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6 Sri Lanka reinstates ousted PM, ending power struggle



25 Badminton gold at last for Sindhu, Shi stuns Momota



28 Sub Shaqiri strikes twice as Liverpool see off Man Utd



Nations agree global climate pact rules, but seen as weak

Marathon talks clouded by political divisions

Zain KSA to save \$453m with telecom agreement

Deal makes significant impact on P & L

RIYADH/KUWAIT: Zain Saudi Arabia (Zain KSA) has signed an agreement with the kingdom's Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), and Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) to consolidate the annual royalty fee for commercial service, reducing the tariff from 15 percent to 10 percent of net revenues retrospectively, commencing Jan 1, 2018.

Additionally, the agreement includes the settlement of disputed amounts related to the payment of annual royalty fees by Zain KSA to the CITC for the nine-year period between 2009 and 2017. The expected financial impact of this settlement is expected to



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi reach SAR 1.7 billion (\$453 million) over the next three years. (See Page 11)

KATOWICE, Poland: Nations yesterday struck a deal to breathe life into the landmark 2015 Paris climate treaty after marathon UN talks that failed to match the ambition the world's most vulnerable countries need to avert dangerous global warming. Delegates from nearly 200 states finalized a common rule book designed to deliver the Paris goals of limiting global temperature rises to well below two degrees Celsius. "Putting together the Paris agreement work program is a big responsibility," said COP24 president Michal Kurtyka as he gavelled through the deal after talks in Poland that ran deep into overtime. "It has been a long road. We did our best to leave no one behind."

But states already dealing with devastating floods, droughts and extreme weather made worse by climate change said the package agreed in the mining city of Katowice lacked the bold ambition to cut emissions the world needed. Egyptian ambassador Wael Aboulmagd, chair of the developing nations G77 plus China negotiating bloc, said the rule book saw the "urgent adaptation needs of developing countries relegated to a second-class status." Executive director of Greenpeace Jennifer Morgan said: "We continue to witness an irresponsible divide between the vulnerable



KATOWICE, Poland: COP24 president Michal Kurtyka jumps at the end of the final session of the COP24 summit on climate change on Saturday. — AFP

island states and impoverished countries pitted against those who would block climate action or who are immorally failing to act fast enough." The final decision text was repeatedly

delayed as negotiators sought guidelines that could ward off the worst threats posed by the heating planet while protecting the economies of rich and poor nations alike. Continued on Page 24

News in brief

Qatar to invest \$20bn in US

DOHA: Energy-rich Qatar said yesterday it plans to invest more than \$20 billion in the US energy sector over the next five years. Saad Al-Kaabi, minister of state for energy affairs and CEO of Qatar Petroleum, told a conference the Gulf state is looking to invest in US oil and gas sectors as well as unconventional resources. He said Qatar's main target was to revive the multibillion-dollar Golden Pass LNG terminal in Texas. Qatar Petroleum yesterday signed a deal with Italy's Eni to acquire 35 percent in three offshore oil blocks in Mexico in the second major Qatari investment in the North American country this year. — AFP

Frenzy as cash rains in HK

HONG KONG: A hail of banknotes rained down onto the streets of a working-class neighborhood in Hong Kong, sending bystanders into a frenzy. Bills worth thousands of Hong Kong dollars were seen fluttering to the ground from the top of a building, as people tried to grab the falling cash and others filmed the scene on their smartphones. A man who runs a cryptocurrency Facebook page live-streamed the prank Saturday in the Sham Shui Po district. Wong Ching-kit said in a Facebook post that he wanted to "help the poor by robbing the rich". But the 24-year-old was arrested yesterday for causing disorder in a public place, after he drove back to the neighborhood in his Lamborghini. — AFP

Bahrain defends Aussie move, but Israel displeased

DUBAI: The foreign minister of US ally Bahrain has defended Australia's formal recognition of West Jerusalem as Israel's capital, saying the move would not affect a future Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Australia's government announced the decision on Saturday, reversing decades of Middle East policy, but said it would not immediately move its embassy there. The United States in May opened its embassy in Jerusalem.

The Arab League had issued a statement criticizing the Australian decision as "blatantly biased towards the positions and policies of the Israeli occupation". But Bahraini minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa described the statement as "mere rhetoric and irresponsible". "Australia's stance does not impact the legitimate Palestinian demands, first among them being East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, and it does not contradict the Arab Peace Initiative," he tweeted on Saturday. Continued on Page 24

MP urges vote to scrap price hikes; row persists over early retirement

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani yesterday called on the National Assembly to vote urgently on two draft laws that call to scrap hikes in fuel and power prices in addition to banning any future increases without the prior approval of the Assembly. Adasani said the

two bills have been in the Assembly for almost two years and were approved by the concerned committee in April 2017 and as such should be voted by the Assembly.

He said the first draft law calls to cancel raises introduced by the government to fuel and electricity prices about two years ago after oil prices crashed. The increase in fuel prices including that of petrol was applied to Kuwaitis and expatriates as well but the 150 percent rise in electricity prices was applied only on expatriates, while citizens were spared. The second bill stipulates that no increases in the prices of public services and commodities can be introduced without the prior approval of the Assembly.

Meanwhile, controversy continued over the amended early retirement law which was approved in the first reading by the Assembly last week despite some opposition. MP Khalil Abul argued the law contains too many benefits for those willing to seek early retirement and accused opponents of the law of trying to provide

Cornerstone laid to rebuild iconic Mosul mosque

MOSUL: Iraqis yesterday laid the cornerstone in rebuilding Mosul's Al-Nuri mosque and leaning minaret, national emblems destroyed last year in the ferocious battle against the Islamic State group. The famed 12th century mosque and minaret, dubbed Al-Hadba or "the hunchback", hosted Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi's only public appearance as IS chief, when he declared a self-styled

"caliphate" after the jihadists swept into Mosul in 2014.

The structures were ravaged three years later in the final, most brutal stages of the months-long fight to rid Iraq's second city of IS. On Sunday, dozens of government officials, religious figures, United Nations representatives and European ambassadors gathered in the large square in front of the battered mosque to see the foundation laid. Abdullatif Al-Humaym, the head of Sunni Muslim endowments in Iraq, set down the stone in a simple ceremony. It bore a black Arabic inscription: "This cornerstone for the rebuilding and restoration of the Al-Hadba minaret and the Great Al-Nuri Mosque was laid on December 16, 2018."

Continued on Page 24



MOSUL, Iraq: A picture taken yesterday shows the cornerstone placed as part of a ceremony for the rebuilding of the Great Mosque of Al-Nuri and the "Al-Hadba" leaning minaret in Mosul's war-ravaged Old City. — AFP

Qatar unveils World Cup final stadium design

LUSAIL, Qatar: Qatar on Saturday revealed the design for the stadium that will in four years' time host the first ever World Cup finals game to be played in the Middle East. The 80,000-seat Lusail Stadium - also the venue for the 2022 World Cup final - was revealed in an elaborate ceremony attended by the country's ruler Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani and other dignitaries, including the United Nations' secretary-general, Antonio Guterres, Hassan Al-Thawadi,

the head of the country's World Cup organising body, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, called the unveiling a "significant milestone". "Every milestone for us is always important," he said. "The announcement of the design of the stadium is very, very important... it's the last stadium as well."

The Lusail Stadium is the eighth and final venue to be revealed for the Qatar World Cup. Designed by British architects Foster and Partners, the stadium is said to take its inspiration from Arab craftsmanship, said the committee. It also stands close to the site of the former home of Qatar's founder, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed bin Thani Al-Thani. The stadium sits in the completely new city of Lusail, a \$45 billion project located 15 km north of the capital Doha. Continued on Page 24



DOHA: A computer generated image of the Lusail stadium for the 2022 World Cup is seen during the unveiling of its design on Saturday. — AFP

Local

Amir, Crown Prince receive top officials at Bayan Palace

Prime Minister receives British Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa



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



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



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iraqi politician Dr Ayad Allawi.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with British Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Dr Ayad Allawi.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, furthermore, His Highness the Amir received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh

Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah who was accompanied by the visiting Iraqi politician Dr Ayad Allawi. The meeting was attended by Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince met with Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister for

Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. His Highness the Crown Prince then received Hawally Governor Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah.

In the meantime, His Highness the Prime Minister received at Bayan Palace, in the presence of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah, British Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt and his accompanying delegation. His Highness the Prime Minister also received Dr Allawi

and Iraqi writer Hassan Al-Alawi.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to President of Ethiopia Sahle-Work Zewde. His Highness the Amir expressed his sincere sorrow to President Zewde and the Ethiopian people over the recent death of former President Girma Woldegiorgis. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to the Ethiopian President. — KUNA

Ambassador in China hosts dinner for Amir's envoy

BEIJING: Kuwait's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China Samih Hayat hosted a dinner banquet yesterday in honor of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visiting envoy First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Sheikh Nasser had arrived in China on Saturday to deliver a written message from His Highness the Amir to Chinese President Xi Jinping on deepening bilateral cooperation and strengthening the strategic partnership between the two countries.

"The 'New Kuwait Vision 2035' and the Chinese 'Belt and Road' initiative are compatible with each other," Hayat said, adding that the two countries' leaders are ready to speed up their cooperation through implementing agreements and memorandums of understanding signed during the state visit to China by His Highness the Amir last July.



BEIJING: First Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends a dinner hosted by Kuwait's Ambassador to the People's Republic of China Samih Hayat. — KUNA

"Our bilateral relations with China are being strengthened day by day with conscious care, great interest and high-level and unrivaled communication between the two countries' leaders," he added. He said that the two countries have taken great and carefully-studied steps, as the visit of Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah to China comes in a timely and pivotal time, a matter which will push bilateral rela-

tions to a broader perspective and promote the integration of existing development strategies. The delegation accompanying Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah includes Ambassador Hayat, Executive Director of the Development of Silk City and Boubyan Island, Faisal Al-Madajj, Lulua Al-Na'ma, Sheikh Al-Anoud Ibrahim Al-Sabah, Abdulwahab Al-Rashid and Sheikh Jaber Fahad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

UNWG appreciates Kuwaiti women's charitable work

ROME: The United Nations Women Guild (UNWG) expressed appreciation to the charitable and voluntarily role played by Kuwaiti women in charitable work. This appreciation came during a charity market titled 'The Holiday Bazaar' and held at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarter in the Italian Capital Rome, with participation of Union members and the spouse of Kuwait's Ambassador to Rome Dr Sara Al-Rakian.

Kuwait's participation in this annual event represents a valuable contribution to the charitable effort of women diplomats in the world, said President of the International Women's Association Winy Amato. She stressed the symbolic and cultural importance of such initiatives and their positive impact on public awareness of the suffering of poor societies and promoting human values through fundraising. The main objective of holding such activities is assisting vulnerable groups, support mother and child care program around the world and funding charitable projects, Amato said.

The UN Women Guild funded more than 700 charitable projects around the world since its establishment four decades ago, this charity bazaar is the most important event of the year, where funds are raised from exhibits proceeds provided by the participants through selling ethnic dishes, artisan products, books, decorative works, and others, she clarified. In this regard, Kuwait's pavilion in the holidays bazaar managed to attract visitors from the UN and embassies in Rome, and collected more than \$15,000 fully allocated to finance the development projects of the Association.

President Winy Amato praised efforts spent by Dr Sara Al-Rakian and her contributions to the success of this initiative, describing her as an honorable example of the Kuwaiti diplomatic women. Meanwhile, Dr Arkian expressed her pride as being a part of UNWG, which



ROME: The spouse of Kuwaiti Ambassador to Italy Dr Sara Al-Rakian is seen with members of the United Nations Women Guild. — KUNA

played a significant role since its inception in 1948, in helping thousands of needy children and mothers around the world to receive the appreciation of the United Nations.

This charitable bazaar aims for enhancing friendship and mutual understanding between participants, Rakian added. She stressed on the important and strong role played by women inside their communities whether through their jobs or through other voluntarily initiatives, and fund raising activities. She thanked FOA for hosting such event, and the facilities it provided for UNWG. She stressed her keenness to participate in this successful charitable initiative, which reflects the keenness of Kuwaiti women to participate in such international forums following the footsteps of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the leader of humanitarian action in the world. — KUNA

Kuwait-British meetings contribute to furthering ties: Deputy Prime Minister



KUWAIT: British Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt (left) and Kuwait's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah shake hands after signing an agreement yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Meetings of the Kuwait-British Joint Steering Group contribute to furthering bilateral ties, a senior Kuwaiti official said yesterday. Holding the 13th meeting here signals keenness of both sides on having those meetings on a regular basis, said Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah in a statement to the press. He pointed out that the visit of British Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt comes within the framework of such close cooperation between the two friendly countries. This meeting, in particular, discussed the situations in Yemen and Syria, as well as the Arabian Gulf's relationship with Iran. An action plan was signed at the conclusion of the meeting. The Group holds biannual meetings, with the last one held in London last June.

Meanwhile, Minister Burt said that relations between the two countries have developed over many years and encompass a range of work from the United Kingdom and the State of Kuwait. "This represents the breadth of the wide relationship between us, as the UK and Kuwait next year will celebrate 120 years from the treaty of friendship. The occasion will be marked in a major way. This is a recognition of a friendship, which is

not only based in history, but is also contemporary," he said.

During the Group's meeting, the two sides agreed to beef up mutual official visits and reactivate all signed agreements, as well as address obstacles, should they exist, a Ministry statement said. The next group meeting will take place in London next year, according to the statement. Continued collaboration on trade, migration, security, defense, cyber security, aviation security, healthcare, science, education and culture was discussed. Both sides voiced content over the volume of military and defense cooperation through providing technical support for the Kuwaiti army in a bid to buttress its abilities and readiness, noted the statement.

Praising the level of educational cooperation, both sides noted the significance of having Kuwaiti students on various scholarships in the UK due to its renowned academic reputation. As for healthcare, both sides welcomed ongoing discussions to benefit from British expertise, especially in hospital management and medical training. The Kuwaiti side also lauded excellent services Kuwaiti patients receive at British medical facilities, the statement said. — KUNA

Local

Two businessmen remanded in custody over real estate fraud charges

State departments study labor market's needs by 2020

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The public prosecution remanded in custody two businessmen charged of selling bogus real estate to citizens inside and outside Kuwait. The prosecution said the two founded several companies and used them for real-estate fraud. The criminal court also ruled to keep a former football player in jail on charges of insulting III the Amir on Twitter. The defendant has denied those charges.

Meanwhile, the criminal court sentenced the former chairman of the police co-op society to 15 years in jail and seven Egyptian and Yemeni men to jail terms ranging between seven and 10 years for embezzling KD 1 million, and fined all the accused KD 1.680 million. In the meantime, the co-op's current chairman Maj Gen Mansour Al-Awadhi began reviewing contracts signed with several companies including for surveillance cameras, which has a value of over KD 100,000, while its actual cost is no more than KD 5,000. Awadhi will report to concerned authorities to investigate suspected violation of public funds.



Former co-op chief jailed for embezzlement

Labor market's needs

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh ordered the formation of a permanent committee to coordinate between Civil Service Commission (CSC), the Public Authority for Manpower, the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, the Central Statistics Bureau and other governmental monitoring bodies to handle public and private labor market's needs by 2020 in a way that matches the 'New Kuwait 2035' vision. The minister asked for a full study to be made by the end of the current fiscal year including offering more incentives to encourage citizens to work for the private sector, well-informed sources said.

The sources added that more focus would be on vocational and technical education for dropouts to provide technicians needed. The minister also stressed the importance of linking educational outputs with the actual needs of the labor market and integrating citizens with special needs in mainstream jobs. Meanwhile, CSC sources said Sabeeh met CSC

officials to resolve employment problems and enforce the replacement of expats with citizens, namely in advisory positions, who could be replaced by retired citizens.

Foreign students

Minister of Education Hamed Al-Azmi stressed that Kuwait University (KU) is still the only government university in Kuwait and that this compels it to accept all students matching admission conditions, which is usually far beyond its capacity. Azmi explained that according to KU's admission policy, 90 percent of admitted students are Kuwaitis and those who receive similar treatment, and only 10 percent are non-Kuwaitis, which reduces KU's rankings in terms of serving foreign students. Azmi noted that a committee had been formed in 2015 and reformed in 2017 to boost Kuwait University's international ranking and that a special plan was set and included in KU's strategy for the years 2018-2022.

Bachelors

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Hossam Al-Roumi said that the total number of complaints filed concerning bachelors residing in private residential areas is 117, including 18 in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, 15 in Ahmadi, 31 in Jahra, four in Hawally and 76 in Farwaniya.

suspect was arrested after confessing he received the money and said he had spent it.

Car stolen

A citizen lost his car and wallet while in a Farwaniya diwnaiya. He filed a complaint but did not accuse anyone. He told police he had his wallet and car key next to him, but after he returned from the toilet, he noticed the key and wallet were missing. When he went out, he discovered the car had disappeared, Al-Rai reported.

Fight

Three men, two Egyptians and a Bangladeshi, beat a man and injured his head following a money-related dispute. The victim lodged a complaint claiming he was beaten with a thick stick, and gave the address of the three assailants to police, who arrested them, reported Al-Rai.

Challenges, high demand behind soaring fish prices: Union

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Responding to recent rumors about fishermen's activities, Kuwait Fishermen Union issued a statement to refute those allegations, and stressing its keenness on the quality and price of local products. The union also attributed soaring fish prices to the challenges fishermen face as well as the high demand for local fish, in addition to the recent local fishing and shrimping bans while reducing fisheries by 50 percent. The statement also stressed that local fish is cheaper than imported and frozen ones and that their taste and freshness are incomparable. The statement added that if the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) changes the fish auction timing to be held after Isha prayers instead of after Fajr prayers, prices would drop by 30 percent.

In other news, Kuwaiti Farmers Union's Chairman Abdullah Al-Dammak said the problem of power outages in Abdali and Wafra farms will be resolved soon, adding that the union recently met Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) assistant undersecretary for power grids affairs Mutlaq Nayef Al-Otaibi, who promised to resolve the problem by the beginning of the summer. Dammak added that Otaibi promised to deploy 100 MEW engineers and technicians to handle the problems mainly resulting from tall trees that intermingle with power towers. He also noted that one of the problems facing technicians is the absence of farm owners on their farms except on weekends, since farm workers do not usually allow them in during other times.

Legalese

Children's rights on social media



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

A few months ago I met up with a friend of mine who is famous - or should I say popular - on Instagram. She is known for her writings, inspiring photos and positive messages, and she was telling me why she chose not to post any pictures of her daughter. She was telling me about how one famous person kept posting photos of their younger sister only to regret it later as the sister kept being stopped for photos while out shopping.

My friend made the decision after a lot of research on the topic and readings, and decided it was best for her daughter not to post her photos, as her daughter did not have a say on whether she would like to be famous or not in Kuwait. This got me thinking on how important it is to have a law to help parents with these choices.

The ministry of justice, public prosecution and juvenile prosecution have established guidelines for parents, especially as it can be tough for parents to deal with social media and to figure out what is really best for their children, especially when these parents have stable jobs because of social media.

Beneficial or not

Question: Who decides what is and is not beneficial? And what about the legal ramifications?

Fajer: This will be up to the prosecution to decide on what is beneficial or not to both the child and the community. An example was given of promoting charity work or promoting an educational product or service. The legal punishments were not highlighted in the guidelines, as these punishments will be according to other laws that protect children. From last week, many parents have been called in for investigations by the public prosecution office.

Already famous

Question: What about children that are famous already, like child actors? Also, there are a lot of influencers who have accounts for their kids that are managed by them. What about those accounts?

Fajer: The guidelines clearly state that children with talents can share those talents, even if that means gaining fame (article 8), but there are a lot of restrictions stated in the other articles, such as:

It is not permitted to publish images of children or produce such images of children or share such images of children that are against the norms of society. For example, making children dress or apply makeup that is not appropriate for their age.

Children cannot be used for adults to gain fame or monetary benefits.

Children cannot be put through any emotional abuse by any images that may humiliate them.

Comments that are negative towards the child must be deleted.

Question: If I see Instagram accounts of children, where can I report them?

Fajer: For now you can report such accounts to both Instagram and the juvenile prosecution.

For questions or queries, please email us at info@tl-legal.com.

Municipality targets roaming vendors

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said its emergency team carried out a campaign against roaming vendors in order to keep them out of open yards, especially in front of embassies. Head of the team Meshaal Al-Malek said the campaign resulted in confiscating and destroying five tons of foodstuff. The vendors were sent to concerned authorities.

Drills

The coastguard will carry out live ammunition exercises on Dec 17-18 from 8 am until 2 pm, and warned sea goers against approaching the area, adding marine patrols will prevent anyone trying to approach the area to ensure the safety of everyone.

A drunk man went berserk after he lost control over his vehicle at a gas station and hit a gas pump, then attacked workers, before others were able to catch him. The Indian man, who was driving around while drinking, entered the station and hit the pump, then started blaming workers for the incident. Police arrested him and he faces several charges.

Theft

An Egyptian man stole KD 3,000 which he was supposed to hand over to his friend's family in Egypt, but kept it for himself. When his friend went to his house and confronted him, he denied receiving any money and kicked his friend out, Al-Rai reported. The victim lodged a complaint and attached a transfer receipt to it. The

Kuwait assures World Bank of support over common aims

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and Industry said yesterday that it stands ready and able to cooperate with the World Bank Group (WBG) to ensure that common economic development goals come to fruition. Kuwait's Chamber of Commerce and the WBG have launched several joint initiatives, its chairman Ali Al-Ghanem said in a statement after meeting the international organization's resident representative in Kuwait Ghassan Al-Khouja. The WBG has enlisted Kuwait's aid to achieve its main goal of ridding the world of poverty, in addition to strengthening the economies of some of the world's most underdeveloped nations, Khouja said. On a related note, he said Kuwait's office at the WBG will soon celebrate the decennial anniversary of its inception. —KUNA

Ministry to provide points to charge electric cars

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Electricity and Water began cooperation with Public Authority for Industry and a car company to prepare the regulations that must be implemented in order to provide points to charge electric cars within the main ministry's perimeter walls, Assistant Undersecretary for Administrative Affairs Mohammad Al-Sharhan said, adding that the ministry plans to use these cars for its employees.

Meanwhile, informed sources said the government has not decided so far the implementation of the second part of Cabinet decision 32/2016 to restructure oil prices. The Cabinet asked the committee for restudying various types of subsidies given by the state to review fuel prices every three months to be at par with global prices. Sources said Kuwait is the last country in GCC to restructure gas prices, while comparative figures indicate that prices in Kuwait remain the lowest even after the adjustments. — Al-Anbaa

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Birds perched on a tree trunk at a park in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Kuwait Airways inaugurates premium lounge at T4 building

KAC-Incheon coordination to make T4 a role model for modern airport administrations

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) inaugurated yesterday the new state-of-the-art Bayan lounge at the Terminal 4 (T4) building, which is dedicated exclusively to first and business class passengers. The opening was held in presence of Directorate General of Civil Aviation's Chairman Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

KAC is keen on enhancing Kuwait International Airport, keeping up with latest developments, and preserving Kuwait's well-regarded international reputation, Sheikh Salman said in a statement. He expressed his gratitude to KAC and all its staff for making a quantum leap in the national carrier's services to travelers, wishing the Corporation further progress and development.

Meanwhile, KAC's Chairman Yousef Al-Jassem stated that opening the new premium lounge is one of the corporation's latest accomplishments and part of its efforts to enhance its various services. The highly efficient lounge

was constructed and completed within just 70 days, Jassem noted, adding the project was implemented in coordination with the South Korean-based Incheon International Airport Corporation.

The KAC-Incheon coordination would attain DGCA's goals in making T4 building a role model for modern airport administrations, he said. Such significant achievements are part of implementing the directions of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, and His Highness

the Prime Minister to swiftly complete and achieve all services, added the executive official. Furthermore, he affirmed KAC's continued keenness to improve its services and keep up with the latest aviation inflight entertainment. — KUNA



Completed within 70 days



KUWAIT: Officials inaugurate the new Bayan lounge at the T4 building yesterday. — KUNA

Kuwait's KAFO partakes in local charitable summit

KUWAIT: Kuwait Achievers for Future Opportunities (KAFO), an Amiri Diwan-backed project, participated in the 'Attah Heb' (Give a Gift) Summit on December 5-6 at Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC) as part of its contributions to the Kuwait Vision 2035 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) 2030, said a statement yesterday. A KAFO statement said that the summit, held under Kuwaiti and



UN supervision, aimed at unifying the youth's efforts towards contributing to Kuwait's own development plans. The KAFO team, partaking in the event, introduced the attendees to the project's KAFO application and Social Media accounts. KAFO is the premier platform that allows youth to easily communicate with each other and cooperate to contribute to the development of Kuwait. — KUNA



A seminar held as part of the summit.

Non-oil exports up to 25.2% in Nov: Ministry

KUWAIT: Kuwait's non-oil exports went up to 25.2 percent in November compared to November 2017, Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry said yesterday. Total exports were about KD 13.4 million (approximately \$44 million) during November compared to KD 7.9 million (around \$26 million) November 2017, the ministry said in a press statement.

Arab countries accounted for 83 percent of Kuwait's total exports with KD 11.1 million (about \$36.4 million). The rest of the world accounted for 17 percent with KD 2.2 million (about \$7.2 million). Qatar was the highest ranked coun-

try to import at KD 4.3 million (approximately \$14 million), after that Saudi Arabia with KD 2.6 million (about \$8.5 million). Next is Iraq at KD 1 million (around \$3.2 million), then Jordan with KD 733,000 (about \$2.4 million), followed by Lebanon with KD 639,000 (approximately \$2 million), then Morocco with a value of KD 9,300 (about \$30,000). Food, utensils, furniture, tents, livestock and material such as wool, metal doors, and glass fibers were most of the exports to Arab countries.

With regards to Kuwaiti exports to non-Arab countries, Italy was the largest importer with KD 1.6 million (around \$2.5 million), then Portugal with KD 187,000 (about \$614,000), after that France with KD 127,000 (about \$417,000) and Spain with KD 95,000 (approximately \$312,000). Kuwait also exported to Greece, Poland, Tanzania, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Guinea and Benin, worth overall KD 142,000 (about \$466,000). Polyethylene, lye, silicon, plastic granules, sweets and chicken were mostly exports to non-Arab countries. — KUNA

KNPC eyes projects worth \$5.2 billion in next five years

KUWAIT: The total value of projects set to be carried out by Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) in the next five years hits around \$5.2 billion, its CEO Mohammad Al-Mutairi said yesterday. The aforementioned value excludes expenses for the company's clean fuels project, which will push that figure up to \$25 billion by the year 2040, he said on the sidelines of a ceremony to mark a decade after KNPC launched its sustainability program. He labeled Kuwait's planned Dibdibah solar power plant as among the company's marquee projects, with 70 percent of expenses covered by foreign funds and 30 percent coming from domestic sources.

Mutairi put a two-year timeframe on the project, which is likely to boost Kuwait's renewable energy to 160,000 barrels per day, citing plans to build a new refinery in the south of the country. "We were the first company in the Gulf region to publish a report over sustainability," he revealed, saying that KNPC has set a benchmark in the oil and gas industries. Sustainability reports help companies assess their level of commitment to legal, environmental and economic standards. KNPC's Managing Director of Support Services Nasser Al-Shamma explained. He went on to say that several companies have started producing sustainability reports as well, following in KNPC's footsteps. — KUNA



KNPC



KUWAIT: Director of production in the Arabian horse center 'Bait Al-Arab' Abdulaziz Al-Attwai. — KUNA photos



The owner of Al-Kenouz (treasures) Arabian Horse Stable Saleh Al-Atwai.



A worker with a horse at Al-Kenouz Arabian Horse Stable.

The Arabian horse: A treasure of local, international appeal

KUWAIT: The Arabian horse is known for its local, regional, and international appeal, making it one of the most sought after breeds globally. The Arabian horse played an important role in the history of the Arab and Muslim civilizations with various documents, books, and pieces of poetry praising its elegance, beauty, and worthiness in the battlefield, sport arenas, and travel paths. Speaking on the importance of the Arabian horse, head of records at the Kuwaiti Arabian horse center Bait Al-Arab (the house of Arabs) Abdullah Al-Barhi said that the Arabian horse still maintained its presence as one of the most important breeds of horse in the world.

Arabs and orientalist in the past knew that this breed was of excellent quality and people nowadays are keen on devising ways to keep the progeny pure, said Barhi. In the 1970s, World Arabian Horse Organization (WAHO)

was established to protect this breed and maintain its excellence, revealed Al-Barhi who added that in 2018, the organization's member states numbered at 80 countries. In Kuwait, the number of pure Arabian horses was at 26 horses in 1996, he indicated, adding that after 20 years later, the number jumped to around 10,000 horses this year with over 1,700 owners.

Meanwhile, owner of Al-Kenouz (treasures) Arabian Horse Stable Saleh Al-Atwai and his colleague Abdulaziz Al-Attwai both said that the process of breeding Arabian horses was meticulous, with horse owners making sure that it was done between pure breeds. There are five main breeds of Arabian horses 'Al-Kahailan', 'Al-Saqlawi', 'Al-Hadban', 'Al-Dahman', and 'Al-Aiban', the stable owners said, revealing that the US was the biggest breeder of Arabian horses with 12,000 horses annually. — KUNA



A stallion at Al-Kenouz Arabian Horse Stable.



A horse at Al-Kenouz Arabian Horse Stable.



An Egyptian stud at Al-Kenouz Arabian Horse Stable.

TREASURED MOMENTS

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North Cyprus journalist takes on mighty Erdogan

Shock waves of #MeToo reach the City of London

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COLOMBO: Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena (right) hands over documents to Ranil Wickremesinghe as he is reappointed as prime minister in Colombo. — AFP

Sri Lanka president reinstates ousted PM

Sirisena berates Wickremesinghe and his supporters

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's president yesterday reappointed as prime minister the same man he sacked from the job nearly two months ago, ending a power struggle that paralyzed the island nation. Ranil Wickremesinghe, whose shock dismissal in late October threw Sri Lanka into an unprecedented constitutional crisis, was sworn in at a closed-door ceremony in the president's office in Colombo. The 69-year-old had refused to step aside since being dumped and replaced by controversial strongman Mahinda Rajapakse - leaving the country with two men claiming the premiership and no functioning government.

The ousted premier had long asserted his dismissal was illegal, a view supported by Sri Lanka's parliament which six times voted against Rajapakse's claim to rule during tumultuous sessions that erupted into brawls. President Maithripala Sirisena had refused to bow to pressure as the country drifted, declaring he would never reappoint Wickremesinghe and deriding his once-ally in public speeches as their alliance imploded.

The acrimony between the two was underscored yes-

terday when Sirisena berated Wickremesinghe and his supporters at length following the swearing-in, one legislator present said. After the frosty reception, which Sirisena



Power struggle paralyzed the island nation

closed to the press, the reinstated prime minister thanked parliament and "all those who campaigned to restore democracy". "The first priority is to restore normality," he said in a brief address to the nation. "The work we initiated

had been brought to a standstill." There was no immediate reaction from Sirisena or Rajapakse, who stood down Saturday. But Namal Rajapakse, his son and also a legislator, publicly extended his congratulations to Wickremesinghe. India, which like the United States and others in the global community urged the warring factions to resolve their differences, welcomed an end to hostilities. "This is a reflection of the maturity demonstrated by all political forces, and also of the resilience of Sri Lankan democracy and its institutions," India's foreign ministry spokesman said yesterday. Wickremesinghe said he will form a cabinet in the coming days. Officials said priority will be given to the 2019 budget - without which Sri Lanka risks government shutdown and defaulting on its sizeable foreign debt.

