Muscat (+1 percent).

IMF agrees new loan program for Sierra Leone

FREETOWN: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) board has approved a new \$172 million loan program for Sierra Leone to help the West African country combat rising inflation and lacklustre economic growth. The 43-month agreement follows a previous \$240 million financing plan that was suspended in February over foot-dragging on reforms such as taxing luxury car imports, and removing subsidies on fuel and rice. "The objectives of the previous program remain appropriate, but circumstances call for a recalibration," the IMF said in statement. "The main objectives of the current program are to safeguard macroeconomic stability, deepen structural reforms, and advance the country's education for development and poverty reduction agendas."

Representatives of Sierra Leone's finance ministry and central bank did not immediately respond to requests for comment. After recovering from a civil war ending in 2002, the country saw impressive growth but its economy was then battered by an Ebola epidemic and falling commodity prices. —Reuters

Business

Gulf Bank continues to strengthen Fikra program for entrepreneurs

We are thrilled to be the gold sponsors of Fikra Program for third year: Al-Amir

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is continuing its involvement in the Fikra program to support the development of entrepreneurs. In addition to being the gold sponsor for the third consecutive year, Meshari Shebab, Assistant General Manager, Priority Banking represented Gulf Bank on the judging panel to help decide which teams of entrepreneurs will advance to participate in this year's program.

In its 4th edition, the Fikra program aims to provide the youth in Kuwait with essential skills and knowledge needed to develop their business ideas into reality. Meshari Shebab aided in judging over 30 teams of entrepreneurs who pitched their business ideas in front of the judges and audience to be selected for the 4th Fikra program.

Ahmed Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communication, Gulf Bank, said: "We are thrilled to be the gold sponsors of Fikra Program for the third year. At Gulf Bank, we aim to continue to empower the youth to reach their full business potential. Every year, we are inspired by the hard work and commitment we witness from these entrepreneurs, which in turn encourages us to work harder and achieve our business goals."

Also commenting on the occasion is Meshari Shebab, Assistant General Manager, Priority Banking: "I am honored to have been part of the judging panel as each team presented their business

ideas passionately. As part of Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility initiatives, we aim to continue to work with and support the youth in Kuwait to develop their business goals as we believe they are the future of Kuwait."

On the day of the event, each of the short-listed teams were given three minutes to pitch their innovative business ideas, followed by a three-minute Q&A session with the judging panel. At the end of the event, 15 teams were chosen to continue with the Fikra program training which will conclude on 2nd April 2019.

Fikra Program was launched in 2015 as a corporate social responsibility program. It is an intensive entrepreneurship training program open to the country's youth graduated with any major who can apply individually or in a team. Providing one-to-one mentorship for guidance and support as well as business training through workshops and field trips.

Gulf Bank is one of the leading conventional banks



Ahmed Al-Amir



in Kuwait with total assets of KD 5,683 million for year ended 31 December 2017. The Bank provides a broad offering of consumer banking, wholesale

banking, treasury, and financial services through its large network of 58 branches and more than 200 ATMs in Kuwait.

Warba Bank announces 10 winners of Al-Sunbula draw

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, held the 43rd and 44th Al-Sunbula Account weekly draws in parallel as the 43rd draw was postponed due to Prophet Muhammad's Birthday (PBUH) holiday. The draw announced the 10 lucky winners in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Bank officials. The bank proudly announces the lucky 5 winners of the 43rd week who received KD 1000 each are: Sayer Bader Mohammed Al-Sayer, Anfal Ibrahim Abdullah Al-Enezi, Arash Mehdi Zadeh, Abdulrahman Abdullah Hussain Abdulkarim and Adel Jawad Mahmoud Jawhar Hayat.

And the lucky 5 winners of the 44th week who received KD 1000 each are: Dhuwaih Ali Saad Al-Sahli, Khaled Saleh Ebrahim Al-Shaban, Sultan Obaid Menwer Al-Maymouni, Hadi Harbi Abdullah Al-Lmaie and Mostafa Mohammad Najeeb Mostafa Arafah. Al-Sunbula Account is the perfect choice for all customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while simultaneously have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. Due to the high traffic on this account, for its offerings of unparalleled opportunities, Warba Bank has worked on enhancing Al-Sunbula account to provide customers with more benefits. Such enhancements include increasing the number of winners and the frequency of the draws. Now, on every Thursday the Bank holds draws for 5 weekly winners of KD 1,000 each. In addition, the Bank continues its monthly draws held on the first Thursday of every month, with cash prizes of KD 30,000 divided amongst 4 winners: two winners getting KD 10,000 each, and two winners getting KD 5,000 each.

Thus, the new development of Al-Sunbula account has increased the total number of winners to 24, and the total amount of prizes to KD 50,000 instead of KD 30,000. As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against each KD 10. It is noteworthy, that Warba Bank has recently launched the Al-Sunbula Fixed Deposit, which provides depositors with high returns of up to 3 percent, as well as getting monthly chances to win in Al-Sunbula Account draws.

Furthermore, Warba Bank has launched its latest Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request opening Al-Sunbula account in an easy electronic manner through the Bank's website without having to visit any of the Bank's branches, by following 5 simple steps that might take up to 5 minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, and the Bank will receive, process and pass the new application for approval through whole new and unique electronic system used to implement this service. Warba Staff will then contact the customer to determine the appropriate time to visit the branch to get required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

- Majid Hilal Abdullhussain Al-Tameemi
- Abdullah Adel Hajdar Alhasan
- Abdulhakim Abdulfatah Mohammad Marafie
- Mahmoud Sulaiman Mohammad Sulaiman
- Eqbal Hamad Mubarak Alayyar

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws. Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Ooredoo Kuwait appoints new COO

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced yesterday the appointment of Fadi Kawar, who is joining Ooredoo Kuwait family as Chief Operating Officer. Kawar has almost thirty years of experience

under his belt, and a wealth of international telecommunications experience having worked for industry like "Lebara" in KSA - an MVNO (Mobile Virtual Network Operator), Etihad Etisalat-Mobily and was the Chairman of Board and CEO of Telecommunications Regulatory Commission in Jordan.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Thani, Chief Executive Officer at Ooredoo Kuwait welcomed Kawar and said: "We wish to extend a very warm welcome to Mr. Fadi Kawar

for joining Ooredoo Kuwait's family. We are confident in his ability to contribute positively to our ongoing success in Ooredoo Kuwait, and we wish him a prosperous journey with us".

Ooredoo's operations in Kuwait date back to December 1999 when it launched wireless services as the second operator. The company today provides mobile, broadband internet and corporate managed services tailored to the needs of customers and businesses. Ooredoo Kuwait - which is an enlisted company in

the Kuwait Stock Exchange Market - operates a number of telecom service providers in the region, such as Ooredoo Algeria, Ooredoo Tunisia, Ooredoo Maldives, and Wataniya Palestine. Ooredoo's customer base in Kuwait increased 2 percent to 2.3 million for the nine months period ended 30 September 2018, compared to the same period in 2017. Revenues for the nine month period were KD 181.7 million, an increase of 13 percent compared to KD 160.7 million for the same period in 2017.

Machines, humans must team up for robust cybersecurity

By Mohammed Arif, Regional Director, Microsoft Gulf

There can be no doubt that the Fourth Industrial Revolution has ushered in a flood of benefits via digital transformation. Organizations now engage citizens and customers, empower public servants and business employees, optimize operations and reinvent business models as never before. But an explosion in device prevalence and data creation has expanded the attack surface for those that would rain on the parade.

How should we discuss our escalating concerns about cybersecurity? Should we talk about insidiousness? The average attack package takes less than 48 hours to take control of a network and will remain there for 146 days before detection. Should we talk about employee training? More than 63 percent of network intrusions occur through compromised user credentials. What about cost? Organizations around the world take a combined annual hit of \$500 billion and the average loss from a corporate data breach is \$3.8 million.



These global findings from Microsoft's "Lean on the Machine" report, and others, are reflected in regional research. For example, a recent Microsoft survey discovered that more than 80 percent of large GCC enterprises still used user names and passwords as the sole means of network authentication. Only around 11 percent use a 2FA SMS notification to support username-password authentication. About 7 percent reported using fingerprint-scanning and just under 1 percent had adopted facial recognition.

Getting ready and staying steady

This is a vital realization, because while the insidiousness of the threat landscape, employee knowledge gaps and frightening costs are all worthy topics for discussion, our solution lies in discussing readiness. If we are ready for whatever the digital bandit throws at us, all other concerns melt away. The average large enterprise combs through 17,000 threat alerts a week, wasting time chasing false positives and prioritizing responses. Lack of visibility and in-house expertise weaken defenses and response effectiveness. We are not ready.

So how do we get ready? Well it may surprise you to learn that technology is only part of the solution. Recent progress in the cybersecurity arena - newfound successes not only in detection, but in prediction - has come from combining big-data analytics, machine-learning, and human expertise. Security analysts sift out the most suspicious alerts and provide feedback that allows software to become smarter.

A hybrid in action

One example of a working system is MIT's AI2, which has been in operation for more than two years. The system trawls

through some 40 million lines of data logs each day, using specialized algorithms to present only the 100 or 200 most nefarious-looking entries for human analysis. It takes feedback from the analysts that allows it to improve real-time performance, and as of April 2016, it could detect 85 percent of cyberattacks. It took AI2 just three months of learning to get that good and the human element was key. MIT's system generates 80 percent less false positives than machine-only solutions.

If we want to be ready, this is our way forward. Microsoft is a strong believer in this approach. We have built an entire cybersecurity ecosystem of layered architecture, specialists, data-sharing, and partner solutions around it. Every month, we scan more than 18 billion Bing searches and process 450 billion authentications. We subject 400 billion emails to checks for phishing campaigns and hidden malware, and more than 200 cloud services are monitored for security risks.

Protect, detect, respond

The Microsoft Intelligent Security Graph powers real-time detection, response, and remediation, using advanced analytics to pull together threat intelligence and security data from our own environment and those of our trusted partners. Insights from the Graph enable us to protect our own products and services as threats arise.

Microsoft's Advanced Threat Analytics, monitors behavior and allows our customers to react as fast as their attackers, reducing false-positive fatigue. And we also offer Windows Defender Advanced Threat Protection (ATP), a unified platform for preventative protection, post-breach detection, automated investigation and response. This, we believe, is what being ready looks like. Our attackers will not relent, so neither should we.

Wall Street Week Ahead

Investors caught in crossfire of fight for holiday shoppers

NEW YORK: Investors would normally be thankful for a strong US economy, yet this holiday season they worry retailers may have to spend heavily to win, leaving shareholders with a lump of coal.

Steep discounts are as familiar a sight during the holidays as rich desserts, but this year so is a fierce grab for a slice of the e-commerce market as Amazon.com Inc and Target Corp offer free shipping for small purchases. US shoppers formed long lines at checkout counters on "Black Friday" to take advantage of discounts on clothing and electronics, offering evidence that a healthy economy and rising wages are translating into stronger consumer spending at the start of retailers' make-or-break holiday season.

Yet underwhelming earnings reports earlier this week from Target to department store Kohl's Corp and home-improvement specialist Lowe's Cos Inc reminded investors that US tariffs on imported goods, fickle consumer tastes and competition could eat away at profits this year. Target shares fell 10 percent on Tuesday as the company said profit margins declined due to growing investments in boosting its online business, wage increases, price cuts and the higher cost of preparing and shipping

orders. Target shares fell 2.7 percent on Friday. "The retailers and e-commerce players are duking it out," Shawn Kravetz, Esplanade Capital LLC's chief investment officer, said at the Reuters Global Investment 2019 Outlook Summit in New York last week.

"Amazon is buying that (consumer retail) business. Other players are buying that business. So it's a war," Kravetz, whose first job after earning an MBA in 1995 was at CML Group Inc, a company that sold NordicTrack exercise machines through catalogs and television advertisements, said "the old joke was that we gave away stuff for free to sell people shipping."

The game has changed for retail players now, he said. "They have almost no gross margin and they're giving away shipping. It's a tough gig. But if you're Amazon - and you're playing the long game - if you can only get another trillion dollars' worth of revenue and then raise prices one percent the numbers can work." More retailers face pressure to cut into their margins or sacrifice growth, creating a catch-22 for investors even as consumers spent strongly during the sales following Thursday's US Thanksgiving Day holiday. GlobalData Retail said that the average person shopping early on Black Friday spent \$407.20, up 2.1 percent over last year.

Even so, money managers have been getting more selective. Eaton Vance Corp portfolio manager Kathleen Gaffney, whose Multisector Income Fund holds bonds issued by J.C. Penney Co Inc and Nordstrom Inc, said she has scaled back the J.C. Penney holding.

"They've pretty much secured every asset that they have so it is going to be challenging. Nordstrom, on the other hand, is well suited



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor at the closing bell of the Dow Industrial Average on November 28, 2018 in New York. Wall Street stocks rallied after investors cheered remarks from the US Federal Reserve chairman which they viewed as a sign interest rates may not rise much further. —AFP

for the current market," Gaffney said at the Reuters summit, adding that the company's managers have been effective and target a solid, upscale niche.

Nordstrom shares have added nearly 12 percent this year, including dividends, sharply paring gains closer to 50 percent earlier this year after reporting disappointing third-quarter same-store sales. J.C. Penney shares crashed nearly 60 percent over the same period as the company continued to struggle to appeal to changing tastes of younger shoppers less likely to frequent traditional department stores.

Katie Shaw, sector leader for the global

consumer team at Fidelity Investments, said she is positive about retail stocks because US consumers are getting a raise, seeing inflation-adjusted wages gain at all income levels for the first time since the 2007-2009 global financial crisis. But Shaw has a lower holding in mall-based department stores and big-box retailers than the benchmark against which she is measured.

"The role of retail to a customer's life has changed," she said. "There are a number of companies who have yet to invest in driving emotional connection with consumers." —Reuters

Health & Science

Cities plant more trees to curb wild weather, boost healthy living

Seoul plants more than 2,000 groves, gardens

MANTUA: From Athens to Melbourne and Seoul to New York, big cities are increasingly turning to trees to help protect them from heatwaves and floods, and to boost people's physical and mental health, urban officials and environmental experts say. South Korea's capital Seoul recently planted more than 2,000 groves and gardens, and Melbourne in Australia plans to nearly double its canopy cover to 40 percent by 2040.

Athens is looking at planting more trees to lower temperatures and protect the Greek capital from sudden downpours. "We have real problems with urban heat islands and flash floods. We know we have to take trees very seriously, and we haven't up to now," said Eleni Myrivili, deputy mayor of urban nature and Athens' chief resilience officer. Athens is still recovering from the 2008 economic crisis and lacks the staff to maintain its trees, which include bitter orange, japonica and Judas trees, she told the World Urban Forestry Forum, taking place in the northern Italian city of Mantua this week. Milan, which plans to plant 3 million trees and expand its green spaces by 2030, has experienced a 2-degree Celsius temperature rise and increasing heat-related deaths in the past 20 years, as well as worsening floods, said the city's chief resilience officer, Piero Pelizzaro.

More trees should "reduce air pollution, improve the quality of the urban space ... and reduce the impact of climate change," he said. "Nowadays there's no difference between the city's energy consumption in the winter and summer" because of the rising demand for air-conditioning, he added. Cities in Niger and Senegal in Africa are planting trees to create jobs and provide fruit for families to eat, as well as provide much-needed shade.

Healthy trees

Trees and green spaces lower stress levels and encour-

age people to exercise and socialize more, experts at the forum said. But with urban populations projected to increase by 2.5 billion people by 2050, demand for more housing and transport is putting pressure on green spaces, they said. And a lack of expertise, data or the ability to attract funds means cities tend to opt for "grey" infrastructure projects over "green" ones to fulfill the same job, according to a report by New York-based 100 Resilient Cities network, published on Wednesday.

That could mean building a concrete wall to protect a coastal city from flooding instead of planting mangroves, which are effective, less costly, more visually pleasing and improve air quality, said 100 Resilient Cities, which produced the report. "What makes nature-based solutions so appealing is that with one intervention, such as an urban forest, a city can address multiple shocks and stresses at once - from flooding and heat waves to air pollution and public health - which is something that grey infrastructure is rarely able to do," the report said.

Creating happiness

Deprived parts of cities often lack trees and other green spaces. Residents in almost every city affected by climate change are calling for more equity and fairness, said David Miller, North American director of C40 and a former mayor of Toronto. "Often that's about economic goods, but it's also about social goods like green spaces, and forests and health," he said. New York city is planting 1 million trees, and mapping where those are most needed, especially in deprived areas, he added.

It is not just large cities that need to grow more trees, Mantua's mayor said. The small north Italian city hosting the international forum is home to 50,000 people and 16,000 trees. The city council plans to increase this to 25,000 trees by 2020, to help protect it from



ATHENS: This file photo shows tourists sit under a pine tree on a hill overlooking Athens. — Reuters

floods and rising temperatures. "We believe it's not about the size of the city - climate change is everywhere," Mattia Palazzi said.

Mantua, voted Italy's greenest city two years in a row,

is in one of the most polluted areas in Europe and needs trees to help clean the air, he said. "Green areas create happiness ... and are important for the city's future sustainability," he said.—Reuters

NASA's Martian quake sensor InSight lands at slight angle

LOS ANGELES: NASA's unmanned Martian quake sensor, InSight, has landed at a slight angle on the Red Planet, and experts are hopeful the spacecraft will work as planned, the US space agency said Friday. The \$993 million lander arrived Monday at its target, a lava plain named Elysium Planitia, for a two-year mission aimed at better understanding how Earth's neighboring planet formed. "The vehicle sits slightly tilted (about 4 degrees) in a shallow dust- and sand-filled impact crater known as a 'hollow,'" NASA said in a statement.

