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Kuwait, India ink agreement on domestic workers, to boost ties

MoU tackles non-payment of salaries, mistreatment of maids

KUWAIT: Kuwait and India signed yesterday a memorandum of understanding on domestic workers, as well as an agreement for visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, special and official passports following a meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers. The deals reflect the willingness of both friendly countries to reinforce bilateral relations in all fields, Kuwait News Agency reported yesterday.

The MoU was signed by Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and visiting Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj. During their meeting, they discussed distinguished bilateral relations and ways of promoting and developing them in all fields, along with existing cooperation at all levels. Both ministers also reviewed the latest regional and international developments and several issues of mutual interest.

The meeting and the signing ceremony was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs Ambassador Ali Al-Said, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols

Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran and several other senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Swaraj, who arrived in Kuwait on Tuesday on an official visit, also met HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah earlier yesterday.

According to an Indian Embassy official who spoke on the condition of anonymity, the MoU will cover a wide gamut of issues concerning Indian domestic workers in Kuwait, such as non-payment of salaries, ill-treatment of maids, etc. According to the MoU, salary payment will be subject to verification in order to avoid possible non-payment of salaries, and sponsors will be contacted to ensure on-time payments.

The official said the agreement also envisages proper insurance protection for workers. If a dispute arises, a time-bound solution will be found in order to avoid delaying a solution indefinitely. Recruitment of domestic labor from India will continue, but only through official agencies both in India and Kuwait, the official added. — Agencies



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj yesterday. — KUNA

Israel moves closer to Gulf; Oman minister visits Ramallah

DUBAI: As Israel and Iran clash in Syria, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government is courting Gulf Arab states at a time when broader policies align against their common rival Tehran. Netanyahu on Thursday held surprise talks with Oman's Sultan Qaboos in Muscat - accompanied by the head of Mossad, according to Netanyahu's office - raising Palestinian fears of a normalization of ties.

Days later, controversial Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev toured the UAE's famed Sheikh Zayed mosque, Israel's communications minister spoke in Dubai and the Israeli national anthem



RAMALLAH: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas meets Omani Foreign Minister Yusef bin Alawi bin Abdullah yesterday. — AFP

played at a judo competition in Abu Dhabi. Israel's transport minister is due to promote a rail link between the Israeli city of Haifa and the Gulf next week in Oman.

Continued on Page 24

Kuwait improves in 3 indicators in 2019 Doing Business Report

KUWAIT: The 2019 Doing Business Report shows that Kuwait's ease of doing business score improved from 61.4 to 62.2 in 2017, as Kuwait improved in three indicators, the World Bank Group (WBG) regional office in Kuwait said yesterday. The government-wide effort to pursue these reforms was led by Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, and members of the Permanent Committee for Streamlining Business Environment and Enhancing Competitiveness and working

groups set up for pursuing business environment reforms in the country, according to the release.

The improvement was driven by Kuwait's improved score in Starting a Business and Protecting Minority Investors. Kuwait ranks 97 on the ease of doing business, the office said in a press release. Protecting Minority Investors indicator improved from 81 to 72. Kuwait also reduced the time required to Starting a Business from 38.5 to 35 days and it reduced the number of procedures involved with starting a business from 9.5 to 7, the World Bank Group added. Kuwait's rank also improved in Getting Electricity from 97 to 95, as it reduced the number of days from 85 to 65 days, it said. (See Page 11)



Khaled Al-Roudhan

News in brief

Engineer dies of injuries

KUWAIT: Egyptian engineer Mohammad Obaid died yesterday morning due to injuries he sustained following an explosion at a power transformer in Salwa three days earlier. His Egyptian colleague remains in ICU. The two victims work for a company that has a contract with the Ministry of Electricity and Water, and were performing maintenance work on the transformers. A source said a spark in the switchboard caused the blast. — Meshaal Al-Enezi

Mom jailed for abusing kids

KUWAIT: The misdemeanors court sentenced a Kuwaiti mother to a month in jail for mistreating and insulting her children while teaching them. The children's father had complained to police that the woman beat the children and abused them verbally and physically, which affected their mental condition. The father's lawyer gave the court evidence including a video recording showing mistreatment by the mother. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

16 police get life for killing 42

NEW DELHI: An Indian court yesterday sentenced 16 police officers to life imprisonment for rounding up and shooting 42 unarmed Muslim men and tossing their bodies into canals, in one of the bloodiest moments of violent clashes between Muslims and Hindus in 1987. — AFP

India opens tallest statue in the world

SARDAR SAROVAR DAM, India: India inaugurated the world's tallest statue yesterday with fireworks, folk dances and floral tributes, deploying tight security amid an outcry by local groups over the soaring cost of the 182-m sculpture of an independence hero. Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially opened the statue of Vallabhbhai Patel, describing the completion of his pet project as "a day that will be remembered in the history of India".

Air force jets flew over the giant figure and clouds of rose petals were dropped from helicopters onto its head as Modi bent in front of the statue on the ground. Modi hailed Sardar Patel's "strategic thinking" in bringing together the disparate country after independence in 1947 and described the Statue of Unity as "a symbol of our engineering and technical prowess".

More than 5,000 armed police guarded the huge site in a remote corner of Gujarat state, with Anand Mazgaonkar, a community group



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi poses for a photo as he takes part in the inauguration festivities for the "Statue of Unity" overlooking the Sardar Sarovar Dam near Vadodra yesterday. — AFP

leader in Narmada district, accusing plain clothes officers of detaining 12 people late Tuesday. Police denied the claims. But the authorities took no chances in case community groups staged protests to condemn the decision to spend 29.9 billion rupees (\$400 million) - much of it public funds - to build the statue over a nearly four-year period. Hundreds of Chinese have been among the 3,500 workers involved in its construction.

Continued on Page 24

US voters poised to elect 2 Muslim women to Congress

CHICAGO: US voters are poised to elect two Muslim women to Congress in the midterm election next week, marking a historic first even as anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric has been on the rise. Ilhan Omar, a Somali refugee, is all but certain to be elected to the US House of Representatives in a heavily-Democratic district in the Midwestern state of Minnesota, where she is the party's nominee. Rashida Tlaib, a social worker born in Detroit to Palestinian immigrant parents, will win a House seat in a district where she is running unopposed.

The two will be the first Muslim women to serve in the US Congress. They will increase the total number of Muslims in Congress to three. Congressman Andre Carson, who is Muslim and African American, is likely to win reelection in his safely-Democratic district in the state of Indiana.



Ilhan Omar



Rashida Tlaib

Continued on Page 24

Local

Amir meets Indian Foreign Minister; Crown Prince receives Sultan Al-Bohra

Amir congratulates Ikhlas School over Arab Reading Challenge award



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and her delegation.— Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing Afghan Ambassador to Kuwait Mangal Hussain.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah accompanied by visiting Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and her delegation. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah also met the outgoing Afghan Ambassador to Kuwait Mangal Hussain. Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah was present at both the meetings.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and the visiting Indian Foreign Minister. The meeting was attended by Undersecretary of the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikhha Itimad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Ali Suleiman Al-Saeed and Kuwaiti Ambassador to India Jassem Al-Najem.

In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah received the 53rd Dai Al-Mutlaq of the Dawoodi Bohra Mufaddal Saifuddin and the accompanying delegation. Head of Protocols at the Crown Prince Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah attended the reception.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir met with His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister and Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Reading challenge

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent congratulation cables to the Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Mohammad Al-Aazmi and Chairman of Ikhlas school Mohammad Al-Sayegh over recently winning the award of the 4th edition of the Arab Reading Challenge in Dubai. His Highness expressed his appreciation of the great efforts led the partici-

pants to win the prize, wishing them all success to serve Kuwait and raising its flag higher at regional and international forums. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent them two similar cables.

Separately, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences yesterday to Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, in which he expressed his sincere condolences to victims of typhoon Yutu, which hit the northern Philippines which caused loss of lives and massive destruction to public properties. His Highness asked Almighty Allah to bestow his mercy upon the victims and wished speedy recovery to those injured and that officials in the friendly country can overcome the effects of this natural disaster. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables. Meanwhile, Speaker Ghanem sent cables of condolences to Philippines House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez and Senate President Vicente Scotto III over the victims of the typhoon.—KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Sultan Al-Bohra Mufaddal Saifuddin.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the 53rd Dai Al-Mutlaq of the Dawoodi Bohra Mufaddal Saifuddin and his accompanying delegation.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj.

Academic calls for security programs for criminal justice cases

ABU DHABI: A Kuwaiti academic yesterday called for the development of awareness and security programs for criminal justice cases through social media for all sectors of society in the Gulf and Arab countries in order to prevent and reduce spread of crime, especially in youth and children. This came in a statement by head of the Tissue Examination Department of the Forensic Evidence of the Kuwaiti Interior Ministry Dr Nadyah Al-Kanderi during her participation in the Arab

Gulf Criminal Evidence Conference, which concluded yesterday in Abu Dhabi.

Kanderi stressed the need for such programs to be implemented by a group of specialists, academics and legal experts in the field of forensic evidence and to deal with the crimes of terrorism, sexual rape, violence against children, drugs and theft, and to warn against their consequences for achieving a safe and healthy society with fewer crimes. She pointed out that some medical programs that are exposed in the channels of social media may be applied wrongly, especially by children, which have negative repercussions on their health.

In the same context, she explained that Kuwait is one of the leading countries in the field of criminal evidence and the most advanced in the world in the field of technical quality in the criminal laboratories, pointing out that the Laboratory of Tissue Examination of the Kuwaiti Forensic



Dr Nadyah Al-Kanderi

Department has received the International Certificate of Accreditation of Criminal Laboratories in the Middle East according to international standards issued by the Supreme Commission of the American College of Pathology.—KUNA

Kuwaiti, Saudi creativity institutes sign cooperation deal

RIYADH: Visiting Head of Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) Dr Oman Al-Banni said yesterday that the center had signed a cooperation agreement with the Saudi King Abdulaziz and His Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity (MAWHIBA).

Banni said that the SACGC offered members of MAWHIBA to visit Kuwait to look into more venues of collaboration. The Kuwaiti official commended the role of MAWHIBA in encouraging creativity within the context of Saudi society, wishing the Saudi institute the best of luck in its future endeavors. He also expressed gratitude towards Kuwaiti Ambassador to Kuwait Sheikh Thamer Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah for his role in facilitating the visit of the Kuwaiti delegation.

Meanwhile, MAWHIBA's Secretary General Dr Saud Al-Mutahmi lauded the strong relations between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, affirming that bolstering cooperation within the creativity domain was important for the future development of ties. There are common cultural ties linking both Kuwaiti and Saudi societies and the signing of the SACGC and MAWHIBA accord was an indication of the strength of ties between the two brotherly nations, affirmed the Saudi official.—KUNA

Embassy in Paris hosts event gathering 13 universities

PARIS: Kuwait's Embassy in Paris hosted late Tuesday the 'Paris: 21st century salon' event with the participation of 13 European universities, said a diplomat. Kuwaiti Ambassador to France Sami Al-Suleiman delivered a speech to the event where he stressed the importance of exchanging views on issues of political, cultural, economic and social nature to fend off ignorance and spread knowledge. Kuwait is keen on pushing forward the ideals of freedom and genuine expression and hosting events like the salon was part of the Gulf state's efforts within these domains, said the Ambassador.

Meanwhile, head of the salon's organizing committee and Italian academic Dr Giovanni De La Rosa lauded the Kuwaiti embassy's initiative to host the event, affirming that the gathering will help bring views closer between Middle Easterners and Europeans. He stressed the importance of maintaining cultural diversity in this day and age, affirming that divisions amongst people of the world would not serve the future of the planet.—KUNA

Major book fair opens in Sharjah



DUBAI: Kuwaiti media researcher Noor Al-Nasser is seen at the Kuwaiti information ministry's pavilion at Sharjah's international book fair.—KUNA

DUBAI: More than 1,800 publishers from 77 nations, including Kuwait, have converged on Sharjah, the third largest constituent of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), to open the city's famed international book fair, Kuwait's Ministry of Information is eager to participate in such events that give spectators a glimpse into the myriad of cultures from around the world, Sultan Bin Haithlian, a media researcher at the ministry, said. He revealed that a number of Kuwaiti authors will have some of their best literary works on display, describing the book fair as a 'prominent cultural gathering.'

Noor Al-Nasser, another Kuwaiti media researcher, highlighted the significance of the event, saying it will display some of the Gulf state's contributions towards Arab culture. She went on to say that the event provides Kuwaiti authors the opportunity to interact with their



Media researcher at the Kuwaiti information ministry Sultan Bin Haithlian

peers in the wider Arab region, thanking the government of Sharjah for organizing such a productive event. An annual gathering, the Sharjah International Book Fair is one of the largest literary expos in the world and the biggest in the Gulf region in terms of turnout.—KUNA

Local

Controversy after National Assembly keeps lawmakers' membership

Different opinions on if MPs can return home without being arrested

By B Izzak and A Saleh

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's vote late on Tuesday has divided constitutional experts, lawmakers and politicians on whether the vote to keep their membership despite receiving a jail term was in line with the constitution or not. The assembly voted 31 against 29 with two abstentions to maintain the parliamentary seats of opposition MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabai and Jamaan Al-Harbash after a heated debate in the assembly.

Some constitutional experts insisted that the vote was illegal and the two lawmakers' membership

has automatically been revoked after they were sentenced to a jail term for entering the National Assembly building during a protest in November 2011. Other constitutional experts however insisted that the Assembly vote was totally in line with the constitution, recalling that the Assembly enjoyed full rights to decide on the membership.

Different opinions

Still, there were different opinions expressed on whether the two lawmakers, currently outside Kuwait, can return to the country without being arrested. Opposition



MP Waleed Al-Tabtabai



MP Jamaan Al-Harbash

MP Mohammad Al-Mutair said yesterday that Harbash and Tabtabai are welcome to return to Kuwait and practice their duties as

members of parliament.

Mutair said that the interior ministry has no right to arrest them if they return to the country without a vote in the National Assembly. He added that if police arrests them, he will file to grill the interior minister.

In the meantime, MP Yusef Al-Fadhlah, one of two MPs who abstained in the voting, said yesterday that he abstained deliberately because the voting was against the constitution. Fadhlah said he believes that the membership of the two MPs had already been revoked immediately after the court convicted them and sent them to jail. He said he is convinced that the mech-

anism of the voting was unconstitutional and accordingly he opted not to participate in the voting.

No pressure

Meanwhile, cabinet sources said that the government did not put pressure on pro-government MPs to vote to revoke the two lawmakers' membership. "MPs were left to vote freely on the matter, which is considered new to Kuwait's parliamentary life," said the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity. They added meanwhile that the cabinet plans to go to the constitutional court to contest the two MPs' membership.

Ministry opens training program for workers' care



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry officials attend the opening of a training program for care of workers in the humanitarian field.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Training Affairs Maj Gen Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah opened the training program for care of workers in the humanitarian field "Taafi", in the presence of Director General of the Training Department Maj Gen Anwar Al-Barjas, Director General of Saad Al-Abdullah Security Science Academy Maj Gen Nasser Buresli and Deputy Director of the Social Development Department Dr Wafra Al-Aradi.

Voluntary activities

State Minister for Housing

Affairs and State Minister for Services Affairs Jenan Bushehri said it is necessary to support voluntary activities and youth initiatives in the country. Bushehri was speaking as she received a delegation of the national initiative to back efforts of the interior ministry, headed by diplomatic relations expert Abdelaziz Al-Thafiri.

Municipality campaign

The Ahmadi emergency team at Kuwait Municipality carried out a tour to check licenses of signs and health certificates of workers, resulting in issuing 22 citations and the closure of two stores. The team removed 98 signs because they obstructed the vision of drivers.



State Minister for Housing Affairs and State Minister for Services Affairs Jenan Bushehri meets with members of a delegation of the national initiative to back efforts of the interior ministry.



Members of the delegation present a memento to minister Bushehri.

Zakat House offers support to PAAET student fund

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Zakat House announced yesterday it was providing additional support of KD 100,000 to the Student Fund of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) in addition to the annual payments. A PAAET statement said that its Director General Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf received in his office a delegation from Zakat House headed by Deputy Director-General for Social Services Dr Majid Al-Azmi to confirm cooperation between the two sides for the best service of the educational process. The statement stressed that the cooperation between the two sides stems from their belief in the importance of education and their keenness to provide full support to students in implementation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's directives. — KUNA



KUWAIT: PAAET Director General Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf (center) meets with a delegation from the Zakat House. — KUNA

Special budget requested for railway project

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Director General of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation Ahmad Al-Hassan said the authority is waiting for approval from the Finance Ministry on its request for a special budget of KD 18 million for an international advisor designing the railway project, adding it asked for the amount to be made available during the next fiscal year. The authority will commence work on the project after approving the budget from the finance ministry, he said, adding that the authority is removing all obstacles surrounding the project. Meanwhile, Assistant Director General for Construction Organization and Structural Planning Mohammad Al-Zubi explained that the special budget is necessary in order to pay the amounts due for the company working on the design, operation and maintenance of the traffic monitoring system.

Car thieves arrested

KUWAIT: Ahmadi police arrested two brothers as they were breaking into a car, and both were found under the influence of drugs. Policemen on patrol noticed the two breaking the window of a car, so they arrested them. One of the brothers was found wanted to serve a three-year jail sentence. Both said they were stealing to buy drugs.

Sorcery

Two men were deported for practicing sorcery in Jabriya and Mahboula. The suspects, Omani and Egyptian, made their victims believe they could help solve problems in exchange of money. The two became known to people until police authorities learned about them. Undercover agents were sent to them, and they were arrested red-handed. The homes of the alleged sorcerers contained sorcery tools.

Smuggling

Two Saudis failed to smuggle out electronic shisha flavors and illicit drugs. In the first case, while the shisha smuggler was about to leave Nuwaiseeb border outlet, customs officers had doubts about him, so his car was searched and 642 flavors were found. Meanwhile, another Saudi national was caught trying to smuggle in 48,000 tablets. Both were sent to concerned authorities.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

Kuwait calls for peaceful solution to East Ukraine crises

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait called for a peaceful solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine in accordance with UNSC resolutions and the Minsk agreements, said a Kuwaiti diplomat yesterday. In his speech during a UNSC meeting on Ukraine, Kuwaiti Permanent Representative at the UN headquarters in New York Mansour Al-Otaibi said that a solution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine must go through efforts by sides well respected by the international community.

The State of Kuwait supports Ukraine's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity through UNSC resolution 2202 and the Minsk peace protocol, he added. A comprehensive and balanced solution through dialogue and the Normandy contact group will ensure that the accords agreed upon in the Minsk protocol will be implemented, said the Kuwaiti diplomat who called on both Russia and Ukraine to steer the situation politically and avoid more conflicts. He indicated that the announcement of elections in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, on November 11, was against the tenets of the Minsk protocol.

Ambassador Otaibi reiterated calls for ending the situation in eastern Ukraine peacefully and avoiding violence at all cost. The Kuwaiti diplomat commended the improving security situation in the area despite light weapon clashes, stressing that it was important to allow health-care and relief aid to reach people in need in eastern Ukraine. —KUNA



KUWAIT: The marine firefighting division at Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) concluded yesterday a number of training courses organized for Kuwait National Guard members, to train them on carrying out marine rescue operations. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun



Local

Kuwait should do more to protect intellectual property rights: US envoy

'First Man' screened at VOX Cinema as part of 'Discover America'

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Hollywood film 'First Man' was screened at the Avenues Mall on Tuesday. The event was organized by the US Embassy in Kuwait, which called on authorities in Kuwait "to do more" with regards to the issue of intellectual property rights. The screening held at the VOX Cinema is part of a two-week 'Discover America' event showcasing music, film, food, sports, automobiles, education and tourism.

"What happens if people pirate a film? It has a domino effect on everyone - the producers will not be able to get back their money invested in the project. They will not be able to produce better movies in the future since they cannot cover the fees of their talents," said US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. "We really need to look at this issue seriously. Kuwait has been doing a lot but I think we need more to protect not just films but all aspects of artistic work, which is being undermined by piracy," he said.

He noted that for several months, the US Embassy has been working very productively with the leadership of the Ministry of Information, the National Library and the Copyright Office on enhanced copyright legislation that will increase protections for intellectual property of Kuwaiti creators and all other creators, which will allow Kuwait to join two important international copyright

treaties. "We hope this amended bill will be submitted to parliament soon. Let me stress: These changes to copyright legislation will help Kuwaiti creators protect and market their impressive works, especially in the digital space, and can help make Kuwait a destination for creative content - an incentive for the economy to diversify and for



Ongoing efforts to increase protections

foreign investors to invest here," Silverman said.

Silverman thanked VOX Cinema for hosting the embassy event and all partners and companies participating in the Discover America events this year. The embassy is hosting the 'Discover America' event for the sixth consecutive year, featuring events throughout Kuwait and highlighting different aspects of the United States. "I am glad so many of you could join us for this exclusive

screening of 'First Man' that tells the incredible story of the first person to set foot on the Moon - Neil Armstrong - played here by Ryan Gosling," he said.

He said Armstrong nearly died a year before his historic landing, when he was forced to eject from a lunar landing research vehicle mere seconds before it crashed. "Armstrong picked himself up from the near-death experience and one year later, made his giant leap for mankind. Everything important starts with an idea, a talented mind trying something new, and dedication to not give up when things don't work the first, second or even third time," Silverman added.

"Armstrong proved that whatever we can imagine is achievable - that's a lesson for all of us to live by. It is therefore important for all of us - and for our governments - to create an environment where our inventors can invent, our creators can create, and our entrepreneurs can start new businesses without fear that their work and efforts - what we call their 'their intellectual property' - will be stolen or misappropriated."

He also told the audience that the embassy is working on bringing back to Kuwait a NASA engineer who spent much of her career working on the Mars Rover project. "We hope she will return to Kuwait to inspire additional young people by appearing at the space exhibit of the Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center early next year," he noted.



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Burgan Bank celebrates successful graduation of young bankers

KUWAIT: In keeping with its reputation as a leading banking institution and sought-after career destination, Burgan Bank recently celebrated the graduation of the new batch of 20 trainees from Burgan Bank's new Burganers Development Program. Led by the Learning and Development Department, it is dedicated to raising the bar of excellence and performance for future Kuwaiti bankers by accommodating the new graduates with comprehensive training and professional learning experiences which constitutes the ideal start to their career in the

banking sector. Initiated nearly a decade ago, the program focuses on equipping the new recruits with the necessary qualifications, core competencies, and experience to perform proficiently as per the highest standards.

The program focuses on three main areas, starting with Burgan Bank's core values, corporate culture, standards of work, performance quality and informing them of the brand strategic objectives. The trainees then learn about banking operating models, international banking, and regulatory standards, and acquire intense technical and operational knowledge. Finally, the program also provide graduates with an opportunity to highlight their performance and demonstrate their skills within the scope of sales and customer service.

Commenting on the program, Burgan Bank Senior Manager - Learning and Development, Ghada El-Kadi said: "As a leading local and regional financial institution, we pride ourselves in cultivating a culture of excellence and innovation that we pass on to the new generation to advance our business in a sustainable and socially responsible manner. The program works

as an optimal learning portal dedicated to refining the capabilities and skills of new employees in the banking sector. Burgan Bank has always relied on a long-term investment plan to develop the next generation of highly qualified and experienced personnel with advanced operational competencies."

"Burgan Bank's internal culture encourages a spirit of perseverance, positivity, and hard work, reflected in our day-to-day and overall operations. Continuous learning and improvement are imperative to remain competitive amid changing market dynamics and customer needs," added Kadi.

Burgan Bank Group is a diverse regional financial powerhouse, which now includes more than 900 employees in Kuwait and a wide network of 169 branches strategically distributed across Kuwait, Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey. The Group aims to provide challenging, dynamic, and highly progressive career opportunities, driven by the belief that investing in human development within Burgan Bank Group is an investment in the country's human development and overall progress.



KUWAIT: Burgan Bank's young bankers.



KUWAIT: Turkish Ambassador to Kuwait Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak hosted a reception recently on the occasion of Turkey's national day. Minister of Information Dr Mohammad Al-Jabri, senior officials, diplomats and media representatives attended the event. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of the Republic of Peru Francisco Rivaarola Rubio hosted a reception recently on the occasion of 197th Anniversary of the National Independence Day at JW Marriott Hotel. Higher officials, diplomats and media persons attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT: The Embassy of Chad in Kuwait hosted a reception recently to celebrate Africa Day, which was attended by ambassadors of African nations to Kuwait. Kuwaiti officials, led by Acting Assistant Foreign Minister for Africa Affairs Ambassador Hamad Al-Meshaan, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event which took place at Crowne Plaza Hotel. — KUNA photo

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A view of the Arabian Gulf Road and Kuwait City's skyline, taken from Salmiya. — Photo by Ahmad Suroor (KUNA)

Kuwaiti oil prices to average \$67-77 per barrel, says analyst

KUWAIT: Current conditions in the global oil market indicate that the price of Kuwaiti crude oil would remain within the range of \$67 to \$77 per barrel, according to an analyst. The price of a barrel of Kuwaiti crude is roughly equivalent to Brent crude, which costs between \$72 to 82 a barrel, Mohammad Al-Shatti said yesterday, adding that 'limited oil supply' is a factor that could buoy the price of Kuwaiti crude. The oil expert drew a correlation between geopolitical conditions in the region and the stability of the oil market, pointing out that as unrest grows, oil production grinds to a halt. He predicted that oil prices would soon pick up again, given the fact that the "core structure of the market remains solid."

On the reasons behind the decline in oil prices, Shatti pinpointed the decline of China's currency against the US dollar as a major factor, in addition to the rise in US stocks of crude oil. The current conditions in the market have pushed oil prices towards a state of 'Contango', a situation where the future price of a commodity is above the expected spot price, the analyst explained. "Oil producing nations could keep production limited as a tactic to ensure stability in the market," Shatti added, highlighting OPEC's forecast of slower oil demand growth in 2019.

Exports to Japan

Meanwhile, Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan declined by 16.3 percent in September from a year earlier to 6.89 million barrels, or 230,000 barrels per day (bpd), down for the first time in two months, government data showed yesterday. As Japan's fourth-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 7.9 percent of the Asian nation's total crude imports, compared with 8.7 percent in the same month of last year, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy Agency said in a preliminary report.

Japan's overall imports of crude oil fell 7.9 percent year-on-year to 2.92 million bpd, the first drop in two months. Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 86.1 percent of the total, down 3.0 percentage points from the year before. Saudi Arabia remained Japan's No.1 oil supplier, but imports from the kingdom slid 13.1 percent from a year earlier to 1.03 million bpd, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with 698,000 bpd, down 17.2 percent. Qatar ranked third with 240,000 bpd and Iran fifth with 149,000 bpd, respectively. Resources-poor Japan, which is the world's-third biggest oil consumer after the US and China, relies on imports for virtually all of its oil, gas and coal. — KUN



Kuwait supports int'l efforts to abolish WMDs

BRUSSELS: Kuwait has reiterated its strong support to effective arms control agreements and the elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) from the globe. This position was expressed by Kuwait's ambassador to NATO, EU, Belgium and Luxembourg, Jassem Al-Budaiwi, at a major NATO arms control conference in Iceland on Monday and Tuesday. "During the meetings, we underlined and reiterated Kuwait's stance on all WMDs and we asserted the importance of the international community to take steps to eliminate the WMDs," Budaiwi said. He noted that senior experts from more

than 50 countries and organizations gathered at NATO's annual Conference on Weapons of Mass Destruction, Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation held in Reykjavik, Iceland. They discussed very important issues during the 2-day event ranging from ballistic missile proliferation and the use of chemical weapons by states and terrorists, to the future of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), said Budaiwi.

Kuwait called upon all signatories of the NPT to ensure that there is a system of control and that there is a clear picture on the spread of WMDs whether chemical or biological. Speakers pointed out to the recent resurgence of the use of chemical weapons like in Syria and discussed the prevention of the spread of WMD delivery systems. "It was a very crucial meeting which addressed key issues of concern to the international community," said the Kuwaiti ambassador. NATO's annual Conference, the 14th of its kind, was chaired by NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Ambassador Alejandro Alvargonzalez. — KUNA

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UN names new envoy to Syria

Notorious Boston mobster Whitey Bulger found dead



PESHAWAR: Supporters of the Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP), a hardline religious political party, chant slogans during a protest following the Supreme Court decision on Christian woman Asia Bibi, in Peshawar yesterday. —AFP

Pakistan overturns blasphemy death sentence

Club-wielding demonstrators block Islamabad highway

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Supreme Court yesterday overturned the conviction of Asia Bibi, a Christian mother facing execution for blasphemy, in a landmark case which has incited deadly violence and reached as far as the Vatican. Blasphemy is an incendiary charge in deeply conservative Muslim Pakistan, where even unproven allegations of insulting Islam and its Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) can provoke death at the hands of vigilantes—and the acquittal immediately sparked large protests from hardliners.

Bibi appeared to be in state of disbelief after hearing that Pakistan's Chief Justice Saqib Nisar had quashed her conviction nearly eight years after she was first sentenced to death. "I can't believe what I am hearing, will I go out now? Will they let me out, really?" Bibi said by phone from prison after the ruling. "I just don't know what to say, I am very happy, I can't believe it." Demonstrations broke out in major cities across the country following the verdict, with approximately a thousand club-wielding demonstrators blocking Islamabad's main highway as several roads in the port city of Karachi were barricaded by protesters sparking chaotic traffic jams.