Bitter end

Sirisena's resistance became untenable after the country's highest court last week ruled that he acted outside the constitution when he dissolved parliament on November 9

and called early elections. Some factions within Sri Lanka's parliament have pushed for Sirisena to be investigated - and possibly impeached-for orchestrating what they say was a coup. Rajapakse, who Sirisena appointed in a sudden, late-night oath-taking ceremony, pressed ahead forming a purported government and naming a cabinet even as parliament cut off state funds to his office. The Supreme Court confirmed Rajapakse could not exercise the powers of a prime minister until he proved his legitimacy-which without enough support in parliament was impossible. On Saturday Rajapakse - who presided over the bloody end to Sri Lanka's civil war in 2009 - backed down, signaling the standoff had come to a bitter close. However, the strongman, whose past administrations were accused of gross rights abuses and whose family still holds considerable sway in Sri Lanka, promised to make a comeback at local elections next year. "There is no doubt at all that the people who stood by us since 2015 (when he lost the presidential election) will continue to support us in the future as well," he said addressing his close associates. — AFP

Russia fumes as Ukraine creates its own church

KIEV: A historic council of Orthodox bishops in Kiev has created a new Ukrainian church independent from Russia, President Petro Poroshenko announced yesterday. The announcement came after Ukrainian priests held a historic synod in Kiev's 11th-century Saint Sophia Cathedral to work towards establishing an Orthodox Church independent from Moscow. "It happened," Poroshenko told a crowd awaiting the council's decision in central Kiev. He also announced the council had chosen the head of the new church: 39-year-old Metropolitan Yepifaniy, whose secular name is Sergiy Dumenko.

"I would like to call on all our brothers, bishops and all believers to the newly created united Ukrainian Orthodox Church," Yepifaniy told the crowd outside the cathedral. "The doors of our church are open to all." Poroshenko said the event will "go down in history" as the day Ukraine "finally received (its) independence from Russia". Earlier, he addressed the synod of bishops, saying Kiev's national security depends on "spiritual independence" from Moscow. The Ukrainian leader, who has made an independent Church a campaign pledge ahead of an unpredictable election next year, told the bishops that the state "did everything it could" towards the creation of

the church. But he also said that those wishing to remain loyal to the Russian Orthodox church could do so. "I guarantee that the government will respect the choice of those" remaining faithful to the Moscow patriarchate, and "protect" those preferring to break away, Poroshenko said. Several thousand Ukrainians had rallied outside the cathedral throughout the day, awaiting the synod's decision. "The people have been waiting for this. Our Ukrainian church should finally be independent from Moscow," 65-year-old Mykhaylo Khalepyk, who travelled to Kiev from the southern Kherson region said.

Vitaliya Popovych, also at the rally, said she hoped Ukraine would have a new independent church "that will have a pro-state position". Several in the crowd said local churches across the country had encouraged parishioners to travel to the capital, even offering free transport. Ties between Russia and Ukraine have broken down since Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014 following a pro-Western uprising in Kiev. This year, those tensions spilled over into the religious arena.

The synod sought to realize a landmark decision by Istanbul-based Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I to recognize Ukraine's independence from the Russian Orthodox Church. The ruling in October sparked fury in Moscow, which has overseen the Ukrainian branch of Orthodoxy for the last 332 years. It led the Russian Orthodox Church to cut all ties with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The synod aimed to unite various branches of the Orthodox church in Ukraine into a single independent body. — AFP

China reform pioneer, leads tech revolution

SHENZHEN: The southern city of Shenzhen is the symbol of the transformative reforms launched by China 40 years ago: former fishing villages that morphed into a global manufacturing hub. Today Shenzhen is again at the heart of a new policy aimed at turning China into a hi-tech innovator and shed its reputation as an assembly line for foreign companies or-worse-an imitator.

Modern skyscrapers housing corporations and ambitious startups tower over the megacity of 13 million people-among them is Wu Yebin, 35, who runs his own tech firm from his 35th floor office. His own story mirrors those of countless others who have risen from modest backgrounds following the reforms spearheaded by late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, which the Communist Party ratified on December 18, 1978. The son of poor farmers, Wu arrived in the city in 2005 and over the years he assembled devices similar to Apple's iPad or MacBook, joining Shenzhen's army of people making "shanzhai"-creative knock-offs of foreign electronics affordable for local population.

"Germany, the United States, Japan, South Korea... All developed countries have done this to develop their manufacturing industry," Wu said. "You have to do that to gain experience." While this economic model used to be "very popular, it is no longer viable today," he said. He now leads his own electronics firm, MeegoPad, which boasts an annual turnover



SHENZHEN: Photo shows a couple looking at a mobile phone in Shenzhen in China's Guangdong province. — AFP

of \$28 million making products such as miniature PCs. "We are now very attached to intellectual property and patents," Wu said.

'Made in China 2025'

Shenzhen, which lived off fishing and rice paddies, became a testing ground for Deng's reforms when it was designated as the country's first Special Economic Zone in 1980. It grew into a massive manufacturing centre, with factories churning out gadgets, computers and phones for foreign firms, which today include Apple and Samsung. Today China's own global corporations, such as telecom company Huawei and internet giant Tencent, have made Shenzhen their headquarters and the city of tens of thousands of factories is dubbed the "Silicon Valley of Hardware".

The metropolis is now seeking to reinvent itself as the home of Chinese innovation, in line with Beijing's "Made in China 2025" plan to dominate key hi-tech industries such as robotics, electric vehicles and artificial intelligence. "China is becoming a world leader in this field," Wu said. "Shenzhen is turning into a meeting point for creative engineers from around the world." Now talent from abroad is flocking to Shenzhen.

Meng Jie, who is French and in his 30s, left California's Silicon Valley in 2017 to create Maybe, a company that makes smart speakers that help people learn Mandarin. "Silicon Valley is still way ahead in artificial intelligence. But you can find the electronic or mechanical component you need three times faster in Shenzhen," Meng said. — AFP

International

North Cyprus journalist takes on Turkey's mighty Erdogan

Jail time, angry mobs, assassination - editor pays a price

NICOSIA: Jail time, angry mobs and assassination attempts - editor Sener Levent has paid a price for challenging Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and authorities in breakaway northern Cyprus through his tiny newspaper. Alongside the stacks of old papers on his desk in northern Nicosia, a luminous screen displays footage from security cameras at his office's entrances. The cameras are part of protective measures in place since gun attacks in 2011 targeted Levent, who has run the leftist daily Afrika for the past 20 years. "There is always a price you pay for freedom of expression," said the 70-year-old Turkish Cypriot, grey hair combed back and sporting a mischievous grin. "We paid this price... but I believe that a person should get rid of his fears."

In January, hundreds of protesters attacked the paper's offices after it ran an article criticizing a Turkish military offensive against the Kurdish border enclave of Afrin in Syria. "Afrin, a second occupation by Turkey" after Cyprus, ran the article's bold headline. Levent is a native of Cyprus, a Mediterranean island whose northern third has been under Turkish military control since 1974. Turkish troops invaded that year in response to a coup backed by the military junta then in power in Athens that sought to unite the island with Greece - a union staunchly opposed by Turkish Cypriots. Only Ankara recognizes the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). It also bankrolls the entity.

'Fear the worst'

Ankara regards the use of the term "occupation" for its deployment of some 35,000 troops in the TRNC - as well as criticism of its operations against the Kurds in Syria - as defamation. After Afrika's article on Afrin, Erdogan called on Ankara's "brothers in north Cyprus to give the necessary response". The following day, a crowd of ultranationalists attacked the offices of Afrika - a tiny daily with a 1,500 circulation in a statelet of around 300,000 people - as Turkish Cypriot police stood back and watched. For

media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF), "the hunt for critical media conducted by Erdogan's government" is so widespread that "we can fear a collateral effect in Cyprus".

Turkey ranks 157th out of 180 countries on RSF's 2018 press freedom index. Ankara holds more than 160 journalists in detention, according to P24, a platform that promotes editorial independence in Turkey. Contacted by AFP, Turkey's embassy in northern Cyprus refused to comment on "unfounded allegations" that Ankara interferes with the media. But the head of RSF's European Union and Balkans desk, Pauline Ades-Mevel, said "a freelance journalist critical of Turkey like Sener Levent can fear the worst".

Levent currently faces three separate trials in north Cyprus for "defaming a foreign leader", "insulting religion" and "publishing fake news with the intent to create fear and panic among the population", his lawyer Tacan Reynar told AFP. He faces up to five years in prison for the article on Afrin and for republishing a cartoon from social media of a Greek statue urinating on Erdogan's head captioned: "Through Greek eyes".

'Silence of people'

To avoid possible arrest, Levent shuns travel to Turkey, a country he says "is no longer a democracy". The TRNC leadership has said Turkish Cypriots cannot be extradited to Turkey, and Levent also sees EU citizenship as his protection. "They know in Turkey that they can't really do what they are doing to their citizens as a European citizen," said Levent, a seasoned campaigner for reunification with the island's Greek Cypriot south, an EU member state since 2004. His two-decade career has long brought pressure from the Turkish Cypriot authorities. In 2002, he and colleague Memduh Ener were jailed for nearly two months after "offending" the Turkish Cypriots' veteran leader Rauf Denktaş.

The previous year, an assailant who considered Levent a "traitor" tried on two separate occasions to gun him down. He has carried a revolver ever since, but



NICOSIA: Sener Levent, chief editor of Afrika Gazetesi newspaper, poses for a picture in his office at the paper's headquarters in the northern side of the Cypriot capital Nicosia in the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). — AFP

remains undaunted. "The thing that upsets me the most is the silence of people in front of injustice," he said. And so, every night, the pages of Afrika continue to roll out from an old-fashioned press in Nicosia. But Levent

remains modest. "The true heroes are those people who are living today in Syria, in Yemen," countries blighted by war where "women have to face incredible dangers every day." — AFP

Displaced huddle in a basement as winter grips Syria

AL-BAB: After washing up her family's dishes over a plastic basin, 11-year-old Cedra sits on the floor of the dank basement in Syria to tackle her day's studies. A dark staircase leads from a street in the town of Al-Bab to the gloomy space the young girl, her blind father and some 40 other families have made the misfortune of calling home. "There's a single room which we use as a kitchen, a bathroom and a bedroom," said Cedra. She scribbled in her notepad, while crouched against a wall of bare cinder blocks and under a line of laundry trying to dry in the humid cellar.

The residents of this underground camp were displaced by the Syrian war, sometimes several times, mostly from the eastern province of Deir Ezzor. Cedra's family fled the city of Deir Ezzor in 2012, in the early stages of Syria's conflict. They took refuge in Raqa, further west, but the city soon became the Syrian capital of the Islamic State group's self-proclaimed "caliphate". The subsequent bombardment of Raqa, which was almost completely levelled, killed

her mother and brother. The girl and her father fled once more and eventually found their way to Al-Bab, a rebel-controlled area near the border with Turkey.

'No money'

Cedra does not go school because she needs to help her blind father, but one of the other adults living in the basement has organized classes for her and a few other children. The war has set her back years in her education. "I'm learning how to write the letters, it's only been a few days," said the girl, wearing a thick, red sweatshirt and a black headscarf. Each morning, Cedra makes the bed, tidies the room, makes tea and prepares breakfast before studying. Then it's time to prepare lunch, after which she plays with the other children before getting to work on dinner.

Blankets are piled up near a flimsy foam mattress in one corner of the small room. A handful of cooking utensils and a plastic broom are tucked away nearby. "Life in this basement is not easy," said her father, Mohammed Ali al-Hassan, who hopes to return to Deir Ezzor. "There is nothing to do here and no money," said the greying father, who used to sustain his family by selling fruit and vegetable from a street cart. A resident of Al-Bab made his basement available to the displaced in mid-2017. The space is now divided in 42 tiny "studios", one for each family. Their food and other basic needs are provided for by local charities.

'Disastrous situation'

"The initial idea was to have a tempo-



AL-BAB, Syria: Muhammad Al-Hussein, a displaced Syrian blind man from Deir Ezzor, sits with his daughter Sidra in their basement room in the city of Al-Bab in the northern Aleppo province on the border with Turkey. — AFP

rary shelter for people while they look for a housing solution," said Abu Abdel Rahman, who was also displaced from Deir Ezzor and acts as a kind of supervisor. The place soon filled up and few of the families ever moved out for lack of affordable options. "The smallest possible accommodation involves a rent of 100 dollars. Those you see here are those who can't pay that amount. Here, everyone is experiencing a disastrous situation," said the 59-year-old, who used to work in a textile factory.

Kneeling in front of a white board, a woolly hat pulled tightly down on his head, Abu Omar forms the letters of the Arabic alphabet, which his pupils recite in unison. He lost a hand and the bones in his left leg were smashed to pieces after an air strike hit his home in Deir Ezzor.

Abu Omar's disabilities left him unable to work but he teaches 13 of the basement's children. He said that number has dropped steadily. "Many of them just have to go out and work." — AFP

5G: A revolution not without risks

PARIS: The recent diplomatic dust-up over Chinese telecoms company Huawei, one of the leaders in developing equipment for fifth-generation mobile networks, has demonstrated that this technology which promises to enable an internet of things and self-driving vehicles also poses risks. What is 5G, what will it be able to do, and what are the risks?

What is 5G?

5G stands for the fifth generation of mobile network technology, which should begin to be rolled out in 2020 in Asia and the United States. Each generation has offered improvements in data transmission speed and capacity, and with 5G the networks are really set to make the transition from telephony to other objects.

What will it be able to do?

The much vaunted internet of things has so far been hobbled by the limitations of mobile networks, both in terms of transmission speeds of handsets and the fact the backbone of networks hadn't been expanded sufficiently in many cases to handle huge volumes of data. With 5G, transmission speeds should accelerate sufficiently to allow for self-driving cars to take to the roads or for doctors to conduct operations remotely. It will also cut the cord on augmented and virtual reality. The ability to connect more sensors will help make many services "intelligent", such as helping manage traffic flow and telling the sanitation department when garbage bins need to be emptied. Industry is in particular looking forward to 5G to reinvent manufacturing and allow it to monitor all sorts of processes.

Why does 5G pose security risks?

The first reason is that more data and more types of data will be travelling across 5G networks. Much of the data transmitted by sensors could be sensitive, such as information about manufacturing processes that business rivals would be interested in acquiring. Or the data from our homes that could be gleaned to determine all sorts of things

about us. The treasure chest of data for hackers is getting much, much bigger. A second reason is that an increased reliance on the mobile network means its disruption would have even more serious consequences, both in terms of safety and economic activity. A failure during a remotely guided operation could lead to the death of a patient or a crash of a self-driving car. A longer outage could disrupt an economy. This poses national security risks.

While the diplomatic spat over the arrest of Huawei's chief financial officer was based on accusations the firm violated US sanctions on Iran, the United States has longstanding concerns about Chinese telecommunications equipment being a Trojan horse for Beijing's intelligence and military. Huawei is a major manufacturer of equipment used to build 5G networks, and the US defense establishment fears it could enable it to disrupt American military communications or otherwise wage asymmetrical warfare in a confrontation. The United States has essentially barred use of Huawei equipment in domestic networks, as have Australia and New Zealand, with other countries considering following suit.

Deliverance or disappointment?

The promises are always hyped, but the delivery is often a disappointment. Early buyers of 4G smartphones were often let down: their handsets could handle nippy speeds but the backbone of networks were often not yet bulked up to handle the higher data flow. Operators have now built up the capacity of their backbone networks, but if 5G is to keep its promise the number of base stations needed is enormous. Otherwise, users will be forced back onto slower networks. Meanwhile operators are having to invest billions to roll out 5G, which is an issue because competition in many countries has hemmed in prices companies can charge consumers. While most analysts believe operators will in the end be able to finance building the new networks, they may not initially be dense enough to handle some of the most anticipated applications. Building a dense network of base stations along highways to handle self-driving vehicles will be a costly endeavor, for example, and operators may find themselves seeking partners from users of new services. — AFP



VANCOUVER: Members of the media wait outside the residence of Huawei Technologies Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou after she was released on bail in Vancouver. — AFP

#MeToo offers hope, mother of Delhi rape victim says

NEW DELHI: The mother of a female student whose brutal gang rape sparked mass protests in India has said the country's #MeToo movement gives her hope things can change, as she marked the sixth anniversary of the fatal attack. Asha Singh said the nationwide outrage her daughter's ordeal provoked had helped create the conditions for Indian women to speak out about sexual misconduct, after a slew of accusations against high-profile men in recent months.

"This (#MeToo in India) is the result of that awareness which is helping women to come out with courage," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview. "The winds of change are blowing, more women are empowering themselves. I feel hopeful when I see so many women speaking up." Singh's daughter, a 23-year-old trainee physiotherapist, died after she was gang raped on a moving bus, in a case that triggered global outrage and forced Indian authorities to tighten laws on sex crimes. She said her daughter helped prompt national soul-searching about India's treatment of women and brought discussions on their safety into people's living rooms.

The #MeToo campaign found momentum in India in September, almost a year after it hit the US entertainment industry, when Bollywood actress Tanushree Dutta accused a veteran actor of sexually harassing her on a film set a decade earlier. Since then, scores of women have leveled complaints of sexual misconduct against prominent journalists, film personalities, comedians, lawyers and executives. "Men thought they could do whatever they want and get away with it. They thought they were untouchable, but look at how all of that is changing," said Singh in her sparsely furnished apartment in a Delhi suburb. "Little did they think that women would start speaking out, even after 10 or 15 years." — Reuters

Israel ex-general denies arming S Sudan war

JERUSALEM: A retired Israeli army general hit by US sanctions for alleged involvement in the South Sudan conflict denied the charges yesterday, saying they were based on false information and that he was available for investigation by the Trump administration. The US Treasury on Friday slapped sanctions on Israel Ziv and three firms he controls, accusing him of using an agricultural consultancy as cover for weapons sales worth \$150 million to the Juba government while also arming the opposition.

"He (Ziv) has also reportedly planned to organize attacks by mercenaries on South Sudanese oil fields and infrastructure, in an effort to create a problem that only his company and affiliates could solve," a Treasury statement said. Interviewed by Israel's Army Radio, Ziv said he had never trafficked in weaponry and called the charges against him "ludicrous, baseless, completely divorced from reality". "We have an amazing agriculture project there ... that many communities depend on. Tens of thousands of people are employed through this project and it feeds the South Sudan market. So anyone who claims this project is a cover should come see it."

The Trump administration has championed international arms embargos against South Sudan to pressure President Salva Kiir into ending the country's civil war and humanitarian crisis. Two South Sudanese nationals, Obac William Olawo and Gregory Vasili, were named alongside Ziv in Friday's US Treasury sanctions notice. Neither was immediately available for comment. "This is not the first time the (US) administration has used sanctions to enforce its foreign policy," Ziv said. — Reuters

International

Shock waves of #MeToo reach the City of London

Series of very public sackings, suspensions, departures

LONDON: A series of very public sackings, suspensions and departures suggests that Britain's finance world is waking up to the toxic implications of sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace. The changes come a little more than a year after the #MeToo movement exploded into public consciousness with multiple allegations of predatory sexual behavior against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. The campaign, in which women from a range of professions went public with allegations of harassment, quickly spread to Britain. And some of the most high-profile cases have come from inside the testosterone-fueled world of business.

Some senior female executives who have already broken the glass ceiling have been instrumental in accelerating the pace of change. At the beginning of the week, four major British auditing firms - Deloitte, KPMG, PwC and FY - announced they had shown the door to members of staff accused of sexual harassment or workplace bullying. Deloitte alone revealed that it had fired 20 of its partners in Britain over the last four years for bullying and sexual harassment. "We will fire people for any inappropriate behavior. No one is protected," Deloitte chief executive David Sproul told the Financial Times.

'The job isn't over yet'

It was the FT that in January revealed the sexual harassment of hostesses at an all-male London charity dinner at the Presidents Club, attended by 360 businessmen and politicians. Companies whose executives had attended rushed to distance themselves from the event and, within days of the scandal breaking, widespread condemnation led the club to announce its closure. On Tuesday, Bloomberg reported that one of HSBC's London-based executives had left the bank after being accused by a younger female staffer of "inappropriate conduct" in a New York hotel bar. HSBC said in a statement: "An allegation was made against an individual. We dealt with it directly, robustly and appropriately." In the insurance industry, around 50 companies signed up to a good conduct charter, the Inclusive Behaviors Pledge, to try to counter the problem of harassment.

One of its main backers was Inga Beale, at the time

chief executive of Lloyds of London and known as an outspoken advocate for a more welcoming environment for women in business. She described the charter as a public commitment "to challenge inappropriate behavior and create increasingly welcoming and inclusive workplaces for the diverse talent powering our sector". Beale, who became the first woman to head up a major insurance company in 2014, said she was proud of the progress made in this area since the 1980s. But she cautioned, "...the job isn't over yet".



Britain's finance world waking up

Breaking the silence

There have been other revelations beyond the world of high finance. Earlier this

month, clothing company Ted Baker announced that chief executive Ray Kelvin had agreed to take a leave of absence following a series of "serious allegations" against him. The company appointed a law firm to carry out an independent investigation after media reports that hundreds of current and former staff

members had signed a petition complaining about his behavior.

Allegations included "forced hugs" and forcing people to sit on his knee. The petition was organized by Organize, an online website set up to make it easier to share allegations of harassment. In October, British fashion tycoon Philip Green was named as the executive who had used the courts to try to stop the publication of allegations of harassment against him by five employees. Green denied "unlawful sexual or racist behavior" after Peter Hain, a member of the House of Lords, used parliamentary privilege to name him.

Lord Hain acted after the Daily Telegraph reported the allegations - but said a court injunction prevented them from naming the executive concerned. Hain said he was using the special legal protection he enjoyed when speaking in parliament because the story was "clearly in the public interest". He was criticized by some for breaking what was an interim injunction that could have been subsequently overturned in court. But in the wake of the #MeToo movement, the incident sparked a debate about the use by the rich of injunctions - and non-disclosure agreements - to escape the scandals their conduct would otherwise cause. —AFP

News in brief

4th 'attack tunnel' found

JERUSALEM: Israel's army said yesterday it has uncovered another Hezbollah "attack tunnel" leading from Lebanon into its territory, the fourth since it started a search-and-destroy operation this month. Israel says the Iranian-backed Shiite militant group has dug the infiltration tunnels for use in a future conflict, and the military has been working to eliminate them. The latest tunnel crossing into northern Israel was exposed at the weekend, the army said in a statement. As with the other tunnels, soldiers placed explosives in it to keep out militants from the Lebanese side, it said. The military refused to give the exact location, stressing the tunnel did not "pose an imminent threat". On December 4, the army announced an operation dubbed "Northern Shield" to destroy tunnels it said have been dug under the border by Hezbollah. Israel fought a devastating war against Hezbollah in 2006 that was halted by a UN-brokered truce. —AFP

Car bomb kills 8 in Syria

BEIRUT: A car bomb killed at least eight people including four civilians near a pro-Turkey rebel post in the northern Syrian city of Afrin yesterday, a British-based war monitor said. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it was not clear who was behind the blast in the city, which was seized from Kurdish forces earlier this year. The explosion comes after the Turkish president on Wednesday threatened to launch a new offensive against the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in Syria. The Observatory said the car bombing wounded dozens, and the toll was likely to rise. "The car bomb exploded near a position of pro-Turkey fighters" in a market, killing four civilians and four fighters, Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. The city of Afrin was captured in March this year from the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) by Turkish armed forces and Syrian rebels supported by Ankara. —AFP

Earthquake rocks Papua

JAKARTA: A 6.1-magnitude earthquake hit Papua, in eastern Indonesia yesterday, US seismologists said, but no tsunami warning was issued. The quake was about 158 kilometers south-southwest of the province's capital Jayapura at 6:42 pm, at a depth of 61 kilometers, according to the US Geological Survey. The quake was felt in Jayapura, but residents didn't panic, a military spokesman said. "I felt it at home," Papua's military spokesman in Jayapura Dax Sianturi said. Officials are still assessing the impact of the quake, but there were no immediate reports of casualties. Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide. Last September, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island killed more than 2,200 with a thousand more declared missing. —AFP

Maldives seizes \$6.5 million

COLOMBO: Former Maldives president Abdulla Yameen is under investigation for corruption, police said yesterday, after a court ordered accounts holding \$6.5 million to be frozen. Yameen, who was defeated in a September election, was interviewed by police on the honeymoon islands on Saturday. He has been dogged by allegations that he received close to \$1.5 million in illicit payments during his failed bid for re-election in the Indian Ocean archipelago nation. The country's monetary authority has lodged a police complaint about the alleged donations made into a private account held by Yameen in two suspicious tranches, local media reported. The former strongman president, who ruled the popular holiday islands with an iron fist, jailing or exiling his opponents, has denied the allegations. Yameen relied heavily on China for political and financial support in the nation of 340,000 Sunni Muslims, troubling neighboring India. —AFP

Russia house fires kill 10

MOSCOW: Six children and four adults died in house fires in several Russian cities yesterday, Russian media reported. Three toddlers died in a house fire in a village in Bashkortostan, a region south of the Ural mountains, news agency RIA Novosti reported. The children, a two-year-old and two four-year-olds, were reportedly left home alone, the agency said. Interfax news agency said two more children died in a house fire yesterday in the village of Krasny Kut, in the southern Saratov region. And the Emergency Situations Ministry in Tatarstan, a republic in central Russia, said a toddler and two adults were killed in a house fire yesterday in Kazan, the main city. Another two adults died and three children were injured yesterday when a dormitory caught fire in Peresvet, a town in the Moscow region, RIA Novosti said. —AFP

As Brexit muddles along - US president roots for full break

WASHINGTON: As Britain's divorce from the European Union stumbles ahead, hardliners pushing for a full break are finding support in one foreign capital - Washington. Prime Minister Theresa May, who is barely holding on to power at home, found a frosty reception on her latest mission to Brussels as she struggles to sell Brexit on her terms. Nor is she finding much support from US President Donald Trump, who has openly questioned her Brexit deal, instead favoring a full break.

Right-wing critics fear the current deal could leave Britain indefinitely in the EU customs union so as to prevent restoration of the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. Trump, speaking to reporters soon after May announced her Brexit package, dismissed it as "a great deal for the EU." He suggested that the agreement could hold back a trade deal between the United States and Britain - which conservatives in both countries have dangled as an incentive if Britain leaves the European Union. "That would be a very big negative for the deal," Trump said.

'Back of the queue'

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has also embraced Brexit since he took over from the less ideological Rex Tillerson. In a recent Fox News interview, Pompeo promised to pursue the vaunted US-Britain "special relation-

ship" in the increasingly likely scenario of a "hard Brexit" without a negotiated deal. Trump's enthusiasm for Brexit stands in marked contrast to the views of his predecessor Barack Obama, who had warned that Britain would be at the "back of the queue" for a US trade deal if it left the European Union. In line with the thinking of much of the foreign policy establishment in both countries, Obama said that a Britain integrated within a forward-looking European Union was better for all sides economically and politically. For Trump, Britain's 2016 referendum to leave the European Union foreshadowed his own election, with few experts predicting the groundswell of support outside major cities.

Looser ties to Europe

Nile Gardiner, an aide to former prime minister Margaret Thatcher now at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative US think tank, said Brexit was a natural philosophical fit for Trump. The American president has championed an "America First" policy suspicious of multinational institutions. Gardiner said that Brexit would also have a practical benefit for Trump in pulling Britain out of a common EU foreign policy. "Britain has been very heavily EU-focused for the last few decades," Gardiner said. "I would envisage a British foreign policy that is much more closely aligned with the United States."

He said, for example, that a successor to May supportive of hard Brexit could part ways with the European Union on championing a denuclearization deal with Iran. Trump has enjoyed no support among Western leaders after exiting the multiparty deal negotiated by Obama and has reimposed punishing sanctions on Iran. A post-Brexit Britain would also be certain to steer clear of a common European defense separate from NATO, as

Protesters march against tough Italy anti-migrant law

ROME: Several thousand people marched in Rome Saturday in protest at Italy's tough new anti-migrant law which makes it easier to expel new arrivals. The protesters waved flags and donned yellow vests emblazoned with the slogan "Get up! Stand Up! for your right" in a reference to the famous Bob Marley song. The new law would "only increase the number of people without papers in Italy and force people underground", protester Kone Brahima, originally from Ivory Coast said.

Another, Tony Scardamaglia, from Palermo, said: "We are still building more walls, more barriers," adding that the anti-migrant and security decree adopted last month would just cause more "difficulties". The decree, adopted by parliament on November 28, also limits residence permits in a country that has become the main gateway for migrants crossing the Mediterranean. A populist coalition government made up of the far-right League

Katowice's climate summit: Outcomes

KATOWICE: In UN climate talks ending Saturday in Katowice, Poland delivered a milestone rule book for the Paris climate treaty, but failed to dial up national efforts to slash carbon emissions. The 195-nation pact calls for capping the rise in Earth's temperature at "well under" two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), and 1.5C if possible. Here are three key outcomes from the 13-day meeting:

After a sobering UN report in October showed the need for slashing greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 50 percent by 2030 to cap global warming at 1.5C, the world - and especially poor countries already reeling from climate-added extreme weather - looked to the UN talks for a sign that nations would ramp up voluntary carbon-

cutting pledges. Even if fulfilled, these promises will see temperatures rise more than 3C above pre-industrial levels, a recipe for global chaos, say scientists. On current trends, the increase would be higher still.

The binding decisions assiduously avoid a clear call for higher ambition in reducing greenhouse gas pollution before 2020, when the Paris Agreement becomes operational. Parties to the 195-nation talks could not even agree to "welcome" the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on 1.5C, as urged by at-risk nations. "What we've seen in Poland reveals a fundamental lack of understanding of our current crisis," said Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, leader of WWF's Climate and Energy Practice. "We need all countries to commit to raising climate ambition before 2020."

The Paris Agreement guarantees smaller developing countries - historically blameless for global warming - \$100 billion (\$8.5 billion euros) per year starting from 2020 to green their economies and cope with future



LONDON: A picture shows Union flags, stickers and banners with slogans as campaign materials at a political rally organized by the pro-Brexit Leave Means Leave group in central London. —AFP

proposed by French President Emmanuel Macron with the support of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Gardiner said.

'Very disruptive'

Yet even as part of the EU, Britain has been the premier international ally of the United States, controversially joining the invasion of Iraq despite widespread European opposition. Kely Magsamen, a vice president at the left-leaning Center for American Progress, called Trump's impact on Brexit "very disruptive." She said that US policy toward such a close ally should be, fundamentally, to "do no harm." "Our objective at this point should be to contain whatever economic damage there may be from Brexit for both us and our allies. But also our

objective should not be to make things worse for Theresa May or Angela Merkel," she said.

She said she doubted that Britain's core international policies would change much after Brexit - but feared that a newly preoccupied Britain might be less active. "The UK is going to be so inwardly consumed with managing the impact of Brexit that we could lose a focused partner on the international stage for a period of time," Magsamen said. A recent survey by Emerson College in Boston found that the US public lacks firm views on whether Britain or the European Union would be a more important partner after Brexit. But more than 90 percent of those surveyed said they valued a good relationship with Britain, with a strong majority supportive of a trade agreement. —AFP



ROME: People, members of anti-racism associations and migrants gather on Piazza Della Repubblica in central Rome to protest the government's social politics, its recent decree restricting the right to asylum, and against racism. —AFP

adequate guarantees, especially for the vulnerable or those with particular needs such as victims of abuse or torture". This year

some 22,500 migrants landed on Italy's coasts, representing a drop of more than 80 percent compared to 2017. —AFP

Global economy

Nations pressing for urgent action also sought language in the final "COP decisions" that would highlight the need to boost financing beyond climate-specific sectors such as development of renewables or efficiency improvements in buildings. Facing down the existential threat of climate change also means "making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development" across the entire global economy, the Paris Agreement says.

The complicated Katowice decisions will give cover both to nations that seek to expand the climate imperative as broadly as possible, and those who prefer a narrow interpretation, experts said. "Markets play a very important role if we are going to be ambitious." Canadian environment minister Catherine McKenna said. "We need to use the private sector, we need the billions to flow into trillions." —AFP

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International

‘Nobody will kneel’: Tigrayans defiant; Ethiopian prime minister cracks down

PM urges support for ‘reforms, not revolution’

MEKELLE: In the birthplace of the armed struggle that propelled Ethiopia's ruling coalition to power 27 years ago, there is growing anger as the country's new prime minister stages a crackdown on the region's once-powerful leaders. Although the Tigrayans who inhabit these craggy hills are only a small minority in a country of more than 100 million, they have dominated its power structures since 1991 when the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) drove a Marxist military regime from power.

Now many leading Tigrayans are being detained or sidelined as reformist prime minister, Abiy Ahmed attempts to draw a line under past abuses. One adviser to Abiy told Reuters that the prime minister has sacked 160 army generals for actions he said amount to "state terrorism". In Mekelle, capital of the Tigray region, and in nearby villages, a siege mentality is taking hold among people who say they feel under attack. The frustration could pose a threat to the 42-year-old prime minister as he urges people to back "reforms, not revolution". At street coffee stalls in Mekelle and in fields outside the city, Tigrayans said they would not stand by as national figures disparaged their region and history.