InSight was engineered to operate on a surface with an inclination up to 15 degrees. Therefore, experts are hopeful that its two main instruments—a quake sensor and self-hammering mole to measure heat below the surface—will work as planned. "We couldn't be happier," said InSight project manager Tom Hoffman of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

"There are no landing pads or runways on Mars, so coming down in an area that is basically a large sandbox

without any large rocks should make instrument deployment easier and provide a great place for our mole to start burrowing." The first pictures from the lander show just a few rocks in the vicinity, more good news since touching down right near a rocky area would have made deployment of the solar arrays and instruments tricky. Better images are expected in the coming days once InSight sheds the

dust covers on its two cameras. "We are looking forward to higher-definition pictures to confirm this preliminary assessment," said Bruce Banerdt, principal investigator of InSight at NASA. "If these few images—with resolution-reducing dust covers on—accurate, it bodes well for both instrument deployment and the mole penetration of our subsurface heat-flow experiment." — AFP



IN SPACE: n this file photo acquired by NASA's InSight Mars lander using its robotic arm-mounted, Instrument Deployment Camera (IDC) shows a view from NASA's InSight lander after it touched down on the surface of Mars. — AFP

New Zealand whale strandings 'linked to ocean warming'

WELLINGTON: More than 50 beached pilot whales perished in New Zealand Friday, the latest in a spate of mass strandings this week that experts have linked to rising ocean temperatures. The dead whales were part of a pod of 80-90 whales spotted late Thursday on the shore of remote Chatham Island, about 800 kilometers east of the South Island, the Department of Conservation said. It is the fifth stranding in New Zealand in less than a week, including 145 pilot whales which all died after they beached last weekend at Stewart Island, off the southern coast of the South Island.

By the time rangers reached the latest group of animals early Friday 50 had died, one remained stranded but alive and the rest had refloated themselves and returned to sea. Department of Conservation manager Dave Carlton said the surviving whale was in poor condition and was euthanised. "It was the most humane thing to do. This is always an awful decision to have to make," he said.

Chatham Island was the scene of New Zealand's largest recorded stranding in 1918, involving 1,000 whales. In addition to the strandings at Chatham and Stewart Islands this week, a group of 12 pygmy killer whales also beached in New Zealand's far north and a sperm whale and a pygmy sperm whale grounded themselves in separate incidents on the North Island.

The reason whales and dolphins strand is not fully understood but theories include sickness, navigational error, geographical features, the presence of predators, and extreme weather. Karen Stockin, a marine mammal scientist at Massey University, said while whale strandings were relatively common in

New Zealand, the cluster of incidents in such a short timeframe was unusual.

Only the beginning

She also pointed out that species such as pygmy killer whales and sperm whales did not normally beach, unlike pilot whales, which regularly wash up on New Zealand beaches in the summer months. Stockin, who is an expert consultant on strandings for the International Whaling Commission, said it added to a string of strange whale behavior over the past year.

In addition to a rise in strandings, she said a number of species had appeared that were not normally seen in New Zealand waters, including gargantuan blue whales in the Hauraki Gulf near Auckland. Stockin said New Zealand was currently experiencing some of the warmest ocean temperatures on record and she believed it was affecting whale behaviour. "We've had an unusual week, which we haven't got to the bottom of, and it's fair to say it's been an entirely unusual year," she told AFP.

"I suspect a lot of that has been driven by the warmer sea surface temperatures that we're seeing at the moment. "We definitely have a spike in temperatures, that's likely affecting where the prey is moving and as a consequence we're seeing prey moving and (whale) species following." She said one reason for the rising ocean temperature was the naturally occurring El Nino weather pattern, but global warming caused by climate change may also be playing a part.

"We certainly have the El Nino pattern in play, but the reality is I've no doubt it's been further exacerbated by the potential global warming effect," she said. "So you've got a bit of both going on there... we can't tease those things apart at this stage." New Zealand's summer, the peak time for whales to beach, begins on Saturday and Stockin said more strandings were likely. "We're just going into stranding season now, this is only the beginning of it and we're very mindful of the fact that this a very busy start," she said. — AFP

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Technology

The empire strikes back: Microsoft returns to the top of the world

'Microsoft is firing on all cylinders right now': Gold

WASHINGTON: Microsoft is back at the top of the technology world following an extraordinary comeback to close the gap with Apple, some three years into a transformation of the onetime leader by chief executive Satya Nadella. Microsoft regained its title as the world's most valuable company when it closed Friday at a higher market value than Apple for the first time since 2010, after a brief move ahead of the iPhone maker earlier in the week.

At Friday's close, Microsoft's market capitalization was \$851.2 billion, having tripled in value since Nadella took over in early 2014. Apple's valuation stood at \$847.4 billion, having dropped some 20 percent in the past eight weeks. Not far behind were Amazon (\$826 billion) and Google parent Alphabet (\$763 billion). In the 1990s, Microsoft held the crown as the top tech firm and most valuable company as it powered the revolution in personal computers with its Windows operating system.

But in recent years, it appeared headed to obscurity after spectacular failures in mobile computing, while Apple, Google and Amazon saw their fortunes rise. Analysts say patience, diversification and the willingness to jettison failing ventures helped fuel Microsoft's surge. "Microsoft is firing on all cylinders right now," said Jack Gold, technology analyst with J. Gold Associates. "Satya Nadella has been doing a fantastic

job in leading them away from dead-end areas and being more innovative."

Thriving in the cloud

Microsoft still draws considerable revenue from Windows, the software that powers the vast majority of PCs. But it has leveraged its position to bring business customers to its cloud computing platform known as Azure, and has developed a steadier revenue stream from its Office software suite for both consumers and enterprises. "Azure has been really big for Microsoft," Gold said.

For companies already using Microsoft systems for PCs and servers, "it's easy for them to stick with Microsoft, and that's the advantage for Microsoft." Microsoft has become far less dependent on a single product than in the past, with strong growth from its cloud services and revenues from its Xbox gaming business, Bing search, Surface tablets and PCs, as well as the professional social network LinkedIn acquired in 2016. It won a \$480 million contract with the US Army last month to supply HoloLens devices that will help troops train using augmented and virtual reality.

It is also competing with Amazon and others for a multibillion-dollar contract for Pentagon cloud services. The diversified revenue stream is in contrast with Apple, which still relies on iPhone sales for the vast

majority of revenue and profit. "Microsoft is pretty well-balanced across a number of different categories," said Bob O'Donnell of TEChnalysis Research.

"For Apple, we've reached peak smartphone and it's a very challenging market. Longtime observers of Apple knew this would happen at some point, and the question is how quickly they can transition to services." Microsoft's emphasis on business services makes the company less visible to consumers, but "it means they are not subject to the whims of tech fashion, and their revenue base is more solid and more stable," O'Donnell said.

Learning from failure

A big part of Microsoft's transformation came when it decided to throw in the towel on its Windows mobile phone business after acquiring the device business of Nokia but failing to get a foothold in the sector dominated by Apple and Google-powered Android smartphones. "I think Satya Nadella exercised extraordinarily good judgment," said Roger Kay, a consultant and analyst at Endpoint Technologies Associates. "He ceded the consumer business to Apple and focused on the corporate sector and the cloud."

Microsoft's failures in mobile may have actually helped it by forcing the company to work with rival operating systems, analysts say. Apple, meanwhile, has largely required its own devices for its services, a strategy which Gold called "troubling." "That's the same path Microsoft went down a decade ago," he said. "Apple is going to have to change that." The company appeared to move a step toward opening its services in the past week, agreeing to offer its streaming music on Amazon's Alexa-powered devices.

“ Satya Nadella exercised good judgment ”



PARIS: In this file photo Microsoft Corporation chief executive Satya Nadella speaks during the VivaTech (Viva Technology) trade fair in Paris. — AFP

"Apple has a great track record when it comes to reinvention," said a research note from Gene Munster and Will Thompson of the investment firm Loup Ventures. It anticipated that the company's "next reinvention does not involve product replacement; rather, it will require a shift in mindset to consuming Apple products as a service."—AFP

Huawei brings the king of smartphones to Kuwait

KUWAIT: Huawei Consumer Business Group (CBG) unveiled the much-anticipated Huawei Mate 20 to users in Kuwait during a launch event that took place at Marina Mall. Attended by Huawei fans, social media influencers and key industry figures, the event was presented by the famous radio personality, Osama Fouda, and included a lineup of performances by the Kuwaiti band, Stylus, followed by Nancy and Cathy Sunchenxi, the well-renowned Violinist and Chinese Ballet Dancer, respectively.

"Building on the success of the HUAWEI Mate 20 Series since its global launch, we are very excited to bring its top-of-the-line features to users in Kuwait. This HUAWEI Mate 20 Series has always brought best-in-class performance and innovation to the mobile phone market, focusing on new chipset technology, processing power and battery performance. We are confident that users in Kuwait will enjoy the breakthrough technologies of mobile AI packed in the HUAWEI Mate 20 Series," said Peter Wu, General Manager of Consumer BG, Kuwait Representative of Huawei.

The Huawei pop-up store opened to mall visitors at the center court of Marina Mall for two days showcased the HUAWEI Mate 20 and its latest features. The Huawei Mate 20 delivers true innovation and breakthrough technology like no other. By taking mobile AI to the next level, Huawei has created synergy between chipsets, devices, and the cloud to ultimately deliver an intelligent, immersive experience across all user settings and stand out as a global iconic tech brand.

It is the first brand to offer a chipset with built-in AI and has taken this a step higher with the recent launch of Kirin 980, promising more efficient and power packed performance in its HUAWEI Mate 20. Huawei Mate 20 price is KD 189,900, and it's available in all authorized dealers in Kuwait.

Revolutionary Matrix Camera system

The HUAWEI Mate 20 Series also features an AI Portrait Color video mode. Using AI, the HUAWEI Mate 20 Series can isolate human subjects and desaturate the colors around them to dramatically highlight the person. AI Spotlight Reel identifies clips with a shared theme and auto-generates a montage, made entirely of highlights.

Kirin 980 Chipset

The SoC at the core of smartphones has a determining factor in a device's performance and efficiency. Manufactured with the



cutting-edge 7nm technology process, the SoC fits 6.9 billion transistors within a die the size of a fingernail. Compared to Kirin 970, the latest chipset is equipped with CPU that is 75 percent more powerful, GPU that is 46 percent more powerful and NPU that is 226 percent more powerful. Furthermore, the efficiency of the components has also been elevated: the CPU is 58 percent more efficient, GPU is 178 percent more efficient, and the NPU is 182 percent more efficient. The Kirin 980 is the world's first commercial SoC to use the Cortex-A76-based cores. The Kirin 980 is also the industry's first SoC to be equipped with Dual-NPU, granting it higher On-Device AI processing capability to support any and all AI applications.

EMUI 9 enables a quality life

The HUAWEI Mate 20 Series comes with EMUI 9.0, a smart operating system based on Android P. Through AI self-learning algorithms, the operating system delivers an "evergreen" experience - it remains smooth even through extended use. It also features a new gesture navigation support allowing users to effortlessly interact with their devices using just taps and swipes.

In addition it enables the Huawei Mate 20 Series to perform or enhance a range of tasks from object identification to food calorie counting by simply pointing camera towards objects. It is also able to recognize famous paintings and landmarks. Using 3D Live Object Modeling, consumers can even create a fun digital

avatar to dance or interact with.

More efficiency, more power

With the capacity to deliver 75 percent improved performance and 58 percent improved power efficiency in the devices that it powers thanks to the world's 1st Cortex-A76 based CPU, the cutting edge 7nm processor packs 6.9 billion transistors into a form factor the size of a fingernail. Running at a high clock speed, Kirin 980 enables quicker app launch times, better multi-tasking and a generally smoother user experience. The Kirin 980's unique configuration of cores is flexibly allocated to tasks depending on the device requirements at that point in time.

Higher gaming level

As graphics in mobile games have become more and more sophisticated in recent years, the Mali-G76 GPU that debuts in the Kirin 980 delivers unparalleled gaming experiences, with 46 percent greater graphics processing power at 178 percent improved power efficiency over the previous generation. It also features an innovative clock boosting technology that utilizes AI to intelligently identify gaming workloads and adjust resource allocation for optimal gaming performance. Even when in intensive scenarios, the solution enables the devices to run lag-free. Furthermore, the AI optimization for touch responsiveness lowers touch response delay by 36 percent. A quicker response time lets players always be the one who shoots first in games.

Attack of the small screens: Africa eyes mobile gaming boom

CAPE TOWN: An army of humans laid waste to an alien colony as South African video game maker Simon Spreckley enthusiastically controlled the action using his phone's touch screen. "The penetration of mobile devices in Africa is huge. People often have two or three phones, which is pretty crazy," said Spreckley, 40, who wore a T-shirt emblazoned with "Brute", a four-armed muscled alien from the game. "So that's one of the big pluses and why we are trying to do this," he said, promoting "Invasion Day" which will likely launch on Apple's App Store and Google's Play platform in 2019.

The multi-player tactics game, set in the 1950s, is the brainchild of Spreckley's eight-strong team at VSUS, a Cape Town-based developer. Many other African developers are also opting to tailor games for mobile devices instead of traditional consoles like PlayStation or desktop computers, leading to a surge of handheld innovation on the continent. "There's enormous potential in Africa because the continent is primarily mobile," said Sidick Bakayoko, 34, the founder of Paradise Game, an umbrella group for developers in Ivory Coast.

"We've done a jump and instead of first going with PC, we've gone directly to mobile," he told AFP at last week's Africa Games Week convention in Cape Town which brought together African games coders, developers and artists with top executives from Sony and other industry giants. "With the emergence of a number of low-cost smartphones, it's now very easy to purchase a mobile phone," he said while video games enthusiasts tried out the continent's latest digital offerings on screens nearby.

'Jump on the bandwagon'

Bakayoko said that the increasing number of African gaming products for handheld devices mirrored the explosion of mobile banking and financial tools like Kenya's Mpesa on the continent in recent years. "So there's great potential for video

games using electronic payments... it can work well with Kenya as a prime example," he said. "There's no reason for Africa not to jump on the bandwagon." Another part of mobile gaming's appeal over other platforms in Africa is that it consumes less data, which can be slow or costly.

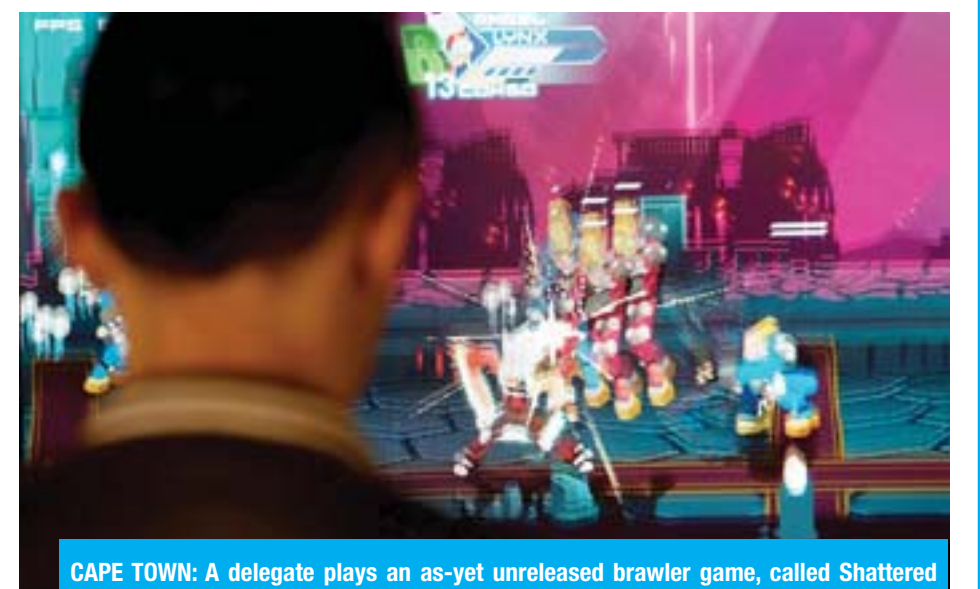
"In Nigeria they even get games pre-loaded on the phones because data is so expensive," said Evan Greenwood, 37, the director of South Africa's leading computer game studio Free Lives. "There's the potential (in Africa) — but data has to get cheaper and the right games have to be made." Invasion Day will be free to download, but players must purchase upgrades from within the game. Spreckley hopes Invasion Day will catch the eye of a major investor, but many African mobile games developers have struggled to turn their creations into cash.

'In more people's hands'

Ivory Coast's Point Point, based on a traditional children's game played using paper, and Madagascar's Gazkar, a racing game featuring the island's ubiquitous Citroen 2CV, have proved popular with mobile gamers-though not readily profitable. But Google's decision in June to allow games developers from African countries including Nigeria, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Tanzania to make money from their creations sold on its Play store could revolutionize the sector.

"Most people use (Google) Android here," said Sithe Ncube, 24, the founder of Zambia's Ubongo Game Lab. "People haven't had a way to monetize their mobile games. People have actually been developing apps for a while but there hasn't been a way to use it as a business model," said Ncube who wore a spiked choker and had a streak of bright purple in her dark hair. "If Google Play can let us do that, then that's a good platform for people to start on."