One of the most vocal groups leading the protests—the Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) — called for "mutiny" against the army's top brass following the verdict. "The Muslim generals of the army, it is their responsibility that they should launch a rebellion against these generals," Afzal Qadri—a TLP leader—told supporters in Lahore. But the acquittal was met with near silence on the country's airwaves as broadcasters appeared to be steer clear of covering the controversial topic.

Protection detail?

Bibi was set to be released immediately according to the court, although there was no word if any security arrangements were being made for her protection. Her legal team celebrated the court's decision amid beefed-up security in

Islamabad. "The verdict has shown that the poor, the minorities and the lowest segments of society can get justice in this country despite its shortcomings," Bibi's lawyer Saif-ul-Mulook said. "This is the biggest and happiest day of my life." Her case drew the attention of international rights groups and swiftly became the most high-profile in the country. Pope Benedict XVI called for her release in 2010, while in 2015 her daughter met his successor and the current head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis.

Blasphemy weaponized

Freedom for Bibi in Pakistan, where university students



Landmark case incites deadly violence

have been lynched and Christians burnt in ovens over blasphemy claims, means a life under threat by hardliners, who regularly hold demonstrations calling for her execution. The allegations against Bibi date back to 2009, when Muslim women she was laboring with in a field objected to sharing water with her because she was Christian. After an argument, the women went to a local cleric and accused Bibi of blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), a charge punishable by death under colonial-era legislation.

During the appeal hearing on October 8, a three-member panel of Supreme Court justices appeared to question

the case against her, with Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa, considered Pakistan's top expert in criminal law, listing flaws in the proceedings. "I don't see any derogatory remarks vis-a-vis the holy Koran as per the FIR," added Chief Justice Saqib Nisar, referring to the initial complaint filed in the case.

Approximately 40 people are believed to be on death row or serving a life sentence in Pakistan for blasphemy, according to a 2018 report by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. Leading rights groups have long criticized the legislation, saying it is routinely abused to justify censorship, persecution, and even murder of minorities. In recent years, it has also been weaponized to smear dissenters and politicians. Mere calls to reform the law have provoked violence, most notably the assassination of Salman Taseer, the governor of Pakistan's most populous province Punjab, by his own bodyguard in broad daylight in Islamabad in 2011.

Taseer had also called for Bibi's release. His assassin, Mumtaz Qadri, was executed in 2016 and has been feted as a hero by hardliners, with a shrine to him built by Islamists just outside the capital. Taseer's son Shahbaz tweeted "Pakistan Zindabad", meaning "Long live Pakistan", following the ruling. Politicians including new Prime Minister Imran Khan invoked blasphemy during a general election this summer, vowing to defend the laws. Analysts have warned the tactic could deepen sectarian fractures and potentially spill into violence. —AFP



Asia Bibi

Divider in chief? Trump in his own abrasive words

WASHINGTON: As calls mount to defuse US political tensions following a week of violence including the killing of 11 worshippers at a Pittsburgh synagogue, Donald Trump continues to throw his rhetorical bombs. The president did urge Americans to "unify" last week after authorities intercepted pipe bombs mailed to mainly Democratic targets of Trump's rage. But an aggrieved Trump swiftly reverted to form, accusing the "fake news" media of stoking fear and anger. Then on Tuesday, Trump dropped a surprise announcement linked to his anti-immigration platform: he intends to scrap a constitutional guarantee to citizenship for anyone born on US soil. Here is a look back at some of Trump's most inflammatory past statements:

'Birther' controversy

Trump earned national political prominence by promoting the falsehood that Barack Obama, America's first black president, was not born in the United States. As a leader of the so-called "birther" movement, Trump repeatedly cast doubt on whether Obama was a natural-born US citizen—and therefore qualified to be head of state. "An 'extremely credible source' has called my office and told me that @BarackObama's birth certificate is a fraud," Trump tweeted in 2012. He grudgingly acknowledged late in his 2016 presidential campaign that Obama was born in the United States.

Mexican 'rapists'

When the provocative billionaire descended the Trump Tower escalator to announce his White House bid in June 2015, his detractors argue he brought the level of national political discourse down with him. Mexico is "sending people that have lots of problems... They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists," Trump said. A year later he argued that the Mexican heritage of a US-born federal judge should disqualify him from presiding over a fraud lawsuit involving Trump University. House Speaker Paul Ryan, the top Republican in Congress, called it "the textbook definition of a racist comment."

'Lock her up'

The Republican National Convention of 2016 will be remembered in part for the event's central rallying cry against Trump's nemesis Hillary Clinton: "Lock her up!" Those three words became a chant of reflexive hostility, not just against the Democratic nominee, but the perception by aggrieved Trump supporters that liberal forces were aiming to derail his presidency. The chants persist. Even on the day last week that pipe bombs arrived in the mail for Clinton and other prominent Democrats, the crowd at Trump's campaign rally in Wisconsin launched into "Lock her up." Trump, who proclaims himself proud to be politically incorrect, continues to malign opponents with noxious nicknames. He repeatedly tags Senator Elizabeth Warren, a potential 2020 presidential contender, with the ethnic slur "Pocahontas" due to her claim of distant Native American ancestry, and brands congresswoman Maxine Waters, an African-American Democrat, "Low IQ." —AFP

Diplomacy without Merkel: Europe's broker bows out

PARIS: For 13 years Angela Merkel has been a cool head at summits and a powerful broker in troubled Europe, but analysts say the countdown until her announced departure could leave her an international lame duck. When Donald Trump became US president, liberal commentators turned to the German chancellor as a potential new "leader of the free world" — a label she swiftly dismissed as "absurd". Her moderate, consensus-seeking approach and staunch defense of the multilateral world order have made Merkel a counterpoint to Trump's "America First" isolationism at international meetings.

But political analysts say it's hard to predict what impact the exit of the world's most powerful woman, now down in the calendar for 2021, will have on global affairs. Cas Mudde, a politics professor at the University of Georgia in the United States, said that whoever takes over at the head of Europe's biggest economy will struggle to wield the same international clout. "That is the hole she leaves — that of senior political leader within Western democracies," he told AFP. Already weakened in domestic politics, he predicted that setting a clock will "further erode her national and international power, which remains, however, significant."

Farewell, queen of Europe

Germany has trod cautiously on the global stage since World War II, wary of throwing its might around for fear of spooking neighbors. But within Europe Merkel has carved out an influential role as a broker, not least in the 2010-2015 Greek economic crisis and in leading the bloc's response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. With Europe already badly divided by Brexit and a wave of migrant arrivals, officials and analysts in Brussels fear her announcement spells yet more uncertainty for the EU.

The Capital Economics consultancy said her announcement was bad timing given the major row that has just broken out over Italy's big-spending budget. "The eurozone needs a safe pair of hands more than ever and Mrs Merkel has been key to brokering compromises in the past," it said in a briefing note. "Her weakened position may mean that an agreement over Italy's budget will take longer to reach, raising the threat of contagion to other markets."

French President Emmanuel Macron has meanwhile worked hard to win Merkel's support for a profound shake-up of the EU. "Lots of the president's initiatives would not have seen the light of day if it wasn't for strong German support," France's Europe Minister Nathalie Loiseau said, naming closer defense ties as an example. But Merkel's support for Macron's ambitious institutional change was already lukewarm and is now in further doubt, with pro-EU commentator Gideon Rachman writing in the Financial Times that her announcement was "bad news" for the reforms.

Some analysts suggest Merkel's clout in general in Europe, where she has notably pushed for close ties with post-Brexit Britain, will take an immediate hit. "Nobody is going to listen to her anymore in Europe. She has taken herself immediately out of the game," said Sebastian Maillard, director of the Jacques Delors Institute think-tank. Yet Nils Diederich, a political scientist at the Free University of Berlin, predicted she will continue to act as a moderator in tense EU disputes, like those it faces with Italy and Hungary. "In recent months it's become obvious that (European affairs) represent her primary interests. She is Germany's real foreign minister," he said.

Step forward, Macron?

Coming a day after Brazil elected a far-right president and with populists on the march across Europe and beyond, Merkel's announcement also signals the decline of a leading voice against nationalism. Some predict her successor at the helm of the conservative CDU party will shift further right in response to the rising far-right AfD party in Germany — a phenomenon spurred in large part by Merkel's 2015 welcome of more than a million refugees.

Mudde, who studies populism on both sides of the Atlantic, said however that Macron and Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had long since taken over as the world's leading defenders of liberal values. "Merkel has been on her way out for a long time," Mudde said. "I think Macron has become a much more vocal opponent of nationalism than Merkel," he added. —AFP

International

Uzbek bloggers test-and hit-the limits of a new-found freedom

Bloggers begin to tackle issues once considered taboo

TASHKENT: When Uzbek authorities detained several online activists in September, blogger Davronbek Tojialiyeu packed some clothes in a bag and waited for the knock on his door. The police never came, and Tojialiyeu, one of a handful of bloggers breaking taboos by criticizing state policies and officials, writes on. The 34-year-old's experience suggests the new government in Tashkent is willing to make concessions as it vows to ease restrictions that made Uzbeks wary of speaking freely for the past 25 years.

The detention of the bloggers, however, shows the change has limits, even as Uzbekistan tries to project a more liberal image to foreign investors whose help it needs to revive the economy after years of stagnation. The government is still sensitive to challenges to its authority, including in the sphere of religion. The country was rocked by bombings in the late 1990s and early 2000s that were blamed on Islamist extremists, and by an armed uprising in 2005 in which hundreds of people were killed. Tojialiyeu says that mixed messages from the state on freedom of expression are unlikely to stop people like him from pushing the boundaries. "I was not afraid (of arrest) but I was ready for it," he said with a smile. Public criticism of the government was unthinkable under former president Islam Karimov, who ran the majority Muslim former Soviet republic from 1989 until his death in 2016. Critics such as journalist Yusuf Ruzimuradov spent years in prison on charges related to public security and inciting rebellion. Ruzimuradov was released last March after 19 years behind bars.

"During Karimov's time bloggers could write only about small issues, mostly social," said Tojialiyeu, whose day job is running Ziyouz.uz, a catalogue of Uzbek literature. "It was not possible to talk about serious and political subjects." Karimov's successor, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has proclaimed a new era of openness and freedom of the press, and moved to curb the powers of the security forces. "I regard as real journalists the ones who expose ... bureaucracy, indif-

ference, extortion, corruption," he said in remarks published by his office last year.

"There needs to be plurality of opinions in the national media space," he said. The foreign ministry, which answers all queries from the international media including to the police, did not reply to a request for comment on this story. Mirziyoyev's approach has improved Uzbekistan's image abroad and helped it start rebuilding ties with institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which had in effect withdrawn from the country under Karimov. US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross praised "the successful political and democratic reforms that are underway in Uzbekistan" on a visit to Tashkent last week.

Young and religious

"...the types of reforms the President has embraced here are essential to establishing the certitude that companies need to open operations in the local economy," he told an American-Uzbek Chamber of Commerce Business Forum. Bordering Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, the country of 33 million produces gold, natural gas and oil. One of its selling points to foreign investors is as a stepping stone between Russia and China. Some of the government's steps have been clumsy, however. Journalists from Russia who visited Tashkent this month as members of President Vladimir Putin's media pool, including a Reuters reporter, were instructed not to leave their hotels without official minders "for their own safety".

The Uzbek blogosphere has expanded since the election in December 2016 of Mirziyoyev, who was prime

minister under Karimov. Bloggers, writing mostly on Facebook, question policies they see as excessively strict or unnecessary. Mirziyoyev himself has a Facebook page, as do many senior officials, although less than 3 percent of Uzbeks regularly visit Facebook.

One story that went viral was that of a young teacher killed by a truck while cleaning up a highway ahead of a presidential visit last March, part of a mass mobilization of public sector workers by provincial authorities. Mirziyoyev quickly responded to the outcry, telling reporters he felt responsible for the woman's death and ordering his subordinates to stop what he called "window-dressing". "Bloggers have become the moving force, not only in social networks but in society as well," Tojialiyeu said. "If they raise certain issues the government is forced to address them."

In several cases, authorities have punished low-level officials after bloggers helped spread news of abuse of power, such as a district mayor filmed beating headmasters for failing to bring enough people to a national holiday event. On Monday, Mirziyoyev sacked a deputy PM who was criticized on social media after a photo showed his subordinates standing knee-deep in a ditch full of water as a punishment. The announcement did not mention the photo but it follows an online outcry.

Uzbekistan wants to improve image

Bolder after success

It was successes like these that emboldened about a dozen young male bloggers, mainly focused on religious issues, to criticize a draft of school uniform regulations in June that disallowed hijabs, headscarves pre-

scribed in Islam for girls and women. After the government enacted the regulations in August, bloggers cried foul and some called for protests. They were joined by Fazliddin Parpiyev, imam of one of Tashkent's mosques.

The pushback was swift. Police arrested at least eight bloggers and the imam was dismissed. Parpiyev told Reuters he remains out of work after refusing to apologize. One of the detained bloggers, Adham Olimov, told Reuters a court sentenced him to 15 days of administrative arrest on charges of disobeying police orders. He and others were out of jail by mid-September. "Things have improved ... Under Karimov, we would have been sent to prison for 15-20 years," said another blogger who asked not to be named so as to avoid further problems.

"(But) I am now avoiding sensitive issues. I have a family ... Blogging is not worth going to jail for." Tojialiyeu said he would continue to write about the school uniform issue, however, and criticized the response as going against the spirit of liberal reforms. "There was no official explanation or response from the government on what was going on," he said. "We live in a democratic society or we claim to have one, but what happened was not in line with our claim - for example, arresting bloggers on trumped-up charges, not informing relatives about the whereabouts of the detainees and so on."

Tojialiyeu said he has not experienced any pressure or intimidation from the authorities, but friends have tried to persuade him to be more careful about sensitive issues. "We can no longer see the bravery and fury which used to be there (in the blogosphere) months ago," he says. "Bloggers have once again started writing about minor and old matters." While Tojialiyeu's optimism may have wavered, his determination has not. "I know that what I am doing is not a crime and perhaps that's why I am not afraid. Also, public and international pressure is a factor now. Maybe this gives me some confidence." —Reuters

Yemeni teacher turns his home into school for 700 students

TAIZ: Outside the home of Yemeni teacher Adel al-Shorbagy the queue of children lining up for education keeps getting longer. Almost 700 come daily to his house which he converted into a school in the government-held city of Taiz, which has been at the centre of a three-and-a-half-year civil war that has left millions on the brink of famine.

Both the Iranian-aligned armed Houthi movement and Yemen's internationally recognized government have deployed forces in various districts of the southwestern city. Yemen's third largest, Al-Shorbagy opened the school following the outbreak of war saying he had nowhere to send his own children. However, 500 boys and girls aged between six and 15 signed up for lessons in that first year. "All the schools closed

down and we had a problem that our kids were on the street," Al-Shorbagy told Reuters. "We opened this building as a community initiative. It was my national and humanitarian duty towards my neighborhood."

Inside the house, facilities are basic, with exposed brick walls and big gaps where windows should be. Ripped curtains are used to divide up space for classrooms. Undeterred, the eager children find any space they can on the floor, with barely any room to move, let alone write. They share donated books and follow what one of the 16 volunteer teachers writes on a broken white board. Classes include maths, science and English, with Al-Shorbagy saying he follows the pre-war Yemeni curriculum. Despite the ramshackle setting and lack of facilities, the school is oversubscribed in a country where education has been decimated and accessible, free school options are limited.

Some 2,500 schools have been damaged or destroyed since a Saudi-led coalition intervened in 2015 to try to restore the internationally recognized government, a UNICEF report said in March. Two million children are out of



AL HAJJAH: Displaced Yemeni students attend a class in a makeshift school in the northern district of Abs in Yemen's northwestern Hajjah province. —AFP

school in Yemen, including Shehab Mohamed Hazzaa, whose mother was trying to enrol him at Al-Shorbagy's school. "I came here to register... in the school and the principal told me that it is too crowded and rejected him," said the

mother, who declined to be named. The only other option in the city are private schools but they cost up to 100,000 Yemeni riyal (\$400) per year, putting them out of reach for many in the impoverished Arab country. —Reuters

UN names new envoy to Syria

WASHINGTON: A seasoned Norwegian diplomat who helped oversee talks leading to the Oslo peace accords has been named as the next special envoy to Syria. In a letter seen Tuesday by AFP, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres told the Security Council that he wishes to give the job to Geir Pedersen. Pedersen is a veteran diplomat, who in 1993 was a member of the Norwegian team to the secret negotiations that led to the signing of the Oslo accords between Israel and the Palestinians. He has held several posts in the region, including as UN envoy to south Lebanon in 2005 and then as special coordinator for the whole of Lebanon from 2007 to 2008. Pedersen also spent several years as Norway's representative to the Palestinian Authority. He is currently Norway's ambassador to China and has previously served as its envoy to the UN.

No more 'cajoling'

The Syria conflict, which began with anti-government street protests in 2011, has claimed more than 360,000 lives and drawn in foreign powers and various jihadist

groups. "I am pleased to inform you of my intention to announce the appointment of Mr Geir O Pedersen as my Special Envoy for Syria. In taking this decision, I have consulted broadly, including with the government of the Syrian Arab Republic," Guterres said in the letter.

"Mr Pedersen will support the Syrian parties by facilitating an inclusive and credible political solution that meets the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people." He also thanked Staffan de Mistura, the outgoing envoy, "for his more than four years of concerted efforts and contributions to search for peace in Syria." Yahya Aridi, the spokesman for Syria's main opposition negotiating body, said the change of envoys would have little impact on the fate of his country if no international will and consensus emerged about a political roadmap.

"This man has experience, ranging from Iraq to Lebanon and the United Nations," he told AFP. "We hope he will be more decisive, and immediately call things by their names - more cajoling and soothing is not what the Syria file needs right now." "But regardless of the name of the envoy, there needs to be international will and determination to reach a political solution," said Aridi. The leaders of Turkey, Russia, France and Germany met in Istanbul at the weekend and called for a political solution to the war and a permanent truce in the last major rebel-held bastion of Idlib. Their joint

Eight years since a revolution that toppled longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia's economy is stagnant and around a third of young graduates are unemployed. Authorities had not previously identified Guebla as a potential extremist, Slihi told AFP. The prosecution spokesman said there had not yet been any arrests in connection with Monday's attack. Authorities said nobody was seriously injured in the explosion. Tunis returned to normal on Tuesday apart from a reinforced police presence around the blast site, on a major artery and close to the North African country's interior ministry and French embassy.

Municipal workers had used high-pressure water hoses to clean the area, where tourists were walking again and cafes had re-opened. Since 2011, jihadists have been waging a campaign of attacks targeting Tunisian security forces, particularly in the mountainous region near the Algerian border. But Monday's attack was the first in Tunis since November 2015, when a suicide bombing killed 12 security agents on a bus for presidential guards, a few hundred metres (yards) from the site of the latest attack. The 2015 attack was claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group. —AFP

Tunisian woman suicide bomber a jobless graduate

TUNIS: A woman who blew herself up on a busy street of the Tunisian capital this week has been identified as an unemployed graduate, the prosecution said yesterday. Mna Guebla detonated a bomb Monday near a gathering of police cars in Tunis' upmarket Avenue Habib Bourguiba, wounding 15 officers and two teenagers in the first such attack in the city since 2015. The bomber, from the eastern region of Mahdia, was aged 30 and had a degree in business English, said prosecution spokesman Sofiene Slihi, who also represents the country's anti-terrorism unit. Guebla did not have a job related to her studies, but sometimes worked as a shepherdess to help her family, according to Tunisian media.

News in brief

Rebels and jihadists clash

BEIRUT: Fierce clashes have broken out between rebels and jihadists in the planned buffer around Syria's Idlib region set out under a Russian-Turkish deal, a monitor said yesterday. "Intense fighting has been going on since Monday, leaving 13 dead in 24 hours," the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Seven of those killed came from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the faction led by former Al-Qaeda fighters that controls most of Idlib, the Britain-based monitor said. Regime ally Russia and rebel backer Turkey agreed in September to set up a buffer zone around the last major opposition stronghold of Idlib to avert a Syrian regime offensive. The latest fighting pitting jihadist hardliners against a Turkish-backed rebel alliance was happening in a part of the "demilitarized" area inside Aleppo province, the Observatory said. —AFP

Danish envoy summoned

TEHRAN: Iran's foreign ministry summoned the Danish ambassador yesterday over the arrest of an Iranian-Norwegian national for allegedly plotting an attack in Denmark. "The Danish ambassador arrived at the foreign ministry this morning," foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi said in a statement, saying he met with a senior official for European affairs. "In this meeting the official strongly denied the biased reports on a foiled attack plot on an Iranian dissident in Denmark and its attribution to the Islamic republic of Iran," Ghasemi added. The official also warned against "hasty and controversial actions". The Danish ambassador is being recalled by Copenhagen over the alleged plot to kill three Iranians living in the Scandinavian country. —AFP

42 Nigerian Shiites killed

KADUNA: A Nigerian Shiite group said yesterday 42 of its members were killed when security forces fired upon their protests in the capital Abuja over the previous two days. The previous death toll as of Tuesday evening was 25 members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), who had marched in their hundreds to demand the government release their leader Ibrahim Zakzaky. On Monday, the army opened fire on the marchers on the outskirts of Abuja. On Tuesday, the police shot at the protesters in the city centre. "The death toll of yesterday's attack on our members has risen to seven as of now," said Ibrahim Musa, an IMN spokesman. "They died as a result of the injuries they sustained yesterday. And the number of those killed on Monday at Maraba (an area on Abuja's outskirts) has also risen to 35." Police and army spokesmen did not respond to phone calls seeking comment. —Reuters

Machar back in Juba

JUBA: South Sudan rebel leader Riek Machar returned to the capital Juba for the first time in more than two years yesterday to take part in a peace ceremony. Machar, who under the terms of a peace deal is to be reinstated as vice president, had not set foot in the city since he fled in July 2016 under a hail of gunfire when an earlier peace accord collapsed. The rebel chief arrived at Juba airport at 9:30am and was welcomed by President Salva Kiir. Machar's former ally turned bitter enemy. The two are to join regional leaders at the ceremony later Wednesday to publicly welcome the most recent peace agreement, signed in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa in September. It was not immediately clear if Machar would remain in Juba after the ceremony, as his aides have expressed concerns over his safety in the city. —AFP



TEBNINE: In this file photo, UN Special Representative in Lebanon Geir Pedersen (left) walks in a field in the southern Lebanese village of Tebnine during a tour to UN peacekeeping forces. —AFP

statement called for a committee to be established to draft Syria's post-war constitution before the end of the year, "paving the way for free and fair elections" in the war-torn country. —AFP



MAHDIA, Tunisia: Neighbors and relatives gather in front of Mna Guebla's family house, a suicide bomber who blew herself up on a busy street in the Tunisian capital a day earlier, in the eastern region of Mahdia. —AFP

International

Notorious Boston mobster Whitey Bulger found dead

89-year-old Bulger beaten 'unrecognizable' by fellow inmates

WASHINGTON: Notorious Boston gangster James "Whitey" Bulger was found dead on Tuesday at a prison in West Virginia, one day after he was transferred to the high-security facility to serve the remainder of two life sentences for a string of brutal crimes, the Federal Bureau of Prisons said. According to The New York Times, the 89-year-old Bulger, who was an FBI informant in addition to being a crime boss, had been beaten "unrecognizable" by fellow inmates. There was no immediate confirmation from the authorities that Bulger had been murdered.

The prisons bureau said the former head of south Boston's "Winter Hill Gang" was found "unresponsive" Tuesday morning at the Hazelton penitentiary in Bruceton Mills, West Virginia. "Life-saving measures were initiated immediately by responding staff," the bureau said in a statement, but "Mr Bulger was subsequently pronounced dead." "The Federal Bureau of Investigation was notified and an investigation has been initiated," it said.

The prisons bureau said Bulger, who had previously been incarcerated in Oklahoma and Florida, had been in custody at the Hazelton facility since Monday. Bulger was serving two life sentences for 11 murders, racketeering, extortion, money laundering, possession of firearms and other crimes. Arrested in 2011 after 16 years on the run, Bulger's life of crime has been the subject of several books and movies including "Black Mass," a biopic featuring Johnny Depp as the Irish-American mobster. Bulger also provided the inspiration for Jack Nicholson's mob boss character in Martin Scorsese's Oscar-winning 2006 gangster film "The Departed."

Ruled Boston underworld

The subject of a years-long manhunt, Bulger was finally arrested in Santa Monica, California, where he had been living quietly under an assumed name with his longtime girlfriend, Catherine Greig. She was sentenced separately to eight years in prison for aiding and abetting him. Police found some \$800,000 in cash and an arsenal of weapons

in the modest apartment where Bulger and Greig had lived for years as Charles and Carol Gasko.

A \$2 million reward for Bulger's capture was doled out to a former Icelandic beauty queen who tipped off the police to their whereabouts. A 12-person jury found Bulger guilty in Boston in 2013 of 31 separate charges. "The scope, the callousness, the depravity of your crimes, is



Bulger's life of crime a subject of books, movies

almost unfathomable," Judge Denise Casper said at his sentencing. Bulger ruled the Boston underworld with an iron fist for nearly 30 years while also working as an informant for the FBI.

His trial, which featured 72 witnesses and 840 exhibits, produced chilling testimony worthy of a pulp novel. It heard harrowing tales of teeth being pulled from the mouths of murder victims to foil identification and the strangulation of a mobster's girlfriend who "knew too much." Bulger refused to testify at his trial claiming he had been given immunity from prosecution by federal agents. He steadfastly denied being an FBI informant, but close links between some FBI agents in Boston and Bulger's Winter Hill Gang in the 1970s and 1980s have been well documented. Former FBI agent John Connolly was sentenced to prison after being convicted in 2002 of effectively becoming a member of the gang. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: In this file photo, Steven Martinez (center) FBI assistant director in charge in Los Angeles, Douglas Price, (left) FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge, and LAPD Deputy Chief, David Doan, Chief of Detectives speak during a news conference to discuss the arrest of Boston crime boss James 'Whitey' Bulger and his companion, Catherine Greig. — AFP

Fake news accounts: Nigeria social media's copycat issue

LAGOS: When one of Africa's richest men joined Twitter and posted his first tweet on May 11 this year, the fanfare in his native Nigeria was immediate. News that Femi Otedola had opened an account spread like wildfire and the billionaire head of Forte Oil appeared to relish the engagement. "Social media isn't exactly my forte but I learn fast," he wrote, even signing his tweets "Ote\$".

But within hours of his Twitter debut, numerous accounts using his name appeared online. Some that had been dormant for years suddenly sprang to life. Unsuspecting users would not necessarily have been able to identify which were real and which were fake, as Twitter suspended its "blue tick" verifications in November 2017. Soon, Otedola was forced to distance himself from news reports based on tweets posted by one imitation account with more than 8,000 followers. The account described itself as a "parody" but in practice appeared anything but.

Otedola announced that he and a charitable foundation set up by the Nigerian businessman Tony Elumelu were offering 10 million naira (\$27,400/24,000 euros) to up to 50 young entrepreneurs. The imitation account repeated the offer and urged people who responded to send their details to a "PA", who would then give further instructions. Elumelu's foundation even responded to the tweets from the imposter, inadvertently giving it credibility. Otedola expressed his disappointment at the attempts at online fraud in his name and in June tweeted he would leave Twitter until he was verified. He has not tweeted since.

Email scams

Nigeria has an unenviable reputation around the world for corruption and is known particularly for its "419" email scams, named after the section of the penal code covering fraud. Fake social media accounts of celebrities, government ministers, news pages and blogs appear to be the equivalent of modern-day "yahoo boys"-online con artists. Many accounts are designed to look like established figures and organizations. Tolu Ogunlesi, a media adviser to President Muhammadu Buhari, said the government had reported "hundreds" to tech companies since 2015.

"A particular case was that we had people impersonating the minister of finance on Facebook. They were using the account to financially defraud people," he said. "A lot of them run pay-for-job schemes. It's a common scam, asking people to pay some money in exchange for a job." Before the end of the year, the government will publish a database of confirmed social media pages of elected officials, he added. But Ogunlesi predicted that misinformation online will still increase as elections approach in February next year when former vice president Atiku Abubakar will challenge Buhari.

Abubakar's campaign team itself has had to publicly distance itself from accounts in his name on Facebook that have been liked by tens of thousands of people. One in the name of Peter Obi, his pick for vice president, had more "likes" than his official page. The accounts include posts encouraging supporters to share pro-Abubakar slogans online for money. Another on Twitter and Facebook recently posted that Abubakar was grateful to have received support from a LGBT rights group. But there is no evidence of any such organization having done so. Nevertheless, the claim made it into a number of Nigerian newspapers quoting an official who appears not to exist. Many apparent support groups based on ethnicity, gender or religion are often fabricated in Nigeria to attack rival positions. In this case, LGBT support would likely be frowned upon in Nigeria, where same-sex relationships are banned and religious conservatives are hostile to the rights of sexual minorities. — AFP

Erdogan's Turkey remembers WW1 battles, not defeat

ISTANBUL: World War I ended with the Ottoman Empire vanquished and facing imminent collapse, its doomed alliance with Imperial Germany costing hundreds of thousands of Ottoman lives and dealing a death blow to the already creaking empire. But 100 years after the surrender of the Ottomans to the Allied powers at Mudros on October 30, 1918, the Great War is in no way seen as a pointless waste or even a defeat by modern Turkey under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Rather than focusing on the four years of devastating conflict that ended in the capitulation and eventual dissolution of the empire, Turkey remembers key individual battles where Ottoman forces, often against huge odds, defied the Allies and helped forge a new Turkish national identity. Chief among them is the 1915-1916 Battle of Gallipoli, but other episodes like the siege at Kut Al-Amara in modern Iraq and the Battle of Sarikamis against the Russians are also marked with increasing emphasis.

