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MPs overwhelmingly approve amended early retirement law

Bill passes after government agrees to 2% cut in pensions

Defense minister discusses cooperation with US envoy



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah discussed yesterday means of mutual cooperation with Ambassador of the United States Lawrence Silverman, accompanied by the military attache to Kuwait,

at the National Assembly. Sheikh Nasser said in a statement that the Kuwaiti and American sides discussed issues of mutual interest and means to develop and enhance them. He praised the deep-rooted ties between both friendly nations. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly yesterday overwhelmingly passed an amended early retirement law in the first reading despite opposition by several MPs to the legislation that allows Kuwaiti civil servants to retire early against a small reduction in pension. Forty MPs including all Cabinet ministers present voted in favor of the law, while 16 lawmakers, all opposition members, voted against the law which was amended through cooperation between the government and the Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee.

A number of MPs who voted for the law said their approval is conditional to changing several provisions before sending the law for the second and final round of voting, expected within the next two weeks. The law allows Kuwaiti citizens to seek early retirement five years ahead of the official retirement age of 55 years for men and 50 years for women, but only after accepting to reduce their pension by two percent for each year. The government had demanded a five percent reduction initially, but agreed to the two percent cut and said it will pay the remaining three percent to the social security agency.

In the previous term, the Assembly overwhelmingly approved the original early retirement law, but it was rejected by the govern-

ment, which demanded some amendments to accept it. Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf told the Assembly the new version does not disrupt the retirement system and insisted that retirement is optional and not mandatory. He said the new law does not take away any benefit from thousands of people who retired before this law, adding that the costs of the law will be borne by the social security agency.

The minister said that the two-percent reduction was introduced because the government does not want to see many civil servants seek early retirement, as the state needs their expertise. Hajraf said the law allows the 350,000 government employees to reap the benefits of the law, adding that 6,700 single women will benefit from its provisions, adding that men and women are treated equally by the law.

Head of the financial committee MP Salah Khorshed said that as many as 7,600 employees will be able to seek early retirement without having to cut their pensions. He said the law is one of the biggest achievements of the Assembly. But opponents said the amendments, sponsored by the government, to the law have rendered the law useless and without any benefit. Several MPs called for voting again on the law.

At the start of the session, the Assembly accepted a request by the rain investigation



KUWAIT: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah gestures at the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

committee to seek the assistance of the Audit Bureau to prepare a study on the technical, financial and legal subjects related to the rain issue. During the debate, Public Works Minister Hossam Al-Roumi said he has tendered his resignation to the Cabinet and is awaiting its response. The minister resigned after heavy rains last month.

Time's 'Person of Year' goes to journalists

NEW YORK: Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was murdered in October at his country's Istanbul consulate, was named Time magazine's "Person of the Year" yesterday, an honor he shared with other targeted journalists recognized as "guardians" of the truth. Among those named with Khashoggi were Philippine journalist Maria Ressa, Reuters reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo - currently imprisoned in Myanmar - and the workforce of the Capital Gazette in the US city of Annapolis, including five staff members killed in a June shooting.

"As we looked at the choices it became clear that the manipulation and abuse of truth is really the common thread in so many of this year's major stories, from Russia to Riyadh to Silicon Valley," Time editor-in-chief Edward Felsenthal said. "So we chose to highlight four individuals and one group who have taken great risks in pursuit of greater truth, starting with Jamal Khashoggi."

Time, which has awarded the "Person of the Year" title annually since 1927, published four different magazine covers for this week's edition, each one spotlighting different honorees. It is the first time someone has been chosen posthumously for the prestigious cover.

Continued on Page 24



18 social media accounts rapped for exploiting kids

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: After Kuwait's attorney general issued on Monday strict guidelines to ensure that children are adequately protected from the potential dangers associated with social media, an attorney told Kuwait Times 18 social media accounts were referred to the prosecutor yesterday. Lawyer Mohammed Al-Khaldi explained the new guidelines only expound on already existing

'Humbled' Modi suffers biggest election defeats

NEW DELHI: India's ruling party suffered stinging election defeats in three stronghold states, results showed yesterday, in a big blow to Prime Minister Narendra Modi before national polls in 2019. The votes held earlier this month and in November were seen as a dress rehearsal for next year when Modi will likely go head-to-head with a emboldened Rahul Gandhi of the Congress party for a second term. "We accept the people's mandate with humility," Modi said late yesterday on Twitter. "I thank the people of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for giving us the opportunity to serve these states. The BJP governments in these states worked tirelessly for the welfare of the people."

Continued on Page 24

Egypt probing naked pyramid pics; curbs sale of yellow vests

CAIRO: Egyptian authorities have launched an investigation into images said to show a naked couple who scaled the Great Pyramid that has sparked outrage in the conservative Muslim country, an official said yesterday. In a video titled "Climbing the Great Pyramid of Giza", Danish photographer Andreas Hvid appears to scale the 4,500-year-old tomb on the outskirts of Cairo

juvenile laws which criminalize the abuse of children. Chief among the new guidelines is introducing age restrictions requiring social media users to be at least 13 years of age.

Khaldi noted punishment may reach up to one year of imprisonment. "Eighteen social media accounts were referred to the prosecutor yesterday for illegally exploiting children for commercial activities. The owners of the accounts signed pledges to refrain from such activities," he said. The new guidelines clarify child rights law no. 21/2015, minors' law no. 111/2015, decree no. 104/1991, decree no. 26/1993, decree no. 168/2018 and the recommendations of the higher national committee for child protection.

Many terms used in this guideline are still very general. "For instance, the law forbids exploiting children in commercial advertising to make profit, but some commercials are completely related to children or their

products. So the juvenile prosecutor will decide whether they are harmful or not," added Khaldi.

Any member of the public can file a case against any social media account or advertisement exploiting children. "The parents, as the guardians of the child, will be penalized for exploiting their child themselves or by anyone else. There are two authorities in charge of these crimes - the child protection center, which is under the Cabinet, and the minors' care department under the interior ministry," he explained.

Exceptions have been made. "The law allows using children in positive advertising that has educational value and for voluntary or charity activities among others," Khaldi said. "The guidelines also sanction all inappropriate comments made under any post of children," he concluded. The justice ministry added that all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that these guidelines are strictly enforced.



NEW DELHI: India's Congress party supporters celebrate outside the party's headquarters yesterday. — AFP

Guarantor a must at public hospitals

KUWAIT: The health ministry has implemented a new system to guarantee collection of fees it has imposed on expatriates when they are admitted to public hospitals for surgeries or receive expensive treatment, where a guarantor will sign a form to pay the fees in case the patient does not. The form is a guarantee and undertaking by the guarantor to pay for the services presented to the non-Kuwaiti patient. The form includes the guarantor's and patient's information, as well as the amount payable. In case of non-payment, the health ministry has the right to take legal action against the guarantor without any warning. — Al-Anbaa

at night with an unidentified woman who is later seen taking off her top. Hvid says the video was taken in late November but it was published on YouTube on Dec 8.

A photograph released by Hvid appears to show the couple completely naked on top of each other while looking in the direction of a nearby pyramid with the horizon illuminated. "The public prosecution is investigating the incident of the Danish photographer and the authenticity of the photos and video of him climbing the pyramid," Mostafa Waziri, the secretary general of Egypt's supreme antiquities council, told AFP. If the video was actually filmed at the top of the pyramid, that would make it a "very serious crime", Waziri said.

The nearly three-minute video has taken social media by storm and has been the subject of late night talk shows. It has notched up almost three million views on YouTube alone. "A 7,000-year-old civilization has turned into a bed sheet," a Twitter user in Egypt lamented.

Continued on Page 24

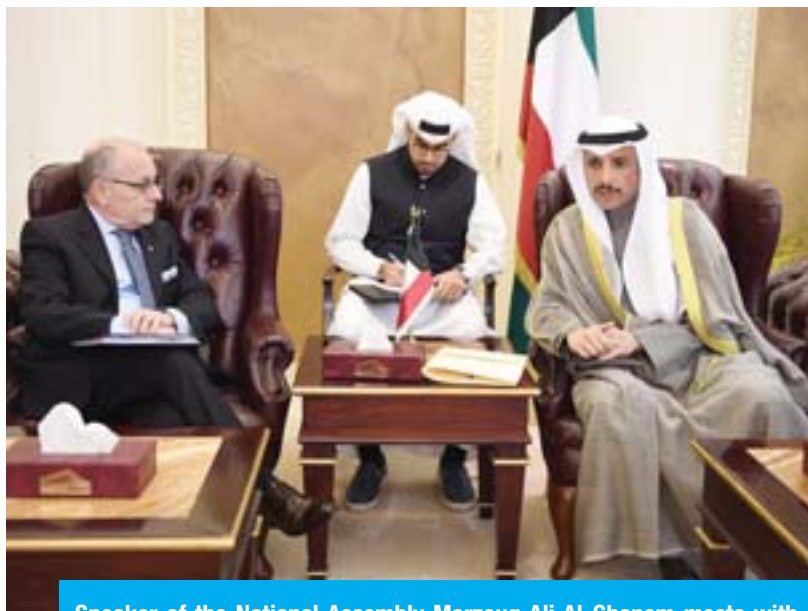
Local

Crown Prince receives Argentinian Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie

Argentina seeks boosting investment, economic ties with Kuwait: Minister



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Kuwait's Counsel General in Irbil Omar Al-Kandari, who handed him a book of Kuwait's humanitarian activities in Iraq since 2015. — KUNA photos



Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem meets with the Argentinian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jorge Faurie.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the Argentinian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jorge Faurie.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, accompanied by Argentinian Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie and his accompanying delegation during their visit to the country.

Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem also received the visiting Argentinian Minister at his office yesterday. During the meeting, both sides discussed standing relations between the two countries and ways to enhance them, in addition to other subjects of mutual concerns. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Americas Reem Al-Khaled, Kuwait Ambassador to Argentina Abdullah Al-Yahya, and the Argentinian Ambassador to Kuwait Jorge Pega. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also met with the visiting Argentinian Foreign Minister at Bayan Palace.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf held talks with Minister Faurie, focusing on economic cooperation. The South American nation has shown a profound desire to boost investment and economic ties with Kuwait, the finance ministry



First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Croatia's Ambassador to Kuwait Amir Muharemi.



Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf meets with Argentina's Minister of Foreign Affairs Jorge Faurie.

said in a statement. A number of deals are expected to be sealed in the near future to bring that goal to fruition, it added.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received yesterday the outgoing Ambassador of Mauritania to Kuwait Hamid

Hamouny and Slovakian Ambassador to Kuwait Pavel Svitek on the occasion of their tenure ending. Furthermore, His Highness received Kuwait's Counsel General in Irbil Omar Al-Kandari as he handed His Highness a book of Kuwait's humanitarian activities in

Iraq since 2015. Attending these meetings was the Director of protocols at His Highness' Diwan, Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

In other news, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh

Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at the National Assembly yesterday Croatia's Ambassador to Kuwait Amir Muharemi. The two sides discussed issues of mutual interest and ways of boosting bilateral ties between the two countries. — KUNA

Austria praises Amir's role as mediator in region

VIENNA: Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl affirmed yesterday that Kuwait is a strategic ally to Austria and the European Union in Middle East as well as Gulf States and their continuous efforts as a mediator in the region. "Kuwait and Austria share a long lasting, stable and friendly relationship since establishing diplomatic relations in 1965, our relationship is based on mutual trust and respect and I hope that we can further deepen and enhance our bilateral cooperation in the future," the Austrian Foreign Minister said.

Austria values His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's role as a mediator in the region and Kuwait's contribution as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, she added. She noted that she would meet with top Kuwaiti officials



Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl

since Austria is holding the EU rotating presidency until the end of this year and talk about matters concerning the relationship between the European Union and Kuwait as well as with the GCC. The minister pointed out that she is looking forward to hear Kuwait's assessment of regional issues, such as the GCC, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Iraq and Iran as well as Kuwait's efforts

with regard to regional diplomacy.

The national development plan 'New Kuwait 2035' offers opportunities for Austrian companies to take part in some of the planned major projects, for example in infrastructure, health care or energy, said the minister. "The European Union and Kuwait have recently taken their cooperation to the next level. In late

November, a high-level official meeting took place in Brussels in order to foster collaboration in various areas, such as renewable energy, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, as well as security and the fight against terrorism," she added. The minister said that Kuwait is a strategic and important partner of the EU in the region, while the opening of an EU Delegation in Kuwait in the course of 2019 underlines the importance the EU attaches to Kuwait.

In response to the question about visa requirements for passport holders of Kuwait and other Gulf citizens, the minister said Visa-free access for Kuwaiti citizens to the Schengen area is an issue that has to be discussed at the EU-level. Adding that the Austrian Embassy in Kuwait works hard to issue visas as quickly as possible and issues almost 11,000 visas every year, most of which are for Kuwaiti and Gulf citizens. The minister responded to question about Austria's policy towards the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians by saying, Austria still holds the view that a two-state solution, with Israel and a Palestinian State living in peaceful co-existence, with mutually recognized borders, continues to be the only option for lasting peace. — KUNA

Kuwait's Ambassador presents credentials to Brazil President

BRASILIA: Kuwait's Ambassador to Brazil Nasser Al-Mutairi presented his credentials to Brazilian President Michel Temer in Brasilia on Monday, Kuwait Embassy said in a statement. It added that Mutairi conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Temer, wishing further development and prosperity for Brazil. Mutairi, it added, said he was looking forward to cementing bilateral relations and cooperation with Brazil at economic and investment levels. — KUNA



BRASILIA: Kuwait's Ambassador to Brazil Nasser Al-Mutairi presents his credentials to Brazilian President Michel Temer. — KUNA

Kuwait continues to aid Iraqis in Kurdistan region

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Consul General in Irbil Omar Al-Kandari affirmed yesterday Kuwait's keenness to continue assisting displaced Iraqis and refugees in the Kurdistan region. In a statement after his meeting with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi, Kandari stressed on Kuwait's continued support for the relocated Iraqis in all Iraqi provinces, especially in the Kurdistan region. Kuwait's aid to the displaced Iraqi people, themed 'Kuwait is beside you,' is continuing

with various forms, he added. Kandari pointed out that the KRCS' vast humanitarian programs includes food distribution, several health projects, development and education to alleviate the suffering of the displaced Iraqi people.

Kandari said pamphlets are issued that list all Kuwaiti aid provided in the Iraqi provinces. On the other hand, Hasawi said that KRCS' assistance includes the construction of schools and health centers. He praised the cooperation and coordination with the Kuwaiti embassy in Baghdad and the consulate in Irbil and Basra, adding that they have made great efforts in facilitating KRCS' volunteers to provide assistance in Iraqi provinces. Hasawi pointed out that the KRCS is exerting great efforts to help Iraq under the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Consul General in Irbil Omar Al-Kandari meets with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) members. — KUNA

News in brief

Amir congratulates karate team

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Kuwaiti karate team members Mohammad Al-Mousawi, Salman Al-Mousawi and Mohammad Bader for winning a gold medal in the Kata division of Shanghai international championship in China. In the cables, His Highness the Amir wished the team members more future success to accomplish more achievements for Kuwait in regional and international championships. 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 sent similar cables. — KUNA

Govt assured of Amir's well-being

KUWAIT: The Council of Ministers was assured about the well-being of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who underwent successful "regular medical examinations" before leaving hospital on Monday, a senior government official said. Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet Anas Al-Saleh prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow blessings and grace on His Highness the Amir to continue his leadership of the country. — KUNA

Speaker eulogizes former MP

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem expressed his deepest regret over the death of former MP Ismail Dashti. In his speech at the National Assembly's ordinary session yesterday, Ghanem said that Dashti was a prominent politician who exerted great efforts to fulfill the needs of Kuwaiti people during his service in 1975. — KUNA

Official eyes tourism boom

ALEXENDRIA: Kuwait is eager to prop up its tourism industry in a bid to propel its economy to global prominence, said an official yesterday. The tourism sector is crucial given the fact that it forms an integral part of the economy, Kuwait's assistant undersecretary for tourism Yousef Mustafa said after talks bringing together ministers of tourism from across the Arab region. The talks revolved around measures needed to bolster tourism in the Arab region as part of sustainable development goals, in addition to various proposals over these efforts, he added. — KUNA

Nazaha refers customs official, other to prosecution on corruption charges

Kuwait gov’t keen to fight corruption: Nazaha

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) referred yesterday an official at Kuwait General Administration of Customs and another official to the public prosecution on charges of corruption. The suspects were allegedly involved in wasting state funds worth up to KD 41,352 (\$135,000), said Dr Mohammad Bouzuber, Nazaha’s Assistant Secretary General for Investigations and official spokesman. He affirmed that Nazaha would continue to gather evidences and witnesses’ account to add to the case against the suspects.

Fighting corruption

The authority has meanwhile stressed that Kuwait’s government is keen to fight corruption through the application of financial disclosure statement. The authority is exerting great efforts to overcome the difficulties in implementing the provisions

of the national strategy on all state bodies, Head of the Authority Counsellor Abdulrahman Al-Namash told Al-Anbaa newspaper. He added this will make a positive contribution to Kuwait’s ranking in the Global Corruption Perceptions Index. The strategy includes working controls and reference terms for state body, on which the Authority can detect the corrupt, he said.

Meanwhile, Namash said Nazaha will organize the international conference to promote integrity and transparency next January, in conjunction with the launch of the national strategy to fight corruption.



Efforts to improve Kuwait’s int’l ranking

Random examination

Nazaha in cooperation with competent authorities does a random examination of funds covered by the

law, including ministers and deputies, he said, stressing that the Authority needs no permission to refer any corruption or suspicion of corruption to prosecution, where the body is independent practically and legally and Nazaha’s work ends with referral to the prosecution.

Nazaha, an independent authority, was established according to Law 2/2016, in response to the requirements stipulated by the UN anti-corruption convention. It advocates transparen-



نزاها

cy and integrity in economic and administrative tasks for sake of securing rational management of states’ financial resources and assets. —KUNA

Kuwait calls for bringing genocide perpetrators to justice

NEW YORK: Kuwait called for bringing to justice all those who committed massacres and crimes against humanity. The remarks were made by Kuwait’s Permanent Representative at the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, during the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)’s session on the council’s role in preventing massacres and genocide late Monday.

Otaibi noted that UNSC must exert further efforts to prevent the breakout of conflicts and avoid these massacres. Although it had been 70 years since approving the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the world is still suffering growing conflicts that kill more and more people, he said.

The ambassador meanwhile spoke of mass killings and ethnic cleansing that occurred in the last century including that in Cambodia, Rwanda and former Yugoslavia. He also mentioned the recent massacres against the Rohingya Muslims and the Yazidis. It is the international community’s responsibility to cooperate with global organizations and NGOs to prevent the occurrence of such crimes. The UNSC must closely monitor early signs of a possible conflict and work on resolving the situation with diplomacy, Otaibi explained. The Kuwaiti diplomat affirmed his full support for the France/Mexico initiative on veto restraint in atrocity situations and the ACT Code of Conduct which Kuwait had joined. — KUNA



Mansour Al-Otaibi

Kuwait’s contribution to UNRWA exceeds \$160 million: Envoy

AMMAN: Kuwait’s contribution for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) surpassed \$160 in 40 years, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Aziz Al-Dihani said yesterday. Dihani was speaking to the press following a ceremony held by Jordan’s Parliamentary Palestine Committee to honor GCC states and extend gratitude for their contribution which enabled UNRWA to fill a large part of the budget deficit.

Dihani said this honoring in large is for Kuwait and Kuwaitis, namely leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the first supporter of the

Palestinian cause, “from whom we receive supreme directives to support the Palestinian people and their cause at various Arab and international forums.” Kuwait allocated \$2 million to support UNRWA’s budget and has contributed to this year by closing the Agency’s financial deficit through the \$50 million contribution it announced during the Rome and New York conferences on UNRWA.

Meanwhile, attorney Yahya Al-Saud, who Palestine committee at Jordan’s parliament, hailed GCC and Kuwait’s stance in supporting the Jordanian Kingdom and Palestinian cause. He also praised Kuwait’s continuing support for Palestine, especially that it would host a conference of the Board of Trustees of the Al-Quds Fund and Endowment today, expressing appreciation for the Kuwaiti position in support of Jordan in its economic crisis. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have collectively provided \$200 million in support to UNRWA for this year, reducing the accumulative budget deficit from \$446 million to \$21 million after the United States announced its decision to stop supporting the agency. — KUNA



AMMAN: Attorney Yahya Al-Saud, who Palestine committee at Jordan’s parliament (right), presents a memento to Kuwait’s Ambassador to Jordan Aziz Al-Dihani. — KUNA

No future plans to add other airlines at T4

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Directorate General of Civil Aviation’s Director Yousif Al-Fauzan stressed the new terminal four (T4) at Kuwait International Airport is allocated only for Kuwait Airways flights and that there is no intention or plans to house any other airlines in this terminal. Fauzan added that new stores will be opened in the new terminal for passengers by the beginning of the new year. He added that both the civil aviation directorate and KAC aspire to make the new terminal service around 6 million passengers annually, noting that the total number of flights in T4 jumped to 90 since it was inaugurated in August.

Automated service

Following the success achieved by the project in nine state departments, the Civil Service Commission’s (CSC) assistant undersecretary for information technology affairs Sabeeka Al-Weqayyan said the CSC is about to contact government bodies that have still not installed automated service devices. Weqayyan added the CSC will distribute the new devices at Kuwait Airport and

large commercial complexes.

5 percent charge

Kuwait Farmers Federation Chairman Abdullah Al-Dammak announced that on behalf of Kuwaiti farmers, it submitted a number of demands to Chairman of Industrial Bank of Kuwait (IBK) Mosab Salem Al-Nisf requesting the cancellation of the 5 percent charge for farmers who delay paying off their dues. “He welcomed us and promised to cancel the extra charge, noting that he was fully aware of the damage incurred on farmers as a result of the recent heavy rain,” explaining affected farmers should file individual requests to defer the 5 percent delay charge for a year.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Nisf, Dammak expressed hope that IBK’s board of directors fully understand farmers’ problems and help them overcome them in order to support Kuwaiti farmers face the increasing prices of farming materials as well as rising wages. He added that demands made to IBK included extending farmers’ loan payment to 20 years, exempting them from delay fines, reducing administrative fees, dropping the payment of this year’s installments because of the rain, turning conventional agricultural loans to Islamic ones, fixing the total loan interest rate at 2 percent, reconsidering the current annual insurance which does not cover possible losses and considering rescheduling loans.

Kuwaiti Ministry of Oil titled ‘Reality and future prospects of energy consumption and its future cost.’

The increase in energy consumption during the period between 1996-2018 exceeded the growth in gross domestic product (GDP) a matter that resulted in keeping the power density indicator at the limits of the global average, which is nine BOE barrels for each thousand dollars of the GDP, he said. One of the most important aspects of local energy consumption in Kuwait in the almost complete dependence on oil and natural gas in the mix of consumed energy, and the use of more than half of the used energy is consumed by the sector of electricity production and water desalination.

He praised the national efforts in the variation of energy sources by the use of solar and wind energy in Kuwait to produce 15 percent of the country’s need of energy by the year 2030. Governmental bodies in charge are working to develop a mix of sources of fossil and renewable fuels at sustainable level on order to maintain the country’s sources of oil and natural has for the future generations. — KUNA

Councilor laments failure to fix malfunctioned landlines

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council’s former deputy chairman Meshaal Al-Juwaisri yesterday criticized Minister of State for Services and Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri because of her alleged failure to fix around 5,100 landlines that malfunctioned due to the recent heavy rain in Salwa, Salmiya and Maidan Hawally. Juwaisri urged His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to interfere and get the problem solved, especially “since minister Bushehri does not have a solution and does not know the reason behind the disconnected lines,” as he put it. Juwaisri explained that the disconnected landlines include over 1,300 in Salwa, 2,600 in Maidan Hawally and 1,200 in Salmiya, some of which were repaired but broke down again.

Automated inquiry

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) yesterday announced adding automated inquiry about ration cards as a new service on the ministry’s website www.moci.gov.kw. A statement issued by the ministry explained the service includes inquiring about the card’s validity, status, number of individuals registered on it, their monthly rations, previously provided goods, products’ prices and types. The ministry added that the cardholder can log on by registering their phone number at any MOCI centers, then setting a password to use to follow up the status of their subsidized goods’ transactions.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Traditional 'boom' ships are pictured with Kuwait City skyscrapers in the background. — Photo by Hassan Galol (KUNA)

Zain honors participants of Makers Academy program

As part of its strategic partnership to the program

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, recognized the participants of the Makers Academy program held in collaboration with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) and in strategic partnership with Zain.

Zain hosted the program's concluding ceremony at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, where the participating students were recognized by Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti and the Assistant Undersecretary for the Youth Development Division in the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs Meshal Al-Subaiei, with the presence of Director of Big Brains and Makers Academy Khalifa Al-Sinan and entrepreneur Nasser Al-Khalidy. The event also witnessed the recognition of the program's partners and mentors.

Zain's support to Makers Academy comes in line with its strategy towards encouraging digital innovation. The company is keen on contributing to the development and advancement of tech innovation within all age groups, including school children, with the aim of boosting their coding and technology skills, as such skills are essential for the modern digital world.

The Makers Academy program was hosted at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh throughout two weeks, where 50 students aged 11-15 from both public and private schools took part in exciting sessions that aimed at teaching them the basics of digital manufacturing, product design, inventions, project creation, 3D modeling and printing,



Meshal Al-Subaiei recognizes Waleed Al-Khashti for Zain's strategic partnership.



Hosted at Zain Innovation Center

robotics, electronics, and more. The Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) is a hub for entrepreneurs and digital investments launched as a platform for the innovations of students, youth, and entrepreneurs. ZINC encourages young minds to think and act creatively outside of the norm in an open, supportive environment for entrepreneurs to generate new ideas and develop them into viable opportuni-



Waleed Al-Khashti, Meshal Al-Subaiei, Khalifa Al-Sinan and Nasser Al-Khalidy with the recognized students.

ties. Through supporting this unique program, Zain seeks to offer the best educational environment for children in Kuwait to nurture their talents, enrich their skills, and promote tech innovation within them from an early age. Zain believes in the important role technology plays in building the future and progressing national economy.

Zain is keen on playing a vital role as an

integrated digital service provider in light of the rapid digital changes witnessed by the modern world.

The company always seeks to reach new levels of excellence with its customers through offering the best innovative services, meeting their needs and aspirations, as well as supporting programs and initiatives that embrace tech innovation and aim at

developing it. Zain further reaffirms its commitment to supporting any entity that offers the proper educational environment for the next generation as per the highest international standards. The company will spare no efforts in offering its support to such initiatives and programs that serve the community and contribute to the further progress of the country.

2020-2025 Development Plan ready by October 2019

KUWAIT: Secretary General of Kuwait's Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mehdi said yesterday that the council is expected to finalize the five-year development plan for 2020-2025 by October 2019 to present it to the National Assembly. This came in a speech he delivered during an open discussion on 'Developing the Public Health System in Kuwait,' organized by Kuwait Center for Public Policy at the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, in cooperation with Kuwait Foundation for the

Advancement of Sciences and the United Nations Development Program.

Kuwait Center for Public Policy aims for developing new policies based on a scientific methodology that may support the next five-year development plan (2020-2025), Mahdi said. He clarified that a study about the general health status in Kuwait will be released soon, it included health services sector, preventive health sector, health awareness, and environmental safety.

The study was made in cooperation with the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences and London School of Economics, Mahdi clarified. He expressed the hope that this discussion will give specialists and researchers in governmental and academic sectors the chance to play a significant role in implementing mid and long developing plans and enhance Kuwait's health status on major global development indicators.

"The main objective of this event is to promote a link between Kuwait's public health system with public policies, and the United Nations sustainable development agenda of 2030," Mahdi stated. "We identified an



KUWAIT: Secretary General of Kuwait Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mehdi speaks during the open discussion. — KUNA

urgent need to enhance the quality and effectiveness of public policy making, therefore we initiated Kuwait

Center for Public Policy and commissioned it to study the state's development plans, evaluate their effectiveness, and recommend new policies to support the country's decision-making," he continued.

Undersecretary for the Ministry of Health Dr Mostafa Redha expressed his happiness to participate in such event, hoping that participants would reach recommendations to support the country's health policy and development plans. Deputy Director General of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, Dr Amani Al-Badah made a presentation about public health national strategy in Kuwait, she explained the importance of involving experts in most sciences, including social sciences.

She said that one of the obstacles facing them is the lack of data and scientific evidence, which the institution seeks to enable scientists, researchers, and administrators to get during their work. As for the United Nations Development Program, representative Edward Christino praised Kuwait commitments to the 2030 agenda which includes 17 goals for sustainable development. — KUNA

Local

Heavier, more intensive rain in the future: Meteorologist

Kuwait Geographical Society hosts discussion on effects of rain on Kuwait

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Geographical Society (KGS) held a discussion panel on 'climate and environmental changes and effects of rain and storms on Kuwait' at its premises in Qadsiya on Monday. Meteorologist Eisa Ramadan warned about heavier rain in the future. "The rain will be heavier and more intensive. Between 2020 and 2027, rainfall may reach over 300 mm, while rainwater drainage systems were designed for only 20 mm per hour. In the past, the average rainfall was around 115 to 120 mm, but the recent rains were really heavy," he said.

According to him, the data in the past were not accurate. "In Europe, they have exact data from over 1,000 years. Climate change was not sudden, but mainly caused by the industrial revolution. Our environment is a desert one and visible climate change has been noticed, especially with heavy short bursts of rain, which is not very useful, as it's not continuous," added Ramadan.

Temperatures will also rise in the future. "We prepared a study on climate change, and temperatures will rise till 2100. Between 2030 and 2070, the temperature will increase by 3-4 degrees Celsius, and by 2100, the temperature will be higher by at least 5 degrees. This will affect our energy and life in general. Climate change has also brought about more phenomena including shifting of seasons, which led to an increase of

insects and other effects," he explained.

Abdulaziz Al-Qarawi, a meteorologist at the Meteorological Department, described the recent flooding as an exceptional situation. "In 1997, when rain-water flooded Kuwait, we registered 114 mm of rainfall, while last month we registered an average of 262 mm. The manholes in residential areas can only hold 20 mm of rain per hour, while airport manholes and those on highways can handle 27 mm, which is not enough compared to the heavy rains we witnessed, so they got flooded," he pointed out.

Climate change has two main effects - rising temperature and rain. "Rainfall was unprecedented this year, not only in Kuwait but also in Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Some areas were also built on dried

streams - the Mangaf tunnel was built on a stream, according to geographical maps. Climate change also causes higher temperatures, and this was proven by registering the highest temperature ever of 54 degrees Celsius in 2016," Qarawi added.

Dr Salman Al-Failakawi, a Public Authority for Applied Education and Training teacher, highlighted the fact that rainfall in Kuwait is irregular. "Rainfall is rare, so after a dry spell, heavy rain causes torrents. This is why usually countries with regular rainfall don't face such disasters, as their system is ready. Also, dryness causes clogging of the rain drainage system with sand, stones and other dirt. So 40 mm of rain per hour caused floods, which was a disaster," he stated.



KUWAIT: Meteorologists and academics attend a discussion panel held by the Kuwait Geographical Society. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



262 mm average rainfall registered last month

Torrents are caused by natural and human factors. "The natural factor is the soil - 90 percent of our soil is desert and poor in plants, and with human activities, it gets flattened. Also, it's covered with a calcareous layer which resists water absorption. When the level of underground water gets higher in residential areas, the torrents are stronger," stressed Failakawi.