In 2017, accountants PwC said "revenues for console and PC games will lose market share to social (and) casual gaming" like that offered on handheld devices. Africa's video game industry, currently worth \$310 million, would be worth \$642 million by 2021, the firm added. Spreckley said that choosing the mobile support for his game would mean "we can get it in more people's hands quicker". "You're not reliant on people buying big expensive consoles and then products off the shelf."—AFP

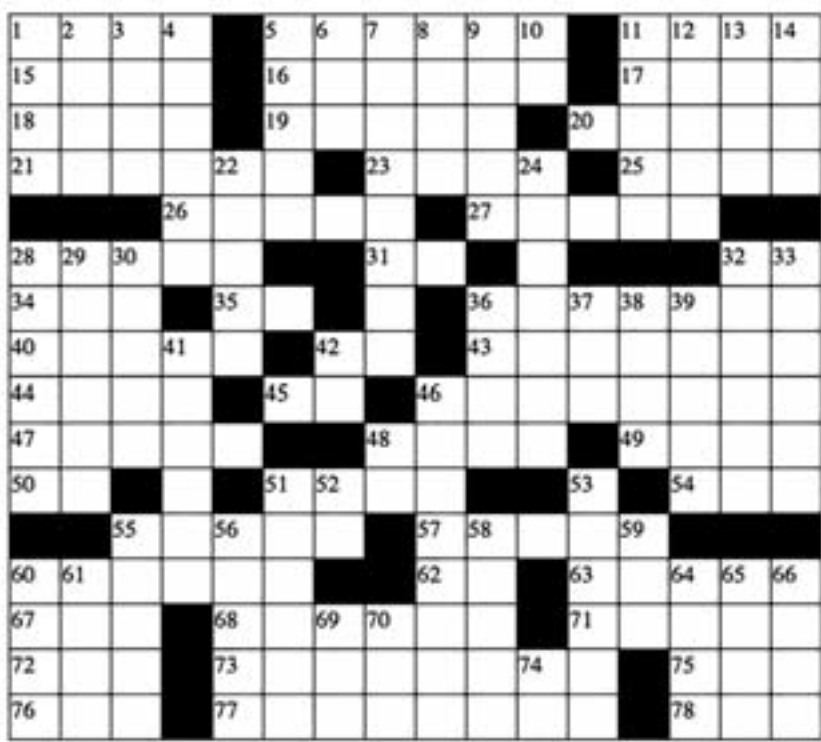


CAPE TOWN: A delegate plays an as-yet unreleased brawler game, called Shattered Realms, at Africa Games Week, one of Africa's most significant electronic gaming expo's in Cape Town. — AFP



Stars

CROSSWORD 2074



- ACROSS
1. A lump on the body caused by a blow.
 5. The amount of something (as whiskey or oil) lost in storage or transportation.
 11. An inn in some Eastern countries with a large courtyard that provides accommodation for caravans.
 15. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
 16. An electronic pulse counter used to count pulses that occur too rapidly to be recorded individually.
 17. Any competition.
 18. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
 19. Any of numerous plants of the genus Capparid.
 20. A board game in which players try to move their pieces into their opponent's bases.
 21. Antibacterial consisting of any of several synthetic organic compounds capable of inhibiting the growth of bacteria that require PABA.
 23. A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
 25. Report or maintain.
 26. American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
 27. Administer an oil or ointment to.
 28. A city of southwestern Russia.
 31. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
 34. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
 35. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
 40. Polish filmmaker (born in 1929).
 43. An ancient port on the Mediterranean.
 44. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
 45. The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
 47. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
 49. A quantity that is added.
 50. A public promotion of some product or service.
 54. Towards the side away from the wind.
 57. A roll of tobacco for smoking.
 60. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
 62. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
 63. The first of three divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures comprising the first five books of the Old Testament considered as a unit.
 67. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
 68. United States poet and critic (1916-1986).
 71. Extremely exciting as if by alcohol or a narcotic.
 72. A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
 73. United States educator famous for writing a book about how to win friends and influence people (1888-1955).
 75. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
 76. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
- DOWN
1. South African term for 'boss'.
 2. Relating to the Urdu language.
 3. The food served and eaten at one time.
 4. The vast grassy plains of northern Argentina.
 5. An annual award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for achievements in motion picture production and performance.
 6. Fiddler crabs.
 7. A spread consisting of capers and black olives and anchovies made into a puree with olive oil.
 8. A city in northwestern Syria.
 9. Small genus of hairy herbs with yellow flowers.
 10. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
 11. A village of huts for native Africans in southern Africa.
 12. Divide by two, divide into halves.
 13. The highest level or degree attainable.
 14. Not far distant in time or space or degree or circumstances.
 22. Australian shrubs and small trees with evergreen usually spiny leaves and dense clusters of showy flowers.
 24. A genus of evergreen shrub that grows in New Zealand.
 29. Not subjected to an aging process.
 30. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
 32. Scottish dramatist and novelist.
 33. Afflicted with or characteristic of mental derangement.
 36. A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
 37. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
 38. A light clear metallic sound as of a small bell.
 39. An award for winning a championship or commemorating some other event.
 41. Covered with or as if with clothes or a wrap or cloak.
 42. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
 46. Wine from muscat grapes.
 48. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
 51. Dividing an animal into right and left halves.
 52. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
 53. Club consisting of a heavy stick (often bamboo) bound with iron.
 55. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
 56. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
 58. Any of a group of heavenly spirits under the god Anu.
 59. Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
 61. A French abbot.
 64. East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the Orient.
 65. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
 66. Type genus of the Hylidae.
 69. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
 70. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
 74. Not out.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today is a day you may find yourself extremely understanding and sympathetic to others. There have been many times in your life you have made decisions that others didn't understand and didn't seem to agree with. You know that there are reasons people do the things they do that might be obvious to others. Becoming the friend to others you have always desired that someone be to you is helping you see beyond the surface of other's actions. You may find taking the time to be a true friend and getting to the root of other's problems draws people closer to you. You may find yourself taking more time to get to know your co-workers, peers, and friends on a much more intimate level. This seems to help you come to grips with a much more spiritual side of yourself than usual.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This may be a time to keep to yourself. A cool front seems to have moved in. Your usual warm caring personality seems to have been cooled off. Cold and hard have taken the place of the usual warm and loving side of you. This is not a good day to present yourself to others. First impressions last a lifetime and you would not make a good one today. This would be a day to skip any job interview or first date. Spend some time to yourself and find your happy place. The old you will emerge when you bring peace and happiness back into your world.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a time for imagination and creativity when it comes to the thoughts that are going through your head. You are able to eloquently put your thoughts into words. Others will find you captivating and be eager to hear all you have to say. This is a great time to escape by reading a book or watching a movie too. Great things are happening in your life. Your future depends on your ambition and drive. This is a time to follow your gut feelings about things. You should be able to use your intuition to know what trends are coming. Make a move now and you will be ahead of the game. You should find this is a time to make some very profitable decisions. Take action now, Gemini, and you will be ahead of the game.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Watch out! You are ready to make a change. You feel like trying something new and stepping out of your comfort zone. This may be anything from a new hairstyle to a new wardrobe. Chances are whatever you choose will be on the wild side. This is a great way of expressing yourself to others. You are ready to show the world a new you. A positive attitude and high energy fill your world this week. Enjoy a fun time.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have a desire to make a lasting first impression on everyone new you meet. You take care of yourself and have been paying extra attention to how others may see you. Your appearance and style are a focal point in your life now. You want to be a head turner. Romance becomes a focus for you and probably a driving factor behind the way you are taking care of yourself. It is a time you may find yourself indulging in the finer things life has to offer. You feel good about spoiling yourself.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

The more unique or unusual it is, the more you are drawn to it today. A shopping trip may find you coming home with a new style. You have taken a giant leap out of your conservative comfort zone. The wilder the better. The evening may find you all dressed up and heading to a new hangout. New friends could be made. You may find yourself at odds with your usual crowd. You have caught others off guard with this big change.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Have you ever wanted something so bad you could taste it, feel it, or imagine yourself already having it? This goes beyond a want. This is a borderline obsession. That is the what you are feeling about something or someone right now. Your thoughts and energy have one focus. You will make this yours. You have never had a lack of determination and today is no exception. Your goal is set. You are focused on doing whatever you can to achieve it and will let nothing stand in your way. Go for it.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find your thoughts are very intense now. You may feel as if you are under a tremendous amount of pressure. If decisions are made now you may find you will regret your choices later. You are full of nervous energy and may find yourself acting in haste without putting the necessary thought into the choices you make. You may find someone close to you seems to challenge your taste or choices. This seems to be a stressful and unpleasant time for you. Take a step back and take a deep breath, Scorpio. Take your time and things will work out in your favor.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 18)

If you have a "gut feeling" about someone today, heed it. Your instincts are usually good. Don't act hastily, but be alert. Avoidance is sometime the best response. Don't give anyone an opportunity to cause a problem for you or a loved one. A little awareness could save you a lot of regret.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are ambitious, secure and responsible. All these qualities seem to combine to help you excel in any area you apply yourself. You are strong willed and have a desire to conquer the world and all that comes your way. You are taking time to reflect on any of your past short comings. This time of reflection is a guiding light for you now and will prevent you from repeating any of your past mistakes. Knowledge is power and the wisdom you have gained from past experience has you on the right track. You may feel as though you are on this journey alone. Not much support is felt from your peers. Do not worry. You will find this to be a very profitable time.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is time that you may feel more inward. You find satisfaction in spending time with the ones you love and the feeling you get from being surrounded by their kindness towards you. You tend to be strong and independent and want others to always see you in this light. You are a rock to many but there are times you need someone to lean on. This is one of those times and you need to realize you do always have to be strong. It is ok to turn to others with your problems. You may find these close friends jump on the opportunity to be able to give back to you. Your mood seems to be much more reflective rather than expressive nows.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are experiencing a strong clarity. Your mind is sharp and so is your tongue. You may want to hold back a bit and bite your tongue to avoid conflict and confrontation today in the workplace. You are known for your quick wit and today you seem to be on a roll. You may feel as if though you are at odds with someone close to you. Use this time to clear the air and work on exiting this conflict with a stronger bond than the two of you previously had. Exercise fairness and take responsibility for your actions today. This will help keep your conscience clear and your mind at peace.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movie Actors 1

Find and circle all of the Movie Actors that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Jeremy Irons won an Oscar.

Y E N O O L C D R T E B A R D E M
F N V N I L A W R P H O E N I X E
O R A R E N A A S G S P A C E Y R
X A O M I E V A N O S B I G L L E
X N R E K O S I H M C K E L L E N
S W L U L C V O T N F B A C O N T
F S A T S A A T N M E N O M A D S
O B A H E S E J R U M L P P E D O
R L D W H N E E F L A D L O T O C
D A I C T B E L K B H U S Y H U S
R C C R A V E C L D T N E E G G E
T K A H E I A R O L A C N R I L G
N H P S A S N O G O T A O R O A D
A S R T U N W E U G S N J A V S I
R U I C Y E H G U A N O C C M N R
G R O E N A M K C A H P E S C I B

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| BACON, Kevin | DUNCAN, Michael Clarke | MCKELLEN, Ian |
| BARDEN, Javier | FORD, Harrison | NEESON, Liam |
| BLACK, Jack | FOX, Jamie | PESCI, Joe |
| BRIDGES, Jeff | GIBSON, Mel | PHOENIX, Joaquin |
| CAINE, Michael | GOLDBLUM, Jeff | REEVES, Keanu |
| CARREY, Jim | GRANT, Hugh | RUSH, Geoffrey |
| CHAN, Jackie | GYLLENHAAL, Jake | RUSSELL, Kurt |
| CLOONEY, George | HACKMAN, Gene | SPACEY, Kevin |
| COSTNER, Kevin | HARTNETT, Josh | STATHAM, Jason |
| CUSACK, John | IRONS, Jeremy | TRAVOLTA, John |
| DAMON, Matt | JACKMAN, Hugh | VOIGHT, Jon |
| DANIELS, Jeff | JONES, James Earl | WAHLBERG, Mark |
| DEPP, Johnny | LAW, Jude | WEAVING, Hugo |
| DI CAPRIO, Leonardo | MCCONAUGHEY, Matthew | WOOD, Elijah |
| DOUGLAS, Michael | | |

Yesterday's Solution

More 80's Songs

A I R O L G N I L I A S T B M P O O H U I G U
F A I T H F U L L Y A I E R P O O H U I G U
N E P O M O R O K T P R C O U S N D S O S T
E R H I N J A A T T I E E N K R E S T E O H W
V H E A N C Y S H O M G A E I P A T E M E O S
A S M A I X F W N H I K D N L B P M E O R T
E O T R R I H U V A C T S W I R A S A A E E N F
H I V E R E T N O A C O T I R A S L S M P Y
S M O O A B C O N O R E N A B S F O L A R
A U Y L O E A R O S A L L G I A I E R I A T R
F C S O R T H L E E C O S S N L O H E A I T R
A T A S I U E O H A R S L B L E N T H C E S
S H O U S O W I K C T C H E S T E N S
T H E S O R Y B T R E S U R I Y A K T C E
C M A L L G I G B U A F R I C A N R T E C
A E O W N O R O T A U T A F N I S O L I O
R V U L O O S O T R O T O N F M E T O
E E H E S A I K O U R H O U S E M D L O H V
I R U L Y N S G N O L E B E W C O N T R O L

- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| AFRICA | GLORIA | NEVER | SUSSIDIO |
| ALWAYS | GUILTY | NOTORIOUS | THE FLAME |
| AMERICA | HEARTBREAKER | OUR HOUSE | THE LOOK |
| BEAT IT | HEAVEN | PASSION | THE ROSE |
| BROKEN WINGS | HOLD ME | PATIENCE | TIME |
| CALL ME | HUMAN | PINK HOUSES | TOO SHY |
| CONTROL | HUNGRY HEART | PURPLE RAIN | TRUE |
| CRUISIN' | INFATUATION | ROCK ON | TRULY |
| DOWN UNDER | KOKOMO | SAILING | TWO HEARTS |
| ENDLESS LOVE | LA BAMB A | SARA | VACATION |
| FAITHFULLY | LET'S DANCE | SATISFIED | VOICES CARRY |
| FAME | MAGIC | SHOUT | WE BELONG |
| FAST CAR | MAGIC HOLIDAY | SONGBIRD | WHIP IT |
| FREEDOM | MONEY MONEY | SUKIYAKI | YOUR LOVE |

The hidden song is: I GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT THE BLUES

Yesterday's Solution

A L I A L E M B I C H A L L
L E R C A N E L L A A B E L
I A A R U N N E L Z L O T Y
A C Q U I R E U S A D O R
S H I N L E A F A C N E D
B A L D R B A T A P B
C H A I N S A K A B A P A L
L A I D I C E D C A L L A
A I D F S A B A H B E A D
P L E B E A S A N A R A C E
D U B A I B L O A D E D
A C G B A N E S S
K O A L A H A L O S E P I A
R A C E M E G O R G E A R M
O C T A P E R I E N T B A I
N T H H A R A N G U E A N A

Daily SuDoku

			6		
				3	6 4
6	8	2 4		3 7	
	4				
5	2 3		9 4		6
				5	
3 1		9 5 7		8	
9 6 8					
		7			

Yesterday's Solution

3	2	7	8	5	4	9	6	1
5	6	4	9	1	3	8	7	2
1	8	9	7	2	6	3	4	5
6	7	1	5	3	2	4	8	9
8	5	3	1	4	9	7	2	6
9	4	2	6	7	8	5	1	3
4	1	8	3	6	5	2	9	7
2	3	6	4	9	7	1	5	8
7	9	5	2	8	1	6	3	4

Lifestyle

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2018



A security guard (center) walks through a light tunnel during the Hong Kong Pulse Light Festival yesterday. — AFP

Spider-Man is back on screen, but this time he's black and Latino

For what seems like the umpteenth time, Spider-Man is back on the big screen. But this year, when Hollywood is under the microscope on the hot-button issue of diversity, the superhero is half-black and half-Latino. Step aside, Peter Parker. There's a new Spidey in town. Hello, Miles Morales. Miles as Spidey is not new to comic book enthusiasts, but he is new to theater-goers, who earlier this year embraced the long-awaited arrival of the Marvel universe's first black hero, Black Panther, on the silver screen. "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse," which hits US theaters on December 14, is a free-wheeling animated look at the multiple Spideys in parallel dimensions, including Spider-Ham (yes, a pig) and two women.



Cast members Luna Lauren Velez and Shameik Moore attend the world premiere for the movie 'Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse' in Los Angeles, California, US. — Reuters

This time, an older Parker is a mentor to Miles, who is voiced by 23-year-old Shameik Moore, an Atlanta-born actor and singer with Jamaican roots. Long before Moore landed the major role, he hoped he would get the chance to play Miles, he told AFP in an interview. He had even written about it in a journal given to him by a friend. "One of the things I wrote in there very early on was, 'I am Spider-Man. I am Miles Morales,'" he said.

Moore first drew notice in the well-received indie film "Dope" in 2015. He says being chosen to play Morales is as rare as... being bitten by a radioactive spider. "That spider chose him. However, many thousands of people live in Brooklyn... Sony chose me to play Miles Morales out of the hundreds of thousands of people that auditioned," he recounted.

Stan Lee's posthumous cameo

The film recalls the visual style of the original comic books, with less refined art and speech balloons that appear on screen. Its release comes one month after the death at age 95 of the character's creator, Marvel legend Stan Lee. But the man behind a stable of heroes, from The Hulk to the X-Men, is still present—he is listed as an executive producer and, as is customary for Marvel films, Lee has a cameo appearance—in animated form.