Gursel Goncu, the editor-in-chief of the monthly Turkish history magazine #tarih, said the empire's defeat was not something that existed in the memory of contemporary Turkey. "We, the Turks, remember and talk about that period through the Gallipoli victory and the triumph of the siege of Kut Al-Amara. The devastating defeat of 1918, on the other hand, is still being interpreted as the 'treason' of the authorities at the time," he said.

'Rising from the ashes'

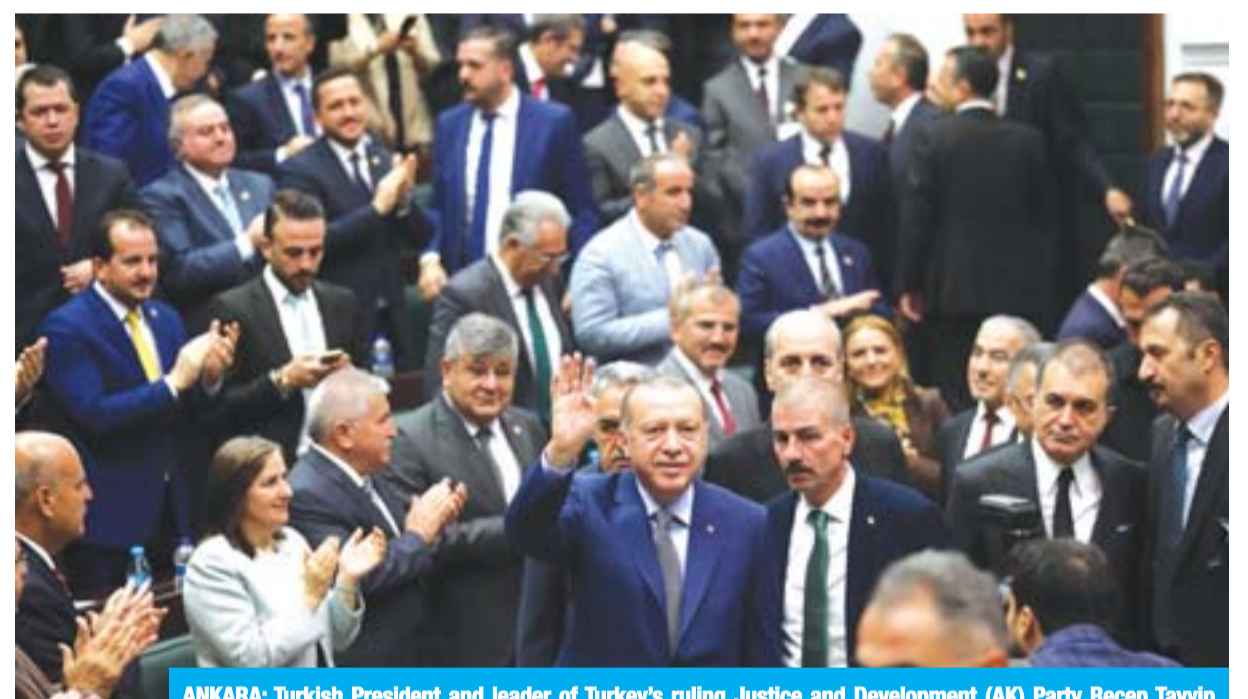
Erdogan increasingly gives these brief triumphs prominence, tracing a line of continuity through the centuries of great events in Turkish history from the pre-Ottoman era into the modern republic right up to the defeat of an attempted coup against him in 2016. The president sees these battles as a defiance of the West and defense of territory which was historically in Turkey's natural sphere of influence. The Ottoman resistance at Gallipoli prevented

Boris Johnson effigy to burn at UK bonfire party

EDENBRIDGE: A giant effigy of former foreign secretary Boris Johnson will be torched as part of a British town's Bonfire Night celebrations, organizers revealed yesterday. The 36-foot tall caricature will be set ablaze on Saturday in Edenbridge, Kent, southeast England, with more than 10,000 people expected to attend. Johnson, who spearheaded the pro-Brexit campaign, resigned in July over Prime Minister Theresa May's plans to keep Britain close to the European Union after leaving the bloc in March. Johnson is depicted with a mop of blond hair poking out from under his cycling helmet, wearing lurid red-and-white jogging shorts and odd socks. The 54-year-old is shown holding an EU cake, about to eat a slice of it with the British flag on.

"Our message to Mr Johnson is that you cannot have your cake and eat it," said Edenbridge Bonfire Society chairman Bill Cummings. "We hope Mr Johnson will appreciate the humor contained in our caricature and take it in the good spirit with which it is intended." Guy Fawkes or Bonfire Night marks the foiling of a plot by Catholic conspirators to blow up Protestant king James I and the Houses of Parliament with 36 barrels of gunpowder on November 5, 1605. It is celebrated with bonfires and fireworks displays either on November 5 or the nearest weekend, with effigies of the plotter Fawkes burned.

Edenbridge has been poking fun at famous figures for more than 20 years, torching effigies of them alongside the traditional Guy Fawkes. Last year disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein went up in flames while in 2016 it was US President Donald Trump. "As with last



ANKARA: Turkish President and leader of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party Recep Tayyip Erdogan gestures as he arrives for his party's parliamentary group meeting at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in Ankara. — AFP

the conquest of Constantinople and helped lay the foundations of the modern state that would be formed in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, a key commander at Gallipoli. Erdogan, who refers to the battle as the Canakkale Victory, has urged Turkish soldiers to remember the heroism of their forebears as they prepare for battle. "The aim is the same, the spirit is the same and the faith is the same," Erdogan said in March as he sent troops on a cross-border mission into Syria to help seize the Afrin region from Syrian-Kurdish militia.

"At Canakkale, a nation filled with a history of victories awakens from a centuries-old sleep, and rising up from the ashes, embraces the spirit of unity," he added. There is no room in this narrative for the fate of the empire's Armenian citizens, whose leaders and prominent intellectuals began

to be rounded up in 1915 just as the Gallipoli campaign started. Armenians contend they were the victims of the first genocide of the 20th century at the hands of Ottoman forces but Turkey rejects this, insisting far smaller numbers perished in a conflict that saw atrocities on both sides.

Every January, thousands of Turks brandishing national flags brave freezing temperatures to march through snow in the northern Kars region to mark not a victory but a famous retreat of Ottoman forces in 1915 after a disastrous defeat inflicted by better-prepared Russian forces at Sarikamis. The retreat is seen as another act of defiance, though Western historians lambast the Ottoman commander Enver Pasha for needlessly sending troops to their deaths. Enver is despised by Armenians, who see him as the instigator of the 1915 massacres. — AFP



EDENBRIDGE: Artist Andrea Deans poses next to the Edenbridge Bonfire Society's 2018 'Celebrity Guy', former British foreign secretary Boris Johnson, during the unveiling in Edenbridge, Southern England yesterday. — AFP

year, there were many strong contenders for this year's celebrity Guy, particularly in the political world," said artist Andrea Deans, who painted the Johnson effigy. "This year Boris was the obvious option, plus he's great to caricature." Previous targets have been cyclist Lance Armstrong, footballer Wayne Rooney, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and British prime ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. — AFP

World War I, a revolution for women

PARIS: Driving trams, ploughing fields and manning production lines: World War I radically changed women's role in society, as they stepped into the boots of men gone to fight for their countries. In cities across Europe, women took on traditionally "male" jobs—waiting on tables, delivering the mail, teaching in boys' schools or handling cash as bank clerks.

"Women rapidly became indispensable, not only in the nursing and welfare services but in offices and factories and agriculture, changing the whole balance of society in the process," says historian Michael Howard. As soon as war broke out in 1914, France's prime minister Rene Viviani called on women to "replace in the workplace those who are on the battlefield". In Germany 44 percent of Bavarian farms were being run by women by 1916, according to the historian Benjamin Ziemann, with some even forced to pull carts in place of horses requisitioned for battle.

From 1915 onwards, Europe's industry-devoted to the war effort—relied massively on the female workforce, as did that of the United States from 1917. "Without women, victory will tarry," warned Britain's soon-to-be prime minister David Lloyd George in 1915. Some 400,000 women were toiling in France's war factories by 1918 - a quarter of the workforce—handling some 2,500 shells per exhausting 11-hour shift. In Britain women's share of the workforce had risen by 50 percent by the end of 1917, with one million employed in war factories in 1918. Many were married and from the middle classes, few of whom worked outside the home until then. — AFP

International

Afghan army copter crashes; 'bad weather' cited; 25 killed

Seven killed in suicide attack near Kabul prison

HEART: An Afghan army helicopter carrying 25 people crashed in western Afghanistan yesterday, killing all those on board, officials said. The aircraft crashed due to "bad weather" in Anar Dara district, which borders Iran, Farah provincial governor spokesman Nasir Mehri said. The Taliban claimed its militants brought it down. Both pilots and 23 passengers were killed. Among the dead were the deputy army corps commander for western Afghanistan and the head of the Farah provincial council, Mehri said. Provincial council member Dadullah Qaneh said the helicopter hit a mountain peak in poor weather en route to neighboring Herat province.

Senior government and military officials often travel by helicopter in regions where the Taliban has a large presence. Helicopter crashes are not uncommon in the mountainous, war-torn country. In September, an Afghan military helicopter carrying weapons and ammunition burst into flames during an "emergency landing" in Farah, killing at least four people. Earlier that month at least 12 people were killed, including two Ukrainians, when a helicopter owned by a Moldovan company crashed in the northern province of Balkh.

The aircraft was also carrying munitions and exploded on impact, Afghan officials said. Western forces have been rebuilding Afghanistan's air force, which was decimated by the civil war of the 1990s and the turbulent period of Taliban rule that ended in 2001. NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan has been training pilots and ground controllers across the country as part of a modernization effort. US Forces' officials told AFP in February that Afghanistan's air force includes four C-130 transport aircraft, 24 C-208 supply planes, 24 Russian Mi-17 helicopters that will be replaced by 159 UH-60 Black Hawks, 12 A-29 Super Tucano attack planes, and 25 MD-530 attack helicopters.

Suicide attack

In another development, a suicide bomber targeting a

bus carrying employees of Afghanistan's biggest prison killed at least seven people yesterday, officials said, in the latest militant attack in the war-torn country. Another eight were wounded in the blast at the entrance to the facility in Kabul, which police spokesman Basir Mujahid said hit a vehicle ferrying Pul-e-Charkhi prison staff. Among the casualties were police officers guarding the main gate and prison staff. The attacker was on foot, interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish said.

He struck as the bus was entering the jail in the east of the Afghan capital. The Islamic State group (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack via its Amaq propaganda agency, SITE Intelligence Group said. IS has claimed most suicide attacks in Kabul in recent months. The attack comes days after a suicide bomber blew himself up near the entrance of Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission in Kabul, killing at least one person and wounding six.

A wave of election-related violence has killed or wounded hundreds across the country in recent months as the Taliban and IS step up attacks on Afghan security forces and government workers. Afghanistan's long-delayed parliamentary election, which was held over three days this month, was marred by chaos and deadly attacks. Two days before voting began on October 20, a Taliban-claimed shooting killed a powerful police chief in the southern province of Kandahar.

General Abdul Raziq was among three people killed in the brazen insider attack on a high-level security meeting in the provincial capital that was attended by General Scott Miller, the top US and NATO commander in Afghanistan. Miller escaped unhurt, but US Brigadier General Jeffrey Smiley was among 13 people wounded in the shooting, which the Taliban said had targeted Miller and Raziq. US officials and NATO's Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan were adamant that Miller had not been a target. Several days later another Taliban-claimed assault killed a NATO soldier and wounded two others—all from the Czech Republic—in the western province of Herat. The attacks came amid a flurry of US-led diplomatic activity to convince the Taliban, Afghanistan's largest militant group, to negotiate an end to the 17-year war. Earlier this month, newly appointed US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad met with Taliban representatives in Qatar. Less than two weeks later a top Taliban commander held in



KABUL: An Afghan woman walks with her children up a steep street in Kabul. — AFP

Pakistani detention for more than eight years was freed. A senior Taliban leader told AFP the group had requested the release of Abdul Ghani Baradar and several others at the meeting with Khalilzad. The group confirmed Wednesday it had appointed five former Guantanamo Bay detainees to its political office in Doha who have authority to "talk about peace". — Agencies

Pakistan's charity crackdown spreads uncertainty

ISLAMABAD: Foreign aid groups are being forced out of Pakistan, where the need for their services remains immense, in a move analysts say is fuelled by suspicions of foreign spying. Eighteen international NGOs will leave Pakistan by December after being given notice earlier this month to liquidate their operations within 60 days, spreading uncertainty among humanitarian organizations. The expulsion follows years of mounting mistrust of aid groups by intelligence agencies, in a country where conspiracy theories are rife and spying accusations against foreigners common.

"The intelligence agencies see western NGOs as proxies of foreign spy agencies because they are overly sensitive about the country's nuclear assets and defense installations," said military analyst and retired general Talat Masood. Open Society Foundations, World Vision and several other of the world's most prominent non-profits are among those given their marching orders, along with charities that have spent decades in Pakistan and invested millions of dollars.

Few groups have dared to comment, even after receiving little or no detail on why they have been asked to shutter their operations and

reapply for registration in six months time. Only ActionAid has denounced the decision, saying the move was "a worrying escalation of recent attacks on civil society, academics and journalists". The eviction has ratcheted up pressure on remaining aid groups who worry that speaking out may jeopardize their own operations in Pakistan. "There is a dimension of fear. Other NGOs are hoping that if they don't make too much fuss, they might be saved," said one NGO worker, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Back to Bin Laden

The ouster is the culmination of a crackdown that began taking shape years ago. Relations between NGOs and officials began to spiral in the wake of the US commando raid on Pakistani soil that killed Osama Bin Laden in 2011. Following the operation Islamabad expelled all expatriate staff from Save the Children, accusing the group of fostering links with Shakeel Afridi — a Pakistani doctor who helped the CIA hunt down the al-Qaeda supremo.

Spying allegations have flourished ever since. "The problem in Pakistan is that the intelligence agencies here are not answerable to anyone," said Human Rights Commission of Pakistan spokesman I A Rehman. "Since Shakeel Afridi was associated with one NGO, our agencies decided to condemn and curb all the other NGOs." Visits by intelligence agencies to aid offices are now common, while staff movements are restricted and questions about their motives the norm. The interior ministry increased pressure in 2015, asking foreign NGOs to re-register to ensure the "transparency" of their finances and operations. Sixty-six groups had their applications

accepted, according to the ministry, while the rest were left pending.

"You can't challenge anything. You are really at their disposal. One day, you are acceptable, another one, you won't be. INGOs are on a really thin line," said another aid worker. The groups play a pivotal role in Pakistan, where funding for social programs is minimal, more than 20 million children are out of school and the neo-natal mortality rate is the highest in the world. At least 11 million people will be affected by the expulsion, along with the "loss" of \$130 million in aid, according to the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum.

Pakistan's newly minted human rights minister Shireen Mazari defended the action, saying authorities are sceptical about the impact of international NGOs. "A lot of them have been spending money on themselves and... we are not clear about the agenda of a lot of these INGOs," the minister told AFP. "But if they were helping millions of people, Pakistan would be a very different, developed place." "If they fulfill the law, they are working. But if they don't meet the requirements, then they have to leave," Mazari added without offering details on how the listed groups might be breaking laws. Envoy from the US, European Union and several other western embassies have jointly lobbied the government to reconsider the eviction.

A diplomat who spoke on the condition of anonymity slammed the "schizophrenia" of officials demanding more money from donors while simultaneously expelling NGOs. Since 2014, Pakistani companies have benefited from duty and quota exemptions on the European single market, which boosted their exports from 8 to 13 billion euros in 2018. — AFP

Asia Bibi: Pakistani Christian acquitted of blasphemy

ISLAMABAD: For the majority of Asia Bibi's life she lived in obscurity like many of Pakistan's downtrodden Christian minority, until a blasphemy allegation saw her sentenced to death in a case that divided the nation. She was thrust into the spotlight in deeply conservative Muslim Pakistan, where even unsubstantiated accusations of disrespecting Islam can provoke death at the hands of mobs. The allegations against Bibi date back to 2009, when Muslim field laborers who were working alongside refused to share water with her because she was Christian.

An argument broke out and a Muslim woman later went to a local cleric and accused Bibi of committing blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) — a charge punishable by death under legislation that rights groups say is routinely abused to target religious minorities and settle personal scores. Bibi was convicted and sentenced to hang in 2010, despite her advocates maintaining her

innocence and insisting the argument was a personal dispute. The illiterate, Christian mother has been behind bars in a prison in central Pakistan's Multan ever since, spending years in a cramped windowless cell during periods of solitary confinement. Her husband Ashiq Meshi told AFP earlier this year that life in their home country was a struggle for the family under the blasphemy laws. "Living in Pakistan for us is very difficult. We don't go out of our home and if we go, we come out very carefully," he said. Their daughters Esham and Esha, who is mentally and physically disabled, were forced to live away from their father for some time over safety fears.

Bibi's plight drew the attention of international rights groups and quickly evolved into the most high-profile case in the country, with Pope Benedict XVI calling for her release in 2010. Her case was also championed by liberal provincial governor Salmaan Taseer, who spoke out in support of Bibi and against intimidation by religious hardliners in repeated television appearances.

Taseer later gunned down in broad daylight in Islamabad in 2011 by one of his own bodyguards who cited the governor's position on reforming the country's blasphemy laws as the motive. The state hung his assassin Mumtaz Qadri in 2016 in a Supreme Court decision that was hailed by progressives, but brought hardliners into the streets supporting Qadri and demanding Bibi's death. — AFP

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Cities seek cash, tech to activate plans for safer, greener future

As 1.4 million people move to cities each week, local abilities to keep residents safe can become strained, increasing the risk of disasters, warned the United Nations secretary-general. "The answer is to build resilience to storms, floods, earthquakes, fires, pandemics and economic crises," said Antonio Guterres in a message for World Cities Day yesterday. Cities are already pressing on with that work, he noted. Bangkok has built underground tanks to store excess rainfall and prevent floods, while Johannesburg inhabitants are joining in efforts to improve public spaces.

As urban areas sucked in 55 percent of the planet's population - a figure UN estimates say will rise to 68 percent by 2050 - the need to find new ways to cope with modern-day pressures such as climate change has become more acute. But it involves far more than dodging disasters, experts said. "Investment in resilience isn't just about avoiding losses and keeping bad things from happening, it's about catalyzing growth and opportunity," said Marc Forni, lead specialist for urban resilience at the World Bank. "One of the things that makes urban resilience an exciting topic is that it's quite entrepreneurial - you have interesting innovation from all different areas," he added.

That includes cutting-edge technologies to help cities use complex geospatial data to tackle flooding or pollution, often at a falling cost, Forni and others said. With cloud computing and satellite imagery, US cities can now map their geographical footprint in real-time, added Forni, noting the technology could soon be applied to monitor floods.

Finance gap

While the toolkit of solutions for cities is expanding fast, deployment can hit financial, political and other barriers. The US-based 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) network, which is backed by The Rockefeller Foundation, has spent five years assisting its cities to craft strategies for dealing with physical, social and economic challenges. About half its members - from Buenos Aires and New Orleans to Paris and Amman - have completed their plans, with the rest expected by the end of 2019. "What's harder is to help cities take that next step, which is actually doing things," said Michael Berkowitz, president of 100RC, which now aims to link cities with the partners and resources they need to implement their strategies.

Sometimes cities need only small amounts of help, he added. In the case of Jakarta, about \$40,000 and some engineering expertise was required to try out new biotechnology to treat wastewater in communities, Berkowitz said. Municipalities often struggle to prepare bankable projects that can tap into financial markets, he and others said. "There's a tonne of interest ... from big commercial banks to impact funds - billions and billions of dollars are wanting to invest in green things," said Todd Gartner, director of the World Resources Institute's Natural Infrastructure Initiative.

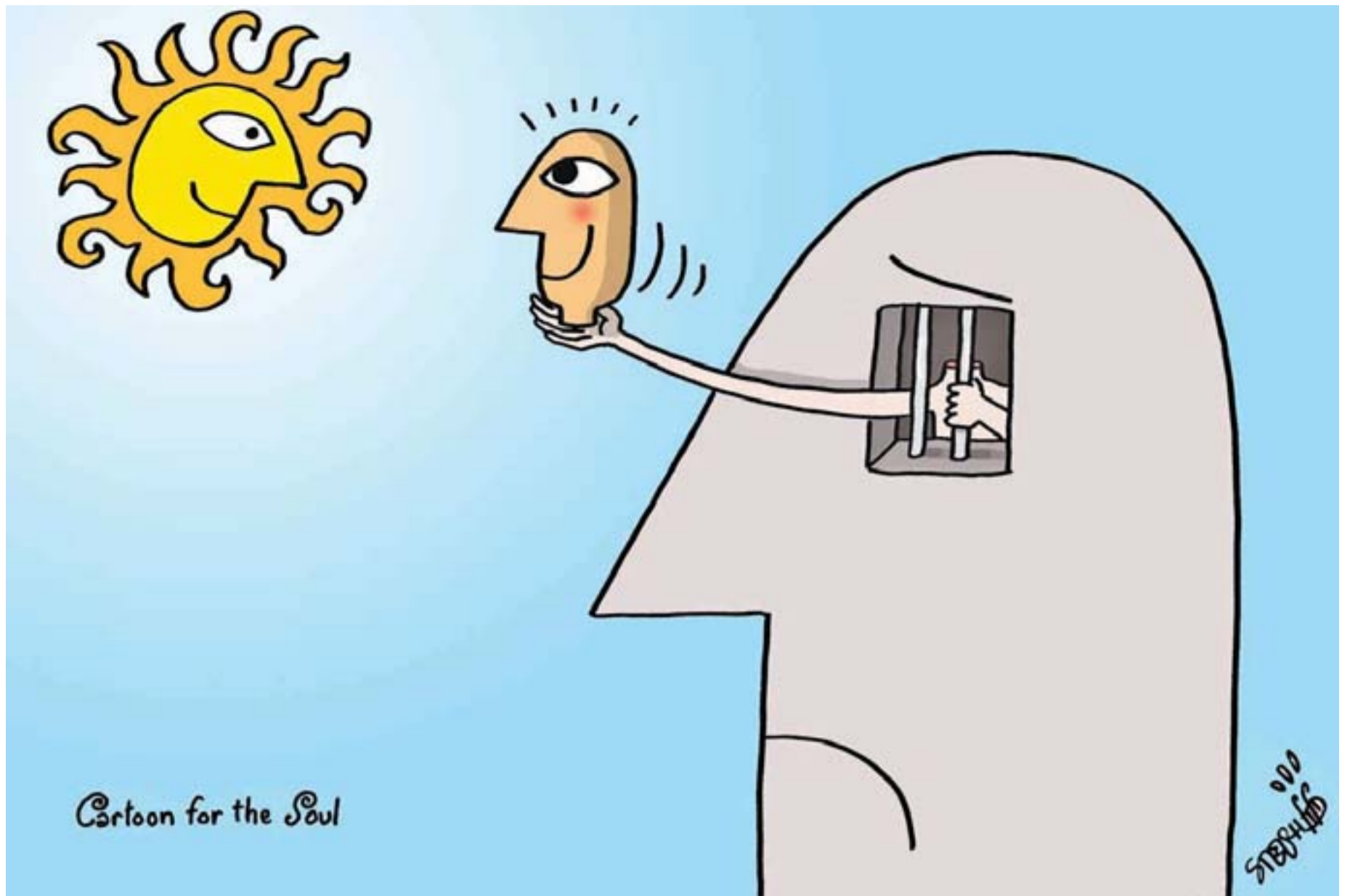
But private investors often shy away because they perceive the risks as too high for the expected returns, he added. Berkowitz said cities would need support in the form of project design and finance structuring to bridge the gap.

Political tension

Cities can also achieve a lot by reallocating their existing resources, and finding new ways to raise money, experts noted. For example, New Zealand's quake-prone capital, Wellington, screens its budget to maximize the resilience benefits of its spending, and its electric utility recently levied a surcharge to upgrade the power network against disasters, Berkowitz said. In Africa too, some cities are making progress on mobilizing money for better infrastructure - whether green bonds issued by South African cities, or Kenyan water utilities accessing commercial loans with support from central government and the World Bank, researchers said.

Yet many cities in sub-Saharan Africa lack the resources to improve services and reduce environmental risks for residents, particularly in slums, said Sarah Colenbrander of the London-based International Institute for Environment and Development. As well as tiny municipal budgets, they often suffer neglect by central government, which has traditionally focused on larger voter bases in rural areas. Political tensions can also hamper efforts to tackle urban poverty and infrastructure deficits, as opposition to the ruling party tends to foment in African cities, Colenbrander said. "If you starve (cities) of basic infrastructure and basic services, then you only get the costs of that population density and none of the benefits," she said.

The region that has made the largest leaps in resilience in the past 10 to 20 years is Latin America, experts said. Robert Muggah, co-founder of the Brazil-based Igarape Institute, said conditions had been ripe for Latin American cities to act as a "laboratory", given its swift urbanization. UN data shows the proportion of the region's population living in cities jumped from about 40 percent to 80 percent between 1950 and 2015. — Reuters



Is the US still a real democracy?

Voters in established democracies are accustomed to going to the polls to choose between parties with competing visions, programs or ideologies. For those who live in countries where freedoms are limited, however, the choice at the ballot box often is not about candidates or issues but about free and fair elections - and even the right to vote. Is the United States heading in that direction? As Americans prepare to make their choices in the pivotal Nov 6 congressional midterms, there are substantive issues like climate change and immigration policies that separate the two main parties. But to an extent that is unprecedented in the post-Civil Rights era, the issue of democracy itself has unmistakably crept on to the US ballot.

In unconsolidated democracies, including many in Europe and North America, democracy is about choosing an economic program, determining a country's foreign policy direction or deciding a set of positions on domestic issues like marriage equality or approaches to policing. However, in countries that are not quite democratic, either because the democracy is not yet fully formed or because democracy is eroding, elections are different. In countries in the former Soviet Union, Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere, elections frequently pit incumbent parties seeking to limit freedoms of speech and assembly and prevent fair elections against an opposition party or bloc whose primary campaign program is essentially democracy itself.

In 2018, American elections are beginning to look disturbingly like those in less democratic countries. For example, in the race for governor of Georgia, one candidate, Republican Brian Kemp, who as secretary of state is charged with administering Georgia's elections, has sought to disenfranchise tens of thousands of mostly African-American voters.

In Kansas, the Republican candidate for governor, Kris Kobach, gained national notoriety when President

Donald Trump appointed him to lead a commission on voter fraud, a problem that very rarely occurs in the United States. Kobach has spent much of his career advocating restrictions on voting rights that would have the effect of making it more difficult for people, particularly those who are not white, to vote. In several other states, such as Iowa, Missouri and North Carolina, Republicans



Discussion has gotten uglier since election of Trump

have enacted legislation in the last two years that makes it more difficult for people to cast their ballots.

In addition to the two parties taking different positions on voting rights, Republican-controlled state governments in Oklahoma and Louisiana have passed laws that either increase the penalties for protesting or otherwise curtail activities that are protected by First Amendment rights to assembly and speech. Several other states have similar legislation pending. This occurs in the context of a Republican president who has proposed limiting the right to protest and has frequently described the media as "enemies of the people".

One area for potential optimism is that the debate over democracy in the United States is surprisingly robust, and increasingly public. Advocates for greater democracy call for repealing laws that erect barriers to voting and for more liberal interpretations of the First

Amendment. Others argue that the Constitution was meant to limit democracy, that there is nothing in that document about making it easy for people to vote and that America is a republic not a democracy.

The discussion has gotten uglier since the election of Trump - who, after George W Bush in 2000, is the second Republican this century to win the presidency without winning the popular vote - and the bitterness over Brett Kavanaugh being confirmed to the Supreme Court by senators representing a minority of Americans, thus laying bare the undemocratic nature of giving all states two senators each, regardless of dramatic differences in population. This is not good for the stability and legitimacy of the US government, but may slowly help make the country more democratic.

It is now likely that the next time the Democrats get national power they will seek structural changes to address what some are calling a crisis of democratic legitimacy in the United States. Some of the proposals aimed at addressing this include expanding the number of Supreme Court judges or granting statehood for Washington, DC and Puerto Rico, thus allowing their diverse populations to elect their own senators and reducing the racial inequality that is - at least for now due to the number of small heavily white states - baked into the US Senate. These are partisan positions, but they reflect the growing awareness among Democrats that the democratic deficits in American political structures all seem to favor Republicans.

Much of this will not be resolved in the midterm elections. The way the Senate is constituted, the process for confirming Supreme Court justices and electing presidents is not on the ballot. Nonetheless, those who want a truly democratic America are beginning to realize that these structures will need to change - and that the national debate about democracy is increasingly become part of US politics. — Reuters

In Idlib, a protester still going strong

Nearly eight years after he joined his very first protest against Syria's regime, Bahr Nahhas still demonstrates every week with unwavering energy, even if the slogans have changed. Just like he has since 2011, the 45-year-old tilemaker carefully paints clever slogans on protest banners before each Friday rally in his rebel-held hometown of Maaret al-Numan, in Syria's northwest Idlib. But their tone has evolved, as popular demonstrations spiraled into active conflict, foreign powers got involved, and the area around him became home to diehard militants.

