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Rouhani vows US won't stop Iran, threatens to cut Gulf oil

Tehran wants to expand missile range despite US ire



WASHINGTON: HH the Amir's representative HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah pay respects to former US President George HW Bush as he lies in state in the US Capitol's rotunda yesterday. — AFP

TEHRAN: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani struck a defiant stance against US sanctions yesterday, renewing his threat to cut off international oil sales from the Gulf. "America should know... it is not capable of preventing the export of Iran's oil," Rouhani said at a televised rally in Semnan province. "If it ever tries to do so... no oil will be exported from the Persian Gulf," he added. Since the 1980s, Iran has said repeatedly it would block the Gulf in response to international pressure but has never carried out the threat.

Washington has reimposed sanctions, including an oil embargo, since withdrawing from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers in May. It has vowed to reduce Iran's oil sales to zero, but has granted temporary waivers to eight countries. Rouhani last threatened to close the Gulf in July when he warned the US "should not play with the lion's tail". The president downplayed the economic impact of sanctions, accusing the media of exaggerating the country's problems. "No hyperinflation, no massive unemployment will threaten us. People should stop saying such things in the papers," he told the crowd.

The latest inflation report from Iran's central bank says food prices rose 56 percent year-on-year in October. Rouhani acknowledged there were "some

problems", but said these would be addressed in the new budget plan to be presented on Dec 16. He said the government would maintain subsidies on essential goods and increase public sector wages and pensions by 20 percent.

Rouhani said the United States would not succeed in cutting Iran's economic ties with the region and the world. Iranian Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri also said yesterday that US sanctions were hitting vulnerable people in Iran. "When (Americans) say their target is the Iranian government and there won't be pressure on the sick, the elderly and the weak in society, it's a lie," Jahangiri said, according to the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

Meanwhile, Iran wants to increase its missiles' range, a senior military official was quoted as saying yesterday, a move that would irk the United States which views Tehran's weapons program as a regional security threat. "One of our most important programs is increasing the range of missiles and ammunition," Iranian air force head, Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh, said, according to the semi-official Fars news agency. "We don't see any limitations for ourselves in this field."

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Rain probe to take 2 months; insurance firms should pay: MP

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The three-member National Assembly committee formed to investigate the destruction caused by heavy rains last month will take two months to complete its probe, its rapporteur said yesterday. MP Khaled Al-Oteibi said the investigation will take this time because it involves many issues related to damage caused by the rains and loose gravel. The committee was given authority to discuss the issue with ministers and top government officials to determine what went wrong and who is responsible.

Minister of Public Works Hussam Al-Roumi, who came under fire and was held responsible, has submitted his resignation, but the government has yet to decide whether to accept it or not. The minister in the meantime has set up an independent investigation committee to probe a number of road contracts signed by the public roads authority in the past few years.

MP Thamer Al-Suwait meanwhile proposed an amendment to the 1961 insurance law stipulating to make it mandatory for insurance companies to compensate Kuwaitis and expatriates for damage caused by floods and flying gravel.

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Australia to stop sheep exports to Mideast for three months each year

SYDNEY: Australia's livestock exporters will stop shipping live sheep to the Middle East for three months each year from 2019, an industry body said yesterday, amid rising public anger over the trade worth around A\$55 million (\$40 million) annually. The Australian Livestock Exporters Council (ALEC) said its

Israel targets Hezb tunnels from Lebanon

JERUSALEM: Israel's army said yesterday it has discovered Hezbollah tunnels infiltrating its territory from Lebanon and launched an operation to destroy them, a move likely to raise tensions with the Iran-backed group. The surprise announcement came hours after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Brussels over regional dangers, with both having repeatedly

warned about the activities of Iran, Israel's main enemy.

Netanyahu said he discussed the operation with Pompeo and called the tunnels a violation of a UN resolution aimed at ending a 2006 war between Israel and Shiite group Hezbollah. "Whoever tries to harm Israel's security will pay dearly," Netanyahu said in a statement. "We will continue with further activities, covert and overt, to ensure Israel's security." US President Donald Trump's White House gave its full backing to the operation, with National Security Adviser John Bolton saying "we call on Iran and all of its agents to stop their regional aggression and provocation".

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members had voluntarily agreed to halt shipments of live sheep to the Middle East during the northern hemisphere summer.

Notably, Kuwait's Livestock Transport and Trading (Al Mawashi), a major supplier to other Gulf Arab states such as Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates, imported 1.28 million livestock from Australia in 2017, mostly sheep. The move comes amid widespread public anger after footage emerged showing the death of 2,400 sheep on a ship bound for the Middle East, prompting calls for the entire trade to be prohibited. "This is about maintaining and growing a strong, viable nine-month-a-year live sheep trade and, more broadly, securing the future of Australia's livestock export industry," Simon Crean, ALEC's chairman, said in an emailed statement.

The move by ALEC could ease some of the strain on

the ruling conservative government. Several members of Prime Minister Scott Morrison's Cabinet have backed calls to ban the entire live sheep exporting industry, a move that threatened to fracture the government. Australia's chief commodity forecaster in September said it expected 1.9 million live sheep to be sold this year, worth A\$250 million. Around a fifth of all live sheep are forecast to be sold to Middle Eastern countries.

In May this year, Al Mawashi said it is in talks with possible new livestock suppliers after an Australian lawmaker proposed legislation to ban the export of live sheep. Al Mawashi CEO Usama Khaled Boodai said the majority state-owned Kuwaiti company was in talks with South Africa, Sudan and Horn of Africa countries as part of its efforts to diversify its sources of livestock. — Reuters



This picture taken yesterday near the northern Israeli town of Misgav Am shows Israeli machinery operating near the border wall with Lebanon. — AFP

AC boom in India to make world hotter

BEHROR, India: Ratan Kumar once battled India's brutal summers with damp bedsheets and midnight baths. Now he is among millions upon millions of Indians using air conditioning - helping make the world hotter still. With India's AC market expected to explode from 30 million to a billion units by 2050, the world's second-most populous country could become the planet's top user of electricity for cooling. India is already the number-three spender of greenhouse gases, burning through 800 million tonnes of coal every year - and the predicted AC boom could mean the country would have to triple its electricity production to meet demand, experts say.

But for the hundreds of millions of Indians enduring scorching, even deadly,

summers, the air conditioners are a god-send. "Summers make our life miserable," said Kumar, a 48-year-old laundryman earning \$225 a month who this year installed an AC unit in his two-room house in the town of Behror in the baking-hot desert state of Rajasthan. "Sleeping for few hours is a struggle after a day's hard work," the father-of-two told AFP, running a hot iron over crumpled clothes. "I am not rich but we all aspire to a comfortable life."

Vast swathes of India endure a grueling four-month long summer, and the mercury has been inching ever higher in recent years. In 2016, the Earth's hottest on record, temperatures in the Indian town of Phalodi soared to 51 degrees Celsius, the highest recorded in India. The brutal heat can melt tarmac on the roads and puts millions of people at risk, with nearly 2,500 victims perishing from sunstroke in 2015.

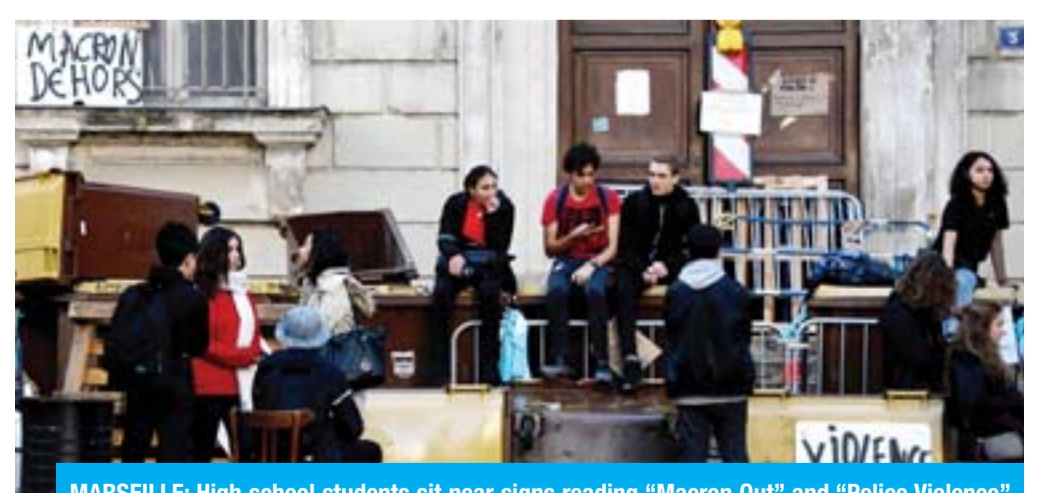
Currently just five percent of Indian households are equipped with AC compared to 90 percent in the United States

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Macron retreats on fuel tax hikes to calm protests

PARIS: The French government yesterday backed down on planned fuel tax hikes in a bid to draw the heat out of fierce protests that have escalated into the deepest crisis of Emmanuel Macron's presidency. The concessions, coming after an earlier 500-million-euro (\$570 million) relief package for poorer households, mark the first time 40-year-old Macron has given ground in the face of public opposition.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced rollbacks on fuel taxes and electricity price increases in a rare televised address after France was rocked by intense street clashes and vandalism in Paris over the weekend. "This anger, you would have to be deaf and blind not to see it, nor hear it," Philippe said after more than a fortnight of demonstrations by so-called "yellow vest" protesters. "No tax merits putting the unity of



MARSEILLE: High school students sit near signs reading "Macron Out" and "Police Violence" as they block an entrance of Thiers High School during a protest against French government education reforms yesterday. — AFP

the nation in danger," he said. Planned tax increases on petrol and diesel on Jan 1 will be suspended for six months, he said, while hikes in regulated electricity and gas prices will also be frozen during the winter. Pressure has been mounting on the government after protests degenerated into the

worst street clashes in central Paris in decades, leading to scores of injuries and arrests. For weeks Macron held his ground on the fuel taxes, which finance anti-pollution policies but which critics say unfairly weigh on drivers in rural and small-town France.

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Local

Govt officials to be punished for unimplemented e-services

Bodies assigned to speed up Jaber Hospital's management

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan briefed the cabinet during its weekly meeting on Monday about the level of e-services in the public sector, and the government sought to address shortcomings either through solving hurdles or punishing officials failing to meet expectations.

In the meantime, the cabinet assigned Public Investment Authority and Ministries of Health and Finance to speed up process for appointing a management of Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's Hospital by September 2019. State departments should complete financial and technical measures to select "a strategic partner and international operator" to manage the hospital, a statement by the cabinet said.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended and patronized last on Wednesday the opening of Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital. The main building of the hospital consists of five towering 10-stories structures built on a 220,000 square meters area. The hospital bed capacity reached around 1,168 with 36 operation rooms, a medical center, a helipad, and a parking lot accommodating some 5,000 vehicles. The cabinet, meanwhile, welcomed a 1.5 million Kuwaiti Dinars donation by Hind Abdullah Al-Shalfan to establish a hospital to be named after Amnah Abdullah Al-Shalfan.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the cabinet's weekly meeting. — KUNA

Deep sorrow

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, who chaired the meeting, expressed deep sorrow and sympathy over the demise of 41st US President George Bush. His Highness Sheikh Jaber recalled Bush's principled and historic stands, including his swift rejection to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990, noting on the decisive and critical decisions taken by the US administration under Bush leadership, in addition to his role in forming an international

coalition and through a UN mandate to liberate Kuwait. His Highness Sheikh Jaber expressed his utmost sorrow and condolences to the American people on Bush's demise, on behalf of Kuwait and its people.

On another topic, His Highness the Premier congratulated UAE on its 47th national day and expressed best wishes to UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Vice President, Prime Minister and Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashed Al-Maktoum, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme

Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, and to all members of UAE Higher council and to the Emirate people. His Highness Sheikh Jaber expressed best wishes and prosperity to UAE leadership and people. On another front, His Highness Sheikh Jaber congratulated Mexico on the swearing-in of new President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, wishing him success on his new post, and more enhance bilateral relations between the two countries. — KUNA

Health minister places focus on elderly care

SHARM EL-SHEIKH: It is imperative to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field of elderly care, Kuwait's Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said yesterday. Kuwait has laid out an intricate elderly care plan after 'careful examination' of demographic and social statistics on people approaching the latter stages of their lives, he said on the sidelines of a meeting bringing together ministers of health and social affairs from across the Arab region.

Citing national statistics, he revealed that the elderly account for four percent of Kuwait's population, saying that research over elderly care is highly encouraged. Much progress has also been made on the legislative front in Kuwait, with recent laws enacted to further reinforce care for the elderly, the minister explained. He went on to



Dr Hind Al-Sabeeh



Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah

thank the Arab League for their 'excellent efforts' to ensure that elderly care forms an integral part of their healthcare systems.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh emphasized importance of the joint meeting between the Arab health and social affairs ministers. Sabeeh, head of the 37th Session of GCC commission of social affairs, said that the joint meeting ended

with a scheduled substantive meeting of the two councils under the title 'Multidimensional Social Protection Policies in Conflict and Conflict-Affected Arab States.' She anticipated for all Arab countries to cohesively work towards a substantial radical development. For UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda in Kuwait, Arab leaders in 2015 signed several papers, she added.

In her keynote speech at the meeting, Sabeeh expressed gratitude to Tunisia for preparing a draft joint strategy for supporting the elderly, in coordination with the United Nations and its agencies. Minister Sabeeh has observed that there has been noticeable increase of the number of old people in the Arab world, largely due to modern health care.

On Somalia, the minister noted that the top Arab leaders, during the latest summit, applauded an initiative by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to organize a donation conference to support education in this African nation. There are other issues that are of common concern for both the ministers of health and social affairs: such as the plight of the displaced, namely the relocated Iraqis, she said. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri meets with officials from the Ministry of Information and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters. — KUNA

Kuwait important intellectual hub in Arab world: Minister

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri stressed yesterday the importance of Kuwait's role as a beacon for cultural enlightenment in the Arab world.

Jabri made his remarks during a meeting with officials from the Ministry of Information and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, on the occasion of the end of the 43rd Kuwait International Book Fair. He pointed out to choosing 'Quds', Arabic for Jerusalem, as theme of the fair, reflects the history of Kuwait in supporting the

Palestinian cause and keeping it present in the minds of Arabs and Muslims, praising the efforts made in organizing the exhibition and its success.

He added that the outstanding cultural achievements were under the guidance of the high political leadership represented by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Kuwait to assure safety of people with special needs

NEW YORK: Kuwait assured yesterday that there are several steps to be taken in order to assure the safety of people with special needs from armed conflicts. Kuwait's permanent representative at the United Nations (UN) Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi affirmed during the session of the UN's Security Council the importance of fulfilling all the decisions of the council to achieve the security of civilians.

Otaibi invited all organizations affiliated with people with special challenges to partic-

ipate in executing strategic plans in preserving peace and set the guidelines to achieve the goal of the strong cooperation between the UN, its specialized agencies, active entities and local partnerships. "We understand that all governments, donors and specialized relief agencies are swamped in their work during armed conflicts, but we must insure the rights of challenged people in providing them with the necessary supplies and aid without any discrimination as part of the human crisis respond plan," Otaibi said.

"The international Community celebrated yesterday The International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and more than one billion people around the world suffer from various disabilities, that's more than 15 percent of the population, and in the 13th of December the world will celebrate the 12th anniversary of the approving the agreement that assures the

rights of people with disabilities which was approved by 170 countries, including Kuwait," Otaibi added.

Otaibi noted that the agreement states that all concerned parties are obliged by International Law, International Humanitarian Law and International Law for Human Rights to take all necessary measures to guarantee the safety of the handicapped people in case of gun conflicts, human emergencies or natural crisis. "People who suffer from rare disabilities are more likely to be exposed to danger especially during the time of conflict and violence where the challenges they face are harder in finding water, food and refuge," Otaibi continued. He concluded his speech by highlighting the situation of children with special needs during the time of conflicts and their needs that are not taken into consideration when providing aid. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Lt Gen Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah yesterday visited the ministry's information technology and communications department, where he was briefed on the latest systems and projects as well as plans to improve capabilities of staff at the department.



Adam Al-Mulla



Sheikh Mubarak Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

UNESCO hosts Sheikh Jaber empowerment award

PARIS: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) hosted an award ceremony on Monday for its joint Kuwait-funded prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, named after the late Amir Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Disabled rights activist Vashkar Bhattacharjee of Bangladesh was awarded the individuals' prize going to Chinese web programmers, Tencent.

In his remarks at the event, Sheikh Mubarak Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said Kuwait, led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, is committed to UNESCO's efforts in support of disabled persons. Kuwait's

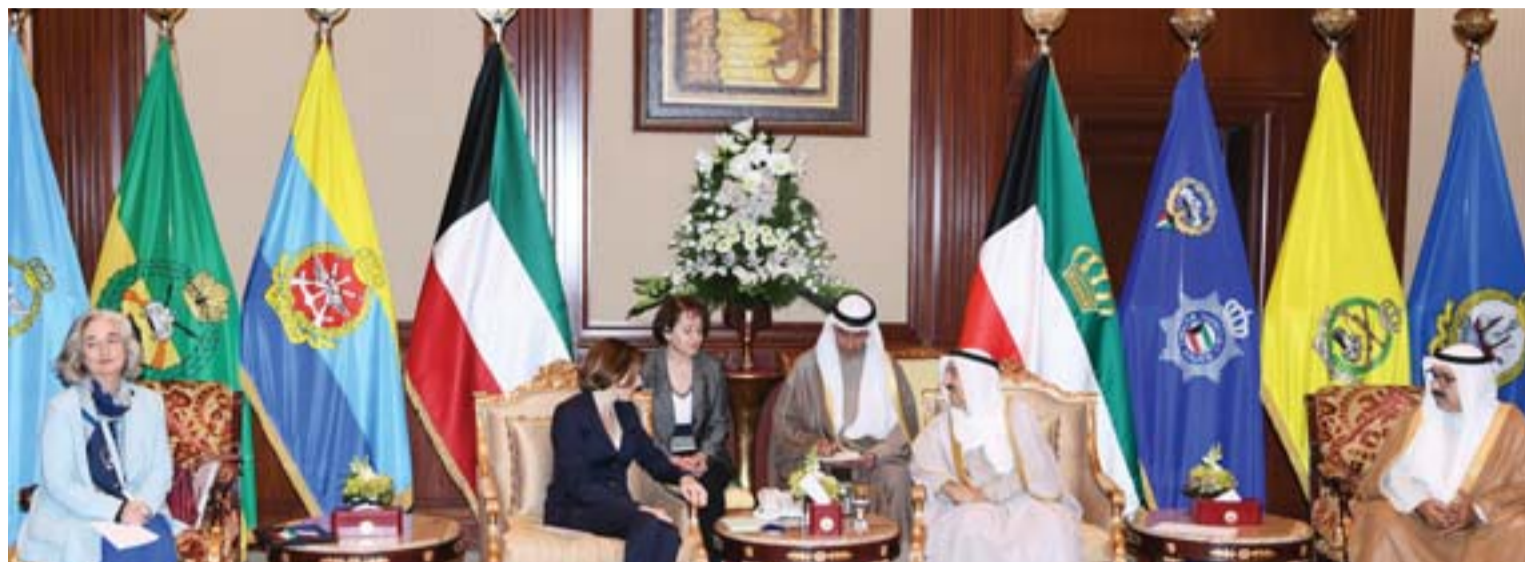
UNESCO representative Adam Al-Mulla said the prize's importance stems from its noble goals to encourage the integration of the disabled community into the rest of society. Speaking about the prize, he said it aims to break down barriers faced by disabled learners in obtaining knowledge via the digital world.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Education and Minister Higher Education's representative Undersecretary Bader Al-Mutairi said the ministry is committed to embracing the disabled community in Kuwait, granting them the right to education alongside their able-bodied counterparts. This includes providing fully-equipped schools catering to all forms of disability. — KUNA

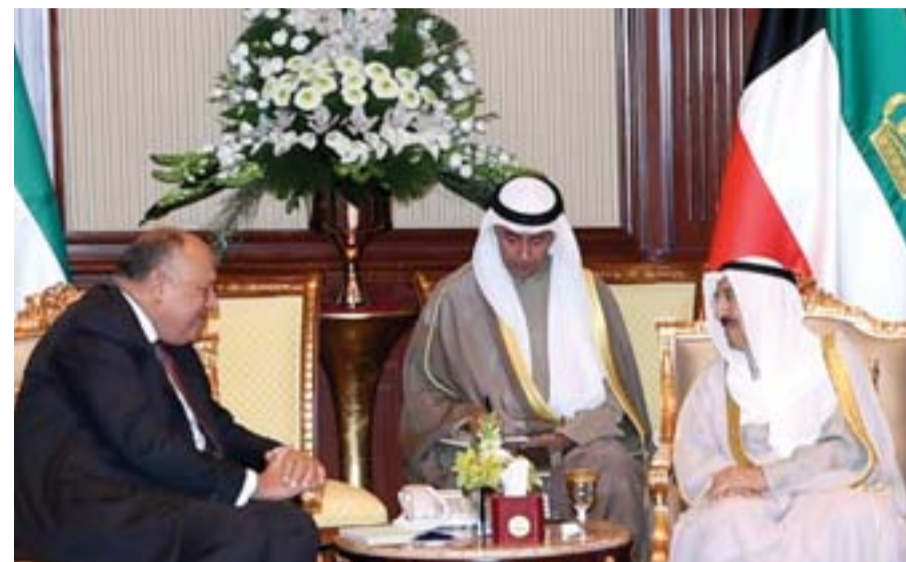
Local

Amir meets French Armed Forces Minister, receives letter from Macron

Sheikh Sabah receives Saudi Royal Court Advisor, Egyptian Foreign Minister



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the French Minister of the Armed Forces Florence Parly, in presence of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy.— Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and French Minister of the Armed Forces Florence Parly as she handed over a written letter to His Highness the Amir from French President Emmanuel Macron on bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries and ways of strengthening them.

Parly said that the Kuwaiti-French relations are improving in various fields. "The relationship between Kuwait and France is very deep and is improving year after year. We had a very massive military exercise called 'Pearl of The West' which finished a few days ago. And it was extremely demanding but very successful, it shows how deep the relationship is," Minister Parly said. "We discussed with my colleague about many projects Kuwait and

France have developed in the industrial corporation on the military side and we would like very much to improve it. There are many projects and we are very confident in our ability to conclude such projects," she pointed out.

"It is my first visit here in Kuwait and I was extremely glad for the warm hospitality of the Kuwait authorities that was provided to the French delegation and we look forward to welcome the Minister of Defense in France very soon," Minister Parly said. "We intend to develop even further the relationship between the military staffs and of course we look forward to continuing to train the Kuwaiti cadets," she noted.

Kuwait-Saudi relations

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Saudi Royal Court Advisor Prince Turki Bin Mohammad Al-Saud. During the meeting, he handed over a letter to His

Highness the Amir from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries and ways of strengthening them.

His Highness the Amir also received Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry as he handed over a written letter to His Highness the Amir from Egypt's President AbdelFatah Al-Sisi on bilateral relations between the two countries and latest regional and international developments. Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah also attended the meetings.

National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received the visiting Egyptian minister. Senior officials attended the two separate meetings.— KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Saudi Royal Court Advisor Prince Turki Bin Mohammad Al-Saud.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Mansour Fehaid Al-Ajmi.

Crown Prince hosts Deputy Chief of National Guard

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He also hosted Mansour Fehaid Al-Ajmi,

who awarded His Highness a collection of his latest works, including a documentary about His Highness' accomplishments and highlights of his life.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is set to

attend and patronize today the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science's (KFAS) Prizes for Scientific Achievements and Contributions. The event will be held in Salwa Al-Sabah's Hall at 10:30 am.— KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with French Minister of the Armed Forces Florence Parly.



French Minister of the Armed Forces Florence Parly is seen with Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah after awarding him the French 'National Order of the Legion of Honor' yesterday.

Parly meets Defense Minister, National Guard Deputy Chief

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah defended yesterday at Bayan Palace French Minister of the Armed Forces Florence Parly. The two sides discussed issues of mutual interest, mainly topics related to the military field, the Ministry of Defense's Moral Guidance Department said in a statement, noting that Sheikh Nasser hailed the deep bilateral relations

between Kuwait and France. Minister Parly extended an invitation to her Kuwaiti counterpart to visit France.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the visiting French Minister at the National Guard's headquarters. During the reception, Minister Parly awarded Sheikh Meshaal the French 'National

Order of the Legion of Honor,' the highest French order of merit for military and civil merits, in recognition of his contributions in building strong ties between Kuwait and France throughout their history. Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy and other officials attended the meeting, the National Guard said in a statement.

Speaker, Foreign Minister host French delegation

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received yesterday a delegation representing the French Senate, headed by Chairman of the French-Gulf Friendship Committee Senator Jean Bockel. The two sides discussed means of cementing bilateral relations at the parliamentary level. A number of MPs and the French ambassador attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Bockel and his accompanying delegation. The two sides discussed the historic and solid ties between the State of Kuwait and the friendly Republic of France, means of reinforcing the cooperation and coordination at various levels. A number of ministry officials and the French ambassador attended the meeting. The French delegation arrived in Kuwait on Sunday on a four-day official visit.

Also yesterday, Speaker Ghanem received at his office a Jordanian media and journalists' delegation currently on an official visit to the country — led by head of Jordanian journalists union Rakan Al-Saaidah. The Jordanian delegation also includes the Director General of Jordanian News Agency (PETRA) Mohammad Al-Omari, Jefra's website Editor in Chief Nedal Fara'ne, Al-Dustour newspaper's Editor in Chief Mustafa Riyalat, beside other journalists. The meeting was attended by MPs Mubarak Al-Harees, Abdullah Al-Enezi and Ali Al-Degbasi, as well as Assistant Undersecretary for Media Affairs at the Ministry of Information Faisal Al-Metlegim, and Director of Arab Countries Media at the Ministry, Lulwah Al-Salem.

Separately, Kuwait's Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf held talks yesterday with Uzbekistan's deputy foreign minister Dilshod Akhatov, focusing on bilateral trade and economic relations. The meeting comes ahead of joint Kuwaiti and Uzbek ministerial committee's talks scheduled for June of next year, the Kuwaiti finance ministry said in a statement. Amid their encounter, the officials discussed what more Uzbekistan can do to lure much needed foreign investment, in addition to the agenda for the forthcoming talks, the statement added.

In other news, Iraqi Minister of Trade Mohammad Al-Ani expressed during his meeting with Kuwaiti Ambassador Salem Al-Zamanan yesterday his country's desire to increase the economic ties between Iraq and Kuwait. The Ministry of Trade said in a release that Minister Ani discussed during the meeting with the Kuwaiti Ambassador ways of strengthening the economic ties and means of boosting commercial exchange between the two countries.

Minister Ani stressed on the importance of activating ongoing deals between the two sides in light of the need of having a vision that is based on cooperation and interaction in several fields. He also noted Iraq's need in investing in the private sector of Kuwait and building new partnerships with the private sector. Ambassador Zamanan showed Kuwait's willingness in developing the bilateral ties in all fields.— KUNA

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: People fishing at Kuwait Towers' pier. — Photo by Tareq Al-Husaini (KUNA)

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Homicide probe in Salmy desert woman's death

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Detectives are investigating the case of a woman whose body was found in the Salmy desert, while preliminary investigations indicate that she was killed. Detectives were unable to identify the victim since her fingerprints were not found in the database, which led them to believe that she could have either been a visitor or someone who stayed illegally in the country. A citizen had called police to report that he had found a dead body in the desert. The woman, believed to be in her thirties, was wearing pants and a shirt, with her throat slashed. The body was recovered by the coroner.

Ardhiya house fire

Ardhiya and Jleeb firemen yesterday rushed to a

house in Ardhiya where a family of seven was trapped due to a fire on the third floor. The family was rescued and the fire put out. No injuries were reported. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the fire.

Attempted murder

A citizen working in a vehicle technical inspection department in Nuwaiseeb became enraged when his superior refused to sign a leave request, and pulled a knife and threatened to stab him, Al-Rai reported yesterday. Colleagues broke up the fight between them. The superior went to Nuwaiseeb police station and lodged a complaint. An attempted murder charge was registered against the employee and detectives arrested him.

Smuggling foiled

An Egyptian man was arrested in Abdaly for attempting to smuggle in 1.5 kg of shabu in exchange of KD 1,000. He was sent to the Drug Control General Department (DCGD), where he explained his actions by saying "the devil is smart". The suspect was to deliver the drug to a person in Kuwait, who was supposed to call him, reported Al-Rai.

Shuwaikh police arrest license plate thief

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Shuwaikh detectives arrested a Palestinian man who stole vehicles' license plates and used them on his vehicle while ripping off various garages, where he usually had expensive tires fixed and then used to speed off without paying for them. A security source said seven similar cases had been filed against the suspect, who often changed his vehicle's license plate number to avoid being identified. The sources added that the suspect was ambushed and arrested after committing the eighth robbery. He confessed and led police to a large number of the new tires that had not yet been sold, in addition to the stolen license plate numbers he had been using.

New machines

Kuwait Municipality's acting deputy director for Hawally and Ahmadi affairs Faisal Al-Jumaa said that new machines had been added to the new cleaning contracts. Responding to an inquiry by Municipal Council member Mohammed Al-Raqeeb, Jumaa said three contracts had been signed to provide cleaning services in Hawally governorate, adding that the new contracts include adding GPS devices, fingerprint systems for workers, suction devices, tow trucks and new heavy machinery. Jumaa stressed that all cleaning companies should regularly clean garbage containers and replace those broken with new ones. He also noted that according to the contracts signed with the companies, garbage will be usually collected from midnight until 8 am.