"There are efforts to cover the people of Tigray," said Getachew Reda, a senior Tigrayan politician and EPRDF member who served as communications minister under Abiy's predecessor. "But we don't believe that's going to work because we are steeped in the tradition not just of defending ourselves but also rising up to whatever challenge". He accused Abiy, a member of the country's largest ethnic group,

the Oromo, of selective justice. Tigrayans were angered when 60 officials, many of them from their region, were detained for suspected human rights abuses and corruption, he said. These included senior executives at the army-run METEC industrial conglomerate. "Abiy controls the international narrative but not necessarily the country," Getachew said.

'Backwardness and injustice'

Abiy addressed the accusation in a statement on Wednesday, saying: "Just like we don't blame a forest for what a single tree has done, we don't blame or point our fingers at any tribe for the crimes individuals committed." Abiy too hails from the EPRDF. He served in the military in Tigray as a teenager and speaks the Tigrinya language. But he has taken a wrecking ball to the institutions the ruling coalition had used to control the country. In a speech last month, he said the three years of anti-government protests that helped bring him to power in April showed that Ethiopians no longer tolerate "backwardness and injustice".

"It is with this understanding that we have been continuously undertaking different reforms in the past months to change our political culture, system and institutions," he said. This is popular with many Ethiopians who resented Tigrayan domination of institutions such as the federal police, which violently repressed the protests. Other larger ethnic groups accused Tigrayans of imposing a federal system based on ethnic identity to "divide and rule". In the capital, Addis Ababa, and other cities, Abiy's face is everywhere: on stickers, t-shirts and posters. But not in Tigray, where he is increasingly unpopular. Although the political

influence of Tigrayans has diminished under Abiy, they remain a force to be reckoned with. Decentralized government has allowed the creation of large regional police forces, including in Tigray. The region also has a history of civilians, mostly farmers who own guns, joining militias to defend the group's causes. Officials in Mekelle said there was no attempt to build up these regional forces. But security is a growing concern, as seen at checkpoints where Tigray police search vehicles and people for weapons before allowing entry to the city.

Many Tigrayans said they were worried about a surge in ethnic violence elsewhere in the country that has forced more than 1 million people to flee their homes since Abiy took office. Although Tigray has been largely unaffected - unlike other regions, it is not home to significant numbers of people from other ethnic groups - residents told Reuters that Abiy was not doing enough to stop the bloodshed elsewhere. Several said they had family members who abandoned jobs and businesses to return to Tigray for fear of reprisals, though there have been no reports of major attacks against the community.

'This has to stop'

Others see veiled attempts to blame Tigrayans whenever Abiy decries the way things were before he took the helm or accuses opposition forces of plotting against his reforms. People packed a stadium in Mekelle earlier this month to vent their anger at a rally organized by the Tigray People's Liberation Front, a former guerrilla movement turned political party. "We were expressing that we are isolated, that we

are experiencing ethnic discrimination, and that this has to stop," said Gush Gebreselassie, a 55-year-old civil servant. Meressa Tsehaye, a political science professor at Mekelle University, recalled Tigrayans' sacrifices in the 1980s civil war that brought Abiy's EPRDF to power.

He and others said Ethiopians were forgetting the achievements delivered by the coalition. Ethiopia's economy has grown around 10 percent a year for the past decade, according to government statistics. "We won them freedom. We brought them electricity. We built them roads," said Fitsum Tekele, a 50-year-old farmer, as he crouched barefoot in a field outside Mekelle harvesting teff, the staple crop, with a sickle. "If they say they were in darkness for 27 years, their minds are not working." Two of his brothers left a car hire business in the Amhara region, Fitsum said. "They came home with nothing."

Concern was palpable at city coffee stalls, where both the young and those who survived the war agreed that the region would not accept what one man called "humiliation". Many did not provide their names out of fear of retribution. "I can't judge whether Abiy directly hates us Tigrayans or is just using techniques to get power over us," said a 19-year-old woman who runs a coffee stall. "If he doesn't accept to have discussions with our leaders, we know our history," she said. That history of armed resistance looms large in a society where many families lost members in the war. A museum to the "martyrs" recounts the bravery of local fighters, and local TV channels broadcast war footage of Tigrayans on the march. "Nobody will kneel down here," a tour guide said. — Reuters

Ear cleaners, roadside clerks: Antiquated jobs thrive in Yangon

YANGON: Ear cleaners, roadside plumbers and typewriters for hire: just a sample of the antiquated jobs found on the pavements of Yangon's Pansodan Street, where old-world businesses still find customers. For years, tourists have been fascinated by odd trades in Yangon, from cycle trishaws swerving through traffic to roadside clerks going clickety-clack on typewriters. Some professions have become victims of the political and economic reforms that started in earnest in 2011. Iced water sellers melted away as improved power supplies made fridges viable; bus conductors lost out in the revamp of the city's transportation network; and landline phone stalls are a relic in the mobile era.

But Pansodan, the beating heart of Myanmar's biggest city, remains home to obscure professions and evokes nostalgia among those who have plied their trade for decades along the potholed pavements below ageing colonial architecture. "This is the street for the books, for the writers, for the poets. Everyone comes, everyone learns here," Aung Soe Min, a long-time gallery owner on Pansodan said. "Everything you need to know, you can come to Pansodan." Built by the British and once called Phayre Street, the downtown artery runs south from the train station to the river, where traders arrive by morning ferry.

Monsoons, manicures

Yangon's growth - statistics show the population has nearly doubled since 1983 to reach 7.3 million - has left city services struggling to catch up. The annual monsoon season clogs decades-old plumbing networks and that is when Min Aung is busiest. Sitting among plungers, pipes and a spare



YANGON: Manicurist Khin Ohn Myint cleans the nails of a customer under a bridge along Pansodan Street in Yangon. — AFP

toilet lid serving as an advertisement for his services, the 58-year-old is a veteran of Yangon's small army of streetside plumbers who still find work in the rapidly modernizing commercial capital.

"As long as there are toilets, there is work for us," Min Aung tells AFP, puffing a cheroot as morning traffic whooshes by. Close by is Khin Ohn Myint, 47, who provides quick manicures, fixes ingrown toenails and syringes ears to remove wax build-up. "I didn't have money to invest in other businesses, so I did this for a living," she says, smiling. Earning around \$10 a day, she has put her children through university so they can pursue other careers. She says she enjoys helping relieve people's suffering and has even had to remove the occasional cockroach from a customer's ear. "Pansodan is a historic street for us," she says as

she digs out a piece of dirt from under a customer's toenail.

The street is also famous for its pavement book-sellers whose offerings include everything from 19th-century literary classics to tomes on Myanmar's real estate laws and taboo subjects like the Rohingya crisis. Its reputation as a place to read and access ideas gave it the nickname Pansodan University. Tin Than has sold books here since 1980, but most of his competitors have shut shop. "Now I only have around two or three customers each month," he says. The prime location has given him a front-row seat to historic events such as the 2007 "Saffron Revolution" when Buddhist monks staged a rare protest against the junta. "When others started packing their books and closing their shops, I also had to close and run away. — AFP

Ex-military chief named Australian Gov-General

SYDNEY: A former chief of Australia's defense forces was yesterday appointed as the next governor-general, the representative of Britain's Queen, but will only assume the role after crucial state and federal elections next year. Retired general David Hurley, 65, will be the second ex-defense forces chief to assume the role, which is largely ceremonial in the constitutional monarchy but does hold the power to intervene in the government.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison - whose embattled conservative coalition could be turfed out in next year's national poll - said he had chosen Hurley to ensure "stability, continuity, certainty". "I had only one choice, my first choice, and he is standing next to me," Morrison told reporters in Canberra. "I was looking for someone who could fill that constitutional role with great dignity, but with a levelness." Morrison's call for stability contrasts with the turbulent political climate in Canberra. Australia has had a revolving door of prime ministers in recent years, with major parties Liberal and Labor ousting their leaders while they were in power.

Morrison is expected to call the federal election in mid-May, while the poll in Australia's most populous state New South Wales, which also has an incumbent conservative government, is tipped for March. Amid poor opinion poll numbers, there are fears within the coalition that they will lose power to Labor at the federal election. Labor welcomed Hurley's appointment but said the party was not informed of the process, despite a national vote just months away. "Ideally, so close to the election, the Opposition would have been properly consulted on this appointment, which is so important to Australia," Labor frontbencher Jim Chalmers told national broadcaster ABC.

Australia's governor-general can open and dissolve parliament, commission the prime minister and appoint ministers, rubber-stamp laws passed by parliament and appoint judges and diplomats. In 1975, then governor-general John Kerr famously dismissed the Gough Whitlam Labor government amid a constitutional crisis over deadlocked budget bills in what became one of the most dramatic episodes in the nation's political history. Hurley will take over from current governor-general Peter Cosgrove, who was appointed in 2014. He has served as NSW governor for four years, before which he spent more than four decades in the Australian Army. Cosgrove's term will be extended to June from March to allow Hurley to conclude his NSW term and oversee the state election. — AFP

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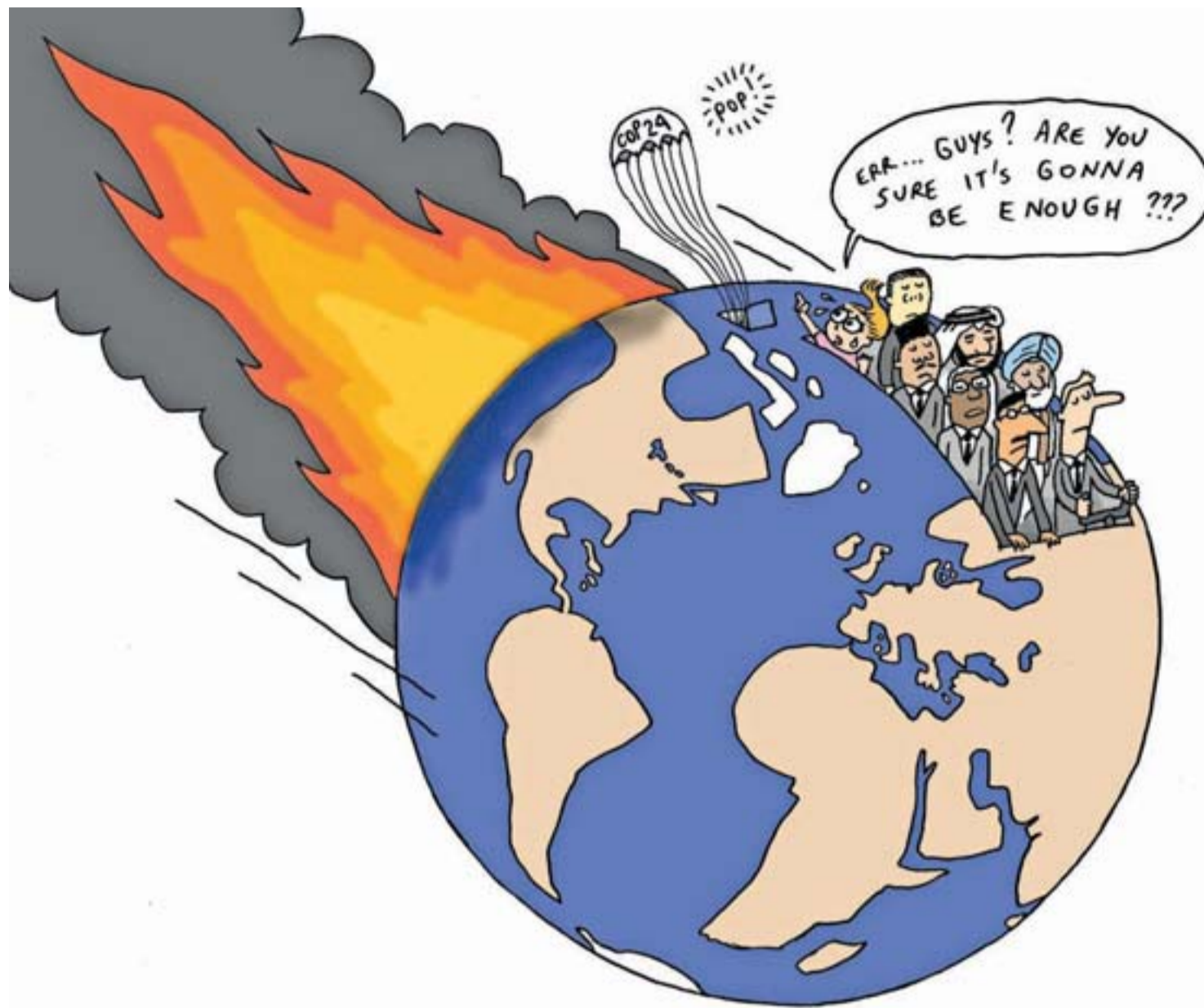
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Deep in the red: Chinese county pays price for vanity-project binge

In the heart of an impoverished village in southern China, a life-sized statue of Mao Zedong sits on a platform adorned with intricate stonework, flanked by a diorama of Red Army soldiers and traditional brick-and-tile homes with curved roofs. Officials have spent a small fortune on the project that has transformed the village of Shazhou, in Hunan province, into an open-air museum dedicated to the Chinese Communist Party. But few tourists have come to peer at the inscription at the foot of Mao's statue, or take selfies in front of the heroes of the revolution.

The "red tourism" project was the brainchild of the former Communist Party chief of the local county, Rucheng, and cost 300 million yuan (\$44 million). But it has yet to produce a profit, just like the string of public gardens, town squares and office buildings that the county has built in recent years. Now the clock is ticking as Rucheng, among China's poorest counties, and with a population of just 420,400 people, is under pressure to resolve \$1 billion in debt, following a decade of credit-fueled vanity projects, three local officials told Reuters. They requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

To raise funds and conserve cash, Rucheng - which doesn't have a train station or an airport - has been slashing public investment in infrastructure projects and increasing government land sales to generate revenue, the officials said. Rucheng is not alone - hundreds of other indebted counties in China are in the same boat. In a recent financial stability report, the central bank said that much of China's hidden debt risk is held at lower-tier levels, meaning prefectures and counties like Rucheng.

As China prepares this month to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the economic reforms that transformed it into the world's second-largest economy, fears over local government debt are growing. China's local governments had 18.4 trillion yuan of outstanding debt at the end of October, and were estimated by S&P Global Ratings to have up to 40 trillion yuan in off-budget borrowing. Of particular concern to the authorities as they tackle risks in the financial system are those governments with tiny revenue streams relative to their debt. Their over-reliance on income from land sales is also driving asset bubbles in China.

Rucheng's free-spending ways came onto Beijing's radar this year when visiting anti-corruption inspectors were shocked by the contrast between the county's newly built but deserted municipal district and cramped older areas where residents drink polluted water from aging pipes. When the inspectors were in town, numerous anonymous complaints arrived in the mail. Since 2008, Rucheng has spent billions on 10 office buildings, 11 public gardens and squares and 26 urban roads, the anti-corruption inspectors found. But less than 6 percent of government spending went on investing in industry.

Vanity investments helped drive Rucheng's debt ratio - or borrowing relative to fiscal revenue - to 336 percent last year from 286 percent in 2016, and 274 percent in 2015. "We must rectify the problem according to what is required of us, otherwise the local people will not trust our government officials anymore," said one of the officials. The head of Rucheng's Communist Party was sacked for profligate spending and "ignoring the livelihood of the local people". Hunan province also placed Rucheng on a "top-level government debt warning list" of counties with debt ratios over 100 percent, the Rucheng officials said. Local governments on the list face restrictions on taking on new debt, launching new projects, hiring employees and travelling overseas, they said.

Rucheng cuts back

Since the anti-corruption inspection, Rucheng has suspended, cancelled and scaled back 79 government projects, cutting investment by 2.1 billion yuan, the officials said. All Rucheng officials have been working seven days a week and meeting regularly with local residents, the three officials said. One official died from overwork, they added. More than 30 million yuan is also being spent on renovating old water pipes in the area.

To resolve the debt problem, Rucheng has to repay 400 million yuan a year in principle and interest to reduce its outstanding government debt, which was around 9 billion yuan at the end of 2017, an official at Rucheng's finance and debt department told Reuters. Rucheng's debt ratio has since dropped to about 60.6 percent, said the official at its finance department. On Dec. 5, the provincial government lowered Rucheng's government debt warning level from "first-level" to "second-level", the officials said. At the same time, Rucheng officials are under pressure to produce economic growth. "The higher authorities require us to have zero additional debt but deliver high-quality economic growth," said a Rucheng official in charge of the economy.

But the legacy of the vanity spending remains. A mineral bath tourism spot in Rucheng was deserted during a recent visit by Reuters. Local residents washing vegetables and boiling eggs in the hot springs said the tourism spot, which had cost about 400 million yuan to build, had done little to improve livelihoods. In nearby Shazhou, which has a population of 500, residents said they had been pressured to sell land at bargain prices to the government for the red tourism project while getting paid only 100 yuan a day as construction workers at the site. — Reuters

Talks pass baton in race to stop warming

Fracious climate change talks in Poland showed the limits of international action to limit global warming in a polarized world, putting the onus on individual governments, cities and communities to stop temperatures rising. Nearly 200 countries at the United Nations talks in Katowice - in the coal mining region of Silesia - saved the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement from disintegration on Saturday by agreeing a package of guidelines for its implementation.

But it deferred rules on carbon credits - a spur to business - and lacked any firm commitment to strengthen countries' emissions cut targets by 2020, when the agreement comes into force. As such it left the parties a long way from the Paris deal's goal of keeping global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, let alone the cap of 1.5C needed to avert more extreme weather, rising sea levels and the loss of plant and animal species. The world is heading for a 3-5C rise in temperatures this century, the UN World Meteorological Organization has said.

The Paris Agreement is based on individual commitments and expectations for the Polish talks to produce much more than rules for how those would be measured had always been low: the unity built in Paris had been shattered by a wave of governments placing national agendas before collective action. Only a handful of country leaders were present in Katowice and the UN Secretary-General had to fly back to the meeting to urge progress.

"Political will is missing," Alden Meyer, director at the Union of Concerned Scientists, a non-profit science advocacy group said as the conference staggered towards a finish delayed for more than 24 hours by last-minute wrangling over parts of the text. "But it provides the hooks for governments, cities, businesses, civil society etc to do the work to get (to the Paris Agreement goals)," he said. For conference president Michal Kurtyka it was a job well done. "Mission accomplished," he wrote on Twitter. "Our children look back at our legacy and recognize that we took the right decisions at important junctures like the one we face today."

Scratching the surface

For nations already suffering from climate change the

Looking out for West Africa's migrant children

Jacques wanted to start working when he was 10. His father refused so he left his home in Tema, Ghana, to live in nearby Benin, like many young children in search of a better life. "I got on a bus to Cotonou sticking to a lady as if I were her son," says the relaxed young man, as if travelling several hundred kilometres alone at such a young age was no big deal - even if it was to his mother's native country. Seven years later, Jacques is living in the cosmopolitan but down-at-heel neighbourhood of Placodji in Cotonou, where he has trained as a cook. He is considering another move east to Nigeria, the economic giant of West Africa.

Josephine, a 16-year-old girl from Togo, left Nigeria in February. She had lived there since she was a child with her mother, who remarried a man from the town of Badagry, near the border with Benin. But the teenager decided to leave Africa's most populous country of 190 million people to live in Seme-Krake, Benin. "If I've got a job I can take care of myself anywhere," the self-assured teen, who has never gone to school, says in English. "I don't see my mother but my boss is good and everything is fine," said Josephine, smiling in her yellow and green uniform of an apprentice seamstress.

Migration has been a way of life and a key to success for centuries in West Africa, where 75 percent of migration happens

agreement, which did not make clear how pledged funding would be provided, was only just better than nothing. Simon Stiell, Environment Minister of Grenada in the Caribbean, told Reuters it "is barely scratching the surface of what we really require". Investors said it would take more action at government level to persuade them to pump in the amount of money needed. "Those countries ... who push ahead with ambitious, long-term climate policies will be the ones to reap the investment and economic advantages of doing so," said Stephanie Pfeifer, Chief Executive of Institutional Investors' Group on Climate Change, noting the low-carbon transition was already underway.

The United States, set to withdraw from the UN process at the behest of President Donald Trump, staged an event touting the benefits of burning fossil fuels, including coal, more efficiently, while back at home, Trump has termed the Paris deal "ridiculous". A scientific report requested by the Paris signatories said the share of coal-fuelled power would have to be cut to under 2 percent by 2050, along with big cuts to other fossil fuels, to stop temperatures rising more than 1.5C and causing devastating floods, storms, heat waves and drought.

The United States, as well as fellow oil producers Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait, refused to "welcome" the report, a term sought by countries seeking to focus minds on its findings. The final statement merely welcomed its timely completion and invited parties to make use of the information it contained. Yet the row over the report was far from the only one: China, India, Russia, Australia, Japan, Brazil and the European Union were all drawn into various rifts, although China won some praise for helping to overcome concern, especially from the United States, that it would sidestep any rules.

"I think they have come a long way in recognizing they need to provide confidence," Jennifer Morgan, executive director of Greenpeace International, said of the Chinese negotiators. Describing Washington as "out of touch", Morgan noted the rules agreed in Poland nevertheless bound all countries, including the United States until its planned withdrawal in 2020, an achievement in itself. "But that doesn't substitute for the need to build ambition," she said.

Choking coal

Poland, hosting its third UN climate conference, came in for criticism for its commitment to coal, the most polluting of fossil fuels. The meeting's final statement merely "noted" Warsaw's call for a "just transition" allowing communities dependent on coal more time to adjust. The appointment of Kurtyka, Poland's deputy environment minister, to preside over the talks appeased some campaigners angered by the government's previous choice, former environment minister, Jan Szyszko.

Szysko had expressed doubts that global warming is manmade in the past and increased logging in the ancient forest of Bialowieza, declared illegal by the European Union's top court. However, Kurtyka's job was complicated by Poland's environment minister saying he did not want discussion about raising ambition at the talks and Poland's president vowing not to let anyone "murder coal mining".

A focus on technicalities in the first week was interpreted by campaigners as a pretext to avoid discussions on pledging deeper emissions cuts. Kurtyka got countries to focus on the guidelines near the end of the second week, but there was no collective action to harmonize or improve disparate pledges. "Each delegation has its own domestic interests ... Our role, as the presidency, is to find balance, which ensures reaching a compromise," Adam Guibourge-Czetwertynski, Poland's chief negotiator, said in the second week of talks.

Poland's ruling party, the nationalist-minded Law and Justice (PiS), wants to scale back the share of coal in electricity production from 80 percent to 60 percent by 2030. But the production of hard coal is expected to be stable for decades, although 72 percent of Poles think it should be gradually phased out to reduce emissions, according to a survey by state-controlled pollster CBOS in November.

Katowice, the heart of Poland's coal region, is among the most polluted cities in Europe, because many people heat their homes by burning low quality coal, which is the cheapest. Residents say they have no choice. "No climate decisions, even the best ones, will change the content of our wallets," said Maria Ligeza, an 83-year-old Katowice citizen. "Without help, people will be still burning what they have." — Reuters

within the region. The phenomenon is common among minors and especially prevalent in the Abidjan-Lagos corridor, a coastal strip of some 1,000 km between Ivory Coast and Nigeria. But the younger the children, the higher the risk of exploitation, including abuse and prostitution.

Risk of exploitation

In 2017, the NGO Terre des Hommes and the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY), a pan-African network with a strong presence at the community level, set up a project to protect, accompany and, above all, inform children and young people about migration. Last year, it helped make 7,500 children aware of the dangers and how to protect themselves. "The view of this migration has changed. Before, any movement of children was systematically equated with trafficking," said Alfred Santos, regional coordinator of the Terre des Hommes project. "But sometimes minors themselves decide to leave their home environment in search of opportunities and well-being," he said. "We can't stop them but we have to prepare them, supervise them and avoid early migration."

About 40 meeting points are spread along the Lagos-Abidjan corridor. Open to all vulnerable young people, they are places where migrants can rest, receive help or report others in need. In Come, a city of 80,000 people and a popular stop along the road from Benin to Togo, taxi and moto-taxi drivers have been trained to accompany migrant minors and work with police, the community center and authorities.

Felix Segniho, president of the inter-city drivers collective, is used to driving to and from the border with Nigeria. He and his



This picture taken on Dec 5, 2018 shows Berger Oketan, hopeful facilitator of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) association playing with children in the Xwladodji center in Cotonou. — AFP

colleagues have been made aware of the children they might encounter. "Even if they don't have money, we take them. We ask questions: why did you leave? Where are you going? With whom and why?" he says. "Some say, 'I go to Cotonou or Lagos where it's a good place to live'. If the child has no destination, we stop at Come, go to the police station and look for his family."

Motivation to migrate

While the causes of migration are generally economic, they are also underpinned by complicated family dynamics, such as the remarriage of a parent, where the child feels more threatened than protected. The fact that a loved one has already left is also

an important factor. "A young person can leave if a family member or a friend has gone to Nigeria and comes back to the village with a motorcycle or smartphone. It motivates them to do the same," said Omar Boconon Adihou, from the AMWCY.

At the border, which a minor is not supposed to be able to cross alone, the police have been trained to try to help address the issue. In Nigeria, there has already been training held to help unaccompanied children, who up until that point had simply been refused entry. But this affected only a small part of them: just like adults, most children have no papers and don't pass through official border posts but through the bush. — AFP

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Zain KSA to save \$453m with new telecom agreement

Agreement to consolidate annual royalty fees; and settles disputed amounts for past 9 years

RIYADH/KUWAIT: Zain Saudi Arabia (Zain KSA) has signed an agreement with the Kingdom's Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), and Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) to consolidate the annual royalty fee for commercial service, reducing the tariff from 15 percent to 10 percent of net revenues retrospectively, commencing 1 January, 2018.

The expected financial impact of applying the unified annual royalty fees from 1 January, 2018 to 30 September, 2018 will result in a decrease of fees amounting to SAR 220 million (\$59 million), which will be reflected positively in the next financial results announced by Zain KSA. The reduction in annual royalty fees will positively impact the company's financial results going forward.

Additionally, the agreement includes the settlement of disputed amounts related to the payment of annual royalty fees by Zain KSA to the CITC for the nine-year period between 2009 and 2017, under the condition that Zain further invests in expanding its infrastructure in addition to other conditions over the next three years. The expected financial impact of this settlement is expected to reach SAR 1.7 billion (\$453 million) over the next three years.

Expressing his appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Crown Prince, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Defense, Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, and Zain Saudi Arabia Vice-Chairman said, "We are extremely grateful for the Saudi government's visionary wisdom and support of the ICT sector through a constructive partnership with the Kingdom's telecom operators. Such support further increases the attractiveness of the Kingdom's economy, contributing to its ongoing prosperity."

Al-Kharafi continued, "We acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of the Kingdom's MOF, MCIT and CITC to overcome any obstacles facing the sector and their keenness to implement the goals that serve the aspirations of the Kingdom's Vision 2030, given ICT is one of the vision's most important pillars. Linking our settlement agreement on the primary condition to further investment in infrastructure is an insightful move by the Kingdom's authorities as it enables us to develop

in a higher quality network and service for the benefit of the digital-savvy Saudi community."

Al-Kharafi said, "The agreement announced today is a significant milestone in Zain KSA's turnaround journey, given the positive impact this will have on the financial results this year and beyond. This development will further boost Zain KSA's liquidity position as it will result in the reduction of financial obligations the company faces, and this will in turn allow the company to utilize that additional liquidity to continue the expansion and development of its 4G and 5G network and fiber (FTTH) expansion to meet the growing demand for broadband in the Kingdom."

Numerous positive developments in recent times have created an air of confidence for the future prosperity of Zain KSA. "The management team at Zain KSA is working tirelessly to implement the Board's strategy to improve the company's financial performance in order to create greater shareholder value through innovation, product development and improved customer service," Al-Kharafi concluded.

This latest agreement reached by Zain KSA comes on the back of several other beneficial milestones for the mobile operator. In October 2016, the Kingdom's CITC extended Zain KSA's mobile license for an additional 15 years to total approximately 40 years, which will expire in 2047. This license extension has an annual amortization

benefit of SAR 433 million (\$115 million) on the company's financials. At the same time, the CITC migrated Zain KSA to a unified telecommunications license that supports both service and technology neutrality, allowing the company to provide all telecommunication services.

Zain KSA also announced in November 2018 that its Board of Directors had approved the offer from IHS Holding Limited for the sale and leaseback of its telecom towers for approximately SAR 2.43 billion (\$648 million). This offer is subject to final approvals and conditions by the concerned authorities. Once completed, this step will create shareholder value as it reduces debt obligations, unlocks capital and resources, and allows Zain KSA to focus on core operations.

With respect to recent financial performances, Zain KSA recorded its best-ever quarterly results since inception, for the three months ending 30 September, 2018, with several key financial indicators showing record growth levels, reflecting the success of the operator's turnaround strategy. Key performance indicators for Q3 2018 included revenues of SAR 1.952 billion, up 8 percent; EBITDA of SAR 728 million, up 15 percent; and net profit of SAR 48 million, up from SAR 3 million, all compared to same period a year earlier. Furthermore, during Q3 2018, Zain KSA made an early voluntary payment of SAR 600 million towards its Murabaha financing agreement, reflecting the compa-

- Bader Al-Kharafi: "This is a significant milestone in Zain KSA's turnaround, which will positively impact future financial results"
- The agreement includes a reduction of the annual royalty fee from 15% to 10% of net revenues, commencing retrospectively from 1 January, 2018
- Expected positive impact of settlement for period 2009-2017 to reach SAR 1.7 billion (\$453 million) over the next three years, enabling Zain to invest in network infrastructure and improve its quality of service
- The agreement will yield a SAR 220 million (\$59 million) positive impact for first nine months of 2018



Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi

ny's solid cashflow generation.

This year's improved performance by Zain KSA and this significant historic milestone announced today was achieved as the company celebrates a decade of commercial operation of mobile voice and data services in the Kingdom.

Trade war: Signs of progress in US-China talks

WASHINGTON: Though markets are on edge and the arrest of a top Chinese executive threatened to spark a crisis, there are signs the US-China trade war can be resolved without further collateral damage to the global economy. The whole world is watching the talks between Washington and Beijing, hoping a 90-day tariff truce will hold and the sides can end a dispute that threatens hundreds of billions of dollars in trade.

In recent days the small signs of progress, and perhaps more importantly the absence of new threats from President Donald Trump, have cheered investors worldwide, reversing some of the bloodletting that erased all of 2018 gains on Wall Street.

And the arrest in Canada of a senior Huawei executive amid US charges the company violated sanctions on Iran raised fears the renewed tensions could disrupt the talks—but so far this does not seem to have happened. "What is clear is that both President Trump and the Chinese are trying to separate the issues," said Edward Alden, a trade expert at the Council on Foreign Relations. In fact, Beijing on Friday announced that starting January 1 it would suspend the additional punitive tariffs on US autos imposed in retaliation for Trump's tariffs on China, cutting them to 15 percent from 40 percent. And the talks last week produced reports the country would restart purchases of soybeans from American farmers and ease investment rules for US companies.

"China wants to make a big and very comprehensive deal. It could happen, and rather soon!" Trump tweeted on Friday, applauding the decision on car tariffs.

The ceasefire began after Trump met with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Buenos Aires on December 1 and agreed to hold off on further tariffs or retaliation at least until March 1.

That means Trump will hold off on plans to more than double import taxes on \$200 billion in Chinese



In this file photo, Employees inspect Mercedes-Benz C-Class cars at the Mercedes-Benz US International factory in Vance, Alabama. —AFP

goods at the start of the year and will also refrain from imposing tariffs on the remaining \$246 billion in Chinese products the United States imports each year.

90-day outcome
Trade experts and observers agree the timeframe will not allow for a comprehensive trade pact between the world's two biggest economies. Instead they say they hope to see a deal to roll back the tariffs and continue negotiations on the Chinese policies that have long been irritants to relations with Washington: forced transfer or theft of American technology, restrictive investment rules and industrial subsidies.

"You can't solve every problem with China in 90 days, but progress could be made institutionalizing" changes to Beijing's policies, Jake Colvin, vice president of the National Foreign Trade Council, told AFP.

But he cautioned that both sides "need to figure out a path to a win-win outcome. They both need to be able to say they gained something." US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer is leading the negotiating team, which includes Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House trade advisor Peter Navarro.