In his very first protest in March 2011, Nahhas demanded "freedom and dignity" in solidarity with other cities rising up against President Bashar Al-Assad's regime. "I'll never forget those days for the rest of my life," said the tall, olive-skinned father of five. Protesters would kiss and hug each other, Nahhas recalled, exhilarated by the prospect of speaking out freely against Syria's iron-fisted regime. "We hoped to bring down the regime in just a few days or weeks," he said, his hair and beard greying.

Instead, a drawn-out conflict has seen Russia-backed regime troops slowly roll back rebel and jihadist gains nationwide, until this summer they started to mass around the Idlib region. That prompted residents of Idlib, including Nahhas, to protest once more in order to head off the assault. "By going down to the streets, we are telling people that we are a coexisting, peaceful people asking for freedom and dignity," he said. Now, a shaky buffer zone is keeping regime troops away from the

region, more than half of which is held by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham alliance, led by former Al-Qaeda militants.

But for Nahhas, hardliners do not represent all of Idlib. "We have gone out to protest again to tell the world that we are not terrorists," Nahhas said, wearing a short-sleeved striped white and black shirt. Most days of the week, he makes floor tiles, scooping a grey mixture into a square mould with large yellow gloves, before pushing each into a small oven. But with the week's end approaching, he left his workshop to prepare banners for the town's Friday protests.

Inside a building still under construction, he knelt over a long white sheet, brushing curly Arabic letters across it in thick black paint. Nahhas said he has lost many of his fellow protesters in Syria's war, which has killed more than 360,000 people and displaced millions. "Some were killed, some were arrested and are being held in the regime's jails, some were tortured to death, and some emigrated to Turkey or to Europe," he said.

Others picked up weapons to fight, but Nahhas decided not to. "Words can be stronger than weapons," Nahhas said, as he prepared signs in Arabic and neat, block-lettered English. Outside, young men hoisted up protest signs in the street. A young man in a black hoodie stood inside the elevated metal lip of a bulldozer, reaching down for a banner before tying one end to a rusty pole.

Militants 'kicked out'

Maaret al-Numan's protests trace the arc of the Syrian conflict, rising up against the regime, the Islamic State group, and former Al-Qaeda fighters. "We were among the first towns to go out into the streets against Daesh," Nahhas said, using an Arabic acronym for IS. IS briefly held parts of Maaret al-Numan before opposition fighters expelled them in 2014,



Bahr Nahhas stands next to signs he prepared for a demonstration in the rebel-held town of Maaret al-Numan in the north of Idlib province on Oct 19, 2018. — AFP

according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "Afterwards, we protested against Al-Nusra... and they were kicked out too," added Nahhas, referring to the group that later became HTS.

Turkish-backed rebels ousted HTS from the town this year after months of fighting, the Britain-based war monitor says. All along, the town weathered bombardment by the regime and its Russian ally. Nahhas said he is still haunted by an air strike on a primary school in the town several years ago that killed three students and maimed several others. "I rushed to rescue the pupils after the raid, but I couldn't see anyone because of all the dust," he said. "I found one of the students

reaching out to me, begging. I carried him out to a car outside the school. His leg had been cut off." He pulled out one victim after the other, until rescue workers arrived. "I couldn't take it anymore and I collapsed," he said.

Friday's demonstration got underway after midday prayers. Carrying a small child, Nahhas melted into the crowd of demonstrators, surrounded by banners he helped make. Assad has vowed to eventually retake Maaret al-Numan and wider Idlib, but the veteran protester remained defiant. "There's no way this revolution - that has seen so many people killed and jailed - can end before the regime is toppled," Nahhas said. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2018

12 Samsung Electronics enjoys record Q3 despite struggles**13** Private payrolls rise in October; wages surge in third quarter**14** KFH-Group sponsors AAOIFI - World Bank annual conference

KUWAIT: A view of Kuwait City skyline.

Kuwait improves in three indicators

World Bank Group issues 'The 2019 Doing Business Report'

KUWAIT: The 2019 Doing Business Report, released yesterday by the World Bank Group (WBG), notes that Kuwait's ease of doing business score improved during the past year from 61.4 to 62.2. The improvement was driven by Kuwait's improved score in Starting a Business and Protecting Minority Investor. Kuwait ranks at 97 on the ease of doing business.

In a span of one year, Kuwait improved in three indicators. Kuwait's achievement this year is strengthening minority investor protections by requiring an independent review of related-party transactions and clarifying ownership and control structures. Protecting Minority Investors indicator improved from 81 to 72. Kuwait also, reduced the time required to Start a Business from 38.5 to 35 days and it reduced the number of procedures involved with starting a business from 9.5 to 7. This progress was achieved through online registration and the establishment of a 'one stop shop' for all business registration procedures and the elimination of minimum capital requirement (percent of income per capita) from 8.5 to zero. Kuwait's rank improved in Getting Electricity from 97 to 95, reduced the number of days from 85 to 65 days.

The Government-wide effort to pursue these reforms was led by the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Khaled Al-Roudhan, and members of the Permanent Committee for Streamlining Business Environment & Enhancing Competitiveness and working groups set up for pursuing business environment reforms in the country.

"While Kuwait has made notable improvements, the reform process for improving the business environment in Kuwait is still in early stages and requires continuous cooperation between government agencies, private sector institutions, and civil society to implement the actions adopted in the National Agenda for Improving



Minister of Commerce and Industry, Khaled Al-Roudhan

the Business Environment," said Ghassan Alkhoja, World Bank Resident Representative for Kuwait.

The Doing Business project, launched in 2002, looks at domestic small and medium-size companies and measures the regulations applying to them through their life cycle. By gathering and analyzing comprehensive quantitative data to compare business regulation environments across economies and over time, Doing Business encourages economies to compete towards more efficient regulation; offers measurable benchmarks for reform; and serves as a resource for academics, journalists, private sector researchers and others interested in the business climate of each economy.

The media reports also said the government had invoked never-before-used powers to issue directions to the central bank governor on matters "of public interest", related to support for the financial sector and small companies. In a statement issued hours later through the finance ministry, the government said the RBI's independence was "an essential and accepted governance requirement". The government added that it would continue to carry out extensive consultations with the central bank to give its assessments on issues and suggest possible solutions.

But it was unclear if it had used powers for the first time under the RBI Act to give the bank instructions. The Economic Times newspaper reported the government had sent letters to Patel in recent weeks exercising those powers. Indian television channels CNBC-TV18 and ET Now both ran reports earlier in the day citing unnamed sources saying Patel might resign. The RBI declined to comment.



India says central bank independence 'essential' as row unnerves markets

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI India's government affirmed its belief in central bank autonomy yesterday, calling it "essential" in a bid to calm investors worried by a heated public row with the Reserve Bank of India. Indian stocks and bonds fell and the rupee weakened earlier in the day amid reports that RBI Governor Urjit Patel may consider resigning given the breakdown in relations.

The government's statement, however, struck a calmer tone, according to analysts. "The statement is ambiguous and does not fully clarify the issues at hand," said A Prasanna, chief economist at ICICI Securities Primary Dealership in Mumbai. "Still it does sound like the finance ministry is trying to dial down the temperature." The Economic Times report said that powers under Section 7 of the RBI Act had been invoked on issues ranging from providing liquidity for non-bank finance companies, to capital requirements for weak banks and lending to small- and medium-sized companies.

Indian markets clawed back some early losses after the statement. Benchmark stock indexes Sensex and Nifty both closed up more than 1.5 percent, while the rupee ended at 73.95 to the dollar, up from a session low of 74.14 but still weaker than its previous close of 73.68. The 10-year benchmark bond yield closed 2 basis points higher at 7.85 percent. Tensions between the

RBI and the government escalated after RBI Deputy Governor Viral Acharya said on Friday that undermining central bank independence could be "potentially catastrophic", indicating the authority was pushing back against government pressure to relax its policies and reduce its powers ahead of a general election due by May.

Investors are worried that a prolonged row between the government and the RBI could impact decision-making at a time when the world's sixth largest economy needs a steady hand. India's financial markets have been hit hard by a series of debt defaults by one of the largest infrastructure funding companies. That has led to a liquidity crunch in the entire non-banking finance sector. "We have a fairly fragile financial system, between the public sector banks and non-banking financial companies," said Dhananjay Sinha, head of institutional research at Emkay Global Financial Services.— Reuters

Business

Samsung Electronics enjoys record Q3 despite struggles

Solid demand for memory chips, but warning of tougher times ahead

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics yesterday posted record quarterly operating and net profits as solid demand for its memory chips cushioned the fallout from slowing smartphone sales-but warned of tougher times ahead. The South Korean tech giant-the world's top maker of smartphones and memory chips-has recovered from a series of setbacks, including a humiliating recall and the jailing of its de facto chief, to post a series of record-breaking numbers.

The profits have been driven by its mighty semiconductor unit, which provides chips for its own devices as well as competitors including Apple.

But that run was coming to an end, Samsung signalled in a statement, saying it expected "overall earnings across the company to decline" in the fourth quarter because of seasonal factors in the semiconductor market. Going into 2019, "earnings are forecast to be weak for the first quarter" for the same reason, it added, before business conditions improved.

For July-September, Samsung reported an operating profit of 17.6 trillion won (\$15.4 billion), up 21 percent from a year ago and an all-time higher for any quarter. Net profit also jumped 17.5 percent to 13.1 trillion won, also a record, while sales rose 5.5 percent to 65.4 trillion won. "It was in line with expectation but this will be the peak," Greg Roh of HMC Securities & Investment told AFP.

"I'm expecting a decrease in the fourth quarter across the company including semiconductors and smartphones to around 16.6 trillion won," he said. The figures-in line with estimates announced earlier this month-were "driven mainly by the continued strength of the memory (chip) business", Samsung said. The unit

dominates the global market and the firm has invested tens of billions of dollars each year to build and expand its factories.

Handset competition

The division reported an operating profit of 13.6 trillion won, the second consecutive quarterly record, offsetting sagging profits at the mobile phone division. Mobile handsets once contributed the lion's share of Samsung Electronics' overall sales and profit, but the unit reported a third-quarter operating profit of only 2.22 trillion won, down 33 percent year-on-year.

Margins were squeezed in the face of growing competition with archrival Apple for high-end devices, and Chinese firms churning out cheaper devices in the mid-and low-end segments, where Samsung said sales fell.

Shares in the firm ended up 0.12 percent in Seoul trading. Samsung Electronics is the flagship unit of the Samsung Group, by far the South's largest conglomerate and controlled by the founding Lee family.

It plans to invest a whopping 31.8 trillion won in production facilities this year, it said, mostly to build and expand chip production plants.

It also vowed to expand mobile sales in the long term by rolling out new technologies including much-anticipated foldable phones and artificial intelligence installed in its devices. Samsung's reputation suffered a major blow from a damaging worldwide recall of its flagship Galaxy Note 7 smartphone over exploding batteries two years ago, which cost the firm billions of dollars.

The group's heir, Lee Jae-yong, was also embroiled in a major corruption scandal that ousted South Korean



SEOUL: A woman walks past advertisements for the Samsung Galaxy Note9 at the company's showroom in Seoul yesterday. Samsung Electronics posted record quarterly operating and net profits for the July-September period yesterday. —AFP

president Park Geun-hye and spent nearly a year in jail for bribing her close confidante.

The 50-year-old-the son of the current, ailing

chairman Lee Kun-hee-was released from jail in February after several of his convictions were quashed on appeal. —AFP

Traders negative on pound since 2016 as Brexit risks mount

LONDON: Traders hold a more negative view on the outlook for the pound than at any time since shortly after the Brexit referendum in 2016, according to options markets, as fears grow that Britain is headed for a sudden, disruptive exit from the European Union.

Financial options knows as risk reversals - which measure demand for options that give investors the right to sell sterling at a future date versus options that give them the right to buy - show traders are increasingly concerned about the pound tumbling between December and April.

Fears of a no-deal Brexit have intensified as talks towards an agreement between London and Brussels over the terms of their divorce hit an impasse. Sterling neared 15-month lows under \$1.27 on Tuesday after Standard & Poor's warned Britain it was likely to endure a long recession with a no-deal Brexit. The currency recovered slightly yesterday.

Even if Britain can agree a deal, Prime Minister Theresa May will need to get parliamentary approval-far from guaranteed given her Conservative party lacks a majority and factions within her party oppose her approach. Any delay would leave Britain perilously close to its scheduled EU departure date of March 29. And a parliamentary rejection could plunge Britain into a sudden, disruptive exit, reaping havoc on the economy as the UK fell back on World Trade Organization rules for trade with the EU, its largest trading partner. Paul O'Connor, head of the UK multi-asset team at Janus Henderson, said any relief for the pound would be short-lived should the EU and Britain agree a deal at a special November summit. —Reuters

Rolling in euskos: French Basques' thriving currency

BAYONNE, France: Nipping out to buy a cup of coffee or some bread? These days in France's Basque region it may well be euskos, not euros, that you reach for in your wallet. The border region's local currency, which is equivalent to the euro, hit a milestone in October, hitting more than a million in circulation-a first in Europe.

This puts it ahead of the Bristol Pound, of which around 780,000 euros-worth are in circulation in the British city, and the 648,000 euros-worth of Chiemgauer used in Bavaria, Germany. Like dozens of other micro-currencies around the world, the eusko was created with the aim of boosting the local economy by encouraging custom for neighborhood businesses.

But in the Basque Country, a region with its own language and culture divided between France and Spain, having a separate currency has its own particular resonance. The region's decades-long separatist insurgency, which left more than 850 people dead, only officially ended this year when militant group ETA disbanded.

Even for those who have never backed independence, the Basque identity is a source of deep pride.

"If someone pays me in euskos, I'll speak to them in Basque-it creates a link, obviously," said Pantxika Heguiphal, a bakery worker in the French Basque city of Bayonne. Non-profit organization Euskal

Shopping at Venezuelan stores? Better take dollars

CARACAS: At a luxury hotel in Venezuela's capital, a small store with amply-stocked shelves offers an array of goods ranging from fine wines to imported baby formula, in stark contrast to the crisis-stricken nation's barren supermarkets. Another store, on the other side of the country in the sweltering western city of Maracaibo, sells American-branded breakfast cereals, soap and truffle salt.

In a country with annual inflation topping 400,000 percent, the stores' prices are the only ones that will remain steady. "Here we sell in dollars," said Lourdes Torres, manager of the Maracaibo store, as she attended customers waiting to pay with US legal tender.

"We accept cash as well as transfers from American banks," she said, adding that she also accepts payment in local bolivar currency with prices converted at the black market exchange rate that is nearly four times the official rate. The privately run "bodegones," reminiscent of the "dollar stores" Cuba's government ran in the 1990s, have steadily expanded in recent months as conducting business in the beleaguered bolivar currency becomes increasingly difficult. Their rise follows a decision by the government of President Nicolas Maduro to loosen a 15-year-old currency control system that made dollar-based commerce explicitly illegal.

It also coincides with the growing dollarization of a collapsing economy in which many professionals - from doctors and dentists to personal trainers - are now charging in hard currency to avoid having their earnings swallowed by hyperinflation. The clientele of the "bodegones" are primarily well-heeled Venezuelans with earnings in hard currency. But shoppers also include a growing number of residents who receive remittances from some two million Venezuelans who have emigrated to escape hunger and disease.

Reuters visited six newly established stores selling in dollars in Caracas and five other major cities, including the border city of San Cristobal and the once-bustling industrial hub of Valencia, now filled with empty factories. It was not immediately

Moneta-Monnaie, which manages the currency, invests euros exchanged for euskos in local projects, including environmental or farming schemes. Its head Dante Edme-Sanjurjo believes the currency's success comes from its "unifying capacity". But "this currency is not about Basque nationalism", he said. "We're mobilizing different actors and bringing them together." Xina Dulong, manager of a Bayonne bar, uses the eusko for daily personal outgoings, but also to pay most of her suppliers. "There's even one who I took on for the beer specifically because he used euskos," she said.

Cash or euskokart?

For a small annual fee, eusko users can open an account in the currency and obtain a debit card-or euskokart-which works in participating stores.

"Every month more than 40,000 euskos are credited to personal accounts," said Edme-Sanjurjo.

Some 600,000 of the million euskos in circulation are in digital form, and the rest in cash.

Since its launch in 2013, around 3,000 people have signed up to use the currency, along with 770 businesses, 16 towns and the Basque regional authority.

There's a built-in penalty for turning your back on the system, too: changing euskos back into euros comes with a five-percent commission fee. Edme-Sanjurjo hails the eusko as "the most developed" of around 40 similar local currencies in France.

"But what we're targeting now for 2021 is financial autonomy," he said.

Today, 50 percent of the overheads for running the currency are funded by subscription fees, but public subsidies make up the rest. A months-long legal tussle between authorities in Bayonne and the



BAYONNE: In this file photo a person pays with banknotes of the "Eusko" Basque currency in the French Basque country, in Bayonne, southwestern France. —AFP

French state has been a setback for those hoping to expand the currency.

Bayonne finally got the green light in June to make municipal payments such as councillors' allowances and subsidies to community groups in euskos, despite objections from the state.

So far two Bayonne councillors have asked to be paid in euskos.

"It's a real currency, not a joke," said Martine Bisaut, deputy mayor in charge of sustainable development, who has requested part of her allowance in euskos. "It has to have the same flexibility as the euro, so we really need to bring it to life in society," she said. —AFP

ABK launches 'ABK SecurePay' for Mastercard cardholders

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced the launch of 'ABK SecurePay,' a secure online shopping service for its Mastercard cardholders powered by 'SecureCode.' The launch of this technology is in line with the Bank's efforts to enhance consumer confidence and offer customers a more secure, convenient and speedy service.

Based on a 3-D secure protocol, the 'ABK SecurePay' technology verifies the authenticity of cardholders to participating merchants. It acts as an additional security layer and allows cardholders to choose a unique password through their card issuer, and use it to authenticate themselves when making a purchase. To benefit from the service, ABK Mastercard cardholders will be prompted to register and authenticate their cards when they shop online. Upon completion of the registration process, the information entered will be validated by ABK immediately and the customer will be prompted to create a password to activate the service. Customers are only required to register once per card to benefit from the service, and can then enjoy a more secure online shopping experience using their unique password created during the registration process.

ABK will continue to adopt and implement the latest technologies that present customers with a more secure and reliable banking service, as part of its overall 'Simpler Banking' strategy.

diately evident how many such stores have opened nor why the government was not requiring the stores to meet state price controls that are enforced at major supermarket chains.

The Information Ministry did not reply to a request for comment.

We have diapers

The "bodegones" often grab customers' attention with luxury products such as high-end chocolates or high-tech gadgets. But the most popular items are personal hygiene products like deodorant and toothpaste that are consistently available in greater variety than in supermarkets, according to store managers.

"People are always asking if we have diapers," said the manager of a weeks-old shop in eastern Caracas who, like most shop owners who spoke to Reuters, asked not to be identified. They worry that their operations fall within a legal gray area and could be targeted by authorities.

She said her supply of diapers, displayed next to bottles of champagne, always runs out within a week.

Dollarized prices were unthinkable under regulations created by late socialist leader Hugo Chavez. They put the government in charge of carrying out nearly all foreign currency transactions and setting prices for consumer goods. Maduro's government, which often blames shortages and inflation on unscrupulous businesses overcharging or hoarding products, in August lifted a prohibition on the free exchange of hard currency. But the government did not create a law saying such operations are allowed, which has left many shop owners trepidations about speaking to the media.

In September, as the new bodegones were starting to emerge, the government jailed 34 managers of well-known supermarkets on accusations of price-gouging. They were later released and immediately resigned, according to industry sources. Maria Uzcategui of commerce association Consecmercio said stores pricing goods in dollars do so "at their own risk," while the government has turned a blind eye and gone after big-name grocery chains for political effect. "The arrests are a show to blame retailers for the country's economic situation," Uzcategui said. "That is why they single out the large chains, and not small businesses or these new 'bodegones.'" Prices at the dollar stores are exorbitant for those living on a bolivar-based salaries. The minimum wage is around \$10 per month, and at least 80 percent of the population skips at least one meal per day, according to a quality of life study known as Encovi carried out by private universities. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.380133	0.398033
Czech Koruna	0.005322	0.014622
Danish Krone	0.042233	0.047233
Euro	0.337971	0.351671
Georgian Lari	0.111392	0.111392
Hungarian Forint	0.001162	
Norwegian Krone	0.032155	0.037355
Romanian Leu	0.057092	0.073942
Russian Ruble	0.004633	0.004633
Slovakia	0.009118	0.019118
Swedish Krona	0.029147	0.034147
Swiss Franc	0.296572	0.307572
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.207546	0.219546
New Zealand Dollar	0.193155	0.202655
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.226695	0.235695
US Dollars	0.300700	0.306000
US Dollars Mint	0.302000	0.306000
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002982	0.003783
Chinese Yuan	0.042318	0.045818
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036759	0.039509
Indian Rupee	0.003574	0.004346
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000016	0.000022
Japanese Yen	0.002604	0.002784
Korean Won	0.000257	0.000272
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069454	0.075454
Nepalese Rupee	0.002583	0.002923
Pakistan Rupee	0.001692	0.002462
Philippine Peso	0.005494	0.005794
Singapore Dollar	0.214456	0.224456
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001449	0.002029
Taiwan	0.009727	0.009907
Thai Baht	0.008905	0.009455
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.793917	0.810417
Egyptian Pound	0.014332	0.020050
Iranian Rial	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000213	0.000273
Jordanian Dinar	0.425606	0.434606
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022557	0.046557
Omani Rial	0.785370	0.791050
Qatar Riyal	0.079431	0.084371
Saudi Riyal	0.080193	0.081493
Syrian Pound	0.001292	0.001512
Tunisian Dinar	0.101889	0.109889
Turkish Lira	0.049735	0.061235
UAE Dirhams	0.081561	0.083261
Yemeni Rial	0.000991	0.001071

Business

Private payrolls rise in October; wages surge in third quarter

Job growth accelerates after Hurricane

WASHINGTON: US private sector payrolls increased by the most in eight months in October, suggesting overall job growth accelerated this month after Hurricane Florence weighed on restaurant and retail employment in September. The strong jobs market is gradually putting upward pressure on compensation, with other data yesterday showing a solid increase in labor costs in the third quarter.

The ADP national employment report showed private sector employment rose by 227,000 jobs last month, beating economists' expectations for an increase of 189,000. September's payrolls count was revised down to 218,000 from 230,000. The ADP report is jointly produced with Moody's Analytics. It was published ahead of the release of the government's more comprehensive October employment report tomorrow. According to a Reuters survey of economists, nonfarm payrolls probably rebounded by 190,000 jobs in October after Florence depressed restaurant and retail payrolls in September. Payrolls increased by 134,000 in September, the fewest in a year. The unemployment rate is forecast unchanged at a near 49-year low of 3.7 percent in October.

The dollar was little changed against a basket of currencies after the data, while U.S. Treasury yields rose to session highs. Separately, the Labor Department's Employment Cost Index showed wages and salaries, which account for 70 percent of employment costs, jumped 0.9 percent in the third quarter after climbing 0.5 percent in the prior period.

That pushed the annual increase in wages and salaries to 2.9 percent, the biggest gain since

September 2008, from 2.8 percent in the year to June. Wage growth was boosted by a jump in transportation and warehousing, likely reflecting a shortage of truck drivers. There were also gains on other industries, including information, healthcare and leisure and hospitality. The jobs market is viewed as being close to or at full employment. There are a record 7.1 million job openings in the economy.

The surge in wages lifted the Employment Cost Index, the broadest measure of labor costs, which increased 0.8 percent in the third quarter after rising 0.6 percent in the second quarter. The ECI is widely viewed by policymakers and economists as one of the better measures of labor market slack. It is also considered a better predictor of core inflation. The Federal Reserve increased interest rates in September for the third time this year and removed a reference to monetary policy remaining "accommodative" from its policy statement. The US central bank is expected to raise rates again in December. Private sector wages and salaries rose 0.8 percent in the third quarter after increasing 0.6 percent in the prior period. They were up 3.1 percent in the 12 months through September, the biggest increase since the second quarter of 2008. That followed a 2.9 percent gain in the year to June.

State and local government wages increased 0.9 percent after advancing 0.5 percent in the second quarter. Benefits for all workers increased 0.4 percent in the July-September quarter after rising 0.9 percent in the second quarter. They were up 2.6 percent in the 12 months through September after rising 2.9 percent in the year to June. — Reuters



A sign advertises open jobs at an Embassy Suites hotel in Waltham, Massachusetts, US. — Reuters

Facebook shares roller-coaster as it rides change

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook announced plans on Tuesday to adapt to users sharing more privately as the leading social network pours money into an ongoing battle with "bad actors" out to misuse its service.

Silicon Valley-based Facebook reported that its quarterly profit climbed in the recently ended quarter, but the social network-mired in a spate of controversies-gained fewer users than analysts had expected. Profit beat Wall Street expectations by jumping nine percent to \$5.14 billion on revenue that leaped 33 percent to \$13.7 billion in the quarter that ended September 30.

Facebook shares went for a rollercoaster ride in after-market trades as executives revealed quarterly earnings figures along with challenges and opportunities seen in shifting trends in user behavior.

Shares jumped, dove and then rose anew before staying on higher ground, up 3.1 percent to \$150.80, on the Nasdaq early in the evening in New York. "Right now, the market is really nervous and it doesn't take much to move the stock," said analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group.

"As long as they are meeting or exceeding on the bottom line (profit) they will be fine."

The number of people who used Facebook monthly rose 10 percent to 2.27 billion, but analysts had expected that figure to be slightly higher. Facebook has been trying to fend off concerns about how well it protects user data and defends against use of the site to spread misinformation aimed at swaying elections.

Controversies that have battered Facebook since the 2016 presidential election in the US have raised questions over whether co-founder Mark Zuckerberg should keep his post as chief executive.

"Our community and business continue to grow quickly, and now more than two billion people use at least one of our services every day," Zuckerberg said in an earnings call, including WhatsApp, Instagram and Messenger in the count. "We're building the best services for private messaging and stories, and there are huge opportunities ahead in video and commerce as well."

Facebook users are shifting fast to sharing more privately with messages or a "Stories" feature for creating short photo or video collections, instead of posting in their main feeds, according to Zuckerberg.

While Facebook has made an art of monetizing ads in newsfeeds, it has yet to optimize making money from messages and stories. "This is one of those situations where the community growth we are seeing is outpacing the progress we made on developing ads in that space," Zuckerberg said of Stories.

"I think we will get there in time, and the opportunity will be bigger, but I can't tell you what that time frame will look like." Facebook is also seeing a rapid rise in viewing videos, which also generate less ad money per minute than newsfeeds.

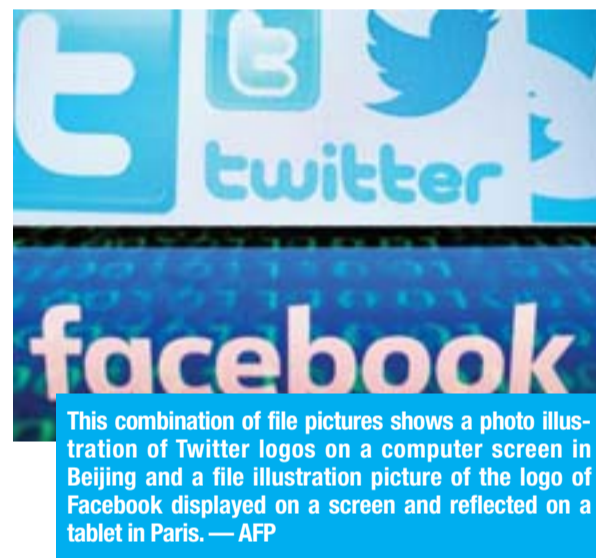
Big spender

Zuckerberg said he expected 2019 to be "another year of significant investment" for Facebook, and executives projected revenue growth would slow. Facebook finished the quarter with 33,606 employees in a 45 increase percent over the number of workers it had the same time last year. Just weeks ago, Facebook activated a "war room" as a nerve center to halt misinformation and manipulation of the social network by foreign actors trying to influence elections.

The war room at the company's Silicon Valley headquarters is part of stepped up security that will include doubling the security team to 20,000 employees. "The upcoming election will be a real test of the protections we put in place," Zuckerberg said on an earnings call.

"We will see all the good and bad humanity can do."

Last week, Facebook said it had taken down accounts linked to an Iranian effort to influence US and British politics with messages about charged topics such as immigration and race relations. The social network identified 82 pages, groups and accounts that originated in Iran and violated policy on coordinated "inauthentic" behavior, according to cybersecurity policy head Nathaniel Gleicher.



This combination of file pictures shows a photo illustration of Twitter logos on a computer screen in Beijing and a file illustration picture of the logo of Facebook displayed on a screen and reflected on a tablet in Paris. — AFP

Gleicher said there was overlap with accounts taken down earlier this year and linked to Iran state media, but the identity of the culprits had yet to be determined. Spending on security and election-related defenses were part of the reason overall costs and expenses reported in the quarter rose 53 percent to \$7.95 billion from \$5.2 billion a year earlier. Zuckerberg said Facebook is up against sophisticated adversaries who continue to evolve.