Neutral committee

Minister of Public Works Hossam Al-Roumi decided to form a new neutral committee to investigate the violations recently committed in the tenders signed by the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation (PART), said informed sources. The sources added that the committee

had been formed upon recommendations made by the primary investigation committee that discovered serious violations in tender numbers 242, 260, 257, 243 and 266, including changing the documents of qualification and of assessing the participating companies.

3,466 kg of expired beef confiscated

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The food and nutrition section at Kuwait airport confiscated and destroyed 11 cartons of chilled Australian beef weighing 3,466 kg, said the section manager Ali Al-Khanfour, noting that the shipment had been expired for 70 days.

Kuwaitization

The private sector employees' union's secretary Jamal Al-Fadhli stressed the union's keenness on nationalizing all private sector jobs, namely in co-op societies. Fadhli added that the policy set and followed by HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Social Affairs Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh in Kuwaitizing co-ops staff is very clear and that the union protects the rights of citizens working for the private sector.

Camping

Municipal Council member and head of Ahmadi committee Fuhaid Fahd Al-Muwaizri urged the Municipality's executive body to allow pitching tents outside citizens' houses during the current camping season, which has been postponed until further notice following the recent heavy rain and the floods that exposed a number of landmines left over by the invading Iraqi army.

Local

Kuwaiti plane airlifts Houthis from Sanaa to Stockholm: Deputy FM

Kuwaiti-Japanese trade volume massive: Jarallah



Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Takashi Ashiki welcomes Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah.



Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Takashi Ashiki delivers a speech.

KUWAIT: A delegation from the Houthi rebels was scheduled to board a Kuwaiti plane from Sanaa to Stockholm yesterday to participate in UN-sponsored Yemen talks in Sweden, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said on Monday. Kuwait's Ambassador to Yemen was set to accompany the Houthi delegation, Jarallah told reporters at a reception held by Japan's embassy to celebrate the birthday of the Emperor of Japan.

Jarallah hoped the talks would succeed and would pave way for a solution of the crisis in Yemen. Earlier on Monday, the visiting Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom touted the significant role played by Kuwait in resolving all regional causes, saying the world looks forward to Kuwait's relevant efforts. "Kuwait already plays a historic role in the region advocating for peaceful solutions, for dialogue, and contacts and I think that has become an even more important role as the world looks today and of course surrounded by big and powerful neighbors but still being able to keep up that objective of creating dialogue," she said to reporters after meeting His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Trade volume

Meanwhile, Jarallah said that the trade volume between Kuwait and Japan is massive, affirming keenness to enhance it and open new prospects of bilateral cooperation in investment, energy, and environment fields. Japan provides Kuwait with top-quality consultative services in environment and supervises environmental projects in the country voluntarily, he said, recalling Tokyo's unforgettable \$13 million donation to support the liberation of Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion in 1990.

The Kuwaiti minister also mentioned his country's \$5 million support to Tokyo to deal with the aftermath of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. There are constant high-level visits between officials of both countries, as well as a permanent communication between Kuwait and Japan leaderships, he said.

In the meantime, Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Takashi Ashiki said that his country is ranked Kuwait's third biggest trade partner and Kuwait is Japan's third crude supplier. "Trade exchanges between both countries continue to hit new records year after year," he said. "We hope Japanese companies would continue to play significant role in Kuwait's infrastructure development."

"I have witnessed the amazingly increasing interest of Kuwait youths in Japanese Pop Culture," the



KUWAIT: Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Takashi Ashiki (left) and Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah cut the cake during the reception. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

“ Japan is Kuwait's third biggest trade partner ”

Ambassador went on. "Japan attaches great importance to other areas of cooperation with Kuwait in addition to business relations; I hereby invite Kuwaiti citizens and expats to visit Japan and get to know more about our culture, especially on the occasions of the '2020 Olympics' in Tokyo and 2025 Expo in Osaka. We look forward to welcoming you in Japan."



Diplomats and other dignitaries in attendance.



Guests in a group photo.

Food bank sponsors 1,000 orphans

KUWAIT: Kuwait Food Bank has launched a large-scale project to meet the needs of more than 1,000 orphans in Kuwait and abroad, which includes sponsorship and food aid. The endeavor also entails comprehensive healthcare free of charge, in addition to providing the children with household necessities, the Kuwait-based charity said in a statement yesterday.

Urging avid philanthropists in the country to contribute to the project, the organization's director general Salem Al-Hamar said the primary objective is to lift the hapless kids out of penury. He went on to extol the merits of orphanage, saying it was among the most generous of deeds, encouraging the general public to visit the charity's website at www.kuwaitfoodbank.org for more information on the project. — KUNA

ALAFCO, SAS reach deal

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Aviation Lease and Finance Company (ALAFCO) has signed a 10-year deal with the Scandinavian region's national carrier SAS to lease a quintet of aircraft from the Airbus A320 family. ALAFCO expects to receive the first airliner out of five by April of next year, the aircraft-leasing company's deputy chairman and CEO Ahmad Al-Zaben said in a statement. The deal will prove instrumental in propelling the local aviation sector to new heights, he said. The Kuwait-based company engages in aircraft leasing and provides management, marketing and consultancy services to the aviation industry. — KUNA

Expert calls for greater investment in energy resources

KUWAIT: Chief Executive Officer at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Nizar Al-Adsani called yesterday for developing and investing in all energy resources to meet future demand however he cautioned greater consumption must be coupled with cutting emissions. Adsani's statement came during a ceremony marking issuance of the 2018 oil forecast report, released by the International Energy Agency (IEA), hosted by Kuwait.

The IEA and OPEC are working together for a stable energy world, he has said, affirming that the global energy scene has become much more coherent, where the producers and consumers have become partners, rather than foes. The IEA was established in 1974 to aid consuming nations to act as "a collective coalition, but today, it turned into an active partner seeking better understanding of the markets," Adsani said.

Meanwhile, Khaled Mahdi, the secretary general of the secretariat general of the supreme planning council, said the state development strategy is primarily designed for serving projects in the oil sector. In turn, the KPC strategy till 2040 focuses on diverse and manufactured products. Kuwait's oil sector is witnessing execution of a number of strategic projects, namely the environmentally friendly fuel, he said, affirming the serious approach toward producing natural gas, at the national level.

Usama Al-Sabbagh, the executive manager at the center of energy research at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, expressed his belief that the demand for oil would not grow, amid abundant supplies of competitive materials namely shale oil.

Another eminent attendant, Dr Tareq Al-Sheikh, the resident coordinator of the UN bureau, said the UN is diligently seeking to ensure low costs for energy by 2030, in addition to increasing renewable energy and efficiency of energy harnessing. The Arab region is rich not only in oil and natural gas but also in solar energy, however many of the Arab countries have been moving at turtle's speed on the path of developing renewable energy. — KUNA

Kuwait among top global humanitarian donors: German official

KUWAIT: Director of the Humanitarian Assistance at the German Federal Foreign Office, Thomas Zahneisen said that Kuwait is considered one of the most important countries in the field of humanitarian donations. During a luncheon held at the German Embassy in Kuwait, Zahneisen expressed his country's readiness to cooperate with Kuwait on the humanitarian field.

A meeting was held with the International Islamic Charitable Organization (IICO) with the promise of continuing coordination to unify visions and efforts in humanitarian work, he proceeded. Germany, which is now one of the top donating countries with humanitarian aids reached 1.5 billion Euros, is closely monitoring the humanitarian situation in Syria, Yemen, Africa, and Palestine, he noted.

On the other hand, he referred to the Kuwait and German contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) with 50 million Euros for each, stressing the fact that both countries are working from a humanitarian prospective not a political one.

As for the Syrian refugees, Zahneisen said that his country and Kuwait were both interested in finding a solution for this case through helping the refugees either by providing them with the necessary supplies, or helping those who want to return to their homeland. With regard to the Yemeni issue, Thomas Zahneisen pointed out that the situation in Yemen needed a political solution by getting all parties involved back into negotiation. — KUNA



Press release announcing the winner of Chaillot Prize - 2018

The Delegation of the European Union in Kuwait

is pleased to mark the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by announcing that the Winner of the Chaillot Prize for the Promotion of Human Rights in the GCC region in 2018 is

LOYAC.

The Chaillot Prize is awarded to this organisation in order to acknowledge and further encourage their remarkable efforts and work for the promotion and protection of human rights, especially for the empowerment of youth, women and marginalised persons, in the State of Kuwait. The awarding ceremony will take place in Kuwait, in December, 2018.

The Chaillot Prize is presented annually by the Delegation of the European Union in Riyadh (responsible for relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Bahrain, State of Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman and State of Qatar), in co-operation with the Delegation of the European Union to the United Arab Emirates and the Embassies of the European Union Member States to GCC countries, to civil society organisations and public or private institutions for actions, campaigns and projects which support human rights awareness, promotion and protection in the GCC region. The Prize is named after the Palais de Chaillot in Paris where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 December 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly.



Italian police arrest Mafia boss in Sicily

Walking, talking and separated: Conjoined twins go home

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BEIRUT: A Lebanese protester holds up a picture of a malnourished child being weighed in Yemen, during a demonstration outside the Saudi embassy in the capital Beirut against the Saudi-led coalition's war in Yemen and the worsening humanitarian situation in the south Arabian country. — AFP

Yemen humanitarian crisis to worsen

Nearly 150,000 migrants arrive in war-torn Yemen

GENEVA: The humanitarian crisis in Yemen, already the world's worst, will deteriorate in 2019, the UN said yesterday, warning that the number of people needing food aid is set to jump by four million. The grim forecast for the embattled country came as the United Nations humanitarian office OCHA released its projected needs assessments for next year. "The country with the biggest problem in 2019 is going to be Yemen," OCHA chief Mark Lowcock told reporters in Geneva. He said that in 2017, the UN was providing food assistance to three million people a month.

That figure rose to eight million per month this year and is expected to hit 12 million in 2019, Lowcock added. The crisis in Yemen spiraled after a Saudi-led coalition launched an offensive to support the government against Iran-backed Houthi rebels in March of 2015. The situation has worsened in recent months due to a broad economic collapse and rising violence in the rebel-held port of Hodeida, a crucial import hub for food and other basic supplies.

Lowcock said the UN is asking for \$4 billion (3.5 billion euros) to help suffering Yemenis next year. Overall, 24 million people in Yemen—roughly 75 percent of the population—will need humanitarian assistance in 2019. Lowcock noted that the government will also need additional budget support from other countries to pay salaries and pensions in order to contain wider suffering. He indicated that some of Yemen's allies in the Gulf, notably Saudi Arabia have committed to continue help-

ing finance the government.

The OCHA chief stressed however that the outlook for Yemen could improve if progress is made at UN-brokered peace talks, set to begin in Sweden this month. If the talks show results, "it is possible that we could find by the second half of the year that the extreme edge could get taken off the suffering of those people who have no form of income," Lowcock said, while noting that diplomatic gains were difficult to predict. "The appeal we are making is based on our assessment of what the situation will actually be, rather than wishful thinking about what we would all like it to be," he added.

150,000 migrants arrive

Meanwhile, a growing number of migrants are flocking to Yemen, even as its dire humanitarian crisis deepens, with nearly 150,000 expected to arrive in the war-ravaged country in 2018, the UN said yesterday. Yemen remains a major stop on the route for migrants from Africa to wealthy Gulf states, and smugglers are taking advantage of the chaos of the war to evade security checks, the International Organization for Migration said.

It forecast that migrant arrivals to Yemen would

swell 50 percent this year compared to some 100,000 people who arrived in the devastated country in 2017. "We are confident in forecasting migration arrivals to Yemen, a country at war, will reach about 150,000 people this year," IOM spokesman Joel Millman told reporters in Geneva. He described it as "extraordinary and alarming" that so many people were "crossing a dangerous war zone."

Yemen's conflict, which erupted in late 2014, has brought the impoverished country to the brink of famine, and the UN has described Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

But the country remains on an established route for migrants, who typically first travel by land through Djibouti before eventually undergoing perilous boat journeys across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen. From there, they usually try to make their way to other Gulf nations, often in search of work.

IOM estimated that around 92 percent of the migrants who have entered Yemen this year are Ethiopian, while the rest are from Somalia. About 20 percent of the migrants are minors, "and many of them are unaccompanied," Millman said. Asked why there would be such a big jump in numbers at a time when

Yemen is spiralling ever deeper into despair, he said it appeared smugglers were actually using the conflict and violence "as marketing points".

Minefields and gunfire

Smugglers, he said, promise migrants an easy passage since the authorities are "way too preoccupied with the civil unrest... to properly monitor the borders." "Of course once they get there, it is a very different situation. There are minefields to cross, there are exchanges of gunfire," he said. IOM could not provide numbers on how many migrants have died trying to cross through Yemen, but Millman said 156 sea deaths had been confirmed this year on the various sea passages towards Yemen. "There is no question (the deaths) are underreported," he said.

Millman stressed that the migrant crisis in Yemen was "an emergency" on a scale that outpaces most large migrant movements in the world. For instance, he said, "the number 150,000 is considerably more, by tens of thousands, than the forecast for all seaborne irregular migration across the Mediterranean this year." In a bid to address the problem, IOM said it would be hosting a conference today in Djibouti, bringing together seven countries—Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Somalia and Yemen—aimed to "ensure urgent enhancements in the management of migratory flows to Yemen and the Gulf countries." —Agencies



'The country with biggest problem'

Hezbollah: A key player in Lebanon, the region

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Hezbollah, which Israel accused yesterday of digging cross-border "attack tunnels", has grown considerably as a domestic political player and a regional military power since its foundation three decades ago. The Israel army announced the launch of an operation dubbed "Northern Shield" to destroy the alleged tunnels.

'Resisting' Israel

Hezbollah, whose name means "Party of God" in Arabic, was founded during the Lebanese civil war after Israel overran the capital Beirut in 1982. Created at the initiative of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, the group gained its moniker as "the Resistance" by fighting Israeli troops who occupied southern Lebanon until 2000. It is the only faction to have retained its weapons after Lebanon's 15-year conflict ended in 1990.

In 2006, Israel and Hezbollah clashed in a month-long war that killed 1,200 Lebanese—mostly civilians—and 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers. UN peacekeeping force UNIFIL is supposed to monitor the border area with Israel in coordination with the Lebanese armed forces, but Hezbollah regularly showcases its military preparedness for any new war with Israel. In September, as fears grew that Iran was seeking to transfer some of its military influence from Syria to Lebanon, Hezbollah said it had successfully acquired precision missiles.

A regional force

The group intervened in Syria two years after war broke out there in 2011, providing key military backing to the Damascus regime, also an ally of Iran. Hezbollah has lost many hundreds of fighters, including senior commanders, since it deployed some of its forces in the neighboring country. It is believed to have between 5,000 and 8,000 fighters in Syria. The conflict is winding down in many parts of Syria, but the group's leader Hassan Nasrallah has said its fighters will remain until further notice. Further afield in the Middle East, the Shiite group has also supported Iran-backed groups in Iraq and Yemen. Nasrallah said last year he had sent "a large number of commanders and cadres" to help the powerful Hashed Al-Shaabi paramilitary forces battle the Islamic State jihadist group in Iraq. Hezbollah is also accused of providing weapons to pro-Iran Houthi rebels in Yemen, which the group has denied.

Yellow flags

Hezbollah was founded in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, but has since become predominant in all Shiite areas, including in the capital's southern suburbs and the south of the country near Israel. The movement runs an extensive social services network—complete with schools, hospitals and a wide range of charitable organizations. This, coupled with its branding as the party of "resistance" against Israel, means it enjoys fierce support among the country's Shiites, who make up around a third of the population. Its trademark yellow flags and huge portraits of its charismatic leader adorn areas of the country where it is popular. The group is remarkably organized but is often accused of rejecting all opposition in areas under its control.

Hezbollah in government

Hezbollah first entered parliament with the end of Lebanon's civil war and began steadily imposing itself as



KFAR KILA: Photo shows a view of the border with Israel, with Israeli vehicles driving on the right side and UN and Lebanese vehicles driving on the left. —AFP

a political player, with its first ministers in 2005. Parliamentary elections in May saw the Shiite movement and its political allies secure enough political support to ensure its military arsenal would not be challenged. With its military activities outside Lebanon potentially slowing down, the movement appears bent on converting its dominance to the domestic political arena. More than six months after the polls, observers say the failure to form a government is partly caused by the group's new insistence on a line-up that reflects its gains.

Global pressure

The United States has considered Hezbollah a "ter-

rorist" organization for years, blaming it for a series of bombings and hijackings in the 1980s, including one targeting US Marines in Beirut. The United States has targeted the party with tough sanctions, and the European Union blacklisted the group's military wing in 2013. The administration of US President Donald Trump has ramped up sanctions against Hezbollah, with its latest raft of measures last month targeting Nasrallah's son Jawad, among other individuals. Hezbollah is also accused of involvement in assassinating Lebanon's former premier Rafiq Hariri in 2005, with several of its members charged by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. — AFP

International

Malaysia seeks return of 'airspace' amid Singapore flight path dispute

Request could affect future operations at Changi hub

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has told Singapore it intends to take back control of airspace that the city-state has managed since 1974 amid a dispute over a flight path to a secondary airport in Singapore, Malaysia's transport minister said yesterday. Singapore has put in place a new instrument landing system at its small Seletar airport to be used by turboprops and business jets that involves a flight path over Malaysian airspace without its permission, Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke told parliament.

He said the flight path would lead to height limits on building development and affect shipping operations in the state of Johor on the south of the Malaysian peninsula that borders the relatively tiny island of Singapore. Malaysia refused to approve the flight path on Nov 28 and 29, Loke said, and on Nov 29 informed Singapore it planned to take back airspace over Johor, that it had delegated for management by the city-state since 1974, in phases, with the first expected around the end

of 2019 and the next phase in 2023.

"We feel that it is now the time that we regained the control of our very own airspace because over the years, we have also upgraded our air traffic control and we think we are capable of doing so," he said. "So we want to begin the process of negotiations with our Singapore counterpart." Loke did not provide details of what airspace Malaysia intended to regain in each phase. The Singapore transport ministry said in a statement in response to Loke's comments that Singapore "respects Malaysia's sovereignty".

"Airspace in this region is one of the most complex in the world... The benefits to both our economies and

our people have been tremendous.... Hence, any proposed changes will impact many stakeholders," it added. Singapore's far larger and newer Changi Airport, one of the biggest hubs in Asia, uses a portion of that airspace for departures and approaches and would not want to be reliant on Malaysian management of it, said an industry source who expected they would settle the dispute before it got to that stage.

Singapore was once part of Malaysia but they separated acrimoniously in 1965, clouding diplomatic and economic dealings for years. Ties were particularly frosty during Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's previous tenure as

prime minister, between 1981 and 2003. Since returning to office after an election this year, Mahathir has deferred a rail project with Singapore and has said he wants to renegotiate the terms of a water-sharing agreement struck in 1962.

Just hours after Loke's comments, Singapore hit back with its own territorial protest against Malaysia over Kuala Lumpur's plan to extend the limits of a port in its southern-most state. "We note with grave concern that Malaysia has recently purported to extend the Johor Bahru port limits in a manner which encroaches into Singapore Territorial Waters," it said in a separate statement. "In response, Singapore has lodged strong protest with the Malaysian Government," the transport ministry added. A Malaysian foreign ministry spokesman declined to comment on Singapore's protest, and directed queries to the transport ministry. A spokesman for Loke declined comment. — Reuters



Flight path to Seletar airport crosses Malaysia

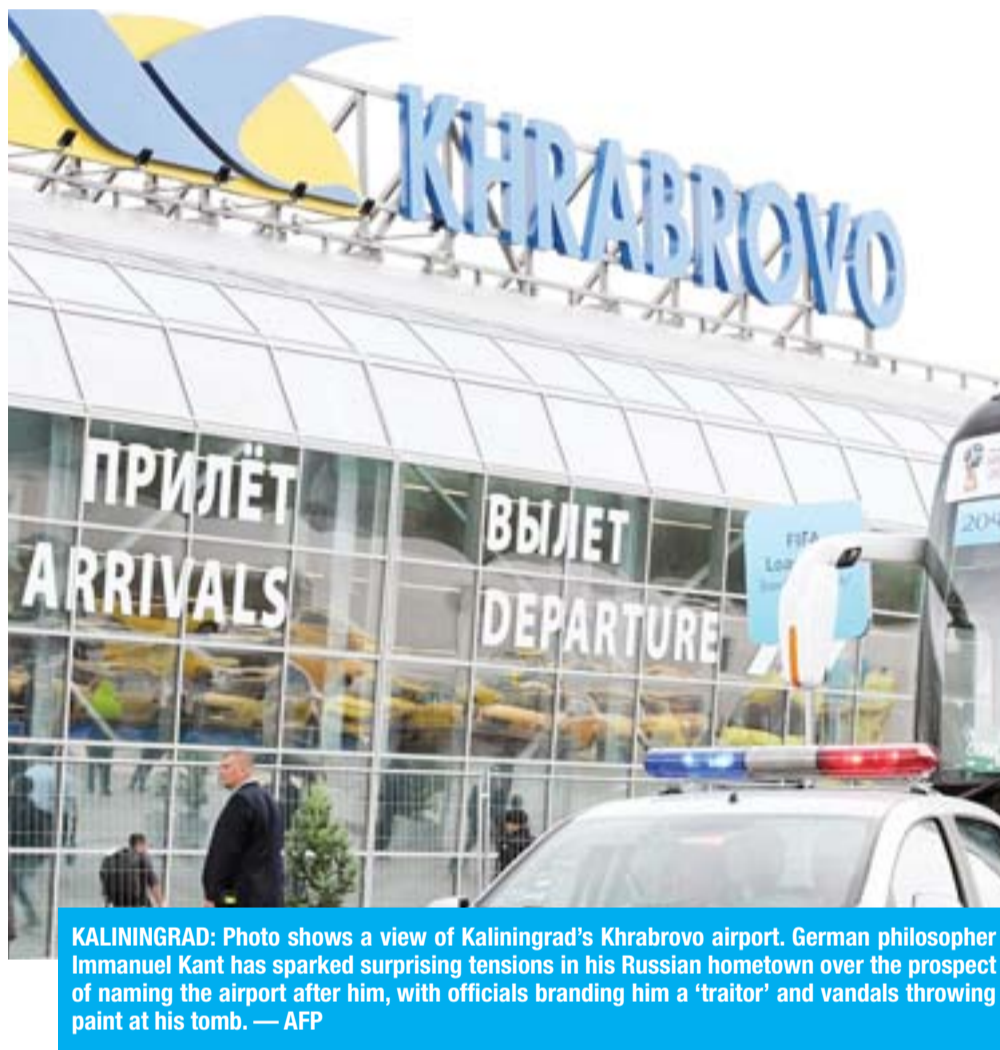
Row over 'traitor' philosopher hits Russia hometown

MOSCOW: German philosopher Immanuel Kant has sparked surprising tensions in his Russian hometown over the prospect of naming the airport after him, with officials branding him a "traitor" and vandals throwing paint at his tomb. Kant was born and spent most of his life in Prussian Königsberg, which was renamed Kaliningrad after coming under the control of the Soviet Union in the wake of World War II. Now it is Russia's westernmost city and hosted World Cup matches this year.

Until recently the philosopher was leading an online poll to choose a name for the city's airport, currently called Khrabrovo after the nearby village. This sparked a furious row with officials blasting Kant as a "Russophobe", even though there is no historical evidence that the philosopher harbored strong feelings toward the Russian Empire. In a video on regional media, a senior Russian naval officer urges servicemen to vote against Kant in the poll, saying he "betrayed his motherland."

The philosopher, a central figure in Western thought, has now sharply dropped in the rankings below Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, whose army captured the city in 1758 but abandoned it five years later. Kant, during the brief period of Russian rule, asked the empress to let him teach at the local university, but his letter was never delivered. "He demeaned himself to get a department in the university, so that he could teach and write some strange books that none of those present here today have read," says the naval officer in the video, identified by local media as Vice-Admiral Igor Mukhametshin, head of the Baltic Fleet staff.

The viral video follows other attacks on Kant in Kaliningrad, which was heavily bombarded during World War II and



KALININGRAD: Photo shows a view of Kaliningrad's Khrabrovo airport. German philosopher Immanuel Kant has sparked surprising tensions in his Russian hometown over the prospect of naming the airport after him, with officials branding him a 'traitor' and vandals throwing paint at his tomb. — AFP

almost entirely rebuilt in Soviet style while the German population was expelled. Last week, three Kant-related locations were vandalized with paint: his tomb, a monument to the philosopher and a memorial plaque commemorating the place where his house once stood. Flyers strewn around the monument expressed satisfaction that "the name of the German Kant will not tarnish our airport."

The spokesman for Kaliningrad's Gothic-style basilica, which houses Kant's tomb, said he couldn't understand the

motive behind the anti-Kant protests. "For Kaliningrad residents, for thinking people, Kant is not a citizen of any certain country, he is an individual of a planetary scope," spokesman Vladimir Silinevich said. A student at the local state university Mikhail Shipilov was questioned by police after proposing a rally in support of the philosopher on his social networking page, local news website New Kaliningrad said. A small pro-Kant picket was eventually held near the philosopher's tomb on Sunday. — AFP

Women and girls raped in South Sudan

UNITED NATIONS: More than 150 women and girls have come forward in the past 12 days to seek help in South Sudan after they were raped or suffered other forms of sexual violence, the heads of three UN agencies said Monday. Armed men, many in uniform, carried out the attacks near the northern city of Bentiu, according to a joint statement from Henrietta Fore, who heads the UN children's agency UNICEF, UN aid chief Mark Lowcock and the director of the UN Population Fund, Natalia Kanem.

The three agencies condemned "these abhorrent attacks" and called on South Sudan authorities to ensure the perpetrators face justice. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) last week said 125 women and girls had been raped while walking to emergency food distribution centers set up by international aid agencies. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres condemned the attacks. "These horrific acts are a distressing reminder of how, despite recent commitments by South Sudan's leaders to a cessation of hostilities and a revitalized peace agreement, the security situation for civilians remains dire, especially for women and children," he said in a statement.

He urged all parties to the conflict and future leaders in South Sudan "to ensure the safety of civilians and address impunity for these crimes through investigation and prosecution of perpetrators." At war since 2013, South Sudan has seen horrific levels of



MINGKAMAN, South Sudan: A Sudanese man from Dinka tribe stands in the early morning at their cattle camp in Mingkaman, Lakes State, South Sudan. — AFP

sexual violence. In the first half of 2018, some 2,300 cases were reported, the vast majority of those targeting women and girls. More than 20 percent of the victims were children, the UN statement said. The three agencies said the actual number of rapes was far higher because the violence is severely underreported.

As well as being raped, MSF said many of the victims were "whipped, beaten or clubbed with sticks and rifle butts" and robbed of their clothes, shoes, money and the ration

cards entitling them to food aid. "In more than three years of working in South Sudan, I have never seen such a dramatic increase in survivors of sexual violence arriving at our programs looking for medical care," said Ruth Okello, a MSF midwife in South Sudan. A UN panel of experts last month said in a report to the Security Council that there were "alarming levels" of sexual violence and human rights abuses in South Sudan. The council is due to discuss the crisis in South Sudan on December 18. — AFP

Turkey police detains dozens over alleged Gulen links

ANKARA: Turkish police yesterday detained nearly 140 people in nationwide raids over alleged links to the group blamed for the 2016 failed coup, state media reported. Prosecutors across the country, including in Istanbul and Ankara, issued 267 arrest warrants, according to state news agency Anadolu, as part of different investigations into followers of US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen. Police launched operations in 24 provinces including Izmir and Mugla on the Aegean coast and Ordu and Zonguldak on the Black Sea. By yesterday, 137 suspects had been detained including 55 in Istanbul as raids continued to capture others, Anadolu reported.

Ankara accuses Gulen of ordering the attempted overthrow of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on July 15, 2016 but he strongly denies the claims. Gulen, who lives in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania, and his followers stress that their movement is peaceful, promoting Islam and education. The probes include one led by

the Istanbul public prosecutor into the movement—referred to as the "Fethullah Terrorist Organisation" (FETO) — and businesses linked to Gulen. The prosecutor issued 96 detention warrants, Anadolu said.

Meanwhile, prosecutors in the Turkish capital sought the arrest of 48 individuals over their alleged use of an encrypted messaging application called ByLock, which Turkish officials claim was especially created for Gulen supporters. So far, 35 people including engineers, civil servants and individuals working in the private education sector have been detained in Ankara, the agency reported. The investigations that led to yesterday's raids also focused on Gulen followers' presence and actions inside the military.

Some of the suspects wanted were soldiers on active duty or sacked military personnel. Another 16 suspects were charged by an Istanbul court of "being a member of an armed terrorist organization", Anadolu reported yesterday. Tens of thousands of people have been arrested over suspected Gulen links since 2016. Despite criticism from activists and Ankara's Western allies expressing concern over the scale of the crackdown, the raids show no sign of slowing down. Turkish officials insist that the operations are necessary to remove the "virus" that is the Gulen movement's infiltration of key Turkish institutions. — AFP

3 migrants found after 'freezing to death' in Turkey

ANKARA: The bodies of three migrants believed to have frozen to death were found in three separate Turkish border villages, state media reported yesterday. The first body of an Afghan migrant was discovered close to the border with Greece in Serem village in the northwestern province of Edirne, state news agency Anadolu said. The two other migrants were found in nearby villages - Akcadam and Adasarhanli - days after they had died but their nationalities were not given.