"The basic problem here is that the United States and China don't trust each other," Alden told AFP.

"The best hope is a partial deal that addresses some of the US concerns and then the negotiations to continue while the progress is closely monitored." —AFP

US Fed to hike again but hints at pause in 2019

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Reserve is likely to raise interest rates in the coming week but policymakers have begun to signal they may take it a bit slower in 2019. Waning growth, a trade war, tame inflation and an increasingly scary geopolitical scene mean the central bank could make clear they plan to slow or even pause the current tightening cycle—instead taking a wait-and-see approach until the economic picture becomes clearer. Since October, Fed officials have watched Wall Street take a wild ride, alternately diving and rallying as public remarks from Chairman Jerome Powell and others veered between indicating gradual hikes would continue or pause. In recent days, economists have begun to cut their forecasts for the number of rate hikes they expect next year to just one or two from as many as four.

Fed officials in September forecast three increases but that could be revised as well in the new projections to be released Wednesday. At last month's meeting, members of the Fed's rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee argued they should signal they were close to the end of the cycle by deleting the words "further gradual increases" from post-meeting statements. That would mark a significant shift in the Fed's messaging of the last three years that maintained a steady drumbeat telling markets to expect "gradual adjustments" to rates.

But economists say the Fed is keenly aware of the specter of slowing growth in China and Europe, a chaotic British exit from the European Union, political turmoil in France and Italy's budget woes.

In the United States, job growth has remained strong this year but inflation has settled at the Fed's two percent target, despite fears the strong economy might ignite prices.

Add to this the fading boost from recent tax cuts and government spending, and expectations US growth will slow, and the future can seem highly uncertain.

"I share the notion that things are not quite as strong as they looked a few months ago but we don't know anything very definitively," former Fed vice chair Alice Rivlin said. "I think they're saying, 'We'll be very careful and we'll play it

how we see it.'" Changing expectations allows the Fed to pause without roiling financial markets with a surprise move.

Wall Street and the Fed

As of Friday, futures markets put the probability of a rate hike this week at 81.8 percent—still high but well below virtual certainty predicted by the betting money ahead of other meetings this year.

"I don't think the Fed is trying to manage that probability number," said Gary Stern, former president of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank. The Fed's mandate is not protect stock market investors but to maximize employment at sustainable levels while keeping a lid on inflation.

Nevertheless, stunning gyrations on equities markets can worry policymakers, because an outright crash can sap consumer and business confidence, making households and companies cut spending, which is never good for GDP growth. Wall Street crumbled from record heights in early October after the Fed chairman said benchmark interest rate was "a long way" below neutral—a rate that is neither stimulating nor restraining growth—suggesting steady rate hikes would continue.

But Powell changed his tune just a few days later, saying the key policy rate in fact was "just below" neutral, suggesting it need not rise too much higher, and that led to a stocks rally on November 28.

"I think they'll be watching carefully what pushes the markets, not because the markets per se are important to them but because the markets are the way monetary policy is conveyed to the rest of the economy," said Donald Kohn, who was the Fed's vice chairman from 2006 to 2010.

Other signals that a pause is increasingly probable have emerged. Amid another day of plunging stock prices, The Wall Street Journal reported December 7 that the Fed was considering whether "to signal a new wait-and-see" approach, news that helped calm jittery investors.

Other Fed officials have voiced caution, including Dallas Fed President Robert Kaplan who said the central bank should be "really patient" in raising rates. Economist Diane Swonk of Grant Thornton says the Fed will call for "a more flexible trajectory."

"We have lowered our own forecast on rate hikes to two next year," she wrote in an analytical note, but like other economists noted that the central bank decisions will depend on the economic data. —AFP

Business

NBK Money Markets Report

Fed balances global risks and a thriving domestic economy

May survives a momentous week over Brexit talks

KUWAIT: The US Federal Reserve now believes rates are getting closer to the lower end of its estimates of the neutral level, allowing space to slow down its rate-rising program. The central bank is still expected to lift its target range from 2.25 to 2.5 percent during its December 18-19 meeting. However, with core inflation short of the two percent target, the Fed may decide to ease the pace of tightening in 2019. Diving into US inflation, the figure appeared to rise at its slowest pace in the nine months to November according to the US labor department.

As fuel and energy costs fell, headline consumer price growth slowed to 2.2 percent, down from the 2.5 percent recorded in October. Core inflation, a figure of greater interest to the Federal Reserve, rose 2.2 percent from the 2.1 percent in the previous month. Following a surge in prices earlier this year, the latest data suggests price pressures are easing. Meanwhile, the spread between the 2-year and 10-year treasuries have narrowed, signaling an economic slowdown might be ahead.

The challenge now facing the Federal Reserve is balancing global risks against a resilient performance of the domestic US economy. Investor confidence is currently hit by a range of global pressures such as the possibility of a hard Brexit from the EU and increasing US trade tensions with China. The US economy grew at an annualized 3.5 percent pace in the third quarter, while unemployment continued to hover at its slowest pace since the late 1960s at 3.7 percent.

Trade tensions

On the trade front, a major sign of gesture by China towards easing tensions was made as the country resumed buying US soybeans with purchases for 1.5 to 2 million metric tons already placed, bringing some reprieve to American farmers. This is the first significant move since the two countries started striking tit-for-tat tariffs, with China placing a 25 percent retaliatory levy on soybeans after Trump imposed duties on billions of dollars' worth of goods. Last week, China also moved to cut import tariffs on US made vehicles from 40 percent to 15 percent. The decisions came following an agreement between leaders Xi Jinping and Donald Trump to a 90-day truce earlier this month. Looking ahead, US and Chinese officials will not hold face-to-face trade talks until January of 2019.

Irrespective, it seems that the gestures failed to offer markets much support. Rather, caution was the prevailing sentiment across global stocks. US yield curve inversion, weaker economic data, and worries over a global slowdown created a reasonably downbeat tone. Clouded with uncertainty, US equity funds suffered \$27.7 billion in outflows for the week ending December 12 after a prolonged period of volatility for

share prices. As investors withdraw their money and reassess investment decisions, it is clear that the trade war is currently a key issue given that there is still a long way to go for a resolve. Looking at the final quarter of 2018, the S&P is down about 9.3 percent with the Dow Jones close behind dropping 7.7 percent. The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite has suffered the greatest, down 12.03 percent.

OPEC production cut

Switching gear to commodities, OPEC and its allies have agreed to cut oil production by 1.2 million barrels a day in defiance of US president Trump's demands. The effort aimed at easing concern regarding supply excess, which has pushed prices 30 percent lower in the past two months. As the market attempts to stabilize, a report from Bloomberg on Thursday stated that Saudi Arabia plans to cut shipments to US refiners to avoid an expansion of US stockpiles. If exports were to ease, the global supply and demand imbalance may swing further in a positive direction. Crude inventories in the US fell by 1.2 million barrels in the week to Dec 7, compared with market expectations for a decrease of 3 million barrels. Meanwhile, OPEC said 2019 demand for its crude would fall to 31.44 million barrels a day (1.5 million less than it currently produces). With concerns regarding the possibility of weaker oil demand growth and booming output by the US, markets might be kept in oversupply in 2019 even with the output cuts. The US is set to end 2018 as the world's top oil producer, ahead of Russia and Saudi Arabia.

May survives a hectic

It was an abundant week for Brexit news as UK Prime Minister Theresa May's struggle to finalize a Brexit agreement shed light on a bitterly divided party. Early last week, May postponed the final vote on her Brexit deal after making a clear admission that she believed it "would be rejected by a significant margin". The issue of the Irish border remains to be of large concern for more than 100 MPs which have spoken out against the draft agreement. It is unclear how May will resolve the issue given that the EU have remained unwilling to consider any deal that leaves open the possibility of a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. The drastic move did not bode well for the pound, as it fell to a 20-month low of 1.2508 following the announcement.

Later that week, May survived an attempted coup by her party's MPs after they were able to trigger a vote of confidence in their leader. She survived the ballot with a 200 to 117 vote, and now faces the task of gaining the support of the 117 Tory MPs who tried to oust her. Looking ahead, the prime minister will return to Brussels to tweak her deal in hopes that the House will vote on it in mid-January.



Britain takes a hit

The UK economy has undoubtedly suffered as a result of the Brexit havoc as GDP growth reportedly slowed to 0.4 percent, down from 0.6 percent in the third quarter of 2018. Month to month, GDP grew by just 0.1 percent in October from September. The figure came in line with expectations and confirmed that the British economy's strength in the third quarter of 2018 was caused by a boost to consumer spending for the summer. Industrial production fell 0.6 percent, with manufacturing output down 0.9 percent. As consumers and businesses face significant cost pressures, the slower GDP growth reflects a hit to the services sector mainly from lower car sales and reports of factory stoppages due to lack of demand. The UK's trade deficit also widened as imports grew faster than exports in October, reflecting deterioration in trade conditions for UK exporters. The March 29 exit deadline is approaching shortly, and with no clarity in sight the Sterling is expected to remain volatile. Year to date, GBP/USD has suffered a 10.75 percent decline and ended the week at the 1.2585 level.

ECB bond-buying program

The European Central Bank has announced on Thursday that it would end its 2.6 trillion euro bond-buying program which began in 2015. The bank will now be left with more traditional tools to manage its economy, primarily interest rate modifications. The decision was reached unanimously by the

ECB governing council, ending four years of bond purchases at a time when growth is uncertain. Eurozone data has generally been undesirable for most of 2018, with forward looking surveys such as purchasing managers' indices, consumer and business confidence continuing to slide since the summer. Looking at GDP, data reveals a deceleration for 2018 as growth was recorded at a four year low of 0.2 percent for the third quarter of the year. The euro fell 0.3 percent against the US dollar in the aftermath of the decision, and is currently trading at around the 1.1311 level.

As such, the ECB lowered its forecasts for both growth and inflation in 2019. President Mario Draghi, whose tenure is to end next year, voiced his concern though remained optimistic overall. He recognized risks were "moving to the downside" predominantly due to trade tensions, geopolitical turbulence, and high volatility in financial markets. Draghi acknowledged that economic data had been "weaker than expected", though remained optimistic adding that the governing council's mood was one of "continuing confidence". The ECB's targets inflation at around 2 percent, and is expected to keep interest rates on hold "at least through the summer of 2019". Inflation is expected to ease to 2 percent in November from an almost 6-year high of 2.2 percent in October.

Kuwait
Kuwaiti Dinar
USD/KWD opened at 0.30405 yesterday morning.

KAMCO Oil Market Monthly Report

Oil prices plunge to 14-month low on oversupply, economic woes

KUWAIT: Brent crude spot price dropped 23 percent during November-18 as concerns over continued oversupply in the oil market coupled with global economic growth concerns overshadowed output cut announcement by OPEC+. Prices remained volatile during the first half of December-18 but witnessed some improvement initially on the back of a trade truce announced between US and China followed by two consecutive weeks of drop in US crude stocks. The announcement by OPEC+ countries to curb output during 1H-19 helped to support prices, but a general weakness across global financial markets kept oil prices under pressure.

Global markets have remained weak recently led by decline in European and Asian indices that affected asset classes across the board. In Europe, the confusion over Brexit pushed down European stocks, while the situation in France and Italy has exerted additional downward pressure. Also, data released by various government authorities have pointed to a slowdown in global economic growth. Japan reported its worst contraction in 4 years during Q3-18 led by decline in capital spending. In addition, the most recent monthly export figures released by China came in weaker-than-expected highlighting a decline in local and international demand. The Nov-18 retail sales in China grew at its weakest pace since 2003 and industrial output growth was weakest in almost three years. Nevertheless, the trade dispute between US and China took a breather after the two countries agreed to not escalate it any further. China announced its first big import from the US amid easing trade tensions and is expected to be reconsidering its China-only manufacturing push as a part of its long term strategy.

Meanwhile, OPEC+ announced that the group would slash production by 1.2 mb/d during 1H-19. The decision was expected by oil watchers, however, a lack of confidence in global oil demand in 2019 led by rising trade tensions, monetary tightening and geopolitical challenges is said to dent the effects of lower production. In its latest monthly report, OPEC kept overall demand for 2018 and 2019 unchanged but lowered demand for its crude for 2019 by 100 tb/d. The group also said that inventories in developed countries has once again risen back above the five-year average after rising for the fourth consecutive month in October-18 by 5.7 million barrels and stood at 2.87 billion barrels. Monthly production by OPEC remained largely flat m-o-m during November-18 as the increase in production primarily by Saudi Arabia was offset by an almost equivalent decline in production from Iran, according to Bloomberg data.

In its monthly report, the IEA expressed its doubts over whether the announced cuts by OPEC+ would be enough to offset curb the supply glut in the industry. The report said that there could be some surplus next year despite the production cuts. Nevertheless, the IEA said that the decline in oil prices could support oil demand in 2019, although it left its demand outlook for global oil demand growth unchanged at 1.4 mb/d for the year.

Oil prices

Oil prices continued to decline during November-18 and during the first half of December-18, falling from a 4-year high level to the lowest level in 14 months. Both spot Brent and

OPEC crudes went below the critical \$60/b mark for the first time since October-17 while median estimates for the next four quarters were lowered by an average \$2.7/b, according to Bloomberg estimates. Prices saw some recovery at the start of December-18 on the hopes of OPEC+ cuts announcement, however, a slight delay in announcement sent prices southwards. A decline in crude inventories in the US also supported prices in December-18. Average OPEC crude prices dropped 17.7 percent during the month, the biggest decline since February-16. Kuwait crude average price also declined by 17.1 percent to average at \$65.2/b while Brent witnessed the biggest drop out of the three crude grades at 20.3 percent to average at \$64.7/b.

In its monthly report, the IEA kept its demand growth forecast for 2018 and 2019 unchanged at 1.3 mb/d and 1.4 mb/d, respectively. The report said that the recent rise in oil prices affected non-OECD demand in September-18 and October-18, however, 4Q-18 demand figures were upgraded due to low oil prices. For 2019, the report said that the expected demand decline led by global economic growth slowdown and weak currencies would be offset by low oil prices. In terms of production, the US continued to pump oil eyeing higher oil prices. According to EIA, for the first time in history, US became a net exporter for crude and refined products, which is a key development given the expectations of rising US oil production this year and in 2019. Nevertheless, the latest Baker Hughes rig count data showed a second consecutive drop in oil rig count this week. The total number of active oil rigs in the US stood at 873 after declining by 4 rigs this week and a steep drop of 10 rigs in the previous week. The decline in the previous week was the biggest weekly decline since May-16 and gives an early indication of production decline, albeit marginally, in the near term.

World oil demand

World demand growth estimates for 2018 was kept unchanged from last months' projections and is expected to grow by 1.5 mb/d to reach 98.79 mb/d in 2018. In the OECD Americas region, oil demand in the US continues to remain strong based on monthly data for September-18 and preliminary data for October-18 and November-18.

Oil demand increased by almost 0.52 mb/d y-o-y during the first eleven months of the year backed by higher demand for diesel, jet kerosene, LPG and ethane partially offset by softer demand trend in gasoline, residual fuel oil and naphtha. Oil demand in Mexico witnessed sharp decline in October-18 in line with the first three quarters of the year. On the other hand, Canada reported higher y-o-y oil demand during September-18 with decline in demand for LPG and naphtha were offset by higher demand for jet kerosene, gasoline and diesel. Demand trends in OECD Europe was reported to be mixed during September-18 with lower requirements recorded in Germany and France primarily for diesel while UK, Spain, Poland and a number of other countries recorded higher y-o-y demand. Indications for October-18 shows positive oil demand growth in Germany, France and Italy while the UK recorded flat y-o-y demand. Also, the latest monthly data for vehicle sales in Europe showed a decline of almost 7 percent y-o-y during October-18 denting YTD-18 demand that continues to remain positive at +2 percent. In OECD Asia Pacific, Japan continued to record declining oil requirements in all the main product categories barring gasoline, diesel and residual fuel oil that recorded marginal y-o-y growth in October-18. In the non-OECD group, China recorded strong demand during October-18 with the exception of diesel and fuel oil that recorded a decline due to slower industrial activity. Nevertheless, negative signals were seen in tracking vehicle sales in China that declined by 13.1 percent during October-18. In India, demand for oil products rebounded during October-



Source for the above charts: OPEC and Bloomberg

18 after softer growth in the previous two months. Main product categories recorded strong demand in India, primarily for diesel. World oil demand growth for 2019 was also kept unchanged from previous projections at 1.29 mb/d and total requirements is expected to reach 100.08 mb/d.

World Oil Supply

Global oil supply increased by 0.5 mb/d m-o-m and 2.95 mb/d y-o-y during November-18 and stood at 100.64 mb/d, according to OPEC monthly report. The increase was primarily led by higher supply from OECD Americas partially offset by a small decline in supply from OPEC producers. On the other hand, IEA estimated November-18 supply at 101.1 mb/d, a m-o-m decline of 360 tb/d due to lower output from North Sea, Canada and Russia. Non-OPEC supply growth projections for 2018 once again saw an upward revision of 0.19 mb/d and is now expected to grow by 2.5 mb/d during the year. Total supply during the year is estimated to reach 60.03 mb/d from non-OPEC countries. The revision mainly reflected upward revisions in historical US and Canada production data as well as increase in supply by almost 0.5 mb/d during Q4-18 mainly from Russia. For the full year, non-OPEC growth in supply would be led by higher flows from US, Canada, Russia, Kazakhstan, the UK and Ghana partially offset by decline in supply primarily from Mexico, Norway and Vietnam. Supply from OECD countries was revised up by 84 tb/d and is expected to grow by 2.29 mb/d to reach 28.0 mb/d during the year. For 2019, supply growth was lowered by 0.08 mb/d to 2.16 mb/d and total supply for the year is expected to reach 62.19 mb/d. The revision primarily reflected a decline in supply from Canada which implemented a mandatory production adjustment along with supply cuts agreed by 10 non-OPEC members of the OPEC+ pact during 1H-19. The y-o-y increase in supply in 2019 is expected to come mainly from the US, Brazil, Russia and the UK partially offset by decline in Mexico and Norway.

OPEC oil production & spare capacity

After increasing by a cumulative 1.3 mb/d over the previ-



ous five months, OPEC production remained almost flat during November-18 at 33.1 mb/d, according to crude production data from Bloomberg. OPEC secondary sources estimated the production to be slightly lower at 33.0 mb/d. OPEC's data showed that Saudi Arabia recorded the biggest increase in production during the month adding almost 0.4 mb/d and producing at a record pace of more than 11.0 mb/d. However, the increase was enough to offset an almost equivalent decline in production in Iran.

UAE also recorded higher production during the month that was offset by decline in production from Nigeria and Libya. Production by UAE reached a record high of 3.3 mb/d, according to Bloomberg, surpassing Iran as the third biggest producer in OPEC. The compliance level to production cuts stood at 120 percent during November-18, according to Reuters calculations, compared to 110 percent in October-18. In its latest meeting in Vienna, OPEC agreed to extend the production cuts agreed between the OPEC+ members until 1H-19. The group agreed to lower OPEC+ output by 1.2 mb/d with 0.8 mb/d shared by OPEC producers and the remaining 0.4 mb/d would be reduced by non-OPEC partners. It was also said that the decision would be next reviewed in April-19 instead of June-19 to give ample time for a decision on extension. According to the announcement, there were no quotas assigned to individual producers to lower their output, while Iran, Venezuela and Libya were given exemptions.

Post the output cut announcement, UAE's ADNOC reportedly informed its customers that it would lower January-19 crude allocations by almost 2.5 percent. On the other hand, it was reported that Saudi Arabia plans lower crude exports to the US in January-19 eyeing the excessive build-up in inventories. The Kingdom's average exports to the US stood at 0.86 mb/d during 2018, according to Bloomberg. Meanwhile, production in Libya once again declined during November-18 that continued in December-18 due to severe rainfall that affected oil export terminals in the country. According to reports, the shutdown affected 0.3 mb/d in production since the start of December-18 due to limited loadings in tankers.

Business

Macron's ratings fall further after a month of protests

'Yellow vest' protests lose momentum on decisive weekend

PARIS: A month of "yellow vest" protests have taken a further toll on the popularity of French President Emmanuel Macron, a new poll showed yesterday, with analysts saying he will be forced to change his style of governing.

Around 66,000 protesters turned out again on Saturday on the fifth round of anti-government demonstrations, which sprung up over fuel tax hikes last month. The figure was about half the number of the previous weekend, suggesting momentum was waning and the most acute political crisis of Macron's 19-month presidency was coming to an end.

"It is calming down, but what remains of it all is a strong feeling of hatred towards Macron," said veteran sociologist Herve Le Bras from the School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS). A major poll by the Ifop group published in Journal du Dimanche newspaper showed Macron's approval had slipped another two points in the last month, to 23 percent.

The proportion of people who declared themselves "very dissatisfied" by his leadership jumped by six points to 45 percent. Many of the protesters have targeted Macron personally, calling on him to resign or attacking his background as an investment banker and his alleged elitism.

Le Bras said the protests had underlined the depth of dislike for Macron's personality and style of governing, which critics see as arrogant and too distant.

'Context has changed'

Until last week, a clear majority of French people backed the protests, which sprung up initially over high taxes before snowballing into broader opposition to Macron. In a bid to end the standoff, he announced a package of measures for low-income workers on Monday in a televised address, estimated by economists to cost up to 15 billion euros (\$17 billion).

The 40-year-old also acknowledged widespread animosity towards him and came close to apologizing for a series of verbal gaffes seen as dismissive of the poor or jobless. Two polls published last Tuesday—in the wake of Macron's concessions—suggested the country was now split broadly 50-50 on whether the protests should continue.

"It's a movement that has succeeded in forcing back what looked like a strong government," Jerome Sainte-Marie, a public opinion expert at the Pollingvox group, said.

"People have confidence in themselves now, so things won't

return to how they were on November 15" before the protests started, he said. "The context in which Emmanuel Macron holds power has changed," he added. The former investment banker had until now styled himself as a determined pro-business reformer who would not yield to pressure from protests like his predecessors.

"Macron has given an indication that he is more open to dialogue," Jean-Daniel Levy from the Harris Interactiv polling group said. The government has announced a six-month consultation with civil society groups, mayors, businesses and the "yellow vests" to discuss tax and other economic reforms.

Hikes in petrol and diesel taxes, as well as tougher emissions controls on old vehicles—justified on the grounds of environmental protection—were what initially sparked the "yellow vest" movement. Macron "won't necessarily change the overall course of his reforms, rather the way he carries them out," Levy added.

Calls for calm

In Paris on Saturday, more than 8,000 police on duty easily outnumbered the 2,200 protesters counted by local authorities. There were 168 arrests by early evening, far fewer than the 1,000 or so of last Saturday. Tear gas was occasionally fired, but only a fraction compared with the weekends of December 8 or December 1 when graffiti was daubed on the Arc de Triomphe in scenes that shocked France.

At Toulouse, in the southwest, police said they had arrested 31 people and were still detaining 26 after clashes during 'yellow jacket' protests in the city.

Two motorway tollbooths at Narbonne and Perpignan in the south were burned overnight Saturday to Sunday, fire services reported. Both had been targeted in previous protests.

Richard Ferrand, the head of the National Assembly, welcomed the "necessary" weakening of "yellow vest" rallies on Saturday, adding that "there had been a massive response to their demands".

Losing momentum

Groups of defiant "yellow vest" demonstrators faced off with tens of thousands of police around France on Saturday, but the protest movement appeared to have lost momentum on a fifth and decisive weekend.

President Emmanuel Macron, facing the biggest crisis of his



PARIS: A protester wearing a yellow vest (gilet jaune) holds a placard reading "here lies democracy" during a demonstration against rising costs of living they blame on high taxes on the place de la Republique, in Paris. —AFP

presidency, announced a series of concessions on Monday to defuse the explosive "yellow vest" crisis, which swelled up from rural and small-town France last month. The package of tax and minimum wage measures for low-income workers, coupled with bitter winter weather this weekend, appeared to have helped bring calm to the country after more than a month of clashes and disruption.

France was also hit by a fresh deadly terror attack on

Tuesday night when a gunman opened fire at a Christmas market in Strasbourg, leaving four dead and leading the government to urge people to stay at home to spare the stretched security forces.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said Saturday that eight people had now died in incidents linked to the demonstrations, and called on protesters to halt their blockades across the country. —AFP

Wall Street Week Ahead

Market looks to Fed outlook for early Christmas gift

NEW YORK: Investors are eager for a touch of Christmas cheer from the US Federal Reserve next week, hoping for signs the central bank may ease up on interest rate hikes next year and spark a Santa Claus rally. US stocks are having their worst December performance in 16 years with the S&P 500 notching a 5 percent drop so far this month.

The Fed's ongoing reversal of easy-money policy is a major overhang, and it is expected to raise rates more at the end of its two-day meeting on Wednesday. That would mark a fourth consecutive December increase since 2015 when it started gradually lifting them. The question on investors' minds is whether it could be the last. "It's imperative (the Fed releases) a dovish statement and an accommodative Q&A session," said Bucky Hellwig, senior vice president at BB&T Wealth Management in Birmingham, Alabama.

"If not, that would put stocks at risk again." "The Fed's the key to a strong December, and it's getting late in the year." Recent comments from policymakers have fueled expectations for a timeout signal when the rate-setting committee's statement is released along with officials' indi-

vidual projections for how much further they will rise in 2019 and beyond. "The market's been under incredible pressure, concerned that the Fed is just going to go charging ahead," said Stephen Massocca, senior vice president at Wedbush Securities in San Francisco. "The Fed understands that and from their latest commentary they're starting to walk it back a little bit." US markets have been highly sensitive to any hint that the Fed is ready to slow down or even take a pause. The central bank has lifted rates eight times since December 2015 in a bid to restore them to normal after having slashed borrowing costs to near zero to combat the financial crisis a decade ago.

Last month, when Fed Chairman Jerome Powell said rates were near the range of policymakers' estimates of "neutral" - the level at which they neither stimulate nor impede the economy - the S&P jumped by the most in eight months. "There's no doubt there's been a shift in sentiment towards a more dovish Fed," said Charlie Ripley, senior market strategist for Allianz Investment Management in Minneapolis. Other FOMC members have recently weighed in. Earlier this month, Fed Governor Lael Brainard nodded to growing risks to growth overseas and in corporate debt markets at home.

St. Louis Federal Reserve President James Bullard chimed in that investors were nervous that the Fed had gone too far. According to their latest projections in September, the median view among policymakers was for three rate hikes in 2019. Interest rate futures used to gauge the

probability of further hikes now reflect almost no chance of that happening. "If you look back at even as late as September, there were probably three rate hikes priced in to 2019, where now there's right around one," Ripley said. Some recent US economic data, including an underwhelming jobs report and tepid inflation numbers, along with pressures such as the ongoing US-China trade skirmish, also appear to support an argument for a pause in Fed tightening in 2019. It is a mixed picture, though, as robust retail sales data for November showed con-

sumer spending remained on solid ground, which could suggest no need for the Fed to let up. How the rest of December plays out likely comes down to how Fed officials communicate their view of a complex economic picture, said Oliver Pursche, vice chairman and chief market strategist at Bruderman Asset Management in New York. "If you get a dovish-sounding (Fed) statement that stresses the fact that the economy is good, but given that there's no inflation to worry about we can take a pause, that could lead to a 7 to 8 percent rally into year-end." —Reuters



NEW YORK, NY: Traders and financial professionals work at the opening bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), on Friday in New York City. —AFP

with Japan, the trade power at the time. Like Trump, Lighthizer believes free trade cannot be unfettered and must be reciprocal. In the talks with China, the objectives are clear: to force the Asian giant to put an end to trade policies the US deems "unfair," especially the theft or forced transfer of American technology, and state subsidies for industry. The countries agreed to a 90-day truce through March 1, but without an agreement, Trump will continue to impose punitive tariffs on Chinese goods imported into the United States. "Technology is the most important advantage that Americans have economically," Lighthizer said in a recent, and rare, television interview.

"We will protect that technology and get additional market access from China. If that can be done the president wants us to do it. If not we'll have tariffs."

Ohio an important port on Lake Erie. It was used for coal and ore transport at the end of the 19th century, and the town's decline contributed to his skepticism about globalization and its drawbacks, according to relatives cited by The New York Times. Prior to being named USTR in May 2017, Lighthizer, a father of two, was a partner in the Skadden law firm where he was a specialist in international trade law for more than 30 years.

Imposing stature, piercing gray-blue eyes, he is described as a man as "grumpy" in private as in public. "He's very particular. Bombastic at times," said an official close to the US-Canada-Mexico talks. But he is "also charming, with a great sense of humor" and "tremendously respected his strong intellect." Like many of the Washington elite, Lighthizer attended Georgetown University both as an undergraduate and for law school. —AFP



US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer

USTR Lighthizer, tough negotiator in Trump's shadow

WASHINGTON: He stays out of the limelight but shares President Donald Trump's mistrust of China and the threat it posed to US economic power. US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer has emerged as the US strongman in the ongoing trade negotiations, determined to force changes in Beijing's economic policies.

A day after signing a new free trade agreement with Canada and Mexico after over a year of tough negotiations, Trump tapped the 71-year-old Lighthizer to lead this time the delicate trade talks with Beijing, with perhaps more at stake for the global economy.

Trump previously entrusted that mission to Commerce Wilbur Ross and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. Without success. The title of US Trade Representative (USTR) makes him a full member of the "cabinet", that is to say the government gathered around the US President and the US representative in the World Organization Trade (WTO).

And Lighthizer is a veteran of trade negotiations, having served as deputy USTR under Republican President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, and dealt

Lighthizer will not be satisfied with promises. He wants actions. Unlike Trump who revels the spotlight, Lighthizer keeps a low profile. During negotiations with Canada and Mexico his appearances were rare, his speeches parsimonious, his press releases distilled. He makes it a point of honor not to expose in public what is happening behind the scenes. Lighthizer comes from an affluent family in Ashtabula,

Fears of slowdown put Fed tightening under microscope

WASHINGTON/SAN FRANCISCO: In June 2006, the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates for a 17th consecutive time but cushioned the increase with a strong signal that officials were ready to stop the tightening cycle.

Each rate increase in the previous two years had come with a cue that the US central bank would continue to lift borrowing costs, but at that policy meeting the Fed said any additional hikes would "depend on the evolution" of the economy. Now, as 2018 winds down with three rate increases on the books and another expected at the end of the Dec. 18-19 policy meeting, the Fed may be similarly preparing to call time on a rate hike cycle that has proved remarkable for its tepid pace.

Although the Fed had hoped to return its benchmark overnight lending rate to "normal" when it embarked on its tightening cycle three years ago, it may end up stranded at about half the 2006 level and well below the average from the 1950s to 2007. The Fed has raised rates eight times since 2015.

Investors and leading Fed analysts have spent the last month adjusting their outlooks as a familiar set of risks took root. Oil prices have plunged. Stock markets are wobbly. There are fears slowing global growth will weigh on a US economy already expected to decelerate. Inflation, watched closely by the Fed, may be weakening.

A Reuters poll on Friday showed economists marking up the probability of a US recession in the next two years to 40 percent from 35 percent previously. They now expect the Fed to both pare its three anticipated rate increases for next year to two or even fewer. The central bank may also ditch its longstanding pledge that "further gradual increases" in rates will be needed to keep the economy on track and inflation under control. —Reuters

German railway reaches pay deal with main union

BERLIN: German railway operator Deutsche Bahn and its main union said Saturday they had reached a pay deal after strikes disrupted services earlier this week. The EVG union, which represents most of the 160,000 DB workers, agreed a 6.1 percent pay rise in all — 3.5 percent payable from July 2019 and 2.6 percent from July 2020.

EVG originally demanded a 7.5 percent pay hike while DB offered 5.1 percent. Employees will also get a one-off payment of 1,000 euros (\$1,130) just before the first phase salary increase, EVG and DB said.

EVG negotiator Regina Rusch-Ziemba said the union had won comprehensively after strike action had "sent a clear sign" to the company of workers' determination.

The agreement "is an important sign of (DB's) esteem for its workers," DB human resources head Martin Seiler said in a statement.

