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# Heads roll over rain deluge; MPs demand minister's resignation

Roumi decries 'intolerable' failures • PM says security forces on alert



KUWAIT: Images from across Kuwait show submerged vehicles and inundated streets after heavy rainfall hit the country early yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Kuwaiti sees end to Gulf row; oil output could resume

KUWAIT: A protracted conflict involving the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is not insurmountable, Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said yesterday, hoping the standoff will not threaten the unity of the bloc. "We will do everything in our power to preserve peace, security and our existence," he said during ministerial talks dealing with joint work in the Gulf region. He said an issue of such enormity is too serious to be downplayed, but the "collective wisdoms of Gulf leaders will get us past this hurdle".

The talks in Kuwait are a "glimmer of hope" that the cohesion of the bloc will remain intact, he added, saying such meetings are needed to protect a bond that has stood the test of time. Jarallah said since the GCC ministerial council's inception in 2008, tremendous progress has been made over plans to conduct joint work and keep the camaraderie within the regional bloc alive. GCC Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani thanked HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his commitment to bringing the people of the Gulf region closer together. He highlighted the need to expedite the passage of legislations that reinforce solidarity among Gulf nations, revealing that annual gatherings will be held to inform the people of the GCC of achievements that have been made in that regard. Such initiatives are a testament to the bloc's eagerness to support joint work and cooperation, the GCC chief explained.

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KUWAIT: Ministerial talks dealing with joint work in the Gulf region were held yesterday. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The government acted swiftly yesterday following massive devastation caused by heavy rains that shut many key roads and forced the government to declare a public holiday. The government sacked head of the public roads authority Ahmad Al-Hassan and referred the undersecretary of the ministry of public works Awatef Al-Ghuneim for retirement following the ministry's failure to face the impact of the heavy rains. Minister of Public Works Hussam Al-Roumi later issued a decree suspending two assistant undersecretaries for two months for "public interest" - assistant undersecretary for maintenance engineering Mohammad bin Nekhi and assistant undersecretary for health engineering Abdelmohsen Al-Enzi.

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Roumi, after holding an emergency meeting held with municipality directors and representatives from the traffic and fire departments, said he will not remain silent over what happened. He added that a neutral investigation committee has been formed to probe the causes of the 'intolerable' failures of the road network and sanitation system, indicating those responsible will be held accountable. Kuwait was lashed overnight by heavy torrential rains caused by a massive thunderstorm and strong lightning, in which several key roads were deluged. HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said yesterday security forces are ready to deal with any emergencies. In comments broadcast on state television, the prime minister assured the nation of immediate action in order to cope with the adverse weather conditions gripping the country. As he toured the interior ministry to assess the level of preparedness of security forces, he revealed that the decision to declare yesterday a public holiday was necessary given the scope of the disaster.

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## Qatar hopes GCC crisis will end; Sisi says army will defend Gulf

DOHA: Qatar's ruler said yesterday "crises pass" but warned of "long-lasting" scars from an acrimonious diplomatic dispute that has seen Doha isolated by Saudi Arabia and its allies for more than a year. In an

annual address to the nation, Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani pointedly called on other Gulf states to respect Qatar's sovereignty and not "interfere" in other countries' affairs. "History teaches us that crises pass, but their mismanagement may leave behind long-lasting effects," Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani said.

Once allies, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain have imposed a near-total embargo on Qatar since June 2017 over allegations the emirate supports radical Islamist groups and seeks closer ties with Riyadh's archrival Tehran. Qatar denies the charges, accusing its neighbors of seeking regime change. The amir said the crisis had exposed the weaknesses of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the regional political bloc of which the rival countries are members. "It's truly

regrettable that the continuation of the Gulf crisis revealed the failure of the GCC to achieve its objectives and meet the aspirations of our Gulf people."

He said Qatar had suffered no economic damage from the boycott and predicted it would retain its position as the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas. "Our oil and gas exports have not been affected by the blockade," he said. "The state has been keen on fulfilling all its obligations under the existing contracts and has signed several long-term contracts, the latest of which was with Petro China."

Doha has moved to attract investors and new trade partners as it builds an economy less reliant on its neighbors, easing restrictions on foreign ownership of

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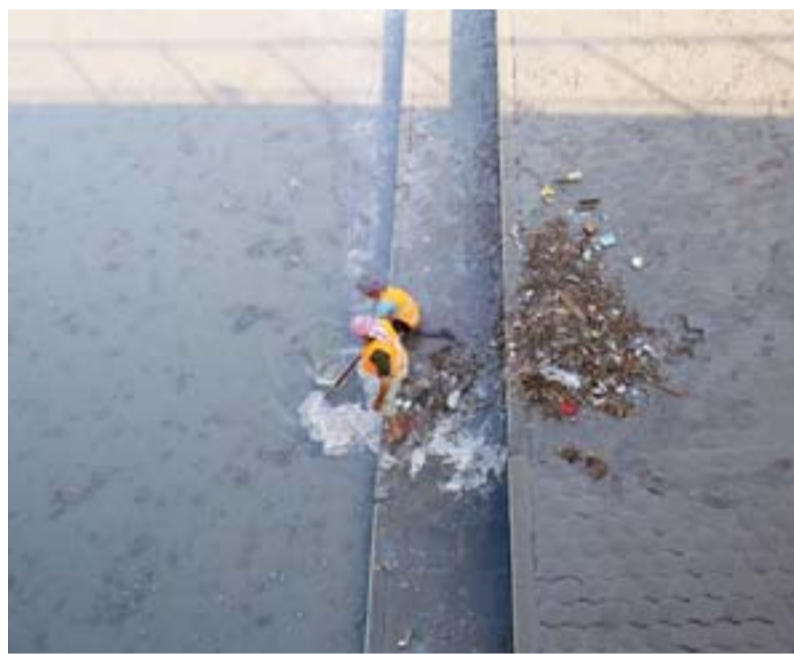
## Local

# Homes, businesses damaged by rainwater; municipality urged to handle complaints

Co-ops affected; directors authorized to make decision to cancel school



KUWAIT: Photos showing the effects of heavy rain that hit Kuwait yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat, Joseph Shagra and Fouad Al-Shaikh



By Faten Omar, Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Life returned to normal on the streets of Kuwait after heavy rains hit the country on Monday night and early yesterday morning, causing flooding on several main roads. Some businesspeople suffered serious losses, while employees took advantage of the day off to enjoy at home or outside. Students also cheered after schools and colleges were closed due to the unstable weather. Videos shared on social media showed vehicles stranded due to flash floods.

Samuel Somik, a salesman at a baqala in Hawally, told Kuwait Times that rainwater damaged bags of rice and other products stored on the floor. "It was not a huge loss, as rain a day earlier made me take some precautions. But the situation was worse for my friends in Jleeb supermarkets," he said.

Ahmed Wahib, a salesman at a clothing store, said rainwater leaked into his shop in Souq Salmiya from the ceiling onto the clothes, causing material damages. "The ceiling leaked water into my shop and damaged some of the goods. I walked this morning into a lake on the floor of my shop. It took me a lot of time to wipe the floor and assess the damage," he said. Wahib was not one of the lucky ones who took the day off and rest at home, but his wife, a teacher at a private school, took their children to the park to enjoy the sunny morning, as her classrooms were flooded.

For Emad Karam, his business did not suffer any damage, but his home turned into an 'indoor lake'. "Rainwater got inside my bedrooms and living room, and even the electricity went off. I did not leave Lebanon to live with no electricity all over again," he said sarcastically. Karam said he was not surprised by what happened to his home, pointing out he had faced similar flooding previously. He told

Kuwait Times he had changed all his furniture after it was damaged by mud mixed with rainwater, as well as electronic devices.

Karam said this heavy rain revealed the corruption and negligence by some people in their work, along with flaws and mistakes. "The streets are cracking. Homes are flooded. Commercial centers are inundated. The funny thing is that the rain only lasted a few hours. What if it rains longer the next time?" He suggested that Kuwait Municipality should open the door to people's complaints and follow up the damage caused by rain in their homes and

noted that no casualties were reported in any of them. Hudhaiban added that work was nonetheless going on and that most co-ops are still providing services to consumers. He added KUCCS has formed a special emergency team to follow up the situation in various affected co-ops.

Separately, MSAL's assistant undersecretary for social care Sheikha Al-Adaani said all residents of social care houses are fine and that none of them were affected by the weather conditions. Adwani added that her sector's employees were all on alert since the beginning of the rainfall and went out on field trips to make sure all residents - especially children and the elderly - were fine. MSAL's assistant undersecretary for social development Hana Al-Hajri said in collaboration with her colleague for financial and administrative affairs Hamad Sayer Al-Enezi, both sectors were deployed to inspect various wedding halls to examine the damage caused by the rain.

#### Be on alert

In the meantime, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and its various sectors are currently preparing to face any contingency resulting from the bad weather conditions, said official sources, noting that educational zone directors have been told to be on alert in the early hours of the morning to contact various stage supervisors and assess the damage caused by the rain. The source added that school directors were instructed to file immediate reports about their respective schools and deal with the situation on the ground. The sources added that MoE is in constant contact with Kuwait Meteorological Center and that educational zone directors have been authorized to make the right decisions whether to cancel school today after consulting school directors, who will judge whether to cancel morning assemblies.



### Social care home residents fine

buildings by specialized engineers, evaluate them and report their causes.

#### Co-ops affected

In the meantime, around 15 co-op societies have been affected by the heavy rainfall, said Abdul Aziz Shuaib, assistant undersecretary for cooperation affairs at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL), adding that coordination is in progress with state departments to assess the damage. Shuaib added that he would meet representatives from the affected co-ops to assess the damage and losses and discuss means to help them.

Meanwhile, chairman of Kuwait Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (KUCCS), Khaled Al-Hudhaiban announced that he toured the co-ops affected by the rain and



Local

# No casualties due to heavy rain; health centers operate overtime

Schools, ministries closed; people advised to stay home



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Ministry of Health confirmed yesterday that there were no injuries or deaths due to the unstable weather conditions and heavy rainfall. Director of Emergency Medical Department Munther Al-Jalameh said that his department has made all preparations to deal with effects of the ongoing unstable weather conditions in the country. Dr Jalameh stressed that the Emergency Medical Department is in constant contact with other emergency bodies represented by the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate, Ministry of Interior and Meteorological experts to follow up on the latest weather conditions in the country. He said that his department has dealt with 205 emergency cases, including 157 asthma and heart cases, noting that most of the cases were treated at home. He confirmed that 74 ambulances were put on alert, attributing delays to the weather conditions.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Health (MoH) official Dr Rehab Al-Watyan said that 42 health centers operated overtime yesterday. Health centers operating in Al-Asimah Health District are Sulaibikaht, Daiya, Adaliya, Kaifan and Yarmouk, she said. Health centers operating in Hawally Health District are Jabriya, West Salmiya, Salwa, Rumaithiya, Bayan, Al-Salam and South Sabah Al-Salem. Health centers operating in Farwaniya Health District are, Abdullah Al-Mubarak, Sabah Al-Nasser, South Al-Ferdaws, South Ardiya, Al-Rabiya, Manahi Al-Osaimi, South Al-Jleeb, Al-Andalus and South Farwaniya. Health centers operating in Jahra District are, Saad Al-Abdullah Block two, Jahra, Al-Qasr, South Sulaibiya, Al-Waha and Abdaly. Health centers operating in Al-Ahmadi district are, Al-Rigga, Bnaider, Al-Sabahiya Western, Fahaheel, new Ali Sabah Al-Salem, Wafrah, Sabah Al-Ahmad, Khiran, Khiran residential, Al-Dahar, Fintas, Hadiya, Western Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Abu Fatira. On the

other hand, Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah and Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha have ordered the directors of health areas and hospitals to have field trips to hospitals and health centers to inspect the progress of work.

**People advised to stay home**

Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) had advised people to stay home and not venture outside due to rainwater flooding some roads. Director General of KFSD Lieutenant General Khaled Al-Mekrad said that fire engine teams were ready to respond to any type of emergency. He urged people to call the 112 number in case of emergency, indicating that the KFSD



**Air navigation, ports operate normally**

had received over 50 calls responding to various urgent matters and situations. Meanwhile, the KFSD urged citizens to follow safety instructions issued by the meteorology center and state media during heavy rain. People were urged to turn off their dwellings' exterior lights and make sure that drainage systems were working properly to avoid flooding. Also, windows and doors should be firmly closed to prevent water seepage, said the KFSD. Firemen dealt with more than 200 calls resulting from rain, most of which reported people trapped in their vehicles, and basements filled with water with people inside. There were other incidents reported of

trees falling, car shades collapsing and lifts malfunctioning. Boats and water pumps were used in most cases.

The Interior Ministry coordinated with the Ministry of Public Works to address the emergency situation caused by the accumulation of rainwater in some roads, which caused traffic congestions and floods. A press release by the Ministry of Interior said that road users were urged to strictly follow traffic rules and regulations so that police officers could deal with the current situation. The ministry also called on citizens and expatriates to avoid venturing out of their dwellings and asked them to contact the emergency number 112 to report any urgent situation. It also urged sea goers to avoid going to the sea. Kuwait National Guard also responded and sent teams to secure vital buildings including the Central Bank of Kuwait and Information Ministry, while other teams worked with firefighters to handle water accumulations at the Fifth Ring Road. Meanwhile, municipal teams rushed to clear roads and drain water resulting from the heavy rain. The teams, especially the ones operating in Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate, worked with other government bodies to clean roads from any obstacles that drivers could face.

**No power outage**

In the meantime, the Ministry of Water and Electricity said that no power outages or malfunctions had been reported at power stations because of the heavy rain. Undersecretary of the ministry Eng Mohammad Boshery said that power cuts in some houses and dwellings might be attributed to water seeping into electrical circuits, which shuts off to prevent damage. The ministry urged people to continually monitor the power board in their respective homes to make sure that no damage has been done, said the official, affirming



that emergency teams of the ministry were ready to address any situation.

**Air navigation normal**

Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in the meantime that air traffic at Kuwait International Airport proceeded normally despite the heavy rain. The air traffic at the airport was normal, director of the air navigation department, Eng Imad Al-Sanoussihe said, refuting at the same time news reports over suspension of air traffic. Kuwait Airways said in a press statement that flights operation from Kuwait International Airport proceeded normally and that the operational schedule is continuing and there is no cancellation of flights. Furthermore, Kuwait's Ports Authority said that the navigation traffic in the three ports of Shuwaikh, Doha and Shuaiba did not sustain any halt. It said that wind speeds and horizontal visibility were still at the safe limit for safety of navigation. It added that all its technical cadres of marine operations managers were ready to deal with any circumstances as a result of the heavy rain.

**Schools, ministries closed**

Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi had announced that all schools in addition to colleges and institutes affiliated with the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) and Kuwait University (KU) were closed yesterday due to unstable weather conditions. According to directives from the cabinet, the decision was made to protect students as well as administrative and teaching staff from harm. The cabinet also issued a decision to suspend work at ministries, government institutions, and schools because of the weather condition.

DGCA's forecaster Dherar Al-Ali said that the level of rainwater in Kuwait City as a result of the thunderstorm reached 58 millimeters while winds reached 64 kilometers per hour km/h. At Kuwait International Airport, rainwater reached 40.4 millimeters with wind speed registering at 95 km/h, while in Salmiya and Failaka Island, the level of water and wind speed reached, 35.2 and 50 millimeters as well as 113, and 70 km/h respectively, said the official. — KUNA



## Local

# Kuwait refers army officers to prosecution over students' death

## Audit Bureau set to brief cabinet on 2017-18 budget review

**KUWAIT:** Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has issued a decree sending the findings of a probe committee on the death of Ali Al Sabah Military Academy students to the public prosecution and military judiciary. Accordingly, a number of army officers have been referred to the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Kuwaiti army's general staff said in a statement yesterday.

The edict came as the joint committee entrusted with investigations into the incident completed its job and came up with relevant findings, it elaborated. The committee's final report related to August 2018 incidents was sent to Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, it added. In this regard, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad



Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

voiced deep thanks and gratitude to the ministries of interior, health and justice for their fervent efforts and participation in the joint panel, according to the statement.

He also voiced much confidence in the military establishment and its personnel, while thanking local mass media for having exercised a high level of responsibility in covering such incidents.

### Budget review

In other news, the State Audit Bureau will attend an upcoming Cabinet session to discuss its 2017-18 fiscal review into the budgets of state institutions amid efforts to boost transparency and fight corruption. At their weekly session on Monday, ministers decided to invite the bureau's acting chief Adel Al-Saraawi to discuss the report in detail, and to make the necessary arrangements in response to its recommendations. It is the first time that this action will be taken amid aims to safeguard public funds and support efforts to improve transparency and tackle corruption.