Dr Ahmad Al-Qasabi, a teacher at Alexandria University, gave a presentation on the different types of roads that were damaged by the floods. "Wafra road is not finished yet, but it's damaged already. The floods damaged its sides, and the solution is in fixing it with limestone rocks or concrete on the sides. The damage that happened in Sabah Al-Ahmad City was due to surface deposits, and the same problem is found in Mutlaa," he noted.

Al-Qurain Festival kicks off January 8

KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) announced yesterday that 'The 25th Al-Qurain Cultural Festival' will kick off on January 8, 2019 and proceeds till the 25th of the month, adding that the festival will include performances and exhibitions.

Assistant Secretary-General at Kuwait's NCCAL Dr Essa Al-Ansari said that the celebration of the festival will be different,

as a special anniversary ceremony of 25 years since its start at 1994. The festival aims at supporting local, Arab and international culture and artistic fields, he said. There will be another important symposium at the beginning of the festival, a documentary film, as well as the main symposium of the festival, which will be about new media and cultural issues, he added.

The festival includes theatrical performances, movies, concerts, plastic exhibitions, artistic workshops, national rallies, motorcycle shows and kites, he explained, adding that it will also include special performances for children. NCCAL sponsored and organized Al-Qurain Cultural Festival to be the largest cultural phenomenon in Kuwait, Ansari said. — KUNA

Heavy rain harbinger of lush spring

KUWAIT: Kuwaitis believe that the lashing rain seen as of late heralds the arrival of a blooming spring season with roses and flowers galore, making for picturesque scenery that is uncommon in the Gulf state. After years of scarce rainfall, Kuwait witnessed this year unprecedented levels of precipitation, creating lush greenery nationwide not seen in years, which conjures sayings deeply embedded in folklore that

extol the merits of rainfall.

What makes the rainfall in Kuwait this year so remarkable is that it was preceded by heavy dust storms, Dr Ali Al-Dosari, a researcher at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), said in an interview on Monday. As strange as it may sound, he said the dust storms that blanketed Kuwait during the summer carried with it the seeds of a wide array of plants, including seasonal and perennial.

Similarly, Essa Bouhamad, an official at Kuwait's Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources, foreboded a 'palpable' increase in greenery this spring, accompanied by intermittent rainfall. Persistent rains caused widespread disruption in major roads across Kuwait last month, with forecasters describing the downpour as the heaviest in decades. — KUNA



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Nuns ‘stole schools funds’ for gambling

Twitter warns global users their tweets violate Pakistani law

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PHNOM PENH: Nary, a Cambodian victim of forced marriage to a Chinese man, cooks at home in Phnom Penh. — AFP photos

Mekong women forced into marriage in China

Cambodian bride narrates 6-year ordeal as destitute

PHNOM PENH: Everyone did well from Nary’s marriage to a Chinese man, except the young Cambodian bride herself, who returned home from the six-year ordeal destitute, humiliated and with little prospect of seeing her son again. Her brother ran away with \$3,000 after cajoling the then 17-year-old to leave Cambodia to marry. Brokers split the remaining \$7,000 paid by her Chinese husband, who got himself a longed-for heir.

But her wedding to a stranger thousands of miles from home, in a language she could not understand, was ill-fated from the start. “It was not a special day for me,” Nary told AFP. She is one of tens of thousands of young Cambodian, Vietnamese, Laos and Myanmar women – and girls — who marry Chinese men each year, plugging a gender gap incubated by Beijing’s three-decade-long one-child policy.

While the policy has ended, a shortfall of around 33 million women has left the same number of men facing life on the shelf. Poverty drives many women from the Mekong region to gamble on marriage in China, double-locked by low education levels and a social expectation to provide for parents. Others move for work but end up forced into marriage. The worst cases involve kidnapping and trafficking across porous borders. There are happy marriages, with women also able to provide for the poor villages they left behind.

But new domestic realities frequently unravel, leaving women at risk of abuse, detention under Chinese immigration law or ‘resale’ into prostitution. Nary – whose name has been changed on her request – spoke to a Cambodian marriage broker on her older brother’s advice. “I trusted him,” Nary said in a whisper, as rain drove through holes in the tin roof of her

family’s roadside shack outside Phnom Penh. “My family is poor and I was expected to help them by marrying a Chinese man. So I went.” But her brother stole the dowry that was meant to help the whole family and has since vanished.

Lies and poverty

To buy a wife in China costs between \$10,000 and \$15,000, a sum paid to brokers who give a couple of thousand to overseas associates for recruiting the brides. A ‘dowry’ of between \$1,000 and \$3,000 is dangled in front of the bride’s family, while the young woman herself is last in the money chain, if she receives anything at all. “Families are now looking to their daughters to see the ‘interest’ they can return to them,” says Chou Bun Eng, vice-chair of Cambodia’s National Committee for Counter Trafficking, referring to the money motive that prevails in some homes.

The marriage trade is big business — official figures say 10,000 Cambodian women alone are registered in the southern provinces of Guangdong, Guizhou and Yunnan. Brides are often ‘warehoused’ on arrival and their photos touted on WeChat and dating websites to would-be husbands. The younger and prettier they are, the more expensive. Nary travelled legally on a tourist visa to China but on arrival in Shanghai, she discovered the man who paid for her hand was a construction worker living in a village, not the “wealthy doctor” she had been promised.

Hush money

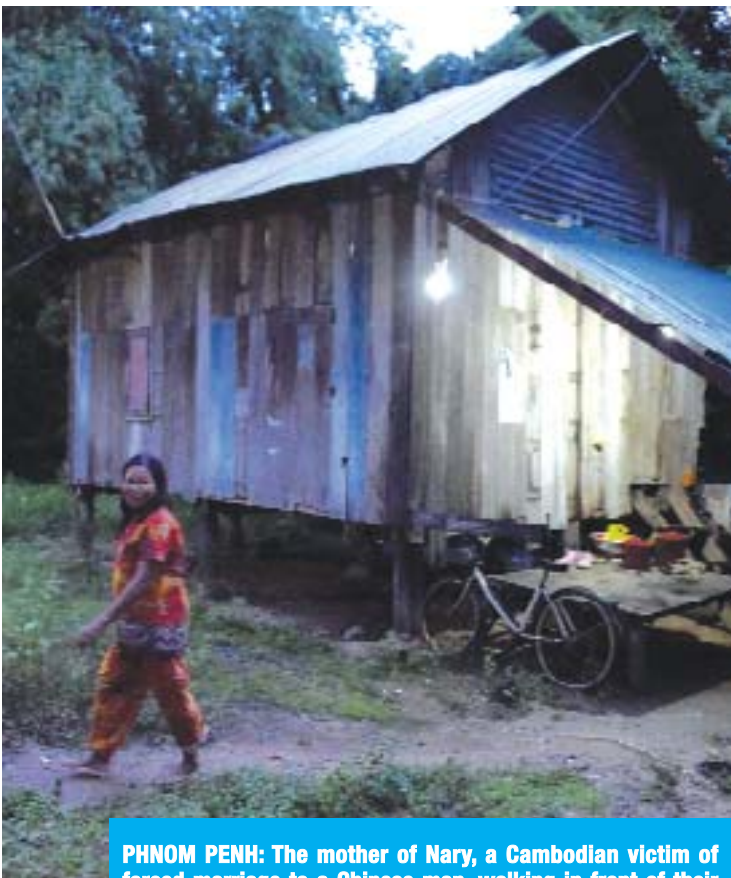
A woman who is paid, bought or sold for marriage and taken across borders – even with consent – is classified as a trafficking victim by the United Nations. In Cambodia, brokers and other third parties

can be jailed for up to 15 years if caught, longer if the victim is a minor. But convictions are rare, with brokers paying up to \$5,000 to buy victims’ silence. “The victims need the money,” a leading trafficking prosecutor told AFP, requesting anonymity for safety reasons. “And they are scared by these big, systematic trafficking networks.” China also has laws against the practice, but enforcement is patchy in a country where family matters are given a wide berth by the authorities. To clean up the system, Cambodia urges prospective foreign husbands to marry under local law, providing proof of consent, age and a paper trail. “Marriage to Chinese men is not bad by its nature,” Chou Bun Eng said. “But problems start when it is done illegally through ‘intermediaries.’”

Long way home

Nary’s marriage imploded one month after she gave birth to a baby boy, when her mother-in-law abruptly stopped her breastfeeding the infant. “She wouldn’t let me see him or even hold him,” she said. The family pushed for divorce, but with an expired visa Nary knew that leaving the home would make her presence illegal in China. Eventually she moved out and found a low-paid job for a few years in a nearby glass factory.

But her immigration status caught up with her and she was held in a detention centre for a year with scores of Vietnamese and Cambodian women, all with similar tales. After her release, her mother reached out to a Cambodian charity who engineered her return in August this year. Now she works for minimum wage in a garment factory, free from a bad marriage, but separated from her child. “I know I will never see him again,” she says. — AFP



PHNOM PENH: The mother of Nary, a Cambodian victim of forced marriage to a Chinese man, walking in front of their home in Phnom Penh.

US army declares 5 missing Marines dead after crash

TOKYO: The US military said yesterday five Marines who had been missing since two planes crashed off Japan a week ago were dead. The announcement brings the final toll in the December 6 crash to six, with a seventh crew member rescued after the incident. The crash involving an F/A-18 fighter jet with two crew onboard and a KC-130 refueling tanker with five crew occurred in the early morning around 100 kilometers off the cape of Muroto in south-western Japan.

It prompted a massive search and rescue operation, which the US military said had now been called off. “Every possible effort was made to recover our crew and I hope the families of these selfless Americans will find comfort in the incredible efforts made by US, Japanese, and Australian forces during the

search,” said US Marine Corps Lieutenant General Eric Smith, commanding general of the III Marine Expeditionary Force.

The accident was initially reported to have happened during a refuelling operation, but the military said yesterday this had not been confirmed and that the circumstances were still under investigation. There are around 50,000 US troops stationed in Japan and accidents are not uncommon. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe sent a condolence message to US President Donald Trump, saying the deaths of the crew members were “a matter of the deepest regret,” according to the foreign ministry.

“Closely cooperating with Donald, I’m determined to further strengthen the bond of the Japan-US alliance and work together to secure peace and stability in the region,” Abe said in the message. In November, a US navy fighter jet crashed into the sea off Japan’s southern island of Okinawa. Its two crew members were rescued alive. And in November 2017, a C-2A “Greyhound” aircraft with 11 people on board went down in the Philippine Sea-eight were rescued and the search was called off for the remaining three. — AFP

Monkeys run amok in India’s corridors of power

NEW DELHI: India’s government faces a tough re-election battle next year but first it must deal with an opponent as wily as any political rival, troops of monkeys that have become a big threat around its offices in New Delhi. Red-faced rhesus macaques have spread havoc, snatching food and mobile telephones, breaking into homes and terrorizing people in and around the Indian capital.

They have colonized areas around parliament and the sites of key ministries, from the prime minister’s office to the finance and defense ministries, frightening both civil servants and the public. “Very often they snatch food from people as they are walking, and sometimes they even tear files and documents by climbing in through the windows,” said Ragini Sharma, a home min-

istry employee. Ahead of the start of parliament’s winter session, an advisory to members of parliament last month detailed ways they could keep simian attacks at bay. Don’t tease or make direct eye contact with a monkey, the advisory said, and definitely don’t get between a mother and her infant.

The rapid growth of cities has displaced macaques, geographically the most widely distributed primates in the world after humans, driving them into human habitats to hunt for food. Many in Hindu-majority India revere and feed the animals they consider to be connected to the demigod Hanuman, who takes the form of a monkey. “This socio-religious tradition of feeding has created a vicious cycle,” said ecology researcher Asmita Sengupta. “They become used to being fed by humans and lose their sense of fear,” said Sengupta, of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment. “They start actively seeking supplementary food and if we don’t feed them, they turn aggressive.”

‘Ape repellents’

The monkeys have hardly proved an ally for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Hundreds of macaques feasting on optic fibre cables strung along the banks of the river Ganges derailed his plan to roll out wifi in his constituency, the crowded 3,000-year-old holy city of Varanasi, in 2015. Men were hired to swat the monkeys away with broomsticks and slingshots, when then US President Barack Obama toured New Delhi that year, media said. Some monkey-human encounters have turned tragic. In 2007, monkeys pushed the deputy mayor of Delhi, SS Bajwa, off his balcony to his death. Last month, one of the animals snatched a 12-day-old boy from his mother and killed him in Agra, home to the famed monument to love, the Taj Mahal.

Monkeys have bred rapidly in Delhi and neighboring states as they have protected status, but there is no official estimate of their numbers. India has tried several strategies to fight the menace. Several years ago, it brought in larger, black-faced langurs, feared by the macaques, to patrol key areas but that stopped after it became illegal to keep langurs in captivity. Authorities stumbled on a partially successful solution four years ago, after hiring 40 men to disguise themselves as langurs and squeal monkey-like to try and terrify the macaques away. “We call them ‘ape repellents’ and they are contract employees,” said a government official, who asked not to be identified. — Reuters

International

Saudi, US snub of climate report unsettles UN talks

Kuwait, Russia, US, Saudi Arabia slammed

KATOWICE: The refusal of the United States and Saudi Arabia to embrace a landmark environmental report has unsettled UN talks to breathe life back into the Paris climate pact, negotiators and observers said Monday. It may also signal more direct involvement of Donald Trump's White House, they said, in the nitty-gritty of the troubled negotiations, which depend on painstaking consensus building.

A US side event Monday promoting coal, gas and nuclear energy, led by special advisor to the president Preston Wells Griffith, reinforced that impression. "Alarmism should not silence realism," Griffith said before slogan-chanting protestors temporarily overwhelmed the venue. "We strongly believe that no country should have to sacrifice economic prosperity or energy security in pursuit of environmental sustainability," Trump announced in June last year that the United States would pull out of the 197-party Paris Agreement, which enjoins nations to cap global warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

Since then, critics say the White House appears to have taken little interest in the frontline work of veteran US diplomats, whose input has been described as "constructive" even by delegates at odds with US positions. That changed on Saturday, during what started as a cut-and-dried meeting of a subsidiary body within the complex UN climate machinery. A bloc of 44 small island nations-many facing an existential threat from storm surges engorged by rising seas-called on the UN climate body to "welcome" a UN report on limiting global warming to 1.5C (2.7F) above pre-industrial levels. Earth's average surface temperature has already risen by about 1C.

'Deeply irresponsible'

The motion quickly garnered "an avalanche of support" from more than 100 developed and developing countries, including the European Union, said Rueanna Hayne, a delegate from Saint Kitts and Nevis. "The report is obviously a game-changer for us," she told AFP. "It has to be mainstreamed into the UN process." Unveiled in October, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) "special

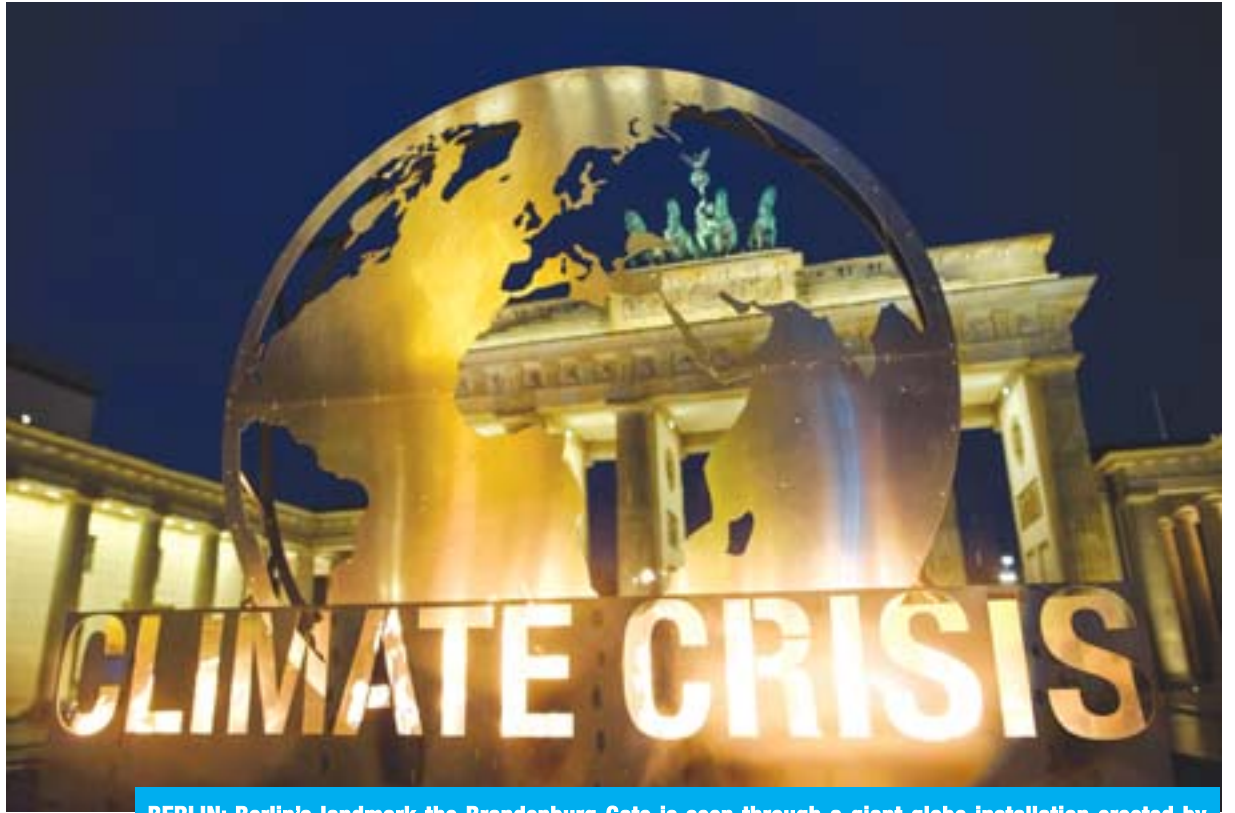
report" concluded that CO2 emissions must drop a quarter within 12 years to stay under 2C, and by nearly half to cap warming at 1.5C, seen as a safer guardrail against catastrophic extreme weather. Most of those emissions come from the burning of fossil fuels, including oil, the mainstay of the Saudi economy.

The United States disagreed with the motion. The fact that Washington had signed off in October on a "summary for policymakers" of the 1,000-page tome "doesn't imply endorsement of the specific findings," a US delegate said. Kuwait, Russia and Saudi Arabia voiced similar reservations, and proposed that the UN climate body simply "note" the report, and not "welcome" it. The Saudi negotiator, visibly angry, seemed to be spoiling for a fight: "This is a warm up for what's coming," he cautioned. The issue-unresolved-was shelved.

Reaction at the 12-day talks, scheduled to run through Friday, was fast and furious. "Saudi Arabia, Russia, Kuwait and especially the United States are rogue nations," said Christian Aid international climate lead Mohamed Adow. "These four major fossil fuel producers are working together against the interests of the rest of the world and jeopardizing the chances of a safe climate." Alden Meyer, director of strategy and policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists, said the US position was "deeply irresponsible and must not prevail". "I don't blame the professional US diplomats here in Poland," Meyer told AFP. "The problem is right at the top-with President Trump."

'A live issue'

Diplomats also slammed the US position. "Denial doesn't change the reality that climate change is already happening and is even worse than we feared," said Hussain Rasheed Hassan, Maldives' environment minister and head of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). "Coral reefs will continue to bleach, forest fires will continue to burn, people will continue to die in droughts, heatwaves, storms, and from diseases, and the sea will continue to rise around us." In a statement released Monday amid the blowback, Saudi Arabia said "limited literature and scientific uncertainties" in the report "required further research and analysis".



BERLIN: Berlin's landmark the Brandenburg Gate is seen through a giant globe installation erected by Greenpeace environmentalists yesterday. — AFP

In point of fact, the IPCC report-the most comprehensive in five years-drew from more than 6,000 peer reviewed studies and was compiled by hundreds of scientists.

Unexpectedly, how the UN climate forum recognizes the 1.5C report has emerged as an issue that could derail the already fragile talks. "This is not mere word play," said Meyers. The discussion will move up the ladder a notch as

ministers take charge on Tuesday for the final push to complete the so-called "rule book" for the Paris Agreement. "This is an issue we feel strongly about," said France's junior environment minister Brune Poirson, adding that the question was bound to come up later in the week. "It remains a live issue and must be addressed," said Hayne from Saint Kitts and Nevis. — AFP

France ships assault rifles to CAR's army

BANGUI: France yesterday handed over 1,400 AK-47 assault rifles and three amphibious vehicles to the Central African Republic (CAR) to shore up its beleaguered armed forces. French Defense Minister Florence Parly oversaw the handover at a ceremony at M'Pollo military base in the capital Bangui. The military aid was announced in Paris in November, along with 24 million euros (\$27.4 million) in civilian assistance. One of the world's poorest nations, the CAR has struggled to recover from a 2013 civil war that erupted when President Francois Bozize, a Christian, was overthrown by mainly Muslim Seleka rebels.

In response, Christians, who account for about 80 percent of the population, organized vigilante units dubbed "anti-Balaka" in reference to the balaka machetes used by Seleka rebels. Thousands of people have died in the violence, 700,000 have been internally displaced and another 570,000 have fled abroad. With the armed forces hampered by poor training and lack of equipment, the UN-backed central government controls only a fraction of the country's territory. In 2013, the UN Security Council imposed an arms embargo and it remains in place today.

Exemptions are made for weapons shipments for the security forces that gain pre-approval from a UN sanctions committee. The panel is tasked with ensuring that imported weapons do not end up in the hands of the militias in the corruption-prone country. The panel gave the green light last year for Russia to supply 1,700 AK-47s to the national forces in January, and gave its approval again to the French shipments. But in June, France, Britain, and the United States blocked a request from the CAR for approval of Chinese weapons deliveries. "From France's point of view, there is in principle no obstacle to ending the embargo" permanently, Parly said yesterday.

She stressed: "What is important is that these weapons, after they are delivered to the Central African armed forces, can be identified, stored and traced." The CAR has



BANGUI: A malnourished child is weighed while other children wait their turn in the Bangui paediatric complex. — AFP

an army of just 7,000 men in a population of 4.5 million. They are facing militia groups estimated to be at least similar in numbers. Russia has sent 170 military instructors — suspected by western sources to be mercenaries linked to Russian mining companies in the mineral-rich CAR. France, the former colonial power, sent 2,000 troops to quell the Seleka rebels, winding down the operation in 2016 after President Faustin-Archange Touadera was elected.

It has around 200 troops in the CAR today, working in sup-

port of the armed forces and the UN peacekeeping mission here. Parly said that France was the CAR's "major partner for development aid", providing 130 million euros annually. The 1,400 guns handed over by France are a gift, French officials said. They were seized aboard a dhow off Somalia in 2016 that was intercepted for breaching an arms embargo with Yemen, they said. The European Union has a military training mission in the CAR that involves 170 people. In July, it pledged 25 million euros to extend the mission until September 2020. — AFP

Indonesia's Aceh whips men for gambling

EAST ACEH: A group of men caught gambling were publicly whipped in Indonesia's conservative Muslim province of Aceh yesterday as a crowd of onlookers cheered. The half dozen men were arrested this year at an internet cafe for online gambling — an offence under Islamic law — earning them between seven and 11 strokes each from a rattan cane. At least one of the men winced in pain as a masked sharia officer lashed his back outside a mosque in East Aceh district. Dozens in the crowd jeered and called for the

men to be whipped harder. "They have violated the Qanun Jinayah (Islamic law) by being involved in gambling," Muliana, head of the general crime unit at the local prosecutors' office said. Public flogging is a common punishment in Aceh for a range of offences including gambling, drinking alcohol, and having gay sex or relations outside of marriage.

Located at the northern tip of Sumatra island, it is the only province in the world's largest Muslim-majority country that imposes Islamic law. Aceh adopted sharia after it was granted special autonomy in 2001, an attempt by the central government to quell a long-running separatist insurgency. Rights groups slam public caning as cruel, and Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has called for it to end. But the practice has wide support among Aceh's mostly Muslim population — around 98 percent of its five million residents practice Islam. Earlier this year, Aceh said that flogging would be carried out behind prison walls in future, but some local governments have continued public whippings. — AFP



EAST ACEH: A Sharia law enforcement official whips a man in East Aceh, in Aceh province yesterday. A group of men were publicly whipped for breaking Islamic law in Indonesia's Aceh in front of a jeering crowd for being involved in online gambling. — AFP

Man jailed in bride kidnap murder case

BISHKEK: A man in ex-Soviet Kyrgyzstan was sentenced to 20 years in prison yesterday for kidnapping and murdering a woman he planned to marry, in a case that sparked public fury. The murder of 20-year-old Burulai Turdaaly Kyzy inside a provincial police station in May caused uproar in Kyrgyzstan, sparking street demonstrations and the dismissals of several police officers. Turdaaly Kyzy's kidnapper Mars Bodoshev was given a 20-year sentence on charges of murder and kidnap for marriage, a spokesman for the Sverdlovskiy district court in the capital Bishkek said.

Kyrgyzstan is known internationally for its custom of bride kidnapping, which sees thousands of girls abducted for forced marriage every year. An accomplice who helped in the kidnapping was handed a seven-year sentence, the court spokesman said. More than 20 police officers were removed from their positions over accusations of negligence after the murder. Turdaaly Kyzy was fatally stabbed by her kidnapper while waiting to file a complaint against him after he was apprehended by police. Bodoshev then turned the knife on himself, according to police, but recovered following a period in hospital. The UN says 13.8 percent of women in the ex-Soviet republic younger than 24 are forced into marriage with their abductors.

Munara Beknazarova, a local activist against gender-based violence, welcomed the sentence and noted the "great resonance" of Turdaaly Kyzy's case in Kyrgyz society. "We know that kidnapping is commonly practiced but few statements are made to police and even fewer cases go to court," she said. "Hopefully after this case law enforcement and society as a whole will treat the crime more strictly," Beknazarova said. Bride kidnapping has roots in the Kyrgyz people's nomadic past. It persisted to some extent during Soviet times but boomed during the impoverished country's chaotic independence from Moscow in 1991. — AFP

Congo polls: Calm before the storm?

KINSHASA: The election posters are up, the candidates are doing the rounds and the party rallies are taking place almost without a hitch. But observers say plenty of nasty surprises remain in store as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa's powder keg, barrels towards presidential and parliamentary elections on December 23. Beneath a relatively smooth campaign lie uncertainties that could lead to lasting political turmoil or violence, they warn.

"The organizing (of the elections) has not been transparent or credible and the people aren't free" to choose, Nobel Peace laureate Denis Mukwege told AFP before he headed to Oslo for Monday's award ceremony. "So it's certain that the results will lead more likely to protests and this is not good for democracy," said the surgeon, who has treated thousands of women raped by armed fighters.

Symbol

For decades, the DRC has been an emblem of Africa's promise and tragedy. Nearly four times the size of France, the country sits atop glittering treasures, ranging from gold and uranium to copper and cobalt. But this wealth has benefited only a few, at the top of a country where corruption and inequality are rife. Violence, meanwhile, is a political hallmark. The DRC-formerly known as Zaire-has never known a peaceful transition of power since it gained independence in 1960 from Belgium, which brutally carved out its borders in the 19th century.

In the past 22 years, two massive wars have shaken the country, claiming millions of lives and sucking in armies from around southern and central Africa. Lower-level conflicts are burning in the centre and east of the country and these could easily flare into full-fledged wars, say analysts. Twenty-one people are vying to succeed President Joseph Kabila, who in spite of his relative youth-he is 47 — has run the sprawling, mineral-rich central African state since 2001, taking over from his assassinated father, Laurent. But the line-up of candidates is thick with controversy, not least Kabila's hand-picked successor Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, who will contest the poll under EU sanctions.

On Monday, the bloc voted to extend a travel ban and asset freeze slapped on him over his role as interior minister in a bloody crackdown on opposition activists. Opposition ranks, meanwhile, have been weakened by a decision by DRC's National Election Commission to bar two heavyweights-former warlord Jean-Pierre Bemba and regional baron Moise Katumbi, who are powerfully supported in the west and south-east of the country, respectively. The move leaves two opposition frontrunners: Felix Tshisekedi of the UDPS party and Martin Fayulu, who has won Bemba's and Katumbi's backing.

Adding to accusations of political meddling are the questions hanging over the election's organizational credibility. They range from South Korean-made electronic voting machines to a lack of foreign election observers, the Congo Research Group at New York University said on November 27. The opposition is divided over the voting devices, with some denouncing them as "cheating machines," but others acquiescing in their use. The authorities have invited monitors from the African Union, but not from the European Union and the Carter Foundation, who would provide global scrutiny of the poll. On December 23, "more than seven million votes could be potentially fraudulent," the French-language report said. "If the elections take place in these conditions, they could cause the country to face years of protests, further weakening election legitimacy and aggravating the conflicts in the east and in Kasai." The central, diamond-rich Kasai region spiraled into violence in 2016 after a powerful local chieftain was killed by security forces. — AFP

International

May tours Europe in desperate bid to salvage her Brexit's deal

‘There is no room whatsoever for renegotiation’

BERLIN: Embattled British Prime Minister Theresa May embarked on a tour of European capitals yesterday in a desperate bid to salvage her Brexit deal, a day after delaying a parliamentary vote on the text to avoid a crushing defeat. May had breakfast with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte in The Hague before heading to Berlin for lunch with Chancellor Angela Merkel, and was then to travel on to Brussels. She is seeking “reassurances” over provisions in the EU withdrawal agreement concerning Northern Ireland, which she hopes could persuade her rebellious Conservative party to support it.

European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker said ahead of meeting May that he was “surprised” at being asked for more talks. “I’m surprised because we had reached an agreement on November 25” at the last EU summit, he told the European Parliament in Strasbourg. “The deal we have achieved is the best deal possible, it’s the only deal possible. “There is no room whatsoever for renegotiation but of course there is room, if used intelligently, to give further clarification and further interpretations.” MPs in the House of Commons were due to vote on the deal, but May deferred it on Monday, admitting she expected to lose by a “significant margin”. Her spokesman said yesterday the vote would be rescheduled before January 21 – just months before Britain leaves the EU on March 29.

‘A political declaration’

EU President Donald Tusk, who was also to meet May in Brussels, has called a meeting of the other 27 EU leaders tomorrow to discuss the latest Brexit developments. They and May were already due to attend a European Council summit tomorrow and Friday, which

the British prime minister is expected to use to further press her case. Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said his government ruled out changes to the wording of the withdrawal agreement, but said there could be “a political declaration coming from a European Council”. “The Irish government doesn’t have an issue with providing reassurance if that’s helpful,” he told national broadcaster RTE.

May faces strong opposition from her own Conservative MPs and parliamentary allies over a clause in the Brexit deal designed to keep open the border with Ireland. The so-called backstop risks tying Britain into a customs union with the EU for years after it leaves the bloc – far from the clean break that eurosceptics want. “I have heard those concerns and I will now do everything I possibly can to secure further assurances,” May told mutinous MPs on Monday, after pulling the vote.

But it is far from clear what she can achieve. One of her ministers, Martin Callanan, said in Brussels yesterday that Britain is seeking “additional legal reassurances that UK cannot be permanently trapped in the Irish backstop”.