Turkish officials believe the three migrants froze to death, Anadolu said, but their bodies have been sent to Istanbul for further examination. Authorities caught an Afghan man, named as Jamaluddin Malangi by Anadolu, who told reporters in Edirne that Greek police sent him back to Turkey on a boat via River Evros between Greece and Turkey. The area is a major crossing point for

refugees and migrants trying to enter the European Union.

Malangi, who claimed he knew one of the migrants found dead, said that they sought help after crossing into Greece by knocking on doors. "We wanted help and during this, someone must have called the police and the Greek police officers came and caught us. First they took us to the police station then they took us near to the river where there were two boats," Malangi said, quoted by Anadolu. "We were sent back after being put on them (the boats)" to Turkey, he added. It was not clear whether the migrants found dead were all part of the same group who entered Greece with Malangi or had separately tried to enter the EU member state.

According to Greek authorities, over 14,000 irregular entries have been recorded across the Turkish border so far this year, compared to some 5,500 in 2017. But the number of migrants coming to Europe has fallen since the 2015 peak when over a million people landed in Greece from Turkey, the majority via boats. The decline followed a deal agreed between the EU and Turkey in 2016 to stop the flow of migrants with Ankara agreeing to take migrants landing on Greek islands in exchange for incentives, including billions of euros to support refugees in Turkey. — AFP



A child stands next a tent at a makeshift camp adjacent to the Moria camp for refugees and migrants on the island of Lesbos. The islands of Lesbos and Samos, which shelter the biggest migrant camps, are both Greek. They sit just off the Turkish coast, on the eastern side of the Aegean. — AFP

International

Legal row holds up debate on contentious Brexit deal

British PM faces opposition on all sides

LONDON: British MPs yesterday debated on a highly contentious Brexit deal amid a row over the government's refusal to publish its legal advice, as a top EU court lawyer said Britain can unilaterally change its mind about leaving the bloc. May is facing opposition on all sides of the House of Commons to the withdrawal agreement she struck with the European Union last month, and it risks being rejected in a vote on December 11.

The Conservative leader opened the first of five days of debate yesterday, insisting her deal is the only option for a smooth Brexit in March. "This is the deal that delivers for the British people," May will tell MPs. "The British people want us to get on with a deal that honors the referendum and allows us to come together again as a country, whichever way we voted."

However, her speech will be delayed by a dispute over the government's refusal to publish the full legal advice on the Brexit deal, despite a resolution to that effect passed by MPs last month. The row, which could see a minister suspended from the Commons, is a reminder of how little control May's fragile minority government has over MPs ahead of next week's crucial vote. May has warned that rejecting her deal could see Britain leaving

the EU with no agreement—risking a major recession—or no Brexit at all.

Pro-European MPs pressing for a second referendum with the right to stay in the EU received a boost Tuesday from an opinion issued by a legal adviser to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). Advocate General Campos Sanchez-Bordona stated that Britain could, if it wanted, stop Brexit without the agreement of other EU countries. "That possibility continues to exist until the withdrawal agreement is formally concluded," he said. Alyn Smith, an MP from the Scottish National Party who was among those who brought the case, said: "We now have a roadmap out of the Brexit shambles."

Renegotiate Brexit?

The vote next week has huge implications for Britain's future and that of May herself. The left-wing Labour party, which rejects the deal and has raised the possibility of a second referendum, says it would likely trigger a confidence vote to bring down her government if May loses. May, who has been constantly challenged by headline eurosceptics in her own Conservative party, could also face an internal leadership contest. The 2016 referendum, in which 52 percent of Britons chose to leave the EU, was deeply divisive and there remain

“ Britain can unilaterally change its mind ”



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast shows Britain's Leader of the House of Commons Andrea Leadsom (bottom right) during the debate in the House of Commons in London yesterday. —AFP

strong feelings on both sides.

Lawmakers are just as divided. Although a large majority voted to start the Brexit process, they cannot agree on how it should end. Hardline Conservative Brexiters say May's compromise deal does not represent enough of a break with Brussels. The Democratic

Unionist Party (DUP), the Northern Ireland party propping up May's government, also objects to special provisions for the province. Many of May's critics want her to go back and renegotiate—some suggest she could do so immediately. Two days after the Brexit vote, she is due in Brussels for an EU summit. —AFP

Italian police arrest Mafia boss in Sicily

ROME: Italian police yesterday arrested new Mafia boss Settimino Mineo and dozens of other suspects in a major swoop against a resurgent Cosa Nostra. Police arrested jeweller Mineo, 80, and at least 45 others in Sicily just before he was due to be officially anointed at a reconvened Mafia Commission or Cupola, the police said. The suspects are accused of extortion, illegal gun possession, arson, Mafia association and other crimes, investigators said.

The Sicilian Mafia managed to rebuild the Cupola after it had not met for years, Italian media reported. The Cupola met in May for the first time since 1993 and was due to appoint Mineo official heir to notorious Mafia boss Toto Riina who died in prison last year. Police also arrested three other Cupola members in the swoop. The four senior Mafia leaders had all recently served prison time for their activities. Italian media reported that police obtained crucial information by tapping the phone of one of the senior arrested members, Francesco Colletti.

He reportedly told his driver about details of the May 29 Cupola meeting, describing it as "a beautiful meeting, very serious, with country people, old people." Palermo prosecutor Francesco Lo Voi told journalists that the Cupola meeting was identified thanks to phone taps and that the main topic at the meeting had been "rules." "The need to reestablish certain rules that Cosa Nostra had lost along the way, they were applied less because of the organization's overall disorganisation," Lo Voi said.

"We deduced that it was a Cupola meeting because important Cosa Nostra members... were not allowed to take part," he said. "These people, despite being heads of families, were kept outside because only regional bosses could take part." It is not known where the Cupola meeting took place, but Colletti's conversation with his driver implicated Mineo and others. Colletti reportedly rejoiced in the resurrected Cupola, which was to be an improvement on Riina's "tyranny". "We all got up and kissed," Colletti reportedly said of the end of the meeting.

Coded messages

"Forty-six arrests and one in particular, that of Settimo Mineo, represents one of the toughest blows inflicted by the State on the Mafia," said deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio. "Mineo was



SICILY: Settimino Mineo (center), jeweler and new head of the Sicilian mafia, is escorted by carabinieri as he exits a police station after his arrest, in Palermo yesterday. —AFP

indeed elected 'heir' to Toto Riina after his death. There is no longer room for this scum in Italy," Di Maio wrote on Facebook. Lifelong Mafia member Mineo was arrested as part of investigations by judge and prosecutor Giovanni Falcone in 1984 and imprisoned for five years.

Falcone was murdered in a massive car bombing in 1992. Mineo was rearrested in 2006 and imprisoned for another 11 years. Mineo survived a 1992 ambush that killed

his brother Giuseppe, around six months after another brother, Antonino, was murdered outside the family jewelry shop. Italian police in March arrested 11 suspected gangsters accused of aiding and abetting senior mob fugitive Matteo Messina Denaro. Hunted by police since 1993, Denaro, 56, was also considered to be a successor to Riina and fellow boss Bernardo Provenzano, who himself died recently in prison. —AFP

To the tower! UK government faces contempt motion

LONDON: The British government yesterday faces a parliamentary motion of contempt over its failure to publish the full legal advice it has received on the Brexit deal. The rarely-used procedure could ultimately lead to the suspension of a government minister and in the past has resulted in expulsion or even imprisonment. Here are some details about the process:

What is contempt?

Contempt of privilege is a term used to describe any act or failure to act that may hinder or block the work of parliament.

What is happening now?

On November 13, a motion tabled by the main opposition Labour party passed the House of Commons demanding ministers immediately publish "any legal advice in full" on the Brexit deal struck with the EU. The government on Monday published a legal position paper, but said it was convention for ministers not to publish the full advice because it might contain sensitive details. Labor, backed by other opposition parties and the government's Northern Irish allies, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), tabled a motion declaring the government in contempt. Speaker John Bercow agreed "there is an arguable case that a contempt has been committed" and set aside time for a discussion starting yesterday. The government has tabled an amendment to the motion in an attempt to delay the process, which if passed would refer the question to the Commons' Committee of Privileges.

The possible sanctions

MPs can be suspended from the House of Commons for a variety of infractions, and this could be the fate of Attorney General Geoffrey Cox or other ministers. The ultimate sanction is expulsion but this has not happened since 1947, in the case of Garry Allighan, MP for Gravesend in Kent, southern England. —AFP

Pompeo defends US policy, slams China, Russia and Iran

BRUSSELS: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo mounted a staunch defense of US foreign policy yesterday, arguing that Washington is building a world order to fight cynical abuses by Russia, China and Iran. On a visit to Brussels, the former CIA chief took aim at European critics who accuse the US of undermining global institutions, insisting that President Donald Trump is restoring America's traditional leadership role.

He urged US allies to join Trump's efforts and to assess honestly whether bodies like the World Trade Organization, the International Criminal Court and the International Monetary Fund are serving their citizens. "Bad actors have exploited our lack of leadership for

their own gain," Pompeo told a gathering of diplomats in the European capital, ahead of talks at NATO. "This is the poisoned fruit of American retreat. President Trump is determined to reverse that." Pompeo's speech came as NATO foreign ministers meet to discuss the latest tensions with Moscow, after a naval clash between Russia and Ukraine and with a landmark Cold War arms control treaty hanging by a thread.

A US decision to pull out of the 1987 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty in response to Russian violations has prompted accusations that Washington is weakening a bulwark of European security. But Pompeo said that Washington was simply taking action to either improve or terminate agreements that were outdated or did not work. "The first two years of the Trump administration demonstrate that President Trump is not undermining these institutions nor is he abandoning American leadership. Quite the opposite," Pompeo argued. "We are rallying the noble nations of the world to build a new liberal order that prevents war and achieves greater prosperity for all." —AFP



BRUSSELS: NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (left) and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (center) talk with Denmark's Minister for Foreign Affairs Anders Samuelsen during a NATO Foreign Ministers meeting at the NATO headquarters in Brussels yesterday. —AFP

News in brief

Shopping mall explosion

KUALA LUMPUR: Three people were killed and 24 injured yesterday when a powerful explosion rocked a shopping mall in the Malaysian state of Sarawak, but a fire official said it was not caused by a bomb. The official Bernama news agency said the blast could have been caused by a leaking gas tank. Wan Abdul Mubin, head of the fire rescue department in the state capital Kuching said his office received an emergency call at around 0737 GMT. "We scrambled 39 officers to the scene. We are investigating the cause of the explosion. It is one of the worst tragedies in the state in years. But it is not a bomb," he said. "We recovered the bodies of three men. And we have helped in the evacuation of 24 people injured to the nearby public hospital," he added. Wan Abdul said the explosion happened near a store on the ground floor of the shopping mall that was undergoing renovation. —AFP

Peacekeepers 'abuse' boy

JOHANNESBURG: Eleven South African soldiers have been convicted of mistreating a teenage boy during a UN peacekeeping deployment to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the military said in a statement. The men, who were convicted of common law assault by a military court, dragged the 17-year-old into their base in southern Kasai province after he was caught allegedly stealing buckets in January, the military said. Sixteen men were originally charged under anti-torture legislation over the incident but five were subsequently cleared of all charges, and the other 11 were not convicted of torture. "The chief of the South African National Defense Force (SANDF), General Solly Shoke, welcomed the speedy trial and the successful conviction of those guilty of assault and tarnishing the good name of the SANDF peacekeepers in the DRC," said the statement. —AFP

Armenia plane crashes

YEREVAN: Two crew members died in an Armenian warplane crash yesterday, the ex-Soviet republic's defense ministry said. Debris of the SU-25 fighter jet "was found in the mountains near the town of Maralik" in Armenia's western Shirak region, the ministry spokesman Atrsrun Hovhannissyan said in a Facebook post. "Two pilots, lieutenant colonel Armen Babayan and major Movses Manukyan, were killed" in the crash, he said. The aircraft disappeared from radars yesterday morning, minutes after it took off for a routine training flight, the ministry had reported earlier. —AFP

Sri Lankan crisis rages

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's toppled premier likened the president to Hitler yesterday as he demanded to be reinstated, almost six weeks into a paralyzing political crisis in the Indian Ocean nation. Ranil Wickremesinghe made the comments - his strongest yet directed at the head of state - at the prime minister's official residence, which he has refused to vacate since his dismissal in October. "The president has to appoint me prime minister as I command a majority in parliament," he said. "I am telling the president not to act like Hitler who bypassed the constitution... We are not going to allow him to do that." President Maithripala Sirisena sacked Wickremesinghe and replaced him with Mahinda Rajapakse, the larger-than-life former president credited with ending Sri Lanka's bloody civil war with Tamil separatists in 2009. —AFP

International

'Dozens of workers shot dead' in Papua; Indonesia probes reports

Killings would mark the deadliest bout of violence in years

WAMENA: An Indonesian soldier was killed while investigating reports that more than two dozen construction workers were shot dead by separatist rebels in restive Papua province, officials said yesterday. If confirmed, the killings would mark the deadliest bout of violence in years to hit a region wracked for decades by a low-level independence insurgency. Citing local police, Indonesian media reported late Monday that the workers were shot dead on Sunday in Nduga, a district in the centre of the far-flung region on the western half of New Guinea island, just north of Australia.

Police and military teams were sent to the area on Monday when they came under rebel gunfire with one soldier killed and another wounded in the firefight, authorities said. The employees of state-owned contractor Istaka Karya were building bridges and roads as part of efforts to boost infrastructure in the impoverished region. All construction work in the area would be temporarily suspended,

the public works ministry said. More than a dozen coffins were being readied in Wamena, the nearest major town to where the alleged killings happened.

"Some media are saying 31 workers are dead, some 24, so we really need to check ourselves," said Papua military spokesman Muhammad Aidi. A team of about 150 personnel would delay its operation until today morning, fearing a confrontation with rebels at night, the military said later. "We think they'll be expecting us," local military chief Jonathan Binsar Sianipar said. A group of workers reportedly managed to escape the shootings, which were allegedly sparked by separatists angry at some workers taking pictures of pro-Papua independence activities.

'Chase these criminals'

The violence was reportedly carried out by rebels who have long fought against Jakarta's rule. Indonesia routinely blames separatists for violence in Papua. Foreign media

need permission to report from Papua and obtaining reliable information is difficult. Authorities would "chase these criminals wherever they are", said national police spokesman Muhammad Iqbal. "But we need to check whether it was really (the rebels) or not," he added. The suspected killings could be the worst outbreak of violence in a "very, very long time", said Sidney Jones, director of the Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC). "Every time we have had a significant incident that has involved military deaths, even though the main victims here were civilians, it is followed by massive retaliatory response," she added.

The suspected killings came as more than 500 activists-including an Australian-were arrested in a nationwide police crackdown that coincided with rallies on December 1, a date many Papuans consider their anniversary of independence from the Dutch. Papua declared itself an independent nation on that date in 1961, but

neighbouring Indonesia took control of the region by force in 1963. It officially annexed Papua in 1969 with a UN-backed vote, widely seen as a sham. Jakarta keeps a tight grip on the resource-rich region, which experienced several spasms of violence this summer including the killing of three local people, allegedly by rebels.

The deaths followed a gunfight that saw a small plane carrying police officers-sent to oversee the local elections-shot at as it landed at Nduga. Some of the violence has been centered on protests against a huge gold and copper mine operated by US-based firm Freeport McMoRan-a frequent flashpoint in the local struggle for independence and a bigger share of the region's resources. In April, an Indonesian soldier and at least one rebel were killed near the mine. In August, authorities arrested Pole Jakub Skrzypski in Papua for alleged links to separatists and he could face life in prison if convicted. His trial date has not yet been set. — AFP

Walking, talking and separated: Conjoined twins go home

DHAKA: Bangladeshi twins conjoined at birth have gone home nearly a year and a half after being separated in the country's first such successful operation, a doctor said yesterday. Two-year-old sisters Tofa and Tahura, joined at the spine and at the rectum, underwent a gruelling nine-hour operation in August 2017 conducted by a team of two dozen doctors.

"They were released from hospital late Monday after their conditions improved," Shahnoor Islam, a paediatric surgeon who led the groundbreaking surgery said. "They can walk and also play like any other normal babies. They are on their way back home. But we'll observe them from time to time," she said. Born to poor farmers, Tofa and Tahura-who do not use a surname-were brought to Dhaka from northern Gaibandha district, 260 kilometers from the capital.

Their mother, Shahida Begum, told AFP how happy she was. "I have never thought they would be separated and live a healthy life. But thanks to Allah, we are now returning home with Tofa and Tahura no longer conjoined," Begum said. The parents almost gave up hope of separating the twins after local doctors told them there were no experts in Bangladesh who could perform the operation and surgery in other countries would cost too much. However, the surgical team which separated the twins was in fact Bangladeshi.

Begum had earlier vowed to send her daughters to Islamic seminaries if they grew up healthy. "I didn't go to school as I got married early. But I want them to learn Islam and be very good human beings," she said. Conjoined twins are rare and about half are stillborn. Almost all Bangladeshi conjoined twins fail to survive their infant years, surgeons have said. In 2016, twin boys, who were joined at the torso and had been abandoned by their parents at the same hospital, died due to severe infections and complications. In November 2015, conjoined twin girls born with two heads and two hearts and a single body attracted crowds of thousands. They died when they were just a week old. — AFP



DHAKA: Combo photo shows conjoined Bangladeshi twins Tofa and Tahura before (top) and after surgery (bottom) to separate them at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. — AFP

Belgrade accuses Kosovo of trying to 'drive out' Serbs

BELGRADE: Belgrade yesterday accused Kosovo of trying to "drive out" its Serb minority by taking steps to create an army and refusing to lift a 100 percent tariff on Serbian goods. The moves by Kosovo, a former Serbian province that declared independence a decade ago, have spiked tensions between the former war foes. Belgrade has cast them as threats to Kosovo's 120,000-strong Serb minority. "It is quite clear that the announcement of the formation of an army and the insistence on a 100 percent tax on Serbian goods are intended to drive the Serb people out of Kosovo," Serbian President Aleksander Vucic said in a statement after meeting the Chinese ambassador. He warned that the move could "lead to disaster, because Serbia cannot and will not calmly observe the destruction of the Serbian people".

Belgrade refuses to accept Kosovo's stashedhood-which is recognized by more than 100 countries but not Russia or China-and tries to shut it out of global organizations. Last month Pristina retaliated by slapping Serbian and Bosnian

goods with the 100 percent tariff. Despite EU pressure to lift the measure, Kosovo has remained defiant. On Monday, Prime Minister Ramus Haradinaj reiterated that the tariff would "remain in force until Serbia recognizes Kosovo's independence". "Taxes are a well-known instrument that we have not invented and that President Donald Trump also uses," he added.

Pristina has also provoked ire in Belgrade by announcing plans to create its own army. Since the 1998-99 war that paved the way for its independence, Kosovo's security has been ensured by NATO-led international forces. In October, Kosovo's parliament approved a first reading of laws that would transform the emergency Kosovo Security Force (KSF) into a regular army. A final vote is expected December 14. KSF minister Rrustem Berisha said the new laws will see the force's "gradual transformation into an organization whose mission is to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kosovo". The process could take up to 10 years, according to officials. — AFP

New Delhi fined over toxic smog

NEW DELHI: India's environmental watchdog has slapped New Delhi's government with a \$3.5 million fine for failing to enforce rules to reduce smog in the world's most polluted major city, officials said yesterday. The National Green Tribunal penalized the capital administration for its lack of oversight after it emerged some polluting industries were still burning harmful waste in the open. The tribunal, a national body tasked with ruling on environmental matters, had been hearing a plea from Delhi residents complaining about factories flouting laws on trash fires.

It said the Delhi government needed to instruct the court on how it would proceed

with tackling the annual crisis that plagues the capital city of 20 million. Each winter, Delhi chokes through haze so extreme that levels of airborne pollutants routinely eclipse safe limits by more than 30 times. An estimated 1.1 million Indians die prematurely from air pollution every year. The US embassy website in Delhi showed the level of harmful airborne particles hit 290 on Tuesday-nearly 12 times World Health Organization's safe limits.

Delhi, which has shut down power plants and banned heavy trucks from the city in a bid to curb smog, has accused other states of not playing their part. In particular, the capital has blamed governments in neighboring Punjab and Haryana for crop fires that burn every year, sending smoke eastward. Acrid smoke from these fires mingles with pollutants from cars, factories and construction sites in Delhi to create a lethal and persistent smog cocktail. — AFP

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Shiite rivalry paralyzes Iraq's government

A growing rivalry between two powerful Shiite Muslim factions has paralyzed efforts to form a government in Iraq six months after an election aimed at steering the country towards recovery from years of war. The two largest parliamentary groupings to emerge after the vote in May - one led by populist cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr and the other by Iranian-backed militia leader Hadi Al-Amiri - formed a tacit alliance in October when they picked a president and approved 14 out of 22 cabinet ministers.

But since then there has been stalemate, mainly over the empty interior ministry post dominated for years by allies of Amiri, who are backing the former head of a paramilitary force supported by Tehran. Sadr meanwhile says no one with a political affiliation should get the post. A vote in parliament to fill the vacant ministries in Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi's cabinet has been repeatedly put back.

Iraq's return to deadlocked parliamentary politics, now involving Shiite factions rather than the Sunni-Shiite sectarianism that followed the 2003 US-led invasion, prompted a plea last week from Iraq's most senior Shiite cleric for politicians to work together. That now looks all but impossible. As Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani made his remarks, the two sides broke off talks, lawmakers said. "We reached a dead end," Hanin Qaddo, a member of the bloc led by Amiri, told Reuters on Friday.

"There's no need for more delays, no use in talks," MP Ahmed Al-Kinani said. "We will go to parliament and vote for the rest of the cabinet." He said they would do this without agreement from Sadr's supporters even though the parliamentary arithmetic is against them. Sadr on Monday urged Abdul Mahdi to present the rest of his cabinet to parliament for approval as soon as possible, without disputed candidates. "You must not submit to what is going on behind the scenes," Sadr told the prime minister.

Sadr, whose alliance won the most parliamentary seats in the election, has threatened to walk out of the political process and stage mass demonstrations as he has done in the past, notably when protesters stormed Baghdad's fortified Green Zone in 2016. "If Bina (Amiri's bloc) ignores us then we will resort to all possible options including mobilizing the street," said a member of Sadr's alliance, who declined to give his name.

'There's no reconstruction'

Whether Sadr's walk-out is imminent or not, the confrontation is paralyzing efforts to rebuild a country wrecked by its war with Islamic State and provide services in poor areas. Flash floods killed several people last month, and militants still stage small-scale attacks. Local officials blame political infighting for failure to deliver services. "There's no reconstruction or jobs here," said Sheikh Abu Mashan, a tribal leader in Anbar province. "Main electricity lines are still down. At first they said we'd get power by October. Now they say January. Authorities have no interest in us - they've spent nearly seven months talking and still have no government."

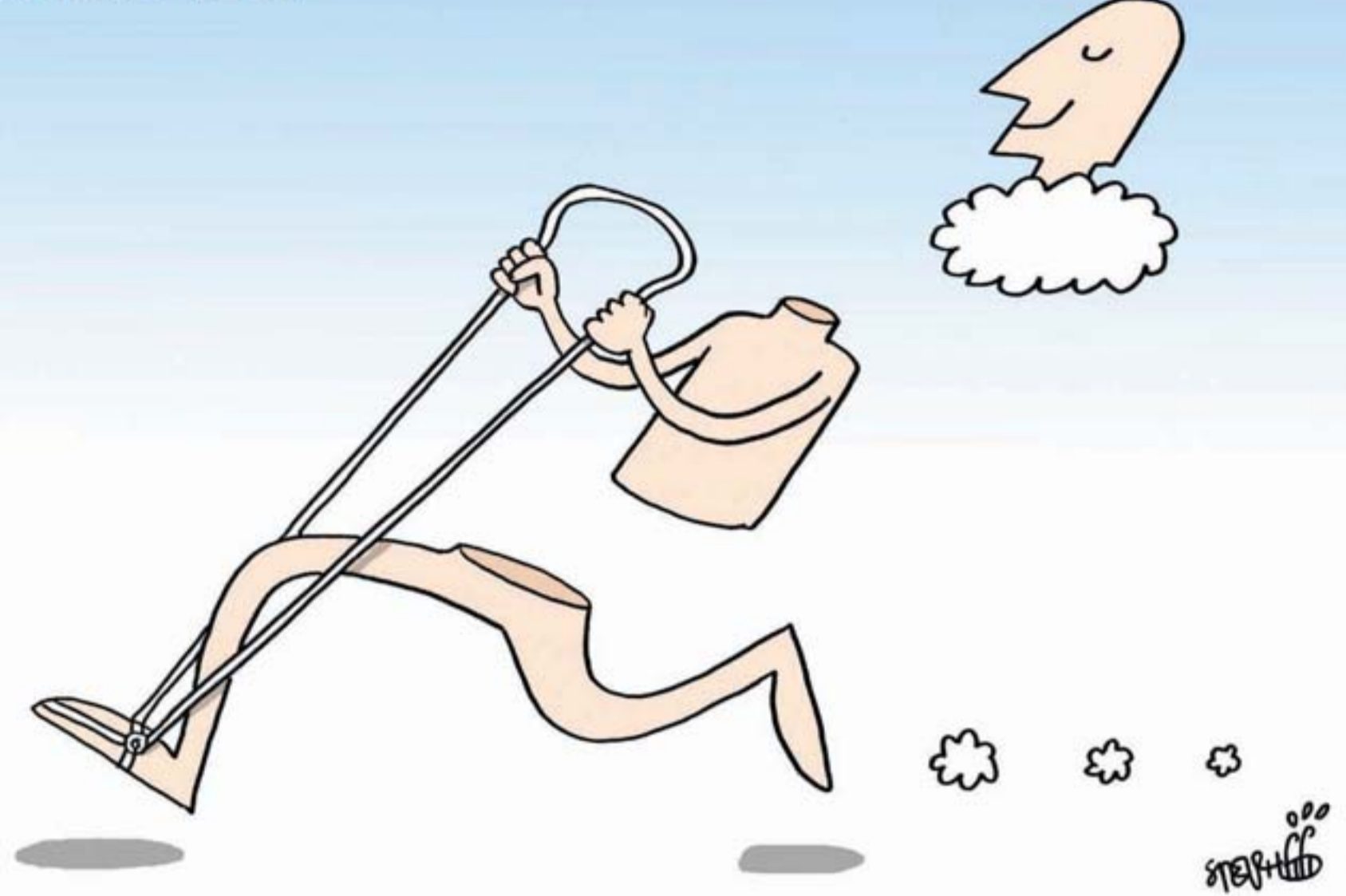
The deadlock also means a 2019 budget has not been passed, so provinces do not know how much they will have to spend on fixing services. "Heavy rainfall cut roads out of Mosul," governor official Nouruddin Catalan said. "We don't even have enough money to fix roads damaged by fighting."

Abdul Mahdi was seen by many parties as a compromise candidate for the post of prime minister who might form a government of independent technocrats capable of delivering services and reducing unemployment, the causes of protests that turned violent in September. He was approved by both parliamentary groupings, which include Sunni parties, Sunnis and Kurds also hold cabinet posts.

But the power struggle between Sadr and Amiri has removed the initiative from the prime minister's hands, and away from parliament, analysts say. "It's not up to him and it's not up to the parliamentarians - neither the executive nor the legislative branches of government have a say in forming the next cabinet," said Renad Mansour, a research fellow at Chatham House, a London think-tank. "There's no leader yet who's able to sit the two sides together and get to the bottom of who will be interior (minister) ... it's become a matter of principle." These divisions among Shiite leaders could weaken Iranian influence in Iraq, which has grown since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein 15 years ago. If the split persists, Iran would prefer to see Amiri and his fellow militia leaders in a strong position. But while Iran will try to stop the divisions getting any worse, there is no sign yet that it has mediated between the two factions.

Lawmakers from Sadr's parliamentary group said they sent a message last week to Amiri's candidate for interior minister, Falih Al-Fayyadh, the former head of a grouping that comprises Iraq's Shiite militias, asking him to step down. MPs in Amiri's bloc told Reuters they would try to push Fayyadh through parliament after giving up on talks with the Sadists. Without agreement from Sadr, however, the vote is unlikely to pass, putting further pressure on Abdul Mahdi's crisis-hit government. "Despite the difficulties the prime minister is facing in nominating interior and defense ministers, he should complete this formation and present names." — Reuters

Cartoon for the Soul



For G20 leaders, greater problems yet to come

World leaders heading home after the weekend G20 might be justified in breathing brief sighs of relief. Unlike at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit two weeks ago, the heads of state were able to agree on a joint communique. A landmark meeting between US President Donald Trump and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping was claimed a success by both sides, avoiding further escalation of their trade war - at least for now.

Those broadly positive headlines, however, are only half the picture. For all the efforts to keep it on track, the meeting in Buenos Aires also served to showcase an alarming rise in the number of international differences. From French President Emmanuel Macron squaring up against Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Trump snubbing Russian President Vladimir Putin, a growing number of leaders appeared openly hostile or dismissive of each other. The primary diplomatic breakthrough of the summit - a joint declaration to reform the World Trade Organization - may simply be a precursor to more arguments. While most nations do want changes at the WTO, US-China tensions make it unlikely there'll be agreement on how to do so.

Pointedly, a forum designed as one of the world's leading venues for international diplomacy struggled to get the word "multilateralism" into the communique for fear of offending leaders such as Trump. Much of the diplomatic effort, insiders said, revolved around avoiding growing taboos of major countries, particularly the United States and China. (The eventual communique managed a reference to the "multilateral trading system" but followed it by stressing the need for reform at the request of US negotiators.)