The Cabinet later discussed the recent developments on its 'New Kuwait' 2035 national development plan, which includes numerous projects. Briefing them on the

2018-19 fiscal year first quarter was Minister of Social Affairs and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh. The report highlighted the implementation of strategic projects, legislative requirements and challenges that may face these projects. It also presented recommendations set forth after assessments carried out by firms tasked with executing these projects. The Cabinet praised the report's contents, which will later be referred to the parliament. The ministers were also briefed on a separate report discussing state reforms to improve the country's business environment and competitiveness standards. Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan discussed the details of the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business annually-compiled data on Kuwait, which showed improvements on several sectors. — KUNA

## OPEC keen on balanced, stable oil prices: Minister

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Oil and Minister of Water and Electricity, Bakheet Al-Rasheedi affirmed yesterday that OPEC was keen on stabilizing and balancing the price of oil globally. Speaking to the press on the sideline of Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) anniversary commemorating the extinguishing of the last oil well burned by Iraqi invading forces, Rasheedi said that the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) would be meeting



Bakheet Al-Rasheedi

in Abu Dhabi on November 11 to review the OPEC's output in line with the production cut agreement of last year.

OPEC and non-OPEC members, who signed the 2017 deal in Vienna, were 100 percent abiding by the agreement to make sure that the output level was suitable for both oil consumers and producers, said the minister. Minister Rasheedi hoped that the JMMC meeting would take into consideration the current status quo of global production and its effect on the positive level of oil reserves worldwide. After the production cut deal by the end of this year, the Kuwaiti Minister hoped that OPEC members and other producers would reach a common ground to maintain the stability on the long run.

On the KOC celebration, Minister Rasheedi affirmed that the occasion, commemorating the extinguishing of the last oil well in November 6, 1991, was a very special historical event for all Kuwaitis. He added that 727 oil wells were burned by Iraqi troops starting from February 21, 1991; however, thanks to the effort of Kuwaiti-led and operated teams managing to put out the raging flames within a record period of 240 days. Meanwhile, Kuwait Environment Protection Society's (KEPS) chairperson Wejdan Al-Oqab said on the occasion that the United Nations' (UN) International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict on November 6 coincided with the Kuwaiti celebrations. It is vital for the world to stand the ill effects of wars on the environment, said Al-Oqab, affirming that the world stood with Kuwait during its darkest environmental disaster and helped the Gulf nation to overcome its dire situation, which was caused by war. — KUNA

## Govt has no plans to establish authority for 'demographics'

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The government does not welcome a parliamentary proposal to establish a special authority to resolve the problem of demographic imbalance because the government plans to reduce the number of state departments and seeks to cut expenses, well-informed sources said. The sources added that establishing more authorities will impede the government's work and increase bureaucracy, leading to contradicting liabilities and specialties.

"This proposal is more motivated by passion and enthusiasm, but it is illogical," stressed the sources, noting that this task is already being done by Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Development Hind Al-Sabeeh. The sources said that practical decisions will be made soon to get rid of many marginal laborers, adding that setting a certain quota per nationality is being taken into consideration, although it is not likely to be put into practice now.

In other news, parliamentary sources said a meeting will be held by the end of this week to discuss practical procedures to wrap up the case of storming the parliament. The sources added that over 14 MPs had so far expressed intentions to attend the meeting and work on the issue of an amnesty law, be it general or special. The sources added that MPs plan to discuss a general amnesty first, demanding the release of prisoners and allowing those abroad to avoid prison on returning home.

## Nearly one million drug pills found in ketchup shipment

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

**KUWAIT:** Shuwaikh customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle a large quantity of illicit tablets kept inside a big ketchup shipment that arrived at Shuwaikh Port from Syria yesterday. The number of tablets could be nearly one million, according to early estimations. Investigations are ongoing to locate and arrest the suspects who imported the shipment.

### Injuries

Five female citizens were injured in a house fire reported in Jaber Al-Ahmad on Monday night. Doha and Tahrir fire stations responded to a call about the fire and put it out. The women sustained injuries after they jumped from the first floor in an attempt to escape.

### Dead maid's sponsor remanded in custody

The public prosecution ordered the detention of a citizen accused of killing her Ethiopian helper for 21 days, Al-Rai reported yesterday. A source said the suspect was charged with premeditated murder and human trafficking. The source said the suspect denied any intention to kill the victim, saying she beat her by hand from Oct 3 until Oct 26 because she was not doing her job. The suspect denied detectives' conclusions that she beat the victim with a wooden stick, but confessed that she did not give her medical care so as not to incriminate herself.

### Entry ban

In moves to control the marketplace and avoid problems that were checked by criminal security lately, the residency affairs department of the nationality and passports sector headed by Maj Gen Sheikh Faisal Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah banned the entry of those with Georgian passports without the approval of assistant interior ministry undersecretary. He also banned domestic helpers from Guinea-Bissau and laborers from Vietnam, Al-Anba reported yesterday. A security source said the measures were taken following letters by Criminal Security

## Kuwait to contribute \$6.419 million for UN bodies in 2019

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait announced voluntary contributions worth \$6.419 million for various UN bodies and programs for 2019. The contributions included \$2 million for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and \$1 million for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said member of Kuwait's permanent mission to the UN Talal Al-Fassam at the UN Pledging Conference for Development Activities for 2019 late Monday.

He said that the contributions also include \$1 million for the Emergency Response Fund, \$570,000 for the UN Development Program's (UNDP), \$500,000 for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and \$500,000 for the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (OHCHR). He added that Kuwait's contributions will also cover many UN programs dedicated for children, environment, women and many other vital fields.

Meanwhile, Fassam noted that Kuwait is eager for international cooperation to achieve sustainable development by 2030. He called on all countries to commit to their pledges to contribute seven percent of their GDP to developmental activities. Even though Kuwait is considered a developing country, it is continuously exerting great efforts to aid all those in need around the world and is contributing double the percentage agreed upon internationally for developmental aid, he affirmed.

### Chemical weapons

Separately, Kuwait has reiterated its firm position of condemning any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time as a violation of international law and related agreements. This came in a speech by Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, during a Security



**KUWAIT:** Shuwaikh customs officers search for drugs inside ketchup bottles that arrived in a shipment from Syria yesterday.

Undersecretary Maj Gen Khalid Al-Dayeen. Sources said several individuals from the said nationalities are linked to new types of crimes, prompting the decision.

### Harasser denies 'ill intentions'

After the prosecution ordered the detention of a policeman accused of sexually assaulting a South Korean woman at the T4 terminal, the suspect said he did not mean to hurt the woman. He said as his job is to check visas, he is used to touching people's hands to take their fingerprints, and did not have any other intentions. About claims that he touched parts of her body, he said he had forgotten his magnetic ID card that

allows him in, and as she works in the inspection department with a similar ID and knows about his job, he asked her help to allow him in.

### Detectives injured chasing dealer

A case of a drug dealer in Salwa ended with injuring three detectives from the drugs control department. Detectives learned the wanted dealer was in Salwa and located him. They found him in his car, so they asked him to pull over, but he ignored their instructions and a chase ensued. He was cornered inside the parking lot of Salwa Co-op Society, but he rammed the detectives' patrol car and was eventually arrested.



**Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a Security Council session on the Syrian chemical file.**

Council session on the Syrian chemical file on Monday. Those responsible for such crimes, whether individuals, entities or groups, should be accountable, Otaibi said, reaffirming the absence of a military solution to the Syrian crisis and that the solution must be political as stated in the Geneva Declaration 2012 and Security Council Resolution 2254. Otaibi said that at this time in 2017, the Council had a mechanism that could investigate chemical crimes and prevent recurrences. Following the unfortunate non-renewal of that mechanism, such efforts had to be handed over to other entities, he noted. Otaibi called upon the Council to shoulder its own responsibility and speak with one voice on the chemical weapons use dossier. He reiterated his delegation's support for the fact-finding mission's efforts to unveil the truth of the April 2018 attacks, and called upon Syrian authorities to reveal all details of its chemical weapons program. At the same time, he condemned any use of such weapons, calling for accountability on the part of any party that uses them. — KUNA



**NEW YORK:** Member of Kuwait's permanent mission to the UN Talal Al-Fassam attends the UN Pledging Conference for Development Activities for 2019. — KUNA

## Al-Zad announces full support for 2019 Horeca Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Leaders Group Company for Consulting and Development announced that several hospitality, catering and hotel equipment companies have so far announced their intention to take part in 2019 Horeca Kuwait exhibition. The event, co-organized by Leaders Group and the Hospitality Services Company, is due to be held at Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref in the period of January 14-16, 2019.

Announcing his company's participation in this annual exhibition, Al-Zad Trading Group's chairman of the board Abdullah Al-Nafisi said that Horeca is held annually at a very suitable timing after the restaurants and hotels sector achieved the best grades in customers satisfaction during the first half of this year, according to Service Hero's regional Index. Nafisi added that Horeca had proved the significance of specialized exhibitions in promoting trade exchanges amongst specialized companies brought together under one roof.

Speaking about his group, Nafisi said that it is one of the biggest 'full line' suppliers to hotels and restaurants in Kuwait. He added that it was established in 1994 and became one of Kuwait's largest suppliers to hotels, restaurants and catering companies. He also noted that the company was established by owners of Kuwait's five-star hotels and that it was now the sole agent of international food brands and the first distributor of those products in the entire GCC region.



Abdullah Al-Nafisi

## Local

# GCC states 'on the way' to implement railway project: Secretary General

## GCC GDP reached \$1.5 trillion in 2017, ranking 13th in the world

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are currently on the way to implement the GCC railway project, which will interconnect the GCC states from Muscat to Kuwait throughout a 2,200-km network, GCC Secretary General Abdullahif Al-Zayani said.

He made his statement during the inauguration ceremony of the 'GCC Days', which is organized by the Ministry of Information in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council from Nov 5 to 9. The ceremony, held at Al-Raya Ballroom, was attended by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, several GCC assistant secretaries, senior officials of Kuwait's ministry of information, dignitaries and media from all GCC countries.

### Economic level

Speaking about the economic level, Zayani mentioned the future vision is to achieve comprehensive economic unity. Following the adoption of the economic agreement in 1981 (which was revised in 2001), the GCC states achieved GCC citizenship and established the GCC Customs Union, GCC Monetary Union and the electricity interconnectivity project.

"The GCC states occupy a considerable place among world countries. The GCC GDP accounted for \$1.5 trillion in 2017, thus ranking 13th in the world. The GCC also occupies a top position in the list of exporting countries, as GCC exports accounted for some \$536 billion in 2017, while imports accounted for \$450 billion in 2017. The volume of GCC trade with other countries of the world accounted for almost \$985 billion in 2017 and the volume of intra-GCC trade accounted for \$133 billion in 2017," concluded Zayani.

### GCC achievements

Zayani reviewed various spheres of successful GCC achievements. "At the political level, the GCC is an important and effective regional and international

organization that enables it to build firm relations and broad strategic partnerships with countries and international economic blocs. This aims to enhance the common interests of the GCC states, intensifying political, security and cultural coordination and developing economic and trade cooperation with these countries and international economic blocs," he noted.

According to him, at the military level, the areas of GCC joint defense action were enhanced towards more joint integration, cooperation and coordination. The GCC armed forces are ready to defend GCC states and protect their achievements and vital interests by implementing the joint defense agreement that was endorsed in 2000, and the creation of the Peninsula Shield Force. The agreement stipulates that an attack on any individual GCC state is to be deemed an attack against all GCC states," stressed Zayani.

### Defense cooperation

He also spoke about joint defense cooperation. "Different military bodies were formed to intensify joint defense efforts, such as the GCC Unified Command and Control, Unified Maritime Operations Center, Maritime Duty Force (81) and the Unified Air Defense Operations Center. Furthermore, a program for increasing and enhancing defense integration through intensifying joint military exercises and drills between individual GCC states or with friendly countries and allies was implemented," he added.

Zayani then mentioned the security level. "GCC states are cooperating to enhance their security and stability and protect their societies by combating all kinds of crime, confronting extremist terrorist organizations, endorsing strategic and security agreements and setting up effective security agencies," he explained.

The anti-terrorism sphere is also part of the achievements. "The GCC states adopted the security strategy for countering terrorist extremism in 2002 and signed the anti-terrorism agreement in 2004. We also enhanced joint security cooperation through establish-



**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri (right) presents a memento to GCC Secretary General Abdullahif Al-Zayani during the inauguration ceremony of the 'GCC Days.' —Photo by Joseph Shagra

ing the GCC Drug Control Criminal Information Center (Doha) and the GCC Emergency Management Center (Kuwait), in addition to organizing joint security exercises (Arab Gulf Security I) hosted by Bahrain in 2016. The second edition of the exercise is planned the United Arab Emirates," stated Zayani.

### More integration

This event aims to achieve more coherence, cooperation and integration between GCC states and their citizens. "The wise GCC leadership put much effort to support and fulfill the aspirations of the peoples of the GCC states towards security, advancement and prosperity," Jabri said during the ceremony. "These events are organized to shed light on the GCC's blessed journey towards achieving security and stability, avoiding the surrounding unrest and to introduce pioneering

roles in various fields," he added.

Jabri highlighted the importance of establishing economic and trade relations, enhancing culture, encouraging local tourism and supporting the existing partnership among the GCC countries at all levels. "The original values were established by the founding fathers of a strong Gulf entity that demonstrates our unity of purpose and shared destiny and protects the security and stability of our privileged Gulf within a strategic partnership and sustainable development," he concluded.

Activities held during these five days include workshops, symposiums, training programs, musical performances and entertainment activities. Most morning activities will be held at Kuwait University, in addition to other locations. The activities will conclude on Friday, Nov 9, 2018 with a kite show and air show on Gulf Road.



**KUWAIT:** A group photo of participants at the second GCC Female Journalist Forum. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## KJA hosts second GCC Female Journalist Forum

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Journalist Association (KJA), in cooperation with the Gulf Press Association (GPA), held the second GCC Female Journalist Forum yesterday at Jumeirah Hotel. This forum reflects the strong

relations and media coordination between Kuwait and GCC states. "Female journalists played an important role in the GCC media experience and in serving their countries. The GCC labor market needs professional female journalists, and this forum presents a window to the region for joint cooperation between Gulf media institutions," stressed Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri during the opening ceremony.

"Great responsibility lies on the media during this fast-paced technology revolution. We cannot ignore the huge amount of news spread on various social media, which many times are forwarded by journalists without confirming their truth or credibility. Therefore, we should all respect credibility and transparency when publishing. We should also fight rumors and false news

due to its bad effects, especially on the youth," he added. Khaled Al-Malik, President of the Gulf Press Association, said six years have elapsed since the first forum for female journalists was held, which was organized by KJA. "Today we have gathered again here in Kuwait, but with a new look of the forum, including discussion panels that meet the demands of the media and those working in it. We particularly need the efforts of female journalists to face the media's enemies who do not serve our nations or stability," he pointed out.

"Female journalists in GCC countries have limited opportunities. This forum may open new media avenues for them. They will then be able to fill shortages by joining these media. Also, this forum gives an opportunity for female journalists to

exchange experiences," Malik added.

Fatma Al-Eisa, Chairperson of the Kuwait Journalist Association, highlighted the importance of journalism. "Although Gulf female journalists have achieved key positions in their careers and had great achievements in the media, their ambitions are higher. A new study on empowering civil society through media showed that women presence in media is only 20 percent compared to men's presence - reaching 80 percent - so we decided to discuss this point during our session," she noted.

After the opening ceremony, the female journalists from the GCC countries participated in a discussion panel on 'Women in Gulf Media' to exchange their experiences and discuss their influence on various issues presented in the media.



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan (right) attends the second GCC Female Journalist Forum.

## Zain participates in inauguration of Youth Empowerment Symposium

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, participated in the inauguration ceremony of the seventh Youth Empowerment Symposium held at Four Seasons Hotel under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The event, which ran from 5-6 November, witnessed the attendance of His Highness the Amir's representative, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Naser Al-Jabri.

Zain took part in the inauguration ceremony as part of its strategic partnership to the Youth Empowerment Symposium for the seventh consecutive year. Zain's support to the event comes in line with the company's long term strategy of providing the necessary support to national initiatives aimed at uplifting the capabilities and skills of Kuwaiti youth.

Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer, commented: "Zain is proud to be present today at the Youth Empowerment Symposium as a strategic partner for the seventh consecutive year. Zain has always been a main supporter of such national academic initiatives that cater to developing and nurturing the skills of Kuwait's youth to help empower them in the community for a better tomorrow. This is our responsibility as a private sector organization, where we must dedicate our capabilities and resources to contribute in developing the Youth sector within the society in which we operate."