Leader of the House Andrea Leadsom said this could take the form of “an addendum”. May said on Monday that “nothing should be off the table”, but warned that reopening the withdrawal agreement could see other countries seek to remove bits they do not like, for example on fishing rights. Anand Menon, European politics professor at King’s College London, said May needed Brussels to make it “absolutely clear” that it would offer no new concessions on the deal. “I imagine they’ll add some language saying that both sides remain convinced that we’ll never need to use the backstop,” he said.

UK PM delays parliamentary vote to avoid a crushing defeat



LONDON: The latest news headline is illustrated on the West End Final board distributing The Evening Standard newspaper in central London yesterday. —AFP

No deal plans

Even if no deal is secured, Britain is still on course to leave the EU on March 29 – a scenario the government has warned will be hugely damaging to the economy. The decision to defer the vote sent the pound plunging. Tusk said Thursday’s EU meeting would cover no-deal plans, while May’s cabinet was also due to discuss the issue today. France’s minister for European affairs, Nathalie Loiseau, said the possibility of no deal was “not unlikely”, adding: “I’m very worried.”

May’s decision also drew outrage from MPs, who demanded the right to vote on the Brexit deal. Opposition Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn is facing calls to table a no-confidence vote in the prime minister, but is holding off for now as the party believes May is likely to win. “The government has lost control of events and is in complete disarray,” he warned on Monday. Eurosceptic MPs in May’s Conservative party also repeated calls for her to be replaced, with one warning it was time to “govern or quit”. —AFP

News in brief

Militants kill 4 Indian police

SRINAGAR: Suspected rebels attacked a police post in Indian-administered Kashmir yesterday killing four officers, police said, two days after soldiers killed two teenage rebels in the restive territory. In the latest incident of the region’s bloodiest year since 2009, the assailants mounted a surprise attack in Zainpora village of southern Kashmir valley and stole four rifles. They killed three police officers instantly and critically wounded another, police official Swayam Prakash Pani said. The fourth died later at a military hospital. “They (militants) fled the spot with four service rifles from the policemen,” Pani said. Militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) claimed responsibility. Muhammad Hassan, calling himself the Pakistan-based group’s spokesman, issued a statement to a local news agency saying its cadres killed three “Indian forces” and critically wounded several. —AFP

Setting rats on politicians

SAINT PETERSBURG: A Saint Petersburg court yesterday fined a Russian activist for setting rats loose in the regional parliament to protest government inaction. Ilya Mokhov, 23, was fined 10,000 rubles (\$150) for “violating the rules of public meetings”, the court press service said. Mokhov brought the two rats in a cardboard box into the Saint Petersburg legislative assembly last month. In a video he posted on YouTube, Mokhov is seen in a corner of the building coaxing the rats out of the box before they scurry along the floor. He told media the action was meant as an indictment of politicians “who do nothing for residents”. In Saint Petersburg, Russia’s second-largest city, people have long complained of dire living standards and of being ignored by the authorities, despite it being President Vladimir Putin’s hometown. The rats, local media reported, were never found. —AFP

Calls mount to sack UNAIDS chief Sidibe

GENEVA: The fate of UNAIDS chief Michel Sidibe hung in the balance yesterday as he faced the agency’s oversight body after an expert report blasted his leadership and called for his removal. The organization founded to coordinate the global response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic has been plunged into a crisis unprecedented in its 24-year history. Seeking to ease concerns after UNAIDS was accused of mishandling sexual assault allegations against a former deputy chief, Sidibe initiated the Independent Expert Panel report to study the agency’s culture and propose reforms. But the findings released last week were a stunning rebuke of the Malian national’s nine-year tenure.

It said UNAIDS was “broken” due to “defective leadership” and accused Sidibe of overseeing a work environment that tolerated sexual harassment and abuse where a “cult of personality” surrounding the executive director saw benefits doled out as favors by Sidibe and his cadre of top allies. It also said Sidibe “accepted no responsibility” for anything that has gone wrong under his watch. “For... UNAIDS to regain a culture of dignity and respect, a change in leadership has become necessary,” the report said.

UNAIDS’ oversight body, the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), opened a three-day meeting in Geneva yesterday that may decide Sidibe’s fate. With activists demanding immediate change, pressure is mounting on UN chief Antonio Guterres to act.

Guterres under fire

“What is the point of having an independent investigation if you don’t intend to do anything about the findings?” the head of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation Michael Weinstein said. Weinstein, who leads the world’s largest HIV/AIDS organization, stressed that the panel’s conclusions were “unequivocal,” and that if the Guterres does not act soon “it would truly be a shocking dereliction of duty.” Hours after the report’s release, Guterres’s spokesman Stephane Dujarric noted that Sidibe had pledged “to create a model working environment for all staff.” The UN chief would reserve comment until the PCB “deliberations” were complete. Code Blue, a pressure group that has been at the forefront of exposing the rot at UNAIDS, blasted that response as “astounding.” “What does it take to be fired by the United Nations?” it said.

Sidibe response ‘surreal’

UNAIDS on Friday said that Sidibe has no intention of resigning. The executive director, accused of fostering a “patriarchal culture” where staff do not report sexual misconduct because they fear inaction or retaliation, said in a statement that he had been “inspired by the



UNAIDS chief Michel Sidibe

#MeToo movement.” “I have taken on board the criticisms made by the Panel...I will spend the next 12 months implementing this agenda for change,” Sidibe said. The editor of the influential medical journal The Lancet, Richard Horton, called Sidibe’s response “surreal.” “Nowhere does (Sidibe) accept that he was responsible for the toxic work environment that his leadership created. Nowhere does he acknowledge the grievous harms done to his colleagues at UNAIDS,” Horton wrote in an online commentary.

“Both the PCB and Antonio Guterres now have a duty to deliver on the recommendations of the Expert Panel” and

fire Sidibe, he added. “The reputation of UNAIDS and the UN system depends on it.” It is not yet clear if the PCB will make a formal recommendation on Sidibe’s future. UNAIDS spokeswoman Sophie Barton-Knott told AFP that the panel report would be an important subject at the closed-door PCB meeting. Britain, which chairs the PCB, said it “cannot tolerate” the practices detailed in the report. “We expect immediate and far-reaching action from UNAIDS over this to address the findings,” a spokesperson for the Department for International Development (DFID) told AFP in an email. —AFP

Twitter warns global users their tweets violate Pakistani law

WASHINGTON: When Canadian columnist Anthony Furey received an email said to be from Twitter’s legal team telling him he may have broken a slew of Pakistani laws, his first instinct was to dismiss it as spam. But after Googling the relevant sections of Pakistan’s penal code, the Toronto Sun op-ed editor was startled to learn he stood accused of insulting the Prophet Mohammad—a crime punishable by death in the Islamic republic—and Twitter later confirmed the correspondence was genuine. His perceived offense was to post cartoons of the prophet several years ago.

Furey and two prominent critics of extremism in Islam say they are “shocked” to have received notices by the social media giant this past week over alleged violations of Islamabad’s laws, despite having no apparent connection to the South Asian country. They say the notices amount to an effort to stifle their voices—a charge Twitter denies, arguing the notices came about as a result of “valid requests from an authorized entity,” understood to mean Pakistan, helped users “to take measures to protect their interests,” and the process is not unique to any one country.

But Furey is the third prominent user in the space of days to publicly complain about receiving a message linked to Pakistan. The other two are Saudi-Canadian activist Ensaif

Haidar and Imam Mohammad Tawhidi, a progressive Muslim scholar from Australia who was born in Iran. Both are outspoken critics of religious extremism and have accused the social media giant of helping to silence progressive ideas within Islam.

‘Validates blasphemy laws’

Furey, who detailed his experience in a column for his newspaper on Saturday, told AFP: “I’m somewhat alarmed that Twitter would even allow a country to make a complaint like this, as it almost validates their absurd blasphemy laws.” The tweet in question was a collage of cartoons of Mohammad that he posted four years ago. “Looking back, I remember I did it right after there had been an ISIS-inspired attack in retaliation over the cartoons,” Furey wrote in his column, adding he had not posted similar material before or since. Haidar, who is the wife of Saudi writer Raif Badawi who was jailed in his country in 2012 for charges including apostasy, told AFP: “I’m very shocked by Twitter. They want to silence any voice telling the truth.” Twitter wrote to her concerning an August tweet which showed a woman wearing the Islamic full veil, with the caption: “Retweet if you’re against niqab.”

A notice sent to her and seen by AFP advised her that Twitter had received official correspondence saying she could be violating Pakistani law for the tweet, adding: “You may wish to consult legal counsel about this matter.” Tawhidi meanwhile was sent a similar notice flagging a tweet that called on Australian police to investigate extremism in



LAHORE: A Pakistani boy carries waste plastic bags on a horse-driven cart in Lahore. —AFP

mosques following a deadly knife attack in Melbourne in November. The scholar attached the legal notice sent to him by Twitter informing him of possible violations of Pakistani law, and tweeted: “I am not from Pakistan nor am I a Pakistani citizen. “Pakistan has no authority over what I say. Get out of here.”

Reached for comment, a spokesperson for Twitter told AFP: “In our continuing effort to make our services available to people everywhere, if we receive a valid request from an authorized entity, it may be necessary to withhold access to certain content in a par-

ticular country from time to time.” The spokesperson added: “We notify users so that they have the opportunity to review the legal request, and the option to take measures to protect their interests.”

Pakistan has previously threatened to block Twitter if the company did not remove content its government found offensive. It banned Facebook for hosting allegedly blasphemous content for two weeks in 2010 while YouTube was unavailable from 2012 to 2016 over an amateur film about the Prophet Mohammad that led to global riots. —AFP

Nuns ‘stole schools funds’ for gambling

LOS ANGELES: Two Catholic school nuns in California have admitted to embezzling about \$500,000, and using the funds over the years for travel and gambling in Las Vegas, their order said on Monday. Sisters Mary Margaret Kreuper and Lana Chang, who are said to be best friends, took the money from tuition, fees and donations at St. James Catholic School in Torrance, south of Los Angeles. “We do know that they had a pattern of going on trips. We do know they had a pattern of going to casinos, and the reality is, they used the account as their personal account,” an attorney for the school told parents and alumni at a recent meeting, the Press-Telegram reported.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles said the missing money was discovered during a routine audit and it is believed the nuns operated their scheme over at least a decade. Kreuper was principal at the school for 29 years until her retirement earlier this year. Chang was a teacher for 20 years and she also retired this year. “Our community is concerned and saddened by this situation and regret any injury to our long relationship with the families of the school,” the Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the nuns’ order, said in a statement sent to AFP. “The Sisters of St. Joseph both desire and intend to make complete restitution to St. James School.”

Parents were informed about the nuns’ misdeeds in a November 28 letter from the school’s pastor, Monsignor Michael Meyers. The letter, a copy of which was obtained by AFP, states that Kreuper and Chang had taken a “substantial” amount of school funds for their personal use and the matter was uncovered during an audit conducted after Kreuper’s retirement. —AFP

International

Red tape and funding problems hamper Lion Air black box hunt

Cockpit voice recorder has 90-day beacon

JAKARTA: Bureaucratic wrangling and funding problems have hampered the search for the cockpit voice recorder of a crashed Lion Air jet, prompting investigators to turn to the airline to foot the bill in a rare test of global norms on the probe's independence. Weeks of delays in the search for the second 'black box' may complicate the task of explaining how 189 people died when the Lion Air Boeing 737 MAX crashed into the Java Sea on Oct 29. Indonesian investigators told Reuters budgetary constraints and the need for approvals had limited efforts to raise the main wreckage and find the cockpit voice recorder (CVR), thought to hold vital clues to Indonesia's second-worst air disaster.

"We don't have further funds to rent the ship," a source at Indonesia's transport safety committee (KNKT) said, in reference to specialized equipment needed for the search. "There is no emergency fund for us, because there is no legal basis," the source said on condition of anonymity. "We have already asked the coordinating minister for the economy, but there is no regulation and it would need to be dis-

cussed by the parliament," the source added. The clock is ticking in the hunt for acoustic pings coming from the L3 Technologies Inc cockpit voice recorder fitted to the jet. It has a 90-day beacon, according to an online brochure from the manufacturer.

Safety experts say it is unusual for one of the parties to help fund an investigation. Under United Nations rules, such probes must be conducted independently to maintain trust in any recommendations made to prevent future accidents. There are also broader concerns about the resources available for such investigations worldwide, coupled with the threat of agencies being dragged into separate legal disputes. A rare exception was the costly search for black boxes of an Air France jet in the Atlantic in 2009, parts of which were funded by the airline and Airbus after a failed two-year effort.

The Lion Air jet crashed in relatively shallow water of 30-35 meters but only the data recorder has been found as the remaining device lies among oil pipelines requiring an

expensive self-positioning vessel without an anchor. A Lion Air spokesman said a chartering contract had been signed and a specialized ship would arrive once all international regulatory approvals were obtained. Even though the airline is helping to fund the search, officials from the KNKT will oversee all operations on board. Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said she was not aware of a lack of funding for the CVR search operation.

Last trace

The voice recorder could help answer questions over whether the crew responded correctly to potentially faulty sensor data and any role that a newly modified anti-stall system on the 737 MAX may have played. The flight data recorder was recovered three days after the crash, giving insight into aircraft systems and crew inputs, though the cause has yet to be determined. The lack of an adequate support ship has frustrated investigators ever since the CVR's locator beacon was last detected on Nov. 12, KNKT

head Soerjanto Tjahjono said.

"We dipped the pinger (locator) into the mud about 60 centimeters, and the sound was still heard," he said. "We did it several times, but we need the ship." The search requires a heavy-duty supply vessel with a large enough deck and crane capacity to help recover the main fuselage wreckage as well as support a remotely operated underwater vehicle, deputy chief Haryo Satrio said.

He estimated the search would cost about 25 billion rupiah (\$1.73 million) every 10 days and cited the need to obtain "administrative progress" on funding as the main obstacle over the last month. Potential funding sources had included the finance ministry, the aviation regulator and Lion Air's insurers, he said. A source at Lion Air said its insurers had been reluctant to pay for the search and so the airline had stepped in. The Lion Air spokesman referred questions to insurer Asuransi Tugu Pratama Indonesia, a subsidiary of government-controlled oil company Pertamina. The insurer was not immediately available for comment. —Reuters

Nearly 100 injured in Bangladesh poll campaign violence

DHAKA: Bangladesh's election campaign turned violent yesterday with scores injured at political rallies across the country, as police fired pellet guns into crowds and stick-wielding mobs attacked rival candidates. Police told AFP clashes broke out in at least seven major towns on just the second day of campaigning, injuring nearly 100 people who turned out to cheer the two major parties contesting the December 30 poll.

The unrest follows a crackdown on the Bangladesh Nationalist Party in recent weeks, with hundreds of supporters from the main opposition movement thrown behind bars before campaigning had even begun. In Thakurgaon, a northern district, a motorcade for the BNP's secretary general Fakhru Islam Alamgir was set upon by a huge crowd swinging batons.

Local police chief Mohammad Moniruzzaman said the windows of several cars were smashed, but Alamgir escaped unscathed. There were reports of several injuries. The opposition blamed thugs aligned to the ruling Awami League, the party chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who is running for a record fourth term in office. In Kabirhat, a southern town, at least 22 people were hurt as rivals from the Awami League and BNP clashed with sticks and hurled rocks during a campaign stop, police said. In the central town of Faridganj, police said they fired rubber bullets at an opposition parade after rocks were hurled at them.

"We were compelled to retaliate in self defense," said local police chief Harunur Rashid. At least 26 civilians and four policemen were injured, he added. At



DHAKA: Supporters of Bangladesh Awami League march in the street as they take part in a general election campaign procession in Dhaka. —AFP

least 25 others were injured in separate clashes elsewhere in the country. There was also fighting, with rival Awami League factions firing pellet guns at each other in southern Fatikchhari town, injuring seven, local police chief Babul Akhter told AFP. BNP spokesman Rizvi Ahmed said more than 200 of its supporters were injured in what it called "administration-backed" attacks. "They are creating the ground for an uneven poll through this violence," he said.

Hasina walked her third term as prime minister in

2014 after the BNP and its allies boycotted what it called a rigged poll. That election was condemned by international observers. Around 100 million voters have registered for this year's ballot, even though the opposition is yet to name a candidate to run against Hasina. Veteran opposition leader and two-time prime minister Khaleda Zia has been barred from contesting the election against her long-time rival Hasina. She is behind bars, serving a ten-year jail sentence on graft charges her supporters say are unfounded. —AFP

tribute to fallen American troops, while the Philippines hails them as a symbol of its struggle for independence. Two of the bells had been on display in the US state of Wyoming and the other in South Korea until being restored and flown to a Manila air base yesterday aboard an American military cargo plane.

'Ring again after 117 years'

"It is time for healing. It is time for closure. It is a time to look ahead as two nations should with shared history and as allies," Philippine secretary of defence Delfin Lorenzana said. "After 117 years the sound of the bells will once again ring," he added. Manila's push for the bells' repatriation began in the 1990s and has had backing from Philippine presidents as well as from the Catholic Church and historians, but also supporters in the US. —AFP

US returns war trophy bells to the Philippines

MANILA: Church bells seized from the Philippines by US troops as war trophies over a century ago were returned yesterday, in a bid to turn the page on a difficult chapter between the historical allies. Giving back the three so-called Balangiga bells meets a decades-old demand from the former US colony at a time when the two nations' ties have been rattled by President Rodrigo Duterte's pivot to China.

Survey: Majority of Australian women sexually harassed

KUALA LUMPUR: Two in three Australian women have been sexually harassed at work, with the majority of cases unreported, according to a survey released yesterday that highlighted challenges activists said prevent women from advancing in their careers. Some 64 percent of women and 35 percent of men said they had been harassed at their current or former workplace, according to the survey of over 9,600 people by the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the country's main group representing workers.

The majority of those surveyed said they were subjected to offensive behavior or unwanted sexual attention. However only about a quarter of them made formal complaints, due to fears of repercussion, the survey found. "Everyone should go to work free from the fear of harassment and unwanted sexual attention," the council's president, Michele O'Neil, said in a statement. "For many people - mainly women - today in Australia this is not the reality. Our workplace laws have failed women who are experiencing harassment at work."

Campaigners said sexual harassment creates a workplace environment that is discriminatory towards women, which can prevent them from moving forward in their careers. "Sexual harassment in the workplace closes off women's opportunities and supports the attitudes that make violence more likely," Merrindahl Andrew, from the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance, said by email. Australia was ranked 35 out of 144 countries in the World Economic Forum's 2017 Gender Gap Index, up from 46 in 2016 due to greater female representation legislators and managers.

Although the global #MeToo movement has helped raised awareness about sexual harassment, the advocacy group Plan International said the lack of strong policies and enforcement has discouraged victims from coming forward in Australia. "The survey finding is disturbing, yet not surprising to us," the group's chief executive in Australia Susanne Legena told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. She urged the government to improve reporting mechanisms, including by setting up a specific hotline and enhance training for police officers to fight under-reporting of cases. —Reuters



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Mueller brings Trump closer to prosecution

US President Donald J Trump, protected from criminal charges while in office, is now facing the prospect of indictment when he becomes a private citizen. On Friday, federal prosecutors in New York accused Trump of a felony: Violating campaign-finance laws with hush-money payments intended to skew the 2016 election. Specifically, they detailed how Trump's lawyer and self-described fixer Michael Cohen bought the silence of two women who said they had sexual liaisons with Trump - and did so in order to help Trump win the presidency - with the president's full knowledge.

Special counsel Robert S. Mueller III also filed documents showing that Cohen has told them that Trump was working on a real estate deal in Moscow potentially worth hundreds of millions of dollars "well into the campaign" - shortly before he secured the Republican nomination for president. Cohen was convicted of lying to Congress about these discussions with Trump.

The American people now know that Cohen "acted in coordination with and at the direction of Individual-1" - the president of the United States - in the illegal payments. Cohen was in "close and regular contact" with the White House and the president's lawyers when he lied to Congress under oath about the Moscow project.

The Moscow project was "a lucrative business opportunity that sought, and likely required, the assistance of the Russian government," Mueller's prosecutors wrote. The negotiations "occurred at a time of sustained efforts by the Russian government to interfere with the US presidential election." Hours after the Russian hacks into the Democratic National Committee's computers were first revealed in June 2016, the Moscow project discussions were suspended.

The FBI started out investigating the Russian operation that summer. By the fall, agents were looking at whether Americans aided and abetted the attack. Now we are witnessing an intelligence nightmare - a Russian operation to put Moscow's preferred candidate in charge of the United States, and the fallout as he damages American democracy and attacks the North Atlantic alliance. After 18 months as special counsel, Mueller has taken his investigation up to the first days after Trump was inaugurated. He and his fellow prosecutors have built a clear and convincing case that lies - not just political lies, but lies that constitute crimes - helped put Trump in power.

That case, along with Mueller's continuing investigation of obstruction of justice by the president, may someday help put Citizen Trump in jeopardy of prosecution for a wide-ranging conspiracy to defraud the United States. That statute, the Supreme Court determined long ago, covers "any conspiracy for the purpose of impairing, obstructing or defeating the lawful function of any department of government." That includes election laws, tax laws, and every manner of fraud.

Mueller and the FBI agents he commands have many months of work ahead. I suspect they are assembling the facts that one day will fill a sealed indictment - United States vs. Donald J. Trump - that could be unsealed by a federal judge when the president leaves office. Trump might try to obstruct Mueller. But, as I have written previously, he can't fire the FBI.

Mueller now has proven that Cohen, along with former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort and former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn, broke the law by lying to the FBI and Congress about their contacts with Russians and people with ties to Russian intelligence. If they lied at the direction of Trump, the special counsel will find out.

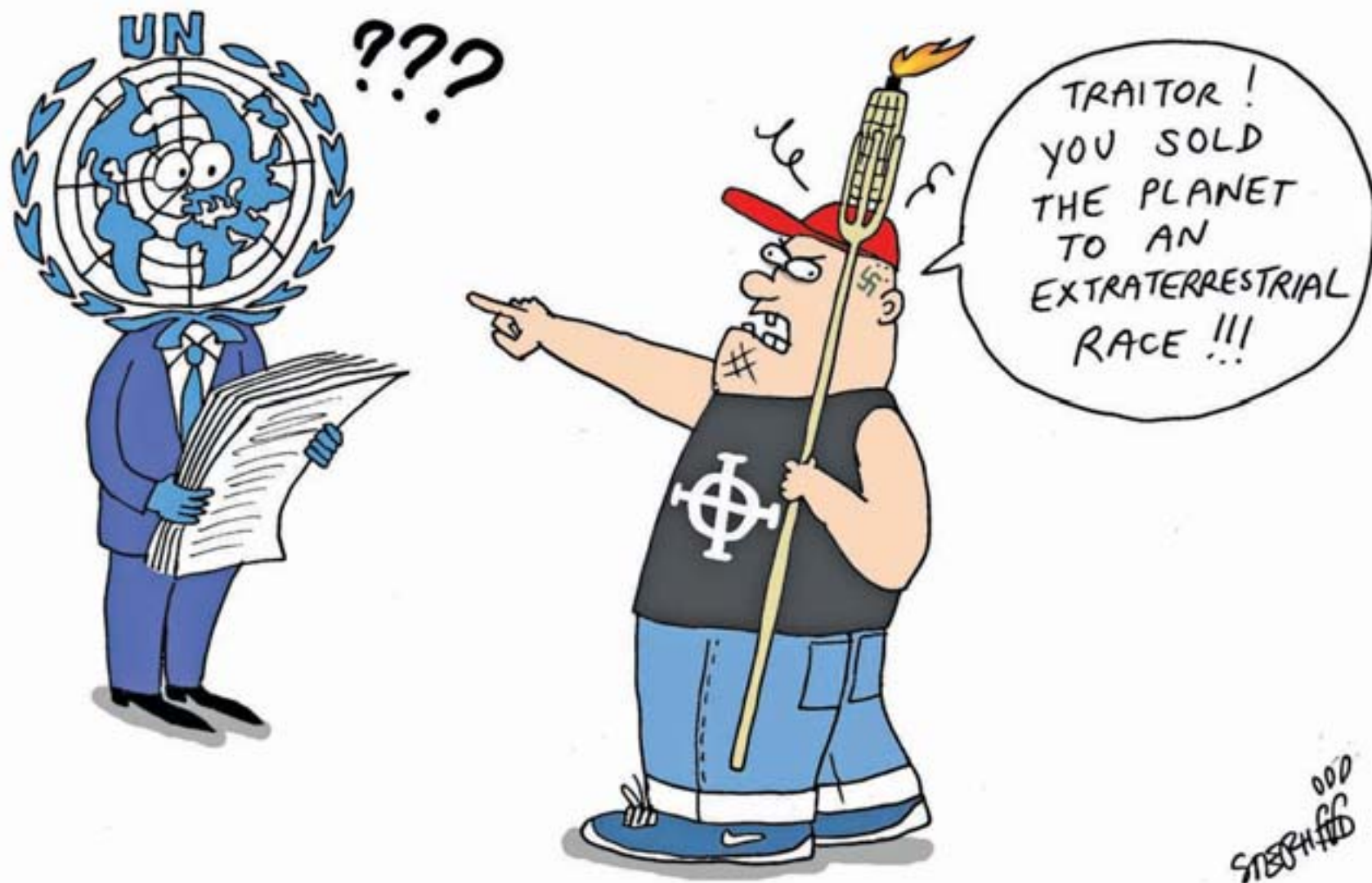
Common denominator

These lies - and more still under Mueller's microscope - have a common denominator. Each shows the hand of Vladimir Putin and his spy service. In 2016, Russians also approached Donald Trump Jr., and Trump's senior adviser Jared Kushner, offering each in turn a tempting morsel - illegally obtained campaign dirt for the son, an illicit intelligence backchannel to Moscow for the son-in-law. These were classic intelligence approaches - "dangles" in spy argot - testing targets to see if they will bite. They did. Did they pick up the phone and call the FBI? They did not.

And then they appear to have misled members of Congress about it, under penalty of perjury. This means that members of the president's family could be in legal peril. Trump denies everything. "Totally clears the president. Thank you!" he tweeted as the new accusations were unsealed. That was yet another false statement from a leader who, according to Washington Post fact checkers, has misled the American people more than 6,400 times while in office, and continually and viciously attacks the special counsel, the FBI, and the Justice Department.

These attacks constitute a clear and present danger the president poses to the rule of law in the United States. The question now is whether US institutions like Congress, the courts, and the criminal justice system can constrain him, and, if it comes to that, convict him for his assaults against the American political and legal system. Come January, the Democrats in the newly-elected House of Representatives would do well to investigate Trump as no president ever has been investigated before. — Reuters

UN CONFERENCE ADOPTS MIGRATION PACT



Modi seen forgiving farmers' loans

Angry farmers

Economists caution that farm loans waivers would widen a fiscal deficit the government has aimed to cap at 3.3 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), or 6.24 trillion rupees. Even without the farm loan waiver, some credit rating agencies have estimated the country's fiscal deficit at 6.67 trillion -



PM seeks to win back rural voters

or 3.5 percent of GDP, on muted tax collections. The loan waiver also risks deepening the malaise at public sector banks saddled with most of India's \$150 billion in stressed loans.

If the government finds very limited fiscal space, it could go for loan waivers only in a few geographies that have suffered extreme weather conditions, sources and analysts said. The results announced yesterday were from elections that took place over the past few weeks in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, three large states in the Hindi-speaking northern belt that is the BJP's traditional stronghold. The BJP lost power in Madhya Pradesh after holding power there for 15 years. "Tuesday's

election result clearly demonstrates farmers' anger against Modi and his administration," said Dharmendra Malik, a farm leader from Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state that borders all three.

The last time a BJP government lost power, in 2004, it was largely because rural voters abandoned the party. "Farmers very well know that the state governments don't have the financial war chest to write off agricultural loans, so it's only Modi's government which can waive loans," Malik said. Although farm loan waivers are a populist move, debt write-offs help only relatively well-off farmers with larger plots of land. India's small farmers - 80 percent of the total - often cannot borrow from banks and turn instead to local money lenders who charge exorbitant interest of 25-50 percent. Both the BJP and Congress have promised farm loan waivers in a number of state elections in the past few years. About seven state governments have promised to write off farm loans worth 1.8 trillion rupees. Low food prices, export curbs, anti-inflation policies that keep rural incomes low and a broad shift from subsidies to investment spending under the pro-business Modi have all infuriated and demoralized farmers.

Both India's capital New Delhi and Mumbai, the country's financial hub, have been recent targets of protests by farmers, mirroring rising anger in the countryside where more than two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion people live. Other than writing off crop loans, the government would also try to step up purchases of farmers' produce, government sources said, without giving details. Mahesh Salve, a wheat farmer from Madhya Pradesh, said he was counting on farm loan waivers. "I will vote for the party that will write off our loans," said Salve. — Reuters

US Supreme Court on collision course with Trump

The US Supreme Court's reluctance to take up new cases on volatile social issues is putting it on a collision course with President Donald Trump, whose Justice Department is trying to rush such disputes through the appeals system to get them before the nine justices as quickly as possible. That tension could come to head in 2019 if the court continues to avoid cases that the Republican president's lawyers are aggressively trying to bring to the justices. The court's 5-4 conservative majority includes Trump appointees Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch.

While Trump has suffered a series of setbacks in lower federal courts since taking office last year, he has collected major victories at the Supreme Court. Most notably, the court in June upheld in a 5-4 ruling Trump's travel ban targeting people from several Muslim-majority countries, with Gorsuch casting a pivotal vote, after lower courts had blocked the policy.

But since Kavanaugh joined the bench in October after a bitter Senate confirmation fight, the court has declined to take up appeals by conservative-leaning states seeking to deny public funds to women's healthcare and abortion provider Planned Parenthood, while postponing action on a dispute over federal employment protections opposed by Trump's administration for gay and transgender people.

At the same time, the administration has been seeking to leap-frog more liberal-leaning lower courts to get cases on divisive questions over immigration, transgender rights and the US census before the justices more rapidly. "The court seems to be in go-slow mode at the moment when it comes to big cases. The court appears

content to focus on meat-and-potatoes cases rather than blockbuster ones," said Kannon Shanmugam, a lawyer who regularly argues cases before the justices.

Trump has frequently railed against the lower courts, especially the liberal-leaning San Francisco-based 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals, that have ruled against him in some major cases including the travel ban. In a setback to social and religious conservatives who strongly support Trump, the high court on Monday declined to take up appeals by Kansas and Louisiana to deny Planned Parenthood public funds under the Medicaid health insurance program for the poor.

Three of the court's five conservatives voted to hear the matter, but with conservatives Kavanaugh and Chief Justice John Roberts declining to join them they fell a vote short of the required four needed to take up a case. Conservative Justice Clarence Thomas accused his colleagues of ducking the case because of its controversial nature. Last week, the court put off action in another divisive case involving whether federal employment law outlaws discrimination against gay and transgender people. There are three appeals on the issue begging attention from the court, but the justices have not yet acted.

The court also has delayed action in a case concerning Republican-drawn U.S. congressional districts in North Carolina that were struck down by a lower court that found the boundaries were drawn to ensure lopsided electoral victories for their party against rival Democrats.