DB will now be able to focus on improving its services, especially on punctuality, he said. —AFP

Business

NBK Capital to be coordinator of largest bond issue in Kuwait for Burgan Bank

CEO outlines NBK Capital's strategy in interview with Sky News Arabia

KUWAIT: Faisal Al-Hamad, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NBK Capital Company, said that the company has a new strategy for the next three years. It follows the needs of the company's customers and focuses on three sectors: asset management, investment services and financial intermediation, indicating that the Saudi market will have a large share of investment in the region.

Al-Hamad said during an interview with Sky News Arabia that the largest bond issue in Kuwait for Burgan Bank would be announced soon, with a value of nearly half a billion dollars.

Al-Hamad said that NBK Capital has two companies to be listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange as part of its efforts to be the first destination for successful companies wishing to be listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange. Al-Hamad pointed out the successful acquisition of Kuwait's 4-sale company as part of the technology sector.

As for the changes in the Kuwaiti stock market, Al-Hamad said: "The development witnessed by the stock market has contributed positively to attract companies to the listing, especially the new regulations that encourage listing." For example, by eliminating profitability requirements, it is possible for emerging companies with good growth prospects adding that joining the global indices will increase the interest of private companies and investors in the Kuwaiti market. "The Kuwaiti economy has witnessed a remarkable improvement in 2018," he said. "We expect the Kuwaiti economy to grow by about 3 percent," he said. "This is a good growth under these economic conditions in the region."

On the general budget of the state, he said: "The rise in oil prices improves the public budget despite the large increase planned for spending in the budget this year, with the need to draw from the general reserve, expected to shrink this year to 1 percent of GDP. (Considering our outlook for the Brent price at \$70 a barrel - the average of the fiscal year.)"

Question: Tell us about NBK Capital new investment strategy in 2019?

Al-Hamad: We have a strategy for the next three years, taking into account that the company renews its strategy annually to suit the conditions of the renewable market, but our strategy follows the needs of our customers and our focus on the three sectors we work in is asset management, investment services and financial intermediation. In terms of investment in the Gulf markets, The Saudi market will have a large share of investment. In terms of investment in private companies, we completed this month the acquisition of Foursale, a Kuwaiti company operating

in the technology sector. We are currently conducting a comprehensive review of investments locally and regionally through our private equity funds. Outside the region, there is strong demand for investment in the real estate sector of some European countries, as well as a high demand for diversification of clients' investments outside the region. In terms of investment services, we will continue our path in terms of listings and bonds. We will soon announce the largest bond issue in Kuwait for Burgan Bank with a value of 150 million Kuwaiti Dinars (about half a billion dollars).

Question: As the National Investment Company has a leading role in listing the largest companies in the stock exchange, are there new listings in the stock exchange in 2019?

Al-Hamad: NBK Capital is seeking to be the first destination for successful companies wishing to be listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange. During the year, NBK Capital Company listed Kuwait Holding Company as the first company to be listed on the first market under the new stock exchange regulations. The listing came after a successful private placement of 35 percent of the company's capital with a transaction size of KD 55.8 million. The offer was highly interactive, with demand exceeding 230 percent of the offered shares and attracting more than 1,000 investors. We are proud of NBK Capital for investing in this important transaction.

NBK Capital has two private companies being processed for listing on the Kuwaiti bourse. Both deals are in the early stages of preparation and are unlikely to be listed in 2019.

Question: What is your assessment of the performance of the Kuwaiti economy, was it satisfactory or not, with clarification of this? What are your expectations for the Kuwaiti economy during 2019?

Al-Hamad: The Kuwaiti economy witnessed a remarkable improvement in 2018. We expect growth of 2.8 percent for non-oil activity and 2.5 percent for oil production in 2018, leading to an increase of 2.6 percent in GDP. According to official data, real GDP rose by 0.7 percent year-on-year in the first half of 2018, despite 2.2 percent decline in oil production in the same period as part of OPEC's commitment to reduce production. Non-oil GDP

grew by 4.9 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year, boosted by good performance in communications, manufacturing and utilities.

For our 2019 projections, we expect total growth to be close to 3 percent, which is a good growth under these economic conditions in the region. With regard to the financial situation, the increase in oil prices contributed to the improvement of the general budget despite the large planned increase in spending in the budget this year, with the need to withdraw from the general reserve. This year's deficit is expected to shrink to 1 percent of GDP, given our expectations for the Brent crude at \$ 70 a barrel (the average of the fiscal year).

Question: Do you feel that the stock market has become attractive to the inclusion of more companies, ending the era of withdrawals that have been seen for some time?

Al-Hamad: Certainly, the noticeable changes on the Kuwait Stock Exchange are positively contributing to attracting companies to listing, especially the new regulations that encourage listing. For example, by removing profitability requirements, it is possible for emerging companies with good growth prospects to raise capital and be listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange. In addition, joining the global indices will increase the interest of private companies and investors worldwide in the Kuwaiti market.



Kuwait GDP to grow at 3% in 2019, positive changes in stock market

The stock market in 2018

Faisal Al-Hamad said the performance of the Kuwait Stock Exchange in 2018 was fairly good by introducing and developing several tools and systems that helped attract investors to trade in the stock exchange, including the division of the market, which contributed to overcoming several challenges such as liquidity decline on listed companies in the first market, the lack of an attractive source base, and the low efficiency of information, in addition to addressing the shortcomings of the rules of listing. The division of the market was aimed at encouraging the inclusion of private and government companies through several proposals and with the aim of creating more orderly channels of capital movement.

The KSE also witnessed a number of development and

modernization programs at various levels, including the launch of the OTC trading system which regulates the trading of companies that are not listed, withdrawn or written off from the official market. The new mechanism has created the possibility of trading through an advanced automated trading system. Hand trades continued for decades. We believe that the launch of this system contributes to attract companies and customers to trade through the platform managed by all professionalism and transparency to follow up stock prices as well as the development of clearing mechanism and settlement.



NBK Capital CEO Faisal Al-Hamad during the interview with Sky News

A step in the right direction

Faisal Al-Hamad expressed the readiness of the stock exchange for the potential upgrade of MSCI Emerging Markets next year as a step forward to consider upgrading the market to emerging markets by 2019. MSCI highlighted a number of positive initiatives implemented by the Kuwait Stock Exchange recently in the market reform and development plan, including simplifying procedures for opening accounts and developing legislation and regulations for trading, clearing and custody of securities. MSCI announced in June 2018 that it would add Kuwait to its annual review list. We believe that the addition of the Kuwait Stock Exchange to the annual review list is a step in the right direction, bearing in mind that the final decision is based on MSCI consultations with market stakeholders, including investors, brokers and custodians. There is no doubt that these consultations will be essential in determining whether Kuwait will receive the promotion or will remain on the checklist in the following years.

Analysts estimate that passive flows will be around \$1.7 billion if upgraded by MSCI, higher than the \$900 million market-induced inflows from the FTSE. These flows usually reach the market after approximately one year of promotion in accordance with the date of application. Many international funds with active managed funds track MSCI Emerging Markets indices and their managed assets reach about \$1 trillion, which could help increase market inflows in the event of an upgrade.

Nissan Al-Babtain offers 7 years of free service package on Nissan Patrol

KUWAIT: For the first time in seven decades, in celebration of Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company's (AABC) successful journey in Kuwait and the region, the sole authorized dealer of Nissan vehicles in the state of Kuwait, is bringing its loyal customers an irresistible offer on some of the world's toughest off-road vehicles.

Driven with the aim to ensure everyone enjoys memorable experiences on Kuwait's roads, Nissan Al-Babtain now offers a free comprehensive service package for 7 years on its Nissan Patrol models to guarantee peace of mind to all Nissan's customers.

The most powerful in its class, Nissan Patrol V8 is backed by a power of 400 hp, and torque of 560 Nm comes with the direct fuel injection system and the variable valve shift control technology. Patrol will give you maximum power with the lowest percentage of emissions while the new V6 has a 275 horsepower and 394 Nm of torque. The Patrol V6 offers 12 percent more torque while driving than competing cars. Strength, luxury, and flexibility await any customer to embark on any adventure.

Discover the technologies packed inside Nissan Patrol are practical, useful and, often times, indulgent. They are designed to make travel easier, safer and a lot more entertaining. The Nissan Intelligent Key allows one to press a button on the door handle or hatch to unlock the doors, while keeping the keys within the pocket or purse. And with remote start, one can start your Nissan Patrol from nearly 60 meters away, allowing the cabin to heat or cool. The intelligent braking system can help save the passengers from a potential frontal collision.

When it comes to blind spot warning, if another vehicle is detected in the blind spot area, blind spot warning flashes the indicator to put the signal on, and the indicator flashes with a warning chime to alert the driver. Intelligent Forward Collision Warning is on the lookout when one can't see what's going on ahead. It watches two cars ahead, monitoring your speed and distance, and when it detects sudden deceleration, it gives the driver a heads-up to slow down.

Nissan Al-Babtain invites customers to seize this exclusive opportunity and celebrate the grand occasion of its 70 year anniversary by benefiting from the ongoing offer on the Hero of All Terrains.

Turkish Airlines reaches 81.4% load factor in November 2018

KUWAIT: Turkish Airlines, who has recently announced its passenger and cargo traffic results for November 2018, reached 81.4 percent load factor in that month. On top of the strong base effect of the last year, growth in the number of passengers, revenue per kilometer and load factor, is an important indicator of the continued growing interest in Turkey and Turkish Airlines in the last quarter of the year as well.

According to the November 2018 traffic results:

- The passenger growth trend continued in November, thus total number of passengers carried went up by 4 percent - compared to the same month of 2017- reaching 5.5 million passen-

gers, and Load Factor went up to 81.4 percent.

- In November 2018, Total Load Factor improved by 2 points - compared to the same period of 2017-, while international Load Factor increased by 3 points to 81 percent, domestic Load Factor reached to 84 percent.

- International-to-international transfer passengers (transit passengers) went up by approximately 8 percent, while the number of international passengers -excluding international-to-international transfer passengers (transit passengers)- went up by 13 percent.

- In November, cargo/mail volume continued the double digit growth trend and increased by 25 percent, compared to the same period of 2017. Main contributors to this growth in cargo/mail volume, are N. America with 45 percent, Africa with 32 percent, Far East with 23 percent and Europe with 21 percent increase.

- In November, Africa, N. America, Far East and Middle East showed load factor growth of 5 points, 5 points, 3

Flydubai announces new fare structure offering passengers more choice

DUBAI: Dubai-based flydubai launches new fare types offering passengers more choice when travelling in Economy. The new fare types are applicable for all bookings made from 02 December onwards and allows passengers to choose between Lite, Value and Flex bundles designed to cater to their different travel needs and budget.

Passengers travelling in Business continue to benefit from great value for money with the existing business class fares that include a generous checked-in baggage allowance, meal options from an internationally inspired menu, complimentary inflight entertainment and many other add-ons.

Commenting on the launch of the new fare structure, Hamad Obaidalla, Chief Commercial Officer at flydubai said: "As we enter a new chapter of the airline's maturity we remain committed to innovation and meeting the changing demands of our customers. The new fare restructure is the latest in a series of product innovation by flydubai which has seen the introduction of an award winning new cabin interior on the new Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft,

a brand-new uniform, the launch of Holidays division and Emirates Skywards become our new rewards program."

"We recognize the challenges and the opportunities that come from operating in such a diverse network. Passengers travelling on flydubai to Muscat, Moscow or Helsinki have different travel needs and preferences and the new fare types will help enhance their flydubai experience by simplifying the booking journey and offering the option to choose between unbundled or bundled packages," commented Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President Commercial Operations and E-commerce for flydubai.

Flydubai carried more than 10.4 million passengers in 2017 and since its inception in 2009 has built a network of 90 destinations in 46 countries spanning from Bangladesh in the east, Finland in the west, Russia in the north and Zanzibar in the south.

The new fare structure is complemented with a revised meal offering for passengers travelling in Economy. All new bookings from December onward will be required to choose a fare type and the meal product available for the Value and Flex fare types respectively. The meal options will vary depending on the route, duration of the flight and time of day and includes sandwiches, hot wraps, hot meals and bento boxes. Passengers who opted for the Lite fare type can choose to buy from the onboard catering cart which includes a selection of snacks and beverages.



points and 2 points respectively.

According to the January-November 2018 traffic results:

- During January- November, increase in demand and total number of passengers was 10 percent, over the same period of last year. Total number of passengers reached to 69.7 million.

- During January-November, total Load Factor improved by 3 points up to 82 percent. While international Load

Factor increased by 3 points reaching 82 percent, domestic Load Factor went up by 1 point reaching 85 percent.

- Excluding international-to-international transfer passengers (transit passengers), number of international passengers went up significantly by 12 percent.

- Cargo/mail carried during the eleven months of the year increased by 25 percent, reaching to 1.3 million tons.

Al-Tijari announces winner of Al-Najma prize program

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced the winner of the weekly draw as follows:-

Weekly draw prize KD 5,000 - Abdulkadir Mohamed Aden Ishaq

The draw was conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000 and monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the grand prize (the

biggest prize in the world) of KD 1,500,000 for which the draw will be held in January 2019. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

Now CBK existing customers can open Al-Najma Account through Al-Tijari Online and enter all draws without visiting the Bank's branch. However, CBK non-customers can submit an account opening application via the Bank's website where the bank's sales unit will call them to arrange a visit to the customers to complete the account opening formalities.

VIVA launches draw campaign; customers may win brand new car

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched a draw campaign that allows customers to win a brand new car. As part of VIVA's 10th anniversary celebration.

VIVA gives both postpaid and pre-

paid customers a unique opportunity to win a brand new Range Rover Evoque 2019. All they have to do for a chance to win is pay their VIVA bills through the VIVA website, VIVA's Kiosks, VIVA App, calling 102 or visiting any VIVA store. For every KDI bill payment for postpaid or KD 1 recharged for pre-paid, they earn one chance to win.

On this occasion, Abdulrazzak Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA said: "As VIVA's first decade celebration continues, we are eager to appreciate VIVA's loyal customers with unique and attractive offers exclusively for this occasion."

Technology

Huawei Mate 20 Pro: A bundle of outstanding performance

The king of smartphones outperforms all rivals

KUWAIT: As in every race there are predictions and expected winners and in this year's best smartphone race Huawei Mate 20 Pro looks to be in a pole position to pass the finish line first. Everything in Huawei's latest flagship smartphone stands out from Kirin 980-the latest chipset built by Huawei, to the most advanced biometric identification features and the superb gaming performance. Huawei Mate 20 Pro comes equipped with the brand's latest Kirin 980, the first commercial System on Chip (SoC) manufactured with 7nm process. It features top-class intelligence, performance, efficiency and communications features to deliver the richest user experience.

More efficiency, more power

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

unique configuration of cores are flexibly allocated to tasks depending on the device requirements at that point in time.

Higher gaming level

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

World-class connectivity

To deliver the best connectivity to phones powered by Kirin 980, Huawei integrated the world's first modem supporting LTE Cat.21 with a peak download speed of 1.4Gbps.

Additionally, with carrier aggregation across frequency bands, users will be free to choose their mobile operators and still enjoy the same premium connectivity experience, wherever they are. A user with the HUAWEI Mate 20 series can stream a 4K video without buffering; download a 2GB video in 10 seconds; or swiftly download a game update in a few seconds. HUAWEI Mate 20 series can cache up map information in the blink of an eye, so that users would not be worrying about using too much data when traveling.

Sophisticated 3D face recognition

Stacking more innovations in the HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro, the device is also equipped with a 3D Face Unlock solution which, through mapping a user's face with 30,000 projected infrared dots, enables the device to accurately read the face of a user, complete with depth information. The 3D Face Unlock solution has advantages in infrared depth, field of view, usability and recognition speed compared to competitor devices. It recognizes a user within 600ms, with an error rate below one in a million.

An improved in-screen fingerprint sensor

Furthermore, fingerprint sensor is another



biometric identification method that Huawei has completely reinvented. HUAWEI Mate 20 Pro has an in-screen fingerprint sensor with an evolved design to achieve better speed and success rates. The device displays a prompt whenever it detects a finger is hovering above the

sensor. Once the authentication process is complete, the unobtrusive prompt quickly disappears into the background. In light of how many users today are accustomed to fingerprint sensors, it's only natural that Huawei wants to integrate the sensor more seamlessly into its devices.

Lexus rated most reliable by consumer reports

KUWAIT: Lexus topped the list for the sixth consecutive year in the Consumer Reports annual list of most reliable cars. Lexus took the top spot with an average reliability score of 78 out of 100. Consumer Reports cited Lexus' well-finished interiors, smooth engines, and fuel-efficient hybrids as among the brand's strengths. "Lexus is an excellent example of how technologically advanced luxury vehicles can also be very reliable," Consumer Reports said.

The publication created the list by analyzing survey responses on more

than 500,000 vehicles and used the responses to predict which cars will create the fewest problems for their owners. While the Lexus GX SUV took the top spot, supercharged cross-over NX secured 6th place. Consumer Reports said the GX was fast and quiet for an SUV, offering a smooth ride and a comfortable cabin. Inspired by performance vehicles, the turbocharged NX combines the expertise of racers within the engineering team and the impeccable touch of Lexus luxury through an exciting and sporty design to set a new benchmark in the automotive world.

According to Mubarak Naser Al Sayer CEO AL SAYER Holding "The very foundation of Lexus is to offer our loyal customers highest level of product quality and an experience beyond compare. Lexus new design global strategy was a major success in Kuwait and the region. Additionally, the new technologies that had been introduced into the Lexus model line-

up had given our customers a new feeling for the driving dynamics that had even surpassed the previous Lexus records."

Lexus brand is continuing to evolve with an increased emphasis on technology, performance, art, fashion - to offer "experience amazing". It is successful in launching many first-time technologies in the market including active safety, car manufacturing and on-board premium features. Other innovation includes first premium cross over with the RX. Lexus has also the largest range of self-charging, industry leading hybrids which is testimony of experience amazing, selling over 1.3 million units globally.

"The quietness which was a great feature for Lexus is even better. The interior design had hit a cord with our customers because they think it has taken Lexus to a new frontier of luxury and a feeling of serenity" added Mubarak Naser Al Sayer.

ITS named Critics' Choice Best Digital Banking Solution

KUWAIT: International Turnkey Systems Group (ITS) is a key player in the provision of advanced financial technology solutions (FinTech) and services that are designed to transform banks and financial institutions (Islamic & conventional) to the new digital age. The Company was named the winner of the Critics' Choice Best Digital Banking Solution 2018 for its innovative 'ETHIX' product range at the 4th Islamic Retail Banking Awards (IRBA). The award presented during a prestigious ceremony held at the JW Marriott Marquis Hotel, Dubai, on 21 November 2018.

Esam Alkhesham, Chief Executive Officer of International Turnkey Systems Group (ITS), received the award during the grand Gala Dinner which was attended by VVIPs, CEO's from

Islamic financial institutions from the GCC, the Far East, Africa and the Western hemisphere and members of the press. Winners of the Critics' Choice Awards are selected by the Critics' Choice Committee, which comprises of leading Islamic banking experts from around the world.

Commenting on the announcement, Esam Alkhesham, said: "It is an honor to be awarded the Critics' Choice 'Best Digital Banking Solution' from IRBA. This award is a testimony to our continued success in delivering on the commitment and to continue empowering banks and financial institutions to succeed in today's digital banking age". He added: "The ETHIX Digital Suite delivers next generation online banking services to corporate and retail banking customers and provides financial institutions with competitive advantage."

ITS ETHIX is the Company's award-winning and innovative solutions package that drives the digital transformation of Islamic financial institutions. The ETHIX suite of solutions includes ETHIX (Core, Finance, Branch, 360, Portfolio, Fund, Treasury, Trade Finance, Salary Domiciliation, FATCA, Bad Debts Collection, ETHIX Digital, and Profit Calculation and Distribution), in addition to other extensions that together create an evolved financial operation.

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Surgery Department
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- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
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What's On



ACK holds exhibition for the college's graduation projects

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) recently held its 9th engineering college graduation projects exhibition under auspices of the private universities council's secretary general, Dr Habib Abul with the attendance of the Australian ambassador to Kuwait, Jonathan Gilbert and ACK rector, Professor Essam Za'balawi. Speaking on the occasion, ACK dean, Mohammed Abdul Nabi said

that the exhibition included 38 projects made by 153 students and that many of the participating projects could easily get patent rights and turn into productive industrial and commercial projects. On his part, ambassador Gilbert highly commended the strong bond between the embassy and ACK noting that all its programs are accredited the Australian Engineers Society.



Styleee.com: The Middle East's first e-commerce aggregator site

Times have changed - and the business of fashion has changed more quickly than most. As we continue to lead ever more time-crunched lives, the pressure on us to keep up with the latest has intensified hand-in-hand with an exponential growth in the amount of information we need to absorb. New fashion brands arrive on the market like shooting stars - if you're not looking at the right area of the sky, they're pretty easy to miss. We're all for finding an easier way to stay on-trend, and we're big fans of letting someone else do the fashion leg-work for us. But who's going to do this for the Middle Eastern market AND make it fun at the same time? Styleee.com - that's who.

Founder and CEO, Faisal Al Essa, says "With styleee.com we've taken a fresh approach", Faisal reports, adding "and we've carefully selected the partners we work with. Most of them are already doing business in the region - but none for the region". Styleee.com is collaborating with the likes of leading online style destinations Farfetch and ASOS, as well as with iconic department stores including Bloomingdales.

Search for that most-wanted fashion item at styleee.com, and their deep database will curate a selection of options from the world's leading sites for you to choose from. Search through styleee.com, and buy direct from your favorite online brands. Styleee.com's model is simple - and it saves the shopper time. They can now just

go to one place and search products, prices and styles. Then buy with confidence.

"Every day we're adding new brands and new lines. Our customers can think of us like a search engine for the latest in global fashion. There's always something new on styleee.com and," he adds "we're working on exclusive



collaborations for the future too". Styleee.com is adding a host of engagement features - including a 24/7 radio channel, competitions and games - all of which offer a level of entertainment above other online shopping sites in the region. New products and features will be announced by the company and via social media as they happen. Rolling the brand out through a series of social media engagements via Facebook, Instagram and Google, styleee.com will be the region's first fashion portal to make online shopping a personal experience through targeted marketing and recommendations.

Palm Beach Hotel honors clients in Black & White event

The Palm Beach Hotel & Spa has hosted a unique BBQ dinner for the hotel guests in recognition of their continued contribution and support to the hotel as business partners in the 2018 success among whole hotel departments, the event allocated on beach and pool area to add magical atmosphere.

The guests were welcomed by the hotel sales team as well as the department heads headed by Rabia Al Atrash, the Hotel General Manager and Ahmad Al Dackroui, the Director of Sales and Marketing. The ceremony started with a welcome speech by Rabie Al Atrash, expressing his thanks and gratitude to all the attendees and praised the distinguished partnership which has always been a prominent role in the success of the hotel over the past years. The palms hotel presented exclusive entertaining program to its clients which includes band, competitions, valuable prizes and live saxophone & violin music along with the famous BBQ live station and delicious open buffet



On the meanwhile, all the attendees praised on the hotel facilities and the level of elite services provided, especially after the major renovations recently accomplished, which included all the hotel rooms and outlets, that makes the hotel is the ideal destination for both business and leisure guests, where the hotel offers 179 modern rooms, meeting rooms, conferences and wedding rooms in addition to the hotel facilities and outlets.

BHCK named 'International Training Provider of the Year'

Box Hill College Kuwait (BHCK) is proud to announce the winning of Box Hill Australia (BHI) of the prestigious award as 'International Training Provider of the Year' at the Australian Training Awards. BHCK would like to take this opportunity to congratulate BHI on this award which reflects the dedication and commitment by BHI and recognizes the strength of the BHI's partnerships with stakeholders in the community, industry and internationally.

Dr Ali Arifa, the president of BHCK commented on this occasion by saying "Congratulations! I believe that winning this award is yet recognition of BHI's standing in the higher educational field and its commitment to quality achievements! At BHCK, we are very proud of this award, knowing that we are an extended campus of one of the best educational provider's internationally"

BHI CEO and Managing Director Vivienne King said the award is recognition for BHI's long and proud history of transnational education and training. "We've been delivering education and training overseas in various forms since 1982, and the programs, partnerships and students we've built relationships with are fundamental to our success as a training provider," Ms King said. BHI has over 10,000 international graduates making significant contributions in their home countries and around the world.

BHCK, which is an extended campus of BHI, Australia, is the sole private higher education exclusive to women in the State of Kuwait. BHCK currently offers six diploma programs in the fields of Management,

Marketing, Banking Services Management, Graphic Design, Interior Design and Decoration and Website Development. The program disciplines currently offered by BHCK require 2 years of post-secondary full time study exclusive of any preparatory requirements.

The programs are offered in English, and are accredited under the Australian Qualifications Framework and by the Kuwait Private Universities Council and Ministry of Higher Education. BHCK offers students pathways to employment as well as undergraduate degree programs through transfer and articulation agreements 2+2 with local Kuwaiti Universities such as Australian College of Kuwait and Gulf University of Science and Technology.



TIES announcement

You are cordially invited to our Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the Last Testament) today, December 17th at 7:00 pm in which we will focus on the last verse of Surat Al-Jum'ah (The Friday Congregation.) In this class, we will learn what a Muslim man must do on Friday as soon as he hears the Prayer Call (Adhan), the ruling regarding leaving the mosque while the Imam is delivering the Khutbah, and the event where the verse was revealed to address. We will also discuss the importance of a strong Muslim economy, the significance of remembering Allah (SWT) in marketplaces, why it is prohibited to neglect obligatory prayers because of trade, and the threat the Prophet (PBUH) posed to his companions had all of them left the mosque for trade. Finally, we will examine the things Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) suggested to us for entertainment, its importance, and the reward of seeking knowledge; eliciting practical knowledge from the verse.

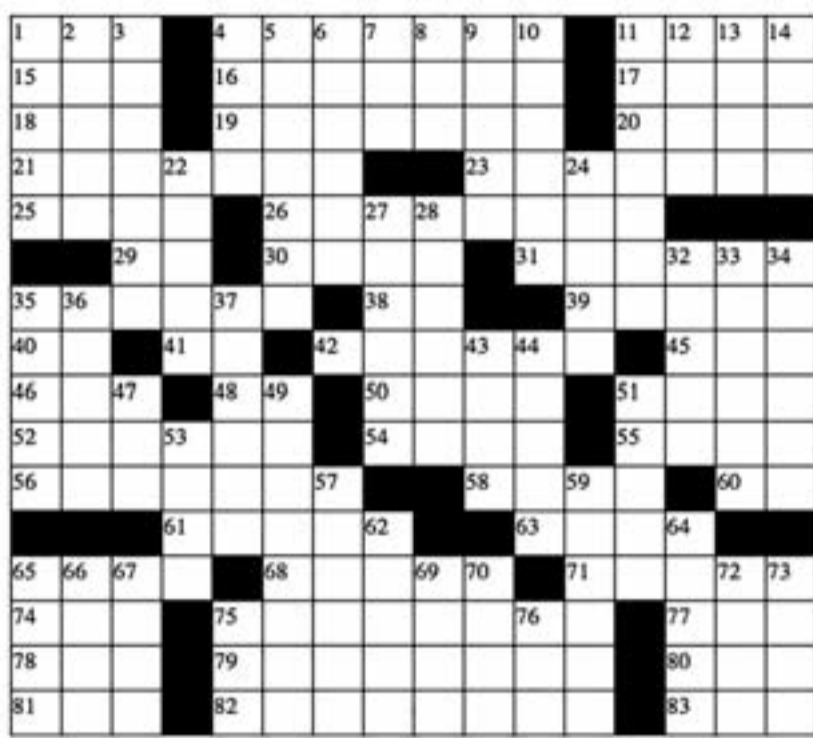
Greetings



May your day be as bright as your smile and as lovely as you. Happy Birthday Mohammed Yunus, lots of love from: Abbu & Ammi (Safeer), Badey Abbu & Ammi (Tanveer), Chacha & Chachi (Zaheer), Bhuppi (Yasmeen & Afreen), Mama (Imthiyaz & Khadeer), Munwar, Hakeem (FICO), Habeeb, Friends & Relatives from Kuwait & India.