**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri honors Waleed Al-Khashti for Zain's strategic partnership.

Khashti added: "Zain considers itself a main partner in achieving the goals of the Kuwait National Development Plan (New Kuwait 2035), which is based on five expected outcomes and seven key pillars. Our support of the Youth Empowerment Symposium today is a testament of our efforts as a leading private sector company in shouldering the public sector in achieving the seven pillars of the National Development Plan, especially the third pillar: 'Human Capital', which features a plethora of innovative projects, including a

"Youth Care and Empowerment" program." Khashti further explained: "we are proud to be a strategic partner of the Youth Empowerment Symposium, which is considered today a key factor in achieving the goals of the New Kuwait vision that stems from His Highness the Amir's conceptualized vision of a new Kuwait by 2035. Recently, Zain participated at GITEX Technology Week in the United Arab Emirates to showcase its technological capabilities in achieving these goals." Khashti affirmed: "I would like to take this



**KUWAIT:** Waleed Al-Khashti poses with Zain's team at the company's booth.

opportunity to affirm Zain's full commitment in dedicating its resources and enriching its partnerships with entities and organizations in the Kuwaiti society that cater to empowering the youth and further contribute to the progress of our beloved country."

The Youth Empowerment Symposium, held 5-6 November, provided local youth with an ideal opportunity to gain valuable insights from a number of internationally and locally renowned industry pioneers, academics, and experts. This year's speakers included Mitch

Lowe, CEO of Movie Pass, former co-founding executive of Netflix and former President of Redbox, Jason Wheeler former Vice President of Finance at Google and former Chief Financial Officer of Tesla Motors, and more.

Zain's presence in this national event showcased the company's dedication to empowering the entrepreneurial skills of youth in Kuwait. The symposium delivered outstanding knowledge to talented young people to be able to progress in their fields of interest as well as to spark the light of enthusiasm within them.



Facebook blocks 115 accounts as US votes

## Dutch envoy faces 'threats' in Pakistan over Wilders tweets

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SINJAR: An Iraqi man inspects the remains of members of the Yazidi minority killed by the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group after Kurdish forces discovered a mass grave near the village of Sinuni, in the northwestern Sinjar area. — AFP

# Over 200 mass graves found in Iraq

## Graves contain up to 12,000 victims

**BAGHDAD:** More than 200 mass graves containing up to 12,000 victims have been found so far in Iraq that could hold vital evidence of war crimes by the Islamic State group, the UN said yesterday. The United Nations in Iraq (UNAMI) and its human rights office said they had documented a total of 202 mass graves in parts of western and northern Iraq held by IS between 2014 and 2017. Even more sites could be uncovered in the months to come, the report warned, urging Iraqi authorities to properly preserve and excavate them to provide closure for victims' families. "The mass grave sites documented in our report are a testament to harrowing human loss, profound suffering and shocking cruelty," said the UN's representative in Iraq, Jan Kubis.

"Determining the circumstances surrounding the significant loss of life will be an important step in the mourning process for families and their journey to secure their rights to truth and justice," he said. IS overran swathes of Iraq in 2014, executing fighters and civilians en masse and using other forms of repression to seize and keep territory in the country's north and west. The mass graves may "contain

critical forensic material" that could help uncover the details of these violations, as well as identify the victims, the UN said. UN investigators in August began collecting evidence on war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide for Iraqi courts to use in trials of accused IS militants.

### Infamous sinkhole

Out of the 202 mass graves documented in the UN's new report, just 28 of them have



### Profound suffering and shocking cruelty

been excavated and 1,258 bodies exhumed by Iraqi authorities. Nearly half the total sites are in Nineveh province, where IS's onetime Iraqi capital Mosul lies and where the jihadists committed mass atrocities

against the Yazidi minority. According to Iraq's high commission on human rights, more than 3,000 Yazidis remain missing in Nineveh, in addition to another 4,000 people. The rest of the sites are distributed in the northern regions of Kirkuk and Salaheddin, or Anbar in the west.

Some of those that have yet to be excavated are secured by Iraqi armed forces, but others remain endangered by fighting or are contaminated by explosive devices left behind by IS. The largest, according to the report, is expected to be the Khasfa sinkhole south of Mosul, where as many as 4,000 people may have been killed. IS has planted explosives at Khasfa, which killed a journalist and three members of Iraqi paramilitary forces last year. After capturing Mosul, Iraqi government forces went on to oust IS from its other urban strongholds and declared victory against the jihadists in late 2017.

### 'A full reckoning'

But many Iraqi families have missing relatives who they suspect may have been killed by IS, or are desperately looking for the remains of loved ones they know were executed by the jihadist group. Their quest



TIKRIT: An Iraqi man cries over body-bags containing the remains of people believed to have been slain by jihadists of the Islamic State (IS) group in the Iraqi city of Tikrit. — AFP

to uncover the truth often leads them into Iraq's exhausting state bureaucracy. "Families of victims must report to more than five State entities to complete the legal

requirements to establish the fate of a missing person," said the report, calling for the creation of a single body to handle the process. — AFP

## Macron calls for a 'real European army' to defend against Russia, US

**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron called yesterday for a "real European army" as the continent marks a century since the divisions of World War I, to better defend itself against Russia and even the United States. Macron, who has pushed for a joint European Union military force since his arrival in power, said Europe needed to reduce its dependence on American might, not least after US President Donald Trump announced he was pulling out of a Cold War-era nuclear treaty.

"We have to protect ourselves with respect to China, Russia and even the United States of America," Macron told Europe 1 in his first radio interview since becoming president in May 2017. "When I see President Trump announcing that he's quitting a major disarmament treaty which was formed after the 1980s Euromissile crisis that hit Europe, who is the main victim? Europe and its security," he said. The Euromissile crisis — a mini-arms race within the Cold War that saw the US roll ballistic missiles into Europe — was

a major factor spurring the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

"We will not protect the Europeans unless we decide to have a true European army," Macron said in the interview, recorded Monday night in Verdun, northeast France, as he tours the former Western Front during week-long World War I centenary commemorations. Faced with "a Russia which is at our borders and has shown that it can be a threat", Macron argued: "We need a Europe which defends itself better alone, without just depending on the United States." Macron has spearheaded the creation of a nine-country European force that would be capable of rapidly mounting a joint military operation, an evacuation from a war zone, or providing aid after a natural disaster.

The nine countries' defense ministers will meet in Paris for the first time on Wednesday, to start thrashing out details of how the force will operate. The wider EU is also set to vastly expand its defence budget from 2021, allocating some 13 billion euros (\$15 billion) over seven years to research and develop new equipment — up from less than 600 million euros in the current budget. Bruno Alomar, a professor at the French War School which trains top military officers, said however that Macron's vision of tight-knit European defense force was a long way off. "The idea of creating a common strategic culture is not a bad one," he said. "But there's a massive gap between the European defense that

Emmanuel Macron dreams about and the reality of very powerful disagreements between European partners."

### Russian meddling fears

In an apparent reference to Russia, Macron warned that "intrusion attempts in cyber-space and multiple interventions in our democracies" required a united response. "Peace in Europe is precarious," Macron told Europe 1. As he prepares to host dozens of world leaders Sunday to mark 100 years since the World War I armistice, including Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the centrist French leader has been railing against rising nationalism in Europe and beyond. He repeated his warning yesterday of similarities between the state of the world today and the financial crisis and "nationalism playing on people's fears" of the 1930s.

Ahead of European Parliament elections next May — billed by many observers as a battle between Macron-style pro-Europeans and rightwing populists — Macron said politicians must respond to voters' fear and anger. Europe "has probably become too ultra-liberal", he said, "which doesn't allow the middle classes to live well". French far-right leader Marine Le Pen — one of the targets of Macron's anti-nationalist tirades — meanwhile accused him of seeking to turn Europe into an empire. "And it was empires that were at the origin of World War I, not nations," she told Radio Classique. — AFP

## Israel MPs eye death penalty for 'terrorists'

**JERUSALEM:** Israel's parliament will renew debate next week on a bill that would make it easier to sentence Palestinian attackers to death, Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said yesterday while vowing to have it passed. "After over three years of a stubborn struggle, the death penalty for terrorists law will finally be brought to the law committee next Wednesday (November 14), and then for its first reading in the Knesset plenum," Lieberman said on Twitter.

"We won't relent or stop until completing the mission." The bill, which passed a preliminary vote by the full parliament in January, would ease the requirements military courts in the occupied West Bank must meet to sentence Palestinians convicted of "terrorist"

crimes to death. As the law stands now, a panel of three military judges must unanimously approve any death penalty in military courts.

The new bill, planned by members of Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu party at his behest, would change the requirement to a majority instead of unanimity. Israel has not carried out any executions since 1962, when Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann was hanged. Israel abolished the use of capital punishment for murder in civil courts in 1954, though it can still in theory be applied for war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, treason and crimes against the Jewish people.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed support for the death penalty in certain cases. But a senior member of Netanyahu's party said yesterday that he would object to the bill since the Israeli security establishment opposed it. "I won't support imposing the death penalty before there's a serious debate and decision in the government and security cabinet," Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz wrote on Twitter. — AFP

International

# Iran's Zarif takes to YouTube against 'unlawful' sanctions

## Turkish President hits out at new US sanctions

**TEHRAN:** Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif took to YouTube yesterday to dismiss US sanctions and Washington's demands of change from Tehran as "absurd, unlawful and fundamentally flawed". "The US administration appears to believe that imposing draconian sanctions on Iran will bring about such pain to our nation that it will force us to submit to its will," Zarif said in a video message, posted in English and Persian. "We have weathered difficult times in the face of 40 years of American hostility relying solely on our own resources, and today we and our partners across the globe will ensure that our people are least affected by this indiscriminate assault," he said.

Washington's decision to scrap the multi-nation nuclear deal with Iran and reimpose sanctions-with the last tranche hitting on Monday-was "pushing it further into global isolation". The Persian version said the US "will regret this unwise move" and emphasized that the sanctions were aimed at "separating people from each other and from the establishment". The United States would be better off rethinking its "unconditional support" for Saudi Arabia and Israel, which has "blinded the US to their appalling atrocities", Zarif said. "President (Donald) Trump's predecessors also began crafting their Iran policy with similar bravado but came around to accepting and respecting the reality of Iran as they became more experienced in office," he added.

### 'Upsetting global balance'

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday hit out at new sanctions on Iran

imposed by the administration of President Donald Trump, saying they were aimed at upsetting the global balance and against international law. Washington on Monday announced the sanctions on the Islamic Republic that aim to isolate the country's banking sector and slash its oil exports. Turkey was one of eight countries exempted from the demand to stop buying Iranian oil. "We don't find the (Iran) sanctions appropriate," Erdogan was quoted as saying by the state-run Anadolu news agency. "Because to us, they are aimed at upsetting the global balance," he added. "They are against international law and diplomacy. We don't want to live in an imperial world."

Erdogan's comments came after his Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu warned that isolating Iran was "dangerous." "While we were asking (for) an exemption from the United States, we have also been very frank with them that cornering Iran is not wise. Isolating Iran is dangerous and punishing the Iranian people is not fair," he told a press conference during a trip to Japan. "Turkey is against sanctions, we don't believe any results can be achieved through the sanctions," he added. "I think instead of sanctions, meaningful dialogue and engagement is much more useful."

### Waivers

Washington has imposed two sets of sanctions this year after pulling out of a nuclear pact agreed between world powers and Iran that President Donald Trump slammed as "defective". The latest round went into effect on Monday. Washington has granted eight countries, including Turkey and Japan, waivers to allow them to continue importing Iranian



**TEHRAN:** Photo shows a general view of the Iranian capital Tehran and the Milad tower. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said the Islamic republic 'will proudly bypass sanctions' by the United States that took effect on Monday targeting the country's oil and financial sectors. —AFP

oil without facing diplomatic consequences.

Mainly Sunni Turkey has a complex relationship with Shiite Iran that has seen disputes notably on what Ankara has seen as moves for domination of Iraq by the majority Shia community. But the two countries are also working closely on a host of issues, notably ending the conflict in Syria even though both Ankara and Tehran are in theory on opposite sides of the civil war. Iranian oil and gas exports are also cru-

cial for resource-poor Turkey. The new sanctions have sparked furious reactions from Iran, whose President Hassan Rouhani said the country would "proudly bypass our illegal, unjust sanctions". On Monday, Washington vowed to be "relentless" in countering Iran, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo saying the US wanted Iran to make a "180-degree turn" and abandon its "current revolutionary course". —Agencies



### Sanctions aimed at 'upsetting the global balance'

## Seeds of change: Mali farmers fight drought with hybrid crops

**SIBY:** Last year, when drought hit in the middle of the growing season in his region of southern Mali, Baba Berthe lost his entire two-hectare maize crop. "I harvested nothing at all," remembers the white-robed farmer with a greying goatee. But disaster was averted when a plot of drought-resistant sorghum he had also planted flourished despite a lack of water. That crop "saved me," producing 2.4 tonnes of grain from one hectare (2.5 acres) of land, said the farmer from rural Siby district.

As climate change brings wilder weather in the Sahel - particularly worsening drought - planting crops able to stand up to extremes can help avert a range of crises, from worsening hunger to migration, experts say. In southern Mali, harder crops are gaining ground, particularly as farmers see the results in their own fields, they say. "I really understood the importance of these new strains last year," said Berthe, 56, sitting beneath a large mango tree during a weekly meeting of the Siby Seed Growers' Cooperative. Maize, he said "is a grain that needs a lot of water" - something southern Mali no longer reliably has.

The new hardy grain varieties were developed by scientists at the Rural Economy Institute (IER), a research institute founded by the Malian government, to respond to the varying levels of rainfall in the country, said

Abdoulaye Diallo, a seed breeder and the head of IER's sorghum program. "We are being confronted by the effects of climate change," he said. Over the past 60 years, he said, rainfall has fallen 15 to 20 percent in Mali, depending on the region, and that has hit harvests. Malian farmers work their fields during the rainy season, which lasts from June to October in some parts of the country's south. But further north, the season is shorter, with some areas getting no more than two months of rain a year.

To cope with the harsh conditions, Malian researchers have in some cases created hybrids that cross traditional local crops with other study varieties. Diallo said hybrid grains, like the sorghum that Berthe planted, can produce a yield of three to four tons per hectare, compared to non-hybrid varieties that manage two to three tonnes even in a good season. "The challenge was to find varieties that can withstand drought after flowering," said Aboubacar Touré, a seed breeder at the IER. Varieties successful in standing up to drought usually need to flower early, be drought-resistant or both, he said.

### 'Full basket'

As a growing number of farmers in Siby turn to planting new seed varieties to protect themselves against climate shocks, local seed producers are enjoying a boost in their income. Alou Camara, president of the Siby Seed-Growers' Cooperative, said it buys seeds capable of dealing with the changing conditions from its members for 500 CFA francs (\$1) per kilogram and sells them to other farmers for 750 CFA francs, five times what traditional seed costs. Even so, "everything we produced in the way of seed was bought last year, and the previous year was the same," Camara said. Touré at the IER



**SIBY:** Alou Camara visits his field of anew sorghum variety Jakumbe in the village of Siby, Mali. —Reuters

said small-scale farmers have given the new sorghum varieties names in the local language that "speak volumes" about their success. Seguifa, for instance, means "full basket", while jakumbe means "anti-drought".

But praise for the new crop strains is not unanimous. Some farmers complain they can't always afford to buy the drought-resistant strains they have come to rely on. In previous years, farmers would simply use the seeds from one harvest to plant the next season's crop. But the hybrid qualities of the new varieties reduce over time, Siby farmer N'fally Coulibaly said, which means he and other farmers would like to buy new seed each year. "The problem with the new varieties is that they are not free, and just

before the rainy season we don't have any money. It wasn't like that before," Coulibaly said. Another problem, he said, is the shortage of information about the characteristics of the new varieties - and the bad publicity that accompanied their introduction. "Lots of people were hesitant at first because they thought these were GM (genetically-modified) crops" - which turned out not to be the case, he said. Coulibaly would like to see more effort put into explaining to farmers the difference between hybrid seeds, which are developed in the field using natural techniques, and genetically-modified seeds created in a lab. "That had a major influence on take-up in the beginning," he said. —Reuters

## Italy mourns family of nine killed in deadly flash flood

**ROME:** Thousands of people gathered yesterday for the funerals of an extended family killed in Sicily when a flash flood engulfed their villa during devastating storms that wreaked havoc across Italy. Vast crowds applauded in respect in the streets of Palermo as the coffins of the nine victims, including two toddlers, were carried to the city's cathedral, where mourners clutched white balloons. "Palermo weeps," and "Sicily, rise up and fight!" read banners hung on nearby shopfronts, as anger grew on the Italian island over illegally built housing, which police say was to blame for the deaths. The family drowned overnight Saturday after a swollen river on a plain near the coastal town of Casteldaccia submerged their holiday villa in water and mud in seconds, leaving them no chance for escape.