"It does appear they are being very careful based on their actions so far. They don't seem eager to take on avoidable, potentially controversial cases. It may be that they have a heightened sensitivity right now," Shannon Minter, legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights advocacy group, said of the justices. The court early next year must decide whether to hear two high-profile appeals by Trump's administration. One involves the president's bid to end deportation protections for hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants known as "Dreamers" who were brought into the United States as children. — AFP

Bolsonaro govt has conservative, military streak

Brazil's next government, under incoming far-right president Jair Bolsonaro who takes power in three weeks, will be neo-liberal economically, morally conservative and heavy reliant on a contingent of ex-military figures. That's the final composition that has emerged after weeks of announcements and casting about to fill the top posts of 22 ministries, down from 29 in the outgoing administration. Seven of the ministers will be military men. Eight have technocrat profiles. And seven are politicians.

All are united by fierce criticism of the leftwing governments that ruled under former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) - who is now in prison for corruption - and his protégée Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) - whose second mandate was cut short by impeachment. Bolsonaro said at a ceremony on Monday he would govern "without distinction of social origin, race, sex, age or religion".

There are just two women in Bolsonaro's government, which is double the number in the outgoing lineup under President Michel Temer. There are no blacks, despite half of Brazil's population being at least partly descended from Africans. Oliver Stuenkel, a professor of international relations at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, said there were three distinct groups to be seen: "A nationalist, anti-globalist group that is oriented towards the populist politics of Donald Trump, a group of neo-liberals that controls the economic part, and another of military men with influence in various areas." He added: "We'll soon see how the power play will work out between these three axes."

'Chicago Oldies'

A big challenge for Bolsonaro will be to bring Brazil's economy back to full health. The country exited its worst recession on record two years ago but has put in an anemic performance since. To that end he has tapped Paulo Guedes, a product of the University of Chicago's economic liberalism, to head up an economy superministry in charge of finances, planning, trade and a chunk of the scrapped labor portfolio.

Guedes, a strong advocate of privatization and small government, has named a bunch of veteran economists - nicknamed the "Chicago Oldies" by the Brazilian press - to take charge of state oil company Petrobras, the central bank and the BNDES development bank. "The formation of the economic team suggests that Guedes will enjoy fairly big autonomy to carry out the reform agenda without interference from other parts of the government," Thomaz Favaro, an analyst at the firm Control Risks, told AFP.

Anti-corruption

Another priority is to fight corruption and rampant crime. Another superministry - for justice this time - will be under the command of Sergio Moro, a celebrated anti-graft judge who led the Car Wash investigation that led to Lula and other politicians being sent to prison. But it remains to be seen how Moro will be able to operate under Bolsonaro's extreme right direction, with divergences already possible over the next president's push to ease gun laws and to label radical rural groups as "terrorists". Wladimir Gramacho, a political sciences professor at the University of Brasilia, said Moro and Guedes, as well as Onyx Lorenzoni who will become Bolsonaro's chief of staff, "have the confidence of the three pillars supporting a government: Congress, the economy and public opinion." Brazil's 63-year-old leader-to-be has never hidden his nostalgia for the 1964-1985 military dictatorship he served, nor his intent to dose his cabinet with ex-military types. — AFP

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AHMEDABAD: An Indian worker arranges sev or vermicelli on bamboo sticks to be dried in the sun in Ahmedabad. —AFP

India appoints Modi ally as new CB head

Investors worry about RBI autonomy; rupee and stocks crash

MUMBAI: India's government named an ally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the country's new central bank chief yesterday, a day after his predecessor quit following a dispute about government interference. Shaktikanta Das has been appointed governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for three years, a government statement said.

The 63-year-old is a former senior finance ministry official and a key figure in Modi's controversial "demonetization" scheme of November 2016.

Das has worked with various government bodies and was part of the economic affairs ministry when Modi announced his controversial cash ban that scrapped 86 percent of notes overnight. "The government has hired an insider who will be sympathetic to government concerns and not hold diverging opinions," independent economist Ashutosh Datar said.

Disappointing choice

"This is an extremely disappointing choice and is the final straw in chipping away at the RBI's integrity and freedom to set rates and take policy decisions," he added. Patel stood down as governor on Monday evening following months of tensions with Modi's government over interference in policy that experts say raises fears about its independence.

Patel cited "personal reasons" for his decision but analysts and media reports have said he was annoyed by New Delhi's repeated efforts to impose its influence. Analysts say Patel's departure, extremely rare for a central banker before the end of his term, is evidence that the RBI's autonomy is under threat. The Indian rupee sank more than one percent against the dollar Monday, with speculation swirling that an RBI intervention kept it from falling further.

Patel's resignation comes after his deputy, Viral Acharya,

warned the government in a strongly worded speech in October that undermining the bank's independence could be "potentially catastrophic". Indian business dailies reported in October and November that the government had invoked never-before-used powers to send at least three letters to Patel seeking to direct policy. Newspapers suggested Patel was close to quitting over the issue at the time, but the tensions were believed to have been diffused following clear-the-air talks three weeks ago.

Election looms

The government is believed to be unhappy with the RBI over a number of issues including its handling of interest rates, how to deploy reserves and what to do about the sliding rupee. The rupee has been one of Asia's worst performing currencies this year, although it has bounced back in the past fortnight, while economic growth slowed to under eight percent in the July-September quarter. It is understood the government is pressuring the bank to enact policies to help spur growth ahead of next year's elections, when Modi will run for a second term. A senior official from a government think-tank played down the resignation, however, saying the RBI was "not dependent on any one particular individual".

"RBI's institutional capabilities are very strong and they will do whatever is required for the markets and economy," said Rajiv Kumar, vice-chairman of Niti Aayog, according to the Press Trust of India. The government would like the RBI to lower interest rates and free up more of its cash reserves to invest in Asia's third-largest economy, analysts say.

The finance ministry wants mainstream commercial banks to be allowed to lend more but the RBI is reluctant, instead focusing on tackling a massive bad loans crisis. Patel took over as RBI chief in August 2016 and his term was due to end in September

next year. Governors are traditionally offered a second term. Patel succeeded the charismatic and outspoken Raghuram Rajan who himself clashed with the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government. Patel was initially seen as a more pliant figure before locking horns with Modi and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

Policy tussle

Patel's shock resignation following a policy tussle with the government sent tremors through financial markets yesterday, and investors were keen to see the government quickly name a credible replacement.

Both foreign and domestic investors say any openly political appointee with little macro-economic experience, would not sit well in equity, currency and debt markets that have already sold-off following setbacks suffered by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party in state polls this week. Investors worry the government will use the central bank to do its short-term bidding to boost the economy for political reasons, with a general election due by May, without fully considering the long-term consequences for inflation and financial stability.

"Governor Patel's resignation leaves many open questions," said Mitul Kotecha, senior emerging markets strategist at TD Securities. "Any hint of an overtly political appointee will likely not bode well for India's markets over the medium term."

The rupee touched a nearly one-month low against the US dollar yesterday. Following Patel's announcement, forward contracts tracking the rupee against the dollar posted their biggest fall in more than five years. Bond and equity markets also sold off sharply early in the day yesterday, before turning around later.

The timing of Patel's resignation, along with the likelihood of losses for the BJP in the five state elections, may spell trouble for foreign investors who have been upbeat about India's long-term



Shaktikanta Das

prospects with Modi at the helm.

"We will have to see how much recovery the government can make by general elections next year," said Ai Fujiwara, senior fund manager at Eastspring Investments. "Indian markets will likely remain volatile for now." Former RBI Governor Duvvuri Subbarao echoed investors' concerns in comments to CNBC-TV18. "The government will have to do some deliberation and serious introspection," Subbarao said. "The next incumbent governor will of course have the task of restoring the credibility of the RBI and entering into a working arrangement with the government which does not give the impression of being influenced beyond acceptable levels by the government." —Agencies

Vietnam refinery, a Kuwaiti JV, begins operations

TOKYO: Vietnam's new oil refinery jointly owned by the Kuwaiti, Japanese and Vietnamese companies has begun commercial operation. Japan's leading refiner Idemitsu Kosan Company announced yesterday. The 200,000 barrels-per-day Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Complex is Vietnam's second refinery and the first with foreign investors' participation, is located about 180 kilometers south of the capital Hanoi. The joint project is 35.1 percent evenly owned by state-run Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) and Idemitsu, 25.1 percent by PetroVietnam and 4.7 percent by Mitsui Chemicals Inc, the Tokyo-based firm said in a press release.

Of the total investment capital of \$9 billion for the joint venture, \$4 billion is contributed by the four co-investors, it said, adding that its construction started in 2013. "Intended to secure stable domestic



supplies of petroleum products in Vietnam, the refinery is a highly efficient facility that has the capacity to process 200,000 bpd of crude oil as well as to maximize production of high-value-added petroleum products through use of sophisticated cracking facilities," said Idemitsu. "Its petroleum products will provide a stable supply to meet Vietnam's booming demand for energy, and its petrochemical products will be sold throughout Asia," it added. —KUNA

Macron blows hole in budget with 'yellow vest' measures

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron's measures to help low-income families and so end the "yellow vest" protests will blow a hole in the budget and perhaps his reputation too, analysts say. The 40-year-old leader came to power in May 2017 promising a new business-friendly France with healthy public accounts, ending the chronic deficits which have been the norm since the 1970s.

But economists estimate the cost of the sweeteners he announced in an address to the nation on Monday could reach 11 billion euros (\$12.5 billion) — a blowout for a country already struggling to meet EU budget rules. The minimum wage will be hiked next year, labor taxes on overtime will be scrapped and a tax rise on pensioners introduced this year will be rolled back.

"Emmanuel Macron's positive image in Brussels as a good steward of the budget is going to take a serious hit," French financial daily Les Echos commented yesterday. The total bill for all the measures announced since last week to help mostly low-income

"yellow vest" protesters from small-town or rural France is estimated at 15 billion euros-and counting.

Under EU rules that underpin the euro common currency, France is obliged to keep its budget deficit under 3.0 percent of gross domestic product-something it failed to do repeatedly until 2017. Last year marked the first time in more than a decade that the country was under the limit-with a deficit of 2.6 percent-thanks to cost-cutting measures and higher-than expected economic growth. Next year, the government had forecast a slide back to 2.8 percent-even before the start of the protests, which are expected to have hit already slowing economic growth.

"In the first phase, there will be an increase in the budget deficit. We need to be clear. It's obvious, it's a question of priority," Environment Minister Francois de Rugy told Radio Classique yesterday. "We aren't saying that long term the debt isn't a problem. But the first priority is not to discuss this with Brussels, but with the French people," he added. Economists said Monday night's measures would likely push the budget deficit out to between 3.0 and 3.5 percent of GDP. It could also tip France's total accumulated debt above 100 percent of GDP for the first time, well beyond the EU's 60-percent ceiling.

Macron has previously said he wants to reform and strengthen the eurozone single currency area, urging member states to stick to the rules. —AFP

Kuwait credit growth improves in Q3; corporate borrowing rising

Growth in borrowing by households softens

KUWAIT: Credit growth improved in 3Q18 despite seasonal softness, ending September at 2.1 percent, supported by both a pick-up in business and household lending, while credit to non-financial companies continued to decline. Deposit growth, on the other hand, eased to 4.9 percent in Q3 on KD sight and savings deposit outflows that coincided with the travel season. As for interest rates, the CBK left its policy rate unchanged after the Fed's September rate hike, but increased the repo rate by 25 bps and so did banks on their deposit rates.

Business lending growth rose to 2.0 percent y/y in September from 1.0 percent in June, thanks to a pick-up in borrowing by key sectors, such as industry and construction, as well as other non-specified categories - its second consecutive quarterly improvement. Business confidence was supported by an environment of higher oil prices, which may have helped restore the appetite for credit in that segment. The subsequent fall in oil prices in October and November may since have impacted this trend.

Growth in borrowing by households, however, softened slightly to 6.3 percent in September from 6.7 percent in June, as weaker consumer borrowing - in the form of medium-term loans and/or credit cards - weighed on healthy housing loan demand. In a bid to catalyze the former, the central bank of Kuwait has relaxed some of its lending restrictions, reflecting recent economic developments. Borrowers seeking non-housing loans can now borrow up to 25 times their salary or a maximum of KD 25,000, up from 15 times or maximum of KD 15,000. The central bank will also now only require proof of purchase documents for housing-related loans, while no such documents will be required for non-housing borrowing.

Meanwhile, the pace of deleveraging by non-bank financial firms picked-up in September to 14.8 percent y/y from 9.9 percent in June, with no borrowing by that segment over the quarter. Credit extended to the investment sector is down KD 188 million year-to-date.

Growth in private deposits eased to 4.9 percent y/y in September from 5.7 percent in June, on withdrawals from KD sight and savings deposits that coincided with the summer travel season. As such, the expansion in the money supply stood at 4.8 percent, down from 5.3 per-

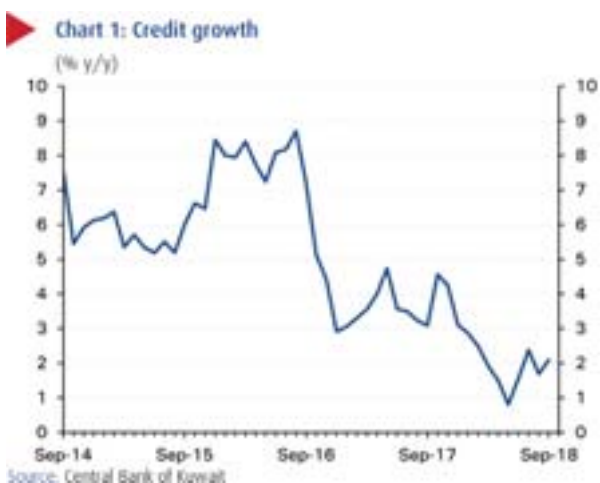


Chart 1: Credit growth (% y/y) Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

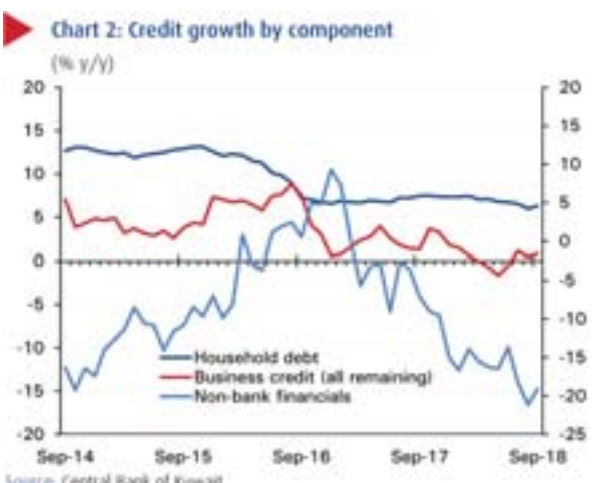


Chart 2: Credit growth by component Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

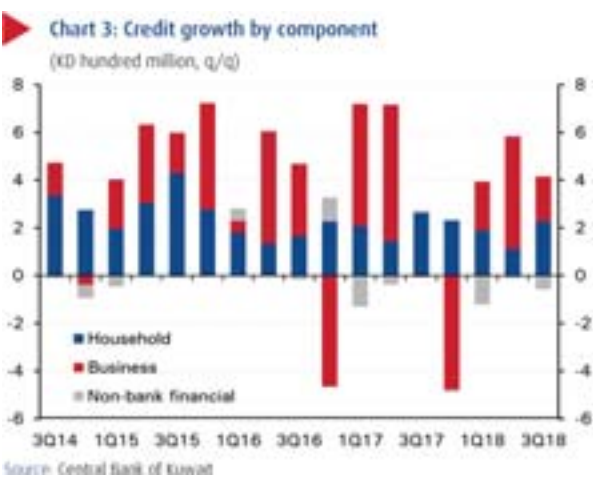


Chart 3: Credit growth by component Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

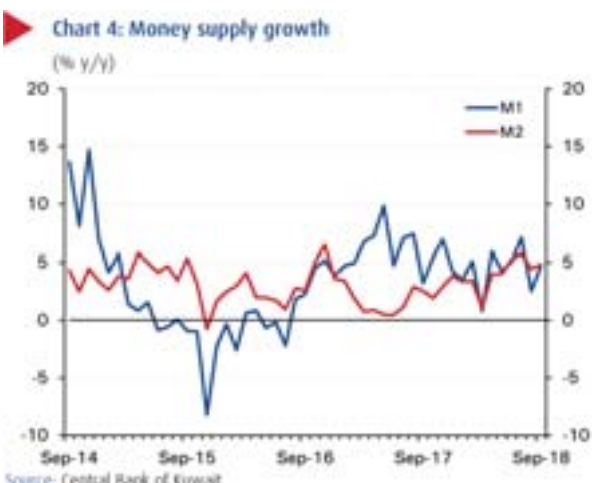


Chart 4: Money supply growth Source: Central Bank of Kuwait

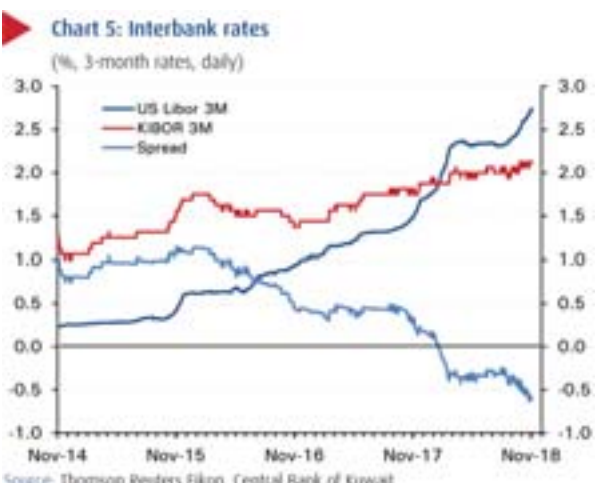


Chart 5: Interbank rates Source: Thomson Reuters Eikon, Central Bank of Kuwait

cent in June. Meanwhile, the contraction in government deposit growth worsened to 8.9 percent in September from 0 percent in June, despite higher oil prices.

Bank reserves (cash, deposits with the CBK, and CBK bonds) were down a small KD 57 million to KD 6.0 billion or 9.2 percent of bank assets in 3Q18. The pick-up in lending helped banks make good use of the KD 450 million in public debt that matured over the quarter. The new public debt law has yet to be approved by parliament.

Commercial lending rates were unchanged last quarter, while deposit and interbank rates increased alongside hikes in the domestic repo rate. The Central Bank of Kuwait forewent an increase in its main policy rate - the discount rate used to price loans - after the US Fed hiked its target rate by 25 bps for the third time this year in September. The CBK has skipped four out of the last eight US Fed hikes, a slower pace of rate increases aimed at supporting economic growth. To maintain the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti dinar and stem potential outflows, however, the CBK increased by 25 bps its repo-rate, with banks following with a similar increase on their deposits. On average, rates for commercial deposits maturing between 1 and 12 months were each up 16 bps over 3Q18. Meanwhile, lingering liquidity in the system capped the rise in the offered 3-

month interbank rate at 3bps.

Credit is projected to finish the year up 4 percent, supported by capital spending and moderate economic growth. The Fed is almost certain to hike its target rate for a fourth time this year in December. The impact of this move on domestic interest rates is not clear at this time depending on the CBK's assessment of credit and

liquidity conditions and economic growth more generally. Even if the CBK decides to raise its policy rate for a second time in 2018, this should not in principle have a noticeable dampening impact on borrowing as looser borrowing restrictions and an unwinding in base effects that have weighed on loan growth this year should see credit growth improve in 2019.

British ad giant WPP axes net 2,500 jobs



A company plaque is cleaned outside the offices of British advertising giant WPP in London. —AFP

LONDON: Global advertising giant WPP yesterday unveiled a new growth plan and said it would axe a net 2,500 jobs as it moves on from the controversial exit of old boss Martin Sorrell.

The company, which is struggling to compete with US technology titans Google and Facebook, said in a statement that it hoped to return WPP to growth after a strategic review. The three-year overhaul will cost WPP £300 million (\$380 million, 333 million euros), but seeks to save £275 million annually by the end of 2021.

WPP will slash 3,500 jobs at its operations but will create 1,000 positions elsewhere, according to people familiar with the matter. The move will largely impact administration roles as the firm seeks to merge 100 offices and shut 80 sites. WPP employs more than 130,000 people worldwide, of which 14,000 are in Britain. "The restructuring of our business will enable increased investment in creativity, technology and talent, enhancing our capabilities in the categories with the greatest potential for future growth," said chief executive Mark Read, who took the reins in September.

"As well as improving our offer and creating opportunities for clients, this investment will drive sustainable, profitable growth for our shareholders." The London-listed group has been in turmoil since Sorrell sensationally quit earlier this year amid allegations of personal misconduct. WPP faced fresh woe in October after issuing a gloomy warning over weaker sales for 2018. —AFP

China loans top forecasts, other credit gauges at record lows

BEIJING: China's banks extended more new loans than expected in November after a sharp drop the previous month, in a sign that recent government pressure on lenders to help struggling smaller firms may be starting to bear fruit.

But several other key credit gauges remained stuck at record lows or fell to new lows, suggesting China's policymakers will need to step up support efforts soon to stabilize the slowing economy.

"Generally speaking, the situation is not satisfactory, and monetary policy should maintain the current tone," said Wang Yang, an economist at the Development Research Center, a government think tank.

"It may take time to see results from supporting measures for private firms and we should step up infrastructure investment in the short term." Chinese banks extended 1.25 trillion yuan (\$182 billion) in net new yuan loans in November, slightly more than analysts had expected and up from the previous month, according to data published by the People's Bank of China yesterday.

Analysts polled by Reuters had pre-

dicted new yuan loans of 1.1 trillion yuan last month, up from 697 billion yuan in October and roughly in line with November last year. October's weak readings had largely been attributed to seasonal factors, with November loans seen snapping back for the same reasons.

But China's stubbornly weak credit growth has fueled speculation that authorities will have to take more aggressive policy action in coming months-such as a benchmark rate cut - to reduce the risk of a sharper economic slowdown in 2019. Total social financing (TSF), a broad measure of liquidity and credit in the economy, jumped to 1.52 trillion yuan in November from 728.8 billion yuan in October, also beating expectations.

But growth of outstanding TSF slowed to a new all-time low of 9.9 percent from 10.2 percent in October, as regulators continued to crack down on riskier types of financing despite indications that it is weighing on broader business activity. TSF includes off-balance sheet forms of financing that exist outside the conventional bank lending system, such as initial public offerings, loans from trust companies and bond sales.

A jump in bank loans this year has barely compensated for a slide in shadow loans.

New bank loans in the first 11 months of 2018 totalled 15.09 trillion yuan, up 16.6 percent from a year earlier and eclipsing last year's full-year record of 13.53 trillion yuan.

But combined trust loans, entrusted loans and undiscounted bankers' acceptances, which are common forms of shadow banking finance, fell by 190.4 billion yuan in November, following a slide of 2.57 trillion yuan in the first 10 months.

Growing financial strains

The data also pointed to growing financial strains on Chinese companies as the economy continues to lose steam amid softening domestic consumption and weakening global demand. Money supply growth remained at record lows, highlighting the impact of the official drive to curb shadow lending, which is slowly shutting off a major source of funding for smaller, private firms.

Broad M2 money supply grew 8.0 percent in November from a year earlier, matching forecasts and October's pace.

Adding to signs of stress on balance sheets and faltering business confidence, M1 money supply rose just 1.5 percent on-year, the weakest pace since January 2014. M1 reflects both the strength of corporate cash positions and whether they may be building up funds for possible future investments.

More help on the way

Slowing sales are adding to cash flow pressures, with corporate bond defaults on track to hit a record this year. Outstanding yuan loans grew 13.1 percent from a year earlier, a touch above expectations and the same pace as October.

Economists had already widely

expected further fiscal and monetary policy easing in China in coming quarters, even if trade talks now under way with the United States succeed in defusing the two sides' bitter trade war. The PBOC has slashed banks' reserve requirement ratios (RRR) four times so far this year and more cuts are expected in 2019 to keep liquidity ample.

It has also brought down interbank market rates and is pressing banks to keep lending to cash-starved companies, though lenders are wary of another spike in bad loans after years of pressure from regulators to reduce riskier activity.

However, those relatively modest measures, along with higher government spending on infrastructure and tax cuts, will take some time to put a floor under the cooling economy. "We believe the markets are putting too much hope on the speed, scale, scope and efficiency of Beijing's stimulus measures (so far), and that they may be unprepared for a significantly worse slowdown in the second quarter next year," economists at Nomura said in a note this week.

Nomura believes China's growth in the first half of 2019 could slow to a pace not seen since 1990, with high levels of debt restraining Beijing's ability to launch massive stimulus as it has in the past. Nomura forecasts economic growth will slow from an expected 6.5 percent this quarter to 6.3 percent early in 2019 and 5.7 percent in spring, before edging back up later in the year as support measures begin to kick in. —Reuters

Tightening US financial conditions to end Fed cycle: Analyst

LONDON: US financial conditions are tightening, a potent mix of a strong dollar, weak stock markets and flat yield curve squeezing the availability of global money that will bring to an end the Fed's rate-hiking cycle sooner rather later. By some measures, conditions are tighter now than they have been for years and money markets are reacting accordingly. A rate hike later this month is no longer the nailed-on certainty it had been, and even one single quarter-point increase next year is no longer fully discounted.

The more financial conditions tighten, the less the Fed needs to raise rates. Fed officials, including Chairman Jerome Powell himself, are beginning to strike a far more cautious note on how much further rates will rise.

Goldman Sachs's financial conditions index has risen by about 80 basis points since early October, and is now its highest in two years. That's a "material but far from devastating" rise, the US bank's economists reckon. But if conditions stay as tight as they are currently, US GDP

growth over the next year could fall by as much as 1 percentage point, they warn.

Goldman is among the most hawkish houses on Wall Street, but is now rowing back. It no longer expects the Fed to raise in March, and now sees three rate rises next year instead of four. According to the St. Louis Fed, financial stress is its highest now since April. It's not quite at February's peak, but if it does scale that - and you wouldn't rule it out - the index will reflect the greatest degree of US financial stress in seven years.

Wall of worry

The wall of worry investors are now climbing has been there all year. It's just that they're climbing it now, whereas they hadn't before. A brewing US-China trade war, rising US rates and yields, slowing corporate profit growth and the economic expansion getting closer to rolling over are taking their toll.

Fed officials will be reluctant to slow the pace of policy normalization if they can help it because that would confirm the suspicion that the "Fed put", the idea that markets will be bailed out with rate cuts at the first sign of trouble, is still very much in place. They may have no choice though.

Wall Street is on the slide, and investor sentiment is turning sour. The S&P 500 just had its worst week since February's "volmageddon" selloff, losing 4.6 pct, the tech sector is creaking, both investment and junk grade credit spreads are widening, and recession warnings are flashing. The 2s/10s yield curve got to within 10 basis points

of inverting last week. Parts of the curve at the shorter end, like the difference between three- and five-year Treasury yields, have already inverted.

Every one of the last seven US recessions has been preceded by the two-year yield falling below 10-year yield. It looks like the curve will invert again soon, another reason markets are seizing up. A flattening and inverted curve hits banks' profitability and willingness to lend. It goes without saying that when the availability of credit for households, businesses and investors dries up, the market and economic consequences can be severe.

The US economy has been remarkably stable this year, impervious to the deterioration across much of the rest of the world. But that may be changing - the housing sector, usually an accurate gauge of where the wider economy is headed, is looking fragile. The rest of the world doesn't have its problems to seek. Emerging markets are buckling under the weight of a strong dollar, the euro zone is growing at its slowest pace in over two years, Germany's economy contracted in the third quarter. Japan's economy shrank at an annualized rate of 2.5 percent in Q3, and Britain is being battered by Brexit chaos.

On top of that, China, the engine of global growth for the past 15 years, is growing at its slowest pace in a decade. Powell has yet to follow his predecessor Janet Yellen and suggest that the Fed is taking into account global conditions in its policy discussions and decisions. That may change soon too. —Reuters

Business

Apple phones still sold in China despite court ban

US giant faces growing nationalist backlash over arrest of Huawei exec

BEIJING: Apple stores in China continued with business as usual yesterday despite a court-ordered ban on iPhone sales, but the US tech giant faces a growing nationalist backlash over the US-sought arrest of a Huawei executive. According to US chipmaker Qualcomm, which requested the ban, the Fuzhou Intermediate People's Court ordered four Apple subsidiaries to stop selling older models of the iPhone, including the 7, 7 Plus, 8, and 8 Plus.

But Apple stores contacted by AFP in Beijing, Shanghai and Fuzhou said they were still selling those older models-confirming a company statement that all remain available.

Sales staff at a Beijing Apple store said they had not yet received any internal notices about the court injunction on iPhone sales. "If the ban is ultimately imposed, there will be no Apple products under 6,500 yuan (\$940) in China," noted Wang Xi, a senior market analyst at research firm IDC.

That would give Chinese smartphone brands, such as Huawei, "more opportunities in the high-end market", he said. Qualcomm's request to halt iPhone sales is part of a long-running patent dispute with Apple. Separately, Apple is also the target of nationalist sentiment over the arrest of Huawei's chief financial officer in Canada at the behest of the United States on alleged Iran sanctions violations. The Chinese government has condemned the arrest and demanded her release.

Nationalist backlash

Some Chinese netizens and companies have also turned against Apple. "What if China banned Apple the way the US has banned Huawei?" wrote one user on Twitter-like Weibo in a post that garnered more than 500 likes. "What if Apple lost its manufacturing center in China?"

Leaked company documents announcing rewards for Huawei purchases and penalties for owning Apple

products are also circulating on Chinese social media. A tech firm based in southwestern China, Chengdu RYD Information Technology, said it would reward employees who bought Huawei products with subsidies in an internal notice that it later confirmed via its official WeChat account.

The Shanghai Nanchong Chamber of Commerce confirmed that it too was offering subsidies for Huawei smartphones, and that staff and executive members of the business group would "lose their positions" if found with Apple products. It seems that "general sentiment is gradually turning to against Apple and support Huawei now," due to recent events, such as Meng's arrest and the US-China trade war, said Wang.

Qualcomm battle

China is a crucial market for Apple, but is has been overtaken by Chinese competitors in recent years.

According to a 2018 financial report, China, Hong Kong and Taiwan were together Apple's third largest market by net sales, after the Americas and Europe. Apple chief executive Tim Cook has also made regular visits to China, and has touted the company's inroads in the Chinese market as well as its manufacturing there. But Apple's premium-priced products remain out of reach for many users, increasing the appeal of more affordable phones produced by local companies.

Apple has the fifth largest market share in China, trailing behind Huawei, Oppo, Vivo, and Xiaomi, according to data from IDC.

Qualcomm, the leading supplier of chips for mobile devices, serves several Apple competitors in China, including Huawei, and has been in a prolonged legal battle with Apple in recent years. Apple has claimed that Qualcomm is abusing its market power over certain mobile chipsets in order to demand



BEIJING: Customers (center) look at products in an Apple store in Beijing yesterday. Apple stores in China continued with business as usual, despite a Chinese court-ordered ban on iPhone sales that could hurt the US tech firm in one of its most crucial markets. —AFP

unfair royalties, joining a string of antitrust actions against the chipmaker.

Qualcomm has countersued Apple and earlier this year escalated its legal fight, claiming the iPhone maker stole trade secrets and shared them with mobile chip rival Intel.