Stars

CROSSWORD 2086



ACROSS

1. (folklore) A small grotesque supernatural creature that makes trouble for human beings.
4. One of a series of rounded teeth formed by curves along an edge (as the edge of a leaf or piece of cloth etc.).
11. Fallow deer.
15. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
16. National capital of Solomon Islands.
17. Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
18. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.
19. Any of the natural numbers (positive or negative) or zero.
20. A vertical spar for supporting sails.
21. Numbered or proceeding by tens.
23. Charge falsely or with malicious intent.
25. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
26. American plover of inland waters and fields having a distinctive cry.
29. A metric unit of volume equal to one tenth of a liter.
30. A demon who swallows the sun causing eclipses.
31. United States singer and film actor (1904-1977).
35. Offensively bold.
38. A mouth or mouthlike opening.
39. A cigar made with light-colored tobacco.
40. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
41. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
42. A republic in southern Europe on the Italian Peninsula.
45. (British) Your grandmother.
46. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
48. A crystalline metallic element not found in nature.
50. One of a pair of planks used to make a track for rolling or sliding objects.
52. A shop where a variety of goods are sold.
54. Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
55. Pathetically lacking in force or effectiveness.
56. Changed in form or character without becoming something else.
58. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
60. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
61. A person who rises (especially from bed).
63. Set down according to a plan.
65. A carriage consisting of two wheels and calash top.
68. (sports) Someone in charge of training an athlete or a team.
71. Bottle that has a narrow neck.
74. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
77. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
78. Used of a single unit or thing.
79. A peninsula in southwestern Asia that forms the Asian part of Turkey.
80. A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
81. A doctor's degree in education.
82. An effigy in the shape of a man to frighten birds away from seeds.
83. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
2. Treated with oil.
3. Thick heavy expensive material with a raised pattern.
4. A thin wedge of material (wood or metal or stone) for driving into crevices.
5. A port and the capital of Guinea.
6. A faint constellation in the southern hemisphere near Hydra and Vela.
7. A statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.
8. The act of slowing down or falling behind.
9. (Greek mythology) One of the mountain nymphs.
10. A unit of astronomical length based on the distance from Earth at which stellar parallax is 1 second of arc.
11. A synthetic narcotic drug (trade name Demerol) used to treat pain.
12. The sixth month of the civil year.
13. A state of confusion and disorderliness.
14. (prefix) In front of or before in space.
22. Person who does no work.
24. Type genus of the Percidae.
27. A mountain in the central Himalayas on the border of Tibet and Nepal (27,890 feet high).
28. The capital and largest city of Zambia.
32. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
33. The Creator.
34. Distant but within sight.
36. Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).
37. Of or concerning Qatar.
43. A speech defect that involves pronouncing s like voiceless th and z like voiced th.
44. Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
47. An antiviral drug used in the treatment of AIDS.
49. Resembling the new moon in shape.
51. An implement consisting of handle with a free swinging stick at the end.
53. Characterized by lightness and insubstantiality.
57. Tall East Indian cedar having spreading branches with nodding tips.
59. A woman's dress style that imitates the caftan cloaks worn by men in the Near East.
62. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
64. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
66. The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
67. Advanced in years.
69. Black birds having a raucous call.
70. Steering mechanism for a vessel.
72. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
73. God of love and erotic desire.
75. The network in the reticular formation that serves an alerting or arousal function.
76. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

In the future when you sit back and reminisce on some of the best times in your life, today will come to mind. Love and friendship comes naturally to you today. Your world is filled with both. Special times are to be spent with love ones today and lasting memories will be made. You may find an unbelievable opportunity will come your way. Lady luck is smiling at you today. This day will find you in the right place at the right time. It seems as if a financial matter is resolved with an unexpected cash flow. Accept gifts and good fortune with much gratitude today. Do not resist what was meant to be. Aries. Enjoy the smile you are unable to wipe off of your face.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

People are creatures of habit. You seem fascinated today by learning what makes people tick. Why do certain people act certain ways. You have asked yourself, "what in the world is wrong with people," on more than one occasion today. This suddenly becomes a mission for you. You want to get to the root of the issues that make people close to you make the choices they have been making. Taking time to open up to others and have them open up to you may give you a much greater understanding of this problem. Keep an open mind and you may have great understanding of the differences you are seeing in people.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Sex, power, and money, are what you are drawn to today. Secrets and mysteries draw you in. All that is taboo is fascinating to you today. You have a desire to know what makes people tick. What makes people do the things they do? You start to realize what an impact your own past can have on your future. You are able to have some time to reflect and realize each stumbling block in your past has been successfully turned into stepping stones by you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This is a great time to stop and really think about how you feel about your life and yourself. This is a nice time for you. Your emotions and the feelings of those around you may be very clear to you now. A time of understanding and a time of love is what this day may bring. You may start to focus your energy on learning more about your peers. Learning what makes people tick is a turn on for you. People seem to fascinate you and you are curious and want to get to the root of who they really are. Secrets, drama, and all that is considered taboo, is where you find your focus has drifted.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

When speaking you may find others are captivated by what you have to say. You may find yourself bringing a group together with your words and ideas. Others may find they are swept away to the day and time you are speaking of. This is a true talent. This is a great day for job-related events. You may shine in your job. You could be offered a promotion coming your way. You may find you are asked to speak on behalf of your company or represent your company in some way. You are the voice others long to hear.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today you may feel as though you have hit a bump in the road. There may even be one person you feel is standing in your way. Aquarius, you will be able to be understanding and cut right through the smoke and mirrors to get to the root of the problem with this individual. You will be admired for your leadership skills. You may find yourself focusing on your sexual needs today. This may be an area you desire dominance and control. Virgo. Relationships are very important to you. You seem to see the beauty in all that surrounds you. Enjoy this day.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You know exactly what you want, and you know exactly how you plan on accomplishing your goals. Your mind is made up and you are more determined now than ever to make things happen. You may want to sit down with your journal and put these ideas on paper. This will help you keep your focus and limit the chance of any distraction. Your ambition is so intense at this time they you may find yourself dismissing all that does not play a direct role in your success. Put some of your focus on balance and making time for those closest to you. This will prevent resentment and conflict in the future.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Whether it is sexual, the desire for power, or the desire for wealth, these are all area that seem to turn you on and set you in motion today. You may find yourself in a very sensual mood at this time. Things seem to affect you on a much deeper level now. The mysterious, secretive, and even that which is taboo seem to call to you and draw you in. You may desire to learn people on a deeper level. You want to know them from the inside out. You may also desire to do some soul-searching of your own and learn yourself in the same manner.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today you may feel as though you have hit a bump in the road. There may even be one person you feel is standing in your way. Aquarius, you will be able to be understanding and cut right through the smoke and mirrors to get to the root of the problem with this individual. You will be admired for your leadership skills. You may find yourself focusing on your sexual needs today. This may be an area you desire dominance and control. Sagittarius. Relationships are very important to you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a time when lovers, children, and people and things dear to your heart take center stage. You have your priorities in order. You know where your bread is buttered. Without these things you may feel as if you would never know what happiness truly is. You find that those close to you shower you with affection and attention. It feels wonderful to be loved and needed. You may find that you are extremely sensitive to the needs of those close to you. In return you are receiving the nurturing and affection your heart has been desiring. Enjoy this wonderful time.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find that you not only have a greater appreciation for things of value but for value itself today. You may find this to be a period of great material gain. It is a time that material things have a great importance to you. You may find yourself in an unrealistic and dreamy mood. You seem to be at odds with your responsibilities. Your friends are used to a more disciplined side of you. You may find that do not like the way you are behaving. Do not be surprised if you find your friends avoiding you at this time. Aquarius. This may make you feel as if you do not have the support you need.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Every action has a consequence. You seem to be one that tends to have to learn this the hard way. This may be a time wiping the slate clean may be in order. Set your goals. Start over from scratch. If things do not work out the first time, roll up your sleeves and try again. Eventually you will accomplish your goals. Stay focused and determined, you may find great reward awaits you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Newspaper

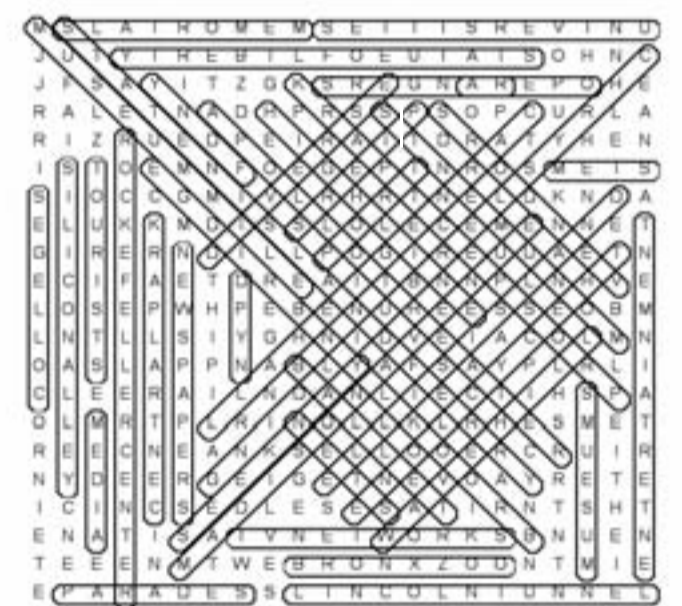
Find and circle all of the Newspaper words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| ADVERTISEMENTS | CULTURE | INTERNATIONAL | PUZZLES |
| ARTS | EDITORIAL | INTERVIEWS | RACK |
| BOOKS | ENTERTAINMENT | LETTERS | REPORTER |
| BUSINESS | EVENTS | LIFESTYLE | REVIEWS |
| CIRCULATION | EXTRA | LOCAL | SECTIONS |
| CLASSIFIEDS | FAMILY | MOVIES | SPORTS |
| COLUMNISTS | FASHION | NEWSSTAND | SUBSCRIPTION |
| COLUMNS | FINANCE | OBITUARIES | TECHNOLOGY |
| COMICS | HEADLINES | OPINION | TELEVISION GUIDE |
| COMPUTERS | HEALTH | PEOPLE | TRAVEL |
| COOKING | HOME | POLITICS | WEATHER |
| CROSSWORD | INSERTS | PUBLISHER | |

Yesterday's Solution

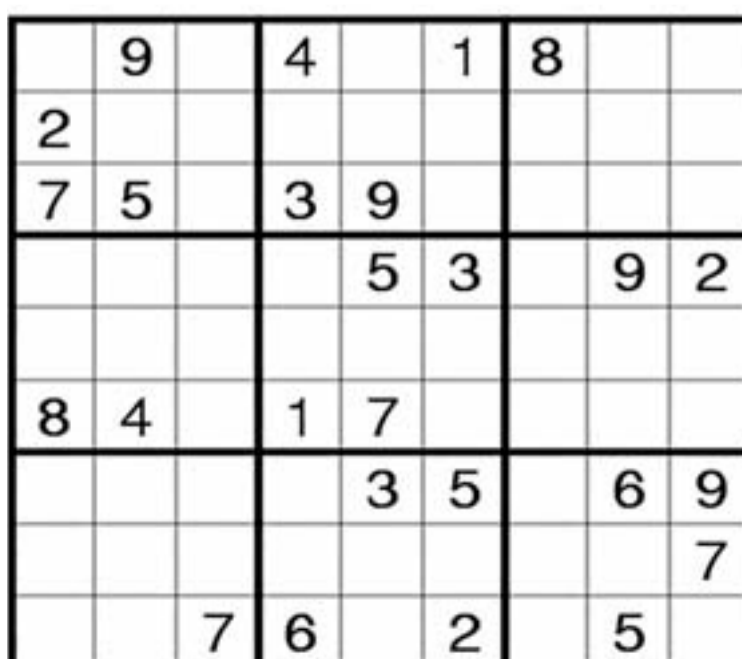
New York City 2



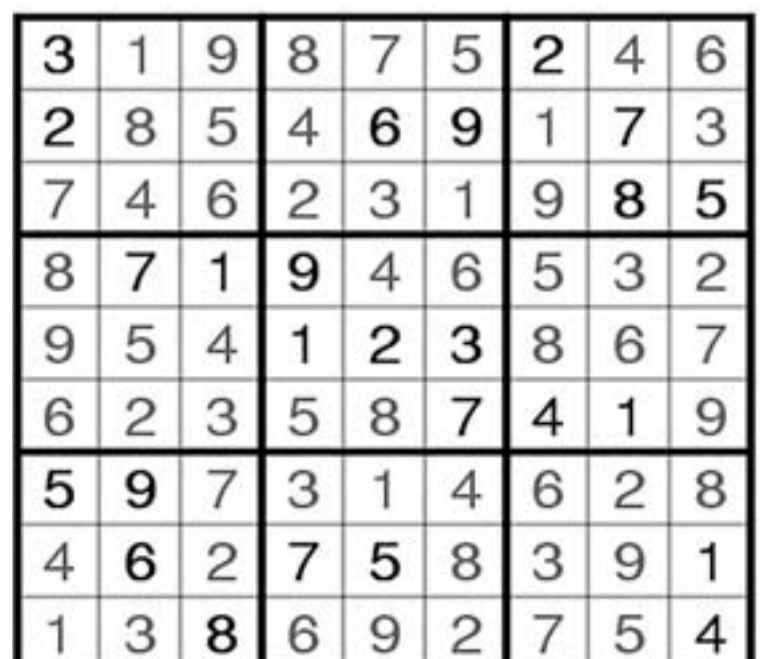
- | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| AROLLO THEATER | FDNY | NETS | SILICON ALLEY |
| BALLET | HIGH LINE | NEWSPAPERS | STATEN ISLAND FERRY |
| BROOKLYN BRIDGE | LINCOLN TUNNEL | NYPD | STATUE OF LIBERTY |
| CARNEGIE HALL | MADISON AVENUE | OPERA | THE CYCLONE |
| CENTRAL PARK | MEDIA | PARADES | TOURISTS |
| CHRYSLER BUILDING | MEMORIALS | PEERS | TV NETWORKS |
| COLLEGES | NETS | PORT | UNIVERSITIES |
| DIVERSE | MONUMENTS | RANGERS | VENUE |
| ELLIS ISLAND | MUSEUM MILE | ROCKEFELLER CENTER | WAVE HILL |
| ENTERTAINMENT | MUSEUMS | YANKEES | |

The hidden message is: JOHN J. FITZGERALD POPULARIZED THE NICKNAME, THE BIG APPLE, IN HORSE RACING ARTICLES IN THE NINETEEN TWENTIES

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2018



Kenyan Maasai Morans attend on December 15, 2018 a sporting event dubbed the Maasai Olympics at Kimana, near Kenya's bordertown with Tanzania. The Olympics are an initiative of international conservation groups led by Born Free, which have been held every two years since 2012 to offer Maasai warriors an alternative to killing lions as part of their traditional rite of passage. It was the brainchild of the wildlife charity Big Life Foundation and eight Maasai elders who wanted to stop lion hunting by our warriors once and for all. — AFP

INDIA'S BIGGEST PET FESTIVAL 'PET FED'



A pet is pictured during the 'Pet Fed', a pet festival, in New Delhi yesterday.



Pet owners walk with their dogs during the "Pet Fed".



A pet wearing sunglasses is pictured during the 'Pet Fed', India's biggest pet festival.



Pet owners play with their dogs in a playground installation during the 'Pet Fed'. — AFP photos

Book Proust gave to his lover sells for world record 1.5 million euros

A copy of Marcel Proust's "Swann's Way" which he dedicated to his "little darling", sold for 1.51 million euros (\$1.7 million) in Paris yesterday—a world record for a French book, auction house Sotheby's said. The rare copy of the first volume of the French writer's masterpiece, "Remembrance of Things Past", had been expected to go for between 600,000 and 800,000 euros. It smashed the previous record for a piece of French literature held by the poet Charles Baudelaire's "Les Fleurs du mal" ("The Flowers of Evil"), a copy of which sold for 775,000 euros nine years ago.

The copy of "Swann's Way" is the very first from a numbered luxuriously bound edition of the novel that Proust paid for himself and gave as a gift to his beloved Lucien Daudet. It came with a touching dedication from Proust to his "little darling". "You are not in this book. You are too much in my heart that I could you never portray you objectively. You will never be (a mere) 'character', because you are the better half of its author," he wrote. The novel includes the famous "madeleine moment", when the taste of a little almond cake dipped in tea sets off a flood of nostalgic memories for the book's narrator.

It was the star lot in the fourth part of the mammoth sale of the library of the late French fashion mogul Pierre Berge. The co-founder of the Yves Saint Laurent fashion empire put together one of the world's greatest private collections of rare and antiquarian books.

Proust's private passion

They are being sold off in a series of high-profile auctions which began last year and are set to continue in 2019. Yesterday's sale, which included a treasury of classic works from the Renaissance, hit a final tally of more than 8.1 million euros, double the estimate. "I am very happy. The market has completely endorsed Pierre Berge's taste," antiquarian books expert Benoit Forgeot, who helped organize the sale, told AFP. He said that story of Proust's dedication to the writer and painter Daudet was a "novel inside a novel".

Proust never admitted his homosexuality, although the younger Daudet was clearly his lover. After Proust's death in 1922 Daudet sold the novel, one of a special run of only five books, but kept the dedication which was written on a separate piece of paper. He gave it to his doctor just before his own death in 1946, Forgeot said. The medic spent the rest of his life trying in vain to track down and reunite it with the book. It was Berge who finally managed to reunite the book and the dedication.—AFP



Davies and O'Riordan had planned collaboration

Dave Davies and Dolores O'Riordan had planned to collaborate on music together before she died. The Kinks guitarist was close friends with the late Cranberries star and he revealed they had discussed working together on a song called 'Home' before she passed away after drowning in the bath of a London hotel due to accidental alcohol intoxication in January. Writing in *The Guardian*, he said: "We had a mutual respect. We talked about writing together - I had an idea for a song called 'Home', about being home again, and she understood what I was trying to say. But we never sat down to do it, and that makes me really sad. She was very kind to me, too. We said we'd meet when she was next in London, and that was that." Dave also praised Dolores' "unique" voice and said he admired her talent from the first time he heard her

sing. He said: "Dolores hadn't had a great time in her life. But the music that came out of her despite everything was incredible. I remember first hearing 'Zombie' in the 1990s - that was the first time I was aware of her. Her voice caught me straight away. The way it went from this beautiful, soft whisper with this real Celtic vibe, to this huge rock voice, was fabulous, really unique. She didn't get enough credit for that." The Cranberries formed in the early 90s and their first big hit single 'Linger' - taken from their debut LP 'Everybody Else Is Doing It, So Why Can't We?' - brought them to the attention of British, American and European audiences in 1993. The band's second album 'No Need To Argue' was released in 1994 and became a global smash, containing the singles 'Zombie', 'I Can't Be With You' and 'Ode To My Family'.

Longoria praises L'Oreal for championing women

Eva Longoria has praised L'Oreal for championing women and their "struggle" for power. The 43-year-old star - who is an ambassador for L'Oreal Paris - has opened up about the difficulties, and said the huge brand is helping with its 'You're worth it' slogan. Speaking at the company's annual Women of Worth Awards, Eva said: "We're finding our voices and our power every day, and there's a struggle to do that in every industry-not just Hollywood, in every industry-so to see a big company like L'Oreal doing the

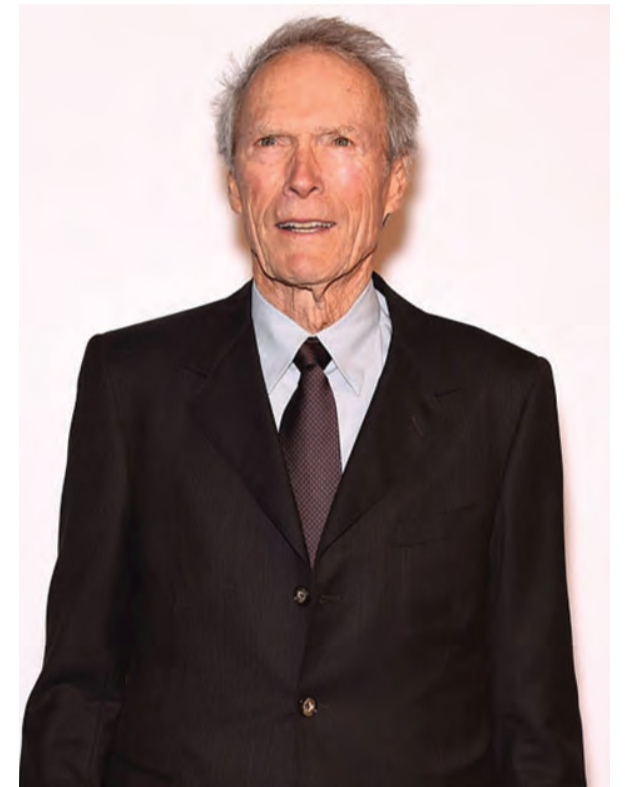
work and representing this slogan, which is, 'You're worth it,' making sure women are finding their worth in life, is really important." Meanwhile, the proud mum gave birth to her first child - son Santiago - with her husband Jose 'Pepe' Baston in June, and she hasn't felt any outside pressure to get her pre-baby body back. She told *Extra*: "Well, I don't really succumb to any pressures outside of myself, but I really gave my body time to heal and just embrace... 'I was breastfeeding and just enjoying postpartum and basking in his energy and this beautiful life I created, and so I was very forgiving to my body because it created a human! 'It's just now I'm starting to get back to working out and dieting... but not even hardcore, just like, you know what? Let's start... let's start to do some movements, see what happens.'" The 'Desperate Housewives' star recently revealed she is on a "very serious" weight training program and being more careful with her diet, but she's happy she didn't rush getting back into exercise and gave her body the time it needed to recover. She said: "I still love yoga, but my workouts now are more weight training. Very serious weight training. 'I really gave my body time to adjust to postpartum and post-pregnancy. You know, it had a baby! It created a human life, so I really wasn't too hard about getting back into shape. 'Now I'm working out a lot more and watching what I eat. I'm barely starting to get back into it."



Toby Keith inspired by Clint Eastwood

Toby Keith's 'Don't Let the Old Man In' was inspired by Clint Eastwood. The singer/songwriter revealed he was inspired by a conversation with the 88-year-old actor/director about his latest movie 'The Mule' and his work ethic. Toby explained he asked Clint how he kept working at his age, explaining: "He said, 'I just get up every morning and go out. And I don't let the old man in'. And I thought, 'I'm writing that.'" Admitted he became obsessed with the song, Toby said: "People were talking to me and they would say, 'Did you hear what I just said?' And I was like, 'No,' because I wasn't listening to any conversations. I was consumed by 'Don't Let the Old Man In.' I worked so hard on it. When I finally sang the line, I thought, it's got to be dark, it's got to be a ballad and it's got to be sim-

ple." Toby was unwell the day he recorded the track but he believes his illness helped to make the song sound even better. He explained to *Billboard*: "I was sick as a dog that day. I was coughing and sneezing and thinking, this is terrible. I gave it the best vocal I could that day, and I sent it off. It's a real raspy, sleepy, tired, sick vocal. I said, 'Well now you've got a reference, and I'll go back and put a vocal on it for you.'" However, Clint loved the song and the recording and immediately asked if he would include it in his movie. Toby said: "He said, 'I've got a spot in the movie and I'm putting it in there.'" And then Warner Bros. called asking did I read the script before I wrote this song because it fits perfectly. He wanted it sick and tired and dark like that."



Walliams was 'starstruck' by Aniston

David Walliams was "so starstruck" by his 'Murder Mystery' co-star Jennifer Aniston. The 47-year-old comic stars opposite the former 'Friends' actress in the upcoming Netflix film and admitted he initially had no idea what to say to the "charming and lovely" star. Speaking to *Heat* magazine, he said: "She is a dream. I was so starstruck because she's so, so famous. 'I was like, 'Oh my God, it's Jennifer Aniston. What do I say to her?' But she's so charming and lovely.'" And the 'Britain's Got Talent' star's friends were hoping to see a romance develop between the pair but he doesn't think he could ever compare to the 'Dumplin'' actress' ex-husbands. David - who has son Alfred, five, with ex-wife Lara Stone - said: "Some of my friends were saying, 'You should go out with her' but I think it would be a bit of a comedown from Brad Pitt and Justin Theroux. I wouldn't wish that on her." The movie also stars Adam Sandler and David praised the actor for creating such a positive atmosphere on the set. He said: "I don't think I've ever had a happier experience on a job. 'Adam Sandler is hilarious and he's constantly improvising, making you laugh, playing funny music and dancing on set. 'It sounds like it might be annoying but it's not. 'He just wants to create a happy

atmosphere, so everyone is relaxed and can do their best. 'It was like he was hosting a party that we were all attending.'" The A-list cast also led the former 'Little Britain' funnyman to a bizarre encounter with Cher while they were in Italy. He explained: "One night I'm at dinner with Jen and Adam and oh, there's Cher at the table next to us. 'She was with this jeweler called Loree Rodkin, who I know through Elton John. So Loree introduced me to Cher and said, 'Cher, this is David, he's a friend of Elton's...' 'And Cher replied, 'Thank you very much'. I didn't know where to go with that."



Benicio del Toro to star in Dora the Explorer

Benicio del Toro is set to play a villain in 'Dora the Explorer'. The 51-year-old actor will voice the character of Swiper, the thieving fox, in the upcoming live action adaptation of the Nickelodeon TV series. According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Benicio will join alongside Isabela Moner, who will play the titular character, Michael Pena, as her father Cole 'Papi' Marquez and Eva Longoria, as her mother Elena 'Mami' Marquez. 'Dora the Explorer' will see the youngster's parents in danger as she leads her cousin Diego, her monkey friend Boots, and a group of teens "on a Goonies-esque adventure to save her parents and solve the impossible mystery behind a lost Inca civilization." 'Dora the Explorer' is a children's television show which first aired in 2000 and is based around the adventures of the titular Spanish-speaking girl, her monkey Boots, her backpack and other animated friends. In each episode, Dora goes on an adventure in an animated world set inside a computer and asks for viewers' help in solving a puzzle or mystery she faced, teaching children both basic Spanish and puzzle solving skills. Michael Bay's Platinum Dunes label and his partners Andrew Form and Brad Fuller were initially attached to produce but they are no longer involved. James Bobin will direct the film from a script penned by Danielle Sanchez-Wittel and Nicholas Stoller. Although the TV series focused on a young Dora, the live-action movie will center around the titular character as a teenager who moves to the city to live with her cousin Diego, who also had his own spin-off show 'Go Diego Go'. Paramount Pictures are looking to distribute the movie, as the studio is devoted to creating films from the Viacom brands including Nickelodeon - on which 'Dora the Explorer' aired - MTV, Comedy Central and BET. 'Dora the Explorer' ran for 14 years and was geared towards the younger viewers, with the franchise also branching out into dolls and video games. 'Dora the Explorer' is set to hit cinema screens in 2019.

Timothee Chalamet had to stop losing weight during Beautiful Boy

Timothee Chalamet had to be told to stop losing weight for his role in 'Beautiful Boy'. The 22-year-old actor plays drug addict Nic Sheff in the biopic and shed 20lbs for scenes when his alter ego hit his lowest point but movie bosses were worried he was "pushing" himself further than he needed to. Explaining the weight loss scenes were shot first to allow the actor to return to his regular size for the happier moments, director Felix Van Groeningen told *Total Film*: "It helped him physically feel it and

hit some sort of rock bottom. 'I mean, he was very closely followed but at some point, we had a feeling he was pushing it further than we wanted, because he was so committed to it. 'We did have to say at some point, 'Timmy, stop. It's great. We don't want you to go into a dangerous place.' 'Timothee stars opposite Steve Carrell as his on-screen father in the movie and they struck up a bond instantly. Steve said: 'We just naturally became friends. There weren't any exercises that we needed to go through in order to generate that affection. I think we had it almost instantly.' Timothee agreed: 'Yeah, I feel the same way. I felt very... just taken in. 'I felt a strong warmth from Steve and from Felix, our director, and then the scenes with Amy Ryan and Maura Tierney as well. 'I felt a very paternal quality coming from them.' 'While Steve had already been cast before his screen son, the 'Call Me By Your Name' actor wowed the director with his audition tape. Felix said: 'We did auditions and saw a lot of tapes coming in. And at some point we saw an audition of a young actor, not very well-known - Timothee Chalamet. 'You know, he blew us away with his bold and fearless energy and how he could switch between a person completely strung out on drugs and also be this very intriguing teenager trying to find a bond with his dad. 'So at some point, we put them in the room together to do a chemistry read and I just felt it - they connected."






CONSUMER PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

RECALL INFORMATION



Model Name: LEXUS LX 570
Model Year: 2016 and 2017
No. of Vehicles: 1788 units



RECALL REASON

Inspect and reprogram the software for Pedestrian Detection feature

REMEDY

All Sayer will contact the involved vehicle customers and inform them to bring to our service centers as the necessary parts are available. You are also kindly requested to contact 1830030. All the repairs will be free of charge for both Parts and Labor

CONTACT

Please contact
MOHAMED NASER ALSAYER & SONS EST.CO.W.L.L
 Starting 13/12/2018
 For your convenience, please call to book an appointment Tel: 1830030

This Recall is run pursuant to articles (42, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47) of no. 27/2017 issuing the executive bylaws of law no. 39/2014 on Consumer Protection

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مركز الطوارئ 135

Lifestyle | Awards



Polish director Pawel Pawlikowski (center) and his team members pose with all their awards for their film "Cold War" during the 2018 European Film Awards (EFA) ceremony at the Maestranza Theatre in Seville. — AFP photos



Polis actor Tomasz Kot (third right) speaks beside Polish director Pawel Pawlikowski (left) after receiving the Best European Film award for their film "Cold War".



Polish director Pawel Pawlikowski receives the Best European Director award for his film "Cold War".

The winners of the 31st European Film Awards



Winners of the Excellence awards Martin Steyer (left) and Andre Bendocchi-Alves (center) for their film "The Captain", and Peter Hjorth (right) for "Border" hold their awards.



Spanish actress Carmen Maura poses with her EFA Lifetime Achievement Award.

More than 3,500 members of the European Film Academy and filmmakers from across Europe have voted for this year's European Film Awards. At the awards ceremony in Seville the following awards were presented:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>EUROPEAN FILM 2018
COLD WAR</p> <p>EUROPEAN COMEDY 2018
THE DEATH OF STALIN</p> <p>EUROPEAN DISCOVERY 2018 - Prix FIPRESCI
Girl</p> <p>EUROPEAN DOCUMENTARY 2018
BERGMAN - A YEAR IN A LIFE</p> <p>EUROPEAN ANIMATED FEATURE FILM 2018
ANOTHER DAY OF LIFE</p> <p>EUROPEAN SHORT FILM 2018
THE YEARS</p> <p>EUROPEAN DIRECTOR 2018
Pawel Pawlikowski for COLD WAR</p> <p>EUROPEAN ACTRESS 2018
Joanna Kulig in COLD WAR</p> <p>EUROPEAN ACTOR 2018
Marcello Fonte in DOGMAN</p> <p>EUROPEAN SCREENWRITER 2018
Pawel Pawlikowski for COLD WAR</p> <p>EUROPEAN CINEMATOGRAPHER 2018 - Prix CARLO DI PALMA
Martin Otterbeck</p> <p>EUROPEAN EDITOR 2018
Jaroslaw Kami ski</p> | <p>EUROPEAN PRODUCTION DESIGNER 2018
Andrey Ponkratov</p> <p>EUROPEAN COSTUME DESIGNER 2018
Massimo Cantini Parrini</p> <p>EUROPEAN HAIR & MAKE-UP ARTIST 2018
Dalia Colli, Lorenzo Tamburini & Daniela Tartari</p> <p>EUROPEAN COMPOSER 2018
Christoph M. Kaiser & Julian Maas</p> <p>EUROPEAN SOUND DESIGNER 2018
Andre Bendocchi-Alves & Martin Steyer</p> <p>EUROPEAN VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR 2018
Peter Hjorth</p> <p>EUROPEAN FILM ACADEMY LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Carmen Maura</p> <p>EUROPEAN ACHIEVEMENT IN WORLD CINEMA
Ralph Fiennes</p> <p>HONORARY AWARD OF THE EFA PRESIDENT AND BOARD
Costa-Gavras</p> <p>EUROPEAN CO-PRODUCTION AWARD 2018 - Prix EURIMAGES
Konstantinos Kontovrakis and Giorgos Karnavas</p> <p>PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD 2018 for Best European Film
CALL ME BY YOUR NAME-www.europeanfilmacademy.org</p> |
|---|--|



Scottish director Armando Iannucci (left) receives the Best European Comedy award for his film "The Death of Stalin".



Swedish director Jane Magnusson receives the Best European Documentary award for her film "Bergman - A year in a life".



Italian actor Marcello Fonte receives the Best European Actor award for his film "Dogman".



Winners of the Excellence awards stand on stage.



Spanish actress Carmen Maura cries between British actress Amira Casar (left) and German director Wim Wenders (right) prior to receiving the EFA Lifetime Achievement Award.



English actor Ralph Fiennes poses with his European Achievement in World Cinema award.



Belgian director Lukas Dhont receives the European Discovery award for his film "Girl".



French Greek director Costa-Gavras receives the Honorary award of the EFA President and Board.



Winners of the Excellence awards stand on stage.

Lifestyle | Features



This file photo shows the Marker Wadden, artificial islands located in the Markermeer lake in The Netherlands. — AFP photos



Visitors walk on the Marker Wadden, artificial islands located in the Markermeer lake in the Netherlands.

Dutch build artificial islands to bring wildlife back

Dutch ranger Andre Donker sighs as he looks out at the rippling grey waters of the Markermeer, one of Europe's largest freshwater lakes. "Once upon a time it was teeming with fish here," he says. But this vast 700-square-kilometre (270-square-mile) expanse of water, which regulates the level of water in the rest of the Netherlands, had become until recently nothing more than a cloudy mass devoid of aquatic life. Now the hope is that a new artificial archipelago of five islands will bring nature back to the area via a typically ambitious engineering project for a low-lying country that has battled the sea for centuries.

It is "one of the largest rewilding operations in Europe", says Donker. Standing on a wooden bridge over a pond in the middle of experimental plots of different kinds of reeds, he says he has been able to see the first signs of increasing biodiversity.

'We had to intervene'

The lake was once part of the Zuiderzee, an engineering wonder of the world completed in 1932, which closed off a huge expanse of water to keep out the North Sea and combat flooding. Vital in a country where 26 percent of the land is below sea level, the scheme created an inland lake and polders, land reclaimed from the sea, but at a cost to the environment.

Over the subsequent decades, sediment used to create a dyke separating the Markermeer from a neighboring body of water, the IJsselmeer, washed away and sunk to the bottom of the lake. That turned the water cloudy, negatively impacting fish and bird populations, plants and molluscs. "We had to

intervene," says Donker, wearing a woollen hat to brave the storms from the North Sea.

Combating vulnerability

The solution was a bold one in keeping with a country whose people like to boast that "God created the world, but the Dutch created the Netherlands". Eight kilometers (five miles) from the port of Lelystad, the ranger walks down the side of an artificial sand dune. Other similar dunes stretch out beyond it as far as the eye can see. Still-sparse vegetation covers a large part of the 700 hectares that have been built anew in the lake.

The islets plan is among many being worked on by the Netherlands, which is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change. Since October, the port city of Rotterdam has hosted the headquarters of an international climate commission led by former UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon and Microsoft founder and climate activist Bill Gates.

'Explosion of plankton'

The five islets were built in two and a half years and have already served as a resting place for 30,000 swallows this year. Experts recently counted 127 kinds of plants, most of which have been brought in by windborne seeds. In the water there is an "explosion" of plankton that "guarantees a large amount of food for the birds", says Donker, in his fifties and whose weathered face shows the signs of 20 years in the job. Greylag goose, common tern, several species of waders such as the great egret and the night heron have also returned, testifying to the islands' success.

'Beautiful landscape'

In the distance a dredger is helping to create the final dunes of the archipelago, dubbed Marker Wadden. The project, initiated by Natuurmonumenten, a Dutch non-governmental organization working for the preservation of nature, cost 60 million euros (\$68 million) — much of it donated by individuals. True to their reputation as masters of water management, the Dutch used an innovative technique, forming the islets with silt, a sedimentary formation halfway between clay and sand.

"Building an island with sand is not that difficult, we do it all over the world, and what is unique here is that we use silt," says Jeroen van der Klooster, project head at Boskalis, the maritime service provider that built the archipelago. His team dug a 1,200-metre "corridor" on the main island which allows the silt, led by strong ocean currents, to form marshy areas, fertile soil and reservoirs where migratory birds can eat.