### Buried with toys

Survivor Giuseppe Giordano, 35, who did not own the villa but stayed there

often, lost his wife, two children, his parents, brother, and sister, his nephew and the boy's grandmother. He wept as he embraced their coffins at the altar of a packed Palermo cathedral. Photos and videos taken by an aunt who had been to the house earlier that day show the family tucking into a sumptuous All Souls' Day meal, before the children opened their presents - a Sicilian tradition in remembrance of the dead. "Singing, dancing, simply spending time together. That's what the villa meant for us," aunt Daniela told La Repubblica daily.

One-year old Rachele Giordana will be buried along with the Mickey and Minnie Mouse toys she had been given. The villa had been built too close to the river, violating safety norms, and the owners had been ordered to demolish it in 2008, according to Sicilian prosecutor Ambrogio Cartosio. All 12 villas built on the plain near Casteldaccia are unauthorized, but residents say they know to leave when the rains come. Out of every 100 new builds in Italy, almost 20 are illegal, according to the national statistics institute (ISTAT). Councils are obliged to knock properties down if the owners ignore the wrecking ball order, but they often lack the resources to do so.

### Red weather alert

"It's easier to sentence a mafioso to life in jail than knock down a house,"



**CARDE:** A view of the river Po in Cardo, southwest of Turin, after it rose overnight following heavy rain. —AFP

Cartosio said, calling for a special fund from the state to pay for demolitions. The villa's owner, Antonino Pace, told La Repubblica the house had flooded 10 years ago, destroying everything he owned. He moved away, but was loathe to bulldoze the villa and he let the Giordanos use it for free instead, he said. "I warned them only to go in summer. There was a red weather alert on Saturday, everyone knew that," he

added. But Giuseppe Giordano's cousin told media the villa had been rented to them by Pace and that he had not warned them. Heavy rains continued to lash northern Italy yesterday, with swollen rivers and Lake Maggiore, the country's second largest lake, close to overflowing. According to Italy's Environment Minister Sergio Costa, 7.5 million Italians live in areas at risk from bad weather events. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Inmates commit suicide

**LOS ANGELES:** Two inmates on death row in California, including a serial killer, are believed to have committed suicide over the weekend, officials said on Monday. Staff at San Quentin State Prison found Andrew Urdiales, 54, unresponsive and alone in his cell late Friday and were unable to revive him, officials said in a statement. Late on Sunday, the second inmate, Virendra Govin, 51, was also found dead, they added. Both deaths are being treated as suicides, prison officials said, adding that there was no indication the two incidents are related. Urdiales was sentenced to death on October 5 of this year for a string of murders dating back to as far as 1986. The killings took place while he was stationed at various US Marine Corps facilities in southern California. He was placed on death row on October 12. —AFP

#### Islamist extremist killed

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh police said yesterday they had killed the chief of Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), an extremist group accused of murdering secular activists and inspiring a cafe siege that killed 22 people. Khorshed Alam, described as the "emir" of Bangladesh's deadliest Islamist outfit, was gunned down yesterday morning in the northern town of Shibganj, police spokesman Sonaton Chokraborty said. "He died before we could bring him to hospital," Chokraborty told AFP of the 38-year-old militant. Police say Alam emerged after JMB's old guard was weakened by the execution of its former commander Shaikh Abdur Rahman, and five other top chiefs, in March 2007. He is accused of masterminding a number of attacks across Muslim-majority Bangladesh, including most recently the murder of atheist writer and publisher Shalhazan Bachchu in the central district of Munshiganj in June. —AFP

#### Boy kills grandma, self

**LOS ANGELES:** An 11-year-old boy in Arizona reportedly shot his grandmother in the back of the head and then turned the gun on himself, apparently because he was upset at being asked to clean his room. Yvonne Woodard, 65, was shot on Saturday in her home in the town of Litchfield Park, northwest of Phoenix, as she watched television with her husband. The couple had full custody of the child and the grandfather told police that he had been asked to clean his room all day but had refused. Maricopa County Sheriff's Office spokesman Sergeant Joaquin Enriquez told local media that the couple were sitting on their couch watching TV when the boy came up behind his grandmother and shot her. The grandfather ran after the boy but then went back to help his wife, at which time the boy shot himself. —AFP

#### Diamond smuggling case

**JERUSALEM:** The son and brother of Israeli billionaire diamond magnate Lev Leviev are among suspects arrested in Israel in connection with a diamond smuggling scheme, according to court documents released yesterday. The case focuses on Leviev's company, LLD Diamonds, a leading global manufacturer and marketer of polished diamonds. Police have said they expect to make more arrests, both in Israel and abroad. Leviev's son Zevulun and brother Moshe are accused of involvement in a smuggling operation that has brought about 300 million shekels' (\$80 million) worth of diamonds illegally into Israel since 2010, according to a transcript of a custody hearing held on Monday. Israel is a world centre for diamond cutting and polishing, with one of the biggest exchanges in the world, at Ramat Gan. —Reuters

## International

# Facebook blocks 115 accounts on eve of US midterm election

## 'Foreign entities' trying to interfere in US poll

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Facebook said it blocked some 30 accounts on its platform and 85 more on Instagram after police warned they may be linked to "foreign entities" trying to interfere in the US midterm election. The announcement came shortly after US law enforcement and intelligence agencies said that Americans should be wary of Russian attempts to spread fake news. The election was yesterday.

A study published last week found that misinformation on social media was spreading at a greater rate than during the run-up to the 2016 presidential vote, which Russia is accused of manipulating through a vast propaganda campaign in favor of Donald Trump, the eventual winner. "On Sunday evening, US law enforcement contacted us about online activity that they recently discovered and which they believe may be linked to foreign entities," Facebook head of cybersecurity policy Nathaniel Gleicher said in a blog post. "We immediately blocked these accounts and are now investigating them in more detail."

The investigation so far identified around 30 Facebook accounts and 85 Instagram accounts that appeared to be engaged in "coordinated inauthentic behavior," Gleicher said. He added that all the Facebook pages associated with the accounts appeared to be in French or Russian. The Instagram accounts were mostly in English, with some "focused on celebrities, others political debate." "Typically, we would be further along with our analysis before announcing anything publicly," Gleicher said. "But given that we are only one day away from important elections in the US, we wanted to let people know about the action we've taken and the facts as we know them today."



### 'Junk news' spreading at greater rate

on particular candidates or campaigns. Sample posts shared included inflammatory commentary about US President Donald Trump, British Prime Minister Theresa May and the controversy around freshly appointed US Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh.

#### War room

Major online social platforms have been under intense pressure to avoid being used by "bad actors" out to sway outcomes by publishing misinformation

#### 'Junk News'

Despite an aggressive crackdown by social media firms, so-called "junk news" is spreading at a greater rate than in 2016 on social media ahead of US congressional election, Oxford Internet Institute researchers said in a study published Thursday. Twitter said Saturday it deleted a "series of accounts" that attempted to share disinformation. It gave no number. Facebook last month said it took 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.

Gleicher said at the time there was overlap with accounts taken down earlier this year and linked to Iranian state media, but the identity of the culprits has yet to be determined. Posts on the accounts or pages, which included some hosted by Facebook-owned Instagram, focused mostly on "sowing discord" via strongly divisive issues rather than



**MIAMI:** Voters fill out their ballots as they cast their vote at a polling station setup in Legion Park for the mid-term election yesterday in Miami. —AFP

and enraging voters. Facebook weeks ago opened a "war room" at its Menlo Park headquarters in California to be a nerve center for the fight against misinformation and manipulation of the largest social network by foreign actors trying to influence elections in the United States and elsewhere.

The shutdown of thousands of Russian-controlled accounts by Twitter and Facebook-plus the indictments of 14 people from Russia's notorious troll farm

the Internet Research Agency—have blunted but by no means halted their efforts to influence US politics. Facebook, which has been blamed for doing too little to prevent misinformation efforts by Russia and others in the 2016 US election, now wants the world to know it is taking aggressive steps with initiatives like the war room. The war room is part of stepped up security announced by Facebook, which will be adding some 20,000 employees.—AFP

## World Wide Web inventor wants new 'contract' to make web safe

**LISBON:** The inventor of the World Wide Web on Monday called for a "contract" to make internet safe and accessible for everyone as Europe's largest tech event began in Lisbon amid a backlash over its role in spreading "fake news". Some 70,000 people are expected to take part in the four-day Web Summit, dubbed "the Davos for geeks", including speakers from leading global tech companies, politicians and start-ups hoping to attract attention from the over 1,500 investors who are scheduled to attend.

Tech firms now find themselves on the defensive, with critics accusing them of not doing enough to curb the spread of "fake news" which has helped polarize election campaigns around the world and of maximizing profits by harvesting data on consumers' browsing habits. British computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee, who in 1989 invented the World Wide Web as a way to exchange information, said the internet had deviated from the goals its founders had envisaged.

"All kinds of things have gone wrong. We have fake news, we have problems with privacy, we have people being profiled and manipulated," he said in an opening address.

Berners-Lee, 63, called on governments, companies and citizens to iron out a "complete contract" for the web that will make the internet "safe and accessible" for all by May 2019, the date by which 50 percent of the world will be online for the first time.

#### 'Going through a funk'

He has just launched Inrupt, a start-up which is building an open source platform called "Solid" which will decentralize the web and allow users to choose where their data is kept, along with who can see and access it. Solid intends to allow users to bypass tech giants such as Google and Facebook. The two tech giants now have direct influence over nearly three quarters of all internet traffic thanks to the vast amounts of apps and services they own such as YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram.

Employees of Google, Facebook and other tech giants have in recent months gone public with their regrets, calling the products they helped build harmful to society and overly addictive. Tech giants are also under fire for having built up virtual monopolies in their areas. Amazon accounts for 93 percent of all e-book sales while Google swallows up 92 percent of all European internet-search ad spending. "I think technology is going through a funk... it's a period of reflection," Web Summit founder and CEO Paddy Cosgrave told AFP. "With every new technology you go through these cycles. The initial excitement of the printed press was replaced in time by a great fear that it was actually a bad thing. Over time it has actually worked out OK."

#### Violent voices magnified

Among those scheduled to speak at the event is Christopher Wylie, a whistleblower who earlier this year said users' data from Facebook was used by British political consultancy Cambridge Analytica to help elect US President Donald Trump—a claim denied by the company. Another tech veteran who has become critical of the sector, Twitter co-founder Ev Williams, will on Thursday deliver the closing address. He left Twitter in 2011 and went on to co-found online publishing platform Medium, which is subscription based and unlike Twitter favors in-depth writing about issues.—AFP

## Five arrested after London fire disaster effigy torched

**LONDON:** Five men have been arrested over a video showing a laughing group of people burning a model of the Grenfell Tower, British police said yesterday. The London residential block went up in flames in June last year, claiming 71 lives. It was Britain's worst residential fire since World War II. The video clip, posted online, showed a large effigy marked "Grenfell Tower", complete with paper figures at the windows, being set ablaze on a bonfire. Raucous laughter can be heard.

"Five men have been arrested on suspicion of a public order offence in connection with an investigation into a video posted online that showed an effigy of Grenfell Tower being burnt," Scotland

Yard police headquarters said in a statement. The men, aged 19, 46, 49, 49, and 55, were arrested after handing themselves in at a south London police station late Monday. "They have been taken into custody," police said. In the video, onlookers can be heard saying: "Help me! Help me!", "Jump out the window!" and "That's what happens when they don't pay their rent."

The Grenfell United organization for survivors and the bereaved, tweeted: "It's a disgusting video. Not only is it extremely upsetting to survivors and people who lost family, it's hateful and offensive to everyone that has been affected." Prime Minister Theresa May tweeted: "To disrespect those who lost their lives at Grenfell Tower, as well as their families and loved ones, is utterly unacceptable." Police Commander Stuart Cundy, who is leading the investigation into the Grenfell disaster, said he was "frankly appalled by the callous nature" of the video. Bonfires are traditional in Britain around November 5, recalling a foiled plot to blow up parliament in 1605. Effigies of plotters Guy Fawkes are burned on the fire.—AFP

## Up to eight feared dead after buildings collapse in Marseille

**MARSEILLE:** As many as eight people were feared dead yesterday after two apartment blocks collapsed in the southern French city of Marseille, where the bodies of a man and a woman have been pulled from the wreckage. Rescuers worked throughout the night searching the rubble of the dilapidated buildings which collapsed suddenly on Monday morning in Noailles, a working-class district in the heart of the Mediterranean port city.

A third adjoining building partially collapsed on Monday night. Prosecutors said the bodies of a man and woman were found separately yesterday under the 15-metre pile of rubble on Rue d'Aubagne, a narrow shopping street which now resembles the scene of an earthquake. Rescuers formed a human chain to remove the debris, stone by stone. A completely flattened car was dug out, an indication of the force with which the building came crashing down in what witnesses said was a matter of seconds.

Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said five to eight people were missing—five residents and three others who may have been visiting in one of the buildings. "We still have hope, even if that hope is fading.

There could still be air pockets," said a senior rescue official. The two other apartment blocks, which were in such a bad state that they had been condemned, were boarded up and in theory unoccupied. Google Maps images taken in recent months showed the collapsed buildings had large visible cracks in their facades. People had been living in nine of the 10 apartments at number 65, while a shop occupied the ground floor.

#### 'It could've been me'

A young bar waiter watched the scene with tears in his eyes, anxious for news of an Italian woman who lived in the building. "She was a great girl, she used to come and study at the bar," he said, without giving his name. Abdou Ali, 34, came in search of his mother after she did not come to collect her youngest son from school on Monday afternoon. "I haven't had any news," he said, wandering among the rescuers.

Sophie Dorbeaux meanwhile told AFP she had left the block on Sunday night to stay with her parents because the building's structural problems meant her door, like several others, was not opening or closing properly. "The walls had been moving for several weeks and cracks had appeared," the 25-year-old philosophy student said. "It could have been me," she added, visibly shaken. Marseille city authorities, who have evacuated and rehoused 100 residents

footage confronting a 14-year-old student for not wearing the proper uniform. Students told the local KTLA news station that the teen refused to leave the classroom as instructed and began shouting profanity and the N-word at Riley, who is black. The boy also threw a basketball at Riley, the students said.

Footage of the incident - which took place last Friday at Maywood Academy High School, in southeast Los Angeles - shows Riley repeatedly punching the student, who appears to hit back once. The brawl ended after a school security officer and students intervened to separate the pair. The student, who was not identified, was transported to a hospital with moderate injuries and later released, the Los Angeles

County Sheriff's Department said in a statement. It added that Riley was arrested on suspicion of child abuse and was released on Saturday after posting bail. He is scheduled to appear in court on November 30.

Many students, staff and parents have come to the defense of Riley, saying the student had pushed him to the limit. But some parents expressed outrage, insisting that nothing could justify a teacher beating a student. "I had this teacher before and I had no problem with him," one student told KTLA. "He was a really nice teacher, I always respected him. He always had a really good relationship with every student." Scores of people also defended Riley on social media, saying the boy was out of line and got what he deserved.—AFP



**MUNSTER:** A justice officer pushes the 94-year-old defendant, a former SS guard, in a wheelchair to the courtroom for his trial at the regional court in Munster, western Germany, yesterday. —AFP



**MARSEILLE:** Firemen work and remove rubble at the site where two buildings collapsed in Marseille, southern France. —AFP

from nearby buildings as a precaution, believe heavy rain may have contributed to the buildings' collapsing.

But the incident - rare in a major Western city - has already sparked a political row over the quality of housing available to Marseille's poorest residents. The neighborhood is home to many buildings in a similarly poor condition, some of them run by slum landlords. "It's the

homes of the poor that are falling down, and that's not a coincidence," said local lawmaker Jean-Luc Melenchon, leader of the leftwing France Unbowed party. Marseille authorities began a vast upgrade plan for the city centre in 2011. But a 2015 government report said about 100,000 Marseille residents were living in housing that was dangerous to their health or security.—AFP

## California teacher caught on camera in brawl with student

**LOS ANGELES:** A California high school teacher is facing charges for punching a pupil who had hurled racial slurs at him, in an incident that many students and staff say was justified. Music teacher Marston Riley, 64, is seen in video



International

# Dutch envoy faces 'threats' in Pakistan over Wilders tweets

## Islamists fume over anti-Islam tweets

**THE HAGUE:** The Netherlands said yesterday that its ambassador to Pakistan has faced "threats", reportedly from Islamists angry over anti-Islam tweets by the far-right politician Geert Wilders. Wilders in August called off a planned Prophet Mohammed cartoon competition that stirred anger in Pakistan, but the MP has since posted several such images on Twitter. "We are dealing with threats to the ambassador's address," a Dutch foreign ministry spokesman said.