The cast features Oscar winners Mahershala Ali (Miles's uncle) and Nicolas Cage (Spider-Man Noir), and Oscar nominees Hailee Steinfeld (Spidey's love interest Gwen Stacy) and Lily Tomlin (Parker's Aunt May). The film is generating major buzz, and currently has a 100 percent "fresh rating" on Rotten Tomatoes, which aggregates reviews from critics.—AFP

Revival of iconic NY toy store feeds holiday-time nostalgia

Three years after shutting down its iconic Big Apple venue, toy store FAO Schwarz has been reborn, offering a nostalgic holiday-time fix to native New Yorkers and tourists alike. "I went to the original, it was magical," said Anna, a teenager from New York on a chilly late-November morning. "But this one is as magical too." The store is only about one-third the size of its former incarnation at the foot of Central Park opposite the Plaza Hotel, made famous in the hit Tom Hanks comedy "Big" and other movies.

But the new venue boasts a festive address of its own just a stone's throw away from the giant Christmas Tree at Rockefeller Center and its skating rink below. The store revives the old FAO Schwarz' red and black color scheme with gold lettering even as its new owners, ThreeSixty Group, reposition the brand after prohibitive rental costs doomed the old store. Besides New York, ThreeSixty plans to open an FAO Schwarz in Beijing. The brand, which was founded in 1862 by a German immigrant, is also opening pop-up stores at department stores elsewhere in the United States and overseas.

ThreeSixty, which has been backed by private equity firm AEA Investors, has adopted a meticulous approach to details in the store since the store was opened November 16. The venture has been launched as retailers know they must give consumers a reason to show up in person at a time when e-commerce sales are rising. It arrives in the first holiday season since the demise of the once-grand retail chain Toys "R" Us. "The key to this store is experience," Chief Merchandising Officer David Niggli said of the ambition to leave children wild-eyed and probably exhausted.

Instagram-friendly

Highlights include magic tricks, certificates to "adopt" a doll and a "Build-a-Bear" workshop where visitors can design their own plush models. "It's not only a place where I like to buy things," said Claudia, who was visiting the store from Argentina with her son, Juan Ignacio. "It's also a cozy and a charming place where I enjoy to walk and spend time." Shoppers can wander around and compare different Barbie options, Ravensburger puzzles

and myriad stuffed animal creations.

"You don't have the same feeling when you are seated at home online," Niggli said. "You don't get to interact with a sales staff that applied for their job going on stage, you don't have costume characters, you are not interviewed to see if you can adopt a baby doll," he added. "All of those things are unique." The store also aims to take advantage of new digital tools to build interest with a new generation of shoppers.

Potential "Instagrammables" for customers include the "dance-on piano," where visitors can take a cue from Hanks in "Big" and take a twirl. The company also enlisted model Gigi Hadid, who has some 45 million Instagram followers, to design its toy soldiers outfits, including the first-ever version with female soldiers. Sandy, a mother from Connecticut, said the store "has very special toys and very special arrangements," even if it's a splurge. "It seems magical...and expensive," she added. "But it's in New York, it's fancy." — AFP



In this file photo an FAO Schwarz employee directs customers outside the new FAO Schwarz store in Rockefeller Center in New York. — AFP photos



People play the Big Piano at the iconic toy store FAO Schwarz in New York during its last day in business.



In this file photo people shop at iconic toy store FAO Schwarz in New York.



FAO Schwarz employees take photos with customers outside the new FAO Schwarz store in Rockefeller Center in New York.

Lifestyle | Music & Movies



This handout photo released by Raindrop Media shows Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra (center right) and American singer Nick Jonas (left) during their wedding celebration along with friends and relatives at Umaid Bhawan palace in Jodhpur. — AFP photos



This handout photo shows Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra (center) during her wedding celebration along with friends and relatives at Umaid Bhawan palace in Jodhpur.



Photo shows Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra (right) and American singer Nick Jonas during their wedding celebration at Umaid Bhawan palace in Jodhpur.

Chopra, Jonas married in traditional Hindu ceremony

US singer Nick Jonas and "Quantico" actor Priyanka Chopra married in a traditional Hindu ceremony yesterday, the culmination of a three-day long wedding celebration that featured cricket matches and Bollywood songs, all taking place in a heritage Indian palace atop a hill. The couple exchanged vows in a Christian ceremony on Saturday, wearing custom-made Ralph Lauren clothes, and later shared pictures on their social media of a pre-wedding ritual, the mehendi ceremony, which involves applying henna on the bride's hands as a good omen.

"One of the most special things that our relationship has given us is a merging of families who love and respect each other's faiths and cultures. And so planning our wedding with an amalgamation of both was so amazing," Bollywood actor Chopra wrote on her Instagram account. The pictures showed the couple laughing and surrounded by family and friends, as an artisan applied henna on Chopra's palms.

Yesterday, Chopra shared a picture and a two-second video of a cricket match, captioning it "team bride vs team groom #cricket". Indian media reported that at another pre-wedding function, guests and the bride and groom danced to Bollywood songs, including some of Chopra's biggest hits. The couple have been tight-lipped about the details of the actual wedding, and representatives for the couple remain unreachable for comment. They are scheduled to host a reception in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The venue of the wedding, the Umaid Bhawan palace in the heritage north Indian city of Jodhpur, has been



Photo shows dancing American singer Nick Jonas being carried by friends during his wedding celebration at Umaid Bhawan palace in Jodhpur.



Photo shows Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra dancing during her wedding celebration with American singer Nick Jonas at Umaid Bhawan palace in Jodhpur.

cordoned off to the public, and Indian media reported that the couple had asked guests not to carry cellphones to any of the ceremonies. The palace is home to the Jodhpur royal family, and is believed to be the world's sixth largest private residence. Part of the palace has been converted into a Taj heritage hotel with peacocks roaming 26 acres of landscaped gardens. A night's stay in

the Grand Presidential suite can cost more than 500,000 rupees (\$7,168), according to the hotel website.

Chopra, 36, and 26-year-old Jonas were engaged earlier this year after a whirlwind courtship that began at an Oscars after-party last year. Chopra, who headlined three seasons of the ABC crime drama Quantico, is one of Bollywood's biggest female leads with acting credits in

several big-ticket films. Nick and his brothers Kevin and Joe formed a pop-rock band, The Jonas Brothers, in 2005 and soared to fame as members of Disney's stable of teenage stars. The band split up in 2013. — Reuters



British actress Pixie Davies



Matthew Morrison and Renee Puente attend the premiere of Disney's "Mary Poppins Returns".



US actor Billy Crystal and his wife Janice Crystal

Kites, dancing penguins and magic: 'Mary Poppins Returns'

Flying through the clouds with a black parrot umbrella and holding her signature carpet bag, whimsical British nanny Mary Poppins made her "practically perfect" movie comeback on Thursday, more than 50 years after first charming audiences worldwide. "Mary Poppins Returns," set some 20 years after the film that made Julie Andrews a star, had its world premiere in Los Angeles, featuring a new cast and new music but with a nostalgic nod to the original.



Emily Blunt and John Krasinski attend the Premiere of Disney's "Mary Poppins Returns" at El Capitan Theatre in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos



Lin-Manuel Miranda and Vanessa Nadal attend the Premiere of Disney's "Mary Poppins Returns" at El Capitan Theatre.

The 1964 film "Mary Poppins" starring Andrews and Dick Van Dyke as a cheerful chimney sweep brought a best actress Oscar for Andrews and an award-winning score of songs like "A Spoonful of Sugar" and "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" that have become classics. In "Mary Poppins Returns," Emily Blunt plays the firm but kind singing nanny who descends on London in the early 20th century to take care of the children of the now adult Banks siblings from the 1964 film. Like the original, "Mary Poppins Returns" features fantasy sequences and plenty of dance numbers. It even brings back the animated dancing penguins.

"It really is a trip down nostalgia lane and paying homage to these incredible movies that we all grew up watching that are so representative of everything we remember as children," Blunt told reporters on the red carpet. "Yet we're doing something new, and I think it's a film that's just full of feeling and full of joy." "Hamilton" rap musical creator Lin-Manuel Miranda takes on the role played by Van Dyke in 1964, but as a young lamp lighter rather than a chimney sweep. Van Dyke, 92, who was given a standing ovation by the Hollywood audience on Thursday, has a cameo as a kindly, tap-dancing banker.

Disney's "Mary Poppins Returns" marks the first time in 54 years that the character, who was created in books written by P.L. Travers in the 1930s and 1940s, has been revisited on film. The story was turned into a Broadway and London stage musical 15 years ago. Director Rob Marshall said he got involved in the sequel because he felt the world needed some Poppins magic. "The world's in a fragile place you know," he said. "I feel it personally and I know that everyone on our film felt it, the entire cast."

"Mary Poppins Returns" also stars British actors Ben Whishaw and Emily Mortimer, and Meryl Streep in a cameo role. The movie begins its worldwide rollout on Dec 19, and is expected to take a healthy \$65 million in its first week in North America alone, according to box-office analysts. — Reuters

Qatari female 'pioneers' bask in filmmaking spotlight

As Qatari filmmakers gathered on the red carpet at Doha's Ajyal Film Festival one thing stood out—the majority of local directors are women. "I think this is a question that everyone is mesmerized by: the idea that we have more women in filmmaking here in Doha than men," said festival director Fatma Al-Remaihi. Among those showing movies at the annual six-day festival were Aisha Al-Shammakh, Nouf Al-Sulaiti and the rising star of Qatari cinema, Amal Al-Muftah.

Their films focus on a variety of subjects, from "marginalized" Qatari millennials and father-daughter relationships through to stories from the gas-rich country's recent and much less-wealthy past. The women are redressing "many misconceptions about them around the world", said Remaihi, who also heads the Doha Film Institute.

The number of female entrants at this year's festival, which runs until Monday, is consistent with data from recent research. A 2016 study by Northwestern University in Doha found that around 60 percent of all emerging filmmakers in Qatar's nascent cinema industry were women. Across the rest of the Middle East and North Africa region, the figure was around 25 per cent, the same study said.

The influx of women directors in Qatar comes at a time when the bright lights of Hollywood have been dimmed by the #MeToo movement's revelations. And the fresh blood has helped diversify the nature of films produced. Previously, one filmmaker jokes, it was "all pearl diving"—a reference to Qatar's main economic activity, before the exploitation of vast natural gas reserves. But now the film topics are diverse. One example of that is Sulaiti's short film, "Gubgub" (Crab).

Seemingly a movie about a day's crab hunting, it really focuses on a young girl's determination to prove she can rival her older brother at a "male" pursuit. She succeeds by catching 10 crabs. "I feel like it gives us a platform where we can express ourselves," said Sulaiti. "I don't think we had that platform or opportunity before." "I want that little girl to believe that she can achieve whatever (she wants). I want little girls to see that," the 25-year-old added. And Sulaiti said younger Qataris would understand that message. "In the past, we got an education, we got married and we stayed at home with our husband. I think slowly [Qatari] girls are seeing we can do whatever our brothers can do."

Conservative or progressive?

The emergence of female filmmakers comes at a time when conservative Qatar is seeking to portray itself as the progressive power in the Gulf. This is especially true as Doha remains politically isolated by neighbouring powers in a bitter regional dispute.

Since June 2017, Qatar has been cut off by former allies including neighboring powers Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which accuse Doha of being too close to Iran and sponsoring terrorism.

Qatar denies the charges, and has sought to present itself as the most tolerant of the Gulf states. One of the most prominent Qatari figures during the Gulf crisis has been Louw Al-Khater, the foreign ministry spokeswoman. Beyond films, Qatar has the highest proportion of women — 51 per cent—in the workplace among Gulf nations, according to the United Nations. In 1999, Qatar became the first Arab country in the Gulf to allow women to vote.



This image grab taken from a handout video released by the Doha Film Institute shows Qatari film director Amal Al-Muftah (left) speaking with actresses on-set during the filming of a short film at an undisclosed location. — AFP photos

'Like pioneers'

Muftah received a rapturous ovation as she was introduced at Ajyal and said filmmakers in Qatar were "like pioneers". "I know from the outside it seems like there is segregation... but here really I feel like it's a level field... whether you're a man or a woman, you are treated the same," she added. She directed "Sh'hab" (Shooting Star) showing at the festival, a story passed on from her grandmother about a girl who wants to go to sea with her father and brother, rather than stay at home.

Muftah rose to national prominence with a 2014 film Al-Himali, about market porters. She admits she had trouble convincing her family that she should seek a career in the arts rather than the sciences. But she believes she can give a voice to generations of Qatari women through her chosen career, since she feels "really strongly about my position as a woman". "The community of women in Doha—especially in this society—are very private," she said. "And I just feel like as women filmmakers we have access to that community and to so many different stories." — AFP



Qatari women film-makers pose on the red carpet during the sixth edition of the Ajyal Film Festival in the capital Doha.

'The Rain' and the politics of black and white

KANA Kuwait presents its third drama based on Shakespeare's 'Othello'

By Sajeev K Peter

It came with a flash of lightning and a clap of thunder. 'The Rain', the latest theatrical production by Kerala Arts and Nataka Academy, presented at Kuwait Boy Scouts Association Hall on Thursday and Friday, created a sensation among drama-lovers. Dramatizing the tragic tale of 'Othello', Shakespeare's great tragedy, 'Mazha' (The Rain) sought to discuss the politics of black and white, a stigma that still haunts humanity today.

cinema and drama transcend time, space and culture and bring people together."

Striking recreation

'Mazha' is probably one of the striking recreations of Shakespeare we have seen in Malayalam theatre. This continuing appeal suggests that 'Othello' transcends the time and space in which it was written, provoking new interpretations from generation to generation, place to place.

Manipulated and goaded on by the resentful and Machiavellian villain Shikharan (Iago), Karutha (Othello) falls prey to his tragic flaw: Envy, a timeless human emotion. According to Aristotle, a tragic hero is of noble disposition, virtuous yet flawed. Here, Karutha's hamartia/tragic flaw is his jealousy that is skillfully nurtured to a fatal fruition by Shikharan: The chilling climax resulting in the terrible murder of Chenthara (Desdemona) and the subsequent suicide of Karutha.

Jealousy was the main tool for Shikharan to undermine Karutha. Shikharan does not follow Karutha - he follows the prospect of promotion; he follows the rank, and in order to do that, he follows Karutha like a sly fox. As Coleridge is known for describing Iago's many soliloquies as the "motive hunting of motiveless malignity", Shikharan has no motive, only hatred and spite. Infidelity was the ultimate marital crime in early modern England as it is in India.

The play illustrates unjust prejudice against blacks and how they are seen as inferior. Karutha, a black general in 'Mazha', was disapproved and deemed unfit to become Chenthara's husband, not because of his achievements, but because of his race.

Racism

Karutha's race is constantly invoked throughout the play as the characters continuously suggest that he is neither deserving of the position he holds in society nor the love of his wife. The politics and vocabulary of race become instrumental in the fate of Karutha and his ultimate downfall.

Apart from the striking themes of racism, betrayal and jealousy, 'Mazha' is also about xenophobia. However hard Karutha tries to be a part of the elite society, he is never fully integrated into it. Even after he commands the army for the king, Karutha is still an outsider who is forever regarded with fear and suspicion much like one would look at a feral animal that is unpredictable and subdued only for the time being. The xenophobia depicted in the play is heavily reminiscent of the anxieties towards minorities and outsiders in a globalized world that purportedly preaches equality yet fails to practice it.

Chenthara's and Karutha's love is no match for Shikharan's plots and the green-eyed monster jealousy. Shikharan's actions undermine the relationship between Karutha and Lakshanan (Cassio).

While Babu Chakola, the director of 'Mazha,' dexterously played the role of Karutha, his tragic heroine Chenthara was played by Manju Mathew impeccably. Kumar Thirithala superbly played the role of Shikharan. The other prominent characters such as Lakshanan (Dr Abraham Kozhenjery), Mandaran (Rodrigo -Dennis Tharakan), Chandrabhoopan (Brabantio -Sajeev K Peter), The King (Gopakumar Navayikulam), Island duke (Aji Paravoor) and Pushpagandhi (Deena Dennis - Emilia) performed their roles well.

Well-known stage designer Vijayan Kademperi flew down from India to create an ambiance of fantasy for 'Mazha.' While costume designer and make-up artist Vakkom Maheen lent the characters their incredible appearances, lighting designer Chirackal Raju provided ample light support to the play.

'Mazha' is the third mega drama produced by KANA Kuwait after the successful performances of 'Abraham' and 'Ningalenne Communistakki'.



Director and writer Abdulaziz Ali Al-Dagher.

Adapted into Malayalam by renowned playwright Hemant Kumar, the drama tells the distressing tale of a black general who gets married outside his race and station to the daughter of a duke. Shakespeare's 'Othello' is a poignant tale of jealousy and betrayal that strikes a contemporary note uncannily relevant to our times. "Although 'Mazha' takes place against an Indian milieu, I have tried to not lose the soul and spirit of 'Othello' and the aesthetic sensibilities the play lends," writer Hemant Kumar said.

It is often asked how Shakespeare's 'Othello' remains relevant for a modern audience, a tragedy that was scripted in the early years of the 17th century. And how does a 21st century perspective on family violence deepen our insights and pathos on viewing the play today? Yet from its first staging to the present, Othello has also been among the few Shakespearean plays to be repeatedly staged to enthusiastic audiences, not only in England, but across the globe. Well-known Kuwaiti producer, director and writer Abdulaziz Ali Al-Dagher, while inaugurating the production, said, "Music,



Stills from the play.