According to Qualcomm's US lawsuit, Apple's goal

was to buy mobile chips from Intel instead of depending on Qualcomm. An Apple statement to AFP called Qualcomm's effort to ban iPhone sales in China a "desperate move by a company whose illegal practices are under investigation by regulators around the world," and added that "we will pursue all our legal options through the courts". —AFP

Hold the phone: Huawei mistrust imperils China tech ambitions

SHANGHAI: China's ambitious drive to dominate next-generation 5G technology faces a sudden reality check as fears spread that telecom companies like Huawei could be proxies for Beijing's intrusive security apparatus. Fifth-generation mobile communications are the next milestone in the digital revolution, bringing near-instantaneous connectivity and vast data capacity.

They will enable the widespread adoption of futuristic technologies such as artificial intelligence and automated cars and factories-advances China is desperate to lead.

With 5G's rollout expected to gain pace in coming years, the race to dominate standards and control security and data traffic underpins much of the current high-tech rivalry between the United States and China, technology experts said.

Huawei's status as a leading world supplier of the backbone equipment for telecoms systems-mostly in developing markets-gives China an inside track.

But analysts said mounting concern over Huawei imperils that lead. "This is a big threat because if Huawei loses access to lucrative Western markets, this will impact its ability to grow and finance R&D," said Paul Triolo, a global technology policy expert with risk consultancy Eurasia Group.

It also could hinder the deployment of 5G

networks in China, which are "a key piece of China's overall effort to upgrade its industrial base", he added.

The US defence establishment fears China's dominance of critical 5G infrastructure could enable it to disrupt American military communications or otherwise wage asymmetrical warfare in a confrontation.

Triolo warned of potentially disastrous fallout for China if US law-enforcement efforts-in the spotlight after the arrest of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou in Canada-result in a ban on sales of US chips and other vital technology to Huawei. "This could be catastrophic for China's tech ambitions, threatening (Huawei) itself, supporting industries, and future development," he said.

Burglar with a key

New Zealand recently joined Australia and the US in essentially barring use of Huawei equipment in domestic networks. Following Meng's arrest on December 1, similar sentiments have arisen from Tokyo to Brussels. On Monday, Kyodo news agency reported Japan's top three telecom companies would forego equipment from Huawei and another big Chinese player, ZTE.

US officials and lawmakers have long expressed concern that China could use its tech firms to steal trade secrets-accusations Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang dismissed on Monday as "ridiculous." "These people do not provide a single (piece of) evidence to show how Huawei affects their national security," Lu said.

Distrust of Huawei stems in part from the background of founder Ren Zhengfei, a 74-year-old former People's Liberation Army engineer.

The US has already put the squeeze on



VANCOUVER: In this courtroom sketch by Jane Wolsak and released to AFP by the artist, Meng Wanzhou (left), Huawei's chief financial officer, speaks with lawyer David Martin in the courtroom in Vancouver, British Columbia on Monday. Meng Wanzhou, Huawei's chief financial officer, faces US fraud charges related to alleged sanctions-breaking dealings with Iran, and has been awaiting a Canadian court's bail decision. —AFP

ZTE, which faced insolvency earlier this year after the Trump administration temporarily banned American companies from selling it vital components.

Huawei has secured many leading 5G patents and supplied networking equipment for telecom systems around the world that will inevitably carry huge amounts of US data, putting that information at potential risk.

"One way to envision (the threat) is to imagine the person who built your house decides to burgle it," James Lewis, a technology policy expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, wrote in an analysis last week.

"They know the layout, power system,

access points, (and) may have kept a key."

'We don't like it'

But US firms like Intel and Qualcomm produce the advanced chips critical for 5G, giving Washington huge sway over Huawei, which depends heavily on those technologies. If the US cuts off Huawei's chip supply and further isolates the company, the blow "will be huge, bigger than ZTE", said Shi Yinhong, an expert on China-US relations at Beijing's Renmin University. "If Huawei is hit hard, China will lose its 5G lead." China observers say President Xi Jinping's more assertive global stance bears much of the blame for Huawei's troubles. —AFP

Trade detente bounce masks unease over Brexit, growth

LONDON: Stocks jumped yesterday as investors clung to hopes of a detente in the China-US trade war and picked through the rubble of conflagrations in other top economies, with heightened uncertainty over Brexit and French protests. A report China is moving to cut import tariffs on American-made cars drove European stocks to extend gains strongly as auto stocks jumped and the market interpreted this as a sign China is ready to make concessions on trade.

The report came after China's Vice Premier Liu He exchanged views on the next stage of trade talks with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer. S&P 500 and Dow futures were up 0.8 to 1 percent, indicating a strong open on Wall Street.

Eurozone stocks rose 1.8 percent and Germany's DAX climbed 2 percent while Britain's FTSE 100 rose 1.6 percent. Germany's DAX, the most China-sensitive market in Europe, last week entered bear market territory. MSCI's world equity index gained 0.4 percent - set for its first

Where next for Brexit?

Sterling hesitantly rose 0.4 percent to \$1.2610 as traders sought to price in a range of possibilities after Prime Minister Theresa May's abrupt decision to postpone a parliamentary vote on her Brexit agreement on Monday, a move that sent the pound spiralling down to \$1.2505.

Goldman Sachs analysts said volatility across UK assets has increased, with option markets pricing a wider range of outcomes including Brexit without a deal, a last-minute agreement or another referendum on EU membership. "We still think a no deal is a very low probability, but the uncertainty will persist for some time," said Richard Turnill, global chief investment strategist at Blackrock.

"The events of the last few days show you why there's caution," he added.

May embarked on the first leg of a trip to meet European leaders on Tuesday, seeking support for changes to her Brexit deal, while at home some lawmakers agitated for a vote of no confidence. The EU was adamant the withdrawal agreement, including its most contentious element - a



TOKYO: People walking in front of a shop of Japan's telecoms giant SoftBank in Tokyo. —AFP

"backstop" for the Northern Ireland frontier - could not be renegotiated. "I have no doubt a no-deal Brexit would rank pretty high on the list of market accidents ... and have a global impact," said Andreas Utermann, CEO of Allianz Global Investors.

French focus

Bond markets were focused on France as investors fretted over fiscal spending after the government announced conces-

sions aimed at defusing weeks of often violent protests. President Emmanuel Macron announced wage rises for the poorest workers and tax cuts for pensioners.

This sent French bond yields to their highest level over Germany's in 19 months, with the spread over the safe-haven German Bund hitting 48.5 basis points. Macron's announcement "leaves open the question about how the new fiscal measures will be covered financially," wrote UniCredit analysts. —Reuters

Services lift US producer prices in November

WASHINGTON: US producer prices unexpectedly rose in November as increases in the costs for services offset a sharp decline for energy products, but the overall momentum in wholesale inflation appears to be slowing.

The Labor Department said yesterday its producer price index for final demand edged up 0.1 percent last month after jumping 0.6 percent in October. In the 12 months through November, the PPI rose 2.5 percent, slowing from October's 2.9 percent surge. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the PPI to be unchanged in November and rise 2.5 percent on a year-on-year basis.

A key gauge of underlying producer price pressures that excludes food, energy and trade services increased 0.3 percent last month. The so-called core PPI gained 0.2 percent in October. In the 12 months through November, the core PPI increased 2.8 percent, matching October's gain.

Inflation measures have been softening. The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation measure, the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index excluding food and energy, increased 1.8 percent in October. That was the smallest gain since February and followed a 1.9 percent increase in September. The core PCE price index hit the US central bank's 2 percent inflation target in March for the first time since April 2012. The Fed is expected to raise interest rates next week for the fourth time this year. But the outlook for monetary policy in 2019 is uncertain amid tightening financial market conditions that have left investors fearing a recession.

US Treasury yields edged higher and the dollar held its losses against a basket of currencies after the data. US stock index futures were trading higher. Wholesale food prices shot up 1.3 percent last month, driven by gains in the cost of chicken eggs and fresh and dry vegetables. Food prices rebounded 1.0 percent in October.

Wholesale energy prices tumbled 5.0 percent, the largest drop since September 2015. Gasoline prices plunged 14.0 percent, the biggest decline since February 2016, after surging 7.6 percent in the prior month. Overall, the cost of wholesale goods fell 0.4 percent in November, the largest drop since May 2017, after shooting up 0.6 percent in October. Core goods rose 0.3 percent last month after being unchanged in October.

The rise in core goods prices likely reflects the impact of the Trump administration's tariffs on lumber, steel and aluminum imports, as well as on a range of Chinese goods. Last month, there were increases in the prices of iron and steel scrap as well as steel mill products.

The cost of services increased 0.3 percent in November, boosted by a 0.3 percent gain in the index for trade services, which measures changes in margins received by wholesalers and retailers. Services vaulted 0.7 percent in October.

The cost of healthcare services edged up 0.1 percent last month. There were increases in prices for hospital outpatient, hospital inpatient, dental and nursing home care. Healthcare prices increased 0.3 percent in October. Those healthcare costs feed into the core PCE price index. —Reuters

Business

NBK enhances ATMs and CDMs

Customers can enjoy faster and more convenient services

KUWAIT: Focused on implementing the safest and latest in technology to improve customers' banking experience, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) enhanced its Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) and Cash Deposit Machines (CDMs) to enable customers to enjoy many new services for a better and easier banking solutions.

With the new enhancements, customers can make cardless withdrawals by simply using their mobile number or Civil ID, update their Civil ID expiry date and use the NBK Tap & Pay debit card or any NFC-enabled debit card to withdraw or deposit money with only a tap and without inserting their card in the machine.

In addition to these features, customers can also easily change their debit or credit card PIN number, transfer between accounts, request check-books and account statements and add beneficiaries who will be able to initiate cardless withdrawals in the same way.

"The new enhancements and services provided by our ATMs and CDMs have earned our customers' satisfaction, saving them time and the effort of visiting their nearest branch to complete the simplest of transactions," said Maitham Al-Salem, ATM Channel Supervisor, National Bank of Kuwait. "We have committed to providing our customers with a faster and safer service, while ensuring we implement the highest quality and safety standards."

Al-Salem added: "NBK also provides customers with the convenience of ATMs and CDMs located across Kuwait to easily withdraw cash. Moreover, NBK Multicurrency ATM at the airport allows customers to withdraw cash in six different currencies that are the US dollar, euro, British pound sterling, UAE dirham, Saudi riyal and Kuwaiti dinar."

NBK makes it even easier, more convenient and safer for customers to use its mobile ATMs, in addition to its Multicurrency ATM located at Nuwaiseeb to withdraw cash when crossing the borders. Both

NBK and non-NBK customers can withdraw in Saudi Riyal when heading to Saudi Arabia and in Kuwaiti dinar when returning to Kuwait. Located across Kuwait, NBK ATMs and CDMs enable customers to deposit up to 100 notes at one time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and immediately credit the amount into their account in a safe and secure way.

Providing convenience and reliability in every step of the banking experience, NBK offers its customers a wide range of exclusive and innovative services and products to satisfy their unique needs and lifestyle.



Maitham Al-Salem



Jet Airways launches 'Happy Holidays' end of year global sale

KUWAIT: Jet Airways, India's premier, full-service international airline, has introduced 65 additional frequencies on its international and domestic routes starting December 2018, thus, further strengthening its network over its hubs of Mumbai and Delhi.

The airline has added a daily direct frequency from Pune to Singapore making it the first airline to do so. Owing to the going traffic to Singapore for leisure, business, medical and growing student traffic, Jet Airways has also added a 3rd daily frequency from both its hubs, Mumbai and Delhi to Singapore.

On the international network from Delhi, Jet Airways has added an additional third service between Delhi and Bangkok and a fourth frequency on the Delhi - Kathmandu route to meet the growing demand from travelers.

Guests will also benefit from the additional frequencies that the airline has introduced from its Mumbai and Delhi hubs to the Gulf, further establishing the airlines status as one of the largest carriers to that region. Jet Airways has also introduced a second frequency to Doha from Delhi and Mumbai.

Dubai has forever remained an attractive tourist and business destination, seeing the rise in travel to Dubai, the airline has added a 7th new daily frequency between Mumbai and Dubai. On the domestic front, effective 5th December, Jet Airways will introduce a fourth frequency between Delhi and Amritsar, and a direct daily service connecting Mumbai to the Holy city.

Happy Holidays end of year global sale

Keeping in mind the forth coming holiday season, Jet Airways is offering guests attractive discounts of up to 30 percent on their domestic and international travel across the airline's vast network open for booking from the 5th to the 11st of December.

As part of the 'Happy holidays year-end global sale' offer, the airline will offer special discounts of up to 30 percent on base fare for return travel in Premiere and Economy cabin from Kuwait to India, Bangkok, Colombo, Dhaka, Hong Kong Kathmandu and Singapore on flights operated by Jet Airways.

Raj Sivakumar, Senior Vice-President - Worldwide Sales & Distribution, Jet Airways, said, "Focusing on our strategy of concentrating capacity, enhancing frequencies, and improving density and hub connectivity via Mumbai and Delhi Jet Airways has introduced additional frequencies to popular destinations. These new frequencies will offer our guests the choice to select flight as per their convenience and we are confident that these new flights will meet their travel requirements and provide our guests with seamlessly connectivity.

The approaching festive season gives us the opportunity to offer our guests with a special 'happy holiday's global year-end sale'. We are confident that with attractive offers of up to 30 percent, this global sale will prove to be popular with our valued guests and will allow them experience exciting destinations across our network."

KIB participates in 11th Kuwait week in Cairo

KUWAIT: KIB recently participated in the 11th Kuwait Week in Cairo, which was held under the patronage of the Egyptian Prime Minister and in cooperation with the Embassy of the State of Kuwait. The event was attended by the Kuwaiti Ambassador to Cairo, Mohammed Al-Thoikh, as well as a group of ministers of investment and international cooperation, trade and industry, culture, and a number of businesspeople. Held from 4 to 6 December, the event took place at the Nile Ritz-Carlton, Cairo.

The event aimed at strengthening Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations and cooperation between the two nations. During the event, over 80 Kuwaiti and Egyptian entities from both public and private sectors attended, including ministries and official bodies, companies across investment, industry, trade, real estate, and tourism sectors, banks, media and a number of Kuwaiti-Egyptian joint ventures.

KIB noted that it remains committed to actively participating in this event that is held annually in Cairo. The event aims at strengthening cooperation between Kuwait and Egypt to promote investment between the two countries. Accordingly, the Bank continues to participate in these events and activities that support development projects and provide an investment-attractive environment in Kuwait. Moreover, KIB pointed out that the event sheds light on outstanding developments achieved by Kuwaiti institutions and economic growth in the nation. The event also presents a unique platform for attendees to learn more about notable investment opportunities and the latest local projects.

KIB added that this event has supported Kuwaiti-Egyptian investment relations over the last ten years. As a result, there has been continued Kuwaiti investment in Egypt, where investment witnessed a remarkable growth over the last few years.

It is worth noting that KIB has always sought to participate in these events and activities that are of interest to Kuwait, organized both locally and abroad. As part of its leading social responsibility program, the Bank aims at positively impacting the local community and all of its members.



ECB to remove support as clouds gather

FRANKFURT: Policymakers at the European Central Bank will remove a key pillar of their support for the eurozone economy as planned tomorrow, even while offering a gloomier outlook for the coming years, analysts expect. But with financial markets in turmoil over risks in Europe and beyond-from Brexit to an Italian budget row and Donald Trump's trade showdown with China-the Frankfurt institution will be at pains to strike a reassuring tone.

After more than three years and purchases of 2.6 trillion euros (\$3.0 trillion) of government and corporate bonds, the ECB should announce as planned the end of its "quantitative easing" (QE) program, after months of stepwise winding-down.

Designed to pump cash through the financial system and into the real economy, central bank chiefs say the scheme has stoked growth and set the eurozone on a path towards inflation at their target pace of close to, but below 2.0 percent.

The 19-nation single currency area saw unexpectedly powerful growth in 2017, but expansion has since fallen back, dropping to just 0.2 percent between July and September.

Speaking to European lawmakers last month, ECB President Mario Draghi said the sharp third-quarter slowdown was

largely due to one-off factors, such as a bottleneck for the car industry from new EU emissions tests. And regardless of risks to growth, "the underlying strength of domestic demand and wages continues to support our confidence" in inflation rising to target, he added.

That confidence means come Thursday, "it's the end of QE as we know it and we will be fine," predicted ING Diba bank economist Carsten Brzeski.

Reinvestment and reassurance

Even after the end of QE, "let's not forget that there is still a reinvestment programme in place," he added. The ECB will stay active in debt markets by reinvesting the proceeds from its massive stock of bonds as they mature-holding down borrowing costs for governments and firms for longer. And it is expected to keep interest rates at historic lows "at least through the summer" of next year as a further spur to activity.

Draghi should play up such continued support for the eurozone as he presents what are widely expected to be lower forecasts for growth in 2018 to 2020, as well as offering the first glimpse of the ECB's expectations for 2021.

The inflation outlook should be mostly unchanged from the last round in September, calling for 1.7 percent price growth each year between now and 2020.

But "the staff is likely to revise down its growth forecast for this, and, in particular, next year," Natixis bank analyst Dirk Schumacher said.

"We expect the staff projections to



BRUSSELS: German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz (left) talks with President of the ECB, Mario Draghi (right), during an Eurogroup meeting at the EU headquarters in Brussels. —AFP

clearly acknowledge the weakening in the data, but still provide the governing council with enough room to argue that an end of net purchases is justified," he added.

Risks under control?

Meanwhile, there are some grounds for Draghi to be optimistic about the persistent risks threatening the eurozone economy from within and without.

After meeting at the G20, Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to hold off from escalating their trade confrontation for 90 days of talks, easing fears of further knock-on effects for Europe.

The Italian government has promised to review the deficit-boosting draft budget that put it on a collision course with Brussels and sent its borrowing costs surging. Regarding Brexit, British Prime Minister Theresa May has secured an agreement with Brussels on the UK's imminent departure. However, lawmakers in London may yet withhold their rubber stamp and Monday saw May say she is deferring a parliamentary vote on her deal after conceding it would be rejected. May said she would first seek "assurances" from other European leaders ahead of an EU summit later this week. —AFP

Signs of gloom lifting for German investors

FRANKFURT: Confidence among German investors recovered slightly from recent months' lows in December, a regular survey found yesterday, but remained gloomy overall. Measuring expectations for the coming months, the ZEW institute's monthly barometer based on a poll of 201 analysts and financial players added 6.6 points to reach -17.5.

"The increase in economic expectations in December is welcome, but shouldn't be over-interpreted," warned ZEW chief Achim Wambach in a statement. "Uncertainties negatively influencing private investment and German exports remain, like the growing international trade conflict and Brexit."

Looking to other elements of the survey, investors' judgment of the current economic situation in Germany worsened by 12.9 points, to 45.3. "This points to relatively weak economic growth in the fourth quarter" following a contraction of 0.2 percent between July and September, Wambach said.

Financial players' view of the present situation in the 19-nation eurozone also darkened, but their outlook for the bloc was slightly brighter. —AFP

Top EU court gives all-clear for ECB bond-buying

FRANKFURT: The European Union's highest court ruled yesterday that the European Central Bank's "quantitative easing" (QE) bond-buying program is not illegal, rejecting a case by German plaintiffs.

"The PSPP (public sector purchase program) does not exceed the ECB's mandate," the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) said in a press release.

Neither does it constitute "monetary financing", or direct funding of government spending by the central bank, the judges also found. While the judgment is a relief for the ECB, it is economically almost moot as the 2.6-trillion euro (\$3.0 trillion) scheme is set to end this month. Both questions had been referred to the CJEU by Germany's Federal Constitutional Court, which said

if either ruling went against the ECB it would have to judge the asset purchase program illegal.

The plaintiffs, mostly well-known skeptics of the euro single currency, argued the ECB overstepped its mandate when it launched mass purchases of government bonds in 2015 to fight the threat of deflation. Central bank bosses wanted to push money belonging to investors-mainly banks-out of bonds and into lending to the real economy of firms and households, aiming to power growth and indirectly boost inflation.

But German critics have long argued that bond-buying spares spendthrift governments from the discipline of the markets by lowering their borrowing costs.

'No monetary financing'

Preventing the ECB and national central banks from buying bonds "might-in particular in the context of an economic crisis entailing a risk of deflation-represent an insurmountable obstacle to its accomplishing the task assigned to it" of maintaining price stability, the court said.

"It is clear... that it was not possible to counter the risk of deflation by means of the other instruments

available" like adjusting interest rates, it added. Meanwhile the fact that the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) only bought bonds on secondary markets-not direct from governments-meant it did not conduct monetary financing, the judges found.

"Safeguards are built into the PSPP which ensure that a private operator cannot be certain, when it purchases bonds issued by a Member State, that those bonds will actually be bought by the ESCB," the court said. What's more, "continuity in the implementation of the PSPP is in no way guaranteed," the statement continued-meaning national capitals cannot rely on the ECB buying bonds indefinitely and must heed signals from debt markets. Co-plaintiff Bernd Lucke, a European Parliament lawmaker who co-founded the anti-euro, anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD) party but has since been pushed out, called the judgement "terrifying".

"The European treaties fundamentally forbid monetary financing. There's no talk of it being allowed in some circumstances," he said in a statement. In its own statement, the ECB said simply that it "takes note" of the judgement. —AFP

Health & Science

Chile's pine forests: A botanical dinosaur bound for extinction?

A 'living fossil' seen as sacred by several local tribes

QUINQUEN, Chile: In Quinquen, an indigenous community in southern Chile, Ricardo Melinir shows off a forest of Chilean pine trees — the *araucaria araucana*, a "living fossil" seen as sacred by several local tribes. He managed to save the "Monkey Puzzle" trees — some of which are 1,000 years old or more — from logging companies, but they are still under threat from blight and climate change.

"It is difficult to say how old these pines are," says the 60-something Melinir, shivering in the cold. He points to a giant tree felled in the winter months earlier this year, a victim of heavy snow and old age. The forest is located in Araucaria province, in the Chilean Andes about 600 kilometers south of the capital Santiago.

The trees, declared a part of Chile's national heritage in 1976, can grow up to 60 meters in height and three meters in diameter. In Quinquen, at least 40 percent of the pine tree forests are wild, says Melinir, who is the head of the Pehuenche community, which takes its name from the tree's fruit. In 1991, the restoration of a democratic government in Chile following the Pinochet dictatorship that began in 1973 allowed the Pehuenche to recover their ancestral lands, which they had lost 50 years before.

Today, 50 or so families — a total of 200 people, all of them named Melinir — live throughout the area, which is the first indigenous conservation zone established in Chile. But climate change has meant more wildfires, and many trees have been destroyed. Their pine nuts — prized by chefs the world over — have been stripped from what Neruda once called "Chile's towers." All told, the trees are more vulnerable than ever.

Disease

Researchers are in a race against time to try to identify a new blight that has devastated the forests in recent years. It could stem from a combination of environmental stress due to drought and the appearance of one or more

types of mushrooms that dry out the tree's branches and kill it. According to a study published in the Chilean daily *El Mercurio*, 90 percent of the trees are already affected, and two percent of those are dead.

The Chilean pine grows very slowly, and needs other male and female trees in order to ensure pollination and survival. It has dark brown male "flowers" at the tips of its branches, and female yellow-green pine cones. The two "fall in love" in the boreal spring, Melinir says with a flourish. Seeds appear in March and April, before the first snowfall. Then, it's a long wait — 20 to 25 years — before the tree sprouts. Ruben Carrillo, a researcher at University of La Frontera, is putting pressure on Chile's environment ministry to put the tree on the list of endangered species, saying all of the procedures have been fulfilled. "All we need now is for the decree to be published in the government gazette!" says the university scientist, who notes that the *araucaria* is the only species associated with an indigenous people.

Ecotourism a possibility

In recent years, Carrillo says the pine forests have shrunk to some 260,000 hectares in Chile. They are also found in Argentina. "The pine nut is our only way of surviving, the only crop we have," says Rene Melinir, Ricardo's chef son. The nut can be used to make flour and drinks. It can be eaten raw or cooked. Some even use it to make jam, as well as savory or sweet pies.

"The pine nut contains lots of protein and calories. It has no salt or gluten, which makes it more healthy," says Rene. In the shade of the *araucaria* trees, the community in Quinquen wants to get into the ecotourism business — a new way to boost its income, confined to farming and raising livestock. About 200 tourists, most of them French, came in 2017, according to Alex Melinir, the president of a cooperative of about 15 members seeking to live in harmony with the environment, as their ancestors did. — AFP



Araucaria trees are seen at Conguillio National Park in Temuco, Chile. — AFP

Climate fight in the shadow of Mount Everest

NEPAL: Formed in the shadow of Mount Everest, the turquoise depths of Nepal's Imja glacial lake would be a breathtaking miracle of nature to behold — were they not a portent of catastrophic floods. Scientists warn that as climate change causes Himalayan glaciers to melt at an alarming rate, lakes like Imja could swell further and eventually collapse, triggering a terrifying deluge in Nepal, an impoverished nation at the mercy of a warming planet.

Those tasked with staving off disaster fear a 'glacial lake outburst flood' — sending torrents of water, mud and rock hurtling downstream — could reach as far as Nepal's densely populated southern plains, wiping out roads, vital energy projects and entire villages in its path. "The risk is getting bigger," said Arun Bhakta Shrestha, a climate scientist from the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. "These valleys are getting more populated, and infrastructure is developing rapidly."

Hundreds of these lakes have appeared out of nowhere in the Himalayas in recent decades. A 2014 survey found one quarter of Nepal's glaciers shrunk between 1977 and 2010, leaving behind 1,466 lakes. Twenty-one have been identified as potentially dangerous and Nepal is racing to stay a step ahead of disaster, as global warming reshapes its mountain geography. "As a small country, there is little we can do to stop what is

happening to our glaciers," said Rishi Ram Sharma, the director general at Nepal's department of hydrology and meteorology. "But we have to do what we can do to adapt and protect our people."

Living in fear

Nepal's fastest-growing lake, Imja once posed little threat to the villagers of Surke, a picturesque hamlet perched high in the Everest region. In the early 1980s, the small lake at the foot of the Imja glacier at 5,010 meters as unremarkable. But by 2014, it had more than tripled in size, contained only by a natural wall of debris, known as a moraine, which experts warned might not hold back the waters much longer.

A year later, when a massive earthquake struck Nepal, villagers in Surke assumed Imja had collapsed and would soon bury them all. "We were terrified the quake would trigger a flood from the lake. All of us ran for safety," vil-

lager Phudoma Sherpa told AFP. The lake miraculously held — sparing the 12,000 people directly in its path. But the quake served as a wake-up call for policymakers.

Experts told the government that the gigantic glacial lakes were effectively a ticking time bomb. With thousands of lives at stake, a massive undertaking began in late 2016 to drain Imja, which then measured 150 meters deep and two kilometers long. Only the second operation of its kind in Nepal's history, the project was a testament to the monumental challenge posed by glacial lakes, which are often remote and very difficult to access.

Yaks and helicopters transported materials and teams of workers to the high-altitude region, where they toiled in thin air for six months until a drainage canal and early-warning system were installed. The lake was lowered by 3.5 metres, draining more than five million cubic metres of water. "Now, you have a channel. So any water that accumulates is drained out. — AFP

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- ◆ Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otolaryngology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
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- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

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DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

- o Dermatology board certified.
- o Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- o Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- o Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

SPECIALIZED IN:

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- o Laser Treatments.
- o Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- o Body & Face Contouring.
- o Injectable Fillers & Botox.

SHARQ, Ahmad Alsharq st., Building 18, Floor 13.
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Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta
at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- ◆ Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- ◆ Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

مستشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tel: 1802 555 **@daralshifa**

DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

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- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4- Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

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Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

- ◆ Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
- ◆ Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society

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- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
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- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com **Tel: 1886677** **ic_kwt**

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFI Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo – Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo – Rectal Surgeon

مستشفى دار الشفاء
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DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American
Board in Pediatrics-Canadian
Board in Pediatric Emergency

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368 **Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B**

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates – Training

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member .
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com **Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228** Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building



Group picture of Gulf Bank's executive leaders with Tony Daher, Bank's CEO

GBK celebrates employees with glittering Human Resources gala

Gulf Bank hosted its annual Human Resources (HR) Gala, celebrating the year's highlights and achievements, and honoring employees who have exceeded in performance over the course of the year. Held on 5th December, the bank hosted the event at Alrayya Ballroom.

The highly-anticipated event is a formal awards ceremony that welcomes the bank's executive leaders, senior managers and top performers across all departments. In addition to the award ceremony recognizing star employees, the evening presented the opportunity to remind staff of the year's highlights and milestones. From the launch of the fifth edition of the AJYAL program, as well as congratulating the graduates of the program's fourth edition. The ceremony provided employees with the opportunity to celebrate the incredible HR initiatives launched throughout the year.

Teams and individuals who have embraced numerous initiatives throughout the year were applauded. From those who have continuously strived to impact tomorrow's future bankers and leaders through volunteering with INJAZ projects, to those who embrace the bank's focus on engagement and customer service, striving for excellence.

Speaking on the ceremony Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager Human Resources at Gulf Bank said: "Every year we see our staff go above and beyond their job description and we couldn't be prouder. Our annual gala allows us to recognize the award winners, as well as our incredibly dedicated staff as a whole. Human resources are at the heart of Gulf Bank, and we will continue to build and empower employees across all departments. A huge congratulations to those who were recognized, and a special congratulations to the AJYAL graduates. We look forward to the coming year and our future successes together."

"Each year we struggle to choose the winners at the Gala, because every member of the staff impresses us. This year was no different, and the selection process demonstrated that the Gala's recognition scheme continues to motivate our workforce to strive and deliver exceptional services. At Gulf Bank, no work goes unnoticed and we are excited to continue to see the success of our employees over the coming year." Al-Hajjaj added. Gulf Bank continually seeks to be innovative, to raise standards, and to set benchmarks for banking excellence in the region.



Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager Human Resources at Gulf Bank speaking at the event



Honoring one of the branch's employees



Group picture of AJYAL4 graduates

Festive activities at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel

The arrival of December brings about lavish festive offerings and the entertaining talent of live performances at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa. Your family and friends have a variety of choices to indulge in from mouth-watering seafood to sumptuous steaks to even more choices at the resort's award-winning luxurious restaurants and cafe.

Starting with festive season dining on December 24th, the resort offers memorable experiences spent with family and friends indulging in either Garden Cafe's festive buffet, or signature Salt, Pepper and Olio's three-course set menus. In addition, fabulous festive treats are available to entice all taste buds on Roast Turkey Takeaway throughout December. Guests can also surprise their loved ones with chocolates, ginger bread cookies and more at Tea Lounge's hamper shop open daily during this month.

For a lavish end of the year, plenty of choices are on offer. Pepper and Salt's elegant five-course menus are sure to create an evening to relish. Over at Olio, a family treat gives a hearty Italian meal for those who love a sense of diverse cultural indulgence.

Even if the appetite is endless, Garden Cafe's grand celebration will satisfy it with its sumptuously decorated buffet for this international occasion. For an immersive evening, Mint's beach BBQ night will deliver not only mouth-watering barbecued ribs, grilled shrimp, smoked meats and sausages, but also live band entertainment to delight and to spread the ambiance of total enjoyment.