"We take the security of the embassy very seriously, and that is also the subject of consultations between the Netherlands and Pakistan. For security reasons, I cannot make any further comment." Pakistan's interior ministry last month wrote a secret memo on plans to



### Cartoon competition stirred anger

"target" the Dutch ambassador by the hardline Islamist Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan party (TLP), media from

both countries reported. The TLP, founded in 2015, led protests in August calling for Pakistan to sever diplomatic relations with The Netherlands over the Wilders cartoon contest. "It has been reported that elements associated with Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) are planning to target (the) Dutch ambassador... to seek revenge for uploading of blasphemous caricatures by Geert Wilders, Dutch parliamentarian, on his personal Twitter account," the memo said.

The Pakistani interior ministry and Dutch embassy declined to comment. The TLP denied making any threats. "Attacking somebody is not a policy of Tehreek-e-Labaik. We are a peaceful movement," TLP spokesman Pir Ijaz Ashrafi said. However, he said the group "demand the

Dutch government expel Wilders from their parliament and if they don't do so, the government of Pakistan should dismiss the Dutch ambassador from Pakistan."

More recently, the TLP has led demonstrations against a Pakistan court ruling saving Christian woman Asia Bibi from death row where she had been languishing on blasphemy charges. Bibi's lawyer, Saif-ul-Malook, fled to The Netherlands at the weekend saying there had been threats to his life-although on Monday he said the UN and EU had made him leave Pakistan.

Separately, a body representing 144 Turkish mosques in the Netherlands has asked Twitter to block Wilders's account for inciting hatred, it emerged on Monday. — AFP

## Indigenous rights in the spotlight: Indian states head to polls

**RAJASTHAN:** The rights of farmers and indigenous people have grabbed an unlikely spotlight as three Indian states head to the polls, underlining growing discontent with land policies ahead of crucial national elections, analysts and activists said. Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh states have elections starting this week, pitting the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) against the main opposition Congress Party.

While election rallies typically see grand promises to generate jobs and alleviate poverty, several speeches by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi have focused on the rights of indigenous people and farmers. "The tribal people must have their rights over land, water and forests," he said in a recent election rally in the central state of Madhya Pradesh. Gandhi vowed to implement a long-delayed law on tribal rights if the party is voted into power, and accused the BJP of diluting the Forest Rights Act (2006) and an earlier law that gave indigenous communities veto power over protected land.

Both laws, as well as the Land Acquisition Act (2013) which required consensus and a social impact assessment for purchases, were enacted by a Congress-led government. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also commented on indigenous communities. "Rights to jal, jungle, jameen (water, forest, land) has always been a demand of indigenous people," said Madhu Sarin, a researcher who had advised on drafting the FRA. "That the two biggest leaders are talking about them shows they can no longer ignore the discontent over denial of rights. It is an indication of what's to come in the national election," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. There are about 650 disputes over land across India affecting more than 7 million people,



**NEW DELHI:** An Indian man (with his face covered) walks amid heavy smog along a street in New Delhi. Smog levels spike during winter in Delhi, when air quality often eclipses the World Health Organization's safe levels. — AFP

according to the research firm Land Conflict Watch, as demand for land increases to build infrastructure such as highways and airports. Modi, who faces five state elections and a general election due by May, praised tribal communities in his monthly radio address in October for protecting forests and the environment. "The nation is indebted to the tribal communities for saving the country's forest land," he said. The Forest Rights Act aimed to improve the lives of impoverished tribes by recognizing their right to inhabit and live off forests where their forefathers settled.

Under the law, at least 150 million people could have

their rights recognized to about 40 million hectares of forest land. But progress has been slow. About 40 percent of claims have been approved, according to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Activists say most of these claims are for individual rights rather than for more important community rights. "For tribal people, these laws have a direct impact on livelihoods," Alok Shukla, president of the advocacy group Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan (Save Chhattisgarh Movement). "There is a lot of anger against the BJP government for weakening these laws and favoring industry over the rights of the tribal people," he said. — Reuters

## Jailed activist's elderly mother seeks justice

**BEIJING:** Unable to see her son ailing in prison, the 85-year-old mother of China's first "cyber dissident" has come to Beijing to plead his case, fearing he will die behind bars. Pu Wenjing said scrutiny had now fallen on her - local police have started calling her since she arrived in the capital in October to try and secure the release of her 55-year-old son, Huang Qi, for medical treatment. He was arrested in 2016 for "leaking state secrets" and Pu has not been

allowed to visit him in prison since then, she said.

Huang, who suffers from high blood pressure and late-stage kidney disease, is being held at the Mianyang Detention Centre in southwestern Sichuan province, his home region. He has yet to have a trial date set. "He's been beaten in jail and abused, and the money his family sent has been withheld from him," Pu told AFP, citing Huang's account to his previous lawyer, whose legal license was reportedly cancelled earlier this year. "Without medical treatment, my son will die in prison — under false accusations — very soon," Pu added. The octogenarian mother is worried that her son will suffer the same fate as dissident Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, who died from liver cancer while under police custody in 2017.

Huang ran a website called "64 Tianwang", named after the bloody June 4, 1989 crackdown on Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protesters. The site, which has reported on local corruption, human rights violations, and other topics rarely seen in ordinary Chinese media, is blocked by the Great Firewall. Last month, Pu travelled to Beijing to submit documents to China's Ministry of Public Security detailing her son's alleged abuse at the detention centre and requesting medical release.

But the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the highest legal supervision body in the country, refused to accept her paperwork, she said. The ministry and the procuratorate did not immediately respond to requests for comment. On Monday, 14 non-profit organizations, including Amnesty International and

Human Rights Watch, called for Huang's immediate and unconditional release.

Pu, who is temporarily based in a relative's apartment in the capital, said she doesn't dare leave the house, fearing authorities might pick her up and place her under house arrest back in Sichuan. "I'm already 85, I'm sick all over," Pu told AFP, tears welling up in her eyes. "I have high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. I have a lot of illnesses." "I'm afraid I won't be able to see my son before I die in this enormous prison," she cried, referring to China. Shortly after her son was bundled away by police in 2016, Pu said she was held for 19 days at a local hospital in Neijiang city in Sichuan province. Security guards kept her under watch 24/7. Neijiang authorities told AFP they would not comment on the case over the phone. — AFP

## Easing tensions, US and China to hold security talks

**WASHINGTON:** The United States and China will hold top-level security talks on Friday, the State Department announced, in a sign of easing tensions after months of escalation over trade and regional disputes. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis will host their Chinese counterparts in Washington for the second US-China Diplomatic and Security Dialogue, following a meeting in June 2017. The announcement of talks with senior Communist Party foreign affairs official Yang Jiechi and General Wei Fenghe came on the eve of US congressional elections, in which President Donald Trump has cast China as a villain set on bringing him down.

In early October, a US defense official said that a planned visit by Mattis to China had been canceled because Beijing declined to make Wei available. But addressing a Middle East security conference last week, Mattis said his Chinese counterpart would shortly travel to Washington, adding that "strategic competition does not imply hostility." Washington and Beijing have been locked in a high-stakes standoff over Trump's move to end what he says have been years of unfair trade practices by China. Trump imposed new tariffs on roughly half of Chinese imports this summer while Beijing fired back with tariffs on most US products.

Trump turned the feud into a full-press offensive - boosting military support for rival Taiwan, stepping up denunciations of Beijing's human rights record and curtailing its access to US nuclear technology. In a speech that some observers said recalled the Cold War, Vice President Mike Pence vowed to challenge China on multiple fronts and accused Beijing of interfering in US elections by buying advertisements extolling the trade relationship. But Trump sounded a more conciliatory note last week, heralding "very good" talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, and later declaring that he expected their trade conflict to end with "a very good deal."

Xi earlier Monday also offered a more forward-looking note as he wooed investors in Shanghai. He pledged to welcome imports, streamline customs clearance and crack down on intellectual property infringement — longtime goals of foreign business leaders, although many of them have grown jaded after similar promises in the past. Friday's talks, however, will focus foremost on security. The United States has accused China of increasingly bold moves in the dispute-rife South China Sea and of harassing US warships in international waters. Also likely high on the agenda will be North Korea, with Pompeo due to meet Thursday in New York with the second highest-ranking official of the totalitarian state, which counts on China as its most important ally. — AFP

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## South Africa's AbM movement fights for urban land reform

Five years ago Ndabo Mzimela was evicted from a cramped backyard shack in Durban to make way for the construction of subsidized government housing. Those houses, he and other residents said, were allocated exclusively to paying members of the African National Congress (ANC), the South African ruling party that has been beset in recent years by allegations of widespread corruption. It is a sentiment routinely heard across Durban, where more than 317,000 households - according to government data - live in impoverished informal settlements like Cato Crest, now Mzimela's home.

Cato Crest alone has more than 1,000 such households. Residents not only lack basic services; they said they had faced as many as 23 attempted evictions by the local municipality - many in contravention of a court order, local media reported. "The ANC had a chance to redress the issues of the past and give poor people the right to land and proper housing," Mzimela told the Thomson Reuters Foundation of the party that in 1994 won South Africa's first democratic elections. "But it's 24 years later, and they've clearly failed."

### Filling the void

More than two decades after apartheid's demise, most private land remains in the hands of South Africa's white minority, making it a potent symbol of wider economic disparities. The ANC has made expropriation of white-owned land a key policy ahead of an election next year that is expected to prove a tough test against a backdrop of recession and signs of rising social discontent. But as the government pushes ahead with its expropriation plans, Mzimela said the plight of urban shack-dwellers in Durban was still largely neglected despite mounting service delivery protests and land occupations across the city district. "The government does not care about the urban poor. Their policies do not address our situation, they just maintain it," he said.

A shack-dwellers' movement called Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) has become an important voice. Since its formation in 2005 - after municipal land earmarked for housing for local shack-dwellers was sold privately - AbM has amassed more than 50,000 members across the country's under-served informal settlements. The bulk of its membership is in Durban, where the group has led a number of land occupations.

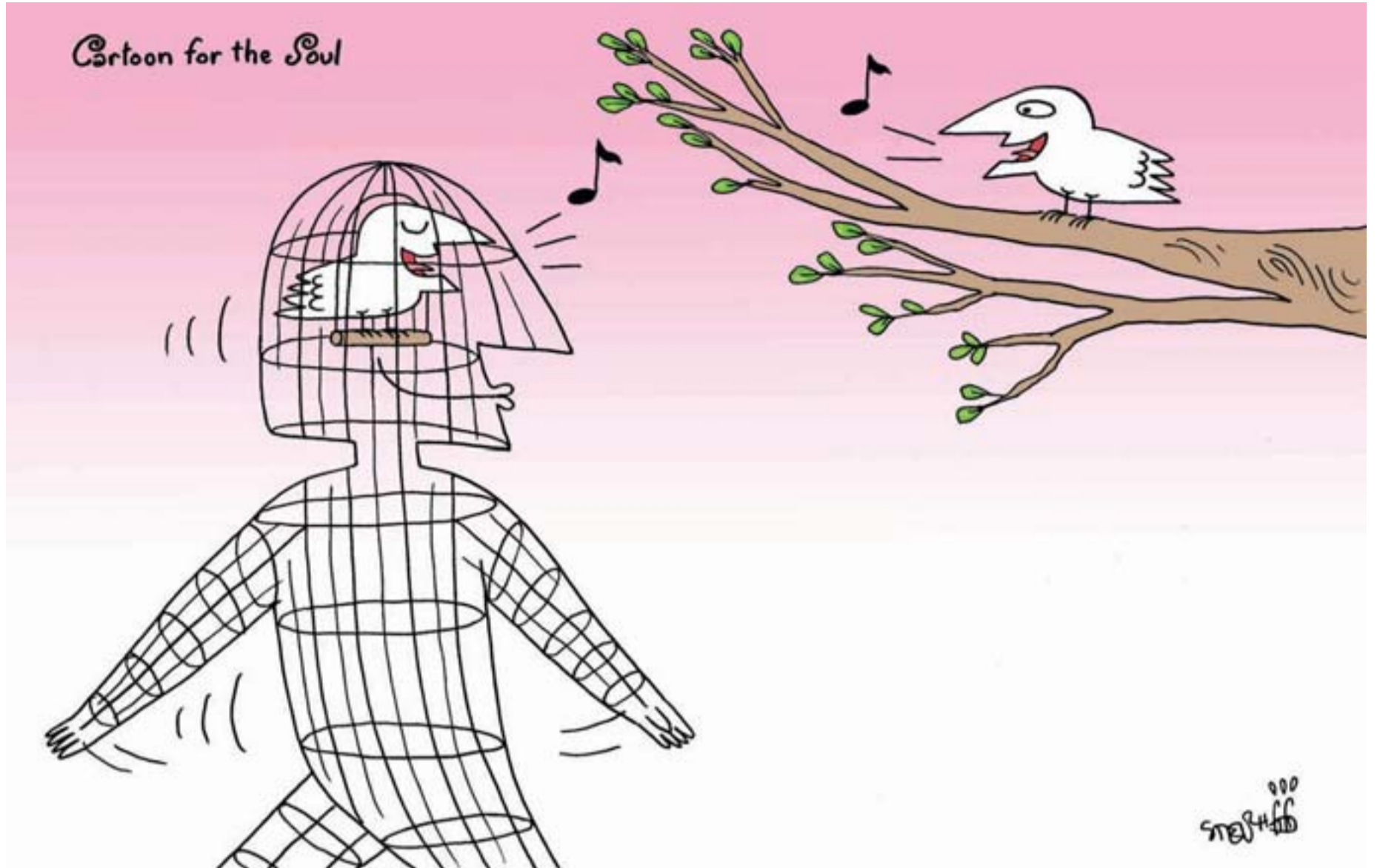
Mzimela, who heads AbM's Cato Crest branch, said members routinely faced threats, intimidation and assassination as they tried to pressure local officials to make land available for housing, improve living conditions, and prevent the violent eviction of shack-dwellers from state-owned land. "The government has tried everything to crush our organization and our processes," he explained. Three AbM members were killed in service delivery protests and attempted evictions in Cato Crest in 2013, including 17-year-old Nqobile Nzuza, according to local media reports. She was shot twice in the back while fleeing police. A further 10 members have been killed since then, AbM said, most of them in Durban.

AbM spokesman Thapelo Mohapi said the ANC in Durban had routinely sought to "criminalise" and "persecute" the movement rather than engage with its leadership over how to implement much-needed urban land reform. Nelly Nyanisa, ANC chief whip in KwaZulu-Natal, the province that encompasses Durban, said the local municipality wanted to build relationships with organizations like AbM, adding that the group's actions often stood in the way of government plans to develop land for housing. "Land meant to improve communities is often illegally occupied - then we can no longer build any community project to help benefit communities," she said by phone.

### 'Decisive action'

Lazola Kati, provincial organizer of local advocacy group Right2Know, said the conflict between AbM and the state was compounded by the lack of an up-to-date housing list in Durban, whose backlog has reached about 400,000 homes. Kati told the Thomson Reuters Foundation the situation had allowed local power brokers to make money from improperly allocating government housing. "We live in communities where local councillors are selling off (government) houses meant to benefit the poor, and municipalities are illegally evicting shack-dwellers," she said. "Even more drastically, activists are being killed for standing in the way of those same people," Kati said.

Mzimela said he doubted the ANC could address land restitution meaningfully or the impasse between the municipality and AbM in KwaZulu-Natal. "The policies that are being made are not supporting the poor," Mzimela told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. He said the ANC move to expropriate agricultural land from white farmers without compensation was merely intended to help secure the votes of the impoverished black electorate next year. Land reform expert Ruth Hall said the land reform debate playing out in parliament was too narrowly focused on whether or not the constitution should be amended to allow expropriation without compensation. "It is not focusing on how the constitution should be amended, nor is it focusing on who should get land, where and for what purpose," Hall said. — Reuters



## European banks' beauty only skin-deep

Europe's top banks may have survived a milestone test of their resilience but strengthened balance sheets count for little when they generate such meager returns compared with US rivals, investors say. The European Banking Authority stress test results on Friday showed the sector in reasonable financial health, with a clean sweep of 48 lenders judged capable of withstanding economic shocks like a crash in real estate or bond prices. For the first time since 2009, the EU health check of the sector showed all top banks passed a key capital threshold under the most adverse economic scenario.

However European Central Bank vice president Luis de Guindos on Monday said a dozen banks that came below the 9 percent threshold in the adverse scenario should strengthen their capital positions. Those banks include Deutsche Bank, BNP Paribas and Societe Generale. Fears of fresh cash calls partly explain why investors are still running shy of the sector. The STOXX European banks index, which has tumbled 20 percent so far this year, held flat on Monday following the results. This rejection looks set to continue as Europe's economic prospects darken, according to some fund managers and analysts.

A decade on from the financial crisis and despite years of central bank stimulus, Europe's growth is slowing, with economists polled by Reuters forecasting full-year GDP growth in the euro zone of 2.1 percent this year and 1.8 percent next. That reflects an outlook depressed in part by Italy's political crisis, the slowdown in Turkey and the likely fallout from Britain's divorce from the European Union, which were all factored into the stress test scenarios.