De Niro gets tribute award at Marrakech film festival

US actor Robert De Niro on Saturday received a tribute award at the Marrakech film festival from the hands of his old friend, director Martin Scorsese. Born in New York in 1943, De Niro's career began on Broadway, before he discovered cinema at age 20. He worked on a variety of films with Scorsese—from 'Taxi Driver' in 1976 to 'Casino' in 1995. The double Oscar winner's ninth collaboration with Scorsese will be Netflix's 'The Irishman', set for release next year.

"We made our first film together, I think it was over 45 years ago... One of the great blessings of my life," said De Niro. Scorsese, while handing him the award joked: "What would this be? The mid-point of his career? It is probably more accurate to say the peak of his career but then this guy has more peaks than the Atlas mountains."

De Niro used the occasion to lash out at President Donald Trump and his "America First" mantra.

"Sadly, in my country we are going through a grotesque version of nationalism... marked by greed, xenophobia and selfishness under the banner of 'America First,'" he said. De Niro has been a frequent critic of Trump and used an expletive to condemn the American president at the televised Tony Awards in June, receiving a standing ovation. During Marrakech Film Festival, US actress Blanca Blanco, Mexican actress and model Patricia Contreras and Nawel Debbouze the sister of Jamel Debbouze, all dazzled in astonishing dresses designed by the International well-known French designer Christophe Guillarm. —AFP



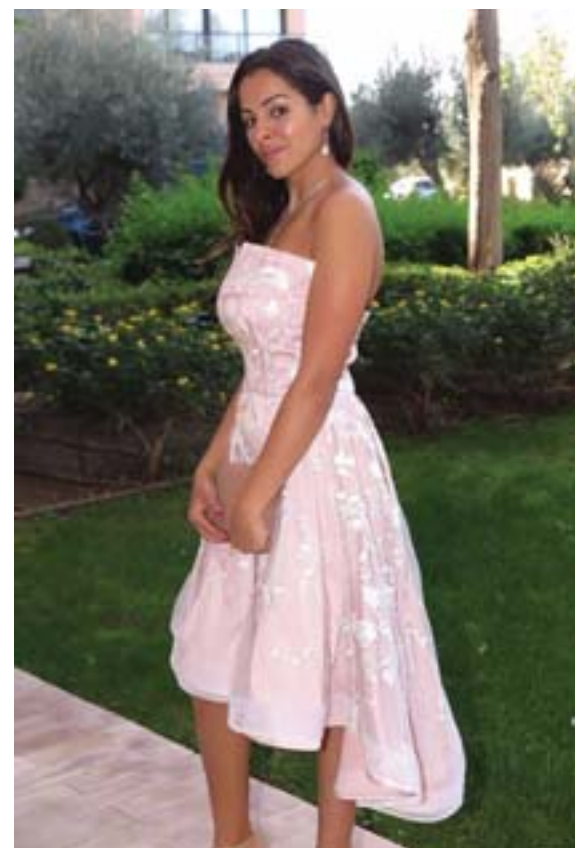
US actor Robert de Niro (right) poses with a Tribute award, next to US Director Martin Scorsese during the 17th Marrakech International Film Festival.



(From left) American actress Blanca Blanco in a maxi dress, nude tulle embroidered with gold sequins and crystals, and Mexican actress and model Patricia Contreras in a long dress, golden tulle with embroidery beads lines, sequins and gold chopsticks both designed by French designer Christophe Guillarme during the Marrakech International Film festival.



(From right) American actress Blanca Blanco in a long dress, nude tulle shaded dark embroidered with gold sequins and crystals, and Mexican actress and model Patricia Contreras in a dress, gandoura spirit in orange both designed by French designer Christophe Guillarme during the Marrakech International Film festival.



The sister of Jamel Debbouze, Nawel Debbouze in a short strapless asymmetric dress, embroidered tulle white lined nude designed by French designer Christophe Guillarme.—AFP photos

Beyonce to lead Mandela tribute concert

Beyonce will lead an all-star line-up that includes Ed Sheeran, Jay-Z and Usher in Johannesburg when she performs at a concert to honor the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela. The concert is the climax of a year of events celebrating the centennial of Mandela's birth in 1918, and is part of a campaign to tackle poverty, child malnutrition and boost gender equality. This year's Global Citizen Festival will be held at Johannesburg's 94,736-capacity FNB stadium with the concert due to begin at 1200 GMT.

Thousands of music fans, many of whom had been given free tickets in return for activism and campaigning work, began to flock to the stadium hours before the gig was due to kick off. "I'm quite excited to have Beyonce and a bunch of these top-flight artists coming to South Africa to perform. It's nice to get this obvious reminder of Mandela's values," said concert-goer Ano Shonhiwa, 23, as he made his way into the venue. Ahead of the concert Oprah Winfrey, who will co-host the event, hailed Mandela's "goodness and integrity", describing him as her "favorite mentor".

Mandela was jailed under South Africa's apartheid regime. After being released in 1990, he led the country's transformation into a multi-racial democracy. He died on December 5, 2013 aged 95. Event organizers paid tribute to a rigger who died following a fall while helping to prepare the stage on Saturday. "The circumstances surrounding the incident are being investigated," Global Citizen said in a statement. —AFP

German police shut down concert over 'Sieg Heil' chants

German police at the weekend shut down a far-right rock concert in a small eastern town after members in the crowd started chanting the illegal Nazi slogan "Sieg Heil". The concert, which took place in Ostritz in the state of Saxony on Saturday, featured two bands from "the right-wing scene" and had drawn an audience of "several hundred", Goerlitz police said in a statement. Officers stationed outside intervened after hearing shouts of "Sieg Heil" (Hail Victory) coming from the venue at 11:20 pm (2220 GMT). The gig was brought to an end and the building was emptied shortly after 1:00 am.

Several witnesses also reported hearing the chants. Federal authorities have opened an investigation, Goerlitz police added. Under German law, using Nazi-era slogans or publicly displaying swastikas and other Nazi symbols is illegal. The town of Ostritz, near the border with Poland, regularly hosts far-right concerts that are often controversial.—AFP



Wet-and-wild ride: Indonesia mud bull races not for faint of heart



Waves of muddy water slosh over the jockey as he hangs on to the tails of a pair of bulls galloping across the rice paddy. It's a wet-and-wild ride in this remote pocket of Indonesia's Sumatra island, where traditional bull racing known as Pacu Jawi is serious business. Andri Majoni would be a senior citizen in most professional sports, but the 42-year-old jockey has no plan to give up racing, despite plenty of bruising tumbles over the decades. "I've been doing this for 25 years. And I love this sport—there are so many ups and downs," the mud-soaked jockey told AFP. The centuries-old races once heralded the end of rice harvesting season when the emerald paddies had been cleared.

as fast as they can. Sometimes a pre-race bite to the tail gets the animals in a galloping mood. Riders have to stay upright for the 250 meter (820 feet) race or it's all over. Injuries are part of the job. "I broke my hand once, but that didn't scare me off—I kept racing," said Zainal, a 37-year-old jockey.

Nowadays, hundreds turn up to cheer on fearless jockeys who can net a bull worth as much as 15 million rupiah (\$1,050) if they win a month-end tournament—a princely prize in a country where many live on a few dollars a day. The rules are simple. Jockeys grab on to the bulls' tails and race one at a time down the paddy

For Patria, a 15-year-veteran of the races, it's important to pass the sport on to the next generation. "This is a tradition handed down from our parents," he said from a water-logged rice paddy. While animal racing can be seen in other parts of the vast Indonesian archipelago—including buffalo racing in holiday hotspot Bali—locals in West Sumatra insist their version is one-of-a-kind. "I like watching the Pacu Jawi races because they only happen here," said spectator Anis Marsela. "You're not going to see this anywhere else." — AFP



Indonesian jockeys ride bulls with carts during a traditional sport bull race locally called 'pacu jawi' in Pariangan of Tanah Datar regency in West Sumatra. — AFP photos

How engineers are straightening the Leaning Tower of Pisa

"It's still straightening," said engineer Roberto Cela, gazing at the Leaning Tower of Pisa gleaming in the autumn sunshine of northern Italy. "And many years will have to pass before it stops." The gravitationally-challenged landmark is leaning less after years of ambitious engineering work. Fortunately for the millions of tourists who come here every year, the 57-metre (186-feet) tower remains beautifully askance. The medieval bell tower, a symbol of the power of the maritime republic of Pisa in the Middle Ages, has leaned to one side ever since building started in 1173 on ground that proved a little too soft.



Italian Engineering Professor at Pisa University Nunziante Squeglia poses in the ground floor room of the Pisa tower, where the Tower's history is explained, in Pisa.



A picture shows the interior of the Pisa Tower in Pisa.

The tower was closed to the public in January 1990 for 11 years over safety fears, as its tilt reached 4.5 meters (15 feet) from the vertical, threatening to turn it into a pile of rubble. "We installed a number of tubes underground, on the side that the Tower leans away from," said Cela, technical director at the OPA, which looks after Pisa's main monuments. "We removed soil by drilling very carefully. Thanks to this system, we recovered half a degree of lean," he said.

Michele Jamiolkowski, an engineer of Polish origin who adopted Italian nationality, coordinated an international committee to rescue the landmark between 1993 and 2001. Engineering lecturer Nunziante Squeglia of Pisa University, who works with the Surveillance Group that was set up after the rescue work, has been studying and measuring the tower for 25 years. He says that the tower straightened by 41 centimeters (16 inches) until 2001, and another four centimeters since then.

Still mysterious
To understand how the 14,500-tonne building is moving, measurements are made as often as once an hour, some automatically using pendulums, some manually using a surveyor's optical level. "The tower tends to deform and reduce its lean in the summer, when it's hot, because the tower leans to the south, so its southern side is warmed, and the stone expands. And by expanding, the tower straightens," said Squeglia. He explains that there are three pendulums, one dating back to 1935, when sys-

tematic measurements began, although annual measurements began as far back as 1911.

"The tower was much more mysterious when I arrived, it wasn't clear why it was leaning, and increasingly leaning," said Squeglia. "It is a building that has been extensively studied for over 100 years but there are still so many things to know," he said, including the remains of what looks like a domed roof inside the tower that is still unexplained. Meanwhile, Cela predicted that the tower "will never be completely straight". "When they were

building it, there were attempts to straighten it (by adding stone on one side), so it has a slight banana shape."

Singaporean tourist Alvin, who like many visitors is taking photos of friends 'holding up' the tower in the background, said he didn't know about the decreased lean. "Oh I didn't notice, is it because like everyone's pushing against it?" he said, promising to try to push the tower back if it straightens too much. — AFP



A tourist takes pictures of the Pisa Tower (right) and the Pisa Cathedral, a medieval Roman Catholic cathedral dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Pisa. — AFP photos



A picture shows the Pisa Tower in Pisa.



Photo shows the Pisa Tower in Pisa.

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Monday, December 3, 2018

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Visibility will improve gradually and Mostly Sunny with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Cool with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

WEATHER WARNING			Drop in Visibility	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 02/12/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	24 °C	18 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24 °C	15 °C		
ABDALY	25 °C	16 °C		
BUBYAN	*** °C	*** °C		
JAHRA	25 °C	16 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	24 °C	17 °C		
SALMIYAH	23 °C	20 °C		
AHMADI	24 °C	20 °C		
NUWAISIB	25 °C	16 °C		
WAFRA	25 °C	15 °C		
SALMY	24 °C	14 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	12/03	Mostly Sunny	25 °C	14 °C	NW	08 - 32 km/h
Tuesday	12/04	Clouds will increase gradually	25 °C	14 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Wednesday	12/05	Cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	26 °C	16 °C	SE-S	12 - 38 km/h
Thursday	12/06	Partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	25 °C	16 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:01
Sunrise	06:25
Zuhr	11:37
Asr	14:30
Sunset	16:49
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	25 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	100%
MIN. RH	37 %
MAX. Wind	S 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
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Mirqab	22456536
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Salmiya	25746401

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Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493



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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 3/12/2018				Departure Flights on Monday 3/12/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	406	Kochi	00:10	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:00
KAC	503	Beirut	00:45	JZR	405	Kochi	12:45
KAC	102	London	00:50	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00
JZR	722	Alexandria	00:55	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JZR	113	Doha	13:30
JZR	734	Cairo	01:25	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	103	Bahrain	14:40
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
JZR	404D	Hyderabad	02:50	SAW	501	Jeddah	15:45
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:05	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:35	JZR	261	Beirut	16:40
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	KAC	675	Dubai	17:05
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	KAC	504	Beirut	17:15
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
JZR	502	Lahore	05:25	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	SAW	511	Riyadh	18:15
JZR	254D	Amman	06:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	112	Doha	06:30	KAC	621	Doha	18:25
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
BAW	157	London	07:10	JZR	501	Lahore	18:40
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	253	Amman	19:15
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	CLX	7907	Hong Kong	19:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	SYR	342	Damascus	20:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:50	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
JZR	122	Dubai	11:20	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
IRA	667	Esfahan	14:10	KAC	203	Lahore	22:15
				MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
				ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
				KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
				GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
				KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
				KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
				UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
				JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20



A ferris wheel is illuminated as the sun sets over the French Riviera city of Nice in southeastern France yesterday. — AFP

Tehran arrests population expert accused of spy links

Iran says it will continue missile tests after US allegation

TEHRAN: An Iranian fertility expert accused of working with foreign "espionage networks" to downplay the country's population crisis has been arrested, state news agency IRNA confirmed yesterday. It did not give details of the charges, but quoted a lawyer who named the expert as Meimanat Hosseini Chavoshi. She is listed by the University of Melbourne as working at its School of Population and Global Health, published widely on Iran's once-lauded fertility and family-planning policies.

On Saturday, hardline newspaper Kayhan reported the arrest of several population "activists... who, under the cover of scientific activities, had infiltrated state bodies". It said they manipulated statistics and handed sensitive information to Iran's enemies as part of efforts at "cultural and social invasion". Iran was once considered an international success story in population control, bringing birth rates down from seven per woman in the 1980s to 1.66 in 2016, according to World Bank figures.

Then-health minister Alireza Marandi received the

United Nations Population Award in 2000 for his family planning initiatives, which had to overcome entrenched taboos in an Islamic society. Chavoshi has written extensively about these efforts, which she described as the "fastest fall in fertility ever recorded" in a 2009 book. But lately there has been concern that Iran overshot its target, with the number of births falling well below the level needed to keep the population growing.

In 2012, supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said it was a mistake to have continued the family planning policies of the 1990s, and called for new measures to double the population to 150 million. The Kayhan report said Iran's enemies were using population experts to counter these efforts by downplaying the gravity of the situation. "There is evidence these individuals are connected to Western espionage networks," Nasrollah Pejmanfar, a member of parliament's cultural commission, told the newspaper.

Meanwhile, Iran said yesterday it would continue mis-

sile tests to build up its defenses and denied this was in breach of UN resolutions following US allegations that Tehran had tested a new missile capable of carrying multiple warheads. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Saturday condemned what he called Iran's testing of a medium-range ballistic missile in violation of the 2015 international agreement on the Iranian nuclear program, from which Washington has withdrawn.

"Missile tests...are carried out for defense and the country's deterrence, and we will continue this," Brigadier-General Abolfazl Shekarchi, spokesman for Iran's armed forces, was quoted as saying by the semi-official Tasnim news agency. "We will continue to both develop and test missiles. This is outside the framework of (nuclear) negotiations and part of our national security, for which we will not ask any country's permission," Shekarchi said. He did not confirm or deny Iran had tested a new missile.

Earlier, US National Security Adviser John Bolton

tweeted: "Iran just test-fired a... ballistic missile capable of reaching Israel and Europe. This provocative behavior cannot be tolerated." Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi also said Iranian missiles were purely defensive and added, "There is no Security Council resolution prohibiting missile program and missile tests by Iran".

UN Resolution 2231 enshrined Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States in which Tehran curbed its disputed uranium enrichment programme in exchange for an end to international sanctions. The resolution says Iran is "called upon" to refrain for up to eight years from work on ballistic missiles designed to deliver nuclear weapons. Iran has repeatedly said its missile program is purely defensive and denied that its missiles are capable of being tipped with nuclear warheads, or that it has any intent of developing nuclear weapons through uranium enrichment. — Agencies

Macron surveys damage after...

Continued from Page 1

began over fuel taxes but have grown into wider anger over Macron's agenda. The president earlier assessed the damage at the Arc de Triomphe, the massive monument to France's war dead at the top of the famous Champs Elysees avenue, where rioters scrawled graffiti and ransacked the ticketing and reception areas.

Inside, rioters smashed in the iconic face of a sculpture, a partial reproduction of the victory allegory "La Marseillaise" by Francois Rude. Macron also saw the wreckage of burnt-out cars and damaged buildings from rioting at other sites, where he praised the police but was also booed by sections of the crowd. Paris police said 412 people were arrested on Saturday during the worst clashes for years in the capital and 378 remained in custody. A total of 263 people were injured nationwide, with 133 injured in the capital, including 23 members of the security forces.

"I will never accept violence," Macron said. "No cause justifies that authorities are attacked, that businesses are plundered, that passers-by or journalists are threatened or that the Arc du Triomphe is defiled." Overnight a motorist died after crashing a van into traffic which had built up due to a "yellow vest" demo in Arles, southern France, a local prosecutor said yesterday. Three people have now died in incidents linked to the protests. The anti-government protests that have swept France were sparked initially by a rise in taxes on diesel.