At Kuwait's idyllic resort, kids will not only be kept safe in the hotel staff care, they will also be entertained. Children will have a vast array of activities to choose from such as festive arts and crafts. Inner artists will be released with ginger bread house decorations alongside the festive fun with coloring activities. Children can also partake in making their own lanterns.

On this occasion, General Manager Savino Leone said: "At Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, we ensure that every month we offer activities to celebrate and get together with family and loved ones. December is yet another special month in which we enjoy the festive season in the company of our valued guests and their families while we offer our unique touch of luxury".



Black Tap celebrates the opening of second branch

The public across Kuwait have enjoyed Black Tap's amazing craft burgers and Crazy Shake milkshakes since the venue first opened its doors in Kuwait earlier this year. Today, the brand celebrated the opening of its second outlet in Kuwait within six months of its entry into the market. The celebrations at 360 Mall were led by Tamdeen Group Vice Chairman Meshal Jassim Al Marzouq along with VIP guests and families. Also gracing the opening was the US Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, Lawrence R. Silverman.

Providing Kuwait's dining and events scene a true 'shake up' for the second time, Black Tap welcomed a 360 Mall organized flash mob which culminated in giant LED pop-up Crazy Shake milkshakes displayed in front of its new dining outlet. Invited VIP guests and thrilled shoppers were entertained with free-flowing food and shake specials from the new menu. Joining the popular lineup of craft burgers & Crazy Shake milkshakes, is a selection of new burgers and starters, including traditional American favorites like 'fried mozzarella'; the 'Atomic Shrimp'; the 'Carolina Burger'; the 'Atomic Shrimp Burger'; the 'Baja Chicken Sandwich'; and even fried pickles!

The 'Atomic Shrimp' starter offers guests crispy fried shrimp served with Black Tap's atomic sauce, dry coleslaw, Boston leaf lettuce, sesame seeds, scallions mixed with flavored Asian spices. If you're looking to enjoy this favorite as a meal, well upgrade and order the Atomic Shrimp burger instead! For burger fans, the Carolina is an all-American must-try burger loaded with smoky pulled beef, butter-milk-dill coleslaw and topped off with Black Tap's Carolina BBQ sauce.

Still looking for more options? Take a trip south of the border with the latest brand-new menu item that joined Black Tap's array of delectable mains earlier this year - the Baja Grilled Chicken Sandwich. Combining a Cajun grilled chicken breast, zippy salsa verde, avocado, crisp beef bacon, melted pepper jack cheese, chipotle mayo, cilantro and tangy fresh lime, the new dish will be available for all Black Tap guests. The 360 Mall opening is now Black Tap's fifth restaurant in the GCC, with Sunset Hospitality Group, with it's the American burger brand's first entrance in the region being at Jumeirah Al Naseem, Dubai in February 2017. Alongside Tamdeen Group, Sunset Hospitality Group aims to continue shaking up the food and beverage offerings in Kuwait with the extended menu and second outlet.



Notice on China visa application

The new China Visa Application center is located at level 44, Arraya Tower 2, Al Shuhada Street, Kuwait City, Kuwait. Visa applicants can direct their queries and appointment request to the helpline at

+96522070012 or by writing in to kuwaitcenter@visaforchina.org. Applicants can also visit the website at www.visaforchina.org for information on visa application procedures.

CROSSWORD 2082



ACROSS

- 1.Nocturnal mouselike mammal with forelimbs modified to form membranous wings and anatomical adaptations for echolocation by which they navigate.
4.Armor plate that protects the foot.
11.A color varying from dark purplish brown to dark red.
15.Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
16.Tropical American shrub bearing edible acid red fruit resembling cherries.
17.A battle (1590) in which the Huguenots under Henry IV of France defeated the Catholics under the duke of Mayenne.
18.Any of numerous perennial bulbous herbs having linear or broadly lanceolate leaves and usually a single showy flower.
19.Superior to the average.
20.Not far distant in time or space or degree or circumstances.
21.A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
22.A slender double-reed instrument.
24.The largest island of the central Ryukyu Islands.
28.A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
29.(biology) Nearest to or facing toward the axis of an organ or organism.
35.A Chadic language spoken in Chad.
38.A gray lustrous metallic element of the rare earth group.
39.The capital and largest city of Yemen.
40.The activity of looking thoroughly in order to find something or someone.
42.The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
45.A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
47.A doughnut-shaped chamber used in fusion research.
50.In the same place (used when citing a reference).
52.Perennial mountain rice native to Mediterranean region and introduced into North America.
53.Gully or streambed in North Africa and the Middle East that remains dry except during rainy season.
56.Squash bugs.
57.Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
58.Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
60.The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
63.Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
65.Little known Kamarupan languages.
69.A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
71.A quotation at the beginning of some piece of writing.
72.The act of preventing the opposition from scoring (in sports).
75.Swiss painter influenced by Kandinsky (1879-1940).
76.The fleshy part of the human body that you sit on.
77.(archaic) The emperor of Japan.
78.Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.

DOWN

- 1.A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
2.A fit of shivering.
3.A fine grained mineral having a soft

soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.

- 4.Any of various plant glucosides that form soapy lathers when mixed and agitated with water.
5.A radioactive element of the actinide series.
6.Spot, stain, or pollute.
7.A small zodiacal constellation in the northern hemisphere.
8.A United States unit of weight equivalent to 2000 pounds.
9.A spread made chiefly from vegetable oils and used as a substitute for butter.
10.A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
11.A boat for communication between ship and shore.
12.The part of the eye that contains the iris and ciliary body and choroid.
13.A pouch in many birds and some lower animals that resembles a stomach for storage and preliminary maceration of food.
14.Long-bodied long-tailed tropical American wildcat.
23.(Scotland) A slope or hillside.
25.The largest city in Pakistan.
26.Of or relating to or characteristic of Ireland or its people.
27.A monocotyledonous genus of the family Iridaceae.
30.Microscopic unicellular marine or freshwater colonial alga having cell walls impregnated with silica.
31.A member of the Algonquian people of Maine and southern Quebec.
32.A three-tone Chadic language.
33.A genus of Stromateidae.
34.A white secretion of the sebaceous glands of the foreskin.
36.Seed of a pea plant.
37.A rapid escape (as by criminals).
41.The capital and chief port of Qatar.
43.Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
44.A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
46.100 qindarka equal 1 lek.
48.Perennial or biennial herb cultivated for its delicate usually blue flowers.
49.A group of African language in the Niger-Congo group spoken from the Ivory Coast east to Nigeria.
51.The cry made by sheep.
54.A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
55.Any of various small terrestrial or aquatic crustaceans with seven pairs of legs adapted for crawling.
59.The capital of Egypt and the largest city in Africa.
61.The sixth month of the civil year.
62.An island in Indonesia south of Borneo.
64.A river in northwestern Russia flowing generally west into the Gulf of Finland.
66.Round object that is hit or thrown or kicked in games.
67.An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
68.Fertility goddess in ancient Greek mythology.
70.A user interface in which you type commands instead of choosing them from a menu or selecting an icon.
73.Modulation of the frequency of the (radio) carrier wave.
74.A state in northwestern North America.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are focused and determined to take care of business. You will not let anything, nor anyone stand in your way. You want to get things accomplished and crave organization. You may feel as though there is a place for everyone and everything in your life and you are determined to make sure they are in it. You have zero tolerance for anything or anyone that does not conform to your way of thinking. This could be a very productive time in your life. You will be able to move mountains if you maintain this level of organization and determination. Your health becomes an additional focus for you as you need to be at your best to accomplish all you have set as goals for yourself.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Whether a surprise is good or bad today depends on how you choose to look at life. You can always choose to look at things with a positive attitude. Assume things will turn out in your favor and make them happen. Hard work and determination have always been two of the great qualities you possess. You are able to make anything you attempt to do look easy. Others are often envious of your talent. Be sure and keep your workday stress free today. You can use humor to accomplish this, Taurus. You are known for that great sense of humor.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

It seems as if those around you have let down their guard. You may find those close to you truly letting you in and openly sharing more than usual. It seems you have earned the trust of many. You may be seen as someone trustworthy and caring. At every turn you feel there is someone seeking your advice or sharing a story. Do not take on the emotions of others. You are wise and will be able to give great advice, but be careful not to become too involved in the drama. You may have an opportunity today to air out your differences with an old friend. Bury the hatchet and be thankful for a new beginning.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It may be time to reorganize and restructure your world. You may find you have a new attitude and this gives you a new outlook on life. Happiness is what you seek. A true need to be free from want. You are a hard worker and will find your efforts are not going unnoticed. This is a time to be more conservative. Be sure and focus on the security of your future. The only person you can depend on taking care of you is YOU, Cancer. Keep your thoughts, energy, and focus positive and you will move mountains. This is a great time in your life, enjoy.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

If you take a bottle of soda and shake it up, it will inevitably explode! Your home life seems as if someone has been shaking the bottle. You are on the brink of a blow up concerning your home and family life. It seems the more you do, the more others expect. You may find others having expectations of you that are not humanly possible to achieve. Keep your cool and do only what you can do. Avoid conflict, as this may be your breaking point. Always remember you can not take back words after they are spoken, Leo. Bite your tongue.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may find yourself at odds with those around you today. You could encounter obstacles and other bumps in the road that slow your progress and cause you to have to sit back and reevaluate your choices and decisions. You may find you feel you are being deceived or misled by someone who has authority over you. You may feel as if the actions you are being asked to take in the workplace go against your values. This is a time to sit back and watch, rather than speak and a time to put deep thought into your decisions before you act.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are a practical person with an abundance of common sense. You are able to use both of these qualities as assets to make your way to the top in the career world. You may be feeling a need to change your focus and tighten your circle a bit. You feel as if you need to spend more of your time and attention on you and yours. At this point you may have accomplished your goal in the workplace but feel you need to continue to work on your goal at home. This will be a balancing act to continue to make sure you thrive in every area of your life. Your communication skills are at all time high and you are able to relate and interact with ease to all who surround you.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be experiencing a time of drastic change in your world. Renovations to your home, buying or selling real estate, or new furnishings may be something you are dealing with now. You will have to work hard to keep a balance between change and continuity. Change like this can be shocking and hard to adjust to. You may find yourself in the middle of a bit of drama. You may find yourself working hard to resolve conflict. You could be faced with having to handle someone who has opposing views, and different opinions from yourself. This is a time of decision. Changes have to be made. Get the facts, Scorpio. Make sure you have all of the facts before you make any decisions. Actions have consequences and the right decision needs to be made.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

With a little planning you can turn a forgettable day into unforgettable moments. Remind yourself today that you have a precious life. You are fortunate to be alive. Of course, there is some darkness out there. But your unique light can overcome the dark. Special moments almost always involve other people, so you can contribute to making someone else's day memorable.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This a great period of mental activity for you. Your communication levels are heightened. It seems as though you have so many ideas to share and you are able to fascinate everyone with what you have to say. You are smart as a fox and you feel empowered by the fact others are taking note of this. In general this a time you feel great and feel as if you are at your intellectual best. You not only feel great about who you are, you feel wonderful about where you are in life. Things seem to be going your way. Happiness is a wonderful emotion. Enjoy this time in your life.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Today finds you a wizard of words. Through your words you may be able to bring a group together. You are persuasive and captivating. Poetry and art would be wonderful outlets for self-expression now. You may feel as you are walking in a dream. An almost trance-like feeling comes over you. This is a good evening to find an escape, a good book or staying in and watching a movie would be a great way to spend your evening. Even if a long bath is the route you choose find a way to have a relaxing evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

What do you want out of life? Now is the perfect time to set your goals. Now is the time to act and decide. You may have a very narrow window of opportunity to make some big changes. It seems as if your goals may jeopardize your sense of security. Weigh the options and act now. Risk can sometimes bring great reward.

Wordsearch Puzzle

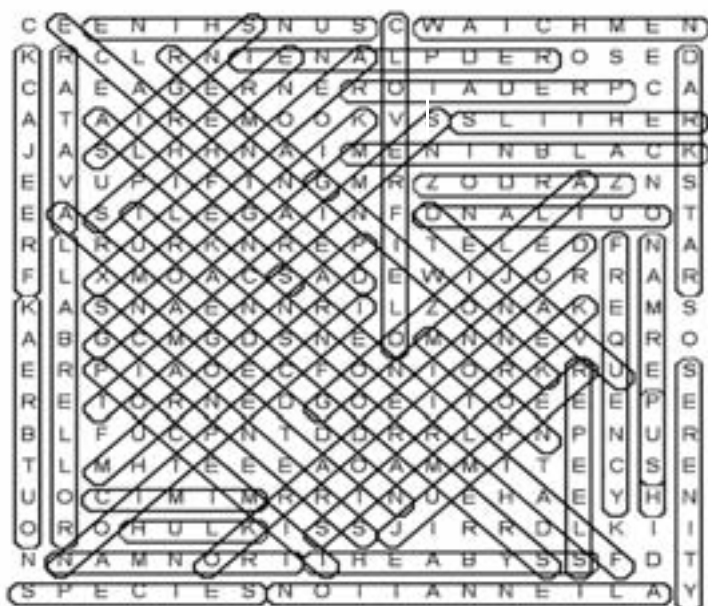
Musical Instruments 1

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



- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| ACCORDION | CONGA | HURDY-GURDY | SAZ |
| BAGPIPE | CORNET | LAUTA | SITAR |
| BALALAIKA | COW BELL | MANDOLA | TARKA |
| BANJO | DIDGERIDOO | MARACAS | TRIANGLE |
| BASS | DRUM | MELODICA | TROMBONE |
| BODHRAN | EUPHONIUM | MIZMAR | UKULELE |
| CAJASAS | FLUTE | OBOE | VEENA |
| CELLO | FRENCH HORN | ODU | VIBRAPHONE |
| CHIMES | GUITAR | PENNYWHISTLE | VIOLIN |
| CITTERN | HARP | PICCOLO | XUN |
| CLARINET | | | |

Movies: Science Fiction 2



- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| AEON FLUX | FREQUENCY | OUTBREAK | SPECIES |
| ALIEN NATION | GAMER | PANDORUM | STAR TREK |
| ALIENS | GOODZILLA | PREDATOR | SUNSHINE |
| ARMAGEDDON | HULK | PUSH | SUPERMAN |
| AVATAR | INCEPTION | RED PLANET | THE ABYSS |
| CLOVERFIELD | IRON MAN | ROLLERSBALL | TIMECOP |
| DARK STAR | JUMPER | SCANNERS | TRANSFORMERS |
| DEATH RACE | KING KONG | SERENITY | WATCHMEN |
| DEJA VU | KNOWING | SLEEPER | ZARDOZ |
| DONNIE DARKO | MEN IN BLACK | MOON | |
| FLATLINERS | MI6 | | |
| FREEJACK | | | |

Hidden movie: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2018



Candidates in Santa Claus “uniforms” applying for a job at the Santa Claus agency of the job center in Rostock, northeastern Germany, pose for a picture yesterday. — AFP

Roving cinema plays public service role in Central Africa

A giant screen flickers to life in a remote village in the equatorial forest of the Central African Republic. Some 200 villagers avidly take in an evening of films thanks to a travelling cinema team with the dual goal of entertaining and enlightening. Ambulant Digital Cinema (CNA) brought its show to the southwestern village of Bayanga along bumpy rutted tracks, aiming to reach people living in remote parts of a deeply poor country scarred by violence. “Some people are astounded when they see a car, so imagine what it’s like when we’re projecting films,” said Serge Mbilika, a state television journalist who brought CNA into the light of day in April 2018.

Silence falls across the clearing among the mango trees once a presenter announces the first film, her voice rising over birdsong and the chirping of crickets. Then a booming voice surprises the audience. “If you don’t register your identity, you won’t be able to receive your retirement pay!” warns a man on the giant screen.

Before the show, Mbilika spent the afternoon strolling around the streets of Bayanga with his compact camera, filming villagers as they went about their business. “This helps us to attract people’s attention before the projection,” said Carmelle, the presenter. “Going to see them and filming in the afternoon gets people interested by word of mouth.” During the show, which follows an hour of music and dancing, the viewers laugh to see themselves on the large screen.

‘Force her to go to school’

“What do you want with that thing of yours?” a taciturn woman asked Mbilika in Sango, the local language, while grinding cassava a few hours earlier. “You’ll see this evening, at 5:00 pm at the school,” Mbilika replied. The prime aim of the roving cinema is to raise awareness of



In this photograph residents of a village of the Mbyaka people (Pygmy) gather as they wait for a film screening at a mobile digital cinema near Bayanga. — AFP photos

issues such as proper hand-washing methods, the need for vaccinations and the ethics of forced marriages. The last film of the evening in Bayanga concerned girls’ education.

“I didn’t think that was a problem,” said Maeva, a woman who had come to Bayanga with her young son in her arms to see the films, along with many other inhabitants of a Pygmy village 10 kilometers (six miles) away. “My daughter stays to help me with the house. She looks after it while I’m in the forest. But now I’m going to force her to go to school,” Maeva smiled. For team leader Mbilika, the evening was a success. “We thought this was the best way of reaching out to people in remote regions. The big screen leaves its mark on some minds and they will talk to others about what they learned.”

‘A means to bring peace’

Mbilika is also convinced that cinema can serve as a means to help people to live together with respect after



An aerial view of the open-air cinema getting ready for spectators.

violence between armed groups erupted into civil war in 2012 over natural resources and religious convictions. “The cinema can be a means to bring peace to Central Africa,” he said. CNA’s films, which come from a variety of countries, may not always hit home, such as one from Cameroon featuring people wearing djellabas and debating marital status. It was dubbed into Sango, but the original Arabic could still be heard. “The problem is that this doesn’t necessarily get through to the people,” whispered Franklin. “Central Africans find it hard to identify.”

‘In the public interest’

“We could make proper films—two of us in the group are journalists—but the problem is that there’s no money,” Franklin said. The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Alliance Francaise provide the funds required for travelling the country and to show some of the films. The bulk of the equipment comes from CNA Afrique (Cinema Numerique



Out and about on the daytime streets of Bayanga ahead of the ambulant movie show, brought to entertain and enlighten villagers.

Ambulant - Afrique), which networks mobile teams in nine West and Central African countries.

The team’s car, for example, is a gift from the Cameroonian CNA. However, it is only two-wheel drive, the suspension is shot and the chassis broke in two during the last mission. “It’s dangerous, when the roads are already difficult,” said Vivien, the team’s driver. “What’s more, we’ve made plans to go to Bambari, which is in a tense area.”

Since good roads are virtually non-existent in the CAR, vehicles are routinely battered and damaged. “We need to find partners to change this car,” said Olivier Colin, the director of the Alliance Francaise in the capital Bangui. “This cinema is in the public interest!” he exclaimed. — AFP



A child stands next to the ‘Fearless Girl’ after a ceremony to unveil the statue’s new location across from the New York Stock Exchange. — AFP photos

‘Fearless Girl’ gets new home at New York Stock Exchange

She may be diminutive in stature but the ‘Fearless Girl’ is standing tall against sexism at her new home outside the New York Stock Exchange. Nearly 200 people attended a brief ceremony for the unveiling of the statue, which appeared in New York’s financial district on International Women’s Day last March, and has since become a firm favorite with tourists. The bronze statue—which stands at four feet (1.20 meters) — depicts a determined youngster with eyes locked on the exchange’s imposing facade: hands on hips, ponytail windswept.

In her previous location, she squared up to the “Charging Bull,” installed by financial firm State Street Global Advisors to make a statement about the lack of women on financial institutions’ boards. Created by artist Kristen Visbal, the statue was originally not meant to remain for more than a week. But its immediate popularity convinced authorities to keep it in place—despite grumbles from the creator of the bull, installed in 1989, who denounced her presence as an “advertising trick.”

“She says in one image all that advocates can say in pages and pages of arguments and statistics,” said

Democrat congresswoman Carolyn Maloney during Monday’s ceremony. “She is bold and self-confident and hopeful,” she added, describing the statue as a “central piece of leadership for the women’s movement.” “We see (in her) our daughters, mothers, nieces,” added Betty Liu, vice president of the New York Stock Exchange, which in May named its first female president, Stacey Cunningham.

“She represents potential, progress and hope, but also all the women who have fought for equality before us.” The “Fearless Girl” has made a name for herself worldwide: a replica was briefly installed in Dublin in November, while reports say she will come to London in March. In the meantime, State Street officials are keen to point out that her tenure has come during an increase in women on company boards. By the end of September, 215 US firms had added at least one woman to their board since 2017, according to State Street president Cyrus Taraporevala. “She has not only changed the way we invest, she has changed the way we see the world,” he said. — AFP



The Fearless Girl statue is unveiled at her new home facing the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) during an event held by the city of New York and State Street Global Advisors.



Meghan presents fashion award to wedding dress designer Waight Keller

Givenchy's artistic director Clare Waight Keller Monday received the British designer of the year womenswear award from Meghan Markle, whose dress she designed for her wedding to Prince Harry. "It is such a pleasure to be here celebrating British fashion," Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, said at the star-studded annual Fashion Awards at the Albert Hall. The former US actress, who is pregnant, praised the "vision", "creativity" and also "the incredible kindness" of Waight Keller.

The two women met in early 2018, before the designer created the dress worn by Meghan for her wedding to Harry on May 19. The British Fashion Awards also recognized Vivienne Westwood, winner of the award for positive change, for her commitment to the environment. The 77-year-old high priestess of punk took the opportunity to denounce the "rotten financial system" which the dame said was "the cause of all our problems".

A long-time political campaigner, she also took aim at French President Emmanuel Macron who recently cancelled fuel tax increases in the face of the "yellow vest" protests. "This tax hurts the poor more than anybody," Westwood said, adding "he's not thinking that he has already given all these tax breaks to the rich people. So of course everybody is going to be annoyed." — AFP



English model Georgia May Jagger



Meghan honored her bridal gown designer during the ceremony, while Waight Keller thanked the royal personally in her speech at the star-studded awards ceremony at the historic venue in Kensington, London. — www.dailymail.co.uk

KAIA GERBER NAMED MODEL OF THE YEAR BRITISH FASHION AWARDS



US model Kaia Gerber poses with her award for Model of the Year during the British Fashion Awards 2018 in London. — AFP photos



Valentino's Italian fashion designer Pierpaolo Piccioli poses with his Designer of the Year award during the British Fashion Awards 2018.



British fashion designer Craig Green poses with his award for British designer of the year Menswear award.



Gucci's president and chief executive Marco Bizzarri poses with his award for Business Leader during the British Fashion Awards 2018.

Kaia Gerber was named Model of the Year at the British Fashion Awards. The 17-year-old catwalk star who is the daughter of Rande Gerber and supermodel Cindy Crawford - was presented with the prestigious prize on Monday night at the ceremony held at London's Royal Albert Hall and her win made her the youngest person to ever be honored with the accolade.

Kaia made her modeling debut last year in the Calvin Klein spring/summer 2019 show during New York Fashion Week and has since worked with some of the industry's most celebrated designers such as Valentino, Burberry, Versace, and Alexander Wang. The teenager was picked as the winner in a nominees list which included Adwoa Aboah, Adut Akech, Bella Hadid and Winnie Harlow, and Kaia now is part of an exclusive club which contains the likes of Kate Moss, Lily Cole, Jourdan Dunn and Cara Delevingne in receiving the gong.

Elsewhere at the ceremony, Givenchy's artistic director Claire Waight Keller was awarded with the gong for British Womenswear Designer of the Year and was presented with the award in a surprise appearance from the Duchess of Sussex - whose wedding dress she designed when she tied the knot with Prince Harry this year. Speaking of Meghan, Claire said: "This woman is so amazing. I got to know Meghan on such a personal level. To have someone like that trust you on such a personal moment in their life. I can't thank you enough because it was the most beautiful moment."

Miuccia Prada was presented with the Outstanding Achievement Award for her massive contribution to the industry over a 30-year spanning career, whilst Vivienne Westwood was the recipient of the Swarovski Award for Positive Change and British menswear designer Kim Jones was chosen to receive the 2018 Trailblazer Award.

Georgia pretty in pink

Georgia May Jagger debuted her new bright pink hair at the British Fashion Awards. The 26-year-old model and designer- who is the daughter of model Jerry Hall and Rolling Stones singer Sir Mick Jagger - unveiled her dramatic new hairstyle on the red carpet for the first time at the glitzy event held at London's Royal Albert Hall on Monday night. The beauty's new bold locks created a contrast look with her elegant two piece fuchsia suit and Georgia paired the look with a rare neutral makeup look featuring a nude lip and subtle eyes - and the fashionista wore copper platform heels adorned with multicolored decorative disks. Although this is the first time she has stepped out with her new look, Georgia gave a sneak peak at her coloured tresses earlier this year by sharing a selfie social media, and the star was flooded with comments from fans who loved her new look.

One user wrote: "I absolutely love this new look! So brave to try such a bold color, you look amazing x (sic)" Another said: "Pink dream! Looking very cool Georgia (sic)" The model is known for her bright and bold make-up looks and signature quirky outfits, and last year the style icon launched her very own clothing line inspired by music, art and travel, in collaboration with Volcom's Stone Row and the brand's womenswear global design director,



US model Cindy Crawford (second left), her husband Rande Gerber (left), daughter, US model Kaia Jordan Gerber (second right) and son, Presley Gerber (right) pose on the red carpet upon arrival to attend the British Fashion Awards 2018 in London.

was over the moon to be working with her. She said: "She is honest and focused on what she wants. Plus, she is with us every step of the way through the design process. With a common influence from London and California, we are aligned on our inspiration for Volcom and Stone Row, so it's been a great partnership."

Kendall goes bold in bare gown

Kendall Jenner made a bold statement on the red carpet of the British Fashion Awards by wearing a completely see-through gown. The 23-year-old model ensured all eyes were on her at the ceremony held at London's Royal Albert Hall on Monday night in the beautiful dress created by British designer Julien MacDonald and the 'Keeping Up

with the Kardashians' star left little the imagination as she went braless under the beaded gown.

Kendall showed off her fabulous figure in the golden mesh long-sleeved gown which boasted a thigh-high split and floor-length skirt and the glamorous ensemble was adorned with dazzling gold embellished accents. And everyone could see her nude thong underneath which she paired with nude heels with see-through Perspex straps. She kept her makeup natural with a subtle blush and cat eyes and styled her hair in a sleek low chignon bun. Kendall accessorized her outfit with a pair of matching gold chunky square hoop earrings and adorned her hands with multiple gold and silver rings. — Bang Showbiz



US model Cindy Crawford's daughter, US model Kaia Jordan Gerber poses on the red carpet.



Givency's British fashion designer Clare Waight Keller poses with her award for British designer of the year Womenswear.



British fashion designer Samuel Ross poses with his award for British Emerging Talent Menswear.



British singer-songwriter Olly Murs



Irish writer Sinead Burke



Turkish fashion photographer Mert Alas and British fashion photographer Marcus Piggot pose with their award for Fashion Creator.



Italian fashion designer Miuccia Prada poses with her Outstanding Achievement award.



British fashion designer Vivienne Westwood poses with their award for Positive Change.

Winners

- Brand of the Year:
Gucci
- Designer of the Year:
Pierpaolo Piccioli for Valentino
- British Designer of the Year Menswear:
Craig Green for Craig Green
- British Designer of the Year Womenswear:
Clare Waight Keller for Givenchy Accessories
- Designer of the Year:
Demna Gvasalia for Balenciaga
- British Emerging Talent Menswear:
Samuel Ross
- British Emerging Talent Womenswear:
Richard Quinn for Richard Quinn
- Business Leader:
Marco Bizzarri for Gucci
- Urban Luxe:
Off-White
- Model of the Year:
Kaia Gerber
- 2018 Trailblazer Award:
Kim Jones
- Isabella Blow Award for Fashion Creator:
Mert & Marcus
- Outstanding Achievement:
Miuccia Prada
- Special Recognition Award for Innovation:
Parley for the Oceans
- Swarovski Award for Positive Change:
Dame Vivienne Westwood



British athlete Dina Asher-Smith



English fashion designer Vivienne Westwood.



Sudanese-British supermodel Alek Wek



Canadian model Winnie Harlow



Gabrielle Calunisi



British model Yasmin Le Bon



English model Georgia May Jagger



English model Rosie Huntington Whiteley



Former English international footballer David Beckham (center) and his wife fashion designer Victoria Beckham (right) stand with their son Brooklyn Beckham.



Turtle soup from China is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos



Menudo from Mexico is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.



Nsenene or grasshoppers, a popular bar snack in Uganda is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.

Maggot cheese, putrid sea herring or virgin boy eggs-bon appetit!

Care for some maggot cheese, fried tarantula or a bat? Or how about fried locusts, grasshoppers or virgin boy eggs? These delicacies are among some 80 items featured at the Disgusting Food Museum that opened in Los Angeles on Sunday, aiming to expose visitors to different cultures and foods and what we may all be eating in the future. Samuel West, the museum's founder, said he came up with the idea for the two-month exhibit—which first opened in his native Sweden in October — in light of the ongoing debate about environmentally sustainable sources of protein and food security.



Gelatin sweets, made by boiling the waste products generated during animal slaughtering, is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.

"If we can change people's notions of disgust, maybe we can also open them up to new sustainable proteins," said West, pointing to platefuls of lru locust beans eaten in Nigeria, mopane worms eaten in South Africa or Nsenene, grasshoppers considered a delicacy in Uganda. The entrance ticket to the museum in downtown Los Angeles is a vomit bag that visitors can use should any of the items from some 40 different countries be too much to stomach.

Some of the foods on display might be considered revolting because they simply stink. That includes French Epoisses cheese, shark meat from Iceland or surstromming, a Swedish delicacy that is considered one of the most pungent dishes in the world and is usually eaten outdoors. It consists of fermented Baltic Sea herring and is so

smelly that it reportedly got one tenant in Germany kicked out by his landlord in 1981 after he opened a can of surstromming in the apartment building's stairwell.

Other foods in the exhibit could be considered disgusting because of the way they end up on our plate and include Chinese mouse wine, which involves drowning and brewing baby mice in rice wine. And let's not forget the virgin boy eggs, a traditional dish in China made from boiling eggs in the urine of young boys.

Andreas Ahrens, co-curator of the exhibition, said the foods chosen haven't gone down well with several countries that have taken offense. "The Vegemite from Australia is causing a bit of an international incident," he said, referring to the thick, black food spread. "They have been quite pissed off that we've included it in the exhibit. "The Americans are upset about the Root Beer and Twinkie... and we've had Peruvians upset that we have included Cuy, or roasted guinea pig, a famous Peruvian dish." He said focusing on the word "disgusting" misses the point of the exhibit.

"This is aimed at getting people to realize that we shouldn't judge the foods of other cultures as disgusting so quickly," Ahrens said. "But if we would have named this the Museum of Sustainability or the Exhibit of Cultural Differences, no one would come. "It wouldn't be interesting." — AFP



Jugo De Rana", from Peru, a drink made of whole skinned frog, quail eggs, honey and other ingredients combined in blender and strained to remove bone fragments is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.



Mopane worm, the caterpillar of the Emperor Moth, a popular dish in Southern Africa is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.



Cuy, roasted guinea pigs from Peru is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.



"Rocky Mountain Oysters" (bull testicles) from the US, are presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.



Shirako, fish sperm sacks, popular in Japan is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.



"Sheep Eyeball Juice" from Mongolia is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.



Kopi Luwak from Indonesia, coffee beans eaten and excreted by the Asian palm civet, is presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.



Pop-Tarts from the USA are presented in the Disgusting Food Museum.