"These aren't problems you fix, they are problems you manage," Zuckerberg said of the challenge. "There is no silver bullet." In what could wind up costing Facebook more money, British finance minister Philip Hammond said he planned to introduce a digital services tax aimed at tech giants from 2020, responding to public outrage over low tax payments by US tech giants. — AFP

German firms should cut dependence on China: Group

BERLIN: German firms should cut their dependence on the Chinese market, a leading industry group says in a strategy paper that underscores rising concern over Beijing's state-driven economic model, according to a draft seen by Reuters. The 25-page China position paper from the Federation of German Industries (BDI), due to be published in January, argues that a long-promised opening of the Chinese market is unlikely to take place and voices concern about rising Communist party control over society and the economy.

Entitled "Partner and Systemic Competitor - How to cope with China's state-driven economic model?", the paper makes clear that firms cannot afford to turn their backs on China.

But, in an unusual step, it urges them to reassess their presence there, while offering numerous recommendations for the German government and European Union.

The BDI is Germany's main business lobby group and while its proposals do not always translate directly into policy, they carry significant weight. "Despite the attractiveness of the Chinese market, it will be increasingly important for companies to closely examine the risks of their engagement in China and to minimise their dependence by diversifying supply chains, production sites and sales markets," the draft reads. It is currently being vetted by BDI members and the text could change before publication.

Bilateral trade between Germany and China hit a record 188 billion euros last year. And big German firms, notably carmakers like Volkswagen, Daimler and BMW, depend heavily on the fast-growing Chinese market.

While their presence there was once seen as a strength, it is now unsettling German politicians and industry as Beijing asserts control over the economy under President Xi Jinping.

Scepticism is growing despite recent steps by China to open up its economy, including allowing Germany's BASF to invest in a major chemical site and BMW to take control of its main joint venture in China, a first for a foreign carmaker. Another worry is the escalating trade conflict between the United States and China, which risks putting Germany - and Europe - in the awkward position of having to choose between its top two economic partners.

The paper cites a range of problems for German firms operating in China, from forced technology transfer and failures to protect intellectual property to arbitrary customs decisions and unequal access to licenses and financing. It calls for closer coordination on China strategy within the German government and between the EU and like-minded partners, led by the United States.

It also argues for a new EU instrument to prevent state-subsidized takeovers, including requiring Chinese firms to present accounts based on internationally agreed standards when acquiring European firms so their ownership structures and financing can be vetted. The BDI calls on the EU to develop its own ambitious industrial strategy for 2030, an echo of Beijing's "Made in China 2025" plan, which prioritizes development of key industry sectors, from robotics and aerospace to clean-energy cars. It argues for a bigger EU budget to support investments in infrastructure, education and innovation. — Reuters

UK PM May to meet executives as fears over no-deal Brexit grow

LONDON: Prime Minister Theresa May met about 120 business leaders and major investors yesterday as concerns mount about the chance that Britain will leave the world's biggest trading bloc without a deal.

May and finance minister Philip Hammond are due to meet executives to discuss Brexit and this week's annual budget, which included spending pledges and higher taxes on technology firms. They will both make statements and then take questions.

The government has so far not said where the meeting is taking place or who will be attending.

With five months to secure a deal before Britain is due to leave the European Union, business leaders are demanding certainty over the kind of trade terms the divorce will deliver. In particular, they want reassurances that there will be a 21-month transition period after Britain is due to leave the bloc.

If Britain and the European Union fail to strike a withdrawal agreement, there will be no formal transition period to cushion the impact of Brexit. The Brexit negotiations are currently stalled over a disagreement on a fallback plan to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland, former focal point for sectarian tensions, if a future trading relationship is not in place in time.

The latest meeting with business leaders follows a conference call the prime minister held with a similar-sized group of business leaders earlier this month.

Earlier this week in the budget, the government announced an end to Britain's long spending squeeze with tax cuts for households and a new tax on the revenues of multinational technology companies. — Reuters



DALLAS FORT WORTH: An Airbus 380 from the Australian airline Qantas is seen on the tarmac of Dallas Fort Worth airport (DFW). — AFP

Airbus says Q3 net profit more than triples to 957m euros

PARIS: European aerospace giant Airbus reported yesterday a third quarter net profit of 957 million euros (\$1.1 billion), more than triple the 2017 performance. The company, which rivals Boeing of the US, said it was maintaining its forecast for deliveries of 800 commercial

aircraft this year but added that there was still much to do to reach that target.

On the key, much-delayed and over-budget military A400M program, Airbus said there had been "tangible progress" on delivery but risks remained. For the nine months to September, net profit rose four percent from the same period a year earlier to 1.45 billion euros.

The results reflected the "good performance" of the key A350 long-haul twin-jet, Airbus head Tom Enders said. Of the 800 delivery aircraft, 18 are the A220 model, the latest member of the Airbus family of single-aisle jets after the company took over the aircraft from Bombardier.

Enders said the main priority continued to be delivery of commercial aircraft and boosting output of the workhorse A320neo, which has been held back by engine supply problems. — AFP

Business

Markaz 'Best Investment Bank in Kuwait for 2018'

Global Finance recognition for 7th time

KUWAIT: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" announced winning the "Best Investment Bank in Kuwait for 2018" award for the seventh time in eight years by Global Finance magazine, a specialized financed and investment magazine.

Global Finance named Markaz as "Best Investment Bank in Kuwait" based on a set of criteria used by their editors and industry experts, including market share, number and size of deals, service and advice, structuring capabilities, distribution network, efforts to address market conditions, innovation, pricing, after-market performance of underwritings and market reputation.

In light of this achievement, Ali Hassan Khalil, Chief Operating Officer at Markaz, stated: "Naming Markaz as the 'Best Investment Bank in Kuwait 2018' by Global Finance Magazine affirms their trust in the quality of our investment banking services in the areas of advisory serv-

ices related to mergers and acquisitions, capital restructuring and disposition, in addition to equity and debt issuances, listing advisory and other advisory services."

Khalil added: "This award is the result of Markaz completing several successful transactions across a wide number of investment banking activities and confirm our relentless efforts, continuous hard work and in-depth understanding of our clients' needs and investment requirements. We believe that each client has a unique requirement, for which a consultative approach is adopted to formulate and advise optimal solutions. Markaz team is committed to meeting these needs through specialized expertise and flexibility in adapting to market variables in order to maximize value for our clients."

Khalil noted: "Since 1997, Markaz has successfully executed over \$4.03 billion (as of 30 June 2018) of debt and equity mandates in the region across a wide num-

ber of activities, including M&A transactions, restructurings, and general advisory transactions. Our achievements record over more than 40 years enforces our clients' trust in our investment banking services, and encourages our dedicated investment banking team to continue providing innovative solutions while following prudent investment policies."

Markaz's performance continues to attract recognition from experts in the region's financial industry. Markaz was recognized twice in 2017 as "Best Investment Bank in Kuwait" by Global Finance and EMEA Finance. Markaz was also named "Best Asset Manager in 2017" by EMEA Finance. Markaz received these awards for its professional skills in executing many successful transactions for its clients in the fields of credit markets, equities, merge and acquisitions along with offering financial consultancy services.



Ali Khalil

NBK appoints Musaad Al-Sudairy as CEO of NBK Wealth Management

KUWAIT: The Board of NBK Wealth Management has announced the appointment of Musaad Al-Sudairy as Chief Executive Officer of NBK Wealth Management, a subsidiary of NBK Group.

"We are delighted that Musaad has been appointed CEO of NBK Wealth Management," said Mr. Tariq bin Mutlaq Al-Mutlaq, Chairman of NBK Wealth Management. "He joined our team in April 2018 and has already been instrumental in leading the launch of NBK Wealth Management's activities in the Saudi market. We confidently look forward to reaping the benefits of his wealth of expertise and proven track record in the Kingdom's banking and investment sector."

Last year, NBK Wealth Management received approval from the Capital Market Authority of Saudi Arabia (CMA) to operate in the local securities sector after it successfully fulfilled all regulatory requirements. The company is now licensed to offer investment funds management, discretionary portfolios management, deal arranging, advisory services, and custody arrangements.

"I am honored to be at the helm of NBK Wealth Management as we embark on our journey in the Saudi market with a commitment to utilizing the unique technical and financial capabilities of our dedicated professional team of to offer our customers a wide array of superior services and unique opportunities," said CEO Al-Sudairy. "We consider Saudi Arabia as a highly promising growth market and a key element in our strategic expansion plan aimed at increasing our network to three branches in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam."

Al-Sudairy was a principal at Investcorp where he was covering the Riyadh market and responsible for placement and managing key relationships. Prior to Investcorp, He was heading the investment banking in Audi Capital after leading a team in the Wealth Management side. Al-Sudairy started his career in SABB handling corporate relationships in the corporate banking department where he progressed from an Assistant RM to an Acting Team Leader. Musaad Al-Sudairy holds a Bachelor's degree in Finance from King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals and an MBA from Manchester Business School.

NBK Group, the leading financial institution in the region, fully supports NBK Wealth Management in both the local and regional markets, with a solid structure and systematic investment methodology that enables NBK Wealth Management to develop value added solutions that constantly deliver fully fledged services to its customers.

It is worth mentioning that NBK continues to enjoy collectively one of the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and its disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. NBK was also named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for thirteen consecutive times and was awarded as the Best Bank in Kuwait in 2017 by the Banker, Euromoney and Global Finance.

NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including New York, Europe, Singapore and China; in addition to its presence in MENA.



Health assurance hospitals company DHAMAN continues recruitment steps

KUWAIT: Health Assurance Hospitals Company DHAMAN announced the implementation of its new phase to complete the human resources system and recruitment of a number of medical and administrative staff to meet its future needs. This coincides with the operation of Primary Healthcare Centers of DHAMAN this year, which is in charge of the treatment of residents in Kuwait. DHAMAN has ended its preparations and completed all the technical, administrative and human resources requirements and has also completed a ratio of employment needs as a start point for the operation of the first phase of the project which covers the governorates of Kuwait, in coordination with the Ministry of Health.

In completion of the program of employment in the company, the nomination for medical posts which were announced are subject to a number of precise professional criteria. In this respect, DataFlow Group provides verification of documents' authenticity (PSV) and investigates information and compliance examination processes and assists institutions and companies to limit risks of forgery and false professional practices in the medical sector. DataFlow investigates and explores authenticity of applicants' degrees and cer-

NBK reveals winner of KD 125,000 prize in Al-Jawhara's monthly draw

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait announced the winner of KD 125,000 in the monthly Al-Jawhara draw for the month of October 2018. The name of the winner, minor Hamad Hammad Al-Shebeeb, was announced live on FM 88.8 Kuwait Pulse, in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as well as representatives from the National Bank of Kuwait.

KFH-Group sponsors AAOIFI - World Bank 13th annual conference

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced its sponsorship of the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions AAOIFI - World Bank 13th Annual Conference under the "Role of Standardization in the Future of Islamic Finance", held on the 23rd and 24th of October, 2018 at the Diplomat Hotel in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Participants at the conference comprised of sharia scholars and senior representatives from central banks, regulatory authorities, financial institutions, accounting and auditing firms, legal firms, universities, higher learning institutions and media. KFH Group sponsorship of the annual conference is part of the Bank's strategy for digital banking and the application of digital transformation within the Islamic banking industry in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

"In light of this 'Jazeel', the first digital platform of its kind allowing users to open bank accounts and conduct banking transactions anytime, anywhere was launched. KFH looks forward to continually sponsoring this prestigious event and ensuring that we achieve our objectives of enhancing digital banking services", he added.

KFH participated in a panel discussion entitled 'The Rise of Digital Banks - Opportunities and Challenges' during which the impact of digital banking on the Islamic financial industry was discussed in terms of regulatory procedures, business models, human resources and operational efficiency. The panel discussion also covered the extent to which the international financial industry is ready to face digital transformation, in addition to how legitimate requirements stand in the way of the application of digital banking. The link between standards and digital transformations and the opportunities offered by Islamic finance for digital banking and important lessons learned in the field of digital banking were also discussed. The conference covered several vital topics related to the future of the Islamic financial industry: 'Learning from Wisdom', 'Collaboration between Islamic



tificates of experience to medical positions to ensure their eligibility for such positions.

In addition, the candidates would generally go through a number of professional interviews and sometimes some technical tests to ensure recruiting the staff that can achieve the plans and the strategies of the plans which aim at creating a typical transformation in the healthcare sector as it is considered

Since 2012, NBK has rewarded loyal customers with prizes worth a total of up to KD 2,200,000 annually through its weekly, monthly and quarterly Al-Jawhara draws.

"We continue to reward our Al-Jawhara account customers in our weekly, monthly and quarterly draws. Customers automatically enter the draws by simply opening an Al-Jawhara account with an opening balance of KD 400, they can open the account by visiting their nearest NBK branch or through NBK's Online and Mobile Banking services," said Suresh Varadarajan, Head of Liabilities and Insurance, Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "Customers can also double their chances of winning when they do not withdraw or transfer amounts from their account during the required period."

Varadarajan added: "In addition to the draws, Al-Jawhara account gives customers access to

one of the main projects in Kuwait's national development plan.

Application for the post is carried out through the online site of the company www.dhaman.co or through the direct recruitment page careers.dhaman.co, where the applicant can browse the vacancies and the application terms, experience and include his resume and also follow the status of his or her application.

many features and benefits, it is also a great way of saving. With this unique and rewarding account, we ensure that our customers are enjoying every step of their banking experience."

Benefits of Al-Jawhara account include a free Visa debit card with access to more than 650,000 ATM machines around the world, and access to NBK Online and mobile Banking services for viewing and managing the account wherever the customer is in the world. Customers have 24 hours, seven days a week access to NBK's call center and SMS service by request.



Suresh Varadarajan



Members of KFH Group during the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions AAOIFI - World Bank 13th Annual Conference.



Dr. Sayyed Mohammad Al-Sayyed Abdul Razzaq Al-Tabtaba with KFH-Bahrain officials



Finance Infrastructure Institutions: Current Status and the Way Forward', 'Islamic Finance Cryptocurrencies-Governing and Regulating Cryptocurrencies', 'The Rise of Digital Banking- Opportunities and Challenges', 'Islamic Finance Landscape in the Next 30 Years, and 'Impact of VAT on the Islamic Finance Industry'.

Established in 1991 and based in Bahrain, AAOIFI is the leading international not-for-profit organization primarily responsible for the development and issuance of standards for the global Islamic finance industry. The body

has issued a total of 100 standards in the areas of sharia, accounting, auditing, ethics and governance for international Islamic finance. It is supported by a number of institutional members, including central banks and regulatory authorities, financial institutions, accounting and auditing firms, and legal firms, from over 45 countries. Its standards are currently followed by all the leading Islamic financial institutions across the world and have introduced a progressive degree of harmonization of international Islamic finance practices.

What's On

Indian Embassy hosts cultural event to honor Sushma Swaraj



By Sajeev K Peter

The Indian Embassy Kuwait hosted a cultural program on Tuesday evening at the Indian Embassy in honor of India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj who arrived in Kuwait on a two-day official visit. The minister interacted with the Indian community members who gathered at the embassy and sought to allay their apprehensions relating to their job security and welfare concerns.

"Meeting the Indian diaspora while travelling abroad is quite a heartening experience for me. I feel that my journey will be incomplete without meeting the Indian community wherever I visit," Swaraj said in her address. Congratulating the Ambassador Jeeva Sagar, she said, "hosting this wonderful cultural program has provided me an opportunity to meet India in Kuwait."

Sparing no words in praising the young singer Malini Mahadevan, the visiting dignitary said, "It was an amazing performance. Despite being a school-going girl, she exuded self-confidence like a mature singer," she said. The musical program was followed by a Kathak recital

by Manju Sibi, wife of Indian Embassy Second Secretary Sibi USA disciple of Kathak exponent Pandit Birju Maharaj, she gave a splendid performance.

The well-known Kuwaiti singer Mubarak Al-Rashed, who is known for his specialization in singing the numbers of late Bollywood singer Kishore Kumar also made an appearance. To his surprise, Swaraj applauded Mubarak saying that the singer could sing Bollywood's two most difficult songs at amazing ease and splendor.

On her request, the Kuwaiti singer came back on the dais and sang the first two lines of 'Vaishnava Jana To' one of the most popular Indian bhajans, written in the 15th century by the poet Narsinh Mehta in the Gujarati language. "The bhajan has special relevance today as we are celebrating 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi," she said. The cultural program came to an end with a dazzling Dandiya dance performance by the students of India Educational School (IES), Abbassiya. Earlier, paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, the minister garlanded his statue in the forecourt of the Indian Embassy. The minister successfully concluded her two-day visit to Kuwait yesterday.



KCST raises awareness for breast cancer

Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST) held a Breast Cancer awareness event in October with the participation of several clubs at the university to raise awareness about the need for early detection, and ways to avoid bad habits.

Prof. Khalid Al-Begain, President of Kuwait College of Science and Technology, Dr Basma Abdullah Al-Saadoun, and Oncologist Zainab Wahidi, received from the Kuwait Cancer Center a speech about the method of detection at the center, which supports all citizens free of charge. Dr Basma Al Saadoun addressed all students and academic and administrative staff on ways to prevent cancer and avoid bad habits and how to maintain good health. She also stressed the importance of educating the attendees to healthy habits and methods of treatment.

The success of the event is the result of the social club's cooperation with the administration of our student Sara Al Harbi and the members of the club: Ms. Mariam Al-Adwani, Sharifa Al-Mohsen, Latifa Al-Mohsen, Lulwa Al-Bashir, Lulwa and Jasmine Bourazek; and with the English Department under the supervision of Prof. HodaBuaisha, and a group of students interested in attending the event: Hessa Al-Adwani, Dana Al-Enezi, Jumana Al-Rashidi, Fatima Al-Mutairi, Madawi Al-Khalidi.

All of them have tried to regulate the effectiveness by preparing encouragement phrases about the importance of early detection and self-discovery methods. They also prepared plates to write expressions dedicated to all cancer fighters, ensuring that distributions are free of sugars, and harmful sweets to encourage that eating bad habits is one of the most important catalysts for cancer, and shared the success stories of many people who had cancer.

Prof HodaBoaisha in the Department of English introduced this event as part of her preparatory program for students to write a report on breast cancer, its symptoms, treatment methods, and prevention. She stressed the need to participate in the effectiveness to increase the skill of speaking, presentation,



and communication in English; which encouraged students to answer all questions raised. Professor Sally Hassroni, Professor of Biology at the University, supervised the medical information mentioned in the research provided by the students, and provided them with the correct information sources and

medical brochures.

All members of the university students, academic staff and administrative wore pink ribbons, which is the universal symbol of breast cancer to support all wounded and combatants to raise awareness and educate all students to raise awareness and prevention."

INJAZ innovates ICSK

INJAZ Kuwait, a member of JA worldwide, initiated the Innovation Camp in ICSK Senior, on Wednesday 24th Oct, 2018. The INJAZ team, esteemed guests and enthusiastic audience were welcomed by Mrs Ruksana, followed by an inspiring and ice breaking address by Senior Administrator & Principal, Dr V Binumon.

Video and slide presentations on entrepreneurial aspects like failures, start-ups, risks, etc were shared for the young budding entrepreneurs. The entire batch of 12th Commerce was randomly split into nine uniformly sized groups, each headed by a mentor. Each group had to identify a problem encountered in their daily

life and devise a flexible solution to it. Following a short break, a Business Challenge was introduced and teams were asked to challenge and brainstorm potential business opportunities.

Through flipchart presentations and on stage demonstrations, teams exhibited their highly innovative and creative business plans. A judging panel from the INJAZ team evaluated all the nine teams with respect to team work, creativity, feasibility of idea and communicative skills. Gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded to the three prize winning groups in addition to participation certificates to the entire commerce batch.

A vote of thankfulness and gratitude was delivered by Mr Atiq Dhanse, accompanied by gifting of 'Thank you' cards to the entire INJAZ team. The INJAZ Innovative Camp wrapped up with a memorable group photo session, leaving behind promises for more entrepreneurial skill development programs in the near future.

Happy Birthday!

Happy birthday to our dear beloved Sabdhana. Our entire family wishes you and hope you have many joyous years ahead.



Technology

Dell partners with Bravado Gaming to build UAE's first-ever esports team

Dell study reports the gaming community worldwide is expected to grow

DUBAI: Dell Gaming has teamed up with Bravado Gaming to find, nurture and support the next generation UAE esports team. In addition, the two companies came together to participate at Games Con 2018 in Abu Dhabi where they hosted the Fortnite Challenge at Games Con 2018 in Abu Dhabi giving away hefty rewards and making this gaming event the ultimate battleground. The interactive and popular activation at the industry event earned Dell Gaming the 'Best Activation' award at the Games Con Annual Exhibitor Awards 2018.

Based in South Africa, Bravado Gaming is Africa's premiere multi-gaming organization and serves home to some of the best local and international competitive gamers (esports) while simultaneously building a lifestyle, gaming brand. It is their aim to help the progression of esports both locally and internationally by raising levels of competition and increasing public involvement and developing corporate opportunities. Post a thorough assessment, Dell Gaming and Bravado Gaming, together will identify and rank pro gamers from the Middle East according to their experience and performance at gaming engagements. These top ranking gamers will then proceed to be a part of UAE's first esports team.

The gaming industry has changed at an exponential rate over the years. This year, Goldman Sachs estimated that by 2022 the esports audience will reach 276 million worldwide, outpacing some major league sports audiences. However, esports in the Middle East remains largely untapped and is relatively in its infancy in comparison to mainstream sports. Earlier this year, Dell Gaming aimed to bridge this gap with Ready to Game ME, a one-stop portal that fosters positive interactions among gamers of all levels in the region.

Hone beneficial skills

This year Dell also commissioned a new global study to better understand gaming habits, attitudes and the wider gaming community. The survey results confirm that today's gamer is not the stereotypical teen loner playing in his parents' basement. She's a co-worker with two kids, the guy next to you at the gym, a fellow volunteer - and most commonly, a spouse, sibling or friend. But what they all have in common is

that they proudly call themselves a "gamer." Once a niche hobby, explored primarily by teenage boys and serviced by a handful of companies, the gaming market is expected to grow at a 6% compounded annual growth rate globally through 2019 as per the study.

Gaming isn't just playtime - it can also hone beneficial skills. Close to four out of ten survey respondents of the study said that, because of gaming, they are more strategic thinkers (39%). Some even perceive that their teamwork (27%) and leadership (18%) skills have improved. The more advanced the gamer, the more likely they are to report skill development. On the same note, online multiplayer gaming also involves social and technological risks. Harassment, bullying, cheating in-game, data privacy, information sharing and unsecure advertisements and pop-ups are the by-products of unsafe online gaming. As part of the community, Dell Gaming wants to ensure the regional gaming environments are healthier, accepting and more tolerant.

Raghav Koorichh, Category & Brand Manager- META, CEE & Russia at Dell said "Gaming is no longer a niche hobby, but a lifestyle, especially when it comes to esports. Games Con 2018 was the ideal platform for us to not only increase the level of awareness around esports in the Middle East, but as pioneers in PC gaming, also to showcase the best gaming solutions possible. This year Dell hosted the Fortnite Challenge, wherein participants had the opportunity to play with the best of machines, in addition to announcing our search for UAE's esports team. This reflects our commitment to increase our efforts in building the regional esports community. Having said that, it also becomes our responsibility to ensure the gaming community thrives while upholding values of online safety. This is because we are gamers ourselves, and that is in everything we do". At Games Con 2018, gamers had the opportunity to display their gaming skills with superior gaming products by Dell Gaming including:

ALIENWARE AURORA

As a mid-tower desktop, Aurora is a proven powerhouse for gaming professionals who need significant performance and



upgradability. The new Aurora is ideal for VR, 4K gaming and even up to 12K gaming with its highest-end graphics options.

ALIENWARE AREA-51

Built for gaming enthusiasts wanting superior gameplay and unstoppable performance for the latest VR, 4k or 8k games and streaming, the Area-51 is a powerful beast with up to 18-core Intel(r) processors.

DELL G3 and G5 gaming

These game-ready laptops are equipped with powerful NVIDIA GeForce GTX 10-Series GPUs, 8th Gen Intel(r) Core processors, thermal management solutions, intelligent content prioritization software, anti-glare IPS panels, and other complimentary features intended to get gamers fully immersed into their games.

Alamana Industries and Four Films expand digital print in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Four Films Printing Group has added Xerox's iGen 5 Press to its fleet of printing presses catering to Kuwaiti customers. The investment in the new press is a result of its successful experience with the preceding model- Xerox iGen 4. Four Films will now be able to offer customers in Kuwait a complete web-to-print solution while simultaneously expanding their market presence regionally.

"The iGen 5 gives Four Films a competitive advantage in Kuwaiti market and allows them to expand their customer base, thanks to increased capabilities enabling a wider variety of jobs. Our customers recognize the productivity and potential return on investment that iGen5 presents. The more time you can spend printing without setup, manual calibration, and rework interruptions, the more profitable you become," says Ayman Mattar, general manager at Alamana Industries that represents Xerox in Kuwait.

"Our digital printing journey started with Xerox equipment from the time we adopted Xerox DocuColor2060 in year 2002, followed by the iGen 4 and now iGen 5 presses. We were the first to introduce digital printing in the Kuwait market and it wouldn't have been possible without innovative solutions developed by Xerox. We are very excited about transitioning our clients from traditional printing to the fast turnaround job with high-quality outputs that the new press offers," comments David



Moujaes, managing director and partner at Four Films Printing Group.

The Xerox(r) iGen(r) 5 Press unites all the elements of the iGen(r) family in a single, configurable platform so printers can choose the exact configuration they need to succeed. Press speed, number of colors, feeding, and finishing - all are integrated into an end-to-end solution as unique as the challenges and opportunities they and their customers face every day. In addition to the state-of-art digital printing capabilities, Four Films will enjoy business development consultancy provided by Xerox that will allow them to reach their highest business potential.

"New options with increased color gamut and printing on heavyweight media will strengthen our positioning and competitiveness within the packaging business. The new press will also unlock new production capabilities by adding a fifth color option

and printing in orange, green, blue, white and clear. Our clients are looking to stand out with accurate branding colors, varied finished sizes, and specially embellishment options," added Moujaes.

The opportunity for digital print gets significantly more compelling when embellishment is added to the picture. Incorporating a fifth print station into Xerox(r) iGen(r) 5 Press enables Xerox's customers to hit more PANTONE(r) colors or apply a variety of special effects - all in-line - so they can meet growing demands.

The Xerox(r) iGen(r) 5 is the most productive digital press on the market, thanks to unprecedented levels of automation and intelligence built into the press from end-to-end. This automation radically reduces setup, improves image quality, reduces labor costs, and drives more profitable turnaround times. The impact is immediate and dramatic both in a print shop and on the business' bottom line.

Kuwaiti baby gets treatment for rare eye condition

LONDON: A Kuwaiti mother has expressed her joy and relief about her premature baby daughter, Talia, being treated for a rare eye condition, congenital coloboma of the optic nerve, at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (GOSH) in London. A coloboma is a gap in the structures of the eye and is caused when a baby's eyes do not develop properly during pregnancy. It is considered a rare disease as it affects just 1 in 10,000 births. Talia's congenital coloboma has led to a retinal detachment, which can potentially cause blindness.

Speaking about her daughter's condition, Talia's mum said: "She was born premature and did not have a normal eye from birth. It was a very difficult time for us and we were unsure what to do next. Our doctor in Kuwait referred us to GOSH in London to see Vitreoretinal Surgeon, Mr Chien Wong. I was initially very worried as coloboma is such a rare disease so it was important for us to have someone with a lot of experience treating children with similar rare diseases. Mr Wong has been very informative and knew exactly what to do. He has been great and he knows what is best for my daughter, so I trust him."

Speaking about the treatment, Mr Chien Wong, Head of Retinal Detachment Surgery in premature infants at GOSH, said: "I have many years of experience managing complex retinal detachments in patients, some of whom can improve without needing any surgery," Mr Chien Wong explains. "I conducted a thorough assessment and imaging of Talia's retina under general anaesthesia. I made the decision to hold off on surgery, and six weeks later upon repeat of examination under anaesthesia, the retinal detachment had improved as I had expected. With the specialist tests that we were able to do, I also found that her other eye was at risk of developing retinal detachment, which I was able to successfully treat with laser." Talia is currently still at GOSH in London and her future is looking brighter since receiving care at GOSH.

CLINIC PAGE



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Dr. Husain Alenezi

-Board Certified Urologist.
-Endourology Society-Approved Fellowship In Endourology And Robotic Surgery At Western University, Ontario, Canada.