On the surface, European bank stocks look like bargains. The sector's valuation via the STOXX bank index is hovering just above all-time lows, long after lenders shed the toxic assets that destroyed faith in the financial system in 2007. But the fact that bank capital levels are now roughly three times higher than pre-crisis levels has failed to offset worries about where bank revenue growth is going to come from. "Profitability remains quite a problem for many banks in Europe," Mario Quagliariello, director of economic analysis at the EBA, told Reuters.

### Rough year

Low base rates - 0.75 percent in Britain and negative 0.4 percent in the euro zone - are forcing lenders to cut margins and take greater risks as demand for loans slows amid stagnant growth, resulting in paltry returns for investors. "European bank stocks have had a rough year thus far - and

until there is economic data that suggests robust economic growth in the eurozone, bank stocks seem unlikely to recover," said Mike Olivia, an advisor at WestPac Wealth Partners, which holds bank stocks.

Bank bosses also have fewer freedoms to make money in investment banking post-financial crisis, investors say. This is compounded by an equally striking incapacity to curb costs. And tighter regulation has made the sector safer but less lucrative, fund managers say, making it a tougher sell to their insurance and pension fund clients, who demand bigger rewards for what they perceive to be riskier investments. EU banks' average return on equity in 2017 stood at 5.6 percent, just over half the 2007 level of 10.6 percent, according to data from the European Banking Federation and below the 9 percent recorded by U.S. peers. U.S. lenders' investment banking businesses have increased their market share at the expense of their European rivals, thanks to weaker markets and tougher regulations in Europe, and laid bare in much more impressive operating margins - a key measure of profitability - for the U.S. banks. The top U.S. banks' equities and fixed income businesses ran at margins of 31 and 42 percent in the first half of this year, according to data from Coalition, compared with 14 and 27 percent for the same businesses in Europe's biggest investment banks.

### Powerless

The biggest two buying signals for investors in banks are an uptick in interest rates, followed by growth in demand for debt. But both of these factors are in the hands of policymakers, not bank CEOs, noted Vincent Vinatier, portfolio manager at AXA IM, which holds bank shares. "Most people doubt we will ever again see the kinds of profits we saw before the crisis... ROE (return on equity) will be just a fraction of what it was," Vinatier told Reuters.

Long-awaited rate rises will come, but those who jumped back into European bank shares in February, when hopes of a shift in monetary policy last peaked, have been punished with a 20 percent fall in prices. When rates do move upwards, this will likely happen in small increments after extensive sign-posting by EU policymakers. And the benefit on margins for banks will likely be largely offset by the need to repay ultra-cheap loans offered by the European Central Bank in recent years, and replace them with costlier funding, analysts at Berenberg said.

Higher debt costs could also prove fatal to a glut of so-called 'zombie firms' - companies struggling to cover borrowing costs on current profit levels. Forbearance - the act

of turning a blind eye to a faltering loan - and 'zombie companies' are most apparent on Italian and Spanish bank balance sheets.

### Costs

With revenue growth so hard to capture, a tighter rein on costs is seen critical in the battle to win back investors. "There is still much more cost cutting to be done i.e. further branch closures and retrenchment of people," said Marc Halperin, manager of the Federated International Leaders Fund, which counts ABN AMRO, AIB Group, Credit Suisse, BNP Paribas, Intesa Sanpaolo and UniCredit among its holdings. Expenses at Barclays' investment bank, for example, continue to spiral, leaving the bank short of its target to cut group cost to income to under 60 percent.

Standard Chartered Finance Director Andy Halford said his bank had made "virtually no progress" on reducing costs this year in a leaked staff email last month. And the benefits achieved by cutting jobs and branches have been eclipsed by fresh spending in technology and cyber defense. Banks have largely put massive penalties for past misconduct behind them but regulatory compliance is an unavoidable overhead set to rise as activities expand.

And promises of 4, 5 and even 6 percent annual dividend payouts are not luring investors either, because European utilities, telecoms and insurers can offer the same dividends at reduced risk, fund managers said. Banks are the second cheapest sector on a price to earnings basis, trading at 9.1 times consensus estimates on 2019 earnings, a 30 percent discount to the market while offering a estimated 2019 yield of 5.7 percent. Berenberg data shows. Only the autos sector is cheaper. Although neutral to the sector, analysts at Bernstein said investors had rarely had a better opportunity to buy the ROE currently offered by the sector at such cheap prices. "If one did want to make a positive case for it, the European banks are somewhat cheaply valued against their level of ROE compared to what history would suggest." The most bearish of investors say the lack of love for European banks reflects growing fears the European project is ultimately doomed, or another global financial crisis triggered by trade wars or sovereign insolvency is just around the corner. "The next financial crisis will be triggered by sovereign debt, rather than the banks themselves. However the banks own a lot of the sovereign debt so there is contagion risk," said Matthew Gallagher, managing member at Odnic Advisors. "Greece and Italy are starting to show cracks and won't be helped as interest rates rise in the US." — Reuters

## In Israel, African families battle hunger, trauma

In the concrete bowels of a vast bus station in the Israeli city of Tel Aviv, a group of children gather in the evening to play and dance to songs blaring from a CD player. Their parents are African migrants who work until late, struggling to earn enough to put food on the table. While their children have access to state education in Israel, they face hardships, support workers said. "Everyone in their proximity is in dire stress, and there's no money for basic necessities," said Yonit Naftali, vice-president of Elifelet, an Israeli charity that supports children born to African migrants.

Over a decade from the mid-2000s, about 64,000 Africans - mainly from conflict-torn Sudan and Eritrea - arrived in Israel across the then-porous border with Egypt's Sinai, which was fenced off several years ago. Many experienced torture, were enslaved or imprisoned for ransom at the hands of Bedouin smugglers in the Sinai desert. Today some 36,000 remain in Israel, with 6,000 more children, according to government data.

For many, life has got tougher since a 2017 law directed employers to deduct 20 percent from the wages of workers with temporary visas who entered Israel illegally from Egypt. As an incentive for them to go elsewhere, the money is deposited in a fund, together with an employer-paid tax of 16 percent, which workers can only access when they leave Israel. The new system is crippling for migrant families, said Naftali. "The children were the first

to get hurt," she said. Parents must now work more - some clocking up 15 hours a day - while earning less, leaving them unable to take care of their children properly, she added.

In birthday cards to friends, children of migrants recently wrote messages such as "May you have food in your refrigerator" and "May you never go hungry", Naftali said. "Then we understood there is something really bad going on," she said. Her charity had to close down one of its after-school centres in order to finance emergency food donations. "There are actually hungry children, which I never believed I would see in Israel to such an extent," Naftali told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The Israeli Ministry of Interior's Population and Immigration Authority did not respond to requests for comment.

### Community school

Many children of African migrants were born in Israel, speak Hebrew, attend Israeli schools and know Jewish culture and traditions. But they do not have Israeli identity cards and often encounter racist slurs, said Naftali. Eritrean migrants in Israel, backed by rights groups, say they are asylum seekers fleeing violence, persecution and conscription under a repressive regime back home. But the Israeli government views them as economic migrants, and has tried to deport them - although a failure to find a country willing to take them forced it to abandon a plan to expel thousands of mostly Eritrean and Sudanese men in April.

Between 2009 and 2017, Israel granted refugee recognition to less than 0.5 percent of the almost 11,000 asylum applications it decided on, according to the Israeli non-profit Hotline for Refugees and Migrants. Elifelet was established following a 2012 hate crime attack, when Molotov cocktails were thrown into a Tel Aviv cen-



African migrants cycle in south Tel Aviv on Sept 5th, 2017. — Reuters

tre for refugees where 21 children were sleeping, Naftali said. For the children of migrant families, developing pride in their heritage is important to equip them to deal with the discrimination they face in everyday life, she added.

An after-hours school set up by the city's Eritrean migrant community has similar aims, teaching children their own language and culture, and offering them a safe space in the evenings. "If our kids go on the streets, they get a lot of discrimination. Here, it's like a home," said Kifle Bizen, director of the Abugida Eritrean Community School. On the top floor of a rundown building in southern Tel Aviv, it is staffed by volunteers who, after finishing day jobs as cleaners or cooks, teach classes for about 120 Eritrean children, aged six to 14, four times a week.

Set up in 2013, it assists children with

school work and fosters their Eritrean identity, Bizen explained. "Our dream is to support our children not only with knowledge but also with their sense of self to help them develop," he said. Besides studying maths and science, the children sing, perform plays and recite poems in Tigrinya, one of Eritrea's main languages.

Learning Tigrinya is key, said Bizen, not least because children and parents often cannot understand one another, sparking arguments. "Here, 100 percent of the children talk in our language," he said. The Eritrean community is like "an extended family", working together to overcome shared challenges, he added. The official monthly fee at Abugida is about 400 shekels (\$108), but most Eritreans pay half that or less, said Bizen, while 40 children from single-parent households attend free. — Reuters

## Business

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AMRITSAR: Indian shoppers look for decoration items on the eve of the Hindu festival of "Diwali", in Amritsar yesterday. —AFP

# High prices, lending curbs dim Diwali sales

## Indian gold dealers offer discount • Sales of Apple iPhone, cars down on weak rupee

**NEW DELHI/BENGALURU:** Higher prices, lending curbs and a move to online shopping are denting the cheer for Indian retailers at this year's Diwali festival, with lackluster sales for high-end items ranging from iPhones to cars and even gold. A weak rupee has pushed prices on Apple Inc's costly iPhones even higher in India, while surging fuel costs and a liquidity crunch in India's shadow banking sector have taken a bite out of growth in carmakers' sales during the country's heaviest shopping weeks. Demand for gold, which typically surges during the season that started in mid-October and ends on Friday, is also weak despite dealers offering discounts on the precious metal for the first time in three years.

The tepid sales may prompt the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to find additional ways to stimulate the economy, especially given there is an election due by May. The government has already reduced fuel excise taxes, pushed the Reserve Bank of India to ease curbs on bank lending, and provided support for weak crop prices in recent weeks.

### Under stress

Expecting the usual spike in demand during Diwali,

when people traditionally buy gifts for family and friends, Sanjay Mahadik, owner of an apparel shop in Satara in the western state of Maharashtra stocked up. But demand is weak, he says.

"Only a few customers are turning up. During Diwali week normally the shop gets so crowded that customers struggle to find space to stand," said Mahadik. Indian households' consumption has grown ahead of income for five years, brokerage UBS Securities India said in a note, thanks to lower interest rates that have reduced savings and encouraged people to take out more loans.

But signs of a slowdown in lending by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) as some of them struggle for liquidity may hurt discretionary consumption, UBS said.

"With NBFCs and banks under stress, the availability of finance and general sentiment is affected," said Sugato Sen, deputy director general at the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), a trade body that counts Maruti Suzuki, Toyota Motor Corp, Volkswagen and BMW among others, as members.

While passenger vehicle sales at Maruti Suzuki,

which sells one in every two cars in India, rose just 0.6 percent to 135,948 units in October from a year ago, motorbike and scooter sales are strong as shown by the 33 percent growth reported by Bajaj Auto Ltd. Also doing well are online retailers like Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart, who have both reported robust sales thanks to major promotional events this season, to the detriment of some traditional retailers.

Just days ahead of Diwali, some wholesale and retail markets in cities like Mumbai saw lower customer numbers as consumers shifted to buying online to take advantage of greater discounts.

Sales of large appliances grew 2.5 times year-earlier numbers during Amazon's Great Indian Festival sale last week, with smart TVs accounting for more than 50 percent of total TV sales, the online retailer said in an email. Amazon also said there was an increase in sales of air purifiers, furniture and clothes.

Other big electronics retailers say zero-interest financing schemes are helping buoy demand for white goods like TVs and refrigerators. "The availability of high speed internet, Amazon and Netflix has something to do with this. People want to access that content so

the feeling is that the TV must be nicer, bigger," said a large Mumbai-based retailer.

### Apple's woes

For Amazon, smartphones continued to be the biggest-selling product by value but this year sales were driven by Chinese phone-makers Xiaomi and OnePlus in a setback for Apple. Sales of iPhones in India will fall for the first time since 2014, one research firm estimates, as users in the world's fastest growing major economy find the phones to be too expensive.

In 2018, Apple is set to sell about 2 million phones in the country - a drop of about 1 million from last year, said Neil Shah, director at Hong Kong-based Counterpoint Research. The Cupertino, California company's struggle to win over India's 1.4 billion consumers swung more sharply into focus this week after Apple blamed a disappointing set of sales forecasts on a handful of big emerging markets like India. Rushabh Doshi, analyst at Singapore-based Canalys, said Apple could be forced to launch cheaper devices. "That is the only way it will gain volume in price-conscious markets like India," he said. —Reuters

## Iran says it is selling oil despite US pressure

**GENEVA/LONDON:** Iran said yesterday it had so far been able to sell as much oil as it needs despite US pressure, but urged European countries that oppose the US sanctions to do more to shield Iran.

The United States on Monday restored sanctions targeting Iran's oil, banking and transport sectors and threatened more action to stop what Washington called its "outlaw" policies - steps that Tehran called economic warfare and vowed to defy. The measures are part of a wider effort by US President Donald Trump to curb Tehran's missile and nuclear programs and diminish the Islamic Republic's influence in the Middle East, notably its support for proxies in Syria, Yemen and Lebanon.

Trump is targeting Iran's main source of revenue - its oil exports - as well as its financial sector, essentially making 50 Iranian banks and their subsidiaries off-limits to foreign banks, on pain of losing access to the US financial system.

"The Americans constantly said they would reduce the sale of Iran's oil to zero but I have to say that, so far,

we have been able to sell our required amounts of oil," Tasnim news agency quoted Iranian Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri as saying.

"The Americans, with the help of propaganda, don't see the realities," Jahangiri said he had spoken to a handful of managers from companies on the US sanctions list, and that some had already formulated plans on how to deal with the measures.

However, Iran's oil minister wrote to OPEC's secretary general calling for two committees that monitor an output deal with non-OPEC countries to be scrapped, accusing them of siding with the United States. The head of Iran's central bank, Abdolnasser Hemmati, said Iranian banks should use their previous experience dealing with sanctions to support the foreign trade process and financial transfers", according to the state news agency, IRNA.

### European support

The European Union, France, Germany and Britain, participants with the United States in the 2015 deal that lifted sanctions on Iran in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, said they regretted the US move and wanted to protect European firms doing legitimate business with Iran. The EU is seeking to launch a "special purpose vehicle" (SPV) to sidestep the US financial system by using an EU intermediary to handle trade with Iran. —Reuters

## Eurozone economy slowing

**LONDON:** Eurozone business growth slumped to a two-year low in October as growing trade tensions and tariffs, alongside rising political uncertainty, put a dent in exports and optimism, a survey showed yesterday.

However, while survey and official figures yesterday showed the slowdown is relatively widespread, the clouds over the euro zone are not as dark as recently feared.

Any positive signs will be welcomed by policymakers at the European Central Bank as they look to halt their 2.6 trillion euro asset purchase program by the end of the year, shutting off one of the main sources of stimulus to the eurozone economy. IHS Markit's Euro Zone Composite Final Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), seen as a good guide to economic health, fell to 53.1 in October from September's 54.1, its lowest since September 2016.

But it was above a 52.7 flash estimate and still

comfortably higher than the 50 mark which separates growth from contraction. "The underlying progress in the economy looks pretty solid," said James Nixon at Oxford Economics.

Official figures showed that industrial orders in Germany rose just 0.3 percent in September but a Reuters poll had predicted a 0.6 percent fall, suggesting Europe's biggest economy ended the third quarter on a solid footing. And the final German services PMI was revised up to 54.7 from a preliminary reading of 53.6 - one of the biggest upward adjustments in the survey's history.

Activity in France accelerated as companies stepped up hiring after an increase in new business and Spain's service sector expanded at its fastest rate since June, also supported by growth in new business, earlier PMIs showed. "October's PMI data suggests that most of the major euro zone economies will perform a little better in Q4 than in Q3," noted Jack Allen at Capital Economics.

As a whole, the bloc's economy expanded 0.2 percent in the third quarter, official data showed late last month, and a Reuters poll predicted it would be 0.4 percent this quarter. —Reuters

Business

NBK CAPITAL - GLOBAL MARKETS COMMENTARY

Global markets in correction mode after selloff in October

Major US indices erase gains for the year

October was the worst month for markets so far this year. Global markets tumbled across the world reaching correction territory in many cases.

Markets were spooked by a spike in the yield of 10-year US Treasury bonds which jumped from a little over 3.0 percent to 3.18 percent in one day following blowout numbers from the ISM non-Manufacturing index.

The International Monetary Fund cut its forecast for global growth citing trade tensions that are starting to hurt economic activity worldwide.