Classifieds

Wednesday, December 12, 2018



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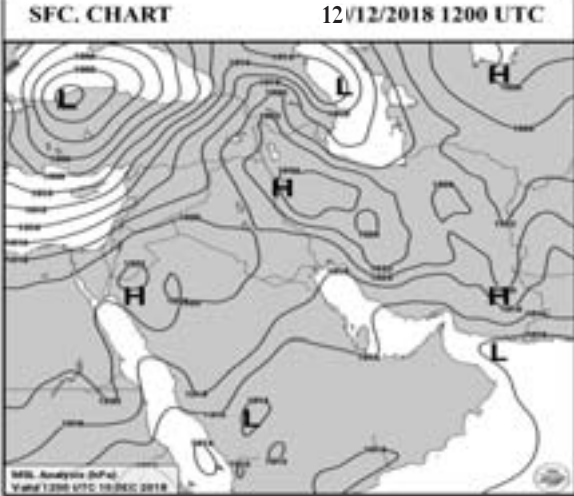
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h with a slight chance for scattered light rain over southern areas with a chance for light fog forming

BY DAY: Sunny with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	<div>SFC. CHART<div>12/12/2018 1200 UTC</div></div>	
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	18 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	14 °C		
ABDALY	25 °C	14 °C		
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C		
JAHRA	23 °C	16 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	22 °C	18 °C		
SALMIYAH	21 °C	19 °C		
AHMADI	21 °C	19 °C		
NUWAISIB	23 °C	18 °C		
WAFRA	22 °C	15 °C		
SALMY	21 °C	13 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	12/11	Sunny	23 °C	14 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	12/12	Sunny	24 °C	12 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 26 km/h
Thursday	12/13	Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for scattered light rain later on.	24 °C	11 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Friday	12/14	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	25 °C	13 °C	VRB-NE	08 - 30 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:07
Sunrise	06:32
Zuhr	11:41
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:50
Isha	18:12

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	24 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	100 %
MIN. RH	45 %
MAX. Wind	SE 18 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Roque Pedro Souza, holder of Indian Passport No: HI831444 and Civil ID no. 256022900498, has changed my name to Roque Souza.

12-12-2018

I, YENAMADALA ANANTHA LAKSHMI S/o. SURI BABU holder of Indian Passport No. L3848064 & Civil ID No. 263011008467 has changed my name from YENAMADALA ANANTHA LAKSHMI to GADDAM SURYA KUMARI hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of GADDAM SURYA KUMARI. (C 5436)

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	22087426
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Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
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Swiss Air	22421516
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Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	341	Sohag	00:05	MSR	575	Dubai	14:20	IRC	6553	ABD	13:55	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
JZR	406	Kochi	00:10	KAC	672	Dubai	14:25	JZR	407	Ahmedabad	00:05	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:30	AZQ	566	Baku	00:05	RBG	218	Asyut	14:25
JZR	253	Amman	00:40	KAC	364	Colombo	14:30	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	KIS	6033	Mashhad	14:30
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	618	Doha	14:40	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30	IRC	527	Mashhad	14:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	RBG	554	Alexandria	14:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:00	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:45	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KNE	683	Madinah	15:05	FEG	242	Alexandria	01:05	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	KAC	529	Jeddah	15:05	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:15	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:05
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:40	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:25	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	JZR	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	JZR	111	Doha	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	222	Riyadh	15:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	KAC	512	Mashhad	15:35	KAC	363	Colombo	01:50	CLX	792	Hanoi	15:40
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	KAC	562	Amman	15:35	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:25	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	JZR	142	Al Najaf	15:40	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	KAC	743	Dammam	15:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	304	Mumbai	15:40	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	MSR	619	Alexandria	02:40	KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	JZR	732	Cairo	15:50	ABD	372	Cairo	02:45	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	SVA	504	Madinah	16:00	IGO	1758	Kochi	02:55	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
JZR	502	Lahore	03:35	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	JZR	152	Mashhad	16:00	KLM	446	Muscat	03:55	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
CLX	6002	Luxembourg	04:05	KAC	118	New York	16:05	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
KAC	796	Madinah	04:10	ABY	127	Sharjah	16:05	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	JZR	261	Beirut	16:40
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	JZR	212	Jeddah	16:25	QTR	1087	Doha	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	KAC	502	Beirut	16:30	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	JZR	105	Bahrain	16:55
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	QTR	1072	Cairo	16:30	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	FDB	051	Doha	16:35	JZR	701	Asyut	04:30	SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	KAC	522	Dubai	16:40	KAC	103	London	05:10	KAC	504	Beirut	17:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	KAC	114	Al Najaf	17:00	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	119	Doha	17:10	DHX	173	Bahrain	05:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	FDB	070	Dubai	05:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:45	CLX	6002	Abu Dhabi	06:05	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	FDB	063	Dubai	18:15	JZR	713	Sohag	06:15	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	JZR	302	Istanbul	18:15	JZR	121	Dubai	06:35	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	QTR	1080	Doha	18:30	THY	771	Istanbul	06:40	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	KAC	212	Paris	07:10	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	RJA	640	Amman	19:00	GFA	217	Bahrain	07:15	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
BAW	157	London	07:05	KAC	744	Dammam	19:00	JZR	115	Doha	07:30	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:35	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:10	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	KAC	165	Rome	08:20	JZR	253	Amman	18:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30	BAW	156	London	08:50	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:50	JZR	721	Alexandria	19:20
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	501	Beirut	09:00	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	104	London	19:55	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:45	KNE	381	Taif	20:00	KAC	613	Bahrain	09:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	JZR	106	Bahrain	20:00	JZR	731	Cairo	09:10	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	166	Rome	20:10	KAC	117	Shannon/New York	09:15	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	620	Doha	20:15	KAC	541	Cairo	09:30	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	DHX	172	Bahrain	20:20	KAC	561	Amman	09:40	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
IRC	6511	Lamerd	09:50	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	KAC	511	Mashhad	09:40	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:10	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	KAC	101	London	09:45	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	674	Dubai	20:35	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
SYR	341	Latakia	11:00	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:45	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	RBG	217	Asyut	20:50	JZR	151	Mashhad	09:50	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	JAV	621	Amman	21:15	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:15	JZR	301	Istanbul	10:05	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
JZR	122	Dubai	11:20	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10	RBG	214	Sohag	21:30
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	11:55	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	KAC	617	Doha	10:35	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	616	Bahrain	21:30	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
MSC	415	Sohag	12:10	KAC	168	Paris	21:30	JZR	211	Jeddah	10:40	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	UAE	859	Dubai	21:35	IRC	6512	Lamerd	10:40	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:45	JAV	622	Amman	22:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:50	QTR	1071	Doha	11:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:15
IRC	6552	ABD	13:00	JAI	574	Mumbai	22:00	IRA	664	Shiraz	11:10	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	KAC	564	Amman	22:05	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
KIS	6032	Mashhad	13:30	QTR	1082	Doha	22:15	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
IRC	526	Mashhad	13:30	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:25	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:00	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25	SYR	342	Latakia	12:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
RBG	213	Sohag	13:45	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:30	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:10	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	SVA	502	Jeddah	22:45	JZR	141	Al Najaf	12:15	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:45	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55	JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	JZR	128	Dubai	23:15	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	12:55	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
CLX	792	Luxembourg	14:10	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45	QTR	1075	Doha	13:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	JZR	262	Beirut	23:55	MSC	416	Sohag	13:10	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
								JZR	113	Doha	13:30	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
								KAC	521	Al Najaf	13:35	SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45

Australia government discusses moving embassy to Jerusalem

Arab League tells Bolsonaro embassy move could harm ties

SYDNEY/BRASILIA: Australia's government met yesterday to discuss whether to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, two sources familiar with the matter said, a decision that would break with decades of policy and risk angering Asian neighbors. "Cabinet met today and the issue of moving the Israeli embassy was discussed. The decision is still pending," said one of the sources who declined to be identified as he is not authorized to speak to the media.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison in October said he was "open" to moving the embassy to Jerusalem, following the lead of US President Donald Trump. The United States opened a new embassy in Jerusalem in May, a move that delighted Israel, infuriated Palestinians and upset the wider Arab world and Western allies. The Australian newspaper reported several senior cabinet members were leaning towards recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital while stopping short of moving the embassy.

Jerusalem's status is a major obstacle to a peace deal

between Israel and the Palestinians. Israel regards all of the city, including the eastern sector that it annexed after a 1967 war, as its capital. The Australian newspaper said a decision could be announced this week. By recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Morrison would be hoping to keep his conservative backbench happy but it would likely anger neighbors, including Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim-majority country.

The Palestinian question is sensitive in Indonesia and it has refused to sign a free trade agreement with Australia until it confirms its plans towards Israel. Israel's government regards Jerusalem as the eternal and indivisible capital of the country. Palestinians feel equally strongly, saying that East Jerusalem must be the capital of a future Palestinian state.

Meanwhile, the Arab League has told Brazil's right-wing President-elect Jair Bolsonaro that moving Brazil's embassy in Israel to Jerusalem would be a setback for relations with Arab countries, in a letter seen by Reuters on Monday. Such a move by Bolsonaro, who

takes office on Jan 1, would be a sharp shift in Brazilian foreign policy, which has traditionally backed a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Ambassadors from Arab nations were expected to meet in Brasilia yesterday to discuss Bolsonaro's plan to follow Trump's decision to move the embassy from Tel Aviv to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, according to the Arab diplomat who asked not to be named. The letter to Bolsonaro from the league's Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit and delivered to Brazil's foreign ministry said the decision on where to locate an embassy was the sovereign decision of any country.

"However, the situation of Israel is not normal, seeing that it is a country that has been occupying Palestinian territories by force - among them East Jerusalem," the letter said. Moving the embassy to Jerusalem would be considered a violation of international law and the United National Security Council resolutions, Aboul Gheit said.

The embassy move has been praised as "historic" by

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who plans to attend Bolsonaro's presidential inauguration, according to the Brazilian's transition team. "The Arab world has much respect for Brazil and we want not just to maintain relations but improve and diversify them. But the intention of moving the embassy to Jerusalem could harm them," the diplomat said.

Brazil is one of the world's top halal meat exporters and that trade could run into trouble if Bolsonaro angers Arab nations by moving the embassy. That could hurt exports to key Middle Eastern markets for Brazilian beef and poultry producers BRF SA and JBS SA. Halal meat is butchered and prepared as prescribed by Muslim law. The meat exporters lobby has pressed the incoming president not to move the embassy, and he appeared to change his mind. But the president-elect's son, Eduardo Bolsonaro, speaking after recently visiting Trump advisor and son-in-law Jared Kushner at the White House, said the embassy move was "not a question of if, but of when". — Reuters



PADANG PARIAMAN, Indonesia: In this video grab taken on Nov 24, 2018, villagers try to capture a large python in West Sumatra. — AFP

Great snakes! Indonesians wrestle with giant python

PARIAMAN, Indonesia: A viral video showing a gigantic python wrapping itself around an Indonesian villager has secured more than a million views, after locals wrestled with the serpent before successfully caging it. The villagers initially thought the giant snake, which was resting by the river, was just an old log before one of them touched the serpent, triggering it into action.

The Nov 22 video, shot by villager Ronal Efendi Coto, shows the man fighting as others try to pry him loose from the python's notorious death grip.

After calling for help and managing to subdue the serpent, the men put it into a cage in Pucuang Anam village in Sumatra and asked a local zoo for assistance. But the zoo declined to take in the python, citing overcapacity. "For now we are just keeping it in the cage so people can come and have a look", Coto told AFP, adding that the snake was eight metres long. Pythons are some of the largest snakes in the world, but are not known to measure more than seven metres in the wild. In June, an Indonesian woman was found dead inside in the belly of a giant python after it was captured near where she vanished while tending her vegetable garden on Sulawesi island. — AFP

Egypt probing naked pyramid...

Continued from Page 1

The young Norwegian, who runs his own YouTube channel, said he had absolutely no interest in stirring up a crisis such as that triggered by cartoons in Western newspapers of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). As for the girl in the video, she was not his girlfriend. "It was just a pose. We did not have sexual relations," Hvid said.

The Great Pyramid, also known as the Khufu pyramid, is the largest in Giza, standing at 146 m tall, and the only surviving structure of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Climbing pyramids is forbidden in Egypt. In 2016, a German tourist was barred from entering the country for life after he posted online footage of climbing one of the ancient structures.

Meanwhile, Egyptian authorities have unofficially restricted the sale of "yellow vest", traders in Cairo told AFP yesterday, signaling fears of possible protests inspired by those in France. The move comes ahead of the eighth anniversary of the uprising that toppled Egypt's longtime president Hosni Mubarak in Feb 2011 and left the country in political and economic turmoil. "We received instructions from the police around a week ago to sell yellow vests to companies only, and not to individuals," one importer said. He said two yellow vest shipments were currently en route to Egypt and that no instructions had been issued to halt such imports.

However, a rights lawyer, Mohamed Ramadan, was yesterday remanded in custody for two weeks over charges including the distribution and possession of leaflets and yellow vests. He was arrested on Monday in the northern city of Alexandria, his lawyer Abdelrahman Al-Gohary said. Launched in early November, weekly "yellow vest" protests in France against planned increases in fuel tax price have spiralled into violence in Paris and other cities, taking a heavy financial toll.

In a downtown Cairo street, several yellow vest sellers told AFP that their sale was being "prohibited" under instructions from police. "National security officials came by and asked us not to sell them to individuals because they fear protests in France could reach us here," one trader said. The interior ministry spokesman did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Egypt imposed heavy restrictions on demonstrations under a 2013 law, passed after the military ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi following mass protests against his rule. General-turned-president



GIZA: In this photo taken on Oct 2, 2018 horse riders gallop near the Giza pyramids. — AFP

Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi has repeatedly criticized the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011, pointing to their repercussions on neighboring countries like Syria, Yemen and Libya. His government has overseen harsh austerity measures including the removal of subsidies and introduced steep price hikes aiming to revive Egypt's economy.

Another protested that "they want to soil the dignity and pride of Egyptians because the pyramid reflects the glory and grandeur of the Egyptian people".

The authenticity of the images has been disputed with some arguing the photograph showing the pair naked appears to be very bright whereas the video showed them scaling the pyramid at night. Antiquities Minister Khaled El-Enany told government newspaper Al-Ahram that the video has stirred "anger and outrage among Egyptians", and that officials in charge of guarding the pyramids would be punished if found to have been negligent.

Hvid, 23, explained back home to the Danish newspaper Ekstra Bladet that he had "dreamed for many years of climbing the Great Pyramid" as well as of taking a naked photograph. "I'm sad that so many people have got angry but I've also received a lot of positive responses from many Egyptians," he said in an interview. — AFP

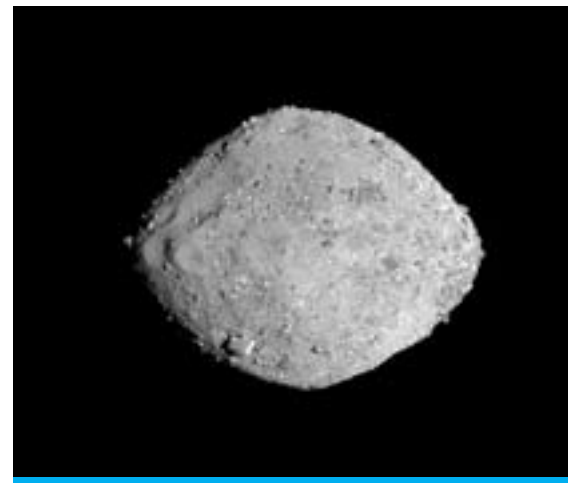
NASA probe finds signs of water on nearby asteroid

ORLANDO: NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft has discovered ingredients for water on a relatively nearby skyscraper-sized asteroid, a rocky acorn-shaped object that may hold clues to the origins of life on Earth, scientists said on Monday. OSIRIS-REx, which flew last week within a scant 19 km of the asteroid Benu some 2.25 million km from Earth, found traces of hydrogen and oxygen molecules - part of the recipe for water and thus the potential for life - embedded in the asteroid's rocky surface.

The probe, on a mission to return samples from the asteroid to Earth for study, was launched in 2016. Benu, roughly 500 m, orbits the sun at roughly the same distance as Earth. There is concern among scientists about the possibility of Benu impacting Earth late in the 22nd century. "We have found the water-rich minerals from the early solar system, which is exactly the kind of sample we were going out there to find and ultimately bring back to Earth," University of Arizona planetary scientist Dante Lauretta, the OSIRIS-REx mission's principal investigator, said in a telephone interview.

Asteroids are among the leftover debris from the solar system's formation some 4.5 billion years ago. Scientists believe asteroids and comets crashing into early Earth may have delivered organic compounds and water that seeded the planet for life, and atomic-level analysis of samples from Benu could provide key evidence to support that hypothesis.

"When samples of this material are returned by



This Nov 16, 2018 photo from NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft shows the asteroid Benu from a distance of 136 km. — AFP

the mission to Earth in 2023, scientists will receive a treasure trove of new information about the history and evolution of our solar system," Amy Simon, a scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland, said in a statement. "We're really trying to understand the role that these carbon-rich asteroids played in delivering water to the early Earth and making it habitable," Lauretta added.

OSIRIS-REx will pass later this month just 1.9 km from Benu, entering the asteroid's gravitational pull and analyzing its terrain. From there, the spacecraft will begin to gradually tighten its orbit around the asteroid, spiraling to within just 2 m of its surface so its robot arm can snatch a sample of Benu by July 2020. The spacecraft will later fly back to Earth, jet-tisoning a capsule bearing the asteroid specimen for a parachute descent in the Utah desert in September 2023. — Reuters

Time's 'Person of Year' goes ...

Continued from Page 1

Explaining the decision to honor dissident journalist Khashoggi, who was a US resident and Washington Post columnist, Felsenthal said it was "very rare that a person's influence grows so immensely in death".

Fellow honorees Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, exposed the extrajudicial killing of 10 Rohingya

'Humbled' Modi suffers biggest ...

Continued from Page 1

"We defeated the BJP today, we will defeat them in 2019 too," Indian media quoted Gandhi as saying. "Mr Modi sold a vision to the country five years ago. India had the patience to give them five years. But they have failed." In both the central state of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan in the west, the chief ministers from Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) conceded defeat, while in Madhya Pradesh the outcome was on a knife-edge.

In Chhattisgarh, ruled by the BJP for 15 years, initial results showed the BJP winning just 16 seats, down from 49 in the outgoing parliament, trailing Congress on 68 in the 90-seat state parliament. Congress also trounced the BJP in Rajasthan, governed since 2013 by the BJP's Vasundhara Raje, an unpopular local princess, winning 99 seats ahead of the BJP on 73 - 89 fewer than in the last election. Television footage showed jubilant Congress workers bursting firecrackers and dancing at regional party offices in both states.

In neighboring Madhya Pradesh, the BJP also suffered from voter fatigue after 15 years in office, with Congress set to be two seats short of a majority and five ahead of the BJP. In two other smaller states also releasing results yesterday, Telangana in the south and remote Mizoram in the northeast, regional parties looked to be leading. Congress's five-time Mizoram chief minister Lal Thanhawla was routed by the regional Mizo National Front, a BJP ally. In Telangana, the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi won handsomely - at the

men during a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's western Rakhine state last year. They have been imprisoned for nearly a year, and were convicted under a state secrets act in September. A court will hear their appeal later this month.

Marie Ressa, meanwhile, is CEO of Rappler, a Philippine news site hit by a string of government efforts to shut it down over its critical tone of President Rodrigo Duterte. She faces a charge - which she has dismissed as "manufactured" - that Rappler provided false information to tax authorities, and risks up to 10 years behind bars. The staff of the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, Maryland, also share this year's title. Their newsroom was attacked by gunman Jarrod Rodman in June, leaving four journalists and a sales assistant dead. — Agencies

expense of Congress.

But it was Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh that mattered most for the Hindu nationalist BJP, which swept to power nationally under Modi in 2014. They form part of the "Hindi Belt" or "Cow Belt" region of around 475 million people - more than the United States, Canada and Mexico combined - where the rightwing BJP has its core support base. Before the recent five elections, the BJP ruled 19 out of 29 Indian states either outright or in alliance with local parties. Congress rules just two states, including one in partnership.

But the latest results are a blow to the image of Modi as an invincible vote-winner, and puts the 68-year-old on the back foot months before he seeks a second term in office. It also strengthen 48-year-old Gandhi - scion of the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty - with Congress having lost more than a dozen states to the BJP since Modi took office in 2014. The results could also help his party cobble together a grand alliance of smaller parties to take on the BJP next year, with Gandhi at its head. "The message (from voters) is very clear. (Modi) needs to address the main issues of employment, corruption, and damage to economic structures," Gandhi said yesterday.

Analysts have linked the BJP's apparent dwindling support to growing rural distress and unemployment. Nearly 55 percent of India's 1.25-billion population is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture, and farmers form an important voting bloc for parties. "The verdict is the cumulative result of the issues faced by people in these states," Gurpreet Mahajan, a political scientist at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University told AFP. "Victory and defeat are an integral part of life," Modi said in a second tweet. "Today's results will further our resolve to serve people and work even harder for the development of India." — AFP

Sports

Seattle Seahawks close on wild card with win over Vikings

Patriots will bounce back after Miami meltdown: Brady

LOS ANGELES: The Seattle Seahawks edged closer to a wildcard berth on Monday after grinding out a 21-7 victory against the Minnesota Vikings. Two field goals from veteran kicker Sebastian Janikowski in the first and third quarters gave Seattle a 6-0 lead as the Vikings once again struggled on offense.

Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson then scrambled for 40 yards in a decisive fourth quarter drive to set up a crucial touchdown. Wilson's run took Seattle within striking distance and it was running back Chris Carson who delivered the killer blow, crashing over from two yards for the score.

Wilson then found Tyler Lockett in the end zone for a successful two-point conversion to make it 14-0 for the hosts at Seattle's CenturyLink Field.

A miserable night for Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins got worse on the next possession when he fumbled and the ball was recovered by Justin Coleman, who galloped in from 29 yards out to make it 21-0.

Minnesota got on the board with just over one minute remaining in the game when Cousins connected with Dalvin Cook from six yards, but the score was too little too late for the visitors.

The win saw Seattle improve to 8-5 in the NFC, leaving them firmly on course for a wildcard spot. The Vikings have little room for error after a loss which left them at 6-6-1, second in the NFC North behind the Chicago Bears (9-4).

Meanwhile, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady insisted his team would bounce back on Monday following their spectacular last-gasp defeat to the Miami Dolphins. The Patriots fell victim to what has been dubbed the "Miami Miracle" on Sunday, when the Dolphins conjured a remarkable winning touchdown off

the final play of the game to snatch a 34-33 victory.

The sweeping 69-yard score, which featured two lateral passes before Kenyan Drake raced over in the corner, prevented the Patriots from clinching a 10th straight AFC East division title.

Brady however is confident the Patriots will pick themselves up for what is a traditionally daunting fixture against the Pittsburgh Steelers at Heinz Field next Sunday. "We've had a lot of tough losses over the years. We lost pretty important games," Brady said Monday on Boston sports radio station WEEI.

"What's the difference between losing by 14 down there, losing by 50, or losing by 1? They all count the same. "Mental toughness is mental toughness. You realize that a lot of things had to go right for them to win, and they did. You know, give them credit. They made some important plays."

While the Patriots remain firmly in charge of their destiny, the defeat to Miami has lengthened the odds on Bill Belichick's team managing to wrest homefield advantage from the Kansas City Chiefs during the play-offs. Brady said the Patriots would look to finish strong over their final three regular-season games. "We still have a lot of football to play," he said. "There was a lot of positives from yesterday's game that we have to kind of use going forward, that we will use going forward."

"Our whole season is ahead of us, so let's make the most of it." Brady also shrugged off suggestions that the defeat was further evidence to support the theory that the Patriots are fallible on the road. "We had every opportunity to win that game," Brady told WEEI. "So it's not that I don't think we can win on the road. We've won on the road, played well on the road. We just have to close the deal," added Brady. — AFP



SEATTLE: Chris Carson #32 of the Seattle Seahawks dives past Ben Gedeon #42 of the Minnesota Vikings for a touchdown in the fourth quarter at CenturyLink Field on Monday in Seattle, Washington. — AFP

US Olympic Committee slammed in review of Nassar abuse case

LOS ANGELES: A damning report into US gymnastics' sex abuse scandal lambasted the United States Olympic Committee on Monday, saying the body had helped create the environment which allowed former team doctor Larry Nassar to abuse hundreds of athletes.

The 233-page report said senior USOC executives had failed to react swiftly when first warned of allegations surrounding Nassar in 2015, instead concealing the doctor's crimes until the scandal erupted into a public view in late 2016.

Investigators hired by USOC to conduct a wide-ranging inquiry into the scandal said former USOC chief executive Scott Blackmun, and current USOC chief of sports performance Alan Ashley, were both guilty of inaction after first being told of abuse allegations. Later Monday, USOC chief executive Sarah Hirshland confirmed Ashley had been fired from his position in the wake of the report. The investigation, carried out by Boston law firm Ropes & Gray, painted a withering picture of a systemic failure which allowed Nassar to abuse hundreds of athletes.

Nassar was jailed for life earlier this year for the abuse of more than 250 athletes, including several stars of the United States' gold medal-winning teams at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics. "While Nassar bears ultimate responsibility for his decades-long abuse of girls and young women, he did not operate in a vacuum," an executive summary of the report said.

"Instead, he acted within an ecosystem that facilitat-

ed his criminal acts." The United States Olympic Committee, USA Gymnastics, coaches, trainers and medical professionals all failing to protect athletes from Nassar, the report said.

"These institutions and individuals ignored red flags, failed to recognize textbook grooming behaviors, or in some egregious instances, dismissed clear calls for help from girls and young women who were being abused by Nassar," the summary said.

Nassar's abuse was a "manifestation of the broader failures at USAG and the USOC to adopt appropriate child-protective policies and procedures to ensure a culture of safety for young athletes," it added.

The US Olympic Committee responded to the report's findings with an apology to survivors of Nassar's abuse. "The US Olympic community failed the victims, survivors and their families, and we apologize again to everyone who has been harmed," said Susanne Lyons, USOC independent board member.

"The USOC board commissioned this independent investigation because we knew we had an obligation to find out how this happened and to take important steps to prevent and detect abuse. We now have a much more comprehensive view of individual and institutional failures." The report's lead investigators Joan McPhee and James Dowden said former USOC chief Blackmun, who resigned in February, and Ashley were first alerted by former USA Gymnastics chief Steve Penny in July 2015 that Nassar was to be reported to law enforcement.

However, neither Blackmun nor Ashley shared the information with other members of USOC's board or directors or USOC's SafeSport team. The report said Blackmun and former USA Gymnastics boss Penny had both "engaged in affirmative efforts to protect and preserve their institutional interests—even as Nassar retired from the sport with his reputation intact and continued to have access to girls and young women at the college,



Larry Nassar

club and high school levels."

Blackmun meanwhile insisted to investigators he had "initiated an internal effort at the USOC to alert his SafeSport team to the allegations and to confirm that the USOC was taking all appropriate steps to respond to the allegations and ensure athlete safety."

However, investigators concluded "no such conversations were had, and no such steps were taken." In remarks to USA Today on Monday, USOC chief Hirshland said Ashley's position had become untenable.

"I made the determination late yesterday evening that our organization simply could not be successful going forward with Alan in the important leadership role he was in; and thus, first thing this morning, we terminated Alan's employment," Hirshland said.

The investigation, which had been commissioned by USOC, included more than 100 interviews, many of them with current and former USA Gymnastics and US Olympic Committee employees over a 10-month period. Investigators reviewed more than 1.3 million documents as part of their probe, which covers allegations dating back to the early 1990s. — AFP

Japan's Seto breaks short-course swim record to stun Clos

SHANGHAI: Japan's Daiya Seto smashed Chad le Clos's short-course record in the men's 200m butterfly as he grabbed gold at the world championships to stun the South African yesterday. The 24-year-old Seto pipped his more famous rival by only 0.08sec to make a piece of history on the first day of action in the Chinese city of Hangzhou.

Seto, who won bronze in the 400m medley at the Rio 2016 Olympics, recovered from a comparatively slow start to hold off Le Clos down the stretch and triumph in 1min 48.24sec. It was a disappointing silver for the 26-year-old Le Clos, the reigning long-course and short-course world champion.

He had also held the short-course record of 1:48.56, set in Singapore in 2013, until Seto bettered it in style. A distant third was China's Li Zhuhao. "I didn't expect the world record," Seto was quoted by the Xinhua news agency as saying. "Now I will focus on the 400m IM (individual medley) and I hope I can break the 400m IM world record also." Australian teenager Ariarne Titmus stormed back to win the women's 200m freestyle gold and underline her status as a rising star of swimming.

The 18-year-old, who won 400m and 800m freestyle gold at the Commonwealth Games in her home country earlier this year, ran down the American Mallory Comerford to seal victory in a thrilling race.

Titmus was back in third after 150m, but she burst to the finish in a time of 1:51.38 to relegate Comerford into silver, with Femke Heemskerk of the Netherlands taking bronze having led for half of a nail-biting race.

Titmus put her head in her hands when she realised she had taken gold, powering to the win with 0.43sec to spare over Comerford. Hungary's Katinka Hosszu, a triple gold medallist at the 2016 Rio Olympics, was strong favourite in the women's 400m individual medley—and she did not disappoint.— AFP

Badminton's Lee reveals tears over cancer diagnosis

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian badminton great Lee Chong Wei has revealed how he broke down in tears after learning he had nose cancer—and detailed the "nightmare" treatment that left him unable to speak or eat.

Lee, who is eyeing a return to action next year, told The Star that he was about to leave for a training session when his wife broke the news, after she received a call from a doctor. "She came towards me, hugged me and cried. I knew it was bad news. It's nose cancer, she broke the news," the 36-year-old said, according to the Malaysian newspaper.

"My badminton bag slipped from my grasp and I started to cry too. I slumped on the sofa crying and asked why it had to be me." The three-time Olympic silver medallist said the cancer was detected following a check-up in July, after he had been unwell.

It wasn't until September that officials revealed he had cancer and was having treatment in Taiwan—opting for specialists there rather than in China, where he feared his story may be leaked, or Japan or South Korea because of the language barrier. Lee, the former long-time world number one, said he went through 33 sessions of proton therapy treatment, where beams are aimed at the cancer, calling it "a nightmare". "By the third week, it has taken a toll on my throat. I could not speak or eat," he said.

"I'm just so glad that the worst is over now." Lee, now down to 15th in the world rankings, is expected to return to training next month, although he is still waiting for the all-clear from his doctors.— AFP

ABK concludes seventh annual football tourney



KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced the conclusion of the 7 thAnnual Football Tournament, which was held at 'The Corner' soccer field in Kuwait City, opposite Kuwait Towers. The exciting day-long event took place on 5 thDecember 2018, from 4pm until 9 pm. A total of 8 Academies for children between the ages of 9 and 10 years old participated in the tournament: Kuwait Brazouka Academy, The Pharaohs Academy, Scorers Academy, British Academy, Kuwait International Academy, Juventus Academy,

Strikers Academy, and Samba Academy.