Coming amid multiple overlapping international crises, this was in many respects the most important G20 since that in London in April 2009. Then, world leaders found common ground in agreeing on a joint approach following the global financial crash the previous year. This time, those present - particularly from the West's largest democracies - were likely more preoccupied with political dramas at home.

Even as he met other foreign leaders, Macron was being told of France's most violent street protests in

decades. British Prime Minister Theresa May is reaching the crunch point on getting her Brexit deal through Parliament, with speculation rife her government might collapse. Trump was spending time on angry tweets about the latest developments in Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of Russian involvement in the 2016 US presidential election.

A grinning, enthusiastic handshake between Putin and

the US president. A communique reference to refugees and migration was removed at US request, Trump signed a revised trade deal with his Mexican and Canadian counterparts, and Washington again avoided any commitments on climate change. While the group recommitted itself to a vaguely defined "rules-based system," Chinese and other attempts to condemn "protectionism" - a thinly veiled reference to Trump's tariffs - also failed to find a place.

Despite Trump's intransigence on various issues, other major world leaders still seem keen to woo him. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe went particularly out of his way to flatter POTUS, congratulating him on his "historic victory" in the US midterms despite the Republican loss of the House of Representatives. China's Xi appeared conciliatory, while the Kremlin's mild statement of "regret" about the cancellation of the Trump-Putin meeting demonstrated just how much Moscow wishes to keep dialogue with the US open.

The Trump administration is now hoping for another diplomatic breakthrough early next year at another meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Even a temporary improvement in Washington-Beijing relations could help that process. Trump tweeted Monday he also hoped for a trilateral meeting with Xi and Putin in the near future to "start talking about a meaningful halt to what has become a major and uncontrollable arms race."

How long that spirit will last is an open question. The Xi-Trump meeting saw the US agree to delay new tariffs scheduled for January 1 by 90 days, while China pledged to buy US crops and other goods and crack down on Chinese-made opiates feeding the US domestic drug crisis. However, there are already signs that tariffs and tensions could soon rise again. There were small but notable differences between the US and Chinese post-meeting readouts, and much will depend on what happens in the coming weeks. One crude but simple bellwether will be whether maritime confrontations in the South China Sea increase or decline. After a year that has seen almost every key international relationship deteriorate, the Argentina meeting could have gone much worse. But almost every leader there has returned to major domestic headwinds. When the next G20 meeting rolls around in Japan in June, successful multilateral diplomacy may yet be harder still. — Reuters



Leaders more preoccupied with political dramas at home

Saudi Arabia's bin Salman appeared to tell a different story - this one about how the world's increasingly repressive autocratic states are standing together. There's clearly an element of truth in that. At the same time, however, the autocrats also find themselves under mounting pressure. Like many of his Western counterparts, Putin finds his domestic approval ratings falling in the face of Russia's economic problems, and it's unclear how his picking fights with countries like Ukraine can alter that dynamic. Riyadh, meanwhile, has suffered significant diplomatic fallout from the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Nor are the autocratic leaders a simple defined bloc - and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan is clearly at ever greater loggerheads with Saudi Arabia, even as his administration moves closer to Putin's Russia. It seems like there are ever more moving parts to international relations, and mutual antagonism continues to grow in many of those bilateral relationships. For all Trump's challenges with the Russia probe at home, the G20 was a broadly successful trip for

brings wilder weather and more losses in the orchards, "the earnings of farmers, whose livelihood is dependent on (fruit), will come down drastically", he warned in an interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Snow in may

In Kashmir, the 40 harshest days of winter, called "Chillai Kalan", usually begin on Dec 21 and last until the end of January. But last winter the region saw no snow at all until the second week of February. Tourists in high-altitude areas were then delighted to see snow in May. But the unexpected weather brought huge problems for pastoralist families on their annual migration routes.

Mohammad Razak, 50, was herding his flock in remote Poonch district when unusual torrential rain and hail killed more than 100 of his goats and sheep. "Before we could understand anything, a thunderstorm and hail followed rains. In the absence of any shelter, goats and sheep rushed towards a gully ... and got washed away," Razak said in an interview.

The herder received about \$500 in financial compensation under the State Disaster Respond Fund but said it was not adequate to meet his losses, which were about double what he received. In the same storm, Mohammad Farooq, 45, another pastoralist, lost over 150 cattle in a landslide in Balfiaz, with his family only narrowly escaping. Social media users in Jammu and Kashmir circulated pictures of his dead livestock and published his bank details, asking for financial help for the family.

Insurance?

To help fruit growers hit by unseasonable snow, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology has issued advice on how farmers can protect trees from damage. The state's horticulture department has uploaded videos on its website showing growers how to drill into broken tree trunks and try to rejoin them with large screws. Dhawale, of the farmer welfare group, said Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana - a crop insurance scheme put in place by India's prime minister in 2016 - has so far not provided much help with worsening crop losses in Kashmir from wilder weather.

Many farmers remain unaware that help is available from the program, according to an August survey by

Weather Risk Management Services Pvt Ltd, a global provider of climate risk management services. Dhawale said that "only a holistic approach" that combined compensation, efforts to reduce farmer debt and help putting in place processing facilities to boost incomes would help farmers deal with the growing pressures.

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, meanwhile, has asked the state government to speed approval of a restructured state insurance program aimed at helping struggling apple and saffron farmers. For now, widespread damage to trees and the apple harvest mean apple prices have jumped over 20 percent across the country since the disaster, as Jammu and Kashmir state produces nearly 80 percent of India's apples.

Cherries, rice and maize

Kashmir's changing weather patterns mean the region now gets more of its snow at the end of February and in early March, said Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, head of earth sciences at the University of Kashmir. That has been good news for autumn-harvested crops - including rice and maize - which saw a 10 percent larger harvest this year, said Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal, a director of the state agriculture department. But the late snow is hurting the region's cherry harvest, Romshoo said, as "the valley receives delayed snowfall when the trees are in full bloom".

Other changes also are underway as Kashmir - like other high-altitude Himalayan regions - records increases in its minimum, maximum and average temperatures. Overall much less snow and more rain is falling, Romshoo said, and "earlier people wouldn't use fans in the region during summer but now people use air conditioners here". Forest fires also are becoming a worsening problem, he said. "The incidents of forest fires, which were earlier unimaginable during winters, are now being reported frequently due to delayed snowfall or dry winters," he said. "Such indicators of the climate change are very disturbing," he added.

Omar Abdullah, the former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, last month shared a viral video clip on Twitter of a heartbroken apple grower frantically trying to save his harvested crop, buried under heavy snow in south Kashmir. Abdullah called the disaster "tragic". "This man's spirits are completely crushed. ... It's no wonder he's weeping the way he is," he remarked. — Reuters

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Zain Drone enters into agreement with worldwide leader DroneShield

Agreement to offer counterdrone solutions across Middle East

SYDNEY/KUWAIT: Zain Group ("Zain"), a leading Middle Eastern mobile and data services operator headquartered in Kuwait has entered into a Teaming Agreement with DroneShield Ltd (ASX:DRO) ("DroneShield"), a worldwide leader in counterdrone solutions, which will see the companies working together on meeting Zain's customers' requirements for counterdrone security solutions in the region.

In October 2018, Zain Group announced the establishment of its Zain Drone entity that will provide Drone-as-a-Service (DaaS) to governments and enterprises in Kuwait, with plans to extend its drone services gradually across its regional footprint. Zain Drone is set to unlock opportunities in various industries to fast-track growth and exploit the Internet of Things (IoT) in an efficient, safer and faster way.

Based in Sydney, Australia, and Virginia, USA, DroneShield is a worldwide leader in drone security technology. The Company has developed the pre-eminent drone security solution that protects people, organizations and critical infrastructure from intrusion from drones. Its leadership brings world-class expertise in engineering and physics, combined with deep experience in defence, intelligence, and aerospace.

Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO commented, "The rise of innovative technology such as Drones also brings a number of risk and liability challenges for governments and industry. Zain has a substantial market penetration in the region with precisely the kind of customers - civil infrastructure operators, airports, governmental bodies and security agencies, and others - that require counterdrone security solutions."

Al-Kharafi added, "We are fielding increasing demand from our customers for comprehensive solutions in this space, and DroneShield's product range, coupled with our telecommunications expertise, provides exactly what our customers are looking for. Consequently, after an extensive review of the counterdrone market, we opted to enter into a Teaming Agreement with DroneShield."

Al-Kharafi concluded by stating, "As a powerful trusted brand in the Middle East, we are confident that a combination of DroneShield's cutting edge technologies coupled with our reputation for excellence and market penetration in the region will produce substantial results for both companies." Oleg Vormik, DroneShield's Chief Executive Officer, commented, "The services we have recently provided to a Middle Eastern governmental body has paved the way for a broader effort



- Bader Al-Kharafi: Civil infrastructure operators, airports, governmental bodies and security agencies, and others will benefit from counterdrone security solutions

- Agreement follows the recent launch of Zain Drone services in Kuwait

in the Middle East, and has now established us as the leader in counter unmanned aerial systems space in the region. We are now honored to partner with one of the largest telecoms in the Middle East, whose customer

reach in the areas relevant to our business is substantially more extensive than that of any of our past regional relationships."

Zain Drone has commenced its commercial offering of DroneShield security solu-

tions providing customers with the ability to identify and passively monitor unauthorized drones that threaten safety, security and privacy. This is achieved by using a combination of proprietary multi-sensor

detection technologies, an enterprise-grade network, real-time alerts and the collection of digital evidence.

Zain Drone is investing heavily to build the required capabilities in drone operations and is positioning itself to become the leading strategic partner in the fast-developing markets for unmanned data acquisition. Zain Drone-as-a-Service (DaaS) is set to unlock opportunities in various industries to fast-track growth and exploit the Internet of Things (IoT) in an efficient, safer and faster way. Zain Drone offers state-of-the-art bespoke drone solutions and provide advanced analytics for governments and businesses.

OPEC works on deal to cut output, still needs Russia on board

VIENNA: OPEC and its allies are working towards a deal this week to reduce oil output by at least 1.3 million barrels per day, four sources said, adding that Russia's resistance to a major cut was so far the main stumbling block. OPEC meets tomorrow in Vienna, followed by talks with allies such as Russia on Friday, amid a drop in crude prices caused by global economic weakness and fears of an oil glut due largely to a rise in US production. The producer group's de facto leader, Saudi Arabia, has indicated a need for steep reductions in output from January but has come under pressure from US President Donald Trump to help support the world economy with lower oil prices.

Possibly complicating any OPEC decision is the crisis around the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October. Trump has backed Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman despite calls from many US politicians to impose stiff sanctions on Riyadh. The sources, three from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and one from a non-OPEC producer, said the meetings were taking place in a difficult environment and that Russia's position would be key in reaching a deal.

"Russia is playing tough," one of the OPEC sources said. Another OPEC source said: "The Saudis are working hard on the cut. But if Russia says no cut, then we

(OPEC) won't cut." United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Suhail bin Mohammed Al-Mazroui said yesterday that an adjustment in global oil output is required and all producers must be on board. "What is that adjustment, and what is the level, from what level - that is what will be discussed," Mazroui told reporters in the Austrian capital, where OPEC is headquartered.

"An adjustment means a decrease in production ... It's important that everyone is on board." Russian sources have indicated Moscow could contribute some 140,000 bpd to a reduction, but Middle East-dominated OPEC insists Russia cut by 250,000-300,000 bpd. Two sources said talks were focusing on a pro-rata cut of 3-3.5 percent from October output levels, with no exemptions for any member. Sources also said OPEC could delay a decision to cut if the main criteria such as Russia's involvement were not met, even though doing so would mean a further fall in prices. "OPEC can always meet again in February, for example, and decide on a cut then. Those who were not able or willing to cooperate will be wanting to cut then," one source said.

Saudi Arabia previously insisted on a need to reduce production. It was unclear whether the apparent shift in position was caused by OPEC using negotiation tactics to bring Russia on board or by pressure from Trump to refrain from cutting output.

Iraq's oil minister said OPEC must come up with a medium- to long-term strategy to achieve crude price stability and minimize damage to oil markets caused by geopolitics. Thamer Ghadhban said Iraq would work to help balance markets and bolster prices. Iraq is OPEC's second-biggest producer after Saudi Arabia. Solutions to low oil prices should "not be limited to decreasing output", Ghadhban said in a statement, adding that any agreement reached this week should avoid damage to the interests of OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers. — Reuters

EU finance ministers clinch reform deal

BRUSSELS: EU finance ministers agreed reforms to better fight against a financial crisis yesterday, fell short of the original ambitions to relaunch Europe by French President Emmanuel Macron.

The agreement between the EU's 27 finance ministers, without Britain, is intended to hand authorities a more powerful tool box in the event of a major shock to the European economy. The proposals strengthen the financial plumbing of the European economy, but do not include far grander visions such as designating a eurozone finance minister or setting up a European-style International Monetary Fund. Even so, the ministers negotiated for more than 18 hours with discussions especially tense over the French backed idea of setting up a budget for the 19-nation eurozone single currency bloc.

"We have a good result. The reform of the euro area is progressing at a decisive pace. Thanks to all those who helped," said German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz.

The reforms now need the greenlight by EU leaders at a summit next week in Brussels.

National governments have for months been mulling a French proposal to create some sort of budget capacity for the single currency bloc which could be used in case of crises or economic shocks.

Macron has made the idea of such a crisis-fighting budget a signature part of his vision to jump-start the

EU after the debt crisis, the shock of Brexit and the rise of populists.

The ministers agreed a much more scaled back version of the idea, linking it strictly to enhancing EU-backed reforms and not as aid to survive an unexpected economic downturn, as the French had intended. French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire defended the outcome saying that "we finally have a real prospect, for the first time, of a eurozone budget".

Completing the banking union has been another difficult challenge, with powerful Germany still firmly opposed to launching a European scheme, wanted by the European Central Bank, to guarantee bank deposits. Berlin hates this proposal that is widely depicted in German media as an effort by overspending eurozone members from the south to benefit from the risk-averse and sensible savers to the north.

The ministers agreed only to discuss the matter again in June 2019. Agreement was more easily found on expanding the responsibilities of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) — the firefighter for eurozone countries with serious debt problems. Ministers also agreed that the ESM would serve as a final backstop in case a major crisis hit Europe's biggest banks. Most of the reforms were agreed beforehand by France and Germany, Europe's twin engines of EU unity that make up nearly half of the eurozone economy.

But the process bogged down due to the weak government in Berlin and irritation by smaller EU members, led by the Netherlands, at having the EU's future dictated by the bloc's biggest powers.

"This is not the end of the road in our plans to reinforce the euro. We will build on progress made to continue to work next year," said Eurogroup chief Mario Centeno, who is also Portuguese finance minister. — AFP

Business

You wanted it, you got it: BoE defends Brexit report

Carney hits back at critics of central bank's warnings

LONDON: Bank of England Governor Mark Carney hit back at critics of the central bank's warnings of a potentially big Brexit hit to the economy, denying allegations of scare-mongering made by some lawmakers who oppose Prime Minister Theresa May's plans.

The BoE said last week that Britain could suffer greater damage to its economy than during the global financial crisis under a worst-case exit from the European Union. Carney, speaking to lawmakers yesterday, denied a suggestion that the BoE's scenarios were rushed out to help May get support for her Brexit plan and stressed that the central bank had been asked to provide them by lawmakers.

"There's no exam crisis. We didn't just stay up all night and write a letter to the Treasury Committee," Carney said. "You asked for something that we had, and we brought it, and we gave it to you."

Less than four months before Britain is due to exit the EU, it remains unclear whether it will leave with a transition deal in place to smooth the shock for the economy. May's Brexit agreement with EU lead-

ers faces deep opposition in parliament, including from within her own Conservative Party, ahead of a key vote on Dec. 11. Pro-Brexit critics of Carney, who regularly accuse him of political meddling, dismissed last week's BoE report as part of a "Project Hysteria."

Former BoE Governor Mervyn King yesterday lamented the central bank's involvement in what he said was an attempt to frighten the country about Brexit.

"It saddens me to see the Bank of England unnecessarily drawn into this project," he said in an article published by Bloomberg. Carney took a couple of barely concealed swipes at King, saying Britain had paid the price for not focusing on risks from the banking sector before the global financial crisis and had misunderstood the importance of wholesale funding for lenders.

Brexit shocks

Asked by lawmakers about the BoE's worst-case scenarios, he said they were "low-probability events" but ones the central bank needed to consider to make sure

Britain's banking system could withstand any Brexit shocks. "We're already sleeping soundly at night, because we have the financial sector, the core of the financial sector, in a position that it needs to be for a tough scenario," he said.

But he said the price of food could go up by 10 percent if Britain left the EU with no deal and with no mitigating arrangements to avoid chaos at the country's ports.

Carney also said Britain's ports were not ready for even a managed shift to World Trade Organization rules for the country's exports and imports with the EU. "Don't assert what is not correct," he snapped at one lawmaker who said the BoE had not considered the possibility of substituting trade with the EU for other markets. Carney reiterated his opposition to ceding decision-making over rules for the banking sector to the EU after Brexit—a potential consequence of the 'Norway-style' arrangement which some lawmakers would prefer to May's Brexit plans. "We would not be comfortable...outsourcing supervision of this incredibly complex, incredibly important financial sector," he said. — Reuters



LONDON: Governor of the Bank of England Mark Carney leaves after attending a Financial Stability Report press conference at the Bank of England in central London. — AFP

Ghoshn arrest puts Japan's justice system in the dock

TOKYO: The shock arrest of former Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn has thrown the international spotlight onto Japan's criminal justice system, where suspects face prolonged detention and interrogation without lawyers present.

Rights groups, lawyers and legal scholars have for years criticized the system, which relies heavily on squeezing out a "confession" from a suspect after lengthy and grueling questioning.

After securing this confession, prosecutors nearly always secure a conviction at trial, as an admission of guilt usually outweighs all other evidence. Colin Jones, a professor at Doshisha Law School, wrote recently in the Japan Times daily that the system is often referred to as "hitotachi shiho" or "hostage-based justice system."

"The 'hostage' is the suspect. The 'ransom' is their confession," wrote Jones. But despite international criticism, there is little public appetite for change, as Japan's ultra-safe streets mean ordinary people have virtually no experience of crime and often view it as an abstract concept. Authorities too defend the status quo, arguing that the nation's legal protocols have emerged out of Japan's unique culture and history and foreigners should mind their own business.

'Aggressive interrogations'

Ghoshn, 64, was arrested on November 19 and the court has granted prosecutors' requests to hold him through December 10 to decide whether to indict him on charges of under-reporting his salary.

Prosecutors are widely expected to file additional charges against the tycoon and with each charge they can seek to hold him for another 22 days with limited access to his lawyers. Even after that, the high-profile businessman can still be held in pre-trial detention. All this has prompted some criticism abroad, particularly in France, where the high-profile tycoon holds citizenship.

The Japanese system "creates an environment which makes it possible for aggressive interrogations and risks producing forced confessions and false convictions,"



TOKYO: A woman passes near the Tokyo Detention House, where former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn is being held, in Tokyo. — AFP

the Japan arm of Amnesty International told AFP.

Hirofumi Uchida, criminal law specialist and professor emeritus at Kyushu University in western Japan, said it was "very hard to gain public empathy" for protecting the rights of criminal suspects.

"We need to bring the system up to par with international standards," with shorter detentions, allowing lawyers to be present during questioning and less reliance on confessions in court, he said. However, prosecutors stress they are working within the existing legal framework, which emerged from the wreckage of World War II, when Japan sought to restore social order via bolstered authority for prosecutors. In the fevered post-defeat atmosphere, suspects' human rights were seen as a secondary concern, say experts.

Shin Kukimoto, deputy chief prosecutor at Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office, lashed out at foreign criticism of their work in a recent news conference.

"Each and every country has its unique history and tradition and systems. I do not criticize other countries' systems just because they are different," said Kukimoto. "We do not unnecessarily keep people in

custody for a long time," Kukimoto said.

False convictions

Defense lawyers say any trial is effectively decided before it starts, with prosecutors enjoying a 99.9-percent success rate—with confessions the key weapon at their disposal.

"Investigations basically determine the outcome of the process, not trials," said Kana Sasakura, professor at Konan University. The defense is often reduced to arguing for clemency in sentencing rather than trying to win the case.

Police and prosecutors believe in confessions as a key to discovering the truth, although experience in other nations has shown this is not the case, Sasakura said. "It is perplexing that they fixate on the old way of doing things, when there are better ways," she said. The traditional system has resulted in horrendous cases of prosecutor misconduct, as well as false convictions. In 2009, a team of prosecutors arrested a senior welfare ministry official for an alleged scam and held her for months. — AFP

First German 'insurtech' firm hits stock exchange

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: A German start-up offering online insurance policies, DFV, yesterday became the first so-called "insurtech" firm in Europe to make its debut on the stock exchange, setting up a growing challenge to traditional insurance giants. DFV, which stands for Deutsche Familienversicherung or German Family Insurance, priced its initial public offering on the Frankfurt stock exchange at 12 euros (\$13.7) per share.

The stock got off to a slightly weak start, falling to 11.90 euros in early trading.

Part of the booming insurtech sector, DFV is a fully digitalised insurer that uses artificial intelligence and automated tools to offer what it says are "simplified" insurance products that can be processed in real time. Seen as one of Europe's leading insurtech players, DFV is also the first to sell its policies through Amazon's Alexa digital assistant, an area where it sees huge growth.

With its flotation DFV raised just over 52 million euros, making it one of Germany's more modest IPOs of 2018 and putting it well below the market capitalisation of companies big enough to be listed on Frankfurt's leading DAX 30 index.

But DFV and other digital insurance minnows like it are increasingly snapping at the heels of giants like Allianz who have been slower to take advantage of new technologies. DFV said it plans to spend some of the IPO cash on marketing to further boost its online presence on sites like Google, Bing, Facebook and YouTube to attract new customers. The proceeds will also be used to help the Frankfurt-based firm expand outside Germany. DFV intends to take on the wider European insurance market with entries planned in 2020 in a string of countries including Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Spain. — AFP

China likely to resume US soy deals, but action on tariffs uncertain

CHICAGO: China will probably resume buying American soybeans around Jan 1 because of limited supplies in Brazil after slashing imports from the United States due to the US-China trade war, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said on Monday.

It has "yet to be determined" whether China will remove tariffs on imports of American soybeans as part of a truce agreed between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Argentina on Saturday, Perdue said. His projection that the world's top soy importer would restart deals with the United States offers hope to US farmers who have suffered as the dispute between the top two economies has hurt crop prices.

China bought about 60 percent of US soybean exports last year in deals worth \$12 billion, but has mostly been buying from Brazil since imposing its 25 percent tariff on American soybeans in July in retaliation for US tariffs on Chinese goods. "We don't think there's enough soybean supply in South America to tide them over to the new crop (in) South America," Perdue told reporters at an agricultural conference. Latin American crops will be ready to harvest in early 2019.

China and the United States agreed in Buenos



Aires to refrain from setting additional tariffs that would escalate the row that has crippled US agricultural exports. The United States said Beijing also promised to buy an unspecified but "very substantial" amount of farm, energy, industrial and other products, with purchases of agricultural goods to start "immediately." Perdue did not have details about the size and timing of deals, but said he expects China's first agricultural purchases to be soybeans. US soy exports to China are down about 45 percent this year through the end of September, according to USDA data.

"We think they're going to have to come back into the United States market and we're hopeful this announcement in Argentina will facilitate that more quickly," Perdue said.

China also could buy US rice, poultry, grain sorghum and wheat, Perdue said. Chinese traders

said Beijing will need to drop the tariffs it imposed on American farm products before it can make significant purchases, however.

Perdue said he did not yet know whether that would happen for soy. "I've been talking with our negotiators and those are the issues that are going to be fleshed out here in the next few days," Perdue said.

US soybean futures rose to their highest level since August on Monday but later pared gains due to uncertainty about the size of any new deals. If China does not drop or cut the tariffs, the only Chinese buyers for US soybeans would be government-backed firms such as state grains stockpiler Sinograin, while private firms would continue to buy from Brazil, said Dan Basse, president of Chicago-based consultancy AgResource Co. — Reuters

South Africa emerges from recession

PRETORIA: Farms and factories dragged South Africa out of its first recession in almost a decade, data showed yesterday, as the economy grew by more than expected in the third quarter.

The positive data is a boost for President Cyril Ramaphosa, who has pledged to re-start growth after a decade of stagnation under his predecessor, Jacob Zuma. South Africa's economy expanded 2.2 percent in the third quarter from the second, snapping out of recession after a revised 0.4 percent contraction in the previous quarter, data from Statistics South Africa showed.

The rand added to early gains, advancing to a session-best 13.5600 per dollar at 0935 GMT from an open at 13.6150. The economic expansion will also ease fears of credit downgrades deeper into non-investment territory following warnings by agencies about the economy. All of the top three ratings firms have cited weak growth as a major threat.

Economists polled by Reuters had predicted a 1.6 percent expansion. Manufacturing expanded 7.5 percent, agriculture grew 6.5 percent. Mining contracted 8.8 percent, however.

Last month, the central bank cut its 2018 growth forecast to 0.6 percent, a touch lower than Treasury's 0.7 percent forecast in the October budget. Analysts said they expected the recovery to continue into 2019, but that recent electricity outages by ailing power utility Eskom posed a threat.

Eskom implemented a sixth day of controlled power cuts yesterday, putting more strain on the economy and raising fears of the blackouts a decade ago that reduced GDP by about 1 percent.

"In all, the data confirms our view that the South African economy is recovering," said chief Africa economist at Standard Chartered Razia Khan. "Renewed load shedding is a source of downside risk." — Reuters



Cadillac Alghanim expands its presence, opens first exclusive showroom in Shuwaikh



- Ceremony attended by executive management of Alghanim Industries, Cadillac, and General Motors
- Number of new Cadillac vehicles by the end of 2020



KUWAIT: Further bolstering its presence as a leading automotive distributor, Cadillac Alghanim announced on 29 November 2018, the opening of its first exclusive showroom in Kuwait, located in Shuwaikh. A number of representatives from Alghanim Industries, headed by Chairman Kutayba Y. Alghanim and CEO Omar K. Alghanim attended the opening ceremony of the showroom. President of General Motors Middle East John Roth, and Managing Director of Cadillac Middle East Christian Soemmer, also attended the event, which included an exclusive tour to explore the latest distinguished Cadillac cars.

During the event, Chairman Kutayba Y. Alghanim praised the historic decades-old ties between the two companies. "We are pleased to celebrate the first exclusive Cadillac showroom in Kuwait, yet another milestone in our 70 year relationship with General Motors. Our enduring partnership continues to flourish, as we restate our mutual commitment to our loyal customers. As the longest standing dealership in the region, we promise to continue to bring to Kuwait the best experience, combined with the best service. We look forward to celebrating more milestones with our customers and our partners, in the near future," he said.

CEO of Alghanim Industries Omar Kutayba Alghanim said: "We are excited to open an exclusive showroom, dedicated entirely for Cadillac, an iconic American brand. We had an incredibly strong performance over the past 24 months. This year, Cadillac Alghanim has become the second largest distributor of Cadillac sales in the region, after Saudi Arabia. This is a huge testament to great products and the hard work of the team."

He added: "I am excited that Cadillac are launching a number of new models before the end of 2020. We can't wait to showcase these beautiful cars, which we believe will appeal particularly to young people and families."

John Roth, President and Managing Director - GM Africa and Middle East, commented during the event: "Our relationship with Alghanim industries is a special one, spanning over 70 years, we have worked together to create customers for life here

in Kuwait. We have achieved a number of milestones together and this showroom is another example of their confidence in the Cadillac brand and ambition to create a special journey for every customer."

Christian Soemmer, Managing Director, Cadillac Middle East commented during the event saying: "These are exciting times at Cadillac as we continue to build on our 10 year plan, we will see a number of new products come from the brand. Kuwait is pivotal in realizing our ambition to return to the pinnacle of premium, and I have full confidence we can with partners like Alghanim who have shown over the many years that they are as determined to realize our vision and new facilities like this one will help us build customers for life and we thank them for this commitment and trust in the brand."

Cadillac Alghanim's expansion plan includes opening three showrooms in the near future, bringing Cadillac closer to its customers around Kuwait.

The new showroom features a full range of elegant Cadillac vehicles on display, offering premium and specialized services for customers such as trade-in, finance, insurance, accessories, personalized vehicle delivery and more.

Cadillac Alghanim has achieved several milestones as a testament to its dedication and ambition. Achievements over the past two years include:

- Cadillac Grandmasters Award 2017
- The highest growth in volume among all the distributors in the region with +18% YOY (year on year) growth Award
- Second-largest dealer in the region following Saudi Arabia YTD Oct 2018
- #1 in the region for Customer Satisfaction based on Sales NPS (Net Promoter Score) YTD
- First place award for the 2018 GM Parts Skills Competition
- GM Middle East Technicians Skills Competition in 2018
- One of the top Cadillac Service Center in the region in 2017



Business

Exclusive interview

Why girls empowerment matters?

Sout Afkari - A modern concept to guide young girls through adolescence

Exclusive Interview with Abdullah Al-Mansour, Al-Hamra Real Estate Co., discussing Sout Afkari - a modern concept to guide young girls through adolescence

Kuwait Times: Al-Hamra is gearing up to launch a new community program, titled "Sout Afkari" that is gaining a lot of traction. Can you please tell us more about it?

Mansour: Sout Afkari is a one-of-a-kind girl empowerment program that touches upon crucial modern times' issues pertaining to the Kuwaiti teen girls, ranging from beauty, identity, love, self-worth, talent, family relationships and career. It is a new format, never before seen in Kuwait that comes in 14 TV episodes, aired exclusively on Al-Rai TV and social media. It is an open platform where accomplished Kuwaiti women, female role models, social media personalities and other female celebrities provide guidance, encourage critical thinking and promote a positive teen culture.