These developments did not help European markets which took a beating in October. The Stoxx Europe 600 Index declined by 5.63 percent during the month.

kept rates on hold during the month but confirmed that plans to end monetary easing by year-end remain on track. The Asset purchase program will now go at a pace of 15 billion euros per month until the end of 2018.

Across in the UK, the FTSE 100 Index closed the month of October down 5.09 percent bringing its losses for the year to 7.28 percent mainly caused by the turmoil in international markets and continuing Brexit saga.

The already troubled Emerging markets didn't do any better in October. The MSCI Emerging Markets Index posted a loss of 8.78 percent bringing its year to date losses to 17.48 percent.



Taiwan Stock Exchange returned to negative territory for the year after plunging 10.94 percent during the month. US-China trade tensions still dominate the scene with the repercussions of an all-out trade war starting to reflect in economic figures and corporate results.

Oil also had a dismal month in October. Brent closed down 8.76 percent for October but had declined more than 16 percent from peak to trough during the month.

decline. Despite the global market turmoil, GCC equities managed to end the month of October in the green supported by the solid performance of the Qatar Stock exchange.

The Tadawul All Share Index ended the month down 1.16 percent after declining by as much as 9.16 percent as of the close of October 14.

Abu Dhabi ADX General Index closed in negative territory down 0.68 percent. MENA equities as measured by the S&P Pan Arab Composite Index closed the month down 0.49 percent.

Private China firms worry Beijing is more focused on big state firms

BEIJING: An unprecedented convergence of economic stresses this year is weighing on China's once vibrant private sector, compelling some entrepreneurs to question the effectiveness - and true intent - of Beijing's policies.

In a meeting with entrepreneurs aired on national TV last week, President Xi Jinping threw his backing behind private companies, pledging tax cuts and an equal business environment for all firms.

"The long-term pressure will be very big, because it's obvious that large enterprises will have more and more advantages, and small firms can only be 'eaten up' or go bankrupt," said Bi Jiacheng, manager at Nantong Kunstronger Labor Protective Products Co.

With economic growth slowing and Beijing cracking down on riskier forms of borrowing, China's private sector is grappling with a financing crunch that

has pushed some firms into distress. So far this year, at least 40 listed private firms have announced stake sales to state firms on the back of financial stresses worsened by the stock market rout, according to state media.

Private firms say they have also lost out to SOEs as environmental inspectors shut small factories in the name of cutting pollution, while many exporters are vulnerable to the trade war with the United States.

"Private enterprises should not consider 'bigger and stronger', but consider 'doing stronger in the middle', because if they are bigger, it's necessary to consider the relationship between the state, society and government," said Sam Yu, general manager at MENTECHS.

Private sector retreat One private ceramics manufacturer said his firm was forced to relocate operations from Zibo in eastern Shandong province after a big industrial restructuring saw many local private firms shut down in a pollution and regulatory crackdown.

In the past, food for passengers was mainly manufactured by private companies, but nowadays SOEs dominate, he said, declining to be named for fear of retribution. China's State Council Information Office, the government's public relations arm, and the National Development and Reform Commission, the top state planner, did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

Mazda Service Drive with Japanese engineers from Mazda Corporation

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. Kaico Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar, conducted the Mazda Service Drive alongside top Mazda engineers from Mazda Motors Corporation in Japan for 4 days starting Saturday 27th October 2018.

Ashish Tandon, general manager of Kaico, said "We conduct this service drive with the cooperation of our principals to re-enforce the relationships between vehicle owners, manufacturer and distributor.

He went on to state "Kaico not only wants the customer to have a lifetime experience from



Mazda cars but also be a customer for life." By following the maintenance of the car as per the manufacturer's service schedule you ensure best & reliable performance.

Mohammad Abuoulaun, senior executive manager - after sales service, mentioned "Mazda customers should feel totally comfortable with their experience of owning a 100 percent Japanese made vehicle such as Mazda and the highly trained service team at Kaico.

technology equipments in the industry grants the continuity of that experience."

Customers participating in the Mazda service drive received comprehensive vehicle check-up, a competitive rate on engine oil and filter change as well as an exclusive discount on spare parts required with a validity of three months in any of Kaico service centers located in Al-Ahmadi & Shuwaikh areas.



EU business lobby dismisses China's latest opening pledge

SHANGHAI: The EU business lobby in China has dismissed President Xi Jinping's latest market-opening pledge as a rehash of earlier unkept promises.

Xi vowed at the opening of a new import fair in Shanghai on Monday that China had a "sincere commitment" to open its markets, despite foreign accusations that it was dragging its feet or backsliding amid calls to remove barriers to market

access. The Chinese leader announced steps would be taken in several areas but the EU chamber said in a strongly worded statement that much of what Xi promised was a reiteration of past statements.

"This constant repetition, without sufficient concrete measures or timelines being introduced, has left the European business community increasingly desensitized to these kinds of promises," it said in a statement late Monday.

The chamber said expectations for Xi's speech opening the China International Import Expo had been "continuously stoked" by the Chinese government.

Xi said China would "step up" efforts to stimulate imports, lower tariffs, ease customs clearance procedures, and implement harsh punishments for intellectual property infringements, among other things.

EXCHANGE RATES

Table with columns for BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL, CURRENCY, BUY, SELL, and various international rates like American, Thai Baht, Vietnamese Dong, Arab, and others.

## Business

# India government set to turn up heat on central bank chief

## Traders fear Patel's departure to roil financial markets

**NEW DELHI/MUMBAI:** The Indian government intends to keep pressing demands for the country's central bank to relax lending curbs and hand over surplus reserves even if it risks provoking a resignation by the bank's governor, three sources familiar with the government's thinking told Reuters.

While there appeared to be a partial truce last week when the government said it respected the autonomy of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the sources said the government will turn up the heat at the bank's central board of directors meeting on Nov 19.

And RBI Governor Urjit Patel will be a key focus of the pressure from a group of directors who support the government's position, according to the New Delhi-based sources, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

"We want the RBI governor to accept the priorities of the economy and to discuss these with board members," said one of the sources, a senior government official with direct knowledge of deliberations. "If he wants to take decisions unilaterally, it will be better for him to quit."

Investors and traders warn that if Patel quits it will create uncertainty and undermine India's already-weak financial markets. They have been hurt in recent weeks because of defaults by a major financing company. A Finance Ministry spokesman declined to comment for this story. The RBI did not respond to an email seeking comment.

### "Potentially catastrophic"

Tensions between the two sides came to the fore last month when RBI Deputy Governor Viral Acharya gave a speech that blew the lid off a fractious dispute between the bank and the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on issues ranging from lending curbs to who controls the institution's reserves. Acharya said that undermining central bank independence could be "potentially catastrophic", and he even cited meddling by the Argentine government in the affairs of its central bank in 2010 - prompting big drops in that nation's financial markets - as a sign of how bad things can get.

For its part, government officials say they have been increasingly frustrated by the intransigence of Patel and his team to address its demands and engage in constructive dialogue.

The RBI has consistently pushed back against calls from the government to hand over more money from its reserves to help fund the fiscal deficit. The ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party is also keen to reduce curbs on the shadow banking sector and increase overall lending to small and medium-sized businesses. The aim is to help offset economic headwinds from low farm prices and high fuel prices ahead of a general election due by next May and key state elections in a few weeks.

"We will do everything to protect the interests of the economy," one of the members of the RBI central board told Reuters, noting the governor and his team would have to "explain, defend and justify" their deci-

sions at the board meeting.

It is unclear, though, how the government will seek to exert pressure through the RBI's Central Board as the body is a largely symbolic one, which has never had a direct say in the bank's directives and policies, according to two additional sources with knowledge of the law under which the central bank operates. "The role of the board has typically been to supervise the workings of the RBI, like internal audit and recruitment. But the RBI is not really accountable to the board for regulatory and operational issues," said one of the sources, saying this would only change if the government invokes Section 7 of the RBI Act allowing it to dictate policy to the central bank.

"We don't know whether the board will supersede the RBI in that case," said the source. "This kind of situation has never arisen before." Still, the government sources say they will find ways to increase pressure on the RBI and Patel via the board before moving to invoke Section 7.

"Patel and his team must recognize the period of an invisible RBI board is over," one of the New Delhi-based sources said, noting that the RBI will sooner or later have to fall in line.

Patel's predecessor Raghuram Rajan defended the RBI's call for autonomy saying that the central bank's responsibility is to secure financial stability and it has the right to say "no" to government proposals that could lead to instability. "The RBI is something like a seatbelt," Rajan, who is a professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, told CNBC-TV18.



RBI Governor Urjit Patel

"As a driver, being the government, it has the possibility of not putting on the seatbelt, but of course, if you don't put on the seatbelt, you can get into an accident which can be quite severe."

N.R. Bhanumurthy, an economist at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, a New Delhi-based think tank, partly funded by the finance ministry said the RBI and the government were dealing with the same problem though there was a difference of opinion on how to solve it.

"While the government is looking for short-term solutions, the RBI is focused on long term solutions," he said, adding that despite disagreements, both could resolve their differences.

"If the RBI governor is forced to resign, it will be a huge setback for the economy." —Reuters

## France battles to save EU digital tax proposal

**BRUSSELS:** France said yesterday it is prepared to delay an EU-wide tax on high-tech giants in order to save a proposal that faces opposition from Ireland and Nordic countries.

Paris has been urging its European Union partners to impose a new tax to ensure that global tech platforms like Facebook and Google pay their fair share. But Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said France now agrees with Germany that once approved, the levy could be delayed and used as an incentive towards forging an international solution, including with the US and China.

On Monday, Le Maire's German counterpart Olaf Scholz backed a European tax, but only if a broader solution was not found by summer 2020. Arriving at a meeting of EU finance ministers in Brussels, Le Maire told AFP the draft EU law "is due to be adopted in December 2018... but we are open to postponing the entry into force to allow time for the OECD to make a more comprehensive proposal."

"There is no disagreement with Mr Scholz on this. We share the same analy-

sis, there are technical difficulties to solve and we must solve them within the next four weeks," said Le Maire.

The change of tack comes after France and the European Commission first advocated a provisional bloc-wide solution until an international scheme is found at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which groups major world economies.

France, backed by EU-presidency holder Austria, wants a law proposal by the end of the year leaving little time to get opponents on side as European tax rules require unanimous backing by all EU members.

Paris argues the measure would be a vote-winning accomplishment for mainstream EU politicians ahead of the European Parliament elections next May, in which anti-Brussels populists could do well.

### "Cannot support"

But Ireland, which hosts the European headquarters of several US tech giants, leads a small group of otherwise mostly Nordic countries that argue the tax will also punish European companies and stoke Washington's anger. "We cannot support the proposed directive... I see no government in Sweden that would have any other opinion on this issue," said Sweden's Magdalena Andersson.

Irish Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe stressed the potential reaction from countries targeted, mainly the US.



BRUSSELS: Austrian Finance Minister Hartwig Loeger (center) talks with Slovak Finance Minister Peter Kazimir (right) prior to an Economic and Financial Affairs meeting at the EU headquarters in Brussels yesterday. —AFP

"What kind of reaction would this bring if this was a model that was imposed on us?" Donohoe asked his fellow ministers in a public session.

Given the way that the tax "has been framed as aiming at US companies, of course there will be a reaction from the United States," added Danish Finance Minister Kristian Jensen.

The EU proposal is also intended to stop other countries going it alone with their own digital tax and creating

a patchwork of schemes across the continent.

Some EU member states such as Britain, Spain and Italy are working on national versions of a digital tax, with Singapore and India also planning their own schemes.

"If we do nothing, the EU will be split up like a puzzle and our European businesses will be the first to suffer," EU Economics Commissioner Pierre Moscovici told the ministers. —AFP

## Surprise rise in German orders eases growth concerns

**BERLIN:** German industrial orders rose unexpectedly in September, driven by bulk orders and higher demand from domestic and other eurozone clients, data showed yesterday, suggesting Europe's largest economy ended the third quarter on a solid footing. Orders edged up 0.3 percent after an upwardly revised increase of 2.5 percent in August, the Federal Statistics Office said. That beat market expectations for a fall of 0.6 percent.

"The small increase is pushing growth concerns into the background," Bankhaus Lampe analyst Alexander Krueger said. For the third quarter as a whole, industrial orders fell 1.0 percent on weak foreign demand, the Economy Ministry said. This suggests manufacturing hardly contributed to overall economic growth in the July-September period.

"Bulk orders were the main driver behind the slight increase in September," DIHK economist Sophia Krietenbrink said. "Nevertheless, there is a clear downward trend for the first three quarters," she added. Krietenbrink said business sentiment was deteriorating due to international trade tensions, weaker global demand and higher energy and commodity prices. The Economy Ministry pointed to special factors in the automobile sector, where the introduction of new regulation has caused production delays. "The development of industrial orders in August and September suggests that bottlenecks in vehicle registration due to new testing rules for cars (WLTP) are slowly clearing up," the ministry said.

The new Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test (WLTP) became mandatory on Sept. 1, forcing carmakers including Volkswagen and Renault to halt deliveries of some models that had yet to be re-certified. The ministry said manufacturing was likely to propel growth in the fourth quarter as many companies are still enjoying an unusually high level of orders. The Federal Statistics Office will publish preliminary gross domestic product growth data next week. Several economic institutes said last week the German economy probably shrank in the third quarter after posting quarterly growth rates of 0.4 percent in the first and 0.5 percent in the second quarter. —Reuters



BERLIN: Deputy Secretary General Ludger Schuknecht (left) at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) hands over his "2018 Regulatory Policy Outlook" to German Minister of State Hendrik Hoppenstedt yesterday at the Chancellery in Berlin. According to the OECD, citizens in Germany should be more involved in the drafting of laws and regulations. —AFP

## German firms ill-prepared for no-deal Brexit: Study

**BERLIN:** Most German firms that export to Britain are poorly prepared for a no-deal Brexit, a survey by the IW economic institute showed yesterday, highlighting the risk that a disorderly British exit from the EU could hurt Europe's largest economy.

Britain is due to leave the European Union on March 29, with London and Brussels yet to secure an

agreement on the Brexit terms and avoid a disruptive "no deal" scenario. The IW survey of more than 1,100 German firms that export industrial goods and services to Britain showed about 30 percent had made no provisions for a no-deal Brexit, with a further 44 percent having made only low-scale preparations.

IW economist Juergen Matthes said the results of the survey were alarming, adding: "Whoever believes they can still wait before making an emergency plan is mistaken." Last month, Germany's BDI industry association said a so-called hard Brexit would spell enormous trouble for tens of thousands of companies and hundreds of thousands of workers throughout Europe.

Several economic institutes said last week the German economy probably shrank in the third quarter after posting quarterly growth rates of 0.4 percent in the first and 0.5 percent in the second quarter. —Reuters

## Rosneft in stand-off with oil buyers as it seeks sanctions protection

**MOSCOW:** Rosneft wants its Western oil buyers to accept new terms and pay penalties from 2019 if they fail to pay for supplies in the event that new US sanctions on the Russian energy major disrupt its oil sales, according to trading sources and Rosneft's draft contracts.

The buyers - including some of the world's biggest oil companies and traders such as BP, Royal Dutch Shell, Total, Vitol and Gunvor - are fiercely opposing the move, according to trading sources.

The stand-off is likely to force Rosneft to soften its demands, the sources said, adding that the development shows the extent to which the state-owned oil giant is concerned about widening US sanctions on Russia. "It is all very uncertain with the sanctions and Rosneft is clearly worried and is trying to minimize possible risks," said a trading source with a European major. "We said no, we couldn't accept this," he added.

Rosneft did not immediately respond to a Reuters request comment. BP and Gunvor declined Reuters requests for comment. Shell, Total, Vitol did not respond to Reuters inquiries. Russia has been under US and EU sanctions since 2014 when it invaded Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. The sanctions have been repeatedly widened to include new companies and sectors, making it tough for Russian oil firms to borrow money abroad, raise new capital or develop Arctic and unconventional deposits. President Vladimir Putin's administration has been hoping for a thaw in relations with the United States since President Donald Trump came to power but Washington has imposed new sanctions instead, including on some of Russia's richest people.

Russian businesses are preparing for a new wave of sanctions expected in the coming days and months. The firms are trying to diversify away from dollar payments and tapping Asia for more of their financing and technology needs.

Rosneft is run by a close ally of Putin, Igor Sechin. He and his company have been under sectoral sanctions since 2014. Rosneft has so far avoided being put on the Special Designated Nationals (SDN) list, which would make it impossible for major Western companies to have dealings with it.

When Washington put Russia's aluminium giant Rusal on the SDN list earlier this year, the move brought its metals exports to a near standstill and disrupted its access to raw materials from suppliers around the world.

### Standoff

A Rosneft tender document seen by Reuters showed the company had asked its oil buyers to accept a new clause in its 2019 annual tender to sell oil products. "No sanctions ... shall terminate or amend any obligations of the parties stated by the contract," the document said. It also said that if a buyer walks away from the contract because of sanctions, it must compensate Rosneft with a payment that could either be a fixed amount or a sum calculated on the basis of the contract terms.