In Paris yesterday, as groups of workers set about cleaning up the mess from the previous day, the scale of the destruction became clear. Around famous areas including the Champs-Elysees, the Louvre museum, the Opera and Place Vendome, smashed shop windows, broken glass and the occasional burned-out car were testament to the violence. Dozens of cars were torched by the

gangs of rioters, some of whom wore gas masks and ski goggles to lessen the effects of tear gas which was fired continually by police.

One person was in a critical condition after protesters pulled down one of the huge iron gates of the Tuileries garden by the Louvre, crushing several people. Nearly 190 fires were put out and six buildings were set alight, the interior ministry said. At the Arc de Triomphe graffiti had been daubed, with one slogan saying: "The yellow vests will win."

Some 136,000 demonstrators, most of them peaceful, were counted across the country on Saturday, the interior ministry said yesterday. The figure was well below the first day of protests on November 17, which attracted around 282,000 people, and also down on the revised figure of 166,000 who turned out last Saturday. Interior Minister Castaner attributed the violence to "specialists in destruction". Referring to the possibility of imposing a state of emergency - a demand made by the police union Alliance - Castaner declared: "Nothing is taboo for me. I am prepared to examine everything."

Over the last few weeks, the "yellow vest" movement has morphed into a broad opposition front to Macron, 40, a pro-business centrist elected in May 2017. Violent anarchist and far-right groups have infiltrated it and are thought to be behind Saturday's clashes. Macron faces a dilemma in how to respond, not least because the "yellow vests" are a grassroots movement with no formal leaders and a wide range of demands.

"We have said that we won't change course. Because the course is good," government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux told BFM television defiantly yesterday morning. "It's been 30 years that people change course every 18 months," he added, referring to Macron's predecessors who have often caved in to pressure from French street protests. Macron has so far refused to roll back taxes on fuel, which he says are needed to fund the country's transition to a low-emission economy. And he remains a fervent defender of the tax cuts he has delivered for businesses and the wealthy, which he believes were necessary to lower chronic high unemployment. — AFP

Jordanian ballet dancer hopes to

Continued from Page 1

Shrouf last week danced in a show directed and choreographed by Rania Kamhawi, who founded Jordan's first ballet and contemporary dance company, MISK, in 1996. Kamhawi, who trained in ballet in Britain, said ballet was growing among Jordanian audiences, who usually prefer performances by folklore or contemporary dance groups. "There is a niche audience

that loves ballet, but what I have noticed is that there is a huge audience for folklore," she said. "So we are incorporating techniques from folklore into ballet in order to make it more lively and attract a wider audience."

Today, MISK, which puts on shows at least once a year, counts 12 dancers. Shrouf is the only man. "It's a worldwide problem, not just in Jordan but I think this stigma is fading with the emergence of (television) shows like 'So you think you can Dance,'" Kamhawi said of the lack of male ballet dancers. "This is breaking some old stereotypes." Shrouf hopes to form a male dance group, even if he acknowledges he may have to hang up his ballet shoes for a more traditional career: "I won't give up, I will continue to work hard and pursue what I love." — Reuters

Naik says he has not...

Continued from Page 1

Britain banned Naik from entering in 2010. About 1,000 people turned up for Naik's speech, along with the state's chief minister, crown prince and religious officials. The preacher was known to be close to officials in the previous Malaysian administration, which

was unexpectedly defeated in a May general election. New Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad in July said as long as Naik was not creating any problems in Malaysia, he would not be deported. Indian media has reported that India has sought his extradition.

In Kangar, Naik described himself as a fundamentalist for following the fundamental teachings of Islam. "I am proud to be a fundamentalist Muslim," he said. A doctor by training, Naik will be delivering more lectures at universities and a mosque on the speaking tour. His wife, Farhat Naik, will address women in separate speeches. — Reuters

US admiral found dead...

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The Chicago native entered the US Navy in 1982 after graduating from the University of Notre Dame with a bachelor's degree in economics. He later

obtained a master's degree from the National Defense University. He served in several strike fighter squadrons flying the FA-18 Hornet and served in Kabul, Afghanistan, as chief of staff of Joint Task Force 435 and later Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435. In the US, Stearny served in various roles, including as instructor and readiness officer at Navy Fighter Weapons School, according to his official biography. He also held various senior posts, including as director of operations at US Central Command. — AFP

Sports

Wilder retains heavyweight crown after Fury thriller ends in draw

Wilder remains unbeaten after 41 fights

LOS ANGELES: Deontay Wilder retained his WBC heavyweight crown here Saturday after battling to a split decision draw against Britain's Tyson Fury in a pulsating 12-round battle.

Wilder had Fury on the canvas twice, including a spectacular final round knockdown, but was unable to get the knockout victory he had promised to deliver at the Staples Center. The three judges were divided on the outcome, with one scoring it 115-111 for Wilder, another 114-112 for Fury and the third 113-113.

"I think with the two knockdowns I definitely won the fight," said Wilder afterwards. "We poured our hearts out tonight. We're both warriors, but with those two drops I think I won the fight."

Wilder, who remains unbeaten after 41 fights, immediately called for a rematch. "I would love for it to be my next fight," Wilder said. "Let's give the fans what they want to see. It was a great fight and let's do it again."

Fury meanwhile insisted he had done enough to win. "We're on away soil, I got knocked down twice, but I still believe I won that fight," Fury said. "That man is a fearsome puncher and I was able to avoid that. The world knows I won the fight." Fury also said he hopes to arrange a rematch. "One hundred percent we'll do the rematch," Fury said. "We are two great champions. Me and this man are the two best heavyweights on the planet."

Until a sensational final round knockdown from Wilder, Fury appeared to be heading towards what would have been a remarkable upset. The 30-year-old "Gypsy King", who returned to boxing this year after missing more than two years through depression, drink and drug problems, had

boxed cleverly to evade the heavy-hitting threat of Wilder for most of the fight.

The American champion struggled to connect cleanly with Fury throughout an absorbing contest, all too often sending huge arcing haymakers whistling past Fury's head.

Wilder landed just 71 of 430 punches thrown, or 17 percent. Fury by contrast cleverly picked his moments, finding Wilder with greater accuracy and causing a nasty swelling over the American's left eye.

Wilder, the more aggressive of the two fighters early on, quickly moved into an early lead. But Fury gradually grew in confidence, regularly taunting Wilder by throwing his arms up in the air or behind his back.

Wilder responded with increasingly desperate flurries of big punches, very few of which found their mark. As several former heavyweights had predicted beforehand, the longer the fight went on, the more Fury looked in control.

However in the ninth round, Wilder finally made his mark, dropping Fury with a short hook that had the fans on their feet. Fury recovered well however and regained his composure to resume where he had left off. With a large contingent of British fans in the audience of 17,698 roaring him on, a victory suddenly seemed within reach.

Wilder however suddenly found a devastating combination just when he needed it in the 12th round. A right hand sent Fury rocking backwards towards the deck and a brutal left hand on the way down appeared to be the coup de grace for the challenger.

Incredibly however, Fury managed to pick himself up and clear his head to survive the remainder of the round and escape with a draw. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: Tyson Fury punches Deontay Wilder in the seventh round fighting to a draw during the WBC Heavyweight Championship at Staples Center on Saturday in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Kuwaiti speed skaters ready to take on the world

KUWAIT: Joining the local winter sports scene, the 17-member Kuwaiti speed skating team vowed to strongly compete on regional and international levels to put the country on the map of the adrenaline-inducing sport. Speed skating is a competitive form of ice skating, pitting athletes against each other in a race where time and speed are of essence. The sport is held out and in-door stadiums, as well as frozen lakes and rivers. Speaking to KUNA, team manager Youssef Al-Kanderi said that team members were selected due to their raw skills, which, hopefully in time, would be sharpened to the point of perfection. He added that in order to develop their skills, several training camps in Europe will be held to bring them to a satisfactory level of performance. More on future plans, Al-Kanderi invited all ice skating enthusiasts to join the team, especially those who have the skill to skate fast. On his part, team captain Mohammad Al-Mutar affirmed that the team is eager to carry the flag at major world tournaments. Speed skating requires a certain level of skills to enable athletes to compete effectively, said Al-Mutar, hoping that more individuals would join the team. Team member Suleiman Al-Saffar said that he found a connection between his motorbikes hobby and speed skating. Knowing that speed skating is taking baby steps in Kuwait, Al-Saffar indicated that the very notion was pushing him to challenge himself and others, adding that the team should start building up its repertoire via regional participation in Qatar and the UAE. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Members of the Kuwaiti speed skating team. — KUNA

Smith holds off Leishman charge to win Australian PGA Championship

GOLD COAST: Relieved defending champion Cameron Smith held off a final round charge from close friend Marc Leishman to win the Australian PGA Championship by two strokes yesterday.

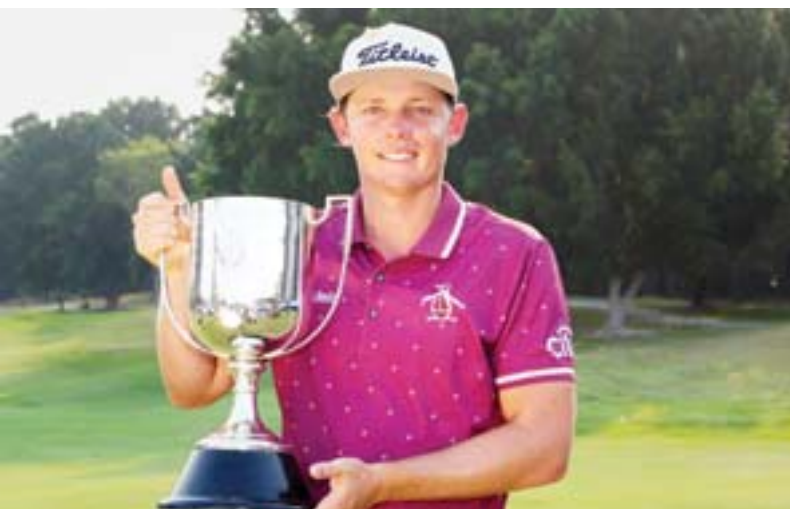
The world number 33 took a three-shot lead over his fellow Australian into day four of the European Tour-sanctioned event at the Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast, but it quickly evaporated.

The 21st-ranked Leishman, who won the US PGA Tour's CIMB Classic in Malaysia recently, had four birdies on the front nine while Smith made two bogeys to give him the edge going into the home straight.

It set up a tense finale with Smith—who partnered Leishman to second place at the World Cup in Melbourne last weekend. Smith kept his cool, sinking birdies at 12, 13 and 15. In contrast, Leishman floundered with bogeys at 14 and 16, leaving him with a round of 69 to end his hopes of a first-ever win at a major Australian event.

Smith finished at 16-under-par for the tournament after a final round 70. Englishman Ross McGowan, who shot a course record nine-under-par 63, was joint third, five behind Smith, alongside Australian Matthew Millar.

"Leish got off to a good start and I didn't, but I managed to hang in there," said Smith. "It was pretty special, I'm sure there's a long night



GOLD COAST: Cameron Smith of Australia celebrates with the Kirkwood Cup after winning the Australian PGA Championship at the Royal Pines golf course on the Gold Coast yesterday. — AFP

ahead." It was another crushing disappointment for Leishman, who despite claiming four titles on the US Tour has never managed to do the same at home.

"A couple of shots didn't come out as I hoped (on the back nine) and I lost a bit of momentum," he said. "Cam made birdies when he had to. I'm disappointed, but I gave it my best." The last person to win back-to-back Australian PGA titles was Robert Allenby in 2000 and 2001. — AFP

Three share lead as Woods falters in Hero World Challenge

NASSAU: Henrik Stenson, Jon Rahm and Tony Finau are tied for the lead on 13-under par heading into the final round of the Hero World Challenge. Sweden's Stenson and Spain's Rahm, who shared the overnight lead, couldn't be separated at the close of day three in signing for three-under par 69s while American Finau birdied both the 15th and 16th holes in a round of 67 to join his European Ryder Cup-winning rivals.

"I played nicely birding four of the par-fives, and on this golf course, we have five of them," said Finau who is making his debut in the \$3 million event hosted by Tiger Woods on the Albany Club course.

"That's what you have to do to play well, so I was able to do that today. "This is a golf course I'm not very familiar with, I played it once before we played. When I'm playing well, I feel like I can score on any golf course, especially a course that has five par-fives."

"We play a lot of golf courses on the PGA Tour there's only two or three, so to be able to have those couple extra par-fives you just know you're going to have some opportunities to score and I've been able to take advantage of those opportunities," added Finau, who is nine-under on 15 par-fives through three rounds.

The 29-year old Salt Lake City golfer said he had also benefitted from a small adjustment to his putter as he seeks to make amends after losing out in a play-off in last month's WGC - HSBC Champions.

"I added two degrees of loft in my putter after Thursday and then went out and shot 64 yesterday with it and so I decided to keep it," he said. Stenson was four-under par over the outward nine holes but played the inward half in one-over as he seeks a first victory since capturing the 2017 Wyndham Championship.

"It's a three-way tie for the lead so it's very much an open ballgame," Stenson said. "It's a small-field tournament, but it still gives you a nice boost if you manage to win at the end of the day."

Fellow Swede Alex Noren was celebrating after recording a hole-in-one at the par-three 17th hole in what was a remarkable finish for the Ryder Cup star. Noren was two-over par after 10 holes and then after a birdie on 12 he completed his closing five holes in bizarre manner - birdie (14), eagle (15), triple-bogey (16), ace (17) and birdie (18) in a score of 70 that put him tied for eighth on eight-under.

Woods, meanwhile, couldn't find any momentum, his third-round 72 seeing him drop to last in the 18-player field on two-under par. "I just haven't played clean this week," said Woods, who had five birdies on his card but also three bogeys and a double bogey seven at the par-five third.

The 14-time major winner began the week battling a "bug" he picked up from his son Charlie. "Today was probably the best I've felt physically this week, finally started to get my energy back and started to feel a little bit better," he said. — AFP

Olympics 2020 broadcasters gear up for the biggest show on earth

MADRID: Clock-watching is an integral part of any Olympic Games but even the most eagle-eyed sporting anoraks might be forgiven for missing the fact that yesterday marked 600 days until the start of the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.

For most people, it is not actually a particularly significant milestone but for 160 people of 35 nationalities beavering away in a building overlooking a highway in Madrid, the pressure of organising the biggest television show on earth just went up a notch.

These are the people of the Olympic Broadcasting Services (OBS), a wing of the International Olympic Committee responsible since 2008 for providing the pictures of every competition which are beamed around the world.

The size of the audience is phenomenal as is the money that is generated. Over five billion viewers tuned in for the last Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 as opposed to 3.4 billion for this year's football World Cup.

Television stations from around the world have dished out more than six billion dollars for the rights to the Games in Tokyo—broadcasting the event is a complex, lucrative business managed from the Spanish capital.

"Preparing and planning for the games is an ongoing function, so as we speak we are obviously very close to the finalisation of our plans for Tokyo," says Yiannis Exarchos, the imposing Greek boss of the OBS.

"But we have already started quite detailed planning for the winter games in Beijing (2022) and we

have already started engaging with Paris (2024) and Los Angeles (2028)." The first time pictures were beamed live from the Olympics was Berlin in 1936. It wasn't until the 1964 Games, also in Tokyo, that pictures went live around the world. Back then it was the responsibility of the host nation to provide the coverage and that is how it stayed until 2008.

"During the games we employ a team of more than 7,000 professionals coming from 90 different countries, we have 1,000 cameras, hundreds of thousands of kilometres of cables," says Exarchos.

"This started to become a big burden for the organising committee as the Games grew bigger and more complex. "As early as the Games of Atlanta (1996), it was made clear that the IOC should do something to support the cities."

So it was that the IOC created OBS in 2001 to provide coverage of all Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Beijing 2008 marked the OBS' first outing and it comes as no surprise to discover that Sotiris Salamouris, who is in charge of technology at OBS,

was back in Beijing last month to discuss the next Winter Olympics in 2022.

"We need to have a good number of discussions with the organising committee in terms of the infrastructures they need to make available for us," says Salamouris. "The IBC, that is the priority."

The IBC is the International Broadcast Centre, a bustling hub set up in each host city where television channels from all over the world get the signal from OBS to broadcast back home.

"We need to work quite early with the organising committee to find this facility, to secure it, to agree about timelines, additional works necessary. "This is what we have begun with Paris," says Salamouris looking ahead already to the Summer Olympics of 2024.

Given that the IOC is based in Lausanne, it may raise an eyebrow to see that the OBS is centred in Madrid. "It does not come from heaven, it comes from (Manolo) Romero," jokes IOC member Juan Antonio Samaranch Salisachs whose father served 21 years as president of the IOC. — AFP

Mehidy lifts Bangladesh to first innings win, series sweep

Tigers bowl out visitors for 111 and 213 runs on third day



DHAKA: Bangladeshi cricketers pose with the tournament trophy following a presentation ceremony at the end of the third day of the second Test cricket match between Bangladesh and West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. —AFP

DHAKA: Off-spinner Mehidy Hasan claimed a career-best 12 wickets as Bangladesh thumped West Indies by an innings and 184 runs in Dhaka yesterday to sweep the two-match series. Hasan took 7-58 and 5-59 in the first and second innings respectively to help the Tigers bowl out the visitors for 111 and 213 runs on the third day of the second Test.

Bangladesh made 508 runs in their only innings at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium to claim their first-ever victory by an innings margin. It was Bangladesh's first Test series win in four years, after they won the opener in Chittagong by 64 runs.