KT: Why "Sout Afkari"?

Mansour: Adolescence is a critical stage in one's life journey and transformational in many respects leaving teens with challenging questions and conflicted on who they are and their place in the world. They also face tremendous social pressure to look, act

and dress in a certain way. So, we wanted to create an edutainment experience, that is both fun and educational that resonates with young girls. Sout Afkari - 'Find your Voice' aims to guide them through this period, open up their minds to find their own voice, bolster their self-confidence and provide outstanding role models that they can look up to and get inspiration from.

KT: This is a brand new concept. How were the episodes chosen?

Mansour: This is a program dedicated to young girls aged 10-18 years and it was crucial to us that we make it really matter to them. So, we conducted focus group research to identify the issues that mattered most to them and brought together exceptional women from all walks of life that speak their language. The setting is informal and discussions are lighthearted to make it more appealing to youth, but the messages we convey are very powerful.

KT: What can we expect from each episode?

Mansour: There will be 14 episodes around seven main themes - "Who are you?" that addresses questions around self and identity; "What is beauty?"; "What is love?"; "What is Passion and Talent?"; "What is the role of women in the workplace?"; "What is power and success?"; "How is your relationship with

your mother and family?"

Role models provide their thoughts from their own perspectives, sparking conversation among youth to form their own opinions that reflect their own unique personalities. There are many other surprises and behind the scenes shots and tremendous friendships that have been formed; so the episodes are positive, engaging and a breath of fresh air.

KT: Who are the role models that are participating in this initiative?

Mansour: We are incredibly proud to have brought together 29 exceptional women, including teen age social media influencers. Every episode will feature a number of role models that are most relevant to discuss that particular topic; sharing a wealth of experience. They include: Dr. Khloud Al-Najar, Areej Al-Kharafi, Rahaf Al-Enzi, Eng. Zainab Al-Qurashi, Dr. Reem Dashti, Manayer Al-Kandari, Sara Al-Amer, Dr. Shaikha Al-Jaseem, Asrar Al-Ansari, Nawal Al-Azaz, Dana Al-Owaisi, Sondos Al-Shaiji, May Al-Najar, Sherefa Al-Jaber, Rehab Al-Tawari, Reem Al-Edian, Lobna Saif Abbas, Dalal Al-Doub, Haya Al-Omar, Razan Almarshad, Nouf Al-Ali, Sherefa Al-Sleti, Dana Mado, Rahaf Al-Enzi, Aisha Al-Abdullah, Khadija Al-Haramy, Eng. Abrar Al-Ebraheem, Dr. Reham Al-Reshidi and Nourah Al-Ajmi.



Abdullah Al-Mansour

KT: Who are your partners in this program?

Mansour: Sout Afkari has been designed in partnership with Light Bug Media Production Company, an award winning media company led by Director Yaroub Bourahmah, and support from the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and Grand Cinemas, with Al Rai TV as our exclusive media partner.

KT: Why is Al Hamra Real Estate Co. supporting this initiative?

Mansour: We believe it is imperative that we, as a society, lend a helping hand to future generations, encouraging their self-reflection, and generally guiding them through transitional stages of their lives - in the way that is the most appealing to them, through social media and female celebrities. This is ultimately about youth empowerment, core to our CSR strategy to ensure a stronger nation for generations to come.

Sout Afkari is also in line with Al Hamra's recent commitment to UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP), as one of the first companies in Kuwait to endorse the global pledge for gender equality and women empowerment.

KT: How can we watch the episodes?

Mansour: The 14 episodes will be broadcasted weekly every Saturday at 8:45 pm on Al Rai TV. The first episode, titled "You are beautiful", focuses on issues related to female beauty, self-image, body expectations and more and will go live on Saturday, 1 December 2018.

They will also be aired on Al Hamra Social Media Accounts and on Sout Afkari dedicated YouTube channel. We look forward to everyone joining us in this initiative to trigger positive change in youth and build a brighter tomorrow.

Australia CB holds rate as home prices fall

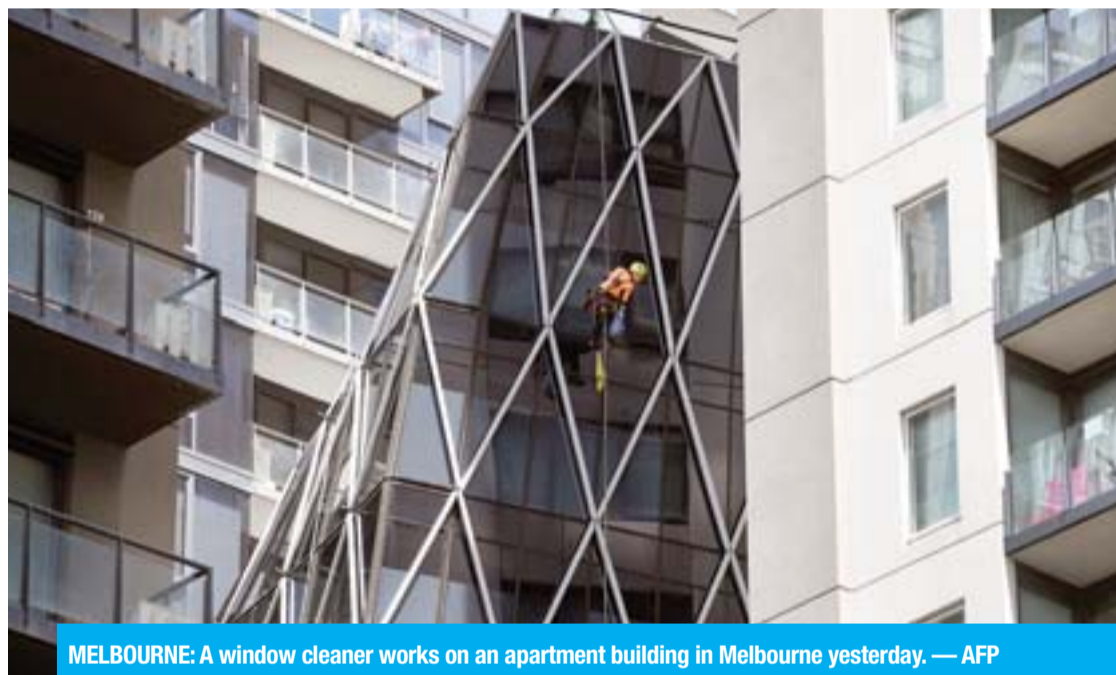
SYDNEY: Australia's central bank kept interest rates at a record-low yesterday as a drop in house prices accelerated. Borrowing costs have stayed at 1.50 percent since they were last cut in August 2016, when the economy was transitioning away from an unprecedented mining investment boom.

"The low level of interest rates is continuing to support the Australian economy," RBA governor Philip Lowe said in a statement.

"Further progress in reducing unemployment and having inflation return to target is expected, although this progress is likely to be gradual." The RBA has remained positive about the Australian economy and the strengthening labor market, but appears to be keeping a closer watch on several risks, including low inflation, weak wages growth and uncertainty over consumer spending.

The housing market is experiencing a downturn after several boom years, with prices in November falling at their fastest pace since the global financial crisis, according to leading property data provider CoreLogic. Market analysts expect the bank to hold rates for some time to come.

"There's nothing on the agenda which is going



MELBOURNE: A window cleaner works on an apartment building in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

to force the RBA's hand at this stage, so I think the upside that we're seeing in the labor numbers is probably being offset to a large extent in housing and (tighter) credit," JP Morgan economist Tom Kennedy told AFP.

"It means that the path of least resistance is probably for the cash rate to remain at 1.50 percent." The RBA decision comes a day before the

release of third-quarter economic growth figures, with expectations for a slowdown after a strong first half of the year owing to slowing household consumption.

Analysts are tipping expansion of 0.5 percent for the three months, taking the annual rate of growth to 3.2 percent, compared with the current reading of 3.4 percent. — AFP

Chevrolet Alghanim extends their biggest offer!

In line with its unceasing commitment to guarantee the safety and peace of mind of its customers and their families, Chevrolet Alghanim extended the free safety checkup campaign on all Chevrolet vehicles being serviced at any of its centers until End of December, 2018. Chevrolet Alghanim encourages its valuable customers to visit the nearest service center today and take advantage of this limited time offer.

Performed by a team of professional service advisors, the special safety checkup entails a detailed inspection relying on state-of-the-art technology and all latest available tools for car inspection and servicing. It covers the most important mechanical and electrical components guaranteeing a car's proper operation and safety, including disk brakes, tire treads and pressure, car battery, windshield wipers, front and rear lights, suspension, shock absorbers and controlling sticks.

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Italy PM says new budget proposal 'in coming hours'

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said yesterday that a revised draft budget to avoid penalties from Brussels would be ready "in the coming hours".

"My objective is to avoid Italy being penalized in a way that hurts our country and risks also hurting Europe," Conte told Italian daily Avvenire. "I'm finalizing a proposal that the European Union will have to take into consideration. It will be ready in the coming hours."

The draft "does not compromise Italians' interests or the promised reforms" of the populist government. "I have some projections on the economic impact of the '100-quota' (pension reform) and citizens' income. This can give me room to manoeuvre to spend and use in negotiations" with the Commission, Conte said.

The European Commission in October rejected the big-spending budget submitted for approval by the coalition government of the far-right League and the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) on the grounds it would only increase Italy's already massive debt mountain while not delivering the promised growth.

The budget includes giving a state pension to anyone whose age plus number of years worked equals 100. It also provides for a universal basic income of 780 euros for the least well-off to help them get back into the job market. Conte declined to provide any figures for the new budget.

Keep dialogue open

EU officials last week said that a reduc-

tion in Italy's public deficit to 2.2 percent from the proposed 2.4 percent would still be insufficient to avoid EU sanctions. "We are not disputing the pension reform, the choices of the Italian government, because it's up to the Italian government to make its own policy choices," said EU economics affairs commissioner Pierre Moscovici after talks with bloc finance ministers in Brussels.

He spoke after ministers on Monday formally agreed with the commission's rejection of the Italian budget, but also urged caution. "The only thing where we cannot take any risk whatsoever is to enter a dead-end in which we don't have channel for dialogue," said Eurogroup chief Mario Centeno, who is also Portuguese finance minister. If agreement is not reached, Italy could find itself the target of an EU excessive deficit procedure, which could ultimately lead to fines of up to 0.2 percent of the nation's GDP.

The government proposal for a budget deficit of 2.4 percent is considerably higher than the 0.8 percent of the previous center-right government and for Brussels moves the country too close to the bloc's 3.0-percent deficit ceiling.

Italy's accumulated debt meanwhile runs at more than 130 percent of GDP, more than double the 60-percent EU limit.

Business organizations who said they represent 13 million workers producing 65 percent of Italy's GDP called for a new budget at a meeting Monday. The 12 industrial and business groups said the proposed budget would not stimulate growth and that Conte must convince League leader Matteo Salvini and M5S leader Luigi Di Maio to accept new figures or resign.

Upping the pressure on the government, official data last week showed that the Italian economy shrank by 0.1 percent in the third quarter of this year, the first such contraction since 2014.

Italy's statistics agency has forecast that the economy would grow 1.3 percent next year, below the government's estimate of 1.5 percent included in its draft budget. —AFP

Gulf Bank celebrates inauguration of Salmiya Cube Mall branch

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank celebrated the inauguration of its Salmiya Cube Mall branch, located on Salem Mubarak Street. The branch extends Gulf Bank's premium financial services offering while providing support for the Bank's main branch in Fanar Mall.

Ahmed Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communication, Gulf Bank, commented: "Gulf Bank is committed to providing our valued customers with the latest and best financial solutions, products and services.

The opening of our 58th branch is a demonstration of our commitment, and we are delighted to be growing and strengthening our offerings across the country."

In an effort to provide best-in class services and convenience to all customers, Gulf Bank now has 58 branches located across Kuwait. The inauguration marks the continued success of the Bank's strategic approach to growth across Kuwait.

Gulf Bank is one of the leading conventional banks 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. The Bank was founded in 1960 and is listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (Boursa Kuwait) since 1984.



Ahmed Al-Amir



Technology

Ooredoo launches Huawei Mate 20 with special offers

Huawei, 1st brand to offer chipset with built-in AI

KUWAIT CITY: In its consistent stride in providing customers with the best and most innovative products in the fast-paced telecom industry, Ooredoo launched the Huawei Mate 20 last week at its headquarters in Kuwait City with exclusive offers. The Huawei Mate 20 launch came amid a visit from Huawei's Consumer Business Group who joined the launch. The launch of the Huawei Mate 20 comes to reiterate Ooredoo's commitment to providing its customers with the newest products and the best offers.

The Huawei Mate 20 delivers true innovation and breakthrough technology, which is portrayed by taking mobile AI to the next level by creating 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. Huawei 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.

The Huawei Mate 20 has an array of exciting features which include a revolutionary New Leica Triple Camera system, Kirin 980 Chipset, EMUI 9, more power and efficiency, and The HUAWEI SuperCharge with TUV Safety certification. The new Leica Triple Camera powered by AI reveals life's drama, texture, color and beauty in every photograph. Designed for different scenarios, the 12 MP main RGB lens cap-

tures great details in everyday photos, while the 8 MP telephoto lens will focus on your distant shots and the new 16 MP Leica Ultra Wide Angle Lens is perfect for the landscape photos and macro shots.

The Kirin 980 Chipset 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. 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. A tribute to nature's rich colors, Huawei Mate 20 is available in four vibrant colors. Light reflects beautifully off the back of midnight blue and emerald green making the unique Hyper Optical Patterns glitter. A special glass texture which is non-slip and anti-fingerprint. The sophisticated craftsmanship creates a smooth and warm contrast to the glass back and makes it comfortable and reliable to hold.



Earth needs climate 'reality check', space pioneer warns

KATOWICE, Poland: The world needs a "reality check" on the threat posed by climate change, NASA astronaut Mae Jemison said yesterday at a UN summit to chart mankind's path away from runaway global warming. Jemison, the first African-American woman in space, brought a little galactic perspective to the COP24 talks in Poland, calling on delegates from nearly 200 countries to tackle "the most difficult problem we've ever faced."

"When people say save the Earth, they are mistaken. This is not about saving the Earth, this is about making sure we don't continue to damage it so much that it doesn't support our life form," she said. Nations must use the United Nations summit to agree on a rulebook implement-

ing the pledges made three years ago in Paris, which aim to limit global temperature rises to well below two degrees Celsius, and beneath the safer cap of 1.5C if possible.

The science is clear: the UN's own independent expert climate body now says fossil fuel emissions must be slashed by half by 2030 if the Paris targets have any hope of being met. Current emission levels, which have risen since the 2015 Paris deal, put us on course for temperature rises that experts warn will alter life as we know it. But the politics behind climate change are convoluted: parties at the COP24 need to agree on a plan that is palatable to all nations—from growing, large polluters like China, to tiny island states threatened by rising seas.

Jemison used her experience on a space shuttle in 1992 to put the political haggling over the future of our only home into context. "I remember looking out of the window and seeing this incredible blue planet and this thin layer of shimmering light that was our atmosphere. We have to get this really clear: this is a first reality check," she told delegates. "The Earth doesn't need us, we need the Earth. And as much as I want to go to Mars, it is not a plan B for our civilization and species. We have to figure this out," Jemison added. — AFP

Galapagos tortoise gene study hints at longevity secrets

QUITO: Galapagos giant tortoises possess genetic variants linked to DNA repair, immune response and cancer suppression—providing clues into their longevity, according to a study published Monday. A team of international researchers sequenced the genomes of two such tortoises, including Lonesome George—the last known member of the subspecies *Geochelone nigra abingdoni*, who died in captivity on the Galapagos's Santa Cruz Island in 2012.

They detected "lineage-specific variants affecting

DNA repair genes, inflammatory mediators and genes related to cancer development," according to the study published in the journal *Nature Ecology and Evolution*. The Pacific island chain off mainland Ecuador is famous for its unique flora and fauna studied by Charles Darwin as he developed his theory of evolution. Twelve giant tortoise species still inhabit it. Galapagos National Park director Jorge Carrion said uncovering the secrets of Lonesome George's longevity will help with efforts to restore giant tortoise populations in the archipelago.

Giant tortoises, which can live for over 100 years in captivity, arrived in the volcanic Galapagos region three to four million years ago. It is believed that ocean currents dispersed them around the islands, creating 15 different species—three of which are extinct. The second giant tortoise studied was a member of a species found on islands of the Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles. — AFP

CLINIC
PAGE

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What's On



Symphony Style Kuwait kicks off festive season with Christmas decor



As the cheerful festive season begins, Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel, decorates its interiors with elegant decorations. Symphony Style Kuwait, marked this occasion with a special tree lighting ceremony and carol singing evening on December 1, 2018. The hotel assembled a choir to sing traditional festive songs and carols during the festive gathering

with members of the in-house team joining in with guests round the large, stunningly decorated golden trees in the hotel's lobby area. The festive cheer was raised a few more decibels when the lights were officially switched on during an engaging ceremony.

The food and drinks team meanwhile is ensuring all festive tastes are catered for this season by offering an exten-

sive Festive Goodies menu and gourmet treats. The menu includes specially prepared made-to-order roast turkeys with all the trimmings in addition to a range of sweet treats, some specialty cakes, Yule-logs, cookies, mince pies, homemade chocolate bells, snowmen, and gingerbread houses, perfect for gifts or to enjoy with the family and can be ordered through the hotel and Symphony Gourmet.



Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa appoints new Spa Manager

Highly skilled and accomplished Spa, Salon and Fitness Centre Director, Adele Osborne, joins Talise Spa team as the new British Spa Manager at Kuwait's idyllic resort. Adele's team leadership, training and development with diversity are some of the capabilities that earned her the recognition gained in award winning spas such as ESPA at the G Hotel and Spa, and her newly landed job.

"At Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, we seek to recruit qualified people to provide the best services to our valued guests. Adele Osborne is a manager that understands the importance of adjusting the course of the Spa to the ever-changing demands, trends and expectations by introducing the most luxurious, innovative and exclusive treatments to Talise Spa," explained General Manager, Savino Leone.

Through the immaculate Talise premises, the recently appointed manager aims to provide a memorable world-class spa journey, in which guests experience beauty, comfort and personalized attention all combined to deliver a rejuvenating experience. Adele's clarity of vision entails the creation of enduring and rewarding relationships with all clients and local community through knowledge, wellness and flawless service.

Nestled in Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, Talise Spa offers high quality new services and packages as well as personalized treatments by specialized therapists and luxurious brands such as KOSME Paris, Natura Bisse from Spain, ILA Spa, Aromatherapy Associates and NEOM Organics from the United Kingdom in addition to Anne Semonin from Paris.



'Who am I?' exhibition explores inner self

Questioning of oneself is the path to knowledge. A common dogma of Socrates' "Know Thyself" method. However, how can a human being know oneself? And how much time will it take to know? Exploring inner-self has always been one of the major objectives of literature and art.

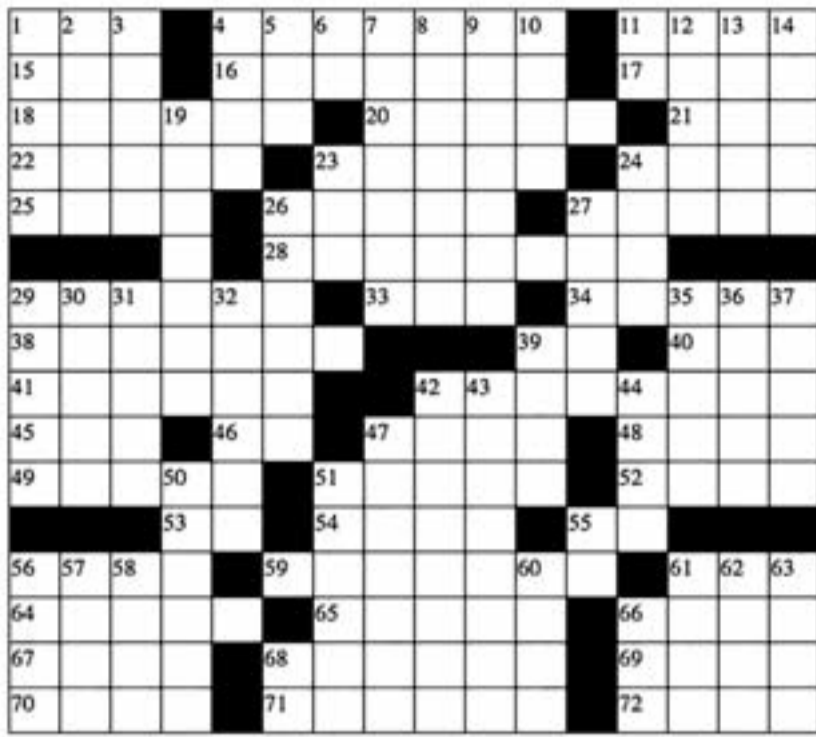
Jenan Khasroh, is a Kuwaiti artist, who wanted to know herself through her 30 paintings. 'Who am I?' is Khasroh's second exhibition through which the artist wanted to express how she felt, how a woman would feel in different shapes: love, strength, independence, sorrow and shock. — KUNA



Results of the semi finals of Kuwait University College debates resulted in the qualification of female law students from the college of medicine, to the finals. Head of the debate league information committee Amal Al-Kandari said the debates league was launched under the patronage of university rector Dr. Hussein Al-Ansary with seven teams from various colleges participating. The finals will be held today, at Abdallah Al-Jaber theater of Shuwaikh campus.

Stars

CROSSWORD 2076



ACROSS

1. A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
4. Patterned by having color applied with sweeping strokes.
11. Type genus of the Anatidae.
15. A chronic drinker.
16. Dried bark of the cascara buckthorn used as a laxative.
17. A characteristic state or mode of living.
18. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
20. (nautical) Of an anchor.
21. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
22. Fear resulting from the awareness of danger.
25. Tear down so as to make flat with the ground.
28. The activity of exerting your muscles in various ways to keep fit.
29. Any of various hard resins from trees of the family Dipterocarpaceae and of the genus Agathis.
33. A branch of the Tai languages.
34. The trail left by a person or an animal.
38. Drug (trade name Sutuprel) used to treat bronchial asthma and to stimulate the heart.
40. An index of the cost of all goods and services to a typical consumer.
41. A Black youth subculture and religious movement that arose in the ghettos of Kingston, Jamaica, in the 1950s.
45. Electrical conduction through a gas in an applied electric field.
46. A state in northwestern United States on the Pacific.
48. A Loloish language.
49. Largest crested screamer.
52. Chief port of Yemen.
53. A monarchy in northwestern Europe occupying most of the British Isles.
54. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
56. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
59. Small solitary wasp that produces galls on oaks and other plants.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. Rice cooked in well-seasoned broth with onions or celery and usually poultry or game or shellfish and sometimes tomatoes.
67. Exhibiting or restored to vigorous good health.
69. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
70. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
71. Wild sheep of semidesert regions in central Asia.
72. By bad luck.

DOWN

1. An annual award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for achievements in motion picture production and performance.
2. Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
3. (Greek mythology) A Titan who was forced by Zeus to bear the sky on his shoulders.
4. A fraudulent business scheme.
5. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
6. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
7. Having any of numerous bright or strong colors reminiscent of the color of blood or cherries or tomatoes or rubies.
8. Small genus of South American epiphytic or lithophytic cacti.
9. (Christianity) Holding views that disagree with accepted doctrine.
10. The lower house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
11. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
12. A rechargeable battery with a nickel cathode and a cadmium anode.
13. Lighted up by or as by fire or flame.
14. An area that includes seats for several people.
19. Acquire by preemption.
23. Charge against a citizen's person or property or activity for the support of government.
24. A short high tone produced as a signal or warning.
26. Indian nun and missionary (born in Albania) dedicated to helping the poor in India (1910-1997).
27. State in northeastern India.
30. The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
31. A small constellation in the polar region of the southern hemisphere near the Southern Cross and Chamaleon.
32. A member of a widespread group of Amerindians living in northeastern South America.
35. The cardinal number that is the sum of seven and one.
36. Speak one's opinion without fear or hesitation.
37. A toxic protein extracted from castor beans.
39. With no effort to conceal.
42. Any fern of the genus Davallia.
43. Water falling in drops from vapor condensed in the atmosphere.
44. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
47. Request for payment of a debt.
50. The southern part of the ancient Palestine succeeding the kingdom of Judah.
51. An athlete who bounds or leaps (as in basketball).
55. Minor or subordinate.
57. Dearly loved.
58. (usually followed by 'to') Having the necessary means or skill or know-how or authority to do something.
60. 100 hwei equal 1 kwana.
61. The food served and eaten at one time.
62. A small cake leavened with yeast.
63. A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
66. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
68. An informal term for a father.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find this to be one of those days you are in true admiration of the beauty that surrounds you. You may see beauty in everything and everyone you encounter today. This brings a sense of peace and harmony into your world and you may find this to be a delightful day. Be careful not to overspend today because this mood tends to make you want to bring home every beautiful treasure you find. Not the best day for a trip to the mall. You will want everything you see! Take a stroll in the park and enjoy the beauty of the nature that surrounds you. This will keep your money in your wallet and a sense of peace in your heart.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

After much thought and reflection you may come to realize how much you truly appreciate where you are in life. Through many challenging situations, and past you may not be very proud of, you have successfully been able to turn the stumbling blocks you have encountered into stepping stones. Seeing others go through some of the same hard times you have draws you to them and gives you a desire to reach out and help. You may feel especially kind to a close friend in need. This is a person you are led to take under your wing. You may find this person looks up to you. Your kind words will have more of an impact than you can ever imagine.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

It may seem if your sexual needs are coming to mind quite frequently. You crave power and control. The great mysteries of life and death seem are subjects you find intriguing. This is a time you long to mend fences and let bygones be bygones. This is a time you crave peace and lasting friendships.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

If you could snap your fingers and disappear that is just what you would do today. You need an escape from reality. Always being responsible is starting to wear you down. You work hard and never take any time for yourself. A massage, a good book, even a night out at a quiet restaurant would be a welcome break for you. You work hard and need to always remember to take a break. Take to reward yourself for all you do. You will find spoiling yourself a little will help you be much more productive in the long run.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have always had that strong shoulder that others seem to lean on. Today is no exception. You may find your phone ringing off of the hook with friends in need. Your advice is in high demand. The level of respect your friends have for you is to be envied. You are the friend others wish to have. Being the one everyone turns to in their time of need can be exhausting. Who is there when you need a friend to confide in? You may find someone older or in authority can offer you the support you need today.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Variety is the spice of life. This seems to be your motto at this time. You may find yourself drawn in different directions or drawn to new experiences. You can't seem to sit still. You are finding you are happiest when on the go. You have a desire for knowledge and you are gathering it from all new experiences. You may find others being drawn to you and expressing admiration toward your desire for knowledge and for the wisdom you possess. This day could bring a variety of emotions as well. You may go from feeling on top of the world to feeling misunderstood. Remember, Virgo, this day is about your pursuit knowledge and it is ok to do just what makes you happy.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A desire for the unusual seems to overcome you today. A desire to broaden your horizons and experience more of what this world has to offer you. The in and outs of your regular world seem to have you bored and unsatisfied. Planning a trip or planning an outing with friends will satisfy your needs. Spend time with friends from different cultures and religions. A new outlook on the same day to day issues will be enlightening. Your eccentric ways could bring a new outlook into their lives as well. Spend some time learning to appreciate the beauty that surrounds you.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

It seems the more independent you become the more you face conflict with those close to you. This is a time you may be trying too hard to be different. This could be met with disapproval from your peers. Not everyone is fond of the changes they see you making. This could cause a great deal of pressure in your life. You well know when making decisions under pressure you seem to freeze and never seem to do the right thing. Take your time. Relax and wait until some of the stress passes. Save the decision making for later. These issues are not matters of life and death.



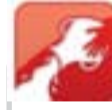
Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Communication is important. When it is put in writing, what you thought was a compliment could be interpreted as criticism. Something you thought was completely innocent or innocuous may be seen as derogatory. Misunderstandings that are in writing are difficult to overcome. They can result in a lifetime of hard feelings. Be thoughtful about what you put on social media. Consider the possible reactions before you send a text, a tweet, or an email.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This may be a great day to enjoy a good book or catch a movie. An escape from reality may be just what you need. This could clear your mind and leave you feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. You feel your most secure when surrounded by friends. You may be feeling a real need for a change in your life. You may feel as if you want to throw out the old and bring in the new. You have had this on your mind for a while and today seems the day you really begin to act on it. It seems a change in the right direction may bring great reward into your life.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Sexual needs seem to be a major focus for you now. There are just some things and some one you can not seem to get off of your mind. This is a great desire for some special time to be spent with a special someone. You desire power and control. These thoughts have your mind racing and you start focusing on a plan to accomplish your goals and satisfy your desires. The great mysteries of life and death fascinate you and you have a desire to live each day to the fullest. You may appear to be at ease and loose today. Everything seems to be working together, and you will be able to communicate and express yourself well.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is day you may feel as if you are spinning your wheels. It seems to be a very superficial day for you. Everything and everyone seems fake to you. It seems as if you are going through the motions, it is a very repetitive and senseless day for you. You find no depth nor meaning in your actions nor the ones around you. You can not seem to get beneath the surface. It may seem as if your feelings are going against what you value. You could find this difficult for you to deal with.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movie Actors 3

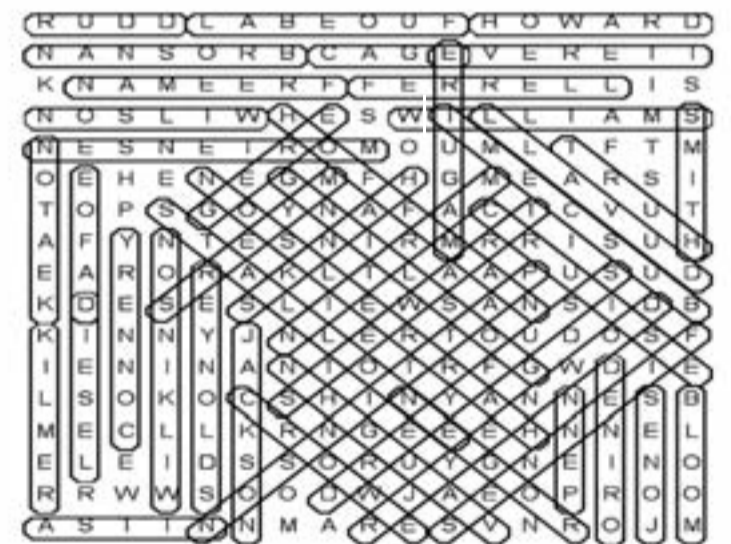
Find and circle all of the Movie Actors that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Forest Whitaker won an Oscar.