The ABK football tournament is part of the Bank's annual social program which aims to engage with the public by encouraging sport and a healthy lifestyle from an early age. The tournament, which was launched in 2011 has grown substantially in popularity year-on-year. Fawzy Al Thunayan, General Manager, Board Affairs at ABK alongside Ali Al Baghli, Senior Manager Corporate Communications, attended the event to present the prizes to the winning teams. The First Place

was won by "Strikers Academy" with each team member receiving KD 60. The second place was taken by "Scorers Academy" with each team member receiving KD 40.

Mohammed Al Husayan, the team player of Juventus Academy received the prize for 'Best Player' while Ammar Rasmy who played for the Strikers Academy won the prize for 'Top Scorer' of the tournament. The prize for the 'Best Goal Keeper' was taken by Hamad Mishari from the Scorers Academy.

Brilliant Hope levels series for West Indies with century

Bangladesh's Shakib top-scored with 65 off 62 deliveries

SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard of the second one-day international between Bangladesh and West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday:	
Bangladesh innings	
Tamim Iqbal c Roach b Bishoo	50
Liton Das c Hetmyer b Paul	8
Imrul Kayes c Hope b Thomas	0
Mushfiquer Rahim c Hope b Thomas	62
Shakib Al Hasan b Roach	65
Mahmudullah Riyad c Hetmyer c Powell	30
Soumya Sarkar c Bishoo b Thomas	6
Mashrafe Mortaza not out	6
Mehidy Hasan not out	10
Extras (b1, lb3, w9, nb5)	18
Total (seven wickets: 50 overs)	255
Did not bat: Mustafizur Rahman, Rubel Hossain	
Fall of wickets: 1-14 (Imrul), 2-125 (Tamim), 3-132 (Mushfiquer), 4-193 (Mahmudullah) 5-208 (Soumya), 6-234 (Liton Das), 7-239 (Shakib)	
Bowling: Roach 10-0-39-1(w2, nb1), Thomas 10-0-54-3 (w3, nb2), Chase 3-0-22-0 (w3), Paul 10-0-68-1 (w1, nb1), Bishoo 10-1-27-1 (nb1), Powell 7-0-41-1.	
West Indies innings	
C. Hemraj lbw b Mehidy	3
S. Hope not out	146
D. Bravo b Rubel	27
M. Samuels c Mushfiquer b Mustafizur	26
S. Hetmyer c sub b Rubel	14
R. Powell c Soumya b Mashrafe	1
R. Chase c Tamim b Mustafizur	9
Keemo Paul not out	18
Extras (lb 5, w6, nb1)	12
Total (six wickets: 49.4 overs)	256
Did not bat: Kumar Roach, Devendra Bishoo, Oshane Thomas	
Fall of Wickets: 1-5(Hemraj), 2-70 (Bravo), 3-132 (Samuels), 4-155 (Hetmyer), 5-157 (Powell), 6-185 (Chase).	
Bowling: Shakib 10-0-28-0, Mehidy 9-0-39-1(w1), Mustafizur 10-1-63-2 (w2), Mashrafe 10-1-52-1 (w2, nb1), Mahmudullah 1.4-0-12-0, Rubel 9-0-57-2 (w1).	
Result: West Indies won by four wickets.	

DHAKA: Shai Hope smashed a brilliant century as West Indies edged Bangladesh by four wickets in the second one-day international to level the three-match series 1-1 in Dhaka yesterday.

Opener Hope hit an unbeaten 146 off 144 balls, guiding West Indies to 256-6 in 49.4 overs after the visitors relied on three wickets from paceman Oshane Thomas to restrict Bangladesh to 255-7 in 50 overs.

Hope shared 71-run in an unbroken seventh wicket stand with Keemo Paul to help West Indies get their first victory on the tour and stay alive in the series after they suffered a five-wicket loss in the opening match on Sunday.

Paul, who remained unbeaten on 18, pushed spinner Mahmudullah towards midwicket to complete the victory. The fate of the game was hanging in the balance until Hope struck three fours off pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman in the penultimate over.

Hope, who has now three centuries in ODIs, hit 12 fours and three sixes in his innings. "I just kept backing myself and knew that as long as I bat till the end, we will win. I asked Keemo to bat deep. It wasn't an easy wicket in the beginning," man of the match Hope said.

Rubel Hossain and Mustafizur claimed two wickets each for Bangladesh giving away 57 and 63 runs respectively. Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiquer Rahim and Tamim Iqbal earlier each scored a half-century to steer Bangladesh to a decent total at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Shakib top-scored with 65 off 62 deliveries while Mushfiquer and Tamim made 62 and 50 respectively after West Indies invited the hosts to bat first.

Mushfiquer and Tamim laid the foundation of the innings with a 111-run second wicket stand after Oshane Thomas worked up lively pace early in the innings. Thomas, who returned with bowling figures of 3-54, forced opener Liton Das to leave the field with a toe injury before handing Imrul Kayes a duck for West



DHAKA: Bangladesh cricketer Rubel Hossain (C) celebrates after the dismissal of West Indies cricketer Shimron Hetmyer (L) as his teammate Shai Hope (R) looks on during the second one-day international (ODI) between Bangladesh and West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka yesterday.—AFP

Indies' first breakthrough.

Leg-spinner Devendra Bishoo dismissed Tamim, who faced 63 balls, to break his partnership with Mushfiquer, who soon became the second victim of Thomas. Shakib, who smashed six fours and a six, then guided the low-order to give Bangladesh a competitive score.

"It was a 50-50 match in the end, but we couldn't hold onto the pressure. It was a good match. Hopefully we'll come back strong in the next game," said Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza.

The third and final match of the series will be held in Sylhet on Friday. — AFP

Buoyant India keen to carry winning momentum to Perth

ADELAIDE: Having become the first Indian team to win a test series-opener on Australian soil, Virat Kohli's side are determined to keep the momentum rolling into the second clash in Perth and inch closer to a breakthrough series triumph Down Under.

India were made to work harder than expected in the 31-run win at Adelaide Oval, and their bowlers will have only three days' rest before taking to the field again at Perth Stadium on Friday. Despite the quick turnaround, Kohli suggested the tourists were leaping out of their skins to land another blow on Tim Paine's shaky side in the four-match series.

"They are at their peak, all of them together and it's something that we as batsman look at as an opportunity to put in good performances," Kohli said of his attack, rated India's most potent in years.

"We will be, in every test match, gunning for a result." Compared to his counterpart Paine, weighed down by a sore index finger and a long list of concerns, Kohli heads to Perth with a spring in his step.

India's Ishant Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami enjoyed a stellar debut as a pace unit in Australia, sharing 14 of the 20 wickets at Adelaide Oval, bowling with sustained pressure and limiting the hosts to a single 50-run partnership.

Kohli's batsmen got off to a shaky start and needed man-of-the-match Cheteshwar Pujara's glittering 123 to achieve a modest first innings total of 250.

However, after Australia were bowled out for 235, they were quick to seize the momentum and build valuable partnerships to all but bat Australia out of the game.

Though beaten and vulnerable, a chastened Australia can be expected to fight back hard on a wicket likely to suit their class pace attack.

Kohli will hope for more from the recalled opener Murali Vijay, who has struggled to justify his place in the side this year. He managed only 11 and 18 in Adelaide, undone by Australia's pace spearhead Mitchell Starc both times.

With sidelined young opener Prithvi Shaw seen limping around Adelaide Oval after his ankle injury during a tour match, the veteran Vijay should have another chance to stake his claim.

Kohli, who struck four centuries in the 2014-15 tour of Australia, is also due a score after being dismissed for three and 34 in Adelaide.

The India skipper noted that his team's tail-end batting was trumped by Australia's as their last five wickets could only muster 25 runs in the second innings.

A more determined application could have set Paine's side a higher target than the 323 for victory, while saving India a lot of nerves on day five. India first toured Australia in 1947-48 and have yet to win a test series Down Under in 11 previous attempts. — Reuters



Tim Paine

Australia look for quick fix ahead of second India Test

ADELAIDE: Australia skipper Tim Paine admitted there was little time to regroup after the first Test defeat to India, but said he had no doubt under-fire fast bowling spearhead Mitchell Starc would bounce back in Perth.

The second Test starts on Friday with India full of confidence after their tense, 31-run win in Adelaide—their first in Australia in a decade, and first ever in the opening Test as they search for a maiden series win Down Under.

Australia skipper Tim Paine admitted there were shortcomings in Adelaide, but he was largely happy with how the team performed. "There was a number of reasons why we lost," he said.

"We thought we could have cleaned them up on day one for 200-210 and we let that slip a bit. Clearly we'd like to score more than 230 in a first innings in Australia. There's things we do need to tighten up."

Starc received some criticism for some wayward spells, including a string of costly byes, in India's second innings in Adelaide. But Paine said the left-arm paceman would come good. "He didn't set the world on fire but I think, for a long time, there's been a really big

gap between Starc's best and his worst," said Paine.

"And from what I'm seeing, that is getting closer and closer every day. Was he at his best? Probably not. But I still thought he played his role." One key area of concern is opening batsmen. Debutant Marcus Harris scored 26 in each innings and showed enough to warrant another crack, but one-day specialist Aaron Finch failed both times, out for a duck and then 11.

Paine acknowledged the top order must start delivering, but indicated they are likely to stick with the same line-up although there could be further discussions with coach Justin Langer before Friday's team is named.

"Justin's the coach and he's got a fair say," Paine said. "So I imagine if he wants to talk about it, it will be on the agenda when we get to Perth." On what is expected to be a bouncy and seam-friendly pitch at the new Perth Stadium, similar to the WACA Ground it has replaced, spin great Shane Warne said he would like to see all-rounder Marcus Stoinis replace middle-order batsman Peter Handscomb.

"Perth, given what we are hearing, it's going to be a nice, fast bouncy pitch, so I would be making one change and that would be to bring in Marcus Stoinis who got 85 in the last (Sheffield) Shield match and a 60 in the Shield game before," said Warne.

"But mainly it would be for his all-round capabilities, just to relieve a little pressure on Starc who might be able to bowl one less spell and be a little bit better." Paine himself is a slight doubt after being on the right finger by a Mohammed Shami delivery—the same finger that has required several operations in the past. —AFP

thinking about ending his career," said Rummenigge. "In today's football, which is very quick and sometimes very aggressive, you just can't avoid suffering injury now and again. "The important thing is to return to competition with your morale intact." Coman, who came through Paris Saint-Germain's training academy before joining Juventus in 2014, told Sunday's Telefoot programme he would consider his future in football if he suffered another major injury. In the past year he has suffered two ankle ligament injuries, in February then August. The first meant he missed possible selection to France's squad for a World Cup campaign in which Les Bleus triumphed.

Coman only returned from his latest injury on December 1, joining Bayern's squad for today's clash in Amsterdam where the Germans need just a point to secure top spot in Group E. Rummenigge, the CEO of Bayern, added: "Everyone is behind him. "We know how good a player he is, he's an important player and will be even more so in the future." — AFP

Stop retirement talk, Rummenigge tells Coman

BERLIN: Bayern Munich chief Karl-Heinz Rummenigge has told Kingsley Coman to stop all talk of retiring from "aggressive" modern-day football and focus on returning to the fray with his morale intact.

Injury-plagued Coman, who has started only three Champions League games for Bayern since joining the club in 2016, said in a recent television interview that back-to-back injuries had left him pondering his future in the game. Rummenigge, speaking before Bayern's trip to Amsterdam where they will face Ajax in the Champions League today, said it was unthinkable for the 22-year-old Frenchman to be considering quitting.

"I would advise him not to get carried away and to stop

Indian batting phenomenon Shaw resumes running

ADELAIDE: Young Indian batting phenomenon Prithvi Shaw resumed running Monday in his battle to be fit for the second Test against Australia after a nasty ligament injury sidelined him late last month.

The 19-year-old, who scored a sparkling debut century against the West Indies in October and has been compared to Sachin Tendulkar, landed awkwardly attempting a catch in a Sydney warm-up match, ruling him out of the opening Test.

His left ankle was heavily strapped as he limped around the Adelaide Oval late last week. But on Monday he was spotted jogging around the sidelines, although still wearing a protective brace. The Indian camp still rate him an unlikely starter for the second Test in Perth starting on Friday, with a return in the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne more likely.

"With youth on his side there might just be a case where he might recover quicker," Indian coach Ravi Shastri said last week. "We'll make a call as and when we get closer to Perth." Shaw was set to open the batting alongside either KL Rahul or Murali Vijay in Adelaide. In his absence, those two were paired together. Rahul made 2 and 44 while Vijay could only manage 11 and 18. —AFP

Social media has a ball with Shastri's TV comments

NEW DELHI: Coach Ravi Shastri has made social media come alive with his cheeky TV comments after his side became the first Indian team to win a Test series-opener on Australian soil. The Virat Kohli-led team overcame tough resistance from Australia's lower order batsmen to win by 31 runs and lead the four-match series in Adelaide on Monday.

An excited Shastri then gave a live TV interview in Hindi, saying "for a little while we had our balls in our mouth" during a studio chat with former captain Sunil Gavaskar. Gavaskar seemed a little taken aback by his ex-teammate's remark and refused to translate it on air, saying "This is a family channel".

But Twitter had a ball as many couldn't believe that the 56-year-old former Test star uttered those words on TV. "Yes India has won a Test in Adelaide but for the last 10 mins, I haven't stopped wondering in half laugh, half shock at Shastri's comment. Whattay," said a Twitter user who goes by one name in Nikhil. "Ravi Shastri just gave us the line by which we will remember this tour for years. #GotiMooMeinTha," another Twitter user, Malay Desai wrote on his handle. India have never won a Test series in Australia as they head for the second Test starting December 14 in Perth.—AFP



Ravi Shastri

Everton grab late goal to salvage 2-2 draw with Watford

Seamus Coleman's unlucky own goal put the visitors level

EVERTON: Everton's France defender Lucas Digne scored with a superb free kick deep into added time to salvage a 2-2 draw with Watford in a frenetic Premier League clash at Goodison Park on Monday.

Richarlison had given the home side an early lead before Watford made it 2-1 with two goals in three minutes just past the hour mark, Seamus Coleman scoring an own goal and Abdoulaye Doucoure powering home a header.

With Gylfi Sigurdsson spurning the chance to equalise for the hosts when his penalty was saved just minutes later, Watford looked to be heading for a win but Digne then popped up with his first Everton goal to salvage a point. The night had started well for the Merseysiders, looking for the win that would have lifted them above Manchester United into sixth place, when Brazilian striker Richarlison scored against his old club after a quarter of an hour.

The goal was controversial, however, with Everton's Theo Walcott appearing to be offside in the build-up. "I prefer not to say anything about the referees," said Watford manager Javi Gracia. "If VAR was ready today the result would have been different."

Everton's Coleman then put through his own goal in the 63rd minute when Roberto Pererya's effort hit the post and rebounded off the defender into the net, before Doucoure put the visitors in front when he rose above Coleman to head firmly home.

Three minutes later Christian Kabasele clumsily fouled Everton defender Yerry Mina in the penalty area but Sigurdsson's spot kick down the middle was saved by the legs of Ben Foster. It was the Iclander's second penalty miss from his last three.

As the clock ticked down, mid-table Watford thought they had done enough for the win but France international Digne stepped up to curl his free-kick into the net and deny the visitors. "It showed personality and character to take that free-kick when people might have expected Gylfi. It's a very good goal," said Everton manager Marco Silva after facing his old club.

However, the Portuguese coach was not happy about his side's defending for Watford's two goals.



LIVERPOOL: Watford's French midfielder Abdoulaye Doucoure (21) vies with Everton's Icelandic midfielder Gylfi Sigurdsson during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Watford at Goodison Park in Liverpool, north west England on Monday. — AFP

"We lost our focus completely. Those two moments were not too special. We are not happy with the result," he said. "When you start like we

start and achieve just one point, of course we are unhappy. Our goal for the match is completely different from the result."

Everton are seventh on 24 points, two behind Manchester United, while Watford are 12th with 21 points from 16 games. — Reuters

Winners and losers as Bayern head to Ajax for showdown

BERLIN: Resurgent Bayern Munich head to Ajax for today's Champions League group showdown with clear winners and losers among the star-studded squad after Niko Kovac's decision to end rotation.

"We want to keep going," said Leon Goretzka, now a firm fixture in central midfield alongside Joshua Kimmich with Bayern having won their last three games after Saturday's 3-0 league home win over Nuremberg.

"Now we travel to Amsterdam and want to finish first in the group - that's important for us." Bayern need just a point at Ajax's Johan Cruyff Arena to win Group E with the Bavarian giants currently top of the table, two points ahead of their Dutch rivals, and both teams already into the last 16.

A 5-1 thrashing of Benfica at the Allianz Arena a fortnight ago, with Robert Lewandowski and Arjen Robben both scoring twice, signified an end to the poor results of October and November which also saw Bayern slide down the Bundesliga table.

Bayern have now clawed their way back up to third in the league and coach Kovac has taken a gamble by ditching rotation, risking ruffled egos with stars left on the bench. "The rhythm is there, the boys are in the flow

- that's why we don't want to change anything," explained Kovac.

His decision has significant winners and losers. World Cup winners - Germany defender Mats Hummels, and Spain midfielder Javi Martinez - languished on the bench against Nuremberg alongside Euro 2016 winner Renato Sanches.

Martinez and Sanches find their path blocked by Kimmich and Goretzka, both 23, who each hit the woodwork against Nuremberg. "Both have a very good understanding of football and read the game well," said Kovac, at the helm at Bayern since July.

"They get on well off the pitch and are in the national team together. "It's an axis that's really fun right now - not only for those two, but the whole team in the last three games."

However, Hummels looked like he was having anything but 'fun', storming through the mixed zone after Saturday's win without a word as Jerome Boateng and Niklas Sule are now established as Kovac's centre-backs. Disgruntled stars watching from Bayern's bench has caused problems for Kovac's predecessors and Robben's imminent return from a thigh injury threatens Serge Gnabry's place on the right wing.

Thiago Alcantara, a second-half replacement on Saturday who is returning to fitness after a knee injury, threatens to break up Kimmich and Goretzka's partnership in central midfield. However, Kovac's decision has reaped dividends in attack with striker Robert Lewandowski scoring four goals in his last three games, supported by Thomas Mueller who is revelling in the attacking midfield role.



AMSTERDAM: Bayern Munich's Croatian head coach Niko Kovac gives a press conference at the Amsterdam Arena on the eve of the UEFA Champions League football match between Ajax Amsterdam and Bayern Munich in Amsterdam, Netherlands, yesterday. — AFP

"At the start (of the season), we rotated as the coach tried to find the right team," said director of sport Hasan Salihamidzic. "Perhaps it was too much and some players didn't know where they fitted in. "In the last few games, Niko hasn't done that and the team looks good." — AFP

them, but it won't be easy to win at Camp Nou," the former world player of the year added.

"Barca could become more vulnerable if they change anything in defence because Tottenham are such a talented attacking team. Players that have had less minutes on the pitch compared to the usual starting XI will naturally concede more chances."

Rivaldo lifted the Champions League trophy with AC Milan in 2003 but tipped the Catalans as favourites for this year's competition, just ahead of record 13-times winners Real Madrid and Premier League champions Manchester City.— Reuters

La Liga remains hopeful of overseas games despite Barca setback

BARCELONA: La Liga has pledged to persevere with a long-term strategy of taking games outside of Spain after immediate plans to play Barcelona's January match against Girona in Miami were derailed by the champions' decision to back out of the fixture.

Following a board meeting on Monday, Barcelona withdrew from the game "after seeing the lack of consensus surrounding the proposal", ending a protracted saga since La Liga applied to move the game from Catalonia to Florida in September.

The league's organising body accepted that the game, set to take place on Jan. 26, could not be played abroad but pledged to continue its legal battle with the Spanish football federation (RFEF), the most vocal opponent of the plan.

"We regret to disappoint our fans in the US and will work to, in the shortest possible time, stage an official La Liga game in the US, just like the major American leagues stage games outside their borders," a La Liga statement said.

"La Liga will continue the planned action, so an official league game can be played outside of Spain. La Liga is convinced that the RFEF is not acting in accordance with the law." The league also said Barca's withdrawal did not affect its 15-year agreement with entertainment firm Relevent to promote Spanish football in North America.

Last month, La Liga filed a lawsuit in a Spanish court against the federation, which turned down its application to have the game moved and whose president Luis Rubiales has loudly protested the league's plans.

La Liga president Javier Tebas told reporters yesterday that he understood Barca's decision, while adding the league would not relent on its future plans. "I don't see Barca's decision as a betrayal. Of course I'd have liked to have played on Jan. 26 but I have to congratulate the clubs for allowing us to get to this point as it will help us in the future," he said.

"This is not a victory for Rubiales, because all that has happened is this request has been withdrawn, but the demand to play a game outside of Spain is still there." Girona, meanwhile, said it accepted Barca's withdrawal but continued to support the idea of playing games overseas.

Barca's withdrawal came a day after the second leg of the Copa Libertadores final between River Plate and Boca Juniors was moved from Buenos Aires to Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu stadium after fan violence in Argentina saw the initial game postponed.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino, however, who has opposed La Liga's plans, has stated that the South American championship tie was moved due to exceptional circumstances and that it would not usher in other finals being played in different territories. — Reuters

Dembele needs to improve his attitude: Rivaldo

BARCELONA: Barcelona winger Ousmane Dembele needs to improve his attitude and focus on being more professional even if he does want to leave the La Liga leaders, the club's former championship winning player Rivaldo has said.

Dembele, who joined Barcelona in August 2017 for 105 million euros (\$119.45 million), suffered injury problems in his first year and this season has been criticised for his behaviour, including turning up late to training and events.

Media reports have linked the 21-year-old with a move away from the Nou Camp during next month's transfer window. Brazilian Rivaldo, who played for Barca for five years from 1997 and is regarded as one of the most skilful attackers of his generation, said there was no doubting the Frenchman's talents.

Dembele has only scored 12 goals for Barca but several of those have been important strikes in the league, the Spanish Super Cup and the Champions League. "Ousmane Dembele's situation at Barcelona is upsetting because he's already shown that he can play very well, score goals and be an important member of the team," Rivaldo, who won the World Cup with Brazil in 2002, told Betfair.

"He just needs to focus on being a little more professional and to stop being late for training sessions. "This is not the correct mentality for someone potentially trying to leave Barcelona. It's always strange to hear that someone might want to leave a big club in this way.

"If he wants to leave, he must prove his value by playing well and not missing training sessions to



recover his credibility as a professional. That will generate interest from other clubs. If he doesn't change, he is hurting himself more than the club."

Reports in the Spanish media said that Dembele arrived two hours late for training on Sunday after Barca's 4-0 league win over Espanyol the previous evening.

He may get a chance at redemption later on Tuesday when Barcelona take on Tottenham Hotspur in Group B of the Champions League. Ernesto Valverde's side have already qualified for the last 16 as group winners ahead of the final matchday, but Rivaldo said that his former team should be wary of Spurs who need a win to guarantee a place in the next round.

"With Barcelona already through to the knockout stages, and with the added possibility of them rotating their team, Spurs will have a bigger chance to upset

Live		
Matches on TV		
(Local Timings)		
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE		
FC Viktoria Plzen v AS Roma	beIN SPORTS HD 3	20:55
Real Madrid CF v CSKA Moscow.	beIN SPORTS HD 1	20:55
Ajax Amsterdam v Bayern Munic	beIN SPORTS HD 3	23:00
SL Benfica v AEK Athens	beIN SPORTS HD 5	23:00
BSC Young Boys v Juventus FC	beIN SPORTS HD 4	23:00
Manchester City v TSG 1899 Hoffenheim	beIN SPORTS HD 2	3:00
Shakhtar Donetsk v Olympique Lyonnais	beIN SPORTS HD 6	3:00
Valencia C.F v Manchester United	beIN SPORTS HD	3:00

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BOSTON: Robert Williams #44 of the Boston Celtics blocks the ball against the New Orleans Pelicans on Monday at the TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

Celtics dump Pelicans with 6th straight win

James wins final duel with Wade as Lakers roll on

BOSTON: Marcus Morris and Jayson Tatum combined to score 52 points as the short-handed Boston Celtics won their sixth game in a row by defeating the visiting New Orleans Pelicans 113-100 on Monday night. Morris scored 31 points and Tatum added 21 to lead the way while five Celtics sat out the game because of injury or illness, including Al Horford (knee), Kyrie Irving (shoulder) and Gordon Hayward (illness). Jaylen Brown scored 19, Semi Ojeleye had 11 and Terry Rozier added 10 for the Celtics. Despite the absences, the Boston reserves outscored their New Orleans counterparts 41-21. Anthony Davis led New Orleans with 41 points, and Julius Randle chipped in 20 points and 11 rebounds. E'Twaun Moore sat out because of a calf injury and Nikola Mirotic did not play in the second half because of an ankle injury.

76ERS 116, PISTONS 102
Joel Embiid scored 24 points, and Philadelphia beat visiting Detroit despite losing Jimmy Butler in the first quarter due to a strained groin.
Ben Simmons added 18 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, Furkan Korkmaz contributed a career-high 18 points, and T.J. McConnell had 14 for the Sixers, who improved to 14-1 at home. Luke Kennard scored a career-high 28 points while Andre Drummond added 21 points and 17 rebounds for the Pistons, who have dropped five in a row. Reggie Jackson contributed 15 points and seven assists.

LAKERS 108, HEAT 105
Kyle Kuzma scored 33 points, and LeBron James added 28 points, nine rebounds and 12 assists as Los Angeles held off visiting Miami for its sixth victory in seven games. In his final game at Los Angeles, and his final matchup against former teammate James, Dwyane Wade produced 15 points and 10 assists Monday after collecting 25 points Saturday in the Heat's road win over the Los Angeles Clippers. Wade, who is retiring after the season, didn't score his first points until five minutes remained in the third quarter. He ended the night 0-for-7 from 3-point range. Justise Winslow led the Heat with 28 points.

WARRIORS 116, TIMBERWOLVES 108
Draymond Green returned from an 11-game absence with a solid all-around performance, and Stephen Curry led a barrage from 3-point range with a game-high 38 points, lifting Golden State past Minnesota in Oakland, Calif. Green, who had seen the Warriors go just 6-5 while he recovered from a bruised toe, contributed seven points, 10 rebounds and seven assists to Golden State's fourth straight win. Klay Thompson finished with 26 points and Kevin Durant had 22 for the Warriors. Karl-Anthony Towns paced Minnesota with 31 points and a game-high 11 rebounds. Derrick Rose contributed 21 points and Andrew Wiggins had 20.

THUNDER 122, JAZZ 113
Paul George scored 31 points and Russell Westbrook

produced his third consecutive triple-double as Oklahoma City beat visiting Utah. It was the first meeting between the teams since the Jazz's first-round playoff series win over Oklahoma City last season. The win was the 17th in the past 21 games for the Thunder. The Jazz took their second consecutive loss after wins in four of the previous five games. Westbrook finished with 12 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists. He was just 4 of 18 from the floor, missing all five of his 3-point tries. Dennis Schroder added 23 points off the bench and Steven Adams scored 22 for Oklahoma City. The Jazz got 19 points from Donovan Mitchell.

CLIPPERS 123, SUNS 119 (OT)
Tobias Harris had 33 points and eight rebounds, and Los Angeles ended a two-game losing streak with an overtime win at Phoenix. Danilo Gallinari scored 25 points and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 16 for the Clippers. Deandre Ayton contributed 20 points and 12 rebounds, and Richaun Holmes (19), Mikal Bridges (19) and Josh Jackson (18) all scored their season highs for the Suns, who have lost nine straight.

BUCKS 108, CAVALIERS 92
Eric Bledsoe had 20 points, 12 rebounds and five assists to lead Milwaukee past visiting Cleveland. Malcolm Brogdon added 18 points, five rebounds and five assists for the Bucks. Khris Middleton chipped in with 16 for Milwaukee, which played without Giannis

Antetokounmpo (sore neck).
Larry Nance Jr. led the Cavaliers with 16 points, and rookie Collin Sexton added 15.

MAVERICKS 101, MAGIC 76
Dallas made it 10 home wins in a row, cruising to a wire-to-wire victory over Orlando. Harrison Barnes led Dallas with 19 points, hitting five 3-pointers. Rookie Jalen Brunson contributed a career-high 17 points on 7-of-9 shooting, plus four assists and a steal in 32 minutes. Dwight Powell led Dallas' bench effort with 16 points. The Magic's only offensive threat was Jonathon Simmons, who scored 18 points.

KINGS 108, BULLS 89
De'Aaron Fox recorded 25 points, six assists and four steals to help Sacramento notch a victory at Chicago. Bogdan Bogdanovic and Marvin Bagley III each added 16 points for the Kings, who won for the fourth time in the past five games. Zach LaVine scored 19 points and Lauri Markkanen added 13 for the Bulls, who have lost nine of their past 10 games. Chicago scored just 33 second-half points on 12-for-34 shooting.
The Bulls' latest setback comes in the wake of deep dissension from the team less than one week after Jim Boylen became coach. Chicago lost by a franchise-worst 56 points to the Celtics on Saturday, and Boylen called for a Sunday practice, but players pushed back and a meeting was held instead. — Reuters



Raheem Sterling

Guardiola praises incredible Sterling for confronting racism

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola has praised Manchester City star Raheem Sterling for refusing to be intimidated by the menace of racism in football.
Sterling endured alleged racial abuse from a Chelsea fan during City's 2-0 defeat at Stamford Bridge on Saturday.
The 24-year-old was targeted by the supporter while he was standing near fans on the touchline.
Sterling appeared to laugh off the shocking incident at the time, but the abuse has drawn widespread condemnation amid fears the sport is being dragged back to the dark ages of the 1970s and 1980s when racism was rife. The England winger later accused the media of fuelling racism in the way it reports certain stories

about black players.
And former England assistant coach Gary Neville revealed this week that Sterling complained during Euro 2016 of constant criticism from fans that carried racist undertones.
Speaking for the first time since the Chelsea incident, City manager Guardiola backed Sterling and hailed his decision to speak out on the controversy.
"I was concerned with what happened but he made a statement on Instagram and was quite clear about his thoughts," Guardiola told reporters yesterday.
"He's an incredible person, an incredible human being. "It's tough in the 21st century to still be in this position, to have problems with diversity. We have to be better, everyone."
Guardiola believes racism is a deep problem in society, not just football, and insisted more must be done to combat it. "It's everywhere, racism is everywhere. People focus on football but it's not just in football. You'd think in football we'd be safe but racism is everywhere," he said.
"What happens today - how we treat immigrants and refugees, when once in our lives our grandfathers were refugees. It's everywhere. That's why we have to

fight every day. "We have to fight for human rights to make a better society for the future. Today it's dangerous, not just in England, all across Europe."
"The message for the politicians is for them to be tough on human rights and we have to defend democracy in the best way."
Former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss Guardiola also pointed out the media has a crucial role to play in keeping racism in check.
"Today the real power is the media, not politicians, not the governments. It's the media," he said.
The Metropolitan Police have launched an investigation into the Stamford Bridge incident, while Chelsea have suspended four supporters.
"I appreciate what Chelsea did," Guardiola said. "If it happened in my club we should do the same."
Guardiola, whose side host Hoffenheim in the Champions League today, made it clear comments about players should be restricted to performances on the field rather than straying into foul abuse.
"Hopefully the criticism is when he plays s***, he plays bad. That would be perfect. Everyone is exposed to that - the managers, the players, everyone around the world," he said. — AFP