West Indies wilted for 213 all out in the second innings after earning the dubious distinction of becoming the first side ever to be asked to follow-on by Bangladesh in a Test match. Big-hitting Shimron Hetmyer scored an attacking 93 off 92 balls with nine sixes and a four to prevent a total Caribbean col-

lapse in the second innings.

But Mehidy stopped Hetmyer from scoring his maiden Test century when the batsman went for a 10th sixth, but wound up delivering it to Mohammad Mithun at long-on. He then removed Jomel Warrican to complete his second five-wicket haul of the game before finishing with match figures of 12-117 — the best ever Test haul for a Bangladeshi bowler.

The 21-year-old spinner improved his own record of 12-159 against England in 2016 at the same ground. Kumar Roach provided late entertainment with an unbeaten 37 off 49 balls with seven fours, but it only delayed the inevitable.

Tajul Islam wrapped up the innings and match when he trapped Shermion Lewis for 20 to finish with 3-40. Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan hailed his team's effort after the match. "We did the process right and we did well in every department. Overall a

very good team effort," he said.

West Indies' trouble began from the very start of the third day's play when they lost five wickets in less than an hour, after resuming their first innings on 75-5. Hetmyer, who also top-scored in the first innings with 39, hit Mehidy for a six in the second over of the day, but the off-spinner flummoxed him for a sharp return catch to start the collapse. Bangladesh never looked back as Mehidy claimed three more wickets in quick time, before Shakib wrapped up the innings to finish with 3-27. West Indies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite lamented the defeat.

"As batsmen we didn't do our jobs. We didn't get a partnership and we let ourselves down on the field," he said. The West Indies will also play three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 internationals against Bangladesh during their month-long tour. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second Test between Bangladesh and West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday:

Bangladesh first innings 508 (Mahmudullah 136, Shakib Al Hasan 80, Shadman Islam 76, Liton Das 54; K. Brathwaite 2-57, K. Roach 2-61, J. Warrican 2-91, D. Bishoo 2-109)

West Indies first innings (overnight 75-5)

K. Brathwaite b Shakib	0
K. Powell b Mehidy	4
S. Hope b Mehidy	10
S. Ambris b Shakib	7
R. Chase b Mehidy	0
S. Hetmyer c & b Mehidy	39
S. Dowrich lbw b Mehidy	37
D. Bishoo c Shadman b Mehidy	1
K. Roach c Liton b Mehidy	1
J. Warrican not out	5
S. Lewis lbw b Shakib	0
Extras (b4, lb3)	7
Total (all out, 36.4 overs)	111
Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Brathwaite), 2-6 (Powell), 3-17 (Ambris), 4-20 (Chase), 5-29 (Hope), 6-86 (Hetmyer), 7-88 (Bishoo), 8-92 (Roach), 9-110 (Dowrich), 10-111 (Lewis)	
Bowling: Shakib 15.4-4-27-3, Mehidy 16-1-58-7, Nayeem 3-0-9-0, Tajul 1-0-10-0, Mahmudullah 1-1-0-0.	

West Indies second innings

K. Brathwaite lbw b Shakib	1
K. Powell St. Mushfiqu b Mehidy	6
S. Hope c Shakib b Mehidy	25
S. Ambris lbw b Tajul	4
R. Chase c Mominul b Tajul	3
S. Hetmyer c Mithun b Mehidy	93
S. Dowrich c Soumya b Nayeem	3
D. Bishoo c Soumya b Mehidy	12
K. Roach not out	37
J. Warrican c & b Mehidy	0
S. Lewis lbw b Tajul	20
Extras (b6, lb3)	9
Total (all out, 59.2 overs)	213
Fall of wickets: 1-2 (Brathwaite), 2-14 (Powell), 3-23 (Ambris), and 4-29 (Chase) 5-85 (Hope), 6-96 (Dowrich), 7-143 (Bishoo), 8-166 (Hetmyer), 9-171 (Warrican), 10-213 (Lewis)	
Bowling: Shakib 14-3-65-1, Mehidy 20-2-59-5, Tajul 10.2-1-40-3, Mahmudullah 1-0-6-0, Nayeem 14-2-34-1.	
Result: Bangladesh won by innings and 184 runs	
Series result: Bangladesh wins series 2-0	

Battling India veteran Vijay has no fear of Australia

SYDNEY: India's Murali Vijay is ready to capitalise on a horror injury to young gun Prithvi Shaw, declaring he has no fear of Australian conditions after almost certainly securing his spot for this week's first Test.

The veteran opening batsman smacked an entertaining 129, including 16 fours and five sixes, in a warm-up match against a Cricket Australia XI on Saturday. After being dropped following a pair in the second Test against England this year, the 34-year-old was seen to be in a fight with incumbent KL Rahul to open the batting alongside Shaw in Adelaide.

But a nasty ligament injury on Friday ruled out the teenager who has been compared to Sachin Tendulkar-making Vijay and Rahul odds-on to face the new ball together again. Others with an outside chance include Shikhar Dhawan or even uncapped Mayank Agarwal.

"We come from the same part of India, so we understand each other well," Vijay said of Rahul, who scored 62 in India's second innings against the CA XI. "He is a good guy to bat with and he is fun. Hopefully we can carry that momentum forward into the first Test."

The pair have batted 25 times together at Test level and Vijay scored 53 and 99 four years ago in Adelaide, a venue he says he likes. "It suits me because I'm a batsman who likes to play off the back foot," he said.

"Australia is one place where you get the bounce so you can play shots. It always feels good to go to grounds where you have scored runs, it helps you a lot and I have good memories of it and looking forward to the Adelaide Test."

After being axed following his Lord's failure, Vijay worked his way back into contention through a spell with Essex and said he had never given up hope of earning a 60th Test cap. "If you are not part of the team, you have to make sure you keep your work ethics at the top level and once you get the chance you have to be ready to go," he said.

"That was my basic fundamental after being dropped in England until now." While India's opening pair appear in form, their middle order also looks good with Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane and Hanuma Vihari all making half-centuries in the CA XI match.

Their bowlers were less impressive, with an inexperienced CA side making a mammoth 544 in reply to the visitors' first innings 358. Pacemen Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma, and chief spinner Ravichandran Ashwin got in some valuable practice, but were all expensive. — AFP

Record-seeking Yasir holds key in Pakistan-NZ decider Test

ABU DHABI: Leg-spinner Yasir Shah is set to become the fastest to reach 200 Test wickets as he holds the key for Pakistan to win the series-deciding third and final Test against New Zealand starting in Abu Dhabi from today.

The 32-year-old needs just five wickets to shatter Australian leg-spinner Clarrie Grimmett's record of completing 200 wickets in 36 Tests, way back in 1936. That will be icing on the cake as Pakistan hope Yasir whose 14 wicket match haul crushed New Zealand to an innings and 16 run defeat in the second Test in Dubai-can come good again.

Yasir took eight wickets in the first Test here but Pakistan fell agonisingly short, losing by four runs before leveling the series at 1-1. Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed agreed hopes are pinned on Yasir, who has 195 wickets in 32 Tests.

"The way Yasir is bowling he has got his rhythm back and we hope that with the return of his form he will do his best to win us this Test and the series," said Sarfraz on Sunday. Until last year the Sheikh Zayed stadium had been a happy hunting ground for Pakistan, having won six of the ten Tests with four draws.

But they lost to Sri Lanka last year and against New Zealand after set low targets of 136 and 176 runs respectively, a fact Sarfraz said hurt his team. "We need to bat long and that we did in the last Test," said Sarfraz whose team put a big 418-5 declared in Dubai. "Toss will again be crucial because in Asia teams like to bat first and post big totals."

Besides Yasir, Pakistan will also hope fast-rising left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi gives them edge, replacing medium pacer Mohammad Abbas who is

River join Boca in refusing to play Copa Libertadores in Madrid

BUENOS AIRES: River Plate said Saturday they have refused to play the Copa Libertadores final second leg against Boca Juniors in Madrid, casting uncertainty over the December 9 fixture. The match between the Argentine arch-rivals has been moved to Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu stadium after it was twice postponed last weekend after River Plate fans attacked the Boca Juniors team bus.

The game is due to be played in the Spanish capital on December 9, but River Plate said they "confirmed their rejection of the change of location". In a statement on the club's website, River said it was "incomprehensible" that the game had been moved to Spain.

River said the club bore no responsibility for the



ABU DHABI: New Zealand cricketers gather prior to start training session at the Sheikh Zayed International Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday. Pakistani will play their third and final Test match against New Zealand today, in Abu Dhabi. — AFP

ruled out with a shoulder injury.

The 18-year-old pacer took back to back four wicket hauls in the 1-1 drawn one-day series against New Zealand last month before getting seven wickets against England Lions in a four-day match, also in Abu Dhabi.

"Shaheen is improving day by day and has talent," said Sarfraz of Shaheen who is six and a half feet tall. Sarfraz admits New Zealand can be dangerous as they have the motivation to win an away series against Pakistan for the first time since 1969.

"New Zealand is a good team with experienced players who know Test cricket well," said Sarfraz. "They have good bowlers so we will also try to play good cricket." New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson admitted Yasir will be a dangerous proposition.

"He (Yasir) is a world class bowler," said Williamson. "He clearly had a fantastic last game and bowled a number of very nice deliveries and used the conditions really, really well." New Zealand will gain confidence

"faults in the security operation" for the high profile fixture in Buenos Aires. "It is incomprehensible that the superclásico cannot take place as normal in the same country where a G20 summit is currently taking place," the club added.

World leaders, including US President Donald Trump and Russian leader Vladimir Putin, are attending the G20 summit in the Argentine capital this weekend. "The club believes this decision demeans the competition, prejudices those who have bought tickets and makes it unfair," River continued.

Several hours before River put out their statement, Boca Juniors said they were going to appeal against the decision to move the match to Madrid to the South American football federation CONMEBOL, and eventually to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

Several Boca Juniors players including Pablo Perez needed hospital treatment for injuries caused by shards of glass and others complained about the effects of inhaling teargas in the attack last Saturday.

Boca then refused to play the match and it was postponed 24 hours, only to then be called off indefinitely the next day. Boca petitioned CONMEBOL to be awarded the trophy, but that was rejected on Thursday.

CONMEBOL, which is headquartered in Paraguay, decided Argentina was in no state to host such an

important match and ordered it played elsewhere, with Real president Florentino Perez jumping on the opportunity and offering use of the Bernabeu for free.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said Saturday that "idiots ruined the party" for everyone at the Copa Libertadores. "I was here last Saturday," Infantino said at a press conference at the G20 summit.

"It was a sad moment for everyone. It is a football match. It is not a war, not even a battle." "We have to work to find out who are the people to blame. You have to identify them and get them out (of football)," said Infantino.

"I hope this does not happen any longer," he said. "This story must mark the end of one chapter and the start of a new one." The FIFA boss believes it is up to CONMEBOL to decide the fate of the final.

They "must take a decision, they know all the factors," he said, adding: "It has to be played, nothing should stop football."

On social media, the Libertadores, the most prestigious club tournament in South America, has been rechristened the "Copa Conquistadores." But, Infantino insisted that Argentina "does not have to feel ashamed" over the final being moved to Madrid. "Argentina has to feel energised to change this, to use it for positive change," he said. — AFP

Sports

Aubameyang stars as Arsenal fightback stuns Tottenham

Arsenal's second win in the last nine league

LONDON: Arsenal won an explosive north London derby as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's brace and Alexandre Lacazette's crucial strike inspired a pulsating 4-2 win over bitter rivals Tottenham yesterday.

Unai Emery's side extended their unbeaten run to 19 matches in all competitions after fighting back from 2-1 down in arguably the Premier League's game of the season so far. Aubameyang's penalty had put Arsenal ahead before Eric Dier's header and a Harry Kane spot-kick gave Tottenham the lead at half-time at the Emirates Stadium. Dier's gloating celebration in front of Arsenal's fans had triggered a touchline brawl involving Arsenal substitutes. But the fireworks were far from over as Aubameyang's superb long-range equaliser sparked a second half surge from the Gunners.

Lacazette came off the bench to put Arsenal ahead and Lucas Torreira sealed the points with his first goal for the club. Capping a miserable day for Jan Vertonghen, the Tottenham defender was sent off in the closing stages after earlier giving away Arsenal's penalty. It was only Arsenal's second win in the last nine league north London derbies and, while stealing local bragging rights is always sweet, this felt like a significant moment for Emery's team in the bigger picture.

Emery has revitalised Arsenal since the depressing final years of Arsene Wenger's reign.

But losses to Manchester City and Chelsea and a draw with Liverpool had raised questions about Arsenal's ability to compete for a top four finish. This stirring comeback was exactly the kind of statement of intent Arsenal needed as they moved above Tottenham into fourth place on goal difference.

Ending their hated neighbours' six-match winning run showed Arsenal aren't content to let the balance of power in north London remain with Tottenham.

Biting into challenges and harrying Tottenham into panicked mistakes, Arsenal made a blistering start and their relentless tempo paid dividends in the 10th minute.

Vertonghen jumped with Shkodran Mustafi as they challenged for a corner and the Belgian's raised arm clearly made contact with the ball as he tried to block the Arsenal defender's header.

Fever pitch

Referee Mike Dean awarded a penalty and Aubameyang sent Hugo Lloris the wrong way from the spot for his 11th goal of the season. Despite being dominated for the opening half hour, Tottenham snatched a 30th minute equaliser as the derby reached fever pitch.

Christian Eriksen's inswinging free-kick caught Arsenal captain Granit Xhaka flat-footed and Dier nipped in to head past Bernd Leno's weak attempted save. Dier celebrated by holding his finger to his mouth to indicate the Arsenal fans should keep quiet and his inflammatory gesture quickly sparked a touchline brawl. Arsenal substitutes Stephan Lichtsteiner and Aaron Ramsey took exception to Dier's taunting, prompting a bout of pushing and shoving. The goal and subsequent fracas sparked Tottenham into life and four minutes later they were ahead. Son Heung-Min's pace was too much for Arsenal to handle and Rob Holding responded by making a rash sliding challenge on the South Korean in the penalty area. There was only minimal contact but Son fell to the turf and, to Arsenal's fury, Dean pointed to the spot.

Kane lashed home the penalty for a record-equalling eighth Premier League goal in north London derbies. Arsenal's sense of injustice spurred them on and Emery responded by sending on Ramsey and Lacazette, back from a groin injury, at half-time.

They proved inspired moves as Gabon forward Aubameyang conjured a majestic equaliser in the 56th minute. Hector Bellerin's long pass was flicked on by Ramsey and Aubameyang was first to the pass, unleashing a ferocious strike that flashed past the disbelieving Lloris from 20 yards.



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English striker Harry Kane (C) vies with Arsenal's Greek defender Sokratis Papastathopoulos (R) during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

Tottenham had reverted to their earlier timid performance and Arsenal went ahead in the 74th minute.

Lacazette slipped when he took aim from the edge of the area, but his miscued shot took a deflection off Dier and trickled past Lloris. Torreira delivered the

knockout blow three minutes later, running onto Aubameyang's pass and fired low into the far corner.

There was still time for Vertonghen to see red for an 85th minute lunge on Lacazette that rounded off Arsenal's perfect afternoon. — AFP

Madrid back to winning ways under Solari

MADRID: Real Madrid's revival under Santiago Solari appears to be back on track after they moved up to fifth in La Liga with a 2-0 win over Valencia on Saturday. An own-goal from Valencia's Daniel Wass gave Madrid an early lead before Lucas Vazquez added a late second to wrap up their sixth win in seven games under their new coach.

The 3-0 thrashing by Eibar last weekend, in Solari's first official game in charge, had placed the depth of the recovery in doubt but this was another assured display to back up an impressive Champions League win over Roma in midweek. "We did not play well against Eibar but we were good in Rome, and we were really good today," Solari said. Madrid move two points behind Barcelona and only three adrift of leaders Sevilla, albeit

with both still to play later. Valencia stay 13th.

Marcelino's side, attempting a comeback of sorts themselves after a poor start to the season, offered disappointingly little, save for a 20-minute spell at the start of the second half.

"We deserved to equalise," Marcelino said. "For a long time in the second half we were better than Real Madrid." Otherwise, their opponents controlled the contest and while Gareth Bale's league drought stretched to 10 games, his longest ever, the Welshman played a lead role in an energetic performance before coming off in the second half.

He appeared to signal some discomfort with his right thigh when sitting on the bench, with Solari confirming afterwards that Bale had "felt a problem". The Santiago Bernabeu was almost packed out, eight days before Boca Juniors and River Plate are due to play here in the postponed second leg of the Copa Libertadores final.

With La Liga still pushing for Barcelona's game against Girona to be staged in Miami, there was perhaps something to be savoured in two Spanish teams, in a Spanish competition, playing in a Spanish stadium.

Isco is one of Spain's primary talents but is still to be picked in a starting line-up by Solari. This was the midfielder's seventh consecutive game out of the side and while he came on to cheers, 10 minutes with Madrid already ahead were only crumbs for comfort.

Bale seemed more pinned to the left wing than he has been for a long time and he rolled back the years with a straight run down the line before whipping in an early cross. Karim Benzema's ambitious volley sailed just wide.

Madrid had made much the better start and in the eighth minute, took the lead. Wass headed into his own net but Dani Carvajal led the celebrations. He kept the ball alive before rummaging past Gabriel Paulista and Jose Gaya. The flicked cross gave Wass too little time to react. Valencia made hardly any impact on the half, pressed and harried into submission. Neto skewed a clearance under pressure but then made up for his error by denying Bale from close range. Fortunate only to be one behind, Valencia improved after the break. Santi Mina blazed over with only Thibaut Courtois to



MADRID: Real Madrid's Spanish midfielder Marco Asensio (L) challenges Valencia's Argentinian defender Ezequiel Garay during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid and Valencia at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on Saturday. — AFP

beat. Gaya's cutback was slightly misplaced. Paulista volleyed over on the stretch from three yards.