- ARKON, Alan
- BALE, Christian
- BANDERAS, Antonio
- BRODRICK, Jim
- BRODY, Adrian
- BYRNE, Gabriel
- CRAIG, Daniel
- DAY-LEWIS, Daniel
- EASTWOOD, Clint
- FIRTH, Colin
- FISHBURN, Laurence
- FRASER, Brendan
- GLOVER, Danny
- GOODING JR, Cuba
- HARRIS, Ed
- HAWKE, Ethan
- KINGSMLEY, Ben
- MACY, William H.
- MALKOVICH, John
- MCGREGOR, Ewan
- MURPHY, Eddie
- MURRAY, Bill
- NICHOLSON, Jack
- NORTON, Edward
- OLDMAN, Gary
- PACINO, Al
- FAXTON, Bill
- FITZ, Brad
- QUAD, Dennis
- RADCLIFFE, Daniel
- SINISE, Gary
- SLATER, Christian
- STRATHAIRN, David
- THORNTON, Billy Bob
- WALKEN, Christopher
- WASHINGTON, Denzel
- WHITAKER, Forest
- WILLIS, Bruce

Yesterday's Solution

Movie Actors 2



- ASTIN, Sean
- BLOOM, Orlando
- BROSNAN, Pierce
- BUSCEMI, Steve
- CAGE, Nicolas
- CONNERY, Sean
- CROWE, Russell
- CRUISE, Tom
- DAFOE, Willem
- DE NIRO, Robert
- DIESEL, Vin
- DOWNEY JR, Robert
- DREYFUSS, Richard
- DUVALL, Robert
- EVERETT, Rupert
- FERRELL, Will
- FIENNES, Ralph
- FREEMAN, Morgan
- GERE, Richard
- GOSLING, Ryan
- HANKS, Tom
- HARRRELSON, Woody
- HOFFMAN, Philip Seymour
- HOWARD, Terrence
- HURT, William
- JACKSON, Samuel L.
- JONES, Tommy Lee
- KEATON, Michael
- KILMER, Val
- LABEOUF, Shia
- MAGUIRE, Tobey
- MARTIN, Steve
- MORTENSEN, Viggo
- MYERS, Mike
- PATTINSON, Robert
- PENN, Sean
- REYNOLDS, Ryan
- ROSEN, Seth
- RUDD, Paul
- SMITH, Will
- STALLONE, Sylvester
- STEWART, Patrick
- VALZGHN, Vince
- WILKINSON, Tom
- WILSON, Owen

The hidden movie title is: KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2018



Muralist Caesar Perez uses spray paint to create his art on the side of a building as the Wynwood neighborhood prepares for the annual Art Basel art fair in Miami, Florida. Artists and art lovers from around the world flock to the Miami area from Dec 6 to the 9th to visit Art Basel as well as the satellite galleries that pop up throughout the city during the week. — AFP

Sierra Leone's 'peace diamond' dividend slow in coming

They were promised a "peace diamond" dividend in the Sierra Leone village of Koryardu after the stone they handed over for auction fetched \$6.5 million (5.7 million euros) a year ago. But they are still waiting to see the benefits. "Absolutely nothing happened," said Pastor Emmanuel Momoh, who manages the team of diggers that found the 709-carat diamond in March 2017, in eastern Kono province. The idea of handing the diamond over to the government to sell was that it would generate money to be ploughed back into developing the local community.

But at the village school, Peter Baimoi, who helps teach its about 190 pupils, said there was no sign of the promised government funding. With no qualified teachers in the village, parents rely on their children being taught by some of the better-educated local people who can read and write, like Baimoi who finished high school. They do it voluntarily, the pastor said. The government had promised that 15 percent of the total sale price—nearly one million dollars—would go into a fund for Koryardu to develop water, electricity, health and education. A year on, Koryardu still has no electricity and no clinic—and the nearest state school is in Koidu, about 14 kilometers (nine miles) away. The hamlet lies 10 kilometers from the main highway—and the road into the village is still impassable for six months of the year, during the rainy season.



In this file photo the Peace Diamond is on display at the Rapaport Group in midtown New York. — AFP

'Blood' and 'peace' diamonds

Sierra Leone, like some other African countries, is struggling to overcome the legacy of so-called "blood diamonds", sold by warlords to finance conflicts. The west African country suffered a devastating civil war between 1991 and 2002. The international community set up the Kimberly certification system in 2003 to eliminate the problem, regulating the sale and export of diamonds. Experts said Koryardu's diamond was the largest found in Sierra Leone in almost half a century. Momoh entrusted it to the administration of the country's

then president, Ernest Bai Koroma, who dubbed it the "peace diamond". The auction was originally scheduled to be held at the Central Bank in Freetown, but as the government thought the best offer made there—more than \$7 million—was not high enough, they took the sale abroad. The subsequent auction in New York netted \$6.5 million.

The legal option

Under the sale agreement, 60 percent of the proceeds went straight to the government, out of which the village was to get its share, and 40 percent to Momoh, he said. After sharing his proceeds with the five miners who found the stone, the village chief and the land owner, as well as donating 30 percent to charity and helping villagers, Momoh had about \$1 million net, he added.

Declaring the find to the government was the only legal option. The only other alternative would have been to sell to smugglers on the black market. Momoh also wanted the community to benefit from the proceeds. But there is still no sign of the money promised to the village. People need to see tangible benefits, said Victor Topoi, a teacher from Kono province, "not only on paper or in the news, but physically on the ground".

'Maintain trust'

The Koroma administration did sign a million-dollar contract with a Chinese company to build a new school and a clinic in the village. But that deal was frozen when the new president, Julius Maada Bio, took office in April. Ibrahim Satti Kamara, spokesman for the National Minerals Agency, said there had been some design issues that had now been sorted out.

Work on the project should begin before the end of the year, he said. "The good news is that the money is still available and ready to use for that project," he said. The authorities understand the community's frustration, he added. "We expect that by the time we continue with the work, that will change. "We are aware of the responsibility to maintain that trust, that's why we've been very careful on how the money is spent on the project," he added.

In the meantime, the Rapaport Group, the auction house that handled the New York sale, has stepped in to help, installing 50 solar panels in the village in November. It also has plans to bring in water filtration systems. "We want to make sure that (the villagers) see something tangible as the government gets its act together," the group's owner Martin Rapaport told AFP during a visit to Koryardu. But the money from the diamond sale also needs to materialise, said Momoh. "If the government doesn't fulfill its promises, I think that it will break the trust and people will not take their diamonds to the government any longer," he said. "Not only the people in Koryardu, but all over Kono." — AFP

Chanel sheds crocodile and snake skin

Chanel said yesterday would no longer use exotic animal pelts, making it the first luxury fashion house to turn its back on crocodile and lizard skin, a move hailed by animal rights groups. Its head of fashion Bruno Pavlovsky said that it "would no longer use exotic skins in our future creations", saying it was becoming more difficult to source high-quality pelts ethically. Handbags, coats and shoes made from snake, crocodile and stingray skin command premium prices, with Chanel handbags made from them reportedly selling for up to 9,000 euros (\$10,300).

Python skin bags were removed from Chanel's website

yesterday, although secondhand bags were still on sale from more than 5,500 euros from online resale sites. Chanel's veteran designer Karl Lagerfeld told the industry bible Women's Wear Daily that the French brand had chosen itself to drop exotic skins rather than it "being imposed on us. We did it because it's in the air." "It's a free choice," he added, insisting that he used fur so rarely at Chanel that he couldn't remember when it last featured on the catwalk.

Animal rights groups welcomed the move, with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) hailing Chanel as giving a lead to other luxury brands. "There's nothing trendy about using stolen skins from tormented animals for clothing or accessories," it said. "It's clear that the time is now for all companies, like Louis Vuitton, to follow Chanel's lead and move to innovative materials that spare countless animals a miserable life and a violent, painful death," PETA added.—AFP



(File photo shows jury members From left) Ileana D'Cruz, Laurent Cantet, Dakota Johnson, Talal Hadid, James Gray, Joana Hadjithomas, Daniel Bruhl, and Lynne Ramsay arrive at the Marrakech International Film festival, in the city of Marrakesh. — AFP

Director Gray lambasts 'imbecile' Trump at Marrakech film fest



James Gray, US director and president of the jury, arrives at the Marrakech International Film festival.

US director James Gray, chairman of this year's Marrakech film festival, on Monday lambasted his country's President Donald Trump as an "imbecile" and source of embarrassment for Americans abroad. "It's been very hard for me to be here because the president of the United States is a moron and a very dangerous moron," he told a news conference in the Moroccan city. "It's embarrassing. I feel very awkward and I feel I have to apologize every two minutes, because... I'm trying to represent the better part of my country not that one that is represented by an imbecile."

US actor Robert De Niro, an outspoken critic of Trump, received a tribute award at

the festival on Saturday. He used the occasion to launch a fresh tirade against the president 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'," De Niro said to loud applause from the audience. Gray, whose films include "Little Odessa" and "The Immigrants", with sci-fi thriller "Ad Astra" starring Brad Pitt, to be released next year, said De Niro's latest outburst against Trump was "for me... the moment" of the festival, which opened Friday. — AFP

Vietnam: The country of bravery, beauty and myths



By Sahar Moussa

Visiting Vietnam is a very unique experience for anyone who wants to be educated about culture, history and myths, and enjoy the beauty of nature at the same time. Vietnam is a country that is known for its resistance and strength of its people who went through a lot of loss, pain and courage. The minute you land in Hanoi, you will be dazzled by the rice fields and spacious landscapes. This country stood fiercely and won the war against the US because they were armed with myths and legends of their ancestors that talk about resistance, hope and magic. I had the privilege to visit north and south Vietnam along with a Kuwaiti media delegation, invited by Emirates airlines. It was an exceptional journey in two unique entities in the same country. In the north, you can sense that people are still living in the past, cherishing their ancestors and preserving the heritage. In the south, due to its growing economy and expensive shopping centers, people - especially the youth - tend to look to a more futuristic future.

Till this day, you can see the French influence, especially in the old buildings in Hanoi in the north of Vietnam that stand as witness of the French colonization in 1887. In the south, you can sense the American influence in terms of military, economy and expanding cities.

Vietnam is a very rich country when it comes to agriculture. It is one of the world's richest agricultural regions and is the second largest (after Thailand) exporter worldwide and the world's seventh largest consumer of rice. With a history of planting tea for over 2,000 years, Vietnam is one of the largest and oldest tea-producing countries in the world. As for coffee, its production has been a major source of income since the early 20th century. It is the second largest coffee producer in the world after Brazil, with robusta coffee accounting for 97 percent of Vietnam's total output.

I have been travelling for business trips with Emirates for a long time now, and my motto for this airline is and will always be: "If you want to be spoiled, travel with Emirates airlines". Our visit from Kuwait to Hanoi wouldn't have been as perfect and comfortable if it wasn't for this exceptional airline. This is not a surprise, because according to the 2019 list of the world's best airlines, Emirates won the in-flight entertainment award for the second time. The flight from Dubai to Hanoi is approximately six hours. When visiting Vietnam, you will have an incredible and unforgettable experience with its endless attractions and touristic sites, cultural landmarks and inexplicable yet delicious cuisine.

Here are some places that I strongly recommend if you are planning to visit Vietnam.



North Vietnam

Hanoi The Old Quarter

Hanoi, located on the banks of the Red River and the capital of Vietnam, is considered to be one of the most ancient capitals in the world. If you are the kind of person who enjoys street-cheap shopping such as shoes, souvenirs and handicrafts, the Old Quarter is the place to be. It is preferable to reach there on weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sunday). Hanoi weekend night markets usually start from around 7:00 am onwards and stretch from Hang Dao Street to the north to the edge of Dong Xuan Market.

Hanoi weekend night markets are full of life, music, roadside stalls, local food vendors, street artists and children playing games and enjoying their childhood away from the Internet and technology. It is very vibrant, colorful and illuminated with decorative lights, which make it easier for tourists to take pictures of the sites within the area. The Old Quarter's markets are like a never ending carnival during the weekends.

Forty percent of Vietnamese people work in the government sector, while 60 percent have their own business-



es. They are very good in selling things and bargaining. So most probably during your shopping there, the most enjoyable new skill that you will gain is bargaining technique - it is a way of life over there. In the evening, if you are tired from all the shopping, bargaining and the excitement, you can take a cyclo ride tour - famous three-wheeled carriers that take you around the Old Quarter to explore the exciting local daily life of Hanoians and get you back to your hotel.

Hoan Kiem Lake

Hoan Kiem Lake or Sword Lake as the legend says is considered to be the center of Hanoi, not only physically but also symbolically. The lake is full of tortoises, and because the tortoise is considered a sacred animal in Vietnam's culture (along with the dragon, phoenix and unicorn), Hoan Kiem Lake has become a holy place that nurtures tortoises. The lake also surrounds Ngoc Son Temple, a pagoda sitting in the center of a small island. The lake and temple are probably the most famous places in Hanoi to rest and enjoy the view, especially since they offer plenty of trees and shaded spots and are a great place to sit back and watch the locals.

'Standing newspaper'

After a leisurely walk in the early morning around the lake, don't forget to stop at the corners to see locals reading the "Standing Newspaper". The aim of the standing newspaper is to serve the people and not for private benefit. Every morning at 6:00 am before going to work, people simply stand and read the paper on the stands, or they can listen to the news through speakers in the streets while they are drinking their famous coffee or tea.

The Temple of Literature

With the special beauty and the harmony of architectural works with historical value, the Temple of Literature is one of the most favorite attractions in Hanoi. Founded in 1076, Quoc Tu Giam was established within a temple to



educate Vietnam's royalty, mandarins and members of the elite. The university functioned for an incredible 700 years, and its gardens and well-preserved architecture offer a fascinating glimpse into Vietnam's past.

You can get there in around 10 minutes by taxi from Hoan Kiem Lake and one hour if walking. It is Vietnam's oldest imperial academy under the feudal courts and the first national university. The temple was built in dedication to Confucian philosophy and still holds a spiritual significance for each generation of students and educators in Vietnam at present. The temple has been chosen as Hanoi's symbol of wisdom, talent and study. One cannot explore the depth of Hanoi if skipping a visit to the very symbol of this old city.

Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum

Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum in Ba Dinh Square is also considered an important touristic attraction in Hanoi. It is the final resting place of Ho Chi Minh, the most iconic and popular leader of Vietnam, known to his people as 'Uncle Ho'. His body is preserved in a glass case at the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum in central Hanoi.



Ba Dinh Square in front of the mausoleum is noteworthy as the site where President Ho declared the independence of Vietnam on September 2, 1945. The square is composed of 240 patches of grass divided by intersecting concrete pathways - make sure not to walk on the grass. The spacious and clean square is an excellent place to go jogging, do yoga or simply enjoy walking in a peaceful environment.

The puppet show

You can know and feel the essence of a country through its arts and culture. You cannot visit Vietnam without watching the famous puppet show or the traditional water puppet. In fact, the Vietnamese call themselves the water civilization because of the water puppet



shows that they have created. It is a famous Vietnamese art with over 800 years of history. The tradition of water puppet theatre stems from a time when rice paddy fields were flooded and villagers would entertain people by standing in waist-deep water with the puppets performing over the water.

Using large rods to support the puppets, it appears as if they are moving across the water with the puppeteers hidden behind a screen. Performances are accompanied by a Vietnamese orchestra playing traditional music using drums, wooden bells, horns, bamboo flutes and cymbals. There are also authentic Vietnamese operatic songs telling the story being acted out by the puppets. Seeing puppets come to life performing traditional folklore, legends and historical tales is an act that gives you a glimpse of ancient history.

Halong Bay

No doubts Vietnam is an interesting country filled with myths and legends, which makes it a unique place. If you want to travel back in time where dragons and brave men fought using magic and fire, then a cruise trip to Halong Bay is the answer.

In ancient Vietnamese, Halong literally means "descending dragon" and originates from a legend of this ancient land. The legend says that during the old time when the country was newly formed, Vietnamese had to fight against fierce invaders coming from the north through the sea. Feeling sorry for the country, the Jade Emperor sent Mother Dragon and her children to earth to help ancient Vietnamese people defend the country.

While the mighty enemies were attacking the mainland, the Mother Dragon and her children suddenly appeared and incinerated the enemies with their divine fire and giant emeralds. The emeralds from the dragon's mouth were scattered around the battlefield on the sea and formed an invincible defensive wall that left the enemy battleship fleet sinking. Thanks to the dragons, the northern invaders were finally swept away and peace finally came back the Southeast Asian country once again. After thousands of years, the wall of emerald turned into islands and islets of different sizes and shapes.

After the battle, the Mother Dragon and her children didn't go back to the heavens, but stayed in the mortal world and turned into human form and help people in planting, cropping, raising cattle, reclaiming and expanding the country.

To remember the help of Mother Dragon and her children, the people named the bay where the Mother Dragon descended "Ha Long or Halong", and the bay where her children descended "Bai Tu Long", which means "Thanks to the Dragon's children". This legend is also a part of the general belief that Vietnamese people have dragon origins. (Taken from www.halongbay.info/news/the-legend-of-halong-bay.html)

You can discover one of Vietnam's most spectacular northern jewels with a private Halong Bay day cruise. If you are staying in the center of Hanoi, you can depart from the buzzing streets of Hanoi in the early morning, leaving the city buildings behind in exchange for the beauty of the Red River Delta. On your way, you will pass by smaller towns and farmlands, enjoying views of the typical Vietnamese countryside.

After reaching, you can board a private junk-style boat, cast off and cruise across the emerald green waters of UNESCO-listed Halong Bay. You can enjoy sitting in the dining area or in the open-air top deck to admire the scenery and the refreshing sea breeze. You will be navigating around the bay's 1,500 limestone islands, providing an opportunity to see these remarkable, geologic wonders from up-close and afar.

There are several caves you can discover there, but the one I saw was Thien Cung Cave (Heaven Cave), which is



located in the north of Dau Go Cave. The cave has numerous stalactites and stalagmites with special and strange shapes such as dragon, phoenix and four pillars. Entering the cave is like entering a portal to another time and era.

After enjoying this phenomenal experience, you can enjoy lunch that will be served on board. Personalized service by the ship's crew will be offered while feasting on delicious, fresh seafood and a selection of Vietnamese dishes. After dining, the ship will begin circling back to port, and you can end this incredible day by relaxing on the open-air top deck while enjoying more breathtaking views and the refreshing salty sea air.

Pearl farm

If you are a pearl lover, then you have come to the right place. Before going to the Halong Bay cruise, make sure to tell your tour guide to make a stop at the Legend Pearl Halong Bay showroom. Vietnam is a producer of Akoya cultured pearls. Many pearl farms are located in region around Halong Bay. Before entering the showroom, you will see the pearl harvesting and preparation process that goes into making the shiny pearl jewelry you wear. The prices are not as cheap as you think but slightly cheaper due to the cheap labor.

South Vietnam

Your journey will not be complete without visiting south Vietnam. It will take you approximately two hours by air from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City. South Vietnam has another flavor than the north. You can feel it in the air, the weather is slightly cooler and the people are different.



Cu Chi Tunnel

Before visiting the Cu Chi Tunnel, make sure to be well-prepared and wear long sleeves, pants and a hat to cover your head, because you will be doing some crawling while experiencing the tiny tunnels that Viet Cong soldiers used in order to survive. It is definitely not for claustrophobic people, because these tunnels are not a joke at all.

At Cu Chi Tunnel, you can find facts about the tunnel with details of well-known victories, and also visit structures that simulate the former liberated area of Cu Chi during 1960-1975. The relics of Cu Chi Tunnel are preserved at Ben Duoc and Ben Dinh. Ben Dinh tunnel is the one I had the opportunity to visit - it has historic revolutionary relics recognized by the state as national relics. It was the base of the Cu Chi District Party Committee during the resistance to the US. It was also a place for dining, living and meeting, as well as a unique battle deployment with contributions to fighting the enemy and national salvation.

get to buy a few herbal medicines and tea on your way out - trust me, you will not regret it.

Independence Palace

'From Norodom Palace to Independence Palace 1868-1966' explores the nearly century-long history of the building that once served as the seat of French colonial government in Cochinchina. It subsequently witnessed many dramatic episodes in the rise and decline of the government of Ngo Dinh Diem, the founding leader of Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam).

The Independence Palace was designed by architect Ngo Viet Thu, the first and only Vietnamese man to win the Grand Prix de Rome in 1955. The palace is a harmonious combination of wind, water and sunlight. It reflects the Eastern traditional philosophy and Vietnamese national characters. The Independence Palace is not only a special symbol of architectural art, but also an important historical Vietnamese relic. The palace is pretty huge and it will take you at least two hours to roam it.



quences inflicted on the Vietnamese people by foreign aggressive forces. Simultaneously, the museum appeals to everybody to oppose unjust wars, preserve global peace and promote friendship and solidarity among nations.

It consists of three floors divided into rooms. The ground floor has an open-air exhibition on the imprisonment system during the Vietnam War and international support for the Vietnamese people in their resistance war. On the second floor you have a conference room, war crimes section and Agent Orange effects and Agent Orange consequences through children's painting. The third floor has exhibits on the historical truth, requiem, Vietnam war and peace, Agent Orange during the Vietnam War and white doves.

If you have more time to spend in southern Vietnam, you can also visit these interesting places: The Old Saigon Post office, Dong Khoi Street (formerly Rue Catinat), Continental Hotel, City Hall and Ben Thanh Market. Definitely, don't miss out the Saigon Opera House, which is also known as the Municipal Theater. The building stands as one of the impressive sight in Saigon -during both night and day. Saigon Opera House was built in 1898 by the French architect Eugene Ferret in the "flamboyant" style of the French Third Republic. My advice to you is to go to the entrance, ask about the night's show, book a ticket and enjoy the memorable experience of traditional and modern art that the talented Vietnamese artistes present.



After you finish your incredible and eye-opening tour, visit a shooting range at your own expense to try firing an AK-47 or MK 16 machine gun, then pass by the souvenir shops to seek closure for this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The FITO Museum

As early as the 2nd century BC, Vietnamese have used hundreds of plant species for medicinal purposes. Statistics from the Vietnam ministry of health show that 1,800 medicinal plant species have been found in Vietnam. So if you are interested in herbs and medicine, the FITO Museum is a must-see. A unique blend of traditional and modern architecture, the museum includes a ground floor and five upper floors that are home to 18 exhibition rooms.

The museum has an impressive collection of 3,000 items relevant to traditional Vietnamese medicine dating back to the Stone Age, along with implements used to prepare traditional medicine such as knives, grinders, mortars and pestles, pots and jars. You can also find books and documents on traditional Vietnamese medicine. Don't for-

War Remnants Museum

The War Remnants Museum is one of Ho Chi Minh City's most enticing cultural and tourist sites. Founded on Sept 4, 1975, the War Remnants Museum is a member of the International Network of Museums for Peace (INMP) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM). It's a unique museum in Vietnam to systematically study, collect, conserve and display exhibits on war crimes and conse-



Maybe the most complex and touchy feeling that I experienced was at the War Remnants Museum. Each and every room exhibits photographs of young soldiers, women and children who lost their lives during the war. When entering the rooms, you can sense the silence, heaviness and sadness that weigh on visitors reading the names and dates of each photograph taken, a reminder of the violence, brutality and cruelty of humankind and war. In my opinion, the museum is a very important place to see and visit to understand the bravery and suffering of the Vietnamese people up-close and personal.



Lifestyle | Travel

Tips on the road:

Tip 1: If you're a first-time visitor to Vietnam, I recommend you to research the history and background of the country before travelling, to understand the dynamics of the country in order to appreciate it more.

Tip 2: The official currency of Vietnam is the Vietnamese dong. Most shops and hotels accept the US dollar. It's handy if you bring some dollars. It is harder to find a place to exchange money in the north than the south. In case you need to withdraw money from an ATM, it's better to do it at an international bank. You will need an average budget of \$40 to \$50 per day.

Tip 3: The internet is very fast. It is better to get a line with internet or only internet if you wish from the airport, it is easy, fast and cheap.

Tip 4: Travel light and take light clothes and your most comfortable walking shoes, because if you really want to enjoy Vietnam, you have to explore it on foot - and trust me, there is a lot of walking.

Tip 5: It is a must to try their cold or hot tea and coffee along with their dry fruits that they serve along with the tea or coffee. You will never taste anything that good elsewhere. Don't forget to buy several packs of coffee with its specially-designed kettle and herbal tea. Also if you like hand-made art, they are really known for their artistry in making amazing drawings on boxes, it would be a good souvenir for yourself and your beloved ones.

Tip 6: Whenever you are in souvenir shops or any shop, bargain, bargain and bargain.

Tip 7: Where to stay? I had the privilege to stay at two hotels. The first one is Hotel De l'Opera Hanoi M Gallery and the second one is Mejectic Hotel -Ho Chi Minh City. I strongly recommend them both. Excellent location, amazing and luxurious architecture, clean and the service is awesome.

Tip 8: It is rare but not impossible to find halal or Arab restaurants - just make sure to do your research and Google the restaurants around you beforehand.



Emirates and Ho Chi Minh City cooperate to grow tourism from Kuwait

Emirates, the world's largest international airline, has pledged its commitment to supporting tourism into Vietnam from Kuwait, with a special focus on Ho Chi Minh City, by signing a marketing agreement to promote tourism to the city.

Nguyen Thanh Phong, the Chairman of the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, led a

high-level delegation and working visit to Kuwait on 29 October 2018. On this occasion, Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee, Department of Tourism, Department of External Relations and Investment and Trade Promotion Centre of Ho Chi Minh City (ITPC), Embassy of Vietnam in the State of Kuwait, in cooperation with the Representative of the

Ministerial Authorities in the State of Kuwait, as well as trade and investment partners from both countries, held a conference on "Trade, Investment and Tourism Promotion into Ho Chi Minh City in Kuwait 2018."

At the conference, Emirates signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate tourism to Vietnam's largest and most visited city. The airline will mutually collaborate with the Ho Chi Minh City Tourism Promotion Center (HTPC) to promote Ho Chi Minh City as a tourism destination.

The agreement was signed by Omar Al-Banna, Emirates' Area Manager for Kuwait and Iraq and Le Truong Hien Hoa- Director of Ho Chi Minh City Tourism Promotion Center, in the presence of Nguyen Thanh Phong, Chairman of Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee; Trinh Minh Nanh, Ambassador of Vietnam in Kuwait; Phan Nguyen Nhu Khue; Deputy head delegation of National Assembly Delegation of Ho Chi Minh City; and Vo Van Hoan, Chief of staff, Office of Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee; Bui Ta Hoang Vu, Director of Ho Chi Minh City Department of Tourism.

Commenting on the signing of the MoU, Omar Al-Banna, Emirates Manager in Kuwait & Iraq said, "Vietnam is a very important destination within Emirates' network and we are pleased to collaborate on joint promotional activities that will leverage the route's success and increase passenger traffic to Ho Chi Minh City from Kuwait."

The agreement is also part of a series of activities that will strengthen the relationship

between Vietnam and Kuwait. We aim to create more demand for travel from Kuwait to Ho Chi Minh City, and we look forward to partnering with the Ho Chi Minh City Tourism Promotion Centre to showcase the city's offerings as a tourist destination and key business hub for passengers traveling for both leisure and business. Through a dynamic joint program to include promotional events, roadshows and tourism exchanges, Emirates hopes to make a significant contribution to boosting tourism and trade in Vietnam."



Emirates has enjoyed tremendous success in its operations to Vietnam with non-stop daily flights from Dubai to both Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Since launching in 2012 with a service to Ho Chi Minh City, Emirates has carried more than 1.25 million passengers on the route. The Agreement will see promotional activities such as facilitating trade and business familiarization trips to attend the Hosted Buyer Program at The 15th Ho Chi Minh City International Travel Expo 2019, which will be

held in September 2019 from 5th to 7th, attendance of other tourism trade shows and fairs, trade familiarization trips, holding presentations and workshops, promotional collaboration to be undertaken jointly by Emirates and the relevant tourism bodies in Ho Chi Minh City, amongst other initiatives.