Expert in diagnosing and treating:

- 1- Urinary Stones (Kidney, Ureter & Bladder) By Endoscopy & Laser
- 2- Prostate Cancer And Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- 3- Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms In Males And Females
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- o Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

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- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
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General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com Tel: 1886677 ic_kwt

Scope of Clinical Practice:

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

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

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DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

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

Academic Certificates - Training

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

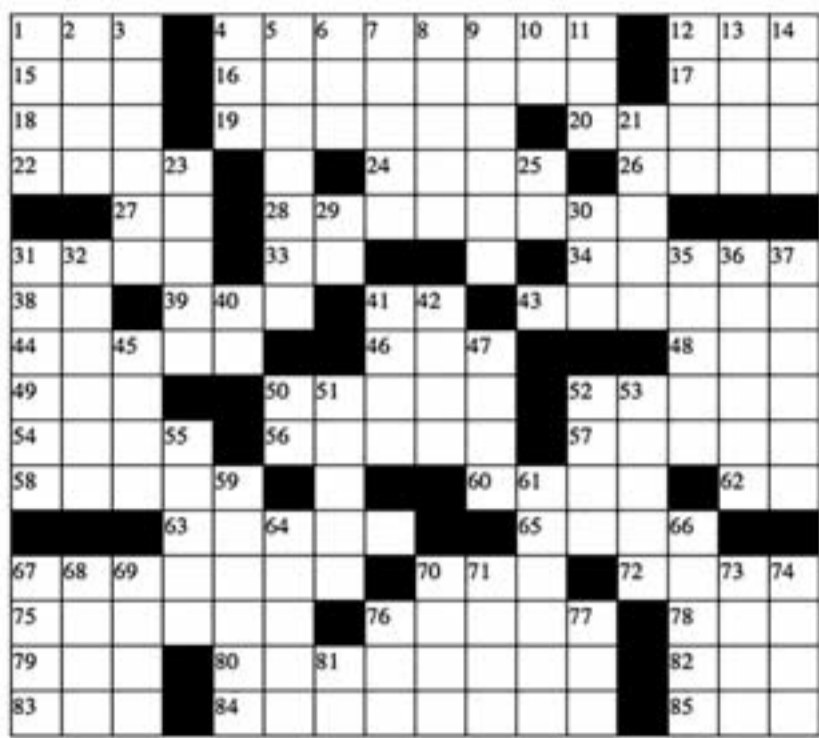
Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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Stars

CROSSWORD 2049



ACROSS

1. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
4. So great in size or force or extent as to elicit awe.
12. A bachelor's degree in naval science.
15. In or of the month preceding the present one.
16. Reprehensible acquisitiveness.
17. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
18. The syllable naming the sixth (submedian) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
19. Express discontent.
20. Irish chemist who established that air has weight and whose definitions of chemical elements and chemical reactions helped to dissociate chemistry from alchemy (1627-1699).
22. (informal) Exceptionally good.
24. Earn on some commercial or business transaction.
26. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
27. A radioactive transuranic element which has been synthesized.
28. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade name Clinoril).
31. A roughly cylindrical that is vessel open at the top.
33. Half the width of an em.
34. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
38. A public promotion of some product or service.
39. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
43. A zodiacal constellation in the northern hemisphere between Taurus and Cancer on the ecliptic.
44. Soaked with moisture.
46. (often followed by "of") A large number or amount or extent.
48. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
49. Electronic equipment that provides visual images of varying electrical quantities.
54. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
56. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
57. Long-tailed arboreal mustelid of Central and South America.
58. Combined or joined to increase in size or quantity or scope.
60. South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
62. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
63. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
67. The slender spear of the Bantu-speaking people of Africa.
72. A platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.
75. High quality grape brandy distilled in the Cognac district of France.
78. Nocturnal mouselike mammal with forelimbs modified to form membranous wings and anatomical adaptations for echolocation by which they navigate.
79. Game in which matchsticks are arranged in rows and players alternately remove one or more of them.
80. (Old Testament) An ancient city near the Dead Sea that (along with Sodom) was destroyed by God for the vice and depravity of its inhabitants.
82. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.

83. An extension at the end and at right angles to the main building.
84. Covered with or as if with a glossy and usually brightly colored coating.
85. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.

DOWN

1. A modified bud consisting of a thickened globular underground stem serving as a reproductive structure.
2. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
3. A Greek island west of Greece.
4. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
5. Being or passing over or across the sea.
6. The upper side of the thighs of a seated person.
7. A projecting bay window corbelled or cantilevered out from a wall.
8. A mountain peak in the southern Sinai Peninsula (7,500 feet high).
9. English writer (born in Ireland) (1713-1766).
10. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
11. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
12. Common Indian weaverbird.
13. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
14. A brace that extends from the rear of the keel to support the rudderpost.
21. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
23. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
25. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
29. An organization of independent states to promote international peace and security.
30. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
32. Regarded with deep or rapturous love (especially as if for a god).
35. A very short time (as the time it takes to blink once).
36. Small genus of evergreen trees of tropical America and western Africa.
37. Having two axes.
40. Minor or subordinate.
41. The basic unit of money in China.
42. A small cake leavened with yeast.
45. A pointed instrument used to prod into motion.
47. An informal term for a father.
50. An associate degree in nursing.
51. A family of Sino-Tibetan languages spoken in southeastern Asia.
52. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
53. The capacitance of a capacitor that has an equal and opposite charge of 1 coulomb on each plate and a voltage difference of 1 volt between the plates.
55. Large dark brown North American arboreal carnivorous mammal.
59. Free and relaxed in manner.
61. The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
64. Back and sides of a hog salted and dried or smoked.
66. A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
68. The state of being covered with unclean things.
69. (computer science) A standardized language for the descriptive markup of documents.
70. Wrap us in a cerecloth, as of a corpse.
71. A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
73. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
74. Indicating the most important performer or role.
76. (computer science) Memory whose contents can be accessed and read but cannot be changed.
77. A doctor's degree in theology.
81. Informal terms for a mother.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today is a day of emotional overload. High energy and high emotions could find you coming across as very forceful in what you say and in the way you think. You seem to be able to really get your point across to others. Careful not to offend anyone with the forceful way your words are flowing. Bite your tongue if you must but be sure and use your words wisely today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You have set your focus on providing a strong foundation for your family life. You crave security and the one that will be by your side for a lifetime. You find yourself in a serious mood where deep conversation and planning will help to insure the stability you crave. You are serious about your future and who you want to spend it with. The seeds you plant today will develop the roots of the reward you seek. You are focused and determined to lead a healthy, happy life. You make your health a priority now, a gym membership, meal planning, or making plans to exercise as team, is where your focus is. This is great start to making your plans a reality. You know exactly what you want, and you will make it happen.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

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



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today finds you more materialistic than usual. "Things" never have much importance to you. You know in the end it is not going to be what you have, but who you are that matters. Today finds you having unfamiliar desires. You actually may be feeling a need to reward yourself for all of the hard work you do. You make sacrifices daily to take care of and provide for others. Do not feel bad about doing things for yourself. Spoil yourself. Cancer: That new pair of shoes may be calling your name.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You should find great pleasure in working with others today. You could find yourself being offered a new position or asked to take the lead on a new project. You seem to begin to develop a desire to start taking your health seriously. Join the gym, take the walk, or start the meal planning. You won't be able to shake this urge. You know to take care of all that you responsible for you first have to take care of yourself. You not only want to feel good about who you but how you look. This is a step in the right direction for you. The beginning of wonderful new time in your life. You have a lot to look forward to.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

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



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a great time for you to experience the breakthrough you have been focusing on. Everything seems to be working in your favor. You may find yourself being drawn to all that represents romance. Take a stroll in the park, have a nice lunch with someone dear to you, a great time to curl up with a book or just a nice long bath may be just what you need today. You may find yourself helping a friend in need today. You are often a source of support and help to others. A friend that everyone wants to have is you are looked at with admiration.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Talk about bringing home the bacon and frying it up in the pan! This is you all day every day. You are able to balance career and home life all with ease. You are a jack of all trades. You have a deep desire to strengthen the foundation you have built for all. You desire a sense of roots and family, home, and relatives are where your focus is. You want to feel as if you belong on a personal and private level. You have an intimate desire to know that you are needed, Leo. The energy and effort you put into taking care of others does not go unnoticed. You are loved, needed, and appreciated.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

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



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself getting carried away and not as focused on the reality of what is best for you. You may be too focused on your wants rather than what you truly need. You may find that others will be quick to offer unsolicited advice when your actions aren't what they expected nor see as the best option for you. You may feel as the world around you is one big blur. This is a nice time to take a step back and focus on the decisions you are making and possibly put them off for a time your mind is clear. You may find that others are not as drawn to you when you are in this dreamy state. You could greatly benefit from some time alone tonight.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a wonderful time to surround yourself with the ones you hold near and dear to your heart. It is a great time of understanding in your life and you may be able to really bond with a special someone. You are happy and there is a feeling of peace and harmony in your world. Your mind is quick today and your words are sharp. You could find your words to be the only weapon you need when dealing with a conflict that may arise in the workplace. You know who you are and are full of self confidence. This may be bringing out a bit of jealousy from a co-worker. You will be able to handle this calmly and quickly.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

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

Wordsearch Puzzle

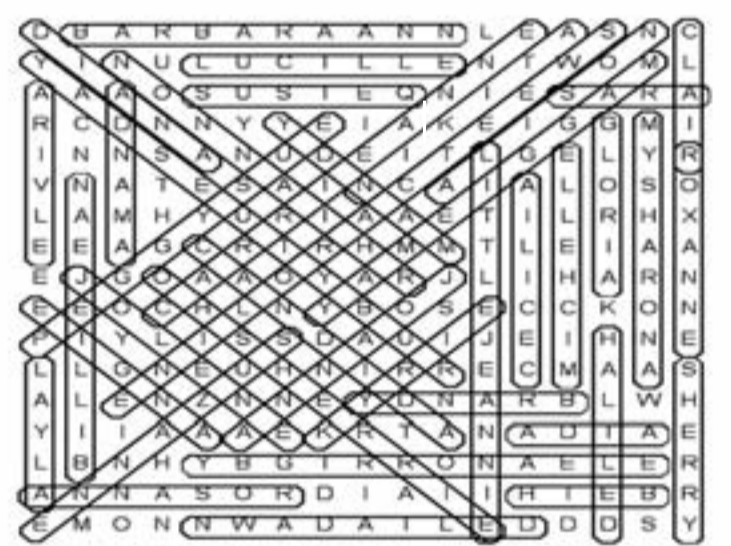
The Golden Girls

Find and circle all of the words and names from *The Golden Girls* TV show. The remaining letters spell the name of a spinoff of *The Golden Girls*.

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

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| BEA ARTHUR | COMEDY | RUE MCCLANAHAN |
| BETTY WHITE | DOROTHY | RUSTY ANCHOR |
| BIG DADDY | ESTELLE GETTY | SHADY PINES |
| BLANCHE | FRIENDSHIP | SITCOM |
| CHARLEY | MIAMI | SOPHIA |
| CHEESECAKE | MILES | SOUTHERN BELLE |
| CLAYTON | RELATIONSHIPS | ST OLAF |
| COCO | ROSE | STAN |

Songs With Girls' Names



- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| ADIA | DIANA | MY SHARONA |
| ALISON | ELEANOR RIGBY | NIKITTA |
| AMANDA | ELVIRA | OH SHERIE |
| ANGIE | GLORIA | PEGGY SUE |
| BARBARA ANN | JOANNA | RHANNON |
| BETH | JOLENE | ROXANNA |
| BILLIE JEAN | KYRIE | ROXANNE |
| BRANDY | LAYLA | RUBY TUESDAY |
| CANDIDA | LITTLE JEANNIE | SARA |
| CARRIE ANNE | LUCILLE | SHERRY |
| CECILIA | MAGGIE MAY | SUSIE Q |
| CLAIR | MANDY | SUZANNE |
| DELLAH | MICHELLE | SWEET CAROLINE |
| DELTA DAWN | | |

The hidden song title is: LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2018



View of cempasuchil (Mexican marigold) cultivation fields with the Popocatepetl volcano in the background, near Cholula, in Puebla state, Mexico. The Cempasuchil flower is used in Mexico to celebrate the Day of the Dead by making paths of petals to guide souls to altars set up for them to enjoy the pleasures they had in life. — AFP

Renewable brew: Indonesian geothermal project energizes women coffee growers

Coffee farmers in matrilineal villages in a mountainous region of Indonesia are getting assistance from a geothermal energy company, which said it is helping them to grow, roast and find global buyers for their beans. Backed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), PT Supreme Energy Rantau Dedap has been supporting coffee growers in South Sumatra province while building a nearby geothermal power plant. This month, the company began linking them with buyers including PT Fortunium, Rumah Kopi Ranin and Indokom, which supply both the domestic and overseas markets, said company and ADB officials.

"We are now reaching out to a global market," said Viswanathan Ramasubramanian of ADB yesterday. "If there is an improvement in coffee quality, it has the potential to attract big sized buyers, which can further improve livelihoods," he said by phone from the Philippines

capital Manila, where ADB is based. The geothermal project on Sumatra, a large and mountainous island west of the capital Jakarta, began in 2011 and is being built with \$227 million of the funding provided by the ADB.

Coffee-growing communities in the area have a matrilineal culture, which means that women play a key role in society and property inheritance is passed down to the eldest daughter. To make way for the geothermal plant, the company purchased 125 hectares (309 acres) of land from 150 households, which used the proceeds to buy nearby land for coffee farming. Two years ago, Supreme Energy and ADB brought agronomists and other farming experts from Indonesian universities to review the coffee growing practices and provide training to increase yields. After just six months, the annual coffee bean production of many farmers who took part in the training doubled, according to Ramasubramanian.

Earlier this year, more coffee specialists were called on to help improve the quality of the beans to eventually help farmers attract higher prices from international buyers. To achieve the best prices, farmers also formed collectives for selling their coffee to local buyers, Ramasubramanian told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The power project also supported the formation of women's groups in several villages, with equipment and technology provided to help with coffee roasting, grinding and packaging. "The plan is for the new coffee facilities to be developed step by step, to be mostly operated by local people, and prioritize the employment of women," said Ismoyo Argo, a senior manager at Supreme Energy. — Reuters



Hernita Jutawan, the head of a family welfare organization, roasts coffee in Tunggul Bute village, South Sumatra, Indonesia. — AFP photos



A coffee farmer is given advice by an agronomist and coffee expert in Yayasan village, South Sumatra, Indonesia.

Pumpkin carvings



A pumpkin carvings by Russian artist Anastasiya Dubach is displayed in a park in Moscow yesterday — AFP



There is more than the Great Wall to visit in *China*

By Joseph Shagra

The Chinese Embassy invited Kuwait Times and other Kuwaiti media to visit and discover the beauty of China. China boasts a large number of wonderful attractions including historical sites, amazing natural wonders, splendid cultural heritage and diversified folk customs. China is the world's number one tourist destination. It will take years to visit all of these attractions. Our first destination was Beijing, which is definitely one of the most visited cities in the world. Every year, millions of visitors flock to Beijing to see the capital of China, a great blend of old and new. Hundreds of tourist scenic spots and historical sites are in Beijing. Some are walkable, while some are a little far from the city center.

You absolutely don't want to miss Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, Temple of Heaven, and to explore the Great Wall and the nearby Ding Tomb. Before you depart to the next destination, don't miss the Summer Palace and Hutong. From Beijing you can travel to all popular destinations in China conveniently. There are daily trains and flights to most travel destinations in China.





A group photo shows Kuwait Times photographer Joseph Shagra with the media delegation in China. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



As for Shanghai, on China's central coast, it is the country's biggest city and a global financial hub. It has a long history as a gateway to China on the Yangtze River Delta. It is the largest economic and trade center in China, and one of China's cultural centers. Shanghai's heart is the Bund, a famed waterfront promenade lined with colonial-era buildings. Across the Huangpu River rises the Pudong district's futuristic skyline, including the 632m Shanghai Tower and the Oriental Pearl TV Tower, with distinctive pink spheres. The sprawling Yu Garden has traditional pavilions, towers and ponds.

duce visitors to China's long history and varied cultures, while Window of the World will take you to every corner of the world in one day. Additionally, if you want to make your stay even more luxurious, visit Happy Valley, the largest of its kind in the city, situated on a picturesque coastline.



The gleaming manifestation of China's economic miracle, Shenzhen has risen from the marshy Pearl River Delta into one of the world's megacities. Shenzhen attracts high-flying tech graduates and global corporations. Shenzhen is located in the southern portion of Guangdong Province, neighboring the Pearl River Delta and Hong Kong. Shenzhen's location gives it a geographical advantage for economic development.

It has created a number of excellent theme parks which entertain while teaching visitors about China and the world. Splendid China - Folk Culture Villages intro-



OSN brings new seasons of series exclusively to screens across the MENA region this November

Brace yourselves to watch the most awaited shows of the season only with OSN. The region's leading entertainment network is bringing forth a spectacular line-up of fresh and exclusive programming this November. From the highly anticipated new seasons of popular series such as House of Cards final season, which comes to viewers in the Middle East at the same time as the US, to brand new Arabic shows and thought provoking documentaries-premiering every Saturday, OSN's November line-up offers irresistible and exclusive entertainment.

Subscribers can also look forward to a range of outstanding content from top studios including National Geographic, Discovery, NBC and E! Entertainment, all set to further enhance this season's offering. OSN subscribers can also watch and catch up anytime, anywhere and on any device with OSN Play.

OSN Series First HD

The Gifted, season 2

Based on Marvel comics X-Men universe. In a world where mutated humans are treated with distrust and fear, an institute for mutants battles to achieve peaceful coexistence with humanity. The Gifted premieres today, at 10pm (KSA).

House of Cards, season 6

On screens in the Middle East at the same time as the US, the multiple Emmy award winning show is back for its final season. Set in Washington, D.C, the final season of the show will follow Claire Underwood as she succeeds her husband to the presidency, moving from first lady to the first female president of the USA. The series premieres on Saturday 3 November, (episodes 1-3), continuing on Sunday 4 November (episodes 4-6) and Monday 5 November (episodes 7-8) at 10pm (KSA), so set your boxes to record and series link for back-to-back viewing. The series will then air weekly every Wednesday night at 10pm (KSA) from Wednesday 7 November and will be available on OSN Play and On Demand.

Outlander, season 4

This multiple Emmy-nominated series is based upon author Diana Gabaldon's historical time travel book series of the same name. An English combat nurse from 1945 is mysteriously swept back in time to 1743 where she encounters the dashing Highland warrior Jamie Fraser (Sam Heughan) and becomes embroiled in the Jacobite risings. Premieres exclusively on Saturday 10 November, 10pm (KSA).

The Last Kingdom, season 3

Premiering exclusively on Friday 23 November, 10pm (KSA), the British historical fiction, adapted from Bernard Cornwell's 'The Saxon Stories' is set in the year 872, and England has fallen to the invading Danes, leaving the great kingdom of Wessex standing alone and defiant under the command of King Alfred. Against this turbulent backdrop lives the hero, Uhtred.

OSN First HD - Home of HBO

NEW: Yellowstone, season 1

Premiering Thursday 1 November (today), 10pm

(KSA), this Western drama follows the Dutton family, led by John Dutton (Kevin Costner), who controls the largest contiguous ranch in the United States. With their land under constant attack by those it borders - land developers, an Indian reservation, and America's first National Park - the family have to fight to protect the land they love.

Shooter, season 3

A conspiracy thriller that follows the journey of Bob Lee Swagger (Ryan Phillippe), a highly-decorated veteran who is coaxed back into action to prevent a plot to kill the President. Premieres Tuesday 6 November, 9pm (KSA).

NEW: Reality Check: Documentaries on OSN First HD - Home of HBO

OSN's dedicated documentaries block, 'Reality Check', offers factual fans a roster of cerebral content every Friday and Saturday from 12pm to 12am, with a topical premiere every Saturday at 8pm (KSA). This month's favourites include Emmy nominated docu-series Great Decisions, 3 November, which takes an in-depth look at critical issues facing America from all angles; Outside The Bubble: On The Road with Alexandra Pelosi, here documentary film-maker and journalist Alexandra Pelosi sets out on a cross-country trip to engage in conversations with fellow Americans to gain an unfiltered understanding of other cultural and social perspectives. Premieres 10 November. Disconnected, 17 November, studies the impact of the modern technology, the internet and social media on society, and Journey in The Danger Zone: Iraq, 24 November, coinciding with the 15-year anniversary of the fall of Baghdad to a coalition of British and American forces, journalist Adnan Sarwar who was a junior commander in the British Army, returns to explore present day Iraq and asks what the future holds for the country.

OSN Series Comedy HD

Speechless, season 3

The show revolves around a family with three kids. The eldest teen, JJ, is challenged with cerebral palsy and the show follows how his family and carer deal with his challenges, creating a few new ones for him along the way. Speechless premieres tomorrow at 8pm (KSA).

Fresh off the Boat, season 5

Premiering tomorrow at 8.30pm (KSA), the series follows the life of Huang (Hudson Yang), and his family as they relocate from Chinatown in Washington D.C. to Orlando, Florida to open a cowboy-themed steakhouse in 1995.

The Simpsons, season 30

This long-running and much-loved animated comedy focuses on the eponymous family in the town of Springfield in an unnamed U.S. state. The head of the Simpson family, Homer, is not the typical family man. In season 30, there will be a satire of The Amazing Race, in which Homer and Marge go on the show. Premieres Monday 5 November, 9.30pm (KSA).

It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, season 13

The gang are back for another season of outrageous and immoral behaviour. Five friends with big egos and slightly arrogant attitudes are the proprietors of an Irish tavern in Philadelphia. Premieres Wednesday 7 November, 10pm (KSA).

OSN Living HD

Gino's Italian Escape

This food and travel show presented by chef Gino D'Acampo, follows Gino as he explores some of Italy's best loved locations through some of the country's dishes and ingredients notable to each region. After experiencing the local dishes, Gino prepares a feast of his own. Premieres today at 8pm (KSA).



The Taste

The high-stakes cooking competition where flavour is the only thing that matters premieres on Monday 12 November, 8pm (KSA). Hosted by multi award-winning food writer and TV cook Nigella Lawson, the critically-acclaimed chef Ludo Lefebvre and legendary food maverick Anthony Bourdain, these presenters judge the contestants as well as compete between themselves.

OSN Yahala AI Oula HD

November will see the third Turkish series slot arrive on OSN Yahala AI Oula HD with brand new shows. Premiering first is a brand new romantic comedy series adaptation of the famous UK and US series 'Shameless' 'Hekaytna', starring Hazal Kaya, exclusively on Monday 5 November, 7pm (KSA) on OSN Yahala AI Oula HD. Additionally, popular Turkish drama series like Fadila Khanum wa Banat'ha S2, Al Hob Al Aama S2, will continue to air on OSN Yahala AI Oula HD.

OSN Yahala Cinema HD

OSN Yahala Cinema HD also brings a stellar line-up of new movies exclusively every Friday at 11pm (KSA), this November. Top highlights include:

Bank Al Hazz

Saleh, Amr and Zaro (Mohamed Mamdouh, Akram Hosni and Mohamed Tharwat) are three men with dif-

ferent levels of intelligence, but with one goal - to rob a bank. Their goal causes them to fall into several comic incidents. Premieres Friday 2 November.

Al Khalia

Premiering on Friday 16 November, Al Khalia revolves around the security forces' efforts to combat terrorism and the difficulties they face during their work. It chronicles around a special operations officer who deals with more than one terrorist operation and how he hunts down terrorist cells. Starring Ahmed Ezz, Mohamed Mamdouh, Samer El Masrei, and Amina Khalil.

Other Programming Highlights

Pop-up Channel: Disney Mickey Mouse with OSN

In celebration of Mickey's 90th birthday, OSN is giving kids and families a dedicated pop-up channel full of marvellous Mickey content from Friday 9 November to Saturday 24 November, on channel 7. Tune in and join the celebration of Disney's most beloved character including a special film, 'Mickey's 90th Spectacular' which will air on 18 November - Mickey's actual birthday. All content will be available in both English and Arabic.

The E! People's Choice Awards 2018

E! Entertainment

Join E! on Sunday 11 November for the best of the 2018 E! People's Choice Awards.

First, 'Live from the Red Carpet' brings you all the can't miss moments as the stars and celebs strut their stuff, from 3am (KSA), then see who takes home the awards from 5am (KSA).

Mars, season 2

National Geographic

This docu-drama mixes real-life stories and interviews about exercises designed to further the cause of colonising Mars with a fictional tale of the first manned mission to land there in the year 2033. In season two, it has been nine years since their landing on Mars and the six original astronauts have developed Olympus Town into a full-fledged colony. Mars premieres, Thursday, 15 November, 8pm (KSA) on National Geographic.

My World to You

TLC

From Tuesday 27 November, 9pm (KSA), join Darine El Khatib as she presents a new perspective on the cultures, traditions, unexplored destinations and foods of the world.

Each episode simulates a day in Darine's life, following her waking up in the morning before she reveals what lies ahead. During her travels, she interacts with locals to discover the culture, heritage and civilizations of the country.

US Mid-Term Elections

Followers of US Politics can catch all the latest news and analysis surrounding the US mid-term elections on OSN's wide range of English news channels, get the full story with Fox News, Sky News, CNBC and Bloomberg.

Splash & Disney capsule collection arrives in the Middle East just in time for Mickey's 90th anniversary

The global celebrations of Mickey Mouse's 90th Anniversary have taken the fashion scene by storm, seeing fashion houses around the world pay homage to the true original with one-off creative collaborations. As the leading fashion retailer in the Middle East, Splash Fashions is once again leading and setting trends with the launch of its very own capsule collection for the GCC. For the very first time, and in keeping with its locally-minded

ethos, Disney and Splash invited four sought-after local faces to join its design team in order to express their individual interpretation of Mickey Mouse's legacy. The influencers involved in this playful design opportunity are: Mohannad Al-Hattab, Mathyel Al-Ali, Fouz Al-Fahad and Ahmed Al-Nasheet.

Invited behind the scenes at Splash's in-house design department, these four hand-picked influencers began their dream co-designing their very

own limited-edition collection alongside the Splash design team. Each individual was allowed the freedom to experiment with potential design options using iconic imagery of Mickey to create these unique pieces. Creative brainstorming, laughter and learning played a big part of this process and both Splash and the design group are incredibly excited by the results as seen in the new collection. Mohannad, Mathyel, Fouz and Ahmed will be visiting select stores in KSA, Bahrain, UAE and Kuwait over the coming weeks to launch their designs and the collection, which are available in select Splash stores across the GCC region.

This collaborative approach from Disney and Splash Fashions highlights their priority and commitment in reconnecting with the communities in the region. Following closely in the footsteps of the recent #InFashion campaign, Splash Fashions is building close relationships with its consumer and the local culture and diversity of the GCC.

The anticipation for this fun-fuelled collection was introduced with a high-energy in-store fashion presentation. At the Splash stores designers joined forces with the Hassan Al-Sheikh, from Star FM Radio, to introduce the Disney range directly to the local community and Splash Fashions fans. Guests were invited to soak up the fashion ambiance, browse the collections and take part in various live competitions for the chance to win a number of Mickey Mouse related prizes in celebration of #Mickey90.



Celebrating a century of evolution in aviation

Introducing the Hamilton
Khaki X-Wind Auto
Chrono limited edition

Hamilton is synonymous with aviation and we're celebrating our first 100 years of timing the skies with a limited edition watch that represents the very best of Hamilton. Based on the original Khaki X-Wind Auto Chrono, the 2018 Limited Edition is packed with aviation features for pilots and offers a technical perspective including the ground-breaking crosswind calculator of the original.

Limited to just 1,918 individually numbered pieces, the Khaki X-Wind Auto Chrono Limited Edition features a robust 45 mm stainless steel case.

Inside the case is the H-21-Si, the first Hamilton chronograph movement with a silicon hairspring. This material makes the movement more precise as silicon is non-magnetic and less sensitive to shocks. The former is an important feature for pilots because they often stay in environments with high magnetic fields, such as airports. In addition, the movement has been precision certified by COSC (Controle

Officiel Suisse des Chronometres) as a chronometer.

Evolutionary design

Thanks to newly shaped hands and Super-LumiNova numerals in sand color that glow neon green in the dark, the watch has enhanced readability. The multilevel black dial allows the eye to navigate between the three counters, the day date window at 9 o'clock and the turning inner bezels. The X-shape visible between the pushers and crowns surrounding the case complete this multi-dimensional theme.

The 'H' buckle and sturdy leather strap are in typical Hamilton aviation style and there is also a metal bracelet for those who prefer a full steel look.

With the crosswind calculator on the turning bezel, the Khaki X-Wind Auto Chrono Limited Edition represents the very best of aviation timekeeping from Hamilton.

Accuracy, innovation, a taste for adventure and a focus on precision have all contributed to making Hamilton the choice of professional aviators to accompany them in the cockpit. Hamilton is proud to celebrate our first century of timing the skies with a precision watch that represents our aviation heritage past, present and future.