Bale was replaced by Marco Asensio, who should have given Madrid breathing space but his finish was blocked by Ezequiel Garay. — AFP

Ronaldo caps dominant win as Juve move 11 points clear

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo converted a penalty to cap a dominant 3-0 win for Juventus over Fiorentina on Saturday as the Italian champions continued their charge to an eighth consecutive league title by opening an 11-point lead on top of Serie A.

Ronaldo slotted in his 10th goal from 14 league games from the spot after 79 minutes, to add to Rodrigo Bentancur's opener after half an hour in Tuscany with captain Giorgio Chiellini volleying in after 69 minutes.

The Portuguese star was substituted just afterwards for the first time this season after receiving a yellow card, spending the last 10 minutes on the bench. "Great team effort. Important win," the five-time Ballon d'Or winner wrote on social media after the game. Massimiliano Allegri's side have 40 points from 14 games with second-place Napoli on 29 points before they host Atalanta today. It was Juventus' fifth consecutive win in the championship and 13th in 14 games, as they have won all their away games, with just one home draw against Genoa.

"This is a squad of great champions, great talents, but above all of great men," said Allegri. "Technique alone is not enough, you need humility ... you need players who are open to chasing opponents down, of working for their teammates.

"We knew the difficulties, but we soon took command of the game," said Allegri, just days after his side seal their ticket to the Champions League knock-out rounds. "In the second half Fiorentina created problems for us but the victory was deserved.

"When you have such talented players in attack, they don't need too many instructions and it's important not to limit them," continued Allegri. "We just have to get the ball up to them."

Juventus dominated the game before which tributes were paid to former Fiorentina captain and Italian international Davide Astori who died suddenly last March.

Midtable Fiorentina threatened in the second half through Federico Chiesa and Jordan Veretout but fell to their first home defeat this season, with Stefano Pioli's side without a win since September 30.

"We came up against the strongest team in Italy. It's an ugly, heavy defeat which I do not think it reflects the match," said Pioli. "We're not where we want to be, but the goal remains Europe."

Uruguay international Bentancur broke through after a solo run with an angled low finish into the corner of the net.

Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny saved two Chiesa efforts after the break with a Ronaldo freekick denied by Fiorentina goalkeeper Alban Lafont. Chiellini picked up a corner to turn in the second for the veteran defender's first goal of the season.

Ten minutes later Mario Mandzukic's cross caught Edinson's arm with Ronaldo slotting in the resulting penalty before being replaced by Federico Bernardeschi after a yellow card for his goal celebration. He becomes the first Juventus player to score ten goals in his debut 14 season since Welsh international John Charles in 1957-58.

In Genoa, Fabio Quagliarella continued his goal spree with a brace which helped get Sampdoria back winning after five games with a 4-1 success which piled the pressure on struggling Bologna. — AFP

Live		Matches on TV
		(Local Timings)
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Levante v Athletic de Bilbao	23:00	
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Atalanta v SSC Napoli	22:30	
beIN SPORTS		
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
FC Nuremberg v Bayer 04 Leverkusen	22:30	
beIN SPORTS HD 5		

Milan fight back to beat Parma

MILAN: AC Milan staged a second-half comeback to beat Parma 2-1 at San Siro and move back into the top four in Serie A yesterday. Parma stunned Inter in September with a 1-0 win in Milan and threatened to repeat the feat when Roberto Inglese put them in front early in the second half, but a Patrick Cutrone strike and a Franck Kessie penalty secured the three points for the Rossoneri.

Milan coach Gennaro Gattuso had questioned the logic of handing his side an early kickoff on Sunday after their Europa League exertions three days before, and he also had to deal with the absence of six injured players and suspended striker Gonzalo Higuain.

Yet his players responded with their seventh victory of the season, lifting them above Lazio into fourth place on 25 points ahead of the Roman club's trip to Chievo later. Parma remain in sixth place on 20 points, but could be overtaken by AS Roma, Sassuolo, Atalanta and Torino by the end of the weekend's fixtures.

Parma's Antonino Barilla found himself unmarked inside the box in the first half but his first touch let him down, before Milan's Suso drew a smart save from Parma goalkeeper Luigi Sepe and Riccardo Gagliolo headed wide from six metres out for the visitors.

Parma silenced the 53,000-strong crowd five minutes into the second half when Inglese rose high at the near post to head in from a corner, but their lead lasted just five minutes before Cutrone latched onto a deflected cross and fired a volley into the corner to draw



MILAN: AC Milan's Italian forward Patrick Cutrone (L) fights for the ball with Parma's Slovenian midfielder Leo Stulac (R) during the Italian Serie A football match between AC Milan and Parma at the San Siro stadium in Milan yesterday. — AFP

Milan level. With 20 minutes left on the clock, a VAR review showed that Parma defender Alessandro Bastoni, on loan from Milan's city rivals Inter, was guilty

of handball inside the box and Kessie duly sent Sepe the wrong way from the resulting penalty to complete the comeback. — Reuters

25 Wilder retains heavyweight crown after Fury thriller ends in draw



26 Mehidy lifts Bangladesh to first innings win, series sweep

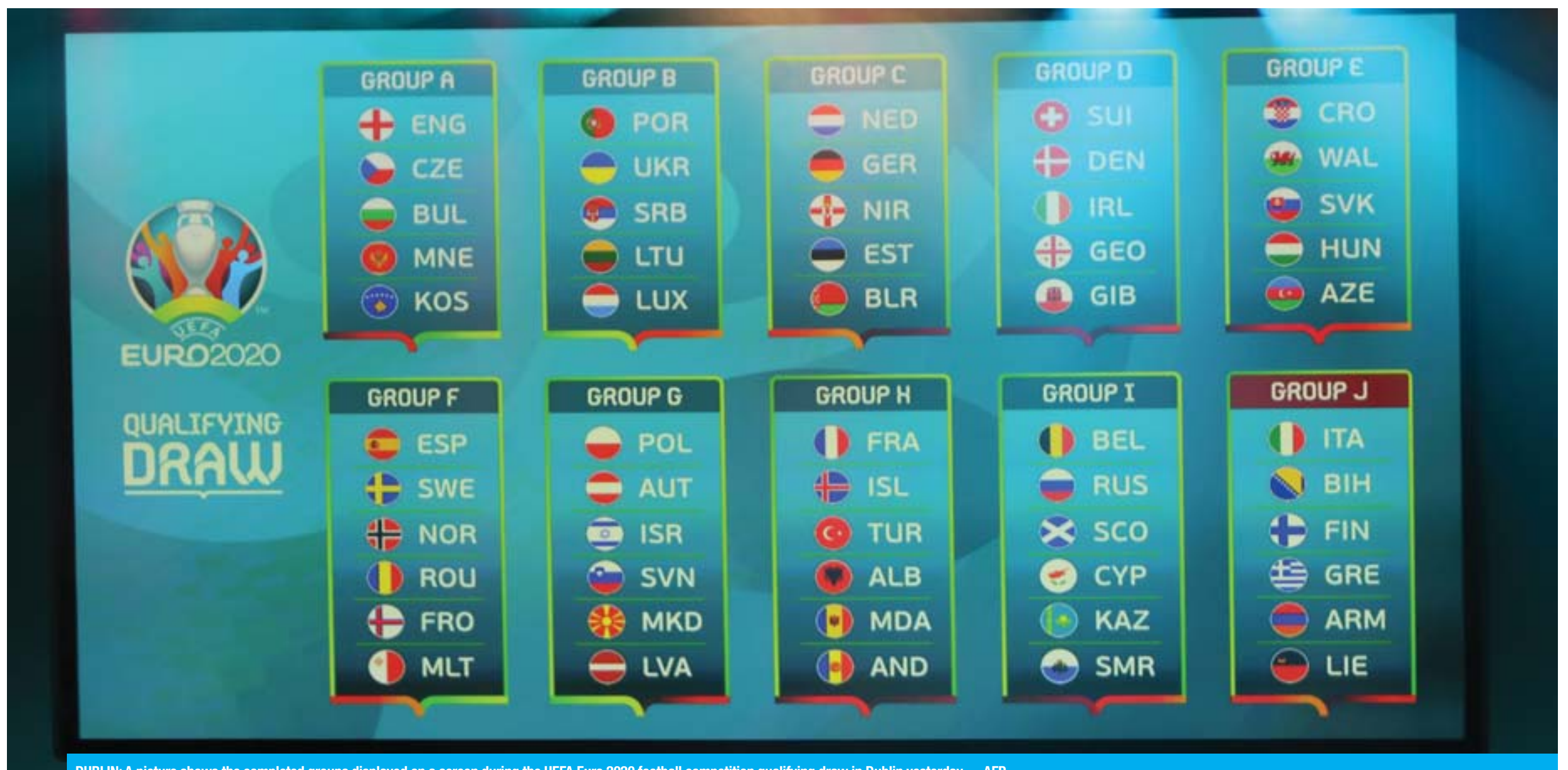


27 Aubameyang stars as Arsenal fightback stuns Tottenham



Germany to face Netherlands

Euro 2020 qualifying: England drawn with Czech Republic



DUBLIN: A picture shows the completed groups displayed on a screen during the UEFA Euro 2020 football competition qualifying draw in Dublin yesterday. —AFP

DUBLIN: The Netherlands and Germany were grouped together in qualification for the 2020 European Championship at yesterday's draw in Dublin, one of 12 host cities for the finals that will be staged across the continent for the first time.

Germany, the team everyone wanted to avoid after their poor showing in UEFA's new Nations League competition pushed them into the second pot of seeds, will also play Northern Ireland, Estonia and Belarus in Group C when the qualification competition begins in March. The Dutch, European champions in 1988, failed to qualify for the last two major tournaments but have been rejuvenated under new coach Ronald Koeman, beating Germany last month on their way to securing a spot in the final stages of the Nations League.

"I wasn't happy because they are strong, they were the strongest team in the second pot, but Germany are also not happy with Holland, I think," Koeman, the former Ajax and Everton manager, told reporters.

"I think the rest of the draw is acceptable but with

the Germans, it will be a good fight. We know it will be tough to beat them. The development of the team is really positive and we look forward."

Holders Portugal must face Ukraine and Serbia in a tricky five-team Group B which also includes Lithuania and Luxembourg while world champions France drew Iceland and Turkey in Group H.

Elsewhere three-times champions Spain were drawn in Group F with Sweden, Norway and Romania. England, one of the other in-form teams from the Nations League, face the Czech Republic and Bulgaria in Group A.

AVOID GERMANY

The top two teams from each group qualify automatically. Unlike previous tournaments, the playoffs to decide the four other spots will be contested between the most successful teams from the four divisions of the Nations League who have not already qualified.

"I would say it's a group with three candidates for

two places, and Portugal are one of them," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos. "We escaped playing Germany... or Germany escaped playing us. You could say the group is less difficult because Germany are not there but that would not be true. Ukraine and Serbia are difficult."

Hoping to restore his team's credibility after they failed to qualify for the World Cup, Italy coach Roberto Mancini was also happy to avoid Germany after his side were drawn in Group J along with teams including Bosnia, Finland and Greece.

"A good draw, the aim was to avoid Germany," he said. "We need to improve and get back to being among the top teams." The new format offers a potential back door for any top side that struggles in qualifying, while also handing the leading minnows from the lowest Nations League division-Kosovo, Georgia, Belarus and Macedonia-a crack at the last qualification place. The finals will take place in 12 different cities stretching from Bilbao in Spain to Baku in Azerbaijan.

For the first time in the competition's history, the tournament will be hosted by more than two countries to mark its 60th anniversary.

No team will qualify automatically as hosts, although every host country that qualifies will be guaranteed two home games in the group phase. A maximum of two host teams were permitted to be grouped together in Sunday's qualifying draw.

That meant that Ireland, to sighs of relief in the Dublin auditorium, had to be moved out of the Germany/Netherlands group they were initially drawn in, dumping neighbouring Northern Ireland in Group C with the former winners instead.

Yet new Ireland manager Mick McCarthy was not thanking the "person on the computer with a magic finger" for long when he realised his side would still face the relatively daunting task of getting past either Switzerland or Denmark in Group D. "I don't see why we should be thinking it's a damn sight easier," the returning Ireland manager said. — Reuters

Chelsea return to winning ways against Fulham

LONDON: Chelsea bounced back from their first Premier League defeat of the season to see off local rivals Fulham 2-0 yesterday, with goals from Pedro and Ruben Loftus-Cheek putting the gloss on a mixed performance.

The home side dominated possession at Stamford Bridge and scored early through Spanish forward Pedro but struggled to find their rhythm and looked shaky until substitute Loftus-Cheek settled their nerves with a late second. Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri enjoyed a dream start to his tenure in England but a chastening 3-1 defeat to Tottenham last week stung him badly, prompting a series of post-mortems with individual players.

Yesterday's hard-fought win lifted Chelsea into third place above Spurs, in action against Arsenal later in the day. The home side, welcoming former manager Claudio Ranieri back to Stamford Bridge in the Fulham dugout, were quickly into their stride against their neighbours and were ahead inside four minutes.

N'Golo Kante—publicly criticised by his manager for his positioning in the match against Spurs—was instrumental in the opening goal, dispossessing Jean Michael Seri in the

middle of the pitch and feeding the ball to Pedro on the right side of the penalty box.

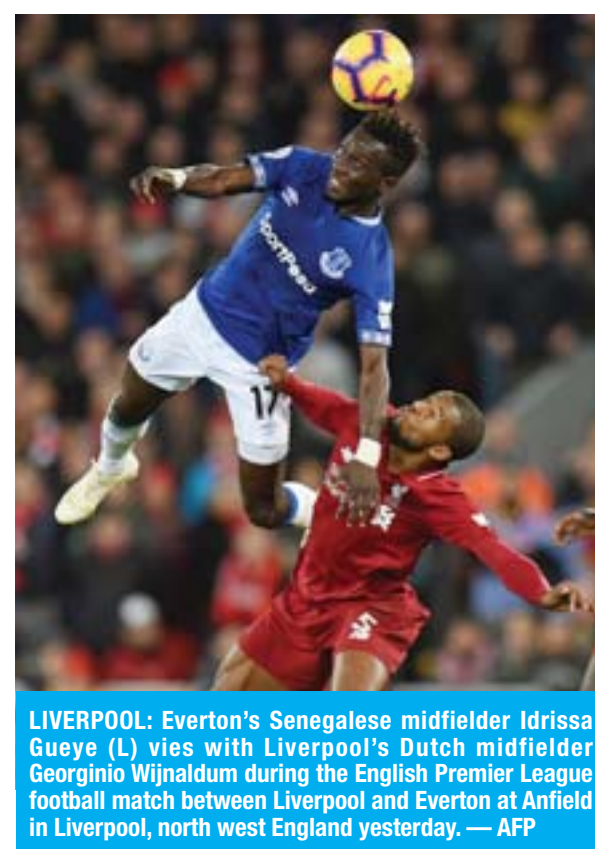
The winger stepped inside onto his left foot and fired the ball into the far corner. Pedro's strike was Chelsea's 1,000th Premier League goal—they are the third club to reach the landmark after Manchester United and Arsenal.

Chelsea dominated the remainder of the first half, with Sergio Rico saving smartly with his feet from Olivier Giroud shortly before half-time but they failed to convert their dominance into clear-cut chances.

Fulham started the match rooted to the foot of the table but lifted by last week's victory in Ranieri's first match as boss, which followed six straight Premier League defeats. Ranieri made two substitutions for the second half, bringing on Floyd Ayite and Aboubakar Kamara for Stefan Johansen and Ryan Sessegnon.

Fulham, playing with more urgency, twice went close to an equaliser through defender Calum Chambers. Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga kept out Chambers' header 10 minutes after the break before the loose ball was cleared off the line by Pedro.

Then midway through the second half Kepa palmed away a powerful shot from Chambers. Chelsea had a chance to seal all three points when Rico could only palm an Eden Hazard deflected shot into the path of substitute Alvaro Morata but he skewed the ball horribly. The Spanish forward was spared further embarrassment when England international Loftus-Cheek finished a lovely move by driving into the net from the right-hand side of the penalty area in the 82nd minute. — AFP



LIVERPOOL: Everton's Senegalese midfielder Idrissa Gueye (L) vies with Liverpool's Dutch midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Everton at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

Forgotten man Origi snatches dramatic derby win for Liverpool

LIVERPOOL: Forgotten man Divock Origi snatched a dramatic last-gasp 1-0 win for Liverpool over Merseyside rivals Everton in the Premier League at Anfield yesterday. Everton looked to have done enough to secure a point but a horrendous error from goalkeeper Jordan Pickford gifted the ball to Origi, who headed it home in the sixth minute of stoppage time.

Chasing a first win at Anfield since 1999, Everton created the better of the openings in the first half, but found Liverpool goalkeeper Allison in inspired form. Liverpool upped the tempo after the break and twice went close through Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane.

Origi, who came off the bench for his first league appearance of the season, saw an earlier close-range effort come out off the post, before he grabbed the headlines with the bizarre winner. The goal sparked wild celebrations at Anfield with manager Juergen Klopp running on to the pitch. The win allowed second-placed Liverpool to close the gap on league leaders Manchester City to two points. — Reuters