"And that's how this beautiful landscape was born," says van der Klooster from the top of a wooden observation tower, wearing an orange vest and a white helmet. Three wooden bird observatories, a house for the island's guardian, 12 kilometers of footbridges and unpaved roads have also been built on the main island, which is open to the public. The four others are exclusively reserved for wildlife and plants—a once-sterile space now returned to nature. — AFP



Visitors walk on the Marker Wadden, artificial islands located in the Markermeer lake in the Netherlands.



Visitors cross a bridge on the Marker Wadden, artificial islands located in the Markermeer lake in the Netherlands.



This file photo shows the Marker Wadden, artificial islands located in the Markermeer lake in The Netherlands.

Japanese animation classic hits Chinese screens 30 years late

The Japanese animation classic "My Neighbor Totoro", which has enchanted generations of children, finally hit Chinese cinemas Friday — 30 years after its original release. The Studio Ghibli film has never been screened in China despite its global popularity. The movie follows two sisters who move with their father to the countryside where they come across Totoro and other forest creatures. With its whimsical pastels and postwar Japanese countryside setting, the movie made its debut in 1988 and became an instant classic.

The film's characters have become cultural icons with the eponymous wood spirit Totoro serving as the mascot for Studio Ghibli. It is unclear why the movie has never been released in China, though the Communist government has quotas for the number of foreign films allowed to screen every year and censors what it deems sensitive content.

China and Japan have been traditional rivals for centuries. Although relations have improved somewhat in recent years, they remain touchy due to issues such as Japan's bloody occupation of parts of China in the 1930s and 40s. Despite the lack of public screenings, the rotund titular character has shown up everywhere in China, from mobile phone cases to birthday cakes, while copies of the movie are readily available in Chinese shops and e-commerce platforms.

Studio Ghibli chairman Koji Hoshino on Monday told a news conference in Shanghai that the movie promotes "nature in Japan" and "warm relations between families", Japanese media reported. "In order to get rid of bogus copies (of the movie), I thought we should show a Ghibli movie in the Chinese market," Hoshino said. Studio Ghibli is Japan's premier animation studio, renowned internationally for works including "Princess Mononoke" and "Spirited Away", and co-founder Hayao Miyazaki is among the world's most acclaimed animators. "Spirited Away" won the Oscar for best animated feature in 2003 — the first Japanese film to do so—among other major gongs. — AFP



Museum devoted to magic of cinema to open in LA

Nearly a century after the idea was first floated, a museum dedicated to the magic of cinema is finally set to open in Los Angeles, with the first temporary exhibition devoted to Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki. The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, slated to open by the end of 2019, will be devoted to the past, present and future of film, offering visitors a look behind the screen and into how movies are made.

"Los Angeles was at one time and still is to some degree one of the major capitals for the production of film... so it seems the natural place to have a major museum to ensure that the legacy of film lives on," said Kerry Brougher, director of the museum, which is the brainchild of the Academy of Picture Arts and Sciences, the institution behind the Oscars. Dorothy's famed ruby slippers from "The Wizard of Oz," a copy of a script annotated by Gregory Peck for the 1962 drama "To Kill a Mockingbird," the doors to Rick's Cafe Americain from "Casablanca" or the typewriter used by Joseph Stefano to write the screenplay to Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho" are among a trove of objects that will be on display.

Animation master Miyazaki

Designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, the near \$400 million museum will be housed in a historic building—the Saban Building formerly home to the May

Company department store—and will feature six floors that include exhibition spaces, a cafe, a store, plus a 1,000-seat theatre. "The Museum will be a gathering place for film lovers and will invite people from all over the world to re-experience and deepen our collective love of this art form, accessible to all," said Dawn Hudson, CEO of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

"Like the experience of watching a movie, a trip to the Museum will be a kind of waking dream in which visitors feel as if they've slipped through the screen to see how the magic is created," she added. Several Hollywood A-listers, including Tom Hanks, Annette Bening and Laura Dern, have been involved in the project, hosting fundraising events and drumming up support both at home and abroad.

"It's going to be a combination of the Louvre, the Museum of Modern Art and the Hermitage," Hanks told reporters on a recent tour, referring to world-class museums in Paris, New York and St. Petersburg, Russia. "Everybody who comes to Los Angeles will want to see what's inside and they will linger for more than just a few hours." The museum will open with a retrospective devoted to Miyazaki, whose animation masterpieces include "Princess Mononoke" and the Oscar-winning "Spirited Away." —AFP

Ivory Coast painter gives new life to e-waste

Desire Koffi often walks through Koumassi, a popular district of Ivory Coast's main city Abidjan, to collect old mobile phones that he buys from people for 500 CFA francs (\$0.8726) a pair. Back home, the 24-year-old Ivorian artist dismantles the phones with a hammer to pull out the screens and keyboards. He uses them for his paintings. One can take him up to three or five days of work. Koffi grew up in Koumassi and says he was drawn to recycling and incorporating e-waste in his art, after seeing how it affected his environment.

"My number one goal is to try, in my own small way, to reduce electronic waste that is found in the streets and in the bins," he said. "Here, we are in one of the city's most popular neighborhoods, where you usually find old phones which can no longer be repaired." With a population of about 5.5 million, Abidjan generates up to 1,500 tons of e-waste per year, according to the European Union-funded E-waste Implementation Toolkit. Koffi says a significant amount of this waste can be used to make money.

With several exhibitions abroad and at home under his belt, Koffi is quickly becoming one of Ivory Coast most important figures in contemporary art. "I think his work is great. He has decided to go into recycling, and it really suits him because his work stands out from all others," fellow Ivorian artist Ezechiel Guibe said. "Despite incorporating recycling material into his work, he manages to capture all these forms, faces and emotions in his work, which really blew us away," added art gallery director, Olivier Pepe. — Reuters



Classifieds

Monday, December 17, 2018

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 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

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DAY: Sunday 16/12/2018 Valid From 7 PM To 7 AM

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Cool with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h with a chance for light fog forming over some areas.

BY DAY: Mostly Sunny with light to moderate variable wind changing to south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 16/12/2018 1200 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	21 °C	15 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20 °C	11 °C			
ABDALY	20 °C	08 °C			
BUBYAN	** °C	** °C			
JAHRA	21 °C	12 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	19 °C	13 °C			
SALMIYAH	19 °C	15 °C			
AHMADI	19 °C	15 °C			
NUWAISIB	21 °C	12 °C			
WAFRA	21 °C	10 °C			
SALMY	19 °C	08 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	12/17	Mostly Sunny	23 °C	11 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Tuesday	12/18	Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain with a chance for fog forming at night	22 °C	14 °C	NE-VRB	08 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	12/19	Mostly Sunny with a chance for fog forming at night	22 °C	13 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	12/20	Partly cloudy with a chance for fog forming at night	23 °C	12 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	05:11
Sunrise	06:36
Zuhr	11:44
Asr	14:34
Sunset	16:52
Isha	18:15

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	20 °C
MIN. Temp.	14 °C
MAX. RH	82 %
MIN. RH	33 %
MAX. Wind	N 50 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UP0 2018/12/16 14:59 UTC VL00 T2.4 ق.ت.ج.ع.ا-8

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Santhosh Theruparambil (House), S/o. Bhaskaran, Kariyannoor, Erumappetty (PO), Thrissur, 680584, holder of Indian Passport No: J5238774, Civil ID No: 277021014999, converted to Islam and has changed my name and address to Muhammed Suhail, S/o. Bhaskaran, Theruparambil (House), Kaippuram (PO), Thiruvengapura, Naduvattam, Palakkad, Kerala-679308, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C.5438)

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Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
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Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

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

Painful memories for poor family of girl who died in US custody

Guatemalan child dreamed of sending money home

RAXRUHA, Guatemala: Outside a humble thatched-roof home deep in the lush Guatemalan countryside, the mother of a seven-year-old girl who died after being detained by US border agents tries to remember happier days with her daughter. The 27-year-old woman mournfully points to a nearby tree that young Jakelin Caal enjoyed climbing. "I feel pain and sadness over the death of my daughter," said Claudia Maquin, speaking in her native Maya Q'eqchi' language through an interpreter.

Corn stood behind her palm-thatched wooden house and a few chickens and pigs scabbled in the yard as she spoke, dressed in a traditional blouse with a 6-month-old baby in her arms. A family photograph at the house showed Jakelin smiling and looking up at the camera, wearing a pink T-shirt with characters from the cartoon series "Masha and the Bear". Deforestation to make way for palm-oil plantations has made subsistence farming increasingly hard for the 40,000 inhabitants of Raxruha municipality, where the family's agricultural hamlet of San Antonio de Cortez lies in central Guatemala, local officials said. That has spurred an exodus of migrants.

Jakelin's death in American custody on Dec 8 - which followed her detention after illegally crossing from Mexico with her father - has reignited a debate in the United States on immigration policy and mistreatment of migrants. It has also shocked residents of this indigenous farming village of unpaved roads that has neither electricity nor running water, and where crushing poverty is the norm.

The child's death came as President Donald Trump struggles to deter a tide of migrants fleeing poverty and violence in Central America. Nearly 60 percent of Guatemala's 17 million people live under the poverty line, according to government and World Bank figures. That rate is higher in indigenous communities like the remote village where young Jakelin lived in the municipality of Raxruha, some 145 km north of the capital Guatemala City.

Left 'out of necessity'

Jakelin's father Nery Caal, 29, left the village to travel to the United States with her on Nov 30. "He left out of necessity," Maquin told AFP, with her father-in-law Domingo Caal acting as an interpreter. "When he left he said that he'd be looking for work there," she said. Jakelin traveled north with her father because "the girl was very close" to him, said Domingo Caal, 61. He said the girl was "jumping with joy" as she began the trip. Before leaving "she told her mother and grandmother that when she grew up she would work and bring money to them," he said.

The US Department of Homeland Security confirmed the death of the girl, saying she died of dehydration and exhaustion in an El Paso, Texas

hospital less than 24 hours after being detained as part of a group of 163 illegal border crossers in a remote New Mexico border area. The DHS confirmation came only after it was reported by The Washington Post. Guatemala's foreign ministry said the child came down with fever and was shaking and vomiting after she was in US Border Patrol custody, where she received aid from paramedics before being hospitalized.

Father wants answers

The girl's father, who is seeking asylum in the United States, issued a statement Saturday in his family's name "seeking an objective and thorough investigation" into his daughter's death. The statement was read to reporters by Ruben Garcia, the head of Annunciation House, the refugee shelter where he is staying in El Paso, Texas. Jakelin, who was just five days past her seventh birthday, had not been crossing the desert for days and "had not suffered from a lack of food or water prior to approaching the border", the statement read. The statement also said that it was "unacceptable" that US agents had the father, who mainly speaks Q'eqchi', sign documents in English.

The father, speaking through a representative in Texas, said the girl exhibited no sign of distress at the border. Immigrant rights activists, several waving signs and clutching pictures of the young girl, rallied to protest Jakelin's death in downtown El Paso as Border Patrol agents warily looked on from a distance. "We want to know what happened during those hours in which she was detained and then taken to hospital," said one of the protesters, Fernando Garcia, head of the Human Rights Border Network advocacy group. The Department of Homeland Security's inspector general announced an internal investigation into the girl's death.

'What can we do?'

The Guatemalan government has offered to bring back the girl's remains, and said that her father would be released by special permission from US immigration authorities. The late girl's uncle Jose Caal told AFP that it could take some three weeks to complete the process to repatriate the girl's body for a funeral. "It's very painful, very painful, but what can we do?" asked Domingo Caal. "What happened, happened, but it's painful," he said.

The family hopes the girl's father can remain in the United States. "What I want now is for Nery to stay and work in the United States. That's what I want," said his wife. A Guatemalan consular official told Reuters on Friday that Caal told him he had crossed the border planning to turn himself in to US authorities, and will try to stay. — Agencies

said. The mosque's destruction "was a moment of horror and despair," said UNESCO Iraq representative Louise Haxthausen. "Today as we lay the foundation stone of the Nuri mosque, we are starting a journey of physical reconstruction," she told those gathered.

The mosque takes its name from Nureddin Al-Zinki, who ordered it built in 1172 after unifying Syria and parts of northern Iraq. Its cylindrical minaret, which featured several levels of ornamental brickwork capped by a small white dome, started listing centuries ago. It is featured on Iraq's 10,000-dinar banknote and gave its name to countless restaurants, companies and even sports clubs.

But in June 2014, it became infamous as the site where Baghdadi declared IS' "caliphate" just days after the jihadists seized Mosul in a lightning assault. That capture prompted three years of ferocious fighting to wrest back Mosul and other Iraqi cities overrun by IS. In June 2017, as Iraqi forces closed in on a shrinking IS-held pocket in Mosul's Old City, the militants blew up both the Al-Nuri mosque and its leaning minaret. IS itself blamed a US-led strike for the destruction. When the rest of the Old City fell back under state control, Iraqi forces celebrated at the mosque, holding IS' black flag upside down and tauntingly calling out, "Where is Baghdadi?" — AFP

system. The Paris Agreement calls for setting up a mechanism to guard against practices, such as double counting emissions savings, that could undermine such a market. A major sticking point, delegates eventually agreed Saturday to kick the issue down the road until next year. One veteran observer told AFP that Poland's presidency at COP24 had left many countries out of the process and presented at-risk nations with a "take it or leave it" deal. Progress had "been held up by Brazil, when it should have been held up by the small islands. It's tragic."

One of the largest disappointments for countries of all wealths and sizes was the lack of ambition to reduce emissions shown in the final COP24 text. Most nations wanted the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to form a key part of future planning. It highlighted the need to slash carbon pollution by nearly half before 2030 in order to hit the 1.5C target. But the US, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait objected to use the word "welcome" in association with the findings of the report, leading to watered-down wording.

The final statement from the Polish COP24 presidency now merely expresses gratitude for the work on the report, welcomes its timely completion and invites parties to use the information in it - hardly the ringing endorsement many nations had called for. "There's been a shocking lack of response to the 1.5 report," Greenpeace's Morgan, told AFP. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who made three trips to Katowice over the course of the talks, said the world's climate fight was just beginning. "From now on my five priorities will be: Ambition, ambition, ambition, ambition, ambition," he said in a message read out by UN climate chief Patricia Espinosa. — Agencies



RAXRUHA, Guatemala: Claudia Maquin, 27, whose daughter, 7-year old Jakelin Caal died in a Texas hospital, holds her six-month daughter Angela next to her children, Abdel, 9, and Elvis, 5, at her house in San Antonio Seacortez village on Saturday. — AFP

Son-in-law of Iran president faces nepotism claims

TEHRAN: The appointment of President Hassan Rouhani's son-in-law as head of Iran's geological survey has renewed accusations of nepotism and led on Sunday to the resignation of a senior official, according to conservative media. The appointment of Kambiz Mehdizadeh, in his early thirties and reportedly married to Rouhani's daughter in a low-key wedding this August, was widely criticised by Iranians on social media. It also triggered the resignation of Jafar Sargheini, head of the mining section in the industries ministry, who criticized "unprofessional appointments" without directly naming Mehdizadeh,

the conservative Tasnim news agency reported. Mehdizadeh is a PhD student in petroleum engineering, who has also served as an advisor to Iran's oil ministry, taekwondo federation and national youth organization, Tasnim said.

Iranians on social media renewed criticism of nepotism that had spread last year with the hashtag "#good-genes" - a reference to the son of a prominent reformist politician who attributed his business success to inheriting "good genes" from his parents. "I had no idea even sons-in-law could inherit #good_genes!" wrote one Twitter user on Sunday in reference to Mehdizadeh's appointment.

Another online campaign this summer called on senior officials to come clean about the privileges their children enjoy, particularly those studying in the United States and other Western countries. The "#Where_is_your_kid" campaign pressured several government figures to respond, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif who said his children had returned to Iran after studying abroad. — AFP

Bahrain defends Aussie move, but...

Continued from Page 1

Sheikh Khalid has previously said Israel had the right to defend itself against Iran, which Bahrain blames for stoking unrest in the island state. Iran denies interfering in Bahrain. Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has on several occasions hinted at warmer relations with Gulf Arab states and made a surprise visit to Oman in October to meet with its ruler Sultan Qaboos bin Said. Israel has diplomatic relations with only two Arab states, Egypt and Jordan.

Israel meanwhile signaled displeasure yesterday with Australia's recognition of West Jerusalem as its capital, with a confidant of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying it was a mistake to deny Israeli control over the whole city. The premier, for his part, stayed silent on Canberra's move at a weekly Israeli cabinet meeting that is usually his opportunity to hold forth in public on major diplomatic developments.

Israel captured Arab East Jerusalem in a 1967 war and annexed it as its capital in a move not recognized internationally. Palestinians want East Jerusalem as capital of the state they hope to found in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A year ago, US President Donald Trump outraged Palestinians by recognizing Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, a designation that did not acknowledge their claim on the east of the city though it left open the question of its final borders.

On Saturday, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Canberra formally recognizes West Jerusalem as Israel's capital but reaffirmed his country's support for a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem under a two-state peace deal. Israel's for-

eign ministry responded tepidly, calling the Australian move "a step in the right direction". At the cabinet meeting yesterday, Netanyahu declined to elaborate. "We issued a statement at the foreign ministry. I have nothing to add to it," he told reporters at the outset of the meeting.

Tzachi Hanegbi, Israel's minister for regional cooperation and a Netanyahu confidant in the rightwing Likud party, was more openly critical of Australia, though he deemed it a "deep and intimate friend of many years' standing". "To our regret, within this positive news they made a mistake," Hanegbi told reporters outside the cabinet room. "There is no division between the east of the city and west of the city. Jerusalem is one whole, united. Israel's control over it is eternal. Our sovereignty will not be partitioned nor undermined. And we hope Australia will soon find the way to fix the mistake it made."

Morrison's move first surfaced in October, when it was viewed cynically in Australia because it came days before a crucial by-election in an electorate a strong Jewish representation. His party lost that poll. Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said Saturday's move was born of Australian "petty domestic politics". "All of Jerusalem remains a final-status issue for negotiations, while East Jerusalem, under international law, is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory," he said.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad yesterday criticized Australia's move to recognize West Jerusalem as Israel's capital, saying countries had "no rights" to do so. "Jerusalem should remain as it is now and not the capital of Israel," Mahathir told Reuters on the sidelines of an event in Bangkok. "Jerusalem has always been under Palestine, so why are they taking the initiative to divide Jerusalem not belonging to them, but to divide the Arabs and the Jews? They have no rights," he added. Malaysia is a majority-Muslim country and has long supported a two-state solution in the Palestine-Israel conflict. — Agencies

formation for the World Cup. Construction work, in the shape of a Qatari/Chinese joint project, is set to finish in 2020.

The unveiling of Lusail comes as world football's governing body FIFA is still considering whether to expand the tournament from 32 teams to 48. If that expansion occurs - there is currently a feasibility study underway - it is likely that tournament games will be shared among other countries in the region. "Ultimately the decision (on expansion) will be made with FIFA and Qatar," said Thawadi. — AFP

Cornerstone laid to rebuild iconic...

Continued from Page 1

More than a year after IS lost control of Mosul, the iconic mosque still lies in ruins. The stone gate leading up to its courtyard and the greenish dome now covered in graffiti are virtually the only parts still erect. All that is left of the minaret is part of its rectangular base, the rest of it sheared off by fighting. Abu Bakr Kenaan, head of Sunni Muslim endowments in Nineveh province, told AFP remnants of the minaret would be preserved, while other parts of the mosque would be built afresh, along with a museum about its history and adjacent homes.

The five-year project will be financed by a \$50.4 million donation from the United Arab Emirates. The first year will focus on documenting and clearing the site, while the next four years will see the physical restoration, the UN's heritage agency UNESCO has

Nations agree global climate...

Continued from Page 1

"Without a clear rulebook, we won't see how countries are tracking, whether they are actually doing what they say they are doing," Canada's Environment Minister Catherine McKenna told AFP. At their heart, negotiations were about how each nation funds action to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as how those actions are reported.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who has recently backed down on anti-pollution fuel tax hikes in the face of country-wide "yellow vest" protests, said France must "show the way" as he welcomed the progress made at the talks. "The international community remains committed to the fight against climate change," he tweeted yesterday. "Congratulations to the UN, scientists, NGOs and all negotiators. France and Europe must show the way. The fight goes on."

Developing nations had wanted more clarity from richer ones over how the future climate fight will be funded and pushed for so-called "loss and damage" measures. This would see richer countries giving money now to help deal with the effects of climate change many vulnerable states are already experiencing. Another contentious issue was the integrity of carbon markets, looking ahead to the day when the patchwork of distinct exchanges - in China, the Europe Union, parts of the United States - may be joined up in a global

Qatar unveils World Cup final...

Continued from Page 1

It is one of the largest infrastructure schemes undertaken by Qatar, which is undergoing enormous trans-

Sports

Badminton gold at last for 'proud' Sindhu as Shi stuns Momota

Malaysian Olympic silver medallists quit national team

SHANGHAI: An emotional P.V. Sindhu finally got her hands on gold at badminton's season-ending World Tour Finals yesterday while in the men's decider China's Shi Yuqi exacted stunning revenge over number one Kento Momota.

The 23-year-old Indian Sindhu has suffered a series of near-misses in recent years, winning silver at the 2016 Rio Olympics, and again at the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games this year. The world number six, renowned for her never-say-die attitude, has also twice lost in the final of the World Championships and was runner-up in last year's season finale.

But she put all that heartbreak behind her in the Chinese city of Guangzhou, beating the fifth-ranked Nozomi Okuhara of Japan 21-19, 21-17 in the women's final in just over an hour. Sindhu, who was always in control of the match, sealed the championship with a forehand smash, before collapsing to the court floor on her hands and knees, physically and emotionally exhausted.

"I'm really proud, the year has ended on a beautiful note," said Sindhu. "People have been asking me the same question, I think the question won't come again—asking why I always lose in the final. "It was good that people were asking me about losing so many finals because I had to ask myself why I was losing."

"Finally I got the answer." The men's final, a mouth-watering showdown between the two top-ranked players in the world, was a re-run of the world championship decider in August. On that occasion, the 22-year-old Shi—the new star of Chinese men's badminton—was well beaten by Momota.

But roared on by the crowd in Guangzhou, Shi got revenge in emphatic fashion, beating the tournament favourite 21-12, 21-11 in a surprisingly one-sided encounter for the biggest win of his young career.

Significantly, it was the first time Shi has beaten Momota, 24, the outstanding player this year.

"I'm thrilled as I'd never beaten Momota and to do it on this stage is very special," said Shi, who has overtaken Olympic champions Chen Long and Lin Dan to become China's leading male player.

Earlier, two of Malaysia's top badminton shuttlers are quitting the national team, officials confirmed Sunday, less than a year before the Tokyo Olympics kicks off in July. World number six mixed doubles players Chan Peng Soon and Goh Liu Ying will be leaving the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) in January after the pair sent in their resignation letters last month.

"After discussions with various stakeholders, BAM has accepted their resignation, effective 1 January 2019," a statement from the body read. It did not say why Chan, 30, and Goh, 29, who both took silvers at the Rio 2016 Summer Games, were quitting the national sports body. But association president Norza Zakaria told AFP that the duo, who've been playing together since 2008 according to local media, merely wanted to chart their own careers apart from the national body.

"They wanted to become independent, so they thought that it was better for them to be outside to focus on their Olympic ambitions," he said. "It's a mutual agreement by both parties. We would definitely want them to be in the Olympics."

Norza disagreed that the duo's resignations were a setback for the sport and that they could still return as players in national events. "Independent players, they will play outside, but we will register them as national players," he said.

Both Chan and Goh, he said, were free to find their own sponsors now and could still take part in future tournaments though on their expenses. The pair are the



GUANGZHOU: Winner Sindhu Pusarla of India poses with her trophy after the women's singles final match at the 2018 BWF World Tour Finals badminton competition in Guangzhou in southern China's Guangdong province yesterday.—AFP

latest shuttlers to quit the national body after earlier reports that it was trimming down its national team.

The Star reported in early December that the national squad would be whittled down to 48 shuttlers

by the end of January, down from a 60-player line-up. Iskandar Zulkarnain Zainuddin, 27, who was fined in June for smoking during a tournament, quit the body in November.—AFP

Camelo wins WBA super middleweight title fight

NEW YORK: Saul "Canelo" Alvarez proved too strong for Rocky Fielding as he delivered a third round TKO on Saturday to easily win their WBA super middleweight title fight at Madison Square Garden.

The 28-year-old Mexican, a heavy favourite, imposed his will from the opening bell, delivering punishing body shots and knocking down his out-matched British opponent a total of four times.

Alvarez, whose record improves to 51-1-2, sealed the win with a left hook that caused Fielding to take a knee and the referee to end the bout. Alvarez landed 35 body shots in all. "That's what we planned," Alvarez told reporters, of attacking his opponent's body. "We knew he had that weakness. Each one that landed felt like I hurt him."

Despite standing taller at 6-foot-1 and enjoying a three-inch reach advantage, Fielding (27-2-0) entered the night as a clear underdog. Alvarez, whose lone defeat came at the hands

of Floyd Mayweather in 2013, showed why as he became a three-division world champion and put himself in line for another headline fight against a more formidable opponent.

The future appears to be full of possibilities for Alvarez, who moved up to 168 pounds for the fight but insisted he would have no issue in potentially dropping back down. "I felt very strong. We did a good job and I feel very happy," Alvarez said.

"We'll enjoy this triumph and everything we've accomplished in 2018, and then we'll think about what is coming." Fielding had fought his way back from a crushing first round TKO defeat to Callum Smith three years ago, winning six straight bouts before facing Alvarez.

"I came back when no one gave me a chance. I'll come back (again), that's what fighters do," Fielding said. "(Canelo) is an elite fighter. He does everything well. He's the best I've fought."

Fielding fell to the canvas in each of the opening rounds but bravely fought on. The 31-year-old said he ultimately regretted standing immobile in front of Alvarez for so long. Many boxing fans watched the fight through the live-streaming service DAZN, who signed a deal with Alvarez worth \$365 million to stream 11 fights.

The streaming service, which charges a \$9.99 monthly fee but offers a free trial service, is aiming to change the pay-per-view model.—Reuters



NEW YORK: Canelo Alvarez celebrates after the technical knockout of Rocky Fielding in their WBA Super Middleweight title bout at Madison Square Garden on Saturday in New York City.—AFP

their past seven games. Jake Muzzin and Alex Iafallo each had a goal and an assist, and Matt Luff added a goal for the Kings, who are 0-3-1 in their last four games.

PANTHERS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 3 (OT)

Florida's Aleksander Barkov recorded his first career hat trick, including the overtime game-winner, to lift Florida over visiting Toronto. Barkov roofed a backhand with 1:36 left in overtime after a steal led to a two-on-one break on Toronto goalie Frederik Andersen. Jonathan Huberdeau had a goal and an assist for Florida, which snapped a four-game losing streak. Mitchell Marner scored twice, and John Tavares added a goal for the Maple Leafs, who scored three times in the third period to tie the score.

DUCKS 2, BLUE JACKETS 1 (OT)

Daniel Sprong scored his second goal of the game at 1:19 of overtime to lift visiting Anaheim past Columbus. Adam Henrique won a faceoff in the Columbus zone, and Sprong took possession of the puck at the top of the left circle. He turned into the slot and shot the puck into the net to give Anaheim its eighth win in the past nine games. Markus Nutivaara scored, and Sergei Bobrovsky made 20 saves for Columbus, which dropped to 1-2-1 on its season-long six-game homestand.

ISLANDERS 4, RED WINGS 3 (SO)

Mathew Barzal scored the only goal of the shootout to lift host New York over Detroit. Barzal, Anthony Beauvillier and Casey Cizikas scored in regulation for the Islanders, who are 2-0-1 in three home games at Nassau Coliseum this season. Goalie Thomas Greiss recorded 18 saves in regulation before stopping all three shots in the shootout. Gustav Nyquist and Trevor Daley scored in the first period while Thomas Vanek forced overtime with a goal late in the third period for the Red Wings, who lost both ends of a back-to-back set.

FLAMES 2, WILD 1

Another strong third period for Calgary gave the visitors a win over Minnesota in a heated matchup between the two Western Conference rivals. With the score tied in the final period, James Neal took the puck toward the corner and



WASHINGTON: Alex Ovechkin #8 of the Washington Capitals skates past Sam Reinhart #23 of the Buffalo Sabres during the second period at Capital One Arena on Saturday in Washington, DC.—AFP

sent a pass that deflected off a Wild defenseman. The bounce went right to Matthew Tkachuk, who buried the partially screened shot for his 14th goal of the season with 11:15 remaining. The win helped the Flames tie Winnipeg for first place in the Western Conference at 44 points. Calgary is 8-1-1 over its last 10 games.

CANADIENS 5, SENATORS 2

Shea Weber's tiebreaking tally as part of a four-goal third period powered Montreal over visiting Ottawa. Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Matthew Peca each finished with a goal and an assist for Montreal. Jonathan Drouin and Paul Byron also scored along with Weber, whose fourth goal of the season broke a 2-all tie midway through the third. Colin White and Mikkel Boedker scored one goal apiece for Ottawa.

CANUCKS 5, FLYERS 1

Brock Boeser scored a goal and added an assist as host

Hirscher storms to sixth consecutive giant slalom win

ALTA BADIA: Olympic champion Marcel Hirscher of Austria set a blistering pace to snatch a sixth consecutive victory in the men's World Cup giant slalom at Alta Badia yesterday. The seven-time defending overall World Cup champion laid the groundwork for victory in a dominant first run in the Dolomites of northern Italy.

Hirscher was impressive from the start gate to the finish down the challenging Gran Risa course clocking 1min 17.61sec in the first run, nearly one second ahead of his rivals. The 29-year-old did even better in the second with 1:14.68 for a combined time of 2min 32.29sec with France's Thomas Fanara at 2.53sec and Alexis Pinturault at 2.69 to complete the podium. "It was definitely on the limit," said Hirscher. "I was very close to not getting to the finish line. It was on the edge." Hirscher's great Norwegian rival Henrik Kristoffersen, fifth fastest on the opening run, made two big mistakes on his second run and could only finish 14th overall at 3.65sec.

It was Hirscher's 61st World Cup victory and third this season after the slalom in Levi, Finland and giant slalom in Val d'Isere, France. Sweden's Matts Olsson and Swiss Marco Odermatt, who had been second and third after the first run could not match the pace in the second.

Odermatt took a tumble and failed to finish the race as Olsson finished overall sixth. The competition continues today with the parallel giant slalom. In Val Gardena, the rescheduled women's World Cup downhill and Super G will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday after being cancelled in Val d'Isere because of lack of snow.—AFP

Ovechkin leads Caps over Sabres in shootout

WASHINGTON: Alex Ovechkin scored in the fourth round of the shootout, and goalie Pheonix Copley then stopped a Jason Pominville shot to give the Washington Capitals a 4-3 victory over the visiting Buffalo Sabres on Saturday night. Ovechkin, in regulation, already had extended his point-scoring streak to 14 games, a career best. He has now scored goals in six consecutive contests, getting hat tricks in Washington's two previous games as the Capitals have won five straight. The 33-year-old Ovechkin has a league-best 29 goals in 32 games. He beat Buffalo goalie Carter Hutton with a quick wrist shot in the top of the fourth round of the shootout to give the Capitals a 2-1 lead. Copley (26 saves) then denied Pominville on a low shot to give Washington a second shootout win in two nights. The Capitals defeated Carolina 6-5 in a shootout Friday.

PREDATORS 2, DEVILS 1 (SO)

Ryan Johansen scored the game-winning goal in the sixth round of the shootout as Nashville ran its home winning streak to five games with a win over New Jersey. Predators goaltender Juuse Saros made 33 saves, including four in overtime. He also made saves on Kyle Palmieri and Nico Hischier shortly after Boyle tied the score. Keith Kinkaid made 27 saves, but the Devils went 0-for-4 on the power play and fell to 3-5-6 in their last 14 games.

PENGUINS 4, KINGS 3 (OT)

Phil Kessel scored a power-play goal on a one-timer from Evgeni Malkin at 3:59 of overtime as host Pittsburgh beat last-place Los Angeles. Bryan Rust had a goal and an assist, and Matt Cullen and Tanner Pearson also scored for the Penguins, who won their second in a row and are 5-1-1 in

Vancouver downed Philadelphia. The Canucks scored two goals in the first 8:09 of the game and posted their fourth win in five games. The Flyers suffered their fourth straight loss. Chris Tanev, Loui Eriksson, Josh Leivo and Markus Granlund also scored for the Canucks, who led 3-1 after the first and 4-1 after the second period. Troy Stecher furnished two assists for the victors. Scott Laughton scored for the Flyers.