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council's report "Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2018 - Vietnam," the total contribution to Vietnam's travel and tourism to GDP was USD20.6 billion in 2017, accounting for 9.4% of total GDP, and is expected to grow by 6.2% in 2018. Travel and Tourism in Vietnam directly supported almost 2.5 million jobs (4.6% of total employment) which is forecasted to rise by 1.9% in 2018 and a further 1.5% per annum to reach 2,917,000 jobs (4.9% of total employment) in 2028. In terms of importance of the travel and tourism sector's total contribution to GDP, Vietnam ranked in the 47th position out of 185 countries in 2017 and ranks 31st in terms of forecasted growth of the sector for 2018.

In addition to the daily service to Ho Chi Minh City since 2012, Emirates also launched its daily service to Hanoi with a stopover in Yangon in 2016, which became a direct flight between Dubai and Hanoi, one year later. The daily services to both Vietnamese cities are operated by Boeing 777-300ER aircraft in 2-class configurations, with an overall capacity of 5,992 seats per week between Economy and Business Class. Emirates has a fleet of 270 aircraft and flies to 162 destinations in 86 countries and territories across six continents.



Emirates has pledged its commitment to supporting tourism into Vietnam from Kuwait, with a special focus on Ho Chi Minh City, by signing a marketing agreement to promote tourism to the city. The agreement was signed by Omar Al Banna, Emirates' Area Manager for Kuwait and Iraq and Mr. Le Truong Hien Hoa- Director of Ho Chi Minh City Tourism Promotion Center.

Classifieds

Wednesday, December 5, 2018

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 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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 Fax: (+965) 24348714
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy and Visibility will improve gradually with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h with a chance for fog forming over some areas.

WEATHER WARNING			Fog	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 04/12/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	22 °C	14 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	23 °C	14 °C		
ABDALY	23 °C	13 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	23 °C	12 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	22 °C	14 °C		
SALMIYAH	22 °C	15 °C		
AHMADI	21 °C	15 °C		
NUWASIB	23 °C	14 °C		
WAFRA	23 °C	12 °C		
SALMY	20 °C	11 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	12/05	Partly cloudy to cloudy	25 °C	16 °C	S-SE	12 - 32 km/h
Thursday	12/06	Cloudy to partly cloudy with a slight chance for rain that might be thunders at times with a	26 °C	17 °C	SE-NW	20 - 45 km/h
Friday	12/07	Partly cloudy with a chance for light rain	23 °C	16 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Saturday	12/08	Mostly Sunny	23 °C	14 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 24 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:03
Sunrise	06:27
Zuhr	11:38
Asr	14:30
Sunset	16:49
Isha	18:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	00 °C
MIN. Temp.	00 °C
MAX. RH	00 %
MIN. RH	00 %
MAX. Wind	N 00 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation For Filipino ONLY Farwaniya block 1, near gulfmart. Available 25 of November, Contact 94418396 or 69972330

EMERGENCY
 112

ABSCONDING

Eirle Lu Dubinan Veronic, holder of Civil ID number 285010190372, has been absconding from her employer. Anyone hiring her will be held legally accountable. Kindly contact: 6 5 7 5 0 0 7

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 5/12/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 5/12/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	341	Sohag	00:05	MSR	6553	ABD	13:55
JZR	406	Kochi	00:10	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	253	Amman	00:40	RBG	218	Asyut	14:25
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KIS	6033	Mashhad	14:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	IRC	527	Mashhad	14:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	QTR	1079	Alexandria	14:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	MSR	382	Doha	15:00
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	FDB	060	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:05
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:40	GFA	222	Dubai	15:10
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	673	Bahrain	15:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	CLX	792	Hanoi	15:40
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	743	Dammam	15:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
JZR	502	Lahore	03:35	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
CLX	6002	Luxembourg	04:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
KAC	796	Madinah	04:10	JZR	261	Beirut	16:40
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	105	Bahrain	16:55
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	KAC	504	Beirut	17:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
BAW	157	London	07:05	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:35	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	253	Amman	18:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	JZR	721	Alexandria	19:20
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:45	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	RIA	641	Amman	20:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
IRC	6511	Lamerd	09:50	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:10	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
SYR	341	Latakia	11:00	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
JZR	122	Dubai	11:20	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	RBG	214	Sohag	21:30
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	11:55	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
MSC	415	Sohag	12:10	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	JAV	622	Amman	22:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:15
IRC	6552	ABD	13:00	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
KIS	6032	Mashhad	13:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
IRC	526	Mashhad	13:30	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
RBG	213	Sohag	13:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05	JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
CLX	792	Luxembourg	14:10	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
				SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45

Americans pay respects to late president Bush at US Capitol

WASHINGTON: The remains of George HW Bush lay in state yesterday at the US Capitol amid a groundswell of tributes honoring the 41st US president. Since Monday evening, Americans have been quietly filing past the flag-draped coffin in the Capitol rotunda to pay their respects to Bush, who died Friday aged 94 at his home in Houston. His passing has led Americans to reflect on his life of duty and service to country as a leader of the so-called "Greatest Generation".

Only the second president to see his son follow him to the Oval Office, the Republican stalwart is being honored with four days of commemorations and services in Washington and in Texas, where he will be buried tomorrow. President Donald Trump is scheduled to attend a state funeral today at Washington National Cathedral - the first presidential funeral since Gerald Ford died in 2006.

Late Monday, after Bush relatives and dignitaries had gone, the president was driven from the White House up to Capitol Hill. With first lady Melania at his side, Trump saluted, and they stood at Bush's casket for about a minute. They exited the rotunda with little fanfare. Bush never warmed to Trump, and he had let it be known that he did not vote for him in 2016. Trump himself has criticized the elder Bush on the campaign trail.

But on Monday, Trump wrote members of Congress to hail Bush as a man who "led a life that exemplified what is truly great about America". "President Bush worked selflessly throughout his long life to bring about a world of justice and lasting peace," he wrote. The White House also extended an invitation to Bush's family to stay at Blair House - the president's guesthouse - while they are in Washington for events surrounding his funeral.

Bush was a decorated World War II fighter pilot, onetime ambassador to China, former head of the Central Intelligence

Agency, and vice president to Ronald Reagan before winning the White House. Military pallbearers carried the flag-draped casket into the rotunda as a fiery sunset bathed Washington in a glow. The somber ceremony was attended by his son George W Bush - the nation's 43rd president - and other relatives, dignitaries and more than 100 members of the House and Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell lauded Bush - who occupied the White House from 1989 to 1993 - as a patriot who steered the country as straight as he had piloted his World War II airplane. "He kept us flying high and challenged us to fly higher still. And he did it with modesty and kindness that would have been surprising in someone one tenth as tough and accomplished as he was," he said.

Hands on hearts

Bush was transported aboard the presidential Boeing 747 - made available at Trump's direction - from Houston to Joint Base Andrews, in Maryland. In Houston, relatives including his presidential son stood with hands on their hearts as the casket was carried to the aircraft. Bush is the 12th US president to lie in state in the rotunda. Just three months earlier, the honor was accorded to senator John McCain, a former Republican presidential nominee who died of brain cancer.

Hundreds of members of the public began quietly filing in to the Capitol late Monday to pay their final respects. Among them was Kim Frinzell, a government employee who did not vote for Bush but grew to respect his accomplishments, including signing the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. "The fact that he could cross party lines, and did that so gracefully, especially after his presidency, to me is really inspiring and a lesson that our current administration can learn from," Frinzell, 56, told AFP.



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump arrive to pay their respects to former US President George HW Bush as he lies in state in the US Capitol's rotunda on Monday. — AFP

Bush will be honored at a state funeral service at the cathedral today, which Trump has declared a national day of mourning. Bill Clinton will be among the living US presidents to attend, along with dozens of foreign leaders including Germany's Angela Merkel. Former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney said he would deliver one of several eulogies, at Bush's request. Tomorrow, Bush will be interred at the George HW Bush Presidential Library Center in College

Station, Texas, next to his wife Barbara, who died in April, and their daughter Robin who died of leukemia at age three.

Bush's political locus was foreign policy and America's place in the world, and he claimed successes including navigating the end of the Cold War and marshalling a global coalition to eject Iraqi troops from Kuwait in the first Gulf War. But despite Bush's record approval ratings after "Desert Storm", he disappointed Americans on the

domestic front. The US economy slid into recession in 1990, and recovery was sluggish, conditions which contributed to his 1992 election defeat by Clinton. House Speaker Paul Ryan alluded to that political setback in his Capitol remarks and said Bush handled defeat with grace. "He was the first president to teach me that in a democracy sometimes you fall short - and that how you handle that is just as important as how you win," Ryan said. — AFP

AC boom in India to make...

Continued from Page 1

and 60 percent in China, up from virtually zero 30 years ago. But India's AC market is catching up fast, seeing double-digit growth in the last decade as incomes rise and electricity supplies become more reliable. "It's no longer a luxury product but a necessity," said Kanwal Jeet Jawa, India head of Japanese manufacturer Daikin, whose factory in Rajasthan churns out 1.2 million AC units per year. "ACs increase productivity and life expectancy. Everyone deserves an AC," he told AFP.

The irony is that as humans try to stay cool, the refrigerants inside AC units and the generation of electricity needed to power the appliances are exacerbating global warming. In addition, studies - including by the World Health Organization and UN-Habitat - show that the heat-generating motors inside AC units can themselves push up temperatures in urban areas, where the appliances are widely used, by a degree or more.

As demand grows, the amount of energy consumed globally by AC units could triple by 2050, requiring new electricity capacity equivalent to the combined current capacity of the US, the EU and Japan, the International Energy Agency says. India currently generates about two-thirds of its electricity with coal and gas, and despite ambitious plans for renewable energy the country is set to remain highly dependent on hydrocarbons for decades to come.

One possible source of hope is if Indians buy more energy-efficient AC units, and manufacturers like Daikin are promoting these over older technologies. But they are pricier, and Indian consumers that have AC are slow to upgrade, partly due to an ingrained culture of repairing devices rather than buying new ones. In June the Indian government issued an "advisory" to AC makers to keep the default setting at 24 degrees Celsius to save billions of units of electricity and reduce emissions. But for now the measure is not mandatory, and with many people expressing outrage it is unclear how



NEEMRANA, India: This photograph taken on Nov 23, 2018 shows an Indian worker on the production line at the Daikin air conditioning plant. — AFP

effective it will be.

As the latest international climate change powwow COP24 got under way in Poland this week, Behror electronics store owner Ram Vikas Yadav says his customers have bigger worries than global warming. "People want ACs to keep their homes cool," Yadav, who says his sales have rocketed 150 percent every year, told AFP. "This year I sold 300 ACs." Yadav said rural families in particular, attracted by aggressive marketing by manufacturers, are ditching traditional ways to cool their homes. These include ceiling fans or air coolers - a fan-run device that blows cool air off water-soaked pads, which are often a haven for disease-carrying mosquitoes. Laundryman Kumar too feels the summers have become hotter than usual in recent years, pushing him to invest in AC. "Scientists keep on saying such things but I can at least have some sound sleep now." — AFP

ing gravel from roads. To force such compensation, article 2 of the insurance law should be amended, Suwait said.

The Assembly's foreign relations committee began yesterday looking into the issue of billions of dinars of development loans offered by Kuwait to dozens of countries, head of the committee said yesterday. MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said acting on an assignment by the Assembly, the committee invited head of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and other top officials to study the loans. The committee will focus its discussion on the political benefits made by Kuwait through the soft loans and the compliance of debtor countries to repay.

give details on how far Iran would like to increase that range, according to the Fars report. Tehran insists its missile program is purely defensive but has threatened to disrupt oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz in the Gulf, if Washington tries to strangle its exports.

At the weekend, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo condemned what he described as Iran's testing of a medium-range ballistic missile capable of carrying multiple warheads as a violation of the agreement on Tehran's nuclear program. Iran has repeatedly said its missile program is not up for negotiation. — Agencies

Macron retreats on fuel tax hikes...

Continued from Page 1

Rescinding the January increase - three euro cents for unleaded and six cents for diesel - was a core demand of the demonstrators, alongside a higher minimum wage and the return of a wealth tax on high-earners which was abolished last year. Yet many said after Philippe's speech that they had no intention of calling off their protests and it remains to be seen if the government's proposals are enough to stem the protests. "Six months is nothing. They hope we'll now go home but we're not going to move," said Lionel Rambeau, 41, a welder at a blockade halting access to a fuel depot outside Le Mans in western France. "We want Macron and his entire government to resign."

The government is hoping to stave off another day of running riots and burning cars like on Saturday, when more than 400 people were arrested in the capital. "If there is another day of protests, it must be declared in advance and must take place calmly," Philippe said yesterday. Mass street protests have repeatedly forced French presidents into U-turns, something that Macron had vowed to avoid in his quest to "transform" the French economy and state. The concessions yesterday could have implications for other planned reforms, including changes to the civil service and a major and highly controversial shake-up of the

Israel targets Hezb tunnels...

Continued from Page 1

Israeli army spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Conricus said the "attack tunnels" were not yet operational. He declined to say how many were detected, when they reached Israeli territory and how they would be destroyed. Later the military specified it had located one such tunnel dug from a home in the area of Kafir Kela in southern Lebanon that crossed into its territory and was working to "neutralize" it. The tunnel stretched some 200 m, at a depth of around 25 m, Conricus said. The area around the Israeli town of Metula has been declared a closed military zone, with the army distributing images of heavy machinery digging into the ground.

Israel labeled the operation "Northern Shield" and said all activities would take place within Israeli territory, though they still raised the risk of a response from Hezbollah. A UN peacekeeping force which monitors the border region said it had increased patrols but noted the area remained calm. Lebanon's army also said it was monitoring the situation closely, while Hezbollah had not reacted.

According to Conricus, the tunnels were part of a Hezbollah plan from 2012 to "shift the battlefield to Israel" and "conquer the Galilee" in a future conflict by infiltrating its territory. In 2013 the army acted on reports Hezbollah was digging tunnels, but failed to locate any, he said. Following the 2014 war between Israel and Gaza, in which Islamist movement Hamas used cross-border attack tunnels, the army said it found "Hezbollah and Hamas share knowledge" and soon after began intensive work to prevent tunnels from Lebanon.

The military has used various means to collapse or fill in tunnels from the Gaza Strip. No tunnels from Lebanon include exit points within Israel, the army said.

pensions system.

A new poll by the Ifop-Fiducial survey group yesterday showed the former investment banker's approval rating at a record low of 23 percent. "Eventually he backed down, which is going to divide the (yellow vest) movement, but it also risks dividing his own political base," said Jerome Sainte-Marie of the PollingVox survey group. Macron has not spoken publicly about Saturday's destruction in Paris since his return from a G20 summit in Argentina on Sunday, and his office said yesterday he would not comment "for the time being".

The "yellow vest" movement, named after the high-visibility jackets worn by supporters, emerged on social media in October after months of swelling anger over rising fuel prices. It quickly grew into wider protests against Macron, whom many accuse of representing a Parisian elite with little understanding of their monthly struggle to make ends meet. A centrist, Macron was elected in May 2017 on a pro-business platform that included measures inciting companies to invest to create jobs. Immediately after coming to power, he pushed through tax cuts for entrepreneurs and high-earners - an "original sin" for his critics.

The "yellow vest" protests have blocked highways and fuel depots around the country, causing headaches for businesses and fuel shortages in some regions. The protests have spread to around a hundred schools nationwide, which were still partially or totally blocked yesterday by teenagers voicing frustration over university entrance reforms. Four people have been killed during the protests, including an 80-year-old woman who died in hospital on Sunday after being hit by a tear gas canister in Marseille. — AFP

Conricus said that while the army has enhanced its presence in the north, it has not summoned reserve soldiers. He said the military "holds the Lebanese government responsible for all activities perpetrated in Lebanon towards Israel".

Netanyahu has spoken of a sensitive security situation in recent days without providing details, particularly after defense minister Avigdor Lieberman quit over a controversial Gaza ceasefire last month. Lieberman's resignation threatened to provoke early elections, but Netanyahu has held his coalition together and is clinging to a one-seat majority in parliament. The prime minister, who has since assumed the role of defense minister, said at the time that holding elections would be "irresponsible" due to the undefined security threats.

His comments were seen by some as an attempt to save his government, with polls showing wide disapproval among the Israeli public of his handling of the Gaza flare-up in November. Netanyahu is also facing further political pressure after Israeli police on Sunday recommended he and his wife Sara be indicted for bribery, the third such recommendation against the premier in recent months.

Conricus rejected suggestions of politics influencing the announcement. Netanyahu has pledged to stop Iran from entrenching itself militarily in Syria and to keep it from transferring advanced weapons to its ally Hezbollah in Lebanon. There has been increased attention in Israel in recent days over Israeli officials' concerns regarding Iranian activity in Lebanon. Israel has carried out hundreds of air strikes in Syria against what it says are Iranian military targets and deliveries of advanced arms to Hezbollah.

However, a friendly fire incident in Syria in September that led to the downing of a Russian plane by Syrian air defenses during an Israeli strike has complicated Israeli operations there. Russia subsequently upgraded Syrian air defenses with the delivery of the advanced S-300 system, which Damascus had said last month would make Israel "think carefully" before carrying out further air raids. — AFP

Rain probe to take 2 months...

Continued from Page 1

The lawmaker said in his proposal that floods are part of natural disasters, while losses from road gravel are caused by bad infrastructure and people must be compensated by insurance companies in both cases. He said insurance companies should also be forced to compensate people for traffic accidents caused by fly-

Rouhani vows US won't stop Iran...

Continued from Page 1

Iran's military has cited 2,000 km as the current missile range, and said US bases in Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, plus US aircraft carriers in the Gulf, were within range. Nasirzadeh did not

Sports

Nuggets snap Toronto Raptors' eight-game winning streak

Clippers ride 77-point first half to win over Pelicans

TOTONTO: Nikola Jokic had a triple-double with 23 points, 15 assists and 11 rebounds and made three free throws in the final seconds as the visiting Denver Nuggets ended the Toronto Raptors' eight-game winning streak with a 106-103 win Monday night. Jokic made a free throw with seven seconds remaining to end a tie and made two more with 5.6 seconds left for the final margin, extending Denver's winning streak to six games. Jamal Murray added 21 points for the Nuggets, and Juan Hernangomez and Malik Beasley had 15 each. Kawhi Leonard led Toronto with 27 points and had eight rebounds. Serge Ibaka added 15 points.

CLIPPERS 129, PELICANS 126

Tobias Harris scored 27 points and Danilo Gallinari added 24 as Los Angeles won at New Orleans. Lou Williams came off the bench to add 20, Avery Bradley scored 15 and Montrezl Harrell had 14 for the Clippers. Julius Randle scored a career-high 37 to lead New Orleans before fouling out with 4:04 remaining. Jrue Holiday added 32 points and 14 assists, Anthony Davis had 23 points and 13 rebounds and Darius Miller scored 15.

WARRIORS 128, HAWKS 111

Golden State's Big Three combined for 85 points, and the Warriors broke their two-game losing streak with a win at Atlanta. Stephen Curry scored 30, followed by Kevin Durant (28) and Klay Thompson (27) as Golden State improved to 5-7 on the road. Curry, playing in his second game since missing 11 games with an ankle injury, made six 3-pointers. Atlanta lost its third straight game despite getting 24 points and 11 rebounds from John Collins and 20 points from rookie Trae Young.

CAVALIERS 99, NETS 97

Alec Burks threw down a tiebreaking slam dunk with

3.2 seconds remaining, and Cleveland escaped with a victory over Brooklyn. The Nets saw their home losing streak reach seven games. Burks finished with 13 points in his third game for Cleveland after being acquired from Utah on Thursday. He helped end the Cavaliers' losing streak at four games. The Nets had one more chance to tie or win, but Spencer Dinwiddie's 3-point try was well short of the rim with 1.5 seconds remaining. Jordan Clarkson led the Cavaliers with 20 points and a career-high 11 rebounds. Brooklyn's D'Angelo Russell led all scorers with 30 points but shot 13 of 31 as the Nets' overall losing streak reached seven games.

WIZARDS 110, KNICKS 107

Bradley Beal scored 27 points, Kelly Oubre Jr. added 21, and Washington held on to win at New York. John Wall had 18 points and 15 assists, Markieff Morris scored 18, and Otto Porter Jr. contributed 15 as Washington won its ninth straight game at Madison Square Garden. Emmanuel Mudiay's two free throws got the Knicks within five with 1:02 remaining, and after Morris missed a 3-point attempt, Noah Vonleh's layup cut the Wizards' lead to three. However, Wall's 3-point-er with 12 seconds left made it 110-104. Tim Hardaway Jr. led five New York players in double figures with 20 points.

THUNDER 110, PISTONS 83

Steven Adams had 21 points and six rebounds in 27 minutes, and visiting Oklahoma City snapped Detroit's five-game winning streak. Russell Westbrook contributed 18 points, six rebounds and six assists for the Thunder, who have gone 15-3 since an 0-4 start. Paul George supplied 17 points and 10 rebounds. Detroit's Blake Griffin had 20 points, five rebounds and four assists but went 7-for-18 from the field. Pistons guard Reggie Bullock sustained a left ankle sprain in the early going and did not return.



TORONTO: Gary Harris #14 of the Denver Nuggets goes to the basket against the Toronto Raptors on Monday at the Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. — AFP

TIMBERWOLVES 103, ROCKETS 91

Karl-Anthony Towns recorded 24 points, 11 rebounds and three steals to help Minnesota recover from a 19-point, first-half deficit to post a victory over Houston in Minneapolis. Andrew Wiggins scored 16 points for Minnesota, which won for the fifth time in

the past six games. Taj Gibson added 15 points and 11 rebounds. James Harden had 29 points and eight assists for Houston, which tallied just nine fourth-quarter points while falling for the fifth time in its past seven games. Clint Capela scored 24 points for the Rockets. — Reuters



AUB organizes the Charity 'Fun Run'

KUWAIT: In a clear message to encourage the community to take care and protect the environment, Ahli United Bank (AUB) organized its special activity "Fun Run for the Environment". This comes as part of the Bank's social responsibility program and which sets environmental care on the top of its priorities in accordance with His Highness the Amir of the state of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's vision 2035 for a new Kuwait, which emphasizes care for the environment as one of its main pillars. The event was held on Saturday, 1st December with "excellent participation from different age groups and nationalities, many Bank staff, customers and friends of AUB, who competed with an enthusiastic spirit in a fun atmosphere including participants with special needs who showed great enthusiasm to contribute to the success of this activity.

The race started at 8:00 am on Saturday, with a fun atmosphere and great interaction between the participants and supporters. From the Bank's Head Office along an urban route around the banking district the participants walked, jogged and ran for 5 KM until they reached the finish line, which was also at the AUB Head Office. At the finish line, the Bank announced the winners of the first three places for male and female runners. The male winners were: Abdurrahman Al Kanderi, Mohammed Salman and Naif Thamer. The female winners were: Taiba Al Nouri, Sara El Safty and Fatemah Al Awadhi. Mrs Sahar Dashti, Deputy General Manager responsible for the Bank's Corporate Social Responsibility Program at AUB said: "AUB's 'Fun Run' has been solely designed

to showcase our commitment towards making our environment a better place now, and for the future. We were keen to distinguish this special activity to be a clear and strong message that we must join hands and work together to preserve our environment."

Dashti added: "This event represents one of AUB's key initiatives in social responsibility to contribute to the achievement of His Highness the Amir's Vision 2035 for a new Kuwait. In addition, it also reflects the Bank's commitment in supporting activities that will advance social development in the field of raising awareness and spreading the culture of environmental work as an integral part of the Kuwaiti culture. Furthermore it also creates a spirit of competition in preserving the environment and inspires cooperation and collective responsibility among all members of society".

In a speech at the closing ceremony, Dashti went on to thank all government entities, represented by the Ministry of Interior, the Medical Emergency Department in the Ministry of Health and the Red Crescent and all those who participated and were present from the early morning and contributed to the success of this event. Dashti further added: "AUB will donate the overall amount of participation fees to institutions who support the environment. We intend to invest in the success of this activity to continue in future and on a larger scale. We want this to be a powerful message to instill the concept of safeguarding the environment amongst all people in Kuwait. This is just part of the journey along which we can all travel."

Kuwait Martyrs Championship of 'Mini Goal' kicks off today

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Martyrs Championship of "Mini Goal" will kick off today, with the participation of 15 schools, expected to compete hard to qualify for the finals and be eligible of the upcoming championship in February. General coordinator of the championship Hassan Al-Khawaja said the event is being held under the patronage of Amiri Diwan's Martyrs office in cooperation with Ministry of Education. The tournament will be on the knock-out system, under international rules, as the playing field will be of the 15x30 meters dimensions and the goal will be 1x1. He added that it will be an area with three meter diameter around the goal, where if the ball touches a defender, a penalty will be awarded from the middle of the field.

Khawaja said this tournament is considered qualifications for two teams from each governorate for the championship to be held in Feb 2019.



Hassan Al-Khawaja

Rinne, Predators hold off Sabres

NASHVILLE: Pekka Rinne made 21 saves, including five in the final 90 seconds, to lead the Nashville Predators to a 2-1 victory over the visiting Buffalo Sabres on Monday night. Kevin Fiala and Ryan Ellis scored goals for the Predators, who were playing their 13th game over a 24-day span and were without the services of Filip Forsberg (broken hand), P.K. Subban (upper body), Viktor Arvidsson (broken thumb) and Kyle Turris (undisclosed). Rinne was playing in his 10th consecutive game and starting his fifth straight contest. It is Rinne's longest streak since playing in 27 games in a row from Feb. 5 to April 9, 2015. Sam Reinhart scored his seventh goal of the season for Buffalo, which took its third straight loss after winning 10 games in a row. Carter Hutton had 22 saves for the Sabres.

Lightning 5, Devils 1

Nikita Kucherov and Brayden Point continued their sizzling play as visiting Tampa Bay cruised to a lopsided win in Newark, NJ. Kucherov recorded a goal and three assists to extend his point streak to 10 games, and Point had a goal and two assists for the Lightning, who won their third straight overall and swept the three-game season series against the Devils. Tyler Johnson, Yanni Gourde and Steven Stamkos also scored for Tampa Bay. Egor Yakovlev scored his first NHL goal for the Devils, who have lost six straight.

Stars 4, Oilers 1

Brett Ritchie had a goal and an assist, Mattias Janmark had two assists, and Anton Khudobin turned away 28 shots as Dallas defeated visiting Edmonton to earn its third straight win. The loss snapped a three-game winning streak for the Oilers, who are 4-2-1 since hiring former Dallas coach Ken Hitchcock on Nov. 20 to replace the fired Todd McLellan. Jason Dickinson, Jamie Benn and Esa Lindell tallied goals for the Stars. Juhhar Khaira responded for Edmonton, which played without Connor McDavid (illness). It marked the first time McDavid did not dress this season and snapped his streak at 222 consecutive regular-season games played. — Reuters

Budapest to host 2023 world championships

MONACO: Budapest will host the 2023 athletics world championships, the governing IAAF announced yesterday. The Hungarian capital is the first host city to be named under a new bidding process announced in February last year by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

IAAF president Sebastian Coe said after a meeting of the IAAF Council in Monaco that Hungary boasted both athletic tradition and experience in organising world-class sports events. "It has been the scene of some of our greatest moments as a sport. We are excited about their plans for a new stadium that will become a great legacy for athletics," he said.

The new stadium will be built on the eastern bank of the River Danube with a capacity of 40,000 for the championships, reduced to 15,000 for future events. Budapest has twice hosted the IAAF world indoor championships and the European athletics championships. The 2019 world championships will be held in Doha, Qatar, and the 2021 edition in Eugene, Oregon. — Reuters

Sports

Azhar leads Pakistan fightback as Hafeez calls time on Test cricket

Kiwi pace bowler Trent Boult ripped out openers

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the third and final Test between Pakistan and New Zealand at Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi:

New Zealand 1st innings (overnight 229-7)

J. Raval lbw b Yasir	45
T. Latham lbw b Shaheen	4
K. Williamson c Shafiq b Hasan	89
R. Taylor b Yasir	0
H. Nicholls b Yasir	1
B. Watling not out	77
C. de Grandhomme c Shafiq b Asif	20
T. Southee c Azam b Asif	2
W. Somerville b Asif	12
A. Patel c Shafiq b Asif	6
T. Boult b Asif	1
Extras (b11, lb6)	17
Total: (all out, 116.1 overs)	274

Fall of wickets: 1-24 (Latham), 2-70 (Raval), 3-70 (Taylor), 4-72 (Nicholls), 5-176 (Williamson), 6-203 (de Grandhomme), 7-209 (Southee), 8-254 (Somerville), 9-272 (Patel), 10-274 (Boult)
Bowling: Hasan 20-6-58-1, Shaheen 23-6-52-1, Yasir 41-11-75-3, Asif 30.1-4-65-5, Haris 2-0-7-0.

Pakistan 1st innings

Imam-ul-Haq c Southee b Boult	9
Mohammad Hafeez c Southee b Boult	0
Azhar Ali not out	62
Haris Sohail c Watling b Southee	34
Asad Shafiq not out	26
Extras: (b 1, lb 6, nb 1)	8
Total: (for three wickets: 61 overs)	139

Still to bat: Babar Azam, Sarfraz Ahmed, Bilal Asif, Yasir Shah, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi
Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Hafeez), 2-17 (Imam), 3-85 (Haris)
Bowling: Southee 12-3-27-1, Boult 14-4-39-2, Grandhomme 9-2-17-0 (Inb), Patel 14-3-33-0, Somerville 12-3-16-0.

ABU DHABI: Azhar Ali struck a fighting half century to help Pakistan recover to 139-3 at close on the second day of the third and final Test against New Zealand in Abu Dhabi yesterday. It marked a good recovery from 17-2 after Kiwi pace bowler Trent Boult ripped out openers Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammed Hafeez, who later announced his retirement from Test cricket.