Classifieds

Thursday, November 1, 2018

Kuwait Times
 Now you can browse
www.kuwaittimes.net
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STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
 Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

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

BY NIGHT: Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 31/10/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	29 °C	20 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	29 °C	14 °C			
ABDALY	28 °C	15 °C			
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C			
JAHRA	30 °C	16 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	28 °C	18 °C			
SALMIYAH	28 °C	22 °C			
AHMADI	27 °C	21 °C			
NUWAISIB	30 °C	15 °C			
WAFRA	29 °C	12 °C			
SALMY	26 °C	12 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	11/01	Partly cloudy	31 °C	16 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 32 km/h
Friday	11/02	Partly cloudy to cloudy	30 °C	16 °C	NE-NW	12 - 35 km/h
Saturday	11/03	Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on	30 °C	17 °C	NW-NE	15 - 38 km/h
Sunday	11/04	Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	28 °C	18 °C	NE	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:40
Sunrise	06:01
Zohr	11:32
Asr	14:40
Sunset	17:03
Isha	18:21

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	28 °C
MIN. Temp.	14 °C
MAX. RH	68 %
MIN. RH	22 %
MAX. Wind	NW 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

Required for Home Medical Services

- Physical Therapy
- Nurses

For enquiries:
 email: eidnayef1@gmail.com
 Tel: 99676603 / 55020008

JOB VACANCIES

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- RESTAURANT SERVICE CREWS • RESTAURANT CHASRIERS
- HOME DELIVERY DRIVERS

Attractive salary will be granted. Right suitable applicants
 • +3 Years' Experience in Fast Food Industry (In Kuwait or Abroad)
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 Office Hours: 09:30 AM to 04:30 PM Sunday - Thursday
 Call: 22675496 or send Email to a.abdallah@thiqaco.com

ACCOMMODATION

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

Sharing accommodation
 available for decent
 Christian bachelor / single
 lady in Salmiya, Block-10,
 Street-10 (near Garden).
 Contact: 51177342 (C 5430)
 29-10-2018

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Dasuru Sumithra (Old name), Holder of Indian Passport No: N1869555 R/o D.No: 2/329-B, Thyagarajanagar, Mangalimitta, Rajampet Town & Mandal, YSR Kadapa District, AP - 516115, have changed my name as DAARURU ARUNA (new name) W/o Daaruru Nagarjuna. 28-10-2018

EMERGENCY

112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988



Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 1/11/2018				Departure Flights on Thursday 1/11/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	MSC	502	Alexandria	00:10
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	JZR	528	Asyut	01:05
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	MSC	406	Sohag	01:05
JZR	267	Beirut	01:25	THY	773	Istanbul	01:45
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	JZR	502	Luxor	01:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	677	Dubai	02:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:45
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
QT	R1086	Doha	02:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
JZR5	53D	Alexandria	02:50	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	JZR	142	Doha	03:45
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	RBG	216	Sohag	03:45
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	JAI	571	Mumbai	05:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
KAC	544	Cairo	05:20	JZR	356	Mashhad	07:15
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	167	Paris	07:30
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	KAC	173	Munich	07:35
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:40
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	238	Amman	07:50
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35	KAC	201	Beirut	08:00
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	QTR	8512	Beirut/Doha	08:05
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	BAW	156	London	08:20
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC	791	Madinah	09:00
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	07:05	KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	KAC	117	Shannon/New York	09:05
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
KAC	358	Kochi	08:00	JZR	534	Cairo	09:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC	101	London	10:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	797	Taif	10:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:20
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	SYR	342	Damascus	11:00
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	IAW	158	Al Najaf	11:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	JZR	788	Riyadh	11:20
ABY	121	Sharjah	12:55	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	239	Amman	13:00	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
JZR	357	Mashhad	13:05	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
KAC	792	Madinah	13:40	MSC	412	Asyut	13:30
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	ABY	122	Sharjah	13:35
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	13:55	JZR	144	Doha	13:55

Republican Muslim hoping for US Congress seat in Trump era

SAN DIEGO: Omar Qudrat denies any contradiction in his being both a Muslim and a Republican in the era of President Donald Trump. In fact, he is so convinced that his party is still one of diversity, despite the president's rhetoric, that he is running for Congress in California's 52nd District on a Republican ticket. "I'm American period. I was born and raised in this country," Qudrat, whose parents were immigrants from Afghanistan, told AFP. "We have a very diverse party. We just don't talk about it and make it like the number one talking point about us," he said. "I was endorsed by numerous sitting senior members of Congress and it had nothing to do with my ethnicity and religion."

The reality is, however, that if he wins his race, the 37-year-old would be the first Muslim Republican to take a seat in Congress. There are currently two Muslims in the House of Representatives - Keith Ellison and Andre Carson. Both are Democrats. But the label barely matters for Qudrat. "My run for Congress has to do with reality. And real issues," he said, dismissing what he called "identity politics". "I don't think that ethnicity is a qualification," he said.

That is why he did not rush to denounce Trump's ban on people from a number of Muslim-majority countries from entering the country, instead arguing that as former Defense Department worker, he was aware of national security issues. At the same time, he avoids talking about scandal-plagued fellow California Republican Duncan Hunter, who is running against a Democrat of mixed Palestinian and Mexican heritage and who has warned that "radical Muslims are trying to infiltrate the US government", even though his opponent is a Christian. "I've got to talk about the issues in my district and that's it," Qudrat said.

Qudrat grew up in a violent neighborhood

of Los Angeles, where gangs ruled the streets and shoot-outs were common. He was in the fifth grade when a gang tried to recruit him for the first time, and a year later he was offered a gun for sale: A 25mm pistol for \$25. "I'll tell you why I am Republican," he recently told a gathering of students organized by the University of San Diego. "I don't believe in government, I believe in people." He blames the Democrats for "not delivering" and making "false promises", something he attributes to his Democrat rival Scott Peters, whom he is currently trailing in polls.

Qudrat learned from his parents - big supporters of Ronald Reagan, who armed Afghanistan's mujahedin to fight the Soviet occupation - to have "belief in yourself and self-determination". "And that matched more with the Republican political philosophy," said the young candidate, who says he has never felt discriminated against in the United States.

Ten years after the 9/11 terror attacks, Qudrat, who speaks fluent Dari and has degrees in law and international relations, worked for the Department of Defense in Afghanistan, trying to improve the country's judicial system. He then worked for the military prosecutor's office processing detainees in the Guantanamo Bay prison. He thinks the United States has to "end the war in Afghanistan and do so in a responsible manner that will ensure Afghanistan does not again become a safe haven for terrorist networks that can plot and attack us with impunity". If he does win his seat, he hopes to use his experience in Congress's committees on the armed forces and foreign relations.

'We have laws'

Qudrat - who is pro-life and favors tax cuts for the middle classes - said Trump could do more to unite Americans, but at the same time he defends his economic record.



SAN DIEGO: Omar Qudrat (center), who is running for congress in California's 52nd district, speaks to a supporter at a Rock the Vote event at San Diego State University on Oct 23, 2018. — AFP

"President Trump evokes feelings among some people that really caused them to oppose him," he said. "Do you want to derail the progress that's being made right now?" he argues, citing low unemployment, especially among minority groups, and rising wages among blue collar workers. "There are real lives that are improving," he said. "I have

to support that."

He agrees with the president on the need to improve border security, but has avoided commenting on whether he supports his plan for a wall on the Mexico border. He also supports a legislative solution for the so-called "dreamers," children of migrant parents who entered the country without documentation

and who now may face deportation themselves, despite having lived in the United States their whole lives. "I do not believe a two-year-old or a three-year-old could have had criminal intent when they were brought involuntarily into our country," he said. "Therefore we should not treat them as criminals," he said. — AFP

Green homes build cohesion between Syrians, Jordanians

DHLAIL, Jordan: Syrian refugee Umm Mohammed fitted in her chair in a breezy office in Dhail city, northern Jordan, before joking: "We don't know how to sit still." Along with others who fled conflict in neighboring Syria, she works with low-income Jordanians in this industrial town famed for its dairy and textile factories. But their work is different: retrofitting homes to make them green. "We want to work - we don't want to sit around idly. We want to contribute," she said of her fellow refugees' motivation.

Umm Mohammed - she uses the moniker, which means 'mother of Mohammed', to avoid potential difficulties with Syrian officials - is from Deraa, a city close to the Jordanian border. It was the scene in March 2011 of the first major peaceful protests against Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. Umm Mohammed arrived in Jordan later that year with her husband and four children, carrying just a few pieces of luggage.

At first she worked from home, fermenting pickles and making soap to sell in the local market, but she soon became involved with a local women's project to hand-make straw shading devices that are fitted to windows to keep homes cooler. Her work forms part of a bigger effort - a pilot project to retrofit and build affordable green homes, led by two non-profit organizations: the Jordan Green Building Council (JoGBC) and Habitat for Humanity.

The project involves retrofitting existing homes by adding shading devices, solar-thermal water heaters and rainwater collection tanks, and building new homes using green techniques such as reflective paint and double-block brick walls for better insulation. So far, about 48 homes have been retrofitted, while another half-dozen or so have been built from scratch and have near-zero carbon emissions. The JoGBC is hopeful that the project, which cuts emissions and builds community cohesion, will spread to other parts of the country.

Making the straw shades suits women who do not want to work in factories with men or who need to work from home due to childcare. Umm Mohammed told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. And doing so has also allowed her to socialise with her Jordanian neighbors. "This project has definitely helped community cohesion in this area," Umm Mohammed said. — Reuters

Guzansky, senior fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies and former head of the Gulf department for Israel's National Security Council. The public rapprochement could also aim "to acquaint the Gulf street, public opinion, to ties with Israel, so that when something happens it won't be a total surprise, and the public will understand the rationale - that Israel is not the enemy. Someone else is the enemy. And this someone else is Iran."

Israel has full diplomatic relations with only two Arab states, Egypt and Jordan. Qatar has informal ties to both Israel and rival Iran, with which it shares a gas field. Until 2000, the emirate was home to an Israeli trade representative office. Doha also provides humanitarian assistance - and fuel - to the Gaza Strip, under an agreement with Israel backed by United States.

At a regional defense conference in the Bahraini capital on Friday, Omani Foreign Minister Youssef bin Alawi bin Abdullah said it might be "time for Israel to be treated the same (as states in the Middle East) and also bear the same obligations" - a statement endorsed by Bahrain. The Omani statement, according to the forum's official blog, aims to "move the Israel-Palestine narrative on from past intractability to a new focus on pragmatism".

Alawi met Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas yesterday and delivered a letter about Netanyahu's surprise visit to the sultanate last week, official Palestinian media said. The minister gave Abbas the letter from Oman's Sultan Qaboos, official Palestinian news agency Wafa said. It gave no further details on their discussions in Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank. Abbas had also visited Oman in the days before Netanyahu's trip.

Oman's position has sparked fears of what Palestinian presidential advisor Mohammad Shtayeh called "the start of a public normalization and the end of the Arab peace initiative", a 2002 proposal for Arab states to restore ties with Israel in return for the creation of a Palestinian state. "(They) are cozying up to Israel's apartheid regime to carry favor with the Trump administration," said Omar Barghouti, co-founder of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS). "Palestinians are counting on the peoples of the Arab region, including the Gulf...to stand with us in our struggle for freedom, justice and equality." — AFP

US voters poised to elect 2 Muslim...

Continued from Page 1

The expected electoral milestone is in stark contrast to the rise in anti-Muslim sentiment around the country. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) reported a 21 percent increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes in the first six months of 2018.

Both Tlaib and Omar have positioned themselves as polar opposites of President Donald Trump and his Republican Party. They oppose Trump's restrictive immigration policies, support a universal health care system which Republicans oppose, and want to abolish US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. ICE has conducted raids throughout the country, leaving immigrant communities terrified of deportations - including longtime Iraqi refugees in Michigan. "The election of Donald Trump was a wake-up call," Colin Christopher of the Islamic Society of North America told AFP. "Now we're seeing communities that were once absent from public conversations... all of a sudden are really engaged."

The two women are part of a historically diverse crop of candidates - by race, gender, and sexuality - challenging Republican incumbents. They reflect a Trump era in which race and women's rights and empowerment have emerged as flashpoint issues for Democrats, and identity politics are increasingly important. Polls indicate next week's election will likely hand Democrats control of the lower house of Congress in a rebuke of Trump's administration. The Senate is seen as more likely to stay in Republican majority control.

Tlaib was born and raised in Detroit - the eldest of 14 children. In 2008, she became the first Muslim woman to serve in the Michigan state legislature. The 42-year-old has positioned herself as a champion of the working class and strongly anti-Trump. During the 2016 presidential campaign, she heckled then-candidate Trump during a speech in Detroit. Tlaib won the

India opens tallest statue...

Continued from Page 1

by different governments, the ruling BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) is repeating it again. I am not against Sardar, but what is the use of the statue if the people on the land have to suffer and are moved from their homes?"

The Gujarat government said the 185 families moved to make way for the statue had been compensated and given 1,200 acres of land. More than 80 percent of the local population is from tribal groups with special protected status. In the largely tribal town of Dediapada, roughly 60 km from the statue, villagers shuttered shops and closed the main market for the day in protest. "We are still facing problems of water, health infrastructure and employment," one resident, Vikram Vasava, told a local broadcaster. "How will the statue help us?" "You would surely ask, on whose land would this statue stand? Whose plan was this?" social activist Medha Patkar wrote in what she called an open letter to Patel. "This land, river, forest that your avatar is going to stand on, belongs to adivasis."

Patel was a deputy prime minister in India's first post-independence government. He became known as "the Iron Man" by convincing feuding states - some-

Democratic party's primary election in August in a predominantly African American district. "Her district does not have many Muslims in it," said Dawud Walid, executive director of CAIR's Michigan chapter. "I don't believe that her ethnic or religious identity has had much of a part to play in her victory nor any opposition against her."

Tlaib has been mindful of the historic nature of her candidacy. During her tearful primary election victory speech in August, with her mother by her side, she said relatives in the West Bank were watching her success. "It just shows how incredibly wonderful our country can be," she said. "All the ugliness and the hatred that you hear out there, it's not who we are." With no Republican opposing Tlaib, she will be elected next week to a two-year term to replace longtime Congressman John Conyers who stepped down in December amid sexual harassment allegations and failing health.

Ilhan Omar also has forged a progressive political identity. She supports free college education, housing for all, and criminal justice reform. The hijab-wearing Minnesota state lawmaker's personal identity has played a big role in her campaign. She is the first Somali-American legislator in the US. Omar fled her native country's civil war at the age of eight, and later immigrated with her family to the US. She was inspired by politics early on, when accompanying her grandfather to his first election vote.

"I just fell in love with politics and with what it could do," she told Elle magazine in September. "I decided to run because I was one of many people I knew who really wanted to demonstrate what representative democracies are supposed to be." In 2016, the 36-year-old won an uncontested seat in the legislature of her Midwestern home state, where there is a sizable Somali population. Running for a congressional seat in a heavily-Democratic district that includes the city of Minneapolis, she is expected to easily defeat her Republican challenger. She would replace Keith Ellison, who was the first Muslim elected to Congress in 2006. He gave up his seat to run for the state's attorney general's office. — AFP

times with a threat of force - to join the new united country. His name had been largely overshadowed by the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty that has dominated Indian politics since 1947. But Modi-inspired nationalists have sought to put him back in the forefront, with critics accusing them of appropriating his legacy.

The BJP says Congress has deliberately ignored leaders such as Patel, B R Ambedkar, who led the drafting of the constitution, and freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose. The accusations are a distortion of history, says Congress, which ruled India for much of its independence history and is now led by Rahul Gandhi, the great-grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister. "Ironically that a statue of Sardar Patel is being inaugurated, but every institution he helped build is being smashed," Gandhi said on social network Twitter. "The systematic destruction of India's institutions is nothing short of treason."

The statue is more than twice the size of New York's Statue of Liberty and also dwarfs the 128-m-high Spring Temple Buddha in China, the world's next-biggest statue. It is made up of nearly 100,000 tonnes of concrete and steel. Online booking to visit the Statue of Unity has opened with a 350 rupee (\$4.75) admission fee for the 153-metre-high observation deck. Indian authorities hope the statue will attract 15,000 visitors a day. India is also working on a giant statue of 17th-century warrior king Shivaji, riding a horse and brandishing a sword, which should dominate the Mumbai shoreline from 2021. The current design would make it 212 m high. — Agencies

Israel moves closer to Gulf...

Continued from Page 1

The apparent bolstering of relations comes as the United States pushes tighter sanctions on Iran and, like Israel, holds firm to its demand that Tehran have no say in the reconstruction of Syria. In parallel, US President Donald Trump has made no secret of his ties to - and views on - Saudi Arabia, which had cooled during the Obama administration. Trump also refused to take a firm stand on the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Saudi Arabia has not officially reacted to the Israeli visits.

And while Israel's attempt to woo this region has been a long time in the making, analysts say, the tussle between Iran on the one hand and the United States, Israel and Gulf on the other has propelled the talks to new, and public, heights. Gulf states have held clandestine talks with Israel for decades, going back to at least the early 1980s. Arab leaders have not, however, historically publicized talks over fears of a public backlash over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Broader policy alignment, primarily on the need to contain Iran, may have emboldened both sides to now make those talks public as Israel vows to prevent Tehran from entrenching itself militarily in Syria, where Iran backs President Bashar Al-Assad in the civil war. "Policy alignment is bringing them closer, if not yet together," said Elizabeth Dickinson, senior analyst at the International Crisis Group. "Pressuring Iran and squeezing its regional activity is a first order priority in Israel and also in certain Gulf capitals. Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and separately Tel Aviv, all feel it is imperative to seize the current window of opportunity - in which the US administration is also prioritizing Iran."

The Gulf initiatives also comes ahead of possible Israeli elections early next year, and improved relations with Arab states could boost Netanyahu's standing at home. "Israel was always inclined to make such meetings public. It was the Arabs who were very sensitive to photo-ops of the sort because of public opinion" and the Palestinian issue, said Yoel

Sports

Kasatkina hits out at Zhuhai scheduling after Keys defeat

Defending champion Goerges suffers bruising defeat to Kontaveit

ZHUHAI: Top seed Daria Kasatkina slammed the tournament scheduling at the WTA Elite Trophy in China yesterday after losing in straight sets to Madison Keys. Kasatkina, 21, was beaten with relative ease by the 23-year-old American, who took 70 minutes to seal the win 6-2, 6-4.

The Russian, who finished her previous round-robin tie against Wang Qiang at 10pm on Tuesday, looked tired on court and had already criticised the match timetable.

Asked if she stood by the comments at her post-match press conference on Wednesday, she took a deep breath and said: "Yea. I mean if they want me to pull out of the tournament then they are doing a good job, because in less than 24 hours I've played two matches."

"The girls [Keys and Wang] are not playing tomorrow, they are playing on Friday, and I was supposed to play two matches in less than 24 hours. "So there's nothing I can say, nothing I can do. I was fighting, I mean I did everything I could."

"I gave more than 100% of my abilities, so this is professional sport!" Keys cruised to take the first set at the Hengqin International Tennis Center, and although Kasatkina put up a fight in the second, the sixth seed clinched the tie.

The American showed little sign of the left knee injury which forced her to retire from her last two tournaments, in Wuhan and Beijing. After the match, she said: "I think I had a really good start today, and that definitely helped me. "Overall, I think I just played really solid and went out and did what I needed to do."

GOERGES FLOORED

Earlier, defending champion Julia Goerges suffered a bruising defeat to Anett Kontaveit. The fifth seed took a nasty tumble mid-way through the match, which she went on to lose 2-6, 6-4, 4-6 after more than two hours.

Kontaveit, the tournament tenth seed, started brightly, breaking the world no. 14 three times to take the opening set. Goerges, 29, fell heavily on to the hard court in the sixth game of the second set, and needed to ice her right leg during the changeover.

Clearly slightly rattled, the German nevertheless dug deep to claim the set, pumping her fist and gesturing to her coach as she celebrated. However, it was the 22-year-old Estonian Kontaveit who won the decider.

World number 20 Kontaveit has now played both her round-robin matches, after losing on Tuesday to Belgium's Elise Mertens, who will play Goerges today. Yesterday's third and last match saw Spain's Garbine Muguruza beat China's Zhang Shuai.

The seventh seed dropped the first set, but recovered to win 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 in just over two hours. In her post-match press conference, the 25-year-old said: "I didn't start very well. I didn't find my rhythm and I was giving her a lot of free points."

"After the first set I thought, it doesn't matter, we have another set.... It was a good challenge for me to look for something more and to try to change it and to have the chance to win the match again."

Now in its fourth year the Elite Trophy features 12 players ranked roughly from nine to 20. This year's total prize money is \$2.35 million across the singles and doubles tournaments. — AFP



ZHUHAI: Daria Kasatkina of Russia serves to Madison Keys of the US in their women's singles second round match of the Zhuhai Elite Trophy tennis tournament in Zhuhai, in south China's Guangdong province yesterday. —AFP

Djokovic wins Paris opener as Federer confirms return

PARIS: Novak Djokovic stepped up his pursuit of the world number one ranking with a 7-5, 6-1 win over Joao Sousa at the Paris Masters on Tuesday, while Roger Federer confirmed he will play at the event for the first time since 2015.

Djokovic can regain top spot from Rafael Nadal this week if he betters the Spaniard's performance in the French capital, where the Serb is a four-time winner of the indoor tournament. Djokovic had never dropped a set in five previous meetings with Portugal's Sousa, but he surrendered a 4-1 lead in the opener and appeared under the weather before regrouping to break Sousa at 6-5.

The 14-time Grand Slam champion then reeled off five games in a row to end Sousa's resistance and book a meeting with Damiir Dzumhur of Bosnia in the last 16. Dzumhur defeated rising Greek star and 14th seed Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3, 6-3.

Federer will play Canada's Milos Raonic today after receiving a bye in the first round. Federer's only tournament victory in Bercy came in 2011. On his last appearance in 2015 he was knocked out by American John Isner in the round of 16.

The Swiss star missed the event the past two years due to a combination of injury and selective scheduling. He has also sat out the last three French Opens. It is the first non-Grand Slam event to feature Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic since last year's Indian Wells Masters.

"I feel like it's better for me to play matches rather than practice, and I think that's it. As long as I don't feel like I'm taking a chance on



PARIS: Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Portugal's Joao Sousa during their men's singles second round match on day two of the ATP World Tour Masters 1000 - Rolex Paris Masters - indoor tennis tournament at The AccorHotels Arena in Paris. — AFP

my health prior to London (the ATP Tour Finals), that's the key as well," Federer said.

"I'm happy to play tomorrow. I feel like I recovered well from last week. So yeah, I'll give it a go tomorrow. I'm excited," he added, after winning the Swiss indoor championships in Basel on Sunday.

Raonic fired 23 aces as he outlasted France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/5) in his opening match. Federer also revealed he had received an invite to take part in an exhibition featuring Nadal and Djokovic in Saudi Arabia in December, but the 37-year-old said he turned down the approach.

"I didn't want to play there at that time. So, for me, it was a very quick decision," said Federer. Nadal and Djokovic are scheduled to meet in Jeddah on December 22, but they

have faced growing calls to withdraw following the murder of a Saudi journalist in the country's consulate in Istanbul.

Both players this week have said they are assessing the situation and have yet to make a final decision over their participation. Nadal, who has never won the Paris Masters, begins his campaign in the French capital against fellow Spaniard Fernando Verdasco, a 6-4, 6-4 winner over France's Jeremy Chardy.

Fifth seed Marin Cilic cruised into the third round with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over German veteran Philipp Kohlschreiber. Gilles Simon was the only one of six Frenchmen to advance on Tuesday, defeating compatriot Lucas Pouille 6-3, 6-4, with Pierre-Hugues Herbert and qualifier Benoit Paire losing to Mikhail Kukushkin and Marton Fucsovics respectively. — AFP

Japan doctors warn heat could make Tokyo 2020 Olympic marathon 'deadly'

TOKYO: A group of Japanese doctors yesterday urged Olympic organisers to start the Tokyo 2020 marathon as early as 5:30am, saying failure to do so could "lead to deaths" from heatstroke. The warning is the latest in a chorus of concern about how extreme heat could affect several sporting events at the Olympic games, particularly after Tokyo sweltered through a record heatwave this year.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Tokyo 2020 organisers have acknowledged the concerns and already moved the marathon start time up 30 minutes to 7:00am, with competitive walking starting even earlier. But the Japan Medical Association and the Tokyo Medical Association said that was insufficient because most of the course would still be run in heat levels that were dangerous, and under which physical activity should be halted.

"We are seriously concerned about it," Kimiyuki Nagashima, a senior official with the Japan Medical Association told reporters yesterday. "If the risk of heatstroke is high for not only athletes but also staff members and the audience, there will be a rising demand for emergency services, which will have

serious impact on medical institutions and regular patients."

The associations are calling for the start time to be moved to 5:30am, and the presidents of both groups met earlier this week with the head of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee to press the issue.

"We wouldn't have visited the organising committee if we'd thought it was only slightly worrying... we fear the current plan could lead to deaths," Haruo Ozaki, president of the Tokyo Medical Association, told AFP.

Heat stroke kills hundreds of people each year across Japan, and this year record temperatures caused a spike in fatalities and hospital visits. Masa Takaya, a spokesman for the 2020 organisers, said the doctors had presented "a serious opinion based on expert knowledge."

"We'll share it with working groups of the IOC and IPC (International Paralympic Committee)" that are discussing issues of heat, he told AFP. The IOC has backed calls for Japan to adopt daylight savings during the Games to ease the heat situation, but there is little support among Japanese lawmakers or the public for the proposal, which is viewed as too disruptive. — AFP

Last-minute deal aims to salvage Canada's Winter Olympics bid

OTTAWA: Ottawa and the province of Alberta have struck a last-minute funding deal to salvage Canada's 2026 Winter Olympics bid ahead of a crucial vote yesterday on canceling the process.

Calgary city councilors are scheduled to decide on a recommendation from the Olympic committee to end their pursuit of hosting duties over a lack of cash from the central and provincial governments.

But talks overnight between federal and provincial officials resulted in a proposal to fund most of the public costs, and reduce Calgary's share of the burden. "A deal (was) reached between the feds and province," a senior Canadian government source told AFP, on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly on the agreement.

"Calgary had asked that there was a provincial and federal agreement in place before they could make a funding decision on their end. Now that that is in place... it's up to Calgary now to decide," the official said. The agreement—which would see the original Can\$3 billion (US\$2.3 billion) public portion of the Games budget reduced slightly and, along with it, each party's share of the costs—has been validated by federal Sports Minister Kirsty Duncan and Alberta Premier Rachel Notley.

If Calgary city council votes to keep its bid alive, the next hurdle would be a refer-

endum on November 13. Evan Woolley, chairman of the Olympic bid committee, held out little hope of the council voting to move ahead, however, telling public broadcaster CBC the funding deal had been struck too late to allow Calgarians to make an "educated decision."

The host city of the 2026 Winter Olympics will be announced in June next year in Lausanne. Calgary withdrawing its bid would leave only Milan and Stockholm in the running. The International Olympic Committee is facing a scarcity of applications for the Winter Games, with many being scared off by the huge bill for Sochi 2014.

Several cities that initially expressed interest in hosting the 2026 edition pulled out after tepid support from their local populations. As the last Canadian city to host the Winter Olympics in 2010, Vancouver lost tens of millions of dollars despite the event costing a relatively modest US\$7 billion, when compared to the US\$50 billion for Sochi.

Calgary previously organized the 1988 Winter Games and so can save on facilities, but new construction will still be needed. Financing talks came to a head on Friday, when Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi threatened to end the city's bid if the federal government didn't pony up more money. — AFP

Ooredoo's ambassador Al Jeraiwi wins bronze in 2018 West Asian Championship in Jordan

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait's brand ambassador, triathlete Najla Al-Jeraiwi, won the bronze medal in the 2018 West Asian Championship, which includes running, swimming, and cycling. The triathlon was held last Friday 27th October in Aqaba City, Jordan, and included three categories: Men's individual race, women's individual race, and mixed relay.

In a press statement, Ooredoo Kuwait lauded the achievement, noting that her victory brings pride to all the youth of Kuwait. The sponsorship of athlete Al-Jeraiwi comes in alignment with the company's core values of caring, connecting, and challenging. It further underscores the company's commitment to empowering women.

Al-Jeraiwi has a long track record of key achievements. She won the gold medal in the Sierra Nevada Triathlon, in the Spanish district of Granada last June. She won the bronze medal in the African Triathlon Union Cup - the Pan Arab Competition, held in Sharm Al Shaikh last March. She was the first Arab female triathlete representative in the 17th Asian Games, South Korea and the first GCC representative in UCI Road World Championships 2016. She was also the runner-up in the ATU African Triathlon & Pan Arab Championship and the GCC cycling champion in both Time Trial and Road race. Al-Jeraiwi is currently the national champion of Kuwait in both triathlon



and cycling. She has come in the top 3 in multiple regional triathlons.

Supporting youth and empowering women is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in 2017 to support youth projects and initiatives. Ooredoo is continuously working with the different entities in both private and public sectors to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields.

Sports

Jordan Eberle scores twice as Islanders double up Penguins

Marchand scores twice to lift Bruins past Hurricanes

PITTSBURG: The New York Islanders produced a three-goal second period Tuesday, two of the tallies from Jordan Eberle, and rolled to a 6-3 win over the host Pittsburgh Penguins. Andrew Ladd, Brock Nelson, Matt Martin and Tom Kuhnhackl also scored as the Islanders won their third straight. Sidney Crosby had a goal and an assist, and Dominik Simon and Evgeni Malkin also scored for Pittsburgh, which had won four in a row. New York's Robin Lehner stopped 23 of 25 shots before leaving after the second period for undisclosed reasons. Thomas Greiss stopped 12 of 13 shots in the third.

LIGHTNING 8, DEVILS 3

Brayden Point scored the tiebreaking goal and added four assists in a five-point night as Tampa Bay rallied from an early deficit and pulled away for blowout victory over visiting New Jersey. Point snapped a 2-2 tie 31 seconds into the second period by sweeping a loose puck into a vacated net. He also set up the first of Brayden Coburn's two goals in the opening period, a power-play goal by Steven Stamkos in the second and tallies by Tyler Johnson and Ryan McDonagh in the third period. Point recorded the 11th five-point game in team history and third since the start of last season.

COYOTES 5, SENATORS 1

Alex Galchenyuk scored his first goal of the season in a two-point night, and Antti Raanta made 25 saves as Arizona defeated Ottawa at Glendale, Ariz., for its fourth straight win. The Coyotes, shut out in three of their first four games, have been one of the most prolific scoring teams in the league lately, with 20 goals in their last four games. Ottawa goalie Mike Condon gave up three goals on 11 shots and was pulled at 15:30 of the first period. The only goal for the Senators, losers of four straight, was the first NHL tally for 2017 second-round pick Alex Formenton.