AVALANCHE 6, STARS 4

Gabriel Landeskog scored on a blast from the right point with 3:20 to play for his second goal of the game, and Mikko Rantanen tallied twice on the power play as Colorado skated past Dallas in Denver to snap a three-game losing streak. Nathan MacKinnon had three assists and an empty-net goal with 1:23 remaining for Colorado. Rantanen's first goal extended his point streak to 14 straight games. He has 27 points (eight goals, 19 assists) during the streak.—Reuters

Sports

Bruised Australia reach 132-4 to lead by 175 in Perth Test

India all out for 283, Kohli hits 123

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the second Test against Australia at Perth yesterday:

Australia 1st innings 326 (M. Harris 70, T. Head 58; Sharma 4-41)

2nd innings

M. Harris b Bumrah	20
A. Finch retired hurt	25
U. Khawaja not out	41
S. Marsh c Pant b Shami	5
P.Handscomb lbw Sharma	13
T. Head c Sharma b Shami	19
T. Paine not out	8
Extras (lb)	1
Total (four wickets, 48 overs)	132
Fall of wickets: 1-59 (Harris), 2-64 (Marsh), 3-85 (Handscomb), 4-120 (Head)	
Bowling: Sharma 9-0-33-1, Bumrah 13-5-25-1, Shami 10-3-23-2, Yadav 8-0-39-0, Vihar 8-4-11-0.	

India 1st innings (overnight 172-3)

K. Rahul b Hazlewood	2
M. Vijay b Starc	0
C. Pujara c Paine b Starc	24
V. Kohli c Handscomb b Cummins	123
A. Rahane c Paine b Lyon	51
H. Vihari c Paine b Hazlewood	20
R. Pant c Starc b Lyon	36
M. Shami c Paine b Lyon	0
I. Sharma c and b Lyon	1
U. Yadav not out	4
J. Bumrah c Khawaja b Lyon	4
Extras (b4, lb7, nb2, w5)	18
Total (all out, 105.5 overs)	283
Fall: 1-6 (Vijay), 2-8 (Rahul), 3-82 (Pujara), 4-173 (Rahane), 5-223 (Vihari), 6-251 (Kohli), 7-252 (Shami), 8-254 (Sharma), 9-279 (Pant), 10-283 (Bumrah)	
Bowling: Starc 24-4-79-2 (2nb), Hazlewood 21-8-66-2, Cummins 26-4-60-1 (1w), Lyon 34.5-7-67-5.	

PERTH: Australia battled through an onslaught from India's fiery fast bowlers on the third day of the second Test, building an ominous 175-run lead with six wickets in hand on a menacing Perth Stadium pitch that is expected to deteriorate further.

The hosts reached stumps at 132 for four in their second innings yesterday with Usman Khawaja 41 not out and captain Tim Paine unbeaten on eight. Australia, desperate to level the series after narrowly losing the first Test in Adelaide, could be without the services of opener Aaron Finch, who retired hurt on the stroke of tea after being hit on his right index finger.

"I'm not sure if he's going to bat but he's been cleared of any serious damage," spinner Nathan Lyon said of Finch's injury. "I would rather be in Australia's change rooms than India's. We know we have the bowlers that can defend (the total)."

India quick Jasprit Bumrah remained confident about his team's position, but said the morning session on day four would be pivotal. "I think our team is capable of chasing any total," he said. "We want to take early wickets to reduce the total."

Under overcast skies, Australia's batsmen faced torrid bowling from India's fired-up quicks with Finch, who was unbeaten on 25, forced off after being hit by a searing delivery from Mohammed Shami. Marcus Harris, Finch's opening partner, had earlier been hit on the helmet attempting to evade a sharp bouncer from Bumrah, who bowled superbly in favourable conditions.

A bewildered Harris fell after the tea break, clean bowled by Bumrah for 20 after not offering a shot, and Shaun Marsh was caught behind for five while rashly attempting a pull shot off Shami.

Australia's inexperienced batting-order struggled under pressure with Peter Handscomb making an unconvincing 13 before being trapped leg before after shuffling across his stumps to Ishant Sharma, who bowled without luck initially.

Travis Head was dismissed before the close for 19 after needlessly guiding a wide Shami delivery to deep third man, in a mirror-image of his first-innings dismissal. Khawaja, Australia's most accomplished batsman, survived several nerve-jangling moments to compile his highest score in the series.



PERTH: India's batsman Ajinkya Rahane is caught behind by Australia's wicketkeeper Tim Paine (L) on the third day of the second cricket Test match in Perth yesterday. — AFP

Australia's impulsive batting almost squandered their advantage after bowling out India for 283 to gain a handy first-innings lead of 43 runs, despite a brilliant century from India captain Virat Kohli. An enthralling morning session belonged to the peerless Kohli, whose 123 came to an end at the stroke of lunch when he edged Pat Cummins to a forward-diving Handscomb at second slip. Whether Handscomb got his fingers under the ball will be a matter of debate for days to come but the onfield official's soft signal was out and the third umpire did not reverse the decision on review.

Kohli had reached his 25th century in style with a

flowing off-drive to the boundary and then placed his helmet on the ground, pointed to his bat and made a yapping gesture with his gloved hand. It was his sixth century in Australia, which matches the tally of the great Sachin Tendulkar, and ended a drought against Australia with just 83 runs in his past seven test innings against them.

Kohli showed no lasting ill-effects from an earlier injury scare when he was struck on the forearm by a searing Mitchell Starc bouncer and required treatment. Lyon targeted the pitch's expansive rough patches and cleaned up the tail to finish with 5-67. —Reuters

Australia cricket chief open to four-day Tests

PERTH: Australia's new cricket chief says he is open to the idea of trialling four-day Test matches to boost waning popularity of the red ball game. The International Cricket Council approved the experimental concept last year in a bid to ensure the future viability of Tests in the face of an explosion in the fast-paced Twenty20 format.

South Africa played Zimbabwe in the inaugural four-day Test last December in Port Elizabeth, winning inside two. A minimum 98 overs had to be bowled each day, as opposed to the regulation 90 in a five-day game.

Another match is scheduled for July next year when England take on Ireland at Lords. "There's a bit to be said for it," Cricket Australia chief executive Kevin Roberts told commercial sports radio station SEN late Saturday.

"It's certainly something we need to be open minded to down the track," Roberts assumed the reins at CA in October from James Sutherland, who stood down after 17 years in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa.

He pointed out that the average duration of a Test match "is a shade over four days". "We know there's been timeless Tests over the years, we know there were even three-day Tests. So Test cricket hasn't been five days in duration forever," he said.—AFP

Indian teenage pace bowler takes perfect 10

NEW DELHI: Indian teenage fast bowler Rex Singh wrote his name in the record books by becoming one of a select band of bowlers to take all 10 wickets in an innings. The 18-year-old Singh, playing for the north eastern state of Manipur, unleashed a devastating spell of left-arm pace and swing bowling to return the remarkable figures of 10-11 in 9.5 overs.

Singh, who made his domestic debut in the Ranji Trophy this season, took a match haul of 15 wickets in the under-19 Cooch Behar Trophy four-day match played in the north eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Singh's feat helped skittle out Arunachal Pradesh for 36 runs in their second innings as Manipur won comfortably. He splattered the stumps of five batsmen who were out bowled, trapped two leg before and had three caught.

Social media was abuzz at the weekend over the youngster's feat with the video of his amazing spell going viral as news of his exploits earlier in the week spread. "This Manipur boy claimed 10 wickets with his smooth action and beautiful inswingers," the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) tweeted.

"This young boy from Manipur who took 10 wickets in an innings reminds one of @IrfanPathan," tweeted Moulin Parikh, a BCCI communication team member.—AFP

Latham ton puts NZ in charge of first S Lanka Test

WELLINGTON: Opener Tom Latham's unbeaten century put New Zealand in charge of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Wellington yesterday, as the Black Caps raced past the tourists' first-innings total and looked to build an imposing lead.

Latham was 121 not out at stumps on day two with New Zealand cruising at 311 for two in reply to Sri Lanka's modest 282. It was a frustrating day for Sri Lanka's bowlers on a Basin Reserve pitch that transformed into a batters' paradise after wreaking havoc during the tourists' innings on day one.

Black Caps skipper Kane Williamson narrowly missed out on his own century, falling for 91, and all New Zealand's batsmen got good starts, with Jeet Raval making 43 and Ross Taylor not out on 50. While the Sri Lanka attack worked hard, they could not build pressure and the two New Zealand wickets that fell were the result of rash shots from Raval and Williamson. That was not an issue for Latham, who meticulously crafted his seventh Test century from 219 balls and never looked rattled at the crease.

He combined with Williamson for a 162-run partnership, laying the foundation for a huge total from a line-up that has eight wickets in hand and has plenty of batting to come. Coach Gary Stead New Zealand would look to turn the

screws on day three.

"Hopefully we can bat for a big chunk of tomorrow and we'll just bat once in the game, that's the plan," he said. "We'll try and make the most of these conditions as long as we can, then we'll see where we get to tomorrow afternoon and maybe have a wee bowl at them."

"There's a lot of game to be played before then." Despite failing to reach triple figures, Williamson still has a remarkable record against Sri Lanka, with three centuries in seven Tests against them.

That includes an unbeaten 242 at Wellington's Basin Reserve in 2015. Sri Lanka will be hoping for a dramatic New Zealand collapse on day three to salvage any hopes of a win. Earlier, they added just seven to their overnight total before Tim Southee coaxed an inside edge off Kumara to claim a six-wicket innings haul.

Kumara's departure for a duck left Dickwella stranded on 80 not out after he led a rearguard action for Sri Lanka. Angelo Mathews and Dimuth Karunaratne were the only other batsmen to offer any meaningful resistance, notching 83 and 79 respectively and forging a 133-run partnership.

Sri Lanka, ranked sixth in the world, have lost their last five Tests against New Zealand and suffered a 3-0 home Test series whitewash against England last month. They have faced upheaval in their coaching and selection ranks in recent weeks and arrived in New Zealand low on confidence. In contrast, the fourth-ranked Black Caps entered the two-match contest buoyed by their first away Test series win over Pakistan in 49 years. — AFP

the one-dayers and we should take a lot of confidence from that. We played well in the Test series, and that was fantastic," Rhodes told reporters.

"But we are asking for more. We want the players to beat the West Indies in Twenty20. They're ranked above us. They are world champions. "We surprised them in Florida and surprised ourselves as well. But the plan is to go out there and win the series."

"We desperately want to do it and it's going to be a lot tougher than the other two series because this is the format West Indies excel at." Bangladesh suffered an injury scare before the series even got underway, with skipper Shakib Al Hasan struck by a ball on his toe during yesterday's training session.

Rhodes confirmed Shakib was unharmed and should lead Bangladesh into today's match. "He is fine... He is smiling and happy," said Rhodes. "He is icing his foot at the moment. I'd be very surprised if he wakes up tomorrow and there's any issue, to be perfectly honest," he said. West Indies Twenty20 captain Carlos Brathwaite said the series was a



WELLINGTON: New Zealand's Tom Latham celebrates 100 runs during day two of the first Test cricket match between New Zealand and Sri Lanka at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on day two of the first Test between New Zealand and Sri Lanka in Wellington yesterday

New Zealand 1st innings

J. Raval c Dickwella b Kumara	43
T. Latham not out	121
K. Williamson c Rajitha b de Silva	91
R. Taylor not out	50
Extras (lb4, nb1, w1)	6
Total (2 wickets: 84 overs)	311
Fall of wickets: 1-59 (Raval), 2-221 (Williamson)	
Yet to bat: H. Nicholls, B.J. Watling, C. de Grandhomme, T. Southee, N. Wagner, A. Patel	
Bowling: Lakmal 18-2-60-0, Rajitha 21-5-78-0 (1w, 1nb), Mathews 4-3-1-0, Perera 13-0-59-0, Kumara 20-1-79-1, de Silva 8-0-30-1.	

Sri Lanka 1st innings (275-9 overnight)

M. Gunathilaka lbw Southee	1
F. Karunaratne c Watling b Wagner	79
D. de Silva c Watling b Southee	1

K. Mendis c Patel b Southee	2
A. Mathews c Watling b Southee	83
D. Chandimal c Patel b Southee	6
N. Dickwella not out	80
D. Perera c Watling b de Grandhomme	16
S. Lakmal c Nicholls b Wagner	3
K. Rajitha c Watling b Boult	2
L. Kumara c de Grandhomme b Southee	0
Extras (lb7, nb2)	9
Total (all out, 90 overs)	282
Fall of wickets: 1-5 (Gunathilaka), 2-7 (de Silva), 3-9 (Mendis), 4-142 (Karunaratne), 5-167 (Chandimal), 6-187 (Mathews), 7-223 (Perera), 8-240 (Lakmal), 9-275 (Rajitha), 10-282 (Kumara)	
Bowling: Boult 27-6-83-1, Southee 27-7-68-8, de Grandhomme 13-2-35-1 (nb1), Wagner 20-2-75-2 (nb1), Patel 3-0-14-0.	



SYLHET: Bangladesh's cricket coach Steve Rhodes (L) talks to Bangladeshi cricketer Mohammad Saifuddin (R) during a practice session ahead of the first Twenty-20 match between Bangladesh and West Indies at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium in Sylhet yesterday. — AFP

perfect opportunity to give their fans something to celebrate before Christmas after losing the Tests and ODIs. The people back home deserve a Christmas gift. We hope to close out the year with a win," he said.

"We still think T20 is our premier for-

mat. We obviously haven't had the results in the recent past to be proud of. But here's a chance to turn things around and end 2018 in a good way." The West Indies will wrap up their tour of Bangladesh with the final T20 matches of the series in Dhaka on December 20 and 22. — AFP

Sports

Pistons roll to end six-game skid, halt Celtics' winning streak

Suns beat Wolves to complete rare season feat

DETROIT: Blake Griffin had 27 points, eight rebounds and six assists and the host Detroit Pistons snapped a six-game losing streak while ending the Boston Celtics' eight-game winning streak with a 113-104 victory on Saturday. Andre Drummond posted 19 points, 20 rebounds, five blocks and three steals for Detroit. Reggie Bullock, returning after a five-game absence due to an ankle sprain, supplied 15 points while Langston Galloway tossed in 14 off the bench and Reggie Jackson chipped in 12. Luke Kennard added 10 points and three assists. Kyrie Irving's 26 points, eight rebounds, four assists and three steals led the Celtics. Marcus Smart had 21 points, eight rebounds, three assists and three steals while Jayson Tatum contributed 17 points and eight rebounds. Boston led 66-63 early in the second half but the Pistons scored the next 13 points. Jackson got the outburst going with a putback. Drummond contributed a layup and a dunk, and Kennard hit a 3-pointer and assisted on another basket.

SUNS 107, TIMBERWOLVES 99

Deandre Ayton scored five straight points during an 11-0 fourth-quarter run to spark Phoenix to a win over visiting Minnesota. Derrick Rose scored five straight to end the Minnesota drought and cut the Suns' lead to 96-89, but the Phoenix defense clamped down. Phoenix was happy to welcome back Devin Booker, who was averaging 23.5 points, 6.7 assists and 3.6 assists per game. Playing in his first game after missing the previous six with a hamstring injury, he led the Suns with 28 points on 10 of 16 shooting from the field. He also recorded seven rebounds and seven assists.

BULLS 98, SPURS 93

Kris Dunn scored 24 points, and Lauri Markkanen added 23 as Chicago recovered from a 21-point, second-quarter deficit to stun host San Antonio. Ryan Arcidiacono tallied 12 points for Chicago, which won for just the second time in the past 12 games. Robin

Lopez added 10 points for the Bulls, who limited San Antonio to 31 second-half points. LaMarcus Aldridge recorded 29 points and 12 rebounds, and DeMar DeRozan scored 21 points for the Spurs, who had a four-game winning streak halted. Marco Belinelli scored 17 points, and Rudy Gay added 12. The Bulls played without leading scorer Zach LaVine (23.8 average), who injured his left ankle in Thursday's game against the Orlando Magic.

LAKERS 128, HORNETS 100

LeBron James notched a triple-double with 24 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists before sitting out the entire fourth quarter, and visiting Los Angeles rolled to an easy win over Charlotte. The Lakers led by as many as 16 in the first half, then turned the game into a rout with a 19-2 surge early in the third quarter. They led by as many as 36 in the second half. For James, it was the continuation of a personal domination over teams from Charlotte. James now has a record of 47-6 against the Hornets and Bobcats during his 16-year career with the Lakers, Cleveland and Miami. Lonzo Ball also enjoyed a triple-double for the Lakers with 16 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists.

MAGIC 96, JAZZ 89

Nikola Vucevic stuffed the stat sheet in powering Orlando past Utah in Mexico City. Vucevic had 15 points, 19 rebounds and five assists, and Evan Fournier added 24 points and seven rebounds for Orlando. The Magic won both games in Mexico City after losing three straight. Donovan Mitchell led the Jazz with 24 points, and Derrick Favors had 21 points and eight rebounds for Utah, which has lost three of its past four. Rudy Gobert leads the NBA in field-goal percentage but made just 2 of his 6 shot attempts. The Jazz shot only 31.5 percent from the floor as a team.

ROCKETS 105, GRIZZLIES 97

James Harden recorded his second consecutive



DETROIT: Marcus Smart #36 of the Boston Celtics shoots the ball against the Detroit Pistons on Saturday at Little Caesars Arena in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP

triple-double while Gerald Green supplied heroics off the bench as visiting Houston earned its third consecutive win and climbed back to .500 with a victory over Memphis. Harden finished with 32 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists, sinking three free throws with 1:16 remaining to extend the Houston lead to 101-91 and halt the Grizzlies for good. Memphis had sliced a 21-point deficit to six points on two Mike Conley free throws but got no closer. Green scored 17 points with 4-for-4 shooting on 3-pointers. The Grizzlies have dropped four of five games, including back-to-back contests at home. Conley finished with 22 points and six assists,

while Marc Gasol added 17 points and nine rebounds.

THUNDER 110, CLIPPERS 104

Paul George had yet another big game, scoring 33 points as Oklahoma City snapped a two-game losing streak with a win over visiting Los Angeles. George has scored 30 or more points in four of his last six games and is shooting 57 percent from the floor over the last four games after going 11 of 19 from the field against the Clippers. Los Angeles hit 13 3-pointers, including four by Danilo Gallinari, who led the Clippers with 28 points. — Reuters

Ronaldo penalty sees off Torino, Icardi gets Inter back winning

MILAN: Cristiano Ronaldo scored from the spot as unbeaten Italian champions Juventus saw off city rivals Torino 1-0 to hammer home their domination in Serie A on Saturday. Juventus travelled to the Stadio Olimpico after their year-long unbeaten record away from home ended with a shock 2-1 Champions League defeat by Young Boys in Bern.

Ronaldo slotted in his 11th league goal this season, and 5,000th for Juventus in Serie A, after 70 minutes after Torino goalkeeper Salvador Ichazo fouled Mario Mandzukic. Juventus are now 11 points ahead of second-placed Napoli, who travel to Cagliari, with Inter Milan 14 points behind the leaders after captain Mauro Icardi scored from the spot in a 1-0 win over Udinese.

"It was a complicated game, played on a difficult pitch and against a tough opponent," said Ronaldo. "We put in a good performance, played better than Torino, had more scoring opportunities and deserved the victory."

"The 5,000th goal? I'm happy, but the important thing was to help the team." Torino's hopes of a rare 'Derby della Mole' victory took a knock when goalkeeper Salvatore Sirigu hobbled off with a hip injury after 20 minutes, to be replaced by Ichazo.

And the match was decided by a poor backpass from Simone Zaza to Ichazo which resulted in the Torino goalkeeper fouling the onrushing Mandzukic. Five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo made no mistake from the spot, despite Ichazo getting his hand to the ball, with the pair locking horns afterwards with the Portuguese striker receiving a yellow card.



TURIN: Juventus' Italian defender Leonardo Bonucci (L) and Torino's Italian forward Simone Zaza go for the ball during the Italian Serie A football match Torino vs Juventus on Sunday at the Olympic stadium in Turin. — AFP

"He did well to get a hand to it, but I hit it hard and it went in. That's the most important thing," said Ronaldo, who joined Serie A's top scorer Krzysztof Piatek of Genoa on 11 goals. Croatian World Cup runner-up Mandzukic thought he had scored a second four minutes later when he had the ball in the back of the net, but was ruled offside.

It was the seventh straight league win for unbeaten Juventus since being held by Genoa. "Today was a great victory to keep Napoli at a distance," said Juventus

coach Massimiliano Allegri. "We played three days after the Champions League a derby against a team that are coming off a strong period of form on a difficult pitch." Torino stay sixth, four points off the Champions League berths, after their fourth defeat of the season.

Earlier, Icardi got third-placed Inter Milan back to winning ways with a 1-0 victory over Udinese. Luciano Spalletti's side were reeling after their midweek Champions League exit and falling 1-0 to Juventus last weekend in Turin. — AFP

Afghanistan asks FIFA for evidence of abuse against women footballers

KABUL: Afghanistan's attorney general yesterday called on football's world governing body FIFA to share evidence about allegations of sexual and physical abuse against the women's national team.

The request is part of an ongoing investigation into claims of abuse by male officials against players in Afghanistan's female football team, Jamshid Rasuli the attorney general spokesman told reporters in Kabul. "We officially ask FIFA to provide us with any evidence that may help the investigation," he said.

FIFA on Wednesday suspended the president of the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) Keramuddin Karim for 90 days over allegations of sexual and physical abuse against the women's team.

The move came days after the attorney general's office said it also suspended five officials, including the president of AFF, to facilitate the investigation into the case.

Allegations were first reported in November by Britain's Guardian newspaper, which cited what it described as senior officials associated with the women's team who said the abuse had taken place in Afghanistan-including at the AFF headquarters-and at a training camp in Jordan last February.

Former captain Khalida Popal-who fled the country after receiving death threats and has spoken out previously about the discrimination women face in Afghanistan-was quoted as saying male officials were "coercing" female players. Rasuli said Popal had been contacted to provide evidence for her claims. —AFP

Dortmund edge Bremen 2-1 to stay unbeaten

BERLIN: Paco Alcacer and Marco Reus continued their hot scoring form to propel Borussia Dortmund to a 2-1 home victory over Werder Bremen that extended their lead at the top of the Bundesliga.

The win makes Dortmund 'Herbstmeister', or winter champions, the unofficial award given to the team on top of the Bundesliga table at the season's halfway point.

Dortmund could have gone 1-0 up in the seventh minute after Alcacer chipped the goalkeeper only for Davy Klaassen to intervene just before the ball crossed the line. Remarkably, it was Alcacer's first shot on target to be saved since his arrival in Dortmund.

Dortmund fans didn't have to wait long to see Alcacer get on the scoresheet however, with the Spaniard heading a Reus free kick past Bremen keeper Jiri Pavlenka in the 19th minute. It was his 11th goal of the season, most in the Bundesliga.

Reus is tied for second. He hit his 10th when he doubled the Dortmund lead 10 minutes later. He converted an expert assist from Jadon Sancho by skidding a low shot inside the left post. Bremen fought back 10 minutes from halftime, with Max Kruse's shot from outside of the box gliding over the outstretched arms

of Dortmund keeper Roman Burkic.

Earlier, Bayern Munich continued their recent run of form, easing to a 4-0 win away at Hannover 96. The Bavarians led early after Joshua Kimmich hit a second-minute volley to convert an awkward-looking flick from Thomas Mueller.

Mueller had a frustrating night in front of goal, missing several chances in his 300th Bundesliga game for the club.

Bayern doubled their lead in the 29th minute when David Alaba rocketed a strike into the top of the goal which threatened to tear the net from the woodwork.

Interviewed after the match, Alaba said nonchalantly "yeah, I struck it pretty well."

Kimmich turned provider for the last two goals. In the 53rd minute, he played a low cross for Serge Gnabry who weaved through traffic before toe-poking home from close range. Ten minutes later, Kimmich floated a perfectly-weighted cross into the path of Robert Lewandowski who headed his 10th goal of the season.

Hanover sit dead last with 10 points from 15 games. "We can say today was a top match," Mueller said. Pirmin Schwieger said Bayern's win was a warning to the rest of the league that the real Bayern are back.

"The Lamborghini was full of gas today," said the Hannover midfielder. Elsewhere, Borussia Moenchengladbach, who started the day in second drew 0-0 at wasteful Hoffenheim. The home team dominated throughout, racking up 22 shots to four for the visitors, but were unable to convert. — AFP

Madrid keep winning but fans and media remain unimpressed

MADRID: With nine wins out of 11 since Santiago Solari replaced sacked coach Julen Lopetegui, Real Madrid should be full of optimism yet there was evident apathy from supporters and local media as they flew out to Abu Dhabi to defend their Club World Cup title.

Only 55,000 supporters made it to the 81,000-capacity Santiago Bernabeu stadium for Saturday's 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano, despite it being a local derby and the club's final home game of the year. The low attendance was not a one-off: according to newspaper Mundo Deportivo, Real have registered their worst average attendance this season since the 2001/02 campaign.

Those who made it to the ground saw a laboured victory and turned their ire on their own players with a cacophony of boos when goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois was forced to perform a double save to prevent a late equaliser for relegation-fighting Rayo.

Rayo were hammered 10-2 on their last visit to Real in 2015. "The Bernabeu is fed up of Madrid," said Spanish newspaper Marca. Daily AS added: "This Madrid team is boring," after a second consecutive narrow win for Solari's side after last week's 1-0 victory at basement club Huesca, in which they also had to withstand a late storm of chances. Saturday's scrappy win came three days after a 3-0 home defeat to CSKA Moscow in the Champions League, which prompted more loud whistles from supporters. That was Real's heaviest ever home European defeat, although they had already qualified for the knockout stage as group winners.

Real midfielder Marcos Llorente said he and his team mates were satisfied with their recent performances, while adding that there was room for improvement. He urged fans to show their support rather than getting on the players' backs.

"Of course we can improve but inside the dressing room we're happy," he said. "I don't agree with booing, it makes us weaker. I'd prefer them to cheer us on. This is Real Madrid, people are used to us winning all the time, and when things don't go well they put us under pressure, that can sometimes help but it'd be better if they cheered us instead." — Reuters

Live

Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE
Deportivo Alaves v Athletic de Bilbao. 23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE
Atalanta v SS Lazio 22:30
beIN SPORTS

25 Badminton gold at last for 'proud'
Sindhu as Shi stuns Momota



26 Bruised Australia reach 132-4
to lead by 175 in Perth Test



27 Ronaldo penalty sees off Torino,
Icardi gets Inter back winning



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's Swiss midfielder Xherdan Shaqiri (L) shoots to score their third goal during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Manchester United at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

Liverpool on top as Shaqiri sinks United

Arsenal's 22-match unbeaten run shattered

LONDON: Liverpool powered back to the top of the Premier League as Xherdan Shaqiri inspired a 3-1 win over bitter rivals Manchester United, while Arsenal's 22-match unbeaten run was shattered by a shock 3-2 defeat at Southampton yesterday.

Jürgen Klopp's side made it six successive league victories thanks to Shaqiri's late double after United's Jesse Lingard had cancelled out Sadio Mané's opener at Anfield.

Shaqiri's superb substitute cameo allowed Liverpool to reopen a one point lead over second placed Manchester City after the champions had knocked the Reds out of first place with their win against Everton on Saturday.

Liverpool's first win in their last six meetings with

United ended a frustrating streak against the Old Trafford outfit that dated back to March 2016, while also extending their unbeaten start to the league season to 17 matches.

While that was cause for pre-Christmas revelry on the Kop, more significantly, Liverpool's refusal to be subdued by a United team set up by Jose Mourinho with five defenders was another statement of intent as they chase a first English league title since 1990.

Senegal winger Mané put Liverpool ahead in the 24th minute when he broke away from Ashley Young to meet Fabinho's sublime pass with a nimble piece of chest control before shooting past David De Gea.

United equalised against the run of play in the 33rd minute as Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker made

a hash of catching Romelu Lukaku's low cross and Lingard finished off the rebound.

Alisson's error didn't prove costly as Switzerland midfielder Shaqiri struck within three minutes of coming off the bench, his shot flicking off the hapless Young into the roof of the net in the 73rd minute.

Shaqiri ensured Liverpool would return to the top in the 80th minute with a stinging strike that clipped the foot of United defender Eric Bailly on its way past De Gea.

United are now 19 points behind Liverpool in sixth place as the pressure mounts on Mourinho following another wretched display.

Meanwhile, Unai Emery admitted Arsenal need to fix their leaky defence after Southampton's Charlie Austin

punished a howler from Bernd Leno to stun the Gunners. Austin settled a thrilling clash at St Mary's when he headed home with just five minutes left after Arsenal goalkeeper Leno misjudged Shane Long's cross.

Southampton had twice taken the lead through Danny Ings, only for Henrikh Mkhitaryan's brace to draw Arsenal level on each occasion.

Leno's mistake handed Arsenal their first defeat in 15 league games and brought a stunning halt to their longest unbeaten run in all competitions since 2007.

Emery's fifth-placed team had not lost since a 3-2 defeat at Chelsea in August and the north Londoners' first setback since the close-season leaves them three points behind the fourth-placed Blues, who won 2-1 at Brighton yesterday. — AFP

Hazard keeps Chelsea in title hunt at Brighton

BRIGHTON: Chelsea put a week of negative headlines for the behaviour of their fans behind them on the field thanks to an inspired Eden Hazard in a 2-1 victory at Brighton yesterday. The Belgian provided his ninth assist of the season for Pedro Rodriguez to open the scoring and then chalked up his ninth goal of the campaign, but first in 13 games for club and country.

However, Chelsea failed to build on their 2-0 lead and endured a nervous finale after Solly March pulled one back with his first goal of the campaign. Victory saw Chelsea open up a three-point lead over Arsenal in fourth and close back to within seven points of leaders Manchester City.

Much of the pre-match speculation centred on the travelling Chelsea supporters and whether there would be any repeat of either

the accusations of racist remarks aimed at Manchester City's Raheem Sterling last weekend or the anti-Semitic chanting heard during their Europa League tie against Vidi in Budapest in midweek.

Fortunately there appeared to be no further incidents as the visiting fans enjoyed an excellent start from Maurizio Sarri's side. Brighton had only previously been beaten at home by Tottenham Hotspur this season.

An early foul on Hazard sent the message that the Seagulls would not show Chelsea as much respect as they had last season, when they stood back and admired Hazard and company in a 4-0 defeat. It resulted in a free kick that David Luiz thumped through the defensive wall but straight at Australia goalkeeper Maty Ryan. But Hazard was clearly not in the mood to be intimidated by a kick or two, and he answered in the most effective way possible in the 17th minute.

He tried a shot from 20 yards that was blocked but he was instantly onto the rebound, sped into the penalty area, past Brighton right back Martin Montoya and played the ball across goal for Pedro to steer the ball into the empty net.

Brighton's confidence was visibly dented and they almost disappeared completely as an attacking force, barring a long-range effort from March that Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa trapped with a diving stop.

Chelsea could afford to sit back and pick off their passes, as they did when doubling their lead in the 33rd minute. Brighton's Nigeria defender Leon Balogun underhit a forward pass that Willian picked off with ease before sending the ball through the Brighton defence and into Hazard's stride. The Belgian collected and slipped it between Ryan and his near post. A third goal would not have flattered Chelsea's dominance and only the post denied Marcos Alonso just after the hour mark. But three minutes later, Brighton were, improbably, back in the match.

The previously anonymous Pascal Gross crossed from the right, Brazilian left back Bernardo nodded the ball back across goal, and March hooked it past Kepa from six yards. Brighton were revitalised and Alonso was lucky not to be sent off for pulling back March as he broke clear on goal. And Chelsea also breathed a sigh of relief when England defender Lewis Dunk headed wide late on. — AFP



BRIGHTON: Brighton's English midfielder Solly March (2R) scores his team's first goal during the English Premier League football match between Brighton and Hove Albion and Chelsea at the American Express Community Stadium in Brighton, southern England yesterday. — AFP