Azhar was unbeaten on 62 at the close having shared a dogged, unbroken fourth wicket partnership of 54 with Asad Shafiq who will resume on 26. Pakistan are still 135 runs adrift of New Zealand's first innings total of 274 in which BJ Watling made a gutsy and vital 77 not out.

The three-match series is tied at 1-1 after New Zealand won the first Test in Abu Dhabi by four runs before Pakistan bounced back with an innings and 16-run win in the second in Dubai. Azhar remains key for Pakistan if they are to build any kind of first innings lead. The 33-year-old dropped anchor and found the boundary just four times as he crawled through to his 32nd Test half century. His 62 not out was carved painstakingly from 169 deliveries as the Pakistan scoring rate struggled to rise above two an over.

The equally-experienced Shafiq hit the same number of fours in his 26 which has so far occupied 85 balls.

FAREWELL HAFEEZ

The Pakistan top order was jolted by Boult's double strike either side of lunch.

Hafeez has been struggling for form for a while, having made just 66 runs in seven innings since scoring a hundred against Australia in Dubai in October, following his recall to the Test side after a two-year absence.

It was no surprise when Boult had him caught low down at second slip by Tim Southee for a fourth-ball duck in his first over, right before the lunch interval.

Hafeez, 38, who made his debut against Bangladesh in 2003, announced at the close of play that this Test, his 55th, would be his last. "I feel time is up," said Hafeez who has scored 3644 runs, with 10 hundreds and 12 half centuries.

In the fourth full over after the break, Imam-ul-Haq



ABU DHABI: Pakistani batsman Azhar Ali (R) watches a ball after playing a shot next to New Zealand cricketer Henry Nicholls during the second day of the third and final Test cricket match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the Sheikh Zayed International Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi yesterday. — AFP

took his eye off a Trent bouncer and was hit on the back of the helmet. Next ball, he edged to Southee at third slip and was on his way for just nine.

Azhar then dug in with Haris Sohail, adding 68 for the third wicket before Sohail edged Southee to Watling behind the stumps for 34. It was Watling, with an unbeaten 77, who carried New Zealand's overnight total from 229-7 and added an invaluable 45 runs over the last three wickets to frustrate Pakistan.

During his five-and-a-half-hour knock in his 56th Test Watling became the 14th New Zealander to pass 3,000 runs. Watling, dropped on nine by Imam off Bilal Asif on Monday, and debutant Will Somerville extended

their eighth wicket partnership to 45 before Bilal Asif took all three final wickets to finish with 5-65, his second five wicket haul in five Tests.

The 33-year-old playing his 56th Test, reached his 16th Test half-century. His 77 not out came from 199 balls in five hours and 32 minutes, and included four boundaries. Leg-spinner Yasir Shah, in his 33rd Test, failed to add to his three wickets on Monday, leaving him two short of becoming the fastest man to reach 200 Test scalps.

The current record has stood for 82 years after Australia's Clarrie Grimmett reached 200 wickets in 36 Tests in 1936. — AFP

Filipino banned from China eSports tourney over alleged racism

SHANGHAI: A professional Philippine eSports player was banned yesterday from a million-dollar tournament in China, embroiling the world of competitive gaming in controversy as it faces threats of a boycott.

Carlo "Kuku" Palad, who plays for Philippine team TNC Predator, has been barred from competing at the upcoming Dota 2 Chongqing Major after allegedly making a racist taunt during a game that angered the vast Chinese gaming community.

Dota 2, a multiplayer battle-arena game that is one of the biggest in the fast-burgeoning eSports scene, said the Chinese government was not behind the move.

"While there is a lot of anxiety around his attendance and problems it may create, we do not believe his presence creates a real security threat," it said in a blog post. "However, it seems like TNC is currently not taking proper responsibility for their actions, coupled with the attempted cover-up by the team, so we are now stepping in directly and banning Kuku from attending this event."

On Sunday, TNC said on Twitter that Kuku faced being stopped from entering China and alleged that Chongqing city officials might cancel the prestigious tournament should he attend.

TNC said it was "mulling our options" and could pull out. "TNC and Kuku fully understand the gravity of the mistakes committed, which is why we have exhausted every avenue to talk with all parties involved, especially the aggrieved," it said in a statement before his ban was confirmed.

Some prominent members of the eSports community have rallied to Kuku's defence, saying that he had apologised and deserved a second chance. Several eSports casters and analysts have threatened to boycott the tournament, including Grant "GrandGranT" Harris, who wrote on Twitter: "If Kuku isn't allowed to play at the major I refuse to cast officially for the major."

"We all make mistakes and I mistake should not forbid you from playing at a tournament that potentially decides your whole career." ESports host and commentator Paul "Redeye" Chaloner commended Valve Corporation-the Dota 2 developer-for taking action.

"I think they should do so more often and take more of a lead on esports," he tweeted. "I do however wish it hadn't taken all the drama for it to happen." TNC did not immediately respond for comment.

A growing number of foreign companies and individuals have found themselves under pressure over racism and cultural insensitivity in China, with Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana the latest to be widely condemned over racially offensive social media posts last month. — AFP

Cricketer Khawaja's brother arrested over fake terror 'hit list'

SYDNEY: The brother of Australia Test cricketer Usman Khawaja was charged by police yesterday with framing a love rival for a "hit list" that sparked a major counterterrorism investigation.

Arsalan Khawaja, 39, was released on bail after appearing in a Sydney court on charges of forgery and attempting to pervert justice. For months he appears to have convinced Australian police that his 26-year-old university colleague Mohamed Kamer Nizamdeen was embroiled in a plot to kill then prime minister Malcolm

Turnbull. Sri Lankan-born PhD student Nizamdeen spent a month in solitary confinement at a remote high-security prison, where he was questioned about targets including not just Turnbull, but reportedly also the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House.

He was eventually released in September, when police realised the script did not match his handwriting. The charges were later dropped. "What we will be alleging is that he (Nizamdeen) was set up in a planned and calculated manner. Motivated, in part, by a personal grievance," New South Wales assistant commissioner Mick Willing told reporters.

Willing said police believe Khawaja orchestrated the set-up and may have been motivated by a dispute over a woman. "We will allege that that is part of the process. But as you can appreciate, the matter is before the court, so we can't go into much detail," said Willing.

Australian police now say they "regret" arresting

and holding Nizamdeen, and have paid his court costs. Willing confirmed there is no ongoing threat to the community. Nizamdeen is seeking further damages from authorities and has since returned to Sri Lanka.

"What authorities have done to this young man is absolutely unforgivable," his lawyer Moustafa Kheir said after the charges were dropped in October. "It's a terrible experience. He is a young man that has done everything right in life. And he has gone through supermax jail-unforgivable circumstances."

Nizamdeen's exact relationship with Khawaja has not been stated by police. Pakistan-born Australian batsman Usman Khawaja, who is due to make a return from injury tomorrow against India in the first of a four-Test series, made a brief statement calling for privacy while the case ran its course.

"This is a matter for police to deal with. Out of respect for the process it would be inappropriate for me to make any further comment," he said. — AFP



PHILADELPHIA: Running back Darren Sproles #43 of the Philadelphia Eagles carries the ball against cornerback Fabian Moreau #31 of the Washington Redskins during the second quarter at Lincoln Financial Field on Monday in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia Eagles won 28-13. — AFP

Wentz has Super Bowl champion Eagles soaring

LOS ANGELES: Carson Wentz came out firing and finished with two touchdown passes as the Philadelphia Eagles looked to be back in top form with a 28-13 victory over the Washington Redskins on Monday.

The defending Super Bowl champions have clawed their way back into the hunt for first place in the NFC East as Wentz looked like his old self and tight end Zach Ertz continued to enjoy a career year.

"It is big to come out here and get a win against a divisional opponent," said Wentz. "We had our backs against the wall for a little bit but we are a resilient team. "We definitely left some plays out there, but we are coming together and putting the right things on tape. "We feel we got a lot of weapons that we can pass ball to. We never try to emphasize one guy." But if they did, it a good bet they would key on Ertz, who is compiling one of the best seasons ever for a tight end in the league. "We were desperate to win these last two weeks," said Ertz, whose catches and yardage totals are

both career highs. "The season wasn't going how we wanted when we were 4-6, but there wasn't any panic."

The Eagles (6-6) won consecutive games for the first time since Nick Foles led them to a Super Bowl victory over the New England Patriots. Wentz finished 27 of 39 for 306 yards. He led the Eagles to a score on their opening drive. He connected with Golden Tate for a 19-yard pass down the sideline and finished the drive with a six-yard toss and run to Tate again.

The shorthanded Redskins continue to be snakebit at quarterback. On Monday, they lost backup quarterback Colt McCoy to a serious right leg injury in his second game replacing Alex Smith, who broke his right tibia and fibula on November 18.

Veteran Mark Sanchez took his place, but couldn't get the offence moving the way coach Jay Gruden would have liked. "Our job is to get him ready and find a package of plays he is comfortable with and he can handle," Gruden said. "Our offence has to step up around him and make it easier for him."

Gruden said after the game that McCoy likely fractured his fibula and will miss the rest of the season. Adrian Peterson ran 90 yards for a touchdown on Sanchez's first play, giving the Redskins a 10-7 lead. It was the longest run Philadelphia has allowed in franchise history but Washington's lead didn't last long.

Dustin Hopkins kicked field goals of 47 and 44 yards for Washington. — AFP

Afghan leader orders probe of sex abuse on women's football team

KABUL: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani yesterday called for an investigation into claims of sexual abuse against the national women's football team, calling the allegations "shocking" and vowing to act immediately.

The president's call comes days after the Guardian newspaper broke a story about allegations of sexual and physical abuse of members of the women's team by male officials, including the president of the country's football federation.

"It is shocking to all Afghans. Any kind of misconduct against athletes, male and female, is not acceptable," Ghani said after meeting with the country's attorney general. "I ask Attorney General to conduct a thorough investigation compliant with our legal codes into the issue," he added.

The Guardian cited what it described as senior figures associated with the women's team who said the abuse had taken place in Afghanistan, including at the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) headquarters, and at a training camp in Jordan last February.

The story quoted former captain Khalida Popal-who fled the country after receiving death threats and has spoken out previously about the discrimination women face in Afghanistan-as saying male officials were "coercing" female players.

AFF secretary general Sayed Alireza Aqazada batted away the allegations over the weekend, saying the claims were untrue. However Hafizullah Wali Rahimi-president of Afghanistan's Olympic committee-said such allegations were not new.

"The abuse by the head of federations, trainers and sportsmen have always existed. We have had complaints in the past, and this is an undeniable fact," Rahimi told local media Monday.

Ghani called for immediate action. "Even if mere allegations cause our people to stop sending their sons and daughters to sports, we need to act immediately and comprehensively. I do not tolerate sexual abuse," Ghani said. "No power on Earth can abuse our children. We have to have a framework in place to mitigate such incidents in our sports federations," he added. Football's world governing body FIFA has also said it was looking into claims of sexual and physical abuse in the Afghan national women's team, while the Danish sportswear company Hummel announced it had cancelled a sponsorship deal with the team due to the allegations. — AFP

Sports

Mourinho aiming to stop rot as Man Utd season unravels

United's dressing room gives little indication of being a happy place

MANCHESTER: Jose Mourinho needs to lift Manchester United's morale quickly as a deflating run of performances threatens to throw their season off track completely but he faces a daunting task against a revitalised Arsenal.

Mourinho's team have not looked themselves at Old Trafford for much of the season, with their past two matches producing an insipid goalless draw against Crystal Palace and an unconvincing late Champions League victory over Swiss side Young Boys.

On their travels, they had looked as if they were getting back to form as October turned to November, with the side producing fine displays in drawing at Chelsea and beating Juventus.

Yet perhaps those performances were just papering over the cracks. United recovered from a two-goal deficit to draw at Southampton on Saturday and Romelu Lukaku scored his first club goal since September 15 but there was much to be alarmed about.

Mourinho claimed his players, with the exception of Marcus Rashford, were meek, lacking the spirit of what he called "mad dogs". According to Duncan Castles, a British journalist with close links to Mourinho's agent Jorge Mendes, the United manager compared midfielder Paul Pogba to "a virus" after another poor performance at Southampton, saying the France international lacked respect for both his teammates and fans.

United's dressing room gives little indication of being a happy place ahead of Arsenal's visit to Old Trafford today. To prove the point, forward Juan Mata effectively declined to publish his regular Monday internet column this week, instead posting a short message that began: "Unfortunately, I feel as though it isn't the time for posts."

During a season riddled with disappointments,

Mourinho has by and large been treated sympathetically by the club's fanbase, who feel that he was not given enough support in the last close-season transfer market by executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward.

The manager's frustration at not being able to sign a top-class centre-back has been raked over repeatedly but his defensive team selection at Southampton baffled even his most loyal supporters.

With Chris Smalling and Eric Bailly unfit, Mourinho elected to play two midfielders—Scott McTominay and Nemanja Matic—in a three-man central defence against a team that had not won at home all season. It did not work. Failure to win on the south coast further damaged United's chances of finishing in the top four—the ticket to Champions League qualification—and Mourinho himself appears to believe that is now a long shot with his team lagging eight points behind fourth-placed Arsenal.

Asked by Brazilian television what his aims were for the remainder of the season, he said: "Try to win as many points as possible and try (to achieve) almost the miracle of finishing fourth."

"Last year, I said that finishing second was a fantastic thing because of the qualities we had in comparison to the quality of the other teams that are fighting for the top four. And this year, with more problems that we have had, it proves what I said."

Arsenal, like United, spent relatively little in the close-season, bringing in Bernd Leno, Sokratis Papastathopoulos, Lucas Torreira and Matteo Guendouzi for relatively modest sums, yet look revitalised under Unai Emery's management.

They have gone 19 games unbeaten in all competitions since losing their first two matches of the season, and are playing a thrilling brand of aggressive, high-



SOUTHAMPTON: File photo shows Manchester United's Portuguese manager Jose Mourinho (R) and assistant Michael Carrick (L) are seen on the touchline during the English Premier League football match between Southampton and Manchester United at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, on December 1, 2018. — AFP

pressing football. According to Uruguay midfielder Torreira, the manager's words are making as much of an impact as his actions—as evidenced by his half-time team talk on Sunday before the Gunners recovered to

beat Tottenham 4-2.

"He told us to be calm," Torreira said. "We listened to the manager and we improved many things. That worked for us to get the victory." — AFP

Azpilicueta signs new contract with Chelsea

LONDON: Spanish international Cesar Azpilicueta, one of the longest-serving players at Chelsea, signed a new four-year contract yesterday which if he sees it out will take him to 10 years with the Premier League club.

The 29-year-old defender—who joined the Blues in

2012 from French outfit Marseille and has won the Premier League title twice as well as captained them this season in the league—says his desire to fight for the club is stronger than ever.

Azpilicueta, who is two appearances short of 300 for the club, has been a pivotal player in the bright start to the Maurizio Sarri reign which sees them lying in third spot, seven points off leaders Manchester City.

"Delighted to be a blue until 2022," the 25-times capped Spaniard said on his Twitter account.

"Since I arrived in 2012, my desire has been always to give my best and fight for this club, and now more than ever, I feel the responsibility to bring more success to this family." Azpilicueta's previous deal was due to

expire in 2020 after he signed a three-and-a-half-year contract extension in 2016.

Club director Maria Granovskaia said Azpilicueta's new contract was reward not only for his loyalty but also his consistently high-level displays.

"Cesar is one of our longest-serving players and has proven to be a fantastic acquisition over the past six years," she said.

"His professionalism and consistency in that time have been second to none and he has also developed into one of the squad's most influential players."

"This new contract will take Cesar to 10 seasons at Chelsea, and we hope that over the next four years he will be a key part of our success." — AFP

team bus. 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.

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.

The first leg at Boca Juniors' Bombonera Stadium had finished 2-2. CONMEBOL then switched the match to Madrid, a decision opposed by both Argentinian clubs. Boca have not announced the timing of their team departure although, according to the local press, the indications are that they will leave on Tuesday evening with fans preparing farewell festivities for Tuesday afternoon in the neighborhood of La Boca. On Monday, Boca and River put on sale the 5,000 tickets that each club has for fans living in Argentina. They cost 3,600 pesos (84 euros) — about a quarter of the average salary in Argentina.

In Spain, 20,000 additional tickets for River fans not residing in Argentina sold in a few hours, a source close to the organisation told AFP. Another 20,000 for Boca fans living outside the country will go on sale from yesterday. The second leg of the Libertadores Cup takes place in Madrid on December 9. — AFP

River Plate confirm flight to Madrid for Libertadores final

BUENOS AIRES: The River Plate team will leave for Spain today to play the second leg of the highly controversial Libertadores Cup final, the club announced on Monday.

In a statement to the South American football federation CONMEBOL, the Argentinian club said the team would leave for Spain "Wednesday at 1400 local time (1700 GMT) in a charter flight from Ezeiza airport".

River Plate had earlier said it was opposed to moving Sunday's match against fierce local rivals Boca Juniors from Buenos Aires to the Santiago Bernabeu in Madrid. Coach Marcelo Gallardo had called it "absurd", adding that his side had lost home advantage.

River should have hosted the match at their own El Monumental stadium on November 24 but it was postponed after River Plate fans attacked the Boca Juniors

Super sub Milik lifts Napoli with Atalanta win

MILAN: Arkadiusz Milik came off the bench to snatch a late 2-1 win for Napoli over Atalanta on Monday that consolidated second place in Serie A and reduced the gap on leaders Juventus to eight points. Polish forward Milik scored the winner five minutes from time shortly after coming on after Fabian Ruiz had put the visitors ahead just two minutes into the clash in Bergamo and former Napoli man Duvan Zapata had pulled Atalanta level 11 minutes after the break.

Napoli close the gap on Juventus, who pulled 11 points clear with a 3-0 win at Fiorentina on Saturday with Cristiano Ronaldo scoring from the spot to bag his 10th goal in 14 games. "It's a very, very important goal for all of us," said Napoli coach Ancelotti.

"Milik went through a difficult period because he didn't play consistently, but he remained motivated and focused, so deserves this." Ancelotti's side came out firing on all cylinders after their title hopes took a serious hit with a goalless draw against bottom club Chievo last weekend.

The coach stuck with the same starting line-up that beat Red Star Belgrade 3-1 in the Champions League midweek. Captain Marek Hamsik started the move that led to the opener with just a minute on the clock, passing to Lorenzo Insigne who crossed for Spaniard Ruiz to tap in his third goal since joining Napoli from Real Betis.

Insigne was ruled offside early as his volley rattled the bar with a lob shortly after the Italian international forward shot wide as he slipped. Zapata tested Napoli goalkeeper David Ospina in the first half with defender Raul Albiol also clearing off the Colombian after the break.

But the former Napoli forward broke through on 56 minutes when Hans Hateboer headed the ball down and he blasted in from close range. Milik came on for Dries Mertens after 81 minutes and four minutes later picked up a Mario Rui cross to fire in the winner for his fifth goal this season.

And the Polish striker said the win gave his side confidence ahead of next week's decisive Champions League clash against Liverpool at Anfield. "Before the Champions League, we have another tough Serie A game against Frosinone. Of course we want to beat Liverpool, we know it won't be easy, but we believe in ourselves," said Milik. Napoli move three points ahead of Inter Milan, who played out an entertaining 2-2 draw against Roma in the Stadio Olimpico on Sunday. Atalanta are in 11th position after their second consecutive defeat.

Luciano Spalletti's Inter travel to Turin next Friday to face Juventus in the hope of derailing their bitter rivals' title procession, with Napoli hosting second from bottom Frosinone on Saturday. — AFP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Everton FC v Newcastle United FC	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
Fulham FC v Leicester City	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
Wolverhampton Wanderers FC v Chelsea FC	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 8	
Burnley FC v Liverpool	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Tottenham Hotspur v Southampton FC	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
Manchester United v Arsenal FC	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2	

FRENCH LEAGUE

Olympique Lyonnais v Stade Rennais	21:00
beIN SPORTS	
FC Nantes v Olympique Marseille	21:00
beIN SPORTS	
Caen v Nimes Olympique	21:00
beIN SPORTS	
FC Girondins de Bordeaux v Saint Etienne	21:00
beIN SPORTS	
Dijon v EA Guingamp	21:00
beIN SPORTS	
Stade Reims v Toulouse FC	21:00
beIN SPORTS	
RC Strasbourg v Paris Saint-Germain	23:00
beIN SPORTS	

Qatar World Cup games could start at 1000 GMT

DOHA: World Cup matches in Qatar could kick-off as early as 1000 GMT if it holds four games a day during the 2022 tournament group stage, organisers confirmed yesterday. The other three games would start at 1300, 1600 and 1900 GMT, Nasser al-Khater, assistant secretary general for the World Cup organising body the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, told local broadcaster, Qatar Television.

"There's a proposition to hold four matches a day, one at 1300, 1600, 1900, and 2200 Doha time. This will be finalised with FIFA," he said. "We are currently planning for three matches per day, but also considering four a day as the weather and temperature will be good, and also all stadiums enjoying air conditioning."

Qatar's World Cup has an extra time pressure as it will be squeezed into 28 days, rather the usual 32 days, following its switch to November and December 2022 from the traditional months of June and July.

That pressure could increase further, as FIFA is looking into increasing the number of teams in 2022 from 32 to 48. Khater added that building work at four of the proposed eight stadiums would be completed by the end of next year. In addition to the already refurbished Khalifa Stadium, Al-Wakrah, Al-Bayt, and Al-Rayyan will all be finished in 2019, he said. Reporters were allowed to view Al-Bayt yesterday, which is 56 kilometres (35 miles) from the capital Doha and will be the most northerly stadium at Qatar's tournament.

The stadium's design is based on the traditional Bedouin tent in Qatar, Bayt Al Sha'ar. "This is a unique design among all the stadiums in the world," Nasser al-Hajeri, the venue's project director told AFP.

"It shows people who will attend the World Cup, the type of tent which people used to live in." — AFP



DOHA: Picture shows workers at the Al-Bayt Stadium in the city of al-Khor, northeast of Qatar. World Cup matches in Qatar could kick-off as early as 1000 GMT if it holds four games a day during the 2022 tournament group stage, organisers confirmed yesterday. — AFP

25 Nuggets snap Toronto Raptors' eight-game winning streak



26 Azhar leads Pakistan fightback as Hafeez calls time on Test cricket



27 Qatar World Cup games could start at 1000 GMT



Luka Modric wins Ballon d'Or

Hegerberg says 'twerk' request doesn't overshadow historic Ballon d'Or



PARIS: (From Left) Women's Ballon d'Or Olympique Lyonnais' Norwegian forward Ada Hegerberg, men's Ballon d'Or Real Madrid's Croatian midfielder Luka Modric and Under-21 Ballon d'Or (Kopa trophy) Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe pose at the end of the 2018 Ballon d'Or award ceremony at the Grand Palais in Paris on Monday. — AFP

PARIS: Luka Modric saw off competition from a host of French World Cup stars as the Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder won the 2018 Ballon d'Or on Monday, ending the 10-year stranglehold on the award by Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi.

Modric, 33, was announced as the winner of the prestigious prize in a glitzy ceremony held in Paris. Ronaldo was second, with France and Atletico Madrid striker Antoine Griezmann completing the podium.

Paris Saint-Germain's teenage forward Kylian Mbappe came fourth, leaving Messi to settle for fifth position. Another Frenchman, Modric's Madrid teammate Raphael Varane, was seventh, just behind Liverpool's Egyptian forward Mohamed Salah.

"As a kid we all have dreams. My dream was to play for a big club and win important trophies," Modric said.

"The Ballon d'Or was more than just a dream for me and it is really an honour and a privilege to hold this trophy." Mbappe, who does not turn 20 until later this month, picked up the consolation prize of the Kopa Trophy for the best young player.

The gala ceremony also saw a women's Ballon d'Or named for the first time, with Lyon's prolific Norwegian striker Ada Hegerberg taking that award.

Modric—the oldest winner since Italy's Fabio

Cannavaro, also 33, in 2006 — was crowned after an outstanding year in which he starred in the Real side that retained the Champions League before heroically helping drag his country to the final of the World Cup for the first time in their history.

Croatia lost 4-2 to France in Moscow in the final in July. The prize comes after Modric claimed the Golden Ball for the best player at the World Cup before picking up UEFA's prize for player of the season and FIFA's best player award in September.

Ronaldo and Messi were among 30 nominees for the Ballon d'Or, organised by France Football magazine and which takes votes from 180 journalists from around the world. The Portuguese star played with Modric in the Madrid side that won the Champions League before moving to Juventus in a typically prolific year, while Messi has again been outstanding with Barcelona.

The pair had won the prize five times each in the last decade but both are now in their 30s and neither stamped their authority on the World Cup. Messi finishes outside the top three in the voting for the first time since 2006.

The World Cup was always likely to play a key role, and France had hoped to see one of their stars take the award on home soil.

bringing or defending Russian cases at the Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS). Access to the samples would hand the Athletics Integrity Unit, the independent body that manages all doping and non-doping integrity-related matters in athletics, the opportunity to determine whether any suspicious findings should be investigated.

"I hope they'll deliver the data by the end of this year," Andersen said of the samples taken and stored in the Moscow laboratory. "But I cannot go any further than that. "We've received no assurances it will be delivered to us directly," the Norwegian said of the data.

"Assurances have been given to WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) and WADA have set a deadline of December 31 to receive the data. We'll have to rely on receiving the data from WADA before handing it to the AIU to examine the data before we are satisfied that the data is correct data."

The International Association of Athletics Federation's decision means Russia will not, for the moment, be able to compete under its own flag at the European Indoor

'HUGE STEP' FOR WOMEN'S GAME
The last time a Frenchman won the Ballon d'Or came in 1998, when Zinedine Zidane was rewarded for starring as Les Bleus won that year's World Cup.

But perhaps the lack of a single standout French candidate cleared the path for Modric-Hugo Lloris, Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante had also been in the running, as had Tottenham Hotspur and England striker Harry Kane, the World Cup's top scorer.

"I won the Europa League and the World Cup, so it's been a great year, but it is true that it was a little bit disappointing after I was told what the podium was," said Griezmann. Modric has won 14 trophies since joining Real in 2012, including four Champions Leagues. He could add to that as Real take part in the Club World Cup later this month.

A refugee at one point growing up during Croatia's War of Independence in the 1990s, his popularity in Croatia was hit by his testimony last year during the multi-million-euro corruption trial of former Dinamo chief Zdravko Mamic. Prosecutors charged Modric for giving false evidence, but the charges have now been dropped. Hegerberg, 23, won the women's prize after starring for French side Lyon as they successfully defended the Champions League title and won a 12th

consecutive French title. Norwegian striker Ada Hegerberg said the introduction of a women's Ballon d'Or was a "big step forward" for the game, playing down suggestions her historic victory was overshadowed after being asked to perform a "twerk" live on stage. The Lyon star—whose prolific form in front of goal helped the French club secure a third successive Champions League victory—edged out Danish forward Pernille Harder to claim the inaugural prize at a ceremony in Paris on Monday.

But the 23-year-old was asked if she would perform a sexually provocative dance by French host DJ, Martin Solveig, and appeared embarrassed as she rejected the request. Hegerberg later said: "He came to see me after and apologised. The Ballon d'Or is the most important thing." "I am touched and very proud, for women's football, for myself, for the club. I share this with Olympique Lyonnais, my teammates, the staff," she beamed after joining men's winner Luka Modric and men's best young player Kylian Mbappe on the stage with her trophy. "I want to say thanks to my teammates because this would not have been possible without them, my coach or our president Jean-Michel Aulas," Hegerberg said. "I also want to thank France Football. This is a huge step for women's football." — AFP

IAAF maintains Russia's ban from athletics

MONACO: The governing body of world athletics yesterday maintained Russia's ban from track and field over mass state-backed doping, citing two conditions before the powerhouse can return to international competition.

Rune Andersen, head of the IAAF's taskforce on Russia, said Russian authorities, in the form of the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA), had to grant access to data from testing of samples at a Moscow laboratory from 2011 to 2015.

The second condition is that Russia must pay the IAAF's costs incurred in the work of the taskforce and in

Championships in Glasgow in February 2019, with the IAAF Council not scheduled to meet again until March.

Andersen insisted that the taskforce's relationship with the Russians was "business-like, very formal in many ways, but still open", dismissing any suggestion of frustration at their apparent intransigence.

"I don't get frustrated, that's not my nature," he said. "Other persons might get frustrated because this has gone on for three years now, it's a very long time and we didn't foresee that it would take three years, we would have expected Russia to deliver much sooner. "We see the glimmer of light (at the end of the tunnel) all the time," he added. "There has been progress all the way. Many of the criteria has been met by Russia, either by the Russian track and field federation (RUSAF) or Russian authorities."

Andersen, however, dodged the politically sensitive question of whether he thought Russia had truly acknowledged the findings of the McLaren and Schmid reports, a major sticking point on the taskforce's initial

criteria. "We consider that the substance of what was in the Schmid report has been met, that has been acknowledged by Russia," Andersen said, adding that the major difference between that and the McLaren report was the absence of a reference to Russia's FSB security service.

"It's not an easy one. We would have wanted Russia to clearly acknowledge the McLaren report... we will have to move on and deal with what we think is most important: to get access to the data and the samples themselves because that is what counts when it comes to the athletes.

"There has been an acknowledgement of the involvement of persons in the state, that is clear. Whether that means that you can draw that line to say that it has been an acknowledgement of state-sponsored doping, that remains for everyone to determine on what's been written, but it's been finely worded by Russia."

Russia's athletics federation (RUSAF) was initially banned by the IAAF in November 2015 over allegations of widespread government-backed doping fraud. — AFP