PREDATORS 4, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 1

Ryan Hartman scored two goals and Juse Saros had 23 saves as host Nashville scored four unanswered goals to rally for a victory over Vegas in a matchup of the last two Western Conference champions. Hartman's two

goals came just 57 seconds apart in the second period and marked the third multi-goal game of his career. Calle Jarnkrok and Viktor Arvidsson also scored goals for Nashville, while Kevin Fiala chipped in with two assists. Reilly Smith scored the lone goal for Vegas, on a first-period power play. Malcolm Subban, playing against his brother and 2013 Norris Trophy winner P.K. Subban for just the second time in their careers, finished with 25 saves for Vegas.

BRUINS 3, HURRICANES 2

Brad Marchand scored twice and Patrice Bergeron assisted on all three Boston tallies in a victory at Raleigh, N.C. Boston goalie Jaroslav Halak made 42 saves while Carolina goalie Scott Darling made 28 saves in his first appearance of the season. Micheal Ferland and Dougie Hamilton scored for the Hurricanes.

STARS 4, CANADIENS 1

Devin Shore scored a third-period goal after assisting on two second-period tallies as visiting Dallas skated past Montreal. Esa Lindell added a goal and an assist in the victory, which was the Stars' first on the road this season after three losses. Dallas also got goals from Miro Heiskanen and Alexander Radulov while winning for the third time in four games. Montreal, which lost for the second time in its past four games, scored when Brendan Gallagher skated hard into the net and pushed home the rebound of a Tomas Tatar shot early in the third period.

RED WINGS 5, BLUE JACKETS 3

Tyler Bertuzzi scored the go-ahead goal with 3:24 remaining, Dylan Larkin supplied two goals and an assist, and visiting Detroit recovered after giving away a three-goal lead to down Columbus. Bertuzzi's goal came after the Jackets erased a 3-0 deficit during the third period. Rookie defenseman Dennis Cholowski skated in from the point and went around the back of the net. He shoveled the puck toward the front, where Bertuzzi snared it and beat Sergei Bobrovsky just below the crossbar. Larkin added an empty-net tally at 19:17 to put the game away. Josh Anderson, Markus Nutivaara and Pierre-Luc Dubois scored for the Blue Jackets.



GLENDAL: Vinnie Hinostroza #13 of the Arizona Coyotes and Dylan DeMelo #2 of the Ottawa Senators skate after a loose puck during the second period of the NHL game at Gila River Arena on Tuesday in Glendale, Arizona. — AFP

FLAMES 2, SABRES 1

A late equalizer and Johnny Gaudreau's overtime goal gave Calgary a comeback road win in Buffalo. After being unable to solve Sabres goaltender Carter Hutton over the first 59 minutes of the game, Calgary finally broke through at the 19:04 mark of the third period when Matthew Tkachuk redirected a shot into the net. After the Flames had to kill a penalty for the first two minutes of overtime, Gaudreau ended the game 2:40 into the extra frame, netting the score after a nice passing play with Sean Monahan and Mark Giordano. Buffalo's Jack Eichel scored in the first period.

WILD 4, OILERS 3

Mikael Granlund scored the tiebreaking goal at 14:12 of the third period as Minnesota ended host Edmonton's three-game winning streak. Granlund's power-play goal, assisted by Eric Staal and Ryan Suter, gave the Wild their only lead of the game and helped them improve to 1-1-0 on their season-high, seven-game trip. Granlund, who also had an assist, extended his points streak to nine games. He has six goals and six assists during the run. Leon Draisaitl, Connor McDavid and Alex Chiasson scored for Edmonton. — Reuters

Lehmann reveals emotional struggles over sandpaper-gate

SYDNEY: Former national coach Darren Lehmann revealed yesterday how he has paid a heavy emotional toll over the ball-tampering scandal and claimed under-fire Cricket Australia could have done more to support him. Lehmann continues to receive counselling, having gone through some dark times since his life was turned upside down by the incident in the third Test against South Africa in March.

He tearfully quit in the aftermath despite being cleared of any direct role and contracted until the 2019 Ashes series in England, with Justin Langer taking over. His decision followed then captain Steve Smith, his deputy David Warner and opening batsman Cameron Bancroft receiving lengthy bans for the plot to alter the ball using sandpaper.

"I saw people, and am still seeing people about it. That's a work in progress," Lehmann told the Sydney Daily Telegraph as he prepares to re-launch his career as a commentator. "I don't think people know how much it affects people behind the scenes, but that's one of those things that you go through. The help of family and close friends got me through."

Lehmann, who will be behind the microphone for Australia's first one-day international against South Africa in Perth on Sunday, said the governing body offered psychological support "but you could always have more, can't you?"

"For me, it was okay. It was a tough time and you had bad days and good days and I'm sure all those other three blokes (players) had worse days," he said. "You just hope they get the right help, everyone gets the right help when they need it. There could have been more help but they certainly didn't just leave us hanging either."

Lehmann was hailed as a saviour when he took over in 2013 and led Australia to a 5-0 sweep in the 2013-2014 Ashes Test series against old rivals England. But he has since been accused by critics of overseeing a toxic team culture that damaged the reputation of the famed Baggy Green cap.

While he and the three players have all paid a price, no one at Cricket



Darren Lehmann

Australia has been held to account, although the governing body has accepted some culpability and former CEO James Sutherland has departed, along with team performance boss Pat Howard.

An independent review that CA commissioned, released Monday, slammed its "arrogant" and "controlling" culture leading up to the tampering furore, triggering calls for chairman David Peever to quit.

But Lehmann refuted a section of the review that claimed players had "abused" their own staff on match days. There was also a damning assessment of what was described as a bully-boy culture in the dressing room.

"No, I didn't personally (see players abuse staff). That might have been before my time. I didn't see that in my time. They were always respectful and I didn't have a problem with that," he told the newspaper.

"You're a family travelling around," he added. "Some of that has been hurtful saying the culture is not great, because it's not too bad." — AFP

Ganguly fears for Indian cricket amid #MeToo row

NEW DELHI: Former captain Sourav Ganguly expressed his "deep sense of fear" about the running of Indian cricket as he slammed the sloppy handling of #MeToo allegations against board chief executive Rahul Johri, among other key issues.

Johri was accused of sexual harassment on October 12 in an account shared by author Harnidh Kaur on Twitter, and the board's administrative committee gave him a week to explain. However, the Supreme Court-appointed committee is divided on the issue, with its two members arguing over the course of action against Johri.

Ganguly, who heads Bengal's state cricket association, criticised the functioning of the national board, the richest and most powerful cricket body in the world. "I write this mail to you all with the deep sense of fear as to where Indian cricket administration is going," Ganguly wrote to BCCI secretary Amitabh Choudhary, president CK Khanna and treasurer

er Anirudh Chaudhary, in a letter seen by AFP.

"I don't know how far it's true, but the recent reports of harassment has really made the BCCI look very poorly... more so the way it has been handled," he said. Ganguly, 46, also criticised the board over last year's appointment of national coach Ravi Shastri, after a selection process that sidelined his predecessor, Anil Kumble.

Ganguly, who was part of the advisory panel involved in the selection, along with Sachin Tendulkar and VVS Laxman, had recommended Kumble's extension after the spin legend was given the job in June 2016.

But Kumble decided to resign, citing his "untenable" relationship with skipper Virat Kohli. "My experience in the matter of coach selection was appalling (the less said the better)," Ganguly said. "Indian cricket with its massive following has been built over the years of hard work from superb administrators and greatest of cricketers who have managed to bring thousands of fans to the ground... I at the present moment think it's in danger."

The BCCI plunged into crisis in January 2017 when Supreme Court judges ordered the dismissal of president Anurag Thakur over the failure to enact a series of recommended reforms.

Cricket's massive popularity in India has helped the BCCI become by far the wealthiest



Sourav Ganguly

of all of the sport's national boards, netting massive money from sponsorship and TV deals. But it has also been embroiled in a series of scandals, including accusations of corruption and match-fixing that tarnished the Indian Premier League (IPL) — the board's lucrative Twenty20 competition. — AFP

ICC suspends Lanka bowling coach over match-fixing

COLOMBO: The International Cricket Council (ICC) yesterday suspended Sri Lanka's bowling coach Nuwan Zoysa after accusing him of match-fixing and other "corrupt conduct" in the sport. "Mr Zoysa has 14 days from 1 November 2018 to respond to the charges," the ICC said in a brief statement.

Zoysa is charged, among other things, for "being party to an effort to fix or contrive or to otherwise influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or other aspect of an International match", the statement said. It gave no further details.

Forty-year-old Zoysa is the second Sri Lankan to be charged by the ICC's anti-corruption unit (ACU). Earlier this month, dashing former batsman, ex-chief selector and former captain Sanath Jayasuriya was charged for failing to cooperate with a match-fixing probe and concealing information.

Jayasuriya, 49, was reportedly asked to cooperate with an inquiry from ACU chief Alex Marshall who visited Sri Lanka last month. The ACU is acting further on their previous investigation which in January 2016 saw Galle stadium curator Jayananda Warnaweera banned for three years after he failed to cooperate with the ACU.

ACU head Marshall last month said: "There is currently an ICC (ACU) investigation under way in Sri Lanka. Naturally as part of this we are talking to a number of people." It was not immediately clear if the charges against Zoysa and Jayasuriya relate to the same case or if they are being investigated separately.

Sri Lanka has recently sought help from neighbouring India to drafting laws to combat cheating in the game. Colombo has also promised to establish a special police unit to investigate match-fixing after a documentary aired in May showed Galle groundsman Tharanga Indika and professional cricketer Tharindu Mendis allegedly talking about doctoring the pitch for the Test against England starting November 6.

Indika and Mendis have been suspended by Sri Lanka Cricket pending an ICC investigation. A third man, provincial coach Jeevantha Kulatunga, was also suspended. — AFP

Winning title will be harder than last year, says Silva

LONDON: Manchester City's Bernardo Silva claims winning the title this season would be an even better achievement than their record-breaking triumph last term. Pep Guardiola's side smashed a host of Premier League milestones as they finished 19 points clear of second-placed Manchester United.

And, while they haven't hit those heights so far this season, City are firmly in the hunt to win the title again. A 1-0 win at Tottenham on Monday lifted them back to the top of the table, above Liverpool on goal difference.

It was their eighth win from 10 games and their sixth successive clean sheet, but Silva has the feeling it will be much tougher for City to remain on top this season. "I think it will be harder because last season nobody was expecting us to

win as many games and to reach that level of points, so this season the teams know they have to do better to beat us," Silva said.

"Of course it will be very hard, but we will work every game to get the three points and at the end of it try and celebrate winning one more Premier League. "I think either Chelsea and Liverpool are contenders, they are very strong, Arsenal as well.

"Even Tottenham, even though they lost, they're still contenders." What makes City's quest slightly easier is the fact they have already visited Liverpool, Arsenal and Tottenham and have come away unscathed, with seven points.

Portugal midfielder Silva says it could be important to have picked up points in these games ahead of the return fixtures, which will come over the title run-in. "I think that's important to win these games, to have a draw away at Anfield, to win at the Emirates and now here at Wembley, it's important," he said.

"But still they have to come to play us at the Etihad, which is a bit better for us. "It's still the beginning of the season and anything can happen, we have to keep strong and with the ambition of winning every game and never relax." — AFP

Sports

La Liga chief Javier Tebas steps up pressure on PSG

'If you cheat, you have to be thrown out'

PARIS: The president of Spain's La Liga, Javier Tebas, has stepped up his criticism of Paris Saint-Germain as he pushed UEFA to kick teams out of the Champions League for breaching their Financial Fair Play rules.

UEFA opened an investigation into the Qatari-owned club's spending in September 2017 under pressure from some of Europe's footballing elite after they signed Neymar from Barcelona for a world-record 222 million euros (\$264 million).

They then completed a deal to sign Kylian Mbappe from Monaco for 180 million euros just a few weeks later, and Tebas has been especially vocal in his criticism of PSG's finances, while also targeting Abu Dhabi-owned Manchester City.

"UEFA's Financial Fair Play rules say that when you cheat with your budgets, you have to be thrown out of the competition," Tebas said Tuesday during an interview in Paris with several media, including AFP. PSG have never been barred from playing in the Champions League, although in late September UEFA said it had referred the accusations against the French giants to its financial unit "for further investigation".

UEFA rules mandate that clubs cannot spend more

than they earn in any given season and deficits must fall within a 30-million-euro limit over three seasons.

PSG's case, though, is complicated by lucrative sponsorship deals with the Qatar National Bank and the Gulf state's tourism authority. Tebas claims his faith in UEFA and FFP is wavering.

"I am sceptical. I have to have confidence just now. When this whole process ends, ask me again," said the 56-year-old.

Tebas has ignored the pleas of PSG president Nasser Al Khelaifi to stop his public criticism of the French champions and claims he is not simply trying to protect the interests of Spanish giants Real Madrid and Barcelona.

Both clubs, along with other traditional European giants, have been threatened by the emergence of PSG and City with their mega-rich Gulf owners. "I want football to be economically balanced, so that there are no devious methods to becoming big, because this places football's economic structure in danger," he said. "In this case I am defending the interests of professional football in Europe."

"UEFA's Financial Fair Play rules are there to be

obeyed. We also denounced Manchester City and we are studying other clubs in Europe, not just PSG. The thing is that PSG have been the most blatant."

He blames the two clubs for the continuing inflation of wages and transfer fees, with PSG's deal for Neymar more than double the world record at the time-Manchester United bought Paul Pogba from Juventus for 105 million euros a year earlier.

"If players' salaries and transfer fees go up because television rights have gone up, through money that has come into football, that is normal. Inflation is bad when the money doesn't come from football, but from gas or oil."

Meanwhile, Tebas says he is prepared to appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) if his plans to stage a match in the United States are blocked. "We will go to the CAS or the competent courts. We think we have the right legally and ethically," he said.

His response came after FIFA president Gianni Infantino confirmed last week that world football's governing body is opposed to La Liga's plans to take the league game between Barcelona and Girona to Miami on January 26.



Javier Tebas

"Why can the NBA take official matches out of the USA, and go and play in London, and we cannot? We are talking about one match with the strategic motive of trying to grow and improve La Liga's brand." — AFP

Asian football boss urges 'fair play' in presidential poll

KUALA LUMPUR: Asian Football Confederation president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa yesterday called for "fair play" in next year's elections where he will seek a fresh, four-year term as president.

The Bahraini royal said he had the support of nearly 90 percent of the AFC's 46 full members, but warned against "third-party interference" in the vote next April. Sheikh Salman first took the reins in 2013 when the Asian body was still reeling from a corruption scandal which saw his predecessor, Mohamed bin Hammam, banned from football for life.

"In Asia and particularly here at the AFC, we have built a positive reputation and image in the last five years," he told the AFC annual congress in Kuala Lumpur. "We do not need nor do we want any third-party interference or influence in our elections. We need to be strong on this matter."

The congress passed an amendment to an electoral rule which said candidates must be backed by their home country and two other federations. Any three nominations are now acceptable. It also approved a proposal to formally recognise five regional associations within the AFC.

At the AFC Congress in April, Sheikh Salman could face a challenge from Saudi Arabia's Adel Ezzat, head of a new regional bloc, the South West Asian Football Federation. However, the sheikh said he had letters of support from 40 of the federations in the AFC, which has influence as the world's second biggest confederation behind Africa.

"All member associations must be free to exercise their rights for the good of the game. And this,



KUALA LUMPUR: FIFA president Gianni Infantino (R) and AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa (L), hold a plaque after inaugurating the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) new headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday. — AFP

we must remember, is the Asian football family. Our family must stick together," he said. "I can say I won't let you down," added the sheikh.

His potential challenger, Ezzat, resigned as head of the Saudi football federation last month, saying he wanted to focus on the AFC elections. While Saudi Arabia has long been a marginal player in the game, the oil-rich kingdom—currently involved in a diplomatic row with 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar—is seen as being in the midst of a push for influence in football.

Asian football has a chequered history after Qatar's bin Hammam was accused of bribery during his 2011 campaign to unseat the now disgraced Sepp Blatter as president of world body FIFA. After having a life ban annulled by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, bin Hammam was handed a second lifetime ban by FIFA in 2012 for conflict of interest violations. Sheikh Salman was elected in 2013 and completed the last two years of bin Hammam's term, before being re-elected unopposed to a full, four-year term in 2015. — AFP

Neymar risks prison over Barca move, says Spanish magistrate

MADRID: A Spanish magistrate leading an investigation into alleged irregularities in Neymar's move to Barcelona in 2013 said yesterday the Brazilian superstar could face up to six years in prison.

"The term imposed, in principle, could be between four and six years," said a decree issued by judge Jose Maria Vazquez Honrubia, a copy of which was seen by AFP. Neymar, his parents, Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu and his predecessor Sandro Rosell are all awaiting trial over alleged corruption concerning Neymar's move to the Spanish La Liga giants in 2013.

The Brazilian international forward is now with Paris Saint-Germain in France's Ligue 1. The case, which follows a complaint by DIS, a Brazilian group which part-owned the rights to Neymar, surrounds allegations of "corruption" and "fraud" in the player's move to Barcelona.

Neymar moved to the Spanish La Liga giants in May 2013 for a reported fee of 57.1m euros. Although no financial details of the deal were revealed by either Barcelona or his Brazilian club FC Santos, Neymar's parents were said to have received 40m euros and FC Santos 17.1m.

In January 2014, prosecutors in Madrid began investigating the transfer because documents requested by the authorities contained contradictory information. Rosell resigned from his post as president a week later and Barcelona subsequently revealed they had actually paid 86.2m euros for the Brazilian star.

DIS, who received 6m euros of the 17.1m given to FC Santos, alleges that Barcelona and the Brazilian club colluded to mask the true cost of the deal. Bartomeu, Rosell, Barcelona, FC Santos and its former president, Odilio Rodrigues Filho, are now expected to answer charges of fraud, according to the decree.

Because the prison term involved exceeds five years, three judges are set to preside over Neymar's trial which is expected to be heard at the Audiencia Nacional, a high court with jurisdiction over Spanish territory as well as over international crimes which come under the jurisdiction of Spanish courts.

Whether Neymar faces a prison term remains to be seen, however. In May 2017 the Spanish authorities said Neymar should stand trial but no date has yet been set. —AFP

Roedinghausen give Bayern a German Cup scare

BERLIN: Fourth-tier part-timers Roedinghausen made mighty Bayern Munich work for a 2-1 away win in the second round of the German Cup on Tuesday. It was a poor performance from reigning Bundesliga champions Bayern, and the win came at a price as Thiago Alcantara had to be helped off with 15 minutes to go.

"We have got through but everyone needs to think about their performance here," said goalscorer Thomas Mueller. "We played well for the first 20 minutes, but then we made a lot of mistakes and became nervous."

Bayern were 2-0 up after just 13 minutes in Osnabrueck when stand-in striker Sandro Wagner netted and Mueller converted a penalty in freezing conditions. Bayern wasted the chance to increase their lead on 23 minutes when Renato Sanches fired his penalty attempt against the crossbar. Despite trailing by two at the break, Roedinghausen dreamt of an upset after midfielder Linus Meyer drilled in on 50 minutes to cause nervous glances in the Bayern ranks.

Bayern coach Niko Kovac named a weakened team but still started with 11 internationals. They took the lead after just eight minutes at Osnabrueck's Bremner Bruecke stadium, the 16,000-capacity ground which could have housed the entire population of the nearby municipality of Roedinghausen.

Wagner stabbed home a Sanches volley to give Bayern an early lead. When Sanches was pulled down in the area, Mueller put away the penalty and the Bavarians appeared on course for a routine win.

It should have been 3-0 when Leon Goretzka was fouled in the area, but Sanches smashed his spot-kick off the crossbar. Roedinghausen came



OSNABRUECK: Roedinghausen's Laurin von Pichowski (Center Up) jumps for the ball during the German Cup (DFB Pokal) football match SV Roedinghausen v FC Bayern Munich in Osnabrueck, Germany on Tuesday. — AFP

out with renewed energy after half-time and midfielder Meyer soon had the delight of scoring past Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer.

With 15 minutes left, Roedinghausen goalkeeper Niclas Heimann pulled off a remarkable save to deny Franck Ribery but there was ultimately no fairytale for the hosts. Elsewhere fourth-tier Ulm, who knocked out holders Eintracht Frankfurt in the first round, bowed out after being thumped 5-1 at home by Bundesliga

strugglers Fortuna Duesseldorf.

Wolfsburg carved out a 2-0 win at Hanover 96 in an all-Bundesliga clash with their towering Dutch striker Wout Weghorst claiming his third goal in as many games. Hertha Berlin also booked their place in the third round with a 2-0 win at third-division Darmstadt. Hertha captain Vedad Ibisevic scored just seconds after coming off the bench before defender Maximilian Mittelstaedt added a late second. —AFP

FIFA bans Ghana's former football president for life

LAGOS: Ghana's former football president Kwesi Nyantakyi has been banned by FIFA from football for life and ordered to pay a hefty fine after being found guilty of bribery and corruption. FIFA's ethics committee banned Nyantakyi "for life from all football-related activities (administrative, sports or any other) at both national and international level," it said in a statement issued Tuesday.

The committee found Nyantakyi guilty of "conflicts of interest", "bribery and corruption" and "commission" after being caught on camera accepting bribes. Along with the ban, Nyantakyi faces a fine of CHF 500,000 (\$496,000, 438,000 euros).

In June, a documentary by investigative journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas was broadcast showing hidden camera footage of Ghanaian officials taking bribes, including Nyantakyi. Nyantakyi was accused of requesting \$11 million (9.3 million euros) to secure government contracts.

The revelations rocked Ghana, where football is the national sport and which prides itself as being a stable democracy in an often turbulent region. In September, the Referees Association of Ghana said it had banned eight referees and assistant referees for life while 53 officials were subject to 10-year bans.

Football analysts have described corruption as a "curse" on African football. On Tuesday, 10 youth players from Benin were jailed for one month each for lying about their age after they were kicked out of qualifying for next year's under-17 Africa Cup of Nations finals. At the same hearing, the former president of Benin's football federation, Anjorin Moucharoufou, was sentenced to two months in jail. —AFP

25 Kasatkina hits out at Zhuhai scheduling after Keys defeat



26 Jordan Eberle scores twice as Islanders double up Penguins



27 Asian football boss urges 'fair play' in presidential poll



TORONTO: Danny Green #14 of the Toronto Raptors and Amir Johnson #5 of the Philadelphia 76ers go for a loose ball on Tuesday at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. —AFP

Leonard, Raptors rout 76ers 129-112

Trail Blazers thump miserable Rockets in Houston

TORONTO: Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points and grabbed seven rebounds, and Jonas Valanciunas added 23 points off the bench as the Toronto Raptors defeated the visiting Philadelphia 76ers 129-112 on Tuesday night. Kyle Lowry added 20 points and 12 assists for his fifth double-double of the season for Toronto, and Pascal Siakam finished with 15 points and 15 rebounds. Serge Ibaka chipped in with 16 points and eight rebounds, and Danny Green scored 10 points, putting all five starters in double digits in points. It was the sixth straight home victory to open the season for the Raptors, a franchise best. They also have defeated the 76ers in 12 consecutive home games. Joel Embiid scored 31 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for Philadelphia, and Ben Simmons finished with 11 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds—along with 11 turnovers. Robert Covington added 15 points while JJ Redick (13) and Mike Muscala (12) combined for 25 off the bench.

TRAIL BLAZERS 104, ROCKETS 85

Jusuf Nurkic, Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum combined for 63 points and visiting Portland dismantled suddenly hapless Houston, the Rockets' fourth straight loss. The Trail Blazers, completing a four-game, six-day road trip, overcame a sluggish start and pulled away from the rested Rockets with a 15-3 run in the second quarter. Nurkic and Lillard each had 22 points, and McCollum added 19. The Rockets, playing a second consecutive game without All-NBA guard James

Harden (Grade 1-plus left hamstring strain), offered token resistance in the second half, trailing by as many as 28 points while remaining winless at home. Chris Paul led Houston with 17 points and nine assists, and Clint Capela had 14 points and 14 rebounds.

CELTICS 108, PISTONS 105

Kyrie Irving capped a 23-7 third-quarter run with 11 consecutive points, including three 3-pointers, propelling host Boston to a big lead—which the Celtics nearly blew before hanging on in a wild one against Detroit. Irving led all scorers with 31 points, helping the Celtics beat the Pistons for the second time in four days. Blake Griffin (24 points, 15 rebounds) and Andre Drummond (17 points, 12 rebounds) each had double-doubles for the Pistons. Detroit led 60-58 in the third minute of the third quarter before the Celtics scored 10 straight points to take a lead they never relinquished. The Pistons rallied within 90-89 on a Reggie Bullock free throw with 4:21 remaining, but Irving, Jaylen Brown and Marcus Morris countered with consecutive hoops to create some breathing room and the Celtics went on to win their third straight.

THUNDER 128, CLIPPERS 110

Russell Westbrook and Paul George each scored 32 points, and Oklahoma City used an offensive eruption to open the second half and ultimately overrun visiting Los Angeles. Trailing 67-54 at halftime, the Thunder

went on a 23-2 run to open the third quarter, winning their second consecutive game after opening the season with four consecutive defeats. Westbrook, who missed the first two games of the season after undergoing a knee procedure, has scored at least 23 points in three of the four games he has played. He has scored at least 30 points twice. He was not on the court when Oklahoma City lost to the Clippers 108-92 on Oct. 19 at Los Angeles.

CAVALIERS 136, HAWKS 114

Rodney Hood scored a season-high 26 points and helped Cleveland beat visiting Atlanta to earn its first win in seven games this season. The win marked the debut of Cleveland coach Larry Drew, who took over following the firing of Tyronn Lue on Sunday. The Cavaliers also got 20 points from Cedi Osman, who has reached that mark in the past two games. The Cavaliers were playing without Kevin Love, who missed his third straight game with a sore left foot. Trae Young led Atlanta with 24 points, and Alex Len had 20 points and nine rebounds.

KINGS 107, MAGIC 99

Sacramento won for the fourth straight time, beating host Orlando for the Kings' best start in four seasons. Sacramento's 5-3 start this season is its best since a 5-3 opening to the 2014-15 season, and the Kings are two games over .500 for the first time since Nov. 28 that

same season. Buddy Hield led the Kings with a season-high 25 points and 11 rebounds, and Nemanja Bjelica added 21 points. Willie Cauley-Stein contributed 14 points and 11 rebounds. Aaron Gordon (18 points, 10 rebounds) and Nikola Vucevic (15 points, 15 boards) had double-doubles for the Magic.

HORNETS 125, HEAT 113

Tony Parker came off the bench for 24 points and 11 assists as host Charlotte beat Miami for the second time in 11 days. Parker, a 17-year veteran in his first season with the Hornets, shot 8 of 15 from the field on a night when the Hornets hit 54.3 percent from the floor and were 13 of 28 from 3-point range. Malik Monk and Nicolas Batum each had 20 points for Charlotte. Dwyane Wade topped the Heat with 19 points, and Hassan Whiteside contributed 16 points and 12 rebounds.

GRIZZLIES 107, WIZARDS 95

Garrett Temple scored 20 points, and Mike Conley and Marc Gasol added 19 apiece as Memphis topped visiting Washington for its second straight win. Temple hit 4 of 7 3-point attempts and all six of his foul shots. He also grabbed seven rebounds. John Wall scored 22 points and Bradley Beal added 17 for the Wizards, who dropped the final four games of their five-game road trip. Wall had seven assists and nine turnovers. — Reuters

FIFA boss says 48 teams 'feasible' for Qatar WCup

KUALA LUMPUR: FIFA president Gianni Infantino said expanding the 2022 World Cup to 48 teams was "feasible" yesterday, as hosts Qatar pledged to come to a decision in the early part of next year.

Infantino said "Why not?" bring forward the expansion from 32 teams to 48, which is currently due at the 2026 tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico. "We have decided... to increase the number of teams participating in the World Cup final tournaments from 32 to 48," Infantino told the Asian Football Confederation's annual congress in Kuala Lumpur.

"It will happen in 2026. Will it happen in

2022? You know me. It is possible. It is possible. Why not?" he added. Infantino said an expanded tournament would see Asia's allocation rise from 4.5 places to 8.5, raising cheers from the delegates assembled at a luxury hotel in the Malaysian capital.

"You will have (a bigger) chance. It is possible. It is feasible. We are discussing with our Qatari friends. We are discussing with many other friends in the region. We hope we have it happen. We always have to try," he said.

Accommodating another 16 teams would vastly complicate Qatar's task in preparing for the World Cup, which was awarded to the tiny desert state in 2010. Qatar has also been involved in a stand-off with neighbours Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, who have cut off diplomatic relations and imposed a blockade on the resource-rich country, accusing it of endorsing terror activities.

Hassan al-Thawadi, head of the 2022 organising body, told AFP that Qatar was studying the 48 teams proposal and would make a decision

before qualifying gets under way. "We are still looking at the feasibility studies and we will be in a better position to provide a feedback in the future," he said.

"But it will be decided before the qualifications... sometime in the first quarter of next year." He added that preparations remained on track despite the blockade, and that the budget of \$200 billion for the entire infrastructure, including metro and expressway, has not been affected.

"We are very happy and excited with the progress. It is on track. By 2020-2021 all our (eight) stadiums will be ready," al-Thawadi said. "This is the first World Cup in the Middle East and is a perfect opportunity to bring people together and contribute to the process of healing," he added. Ahead of FIFA's presidential election next year, Infantino said 180 out of the 211 federations had given him their support. "You know there is an election coming. I have announced I will be a (presidential) candidate. I have received over 180 letters of support," he said. "And when it comes to Asia, only a couple are missing." — AFP



KUALA LUMPUR: FIFA president Gianni Infantino speaks during the inauguration of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) new headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday. —AFP