Currently Rosneft has relatively mild sanction clauses, which say that none of the parties has an obligation to abide by the contract if sanctions are imposed and no penalty is levied.

Rosneft is the world's largest listed oil firm with oil and gas output at around 5 million barrels per day. It produces over 4 percent of global oil - on par with Iran - and counts all the global oil majors among its buyers. The buyers have insisted on sticking with the old clauses, according to five trading sources. —Reuters

## Business

# GIG announces KD 10.6 million net profit for first nine months of 2018

## GWP up 2.6% to reach KD 252.9 million

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Insurance Group (gig) announced a net profit of KD 10.6 million (\$35 million), or 59.20 fils per share, for the first nine months of 2018. This is up 35.7 percent from KD 7.8 million (\$25.8 million) recorded for the same period last year. This increase is due to the improvement of Group's underwriting results and Group's share of results from its subsidiaries.

Shareholder equity reached KD 79.4 million (\$262 million) as at September 30, 2018. Book value per share reached fils 444 as at September 30, 2018. Gross written premium reached KD 252.9 million (\$834.1 million),

with an increase of 2.6 percent compared to KD 246.6 million (\$813.2 million) with the same period last year.

Net investment income and sundry income reached KD 6.1 million (\$20 million) compared to KD 8.8 million (\$29.2 million) for the same period last year with decrease of 31.6 percent. This is due to the decline in some of the Group's equities market value as a result of the decline in most of the region price indexes.

Net technical reserves rose from KD 126.3 million (\$416.5 million) on December 31, 2017, to KD 132.9 million (\$438.39 million) as at

September 30, 2018. This increase represents a growth of 5.3 percent and it supports the company's technical operations and protects policyholders' rights, thereby strengthening gig's ability to withstand emergencies and risks that may rise in the future.

Total assets reached KD 514.6 million (\$1.7 billion) as at September 30, 2018, an increase of KD 21.5 million (\$71.1 million) or 4.4 percent from Dec 31 2017.

Khaled Al-Hasan, gig's CEO, said: "Our results for the first nine months of 2018 reflect the growth we have achieved. This is also a strong indication of the Group's ability

to protect its assets and shareholders' equity. It is also in line with our constant strive to provide the best insurance services to our clients across all markets we operate in, supported by our strategy for regional expansion and increasing our domestic and regional market share."

He added: "We thank our clients for these achievements, as well as the support of our shareholders, namely KIPCO - Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - and Fairfax Middle East Ltd. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to our dedicated employees for their efforts."



Khaled Al-Hasan

## UPAC records KD 2.5m net profits in 3Q18

**KUWAIT:** United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC), a leading commercial real estate and facilities management company, yesterday announced its financial results for the third quarter of 2018. UPAC recorded a net profit of KD 2.5 million in Q3 of 2018, an increase of 2.3% over the same period in 2017. The company's net profit amounted to KD 7.575 million in the nine months of 2018, an increase of 10% compared to 2017.

Nadia Akil, Chief Executive Officer - UPAC, said, "Our indicators are on par with expectations, with our net profits increasing steadily during the third quarter of the year. Growth continues to be driven by our income generating projects at the Kuwait International Airport as well as other prominent projects in the country. Construction of Abu Dhabi's Reem Mall is moving ahead according to schedule. All the above elements give us confidence and optimism that we are on the right track. I look forward to report further milestones for the remainder of the year."

Reem Mall in Abu Dhabi has been progressing smoothly, with construction on schedule and expected to be complete by the end of 2020. As of August 2018, more than sixteen tower cranes have been erected, over 4,800 labor and staff on site and over 173,000 m3 of reinforced concrete has been cast in place, with some sections now reaching level 4. Upon completion, the project will encompass 350,000 m3 of reinforced cement concrete, 75,000 tons of rebar, 10,000 tons of structural steel and 75,000 m2 of pre-cast hollow-core concrete panels for a total built up area of over 650,000 m2.

UPAC's operations of the commercial space and facilities at the Kuwait International Airport, Sheikh Saad Terminal, and Discovery Mall are operating at almost full capacity, with a continued focus on optimization and efficiency.



Nadia Akil

## Infiniti Al-Babtain offers exclusive deals on its new models

**KUWAIT:** As the year nearly comes to a close, Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait, is offering its loyal fans new opportunities to enjoy advantageous and luxurious offers. The new offer includes a one year comprehensive insurance and 100,000 KM free maintenance on some of its newest models - INFINITI QX60, QX70, QX80, QX30 and Q60.

A family-friendly, high performance car - the QX60 reflects the concept of high-end hybrid cars, and is designed to be a masterpiece of all standards. This innovative icon is equipped with a Rear Entertainment System with dual 8-inch monitors and wireless headphones followed by a 295-horsepower, 3.5-LITER V6 direct injection engine. From the double-arch grille to the LED taillights that accentuate the D-pillar, the confident curves captivate attention not usually given to a 7-passenger SUV.

While the QX70 comes with exterior enhancements, LED daytime running lights along with unique 21x9.5-inch multi-spoke premium paint-finished aluminium-alloy wheels mounted with 265/45R21 V-rated all-season tires. The QX70 is powered by a 329-horsepower 3.7-liter V6 with VVEL (Variable Valve Event & Lift). The engine is matched with a 7-speed automatic transmission featuring Adaptive Shift Control (ASC).

The QX80 has a refined and spacious cabin that features high-quality materials, a hand-crafted finish and advanced drive-assist technologies. With a taut



yet comfort-oriented suspension, and ample performance from its 5.6-liter V8 engine, the QX80 gives drivers an assured feeling of control and confidence at the wheel. The rear entertainment system has also been upgraded. Higher-resolution screens provide the interface for connectivity and entertainment devices. The system also now supports 31 languages, up from three in the outgoing QX80.

The QX30 model that expresses the 'self' of the driver rather than his/her 'status', through new category-defying concepts. The QX30 lines flow up the double-wave bonnet, over the fenders, across the body line and into the strong shoulders of the car. The elevated dimensions make for a confident and relaxing drive, while ascribing to the car's versatile character. An overall height of 1,530mm (with standard roof rails) helps improve forward visibility over its rivals, aided by a slim A-pillar design, while the elevated ride allows for a higher hip point (1,324mm), improving ease

of ingress and egress. The QX30 comes equipped with an Intelligent All-wheel Drive system. The drivetrain is able to send up to 50% of the engine's power and torque to the rear axle to maintain traction on slippery surfaces and in inclement weather, enhancing a feeling of control and confidence when driving.

Distinctive features that set it apart from its peers is the INFINITI Q60's powerful elegance and striking performance. The 2.0-liter 4 turbocharged engine promises optimal power and efficiency, to glide forward confidently while the turbo spools quickly to produce 208hp at 5,500 rpm and outputs a stirring 350 Nm of torque. The Q60 is known to deliver a confidence-inspiring and personalized experience behind the wheel.

Infiniti Al-Babtain welcomes its customers to take advantage of the exclusive deal and visit the Infiniti showroom located in Al-Rai that opens every day except Fridays.

## 43 customers win in Western Union, Aman Exchange award promotion

**KUWAIT:** Western Union, a leader in cross-border, cross-currency money movement, and Aman Exchange, a leading money exchange businesses in Kuwait, rewarded 43 individuals with prize money and iPhones in a recently concluded promotion for customers who sent money through the Western Union mobile app and Westernunion.com. During the course of the promotion 42 customers received iPhones and Ahmad Al-Saqer, a Kuwaiti national, was announced as the winner of the grand prize of \$10,000.

To qualify for the promotion, customers were required to send money online to any part of the world, from September 1 to October 12, 2018. Their transaction was automatically entered into a daily drawing for a chance to win an iPhone 8, or the grand prize of \$10,000. Over the last few years, Western Union has undergone a dramatic digital transformation, driving a multi-layer digital strategy allowing customers to begin their transactions on mobile devices - via app or web browser.

In Kuwait, with a click of a few buttons, customers can fund transactions which can be paid in cash at more than half a million global Western Union Agent locations in more than 200 countries and territories.

"At our core, we are a network that connects people. In a world where our customers live in different cities,



countries, and continents with diverse economic, financial and technological ecosystems, Western Union moves money quickly and reliably through digital or cash, online or offline," said Hatem Sleiman, Regional Vice President, Middle East, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Western Union.

"Enhancing customer experience is key. This promotion is our way of showing our appreciation to customers who place their trust in us and assuring them of our continued commitment to providing convenient services and a great customer experience. Congratulations to all the winners," added Sleiman.

The grand prize winner received his prize during a ceremony held at the Head Office of Aman Exchange on October 21. "With Western Union's digital offering, I

am glad customers now have the convenience of access to money transfer services at their fingertips. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all the winners. We are delighted to be able to give back to customers and to be able to put a smile on their faces," said Adel Al-Muzaini, General Manager, Aman Exchange.

The Western Union Company is a global leader in cross-border, cross-currency money movement. Its omni channel platform connects the digital and physical worlds and makes it possible for consumers and businesses to send and receive money and make payments with speed, ease, and reliability.

Aman Exchange is one of the leading money exchanges in Kuwait, and a frontrunner in digital remittances.

## Australia CB lifts economic growth forecast

**SYDNEY:** Australia's central bank yesterday said the economy was "performing well" and lifted its growth outlook while keeping interest rates at a record low but warned there were concerns about global trade. The announcement comes as worries also begin to emerge about the country's once booming housing market, which has slowed in recent months.

The Reserve Bank of Australia said this G20 economy continues to chug along and should expand around 3.5 this year and next, a fraction up from its previous forecast and continuing a global record 26 years of continuous growth. Its main cash rate was left unchanged at 1.50 percent to stimulate consumer and business spending.

But it said there were doubts prompted by the "direction of international trade policy in the United States", with Donald Trump having embarked on a protectionist agenda sparking standoffs with key partners including China and the European Union.

Meanwhile, at home consumers have looked increasingly jittery, with Australians tempering their spending and confidence steadily ebbing this year. And a drop in house prices may be good news for renters, but it could hit the broader economy with recent buyers saddled with assets worth less than they paid for. "It wouldn't be too much of a concern yet, in the near term," Jason Yek of Fitch Solutions told AFP. "But I do think housing prices are going to go down over coming quarters."

House prices in Sydney and Melbourne have increased by around 70 percent this decade, with wage growth lagging well behind, despite low unemployment rates.

Many Australians already find balancing the household books tougher despite the booming market and household debt remains at one of the highest levels of all OECD. —AFP

## Airbus China CEO says 'no winner' from US-China trade war

**ZHUHAI, China:** Europe's Airbus SE indicated yesterday that it did not expect a sales windfall from trade tensions between China and the United States, with the manufacturer's China head saying there would be "no winner" from a prolonged economic conflict. Airbus China CEO George Xu said such tensions would hurt aviation growth by depressing middle class incomes. "I am Chinese and we don't like this kind of trade war," Xu said at a news conference. "Nobody will be the winner in this kind of trade war."

Airbus has been trying to unlock talks with China over a long-delayed deal to sell up to 180 jets, and its board in September held an unusual meeting in China.

Trade frictions with the United States and accusations of

industrial espionage are set to cast a cloud over China's largest aerospace meeting this week, as suppliers consider what the country's slowing economy could mean for booming jet demand. The biennial Airshow China, to be held in the coastal city of Zhuhai during Nov 6-11, is traditionally an event for Beijing to parade its growing aviation prowess in front of aerospace executives, diplomats and arms buyers from over 40 countries. But analysts say they are not expecting many headline announcements or big deals this year as a bruising trade war between Beijing and Washington and a slowing Chinese economy cause companies to be cautious.

While the tarmac will be filled with planes from the likes of Airbus SA and Embraer, the main symbol of China's own commercial aviation ambitions, the Commercial Aircraft Corp of China's (COMAC) C919 narrowbody jet, will not be there. A senior executive said it was undergoing test flights.

Boeing Co, which is opening a 737 completion plant in China, will not display any of its planes but only models at its exhibition stand. "We're not expecting a big turnout this year," said Chinese aviation expert Li Xiaojin. "As you know the Chinese economy is not doing great this year, so companies that would normally send 10 people will only send five instead." China has become a key hunting ground for foreign firms to do deals as its airlines have expanded fleets to keep



**TOULOUSE:** People walk on the tarmac during a visit of the Airbus A330-800 aircraft before its first flight from Toulouse Blagnac airport, near Colomiers, yesterday. The A330-800 - one of two A330neo versions, along with the A330-900 - is a more efficient aircraft that will generate savings through its reduced fuel burn. —AFP

up with surging travel demand, putting the country in a position to overtake the United States as the world's top aviation market in the next decade. —Reuters

What's On

# KIPCO participates in Youth Empowerment Symposium



Eman Al-Awadhi (center) receiving a plaque from the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Mohammad Al-Jabri (right).



The judging panel (from left) Arsen Avakian, Abdulwahab Al Essa and Faisal Sarkhou.



Technocare team presenting their company to the judging panel.



Nutribox being pitched to the judges



Zidnei founder speaking about his application

KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - participated in the 7th Youth Empowerment Symposium (Tmkeen), held under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. KIPCO is a Strategic Sponsor of the symposium for the fourth year. Speaking at the opening ceremony Eman Al-Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Communications Director, said: "KIPCO strongly

believes that Kuwait's development plans can only be made a reality through the empowerment of its young people. We also believe that the private sector has an important role to play in this. Our partnership with Tmkeen and the launch of the KIPCO Tmkeen Award for Young Entrepreneurs has allowed us to establish a dialogue with the talented youth of Kuwait and encourage them to channel their creativity and innova-

tive ideas into sustainable businesses. In the past four years, we have been able to shed light on the growing entrepreneurial community in Kuwait and the remarkable achievements of our young businessmen and women despite the challenges they may face."

The first day of the symposium saw the 'Startup Battle' of the KIPCO Tmkeen Award for Young Entrepreneurs. The three e-media and technology busi-

nesses that qualified in the first judging round - Nutribox, Technocare and Zidnei - presented to a judging panel that included Founder and CEO of Cooler Screens and Founder of Argo Tea, Arsen Avakian; CEO of KAMCO, Faisal Sarkhou; and CEO of Boutiqat.com, Abdulwahab Al Essa. The winner of the 4th KIPCO Tmkeen Award for Young Entrepreneurs will be announced on the second day of symposium.

## Al Jeri, UNHCR launch 'Together We Bring Back Hope to Refugee Children' campaign

In a new cooperation between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuwait and Kuwait's private sector leaders, the awareness campaign "Together We Bring Back Hope to Refugee Children" was launched on Thursday, on the 1st of November 2018, in collaboration with Al Jeri Holding Group.

"Together We Bring Back Hope to Refugee Children" - is an awareness campaign led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuwait in collaboration with the Al Jeri Holding Group, featuring the participation of approximately 20,000 students aged 12 to 18, enrolled in the schools and institutes of Al Jeri Holding Group. Students are encouraged and invited to demonstrate, through the usage of oil painting or collaging of recyclable material, their artistic expression and encouragement for refugee children with hope and support, while simultaneously highlighting what refugees and non-refugees have in common and how one could better help them feel safe, welcome and included.

The campaign, due until the end of next March, aims to raise awareness among students in a distinctive, cultural and artistic method through drawing and collaging, seeking simultaneously to promote solidarity among students and youth in an effort to urge the young generations to accept refugees and encourage them to support refugee children in all intellectual and cultural fields.

### Shedding light

Through this collaboration, Al Jeri Holding Group seeks to expand these young generations' perception, especially the humanitarian perspective and shed light on the refugees' crisis worldwide where the number of refugees reached 25.4 million refugees at the beginning of 2018. As an encouragement to participate in the campaign, whether amateurs, novice or professionals, the top winners will be honored by Al Jeri Holding Group in the presence of the office of UNHCR in Kuwait and well known Kuwaiti artists.

In highlighting the importance of the campaign, Talal Khalifa Al Jeri, Chairman of Al Jeri Holding Group, stated: "We are very pleased to establish this partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), offering us the chance to reaffirm our keenness in promoting awareness of the refugee crisis for all segments of society, whilst providing all forms of moral and financial support to refugees through all means and at all levels.

Al Jeri added that cooperation and coordination are on-going with the Office of UNHCR in Kuwait, to establish a long-term strategic partnership with UNHCR that supports refugees regionally and worldwide. Moreover, Al Jeri also emphasized that this art contest shall contribute significantly to spreading the message of hope to refugees through Al Jeri Group students' who through their drawings and paintings shall draw a path of hope for all refugees around the world.

The Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait, Dr. Hanan Hamdan, mentioned: "In recognition of UNHCR's humanitarian role and the importance of cooperation with all sectors of Kuwaiti society in various athletic, social and cultural activities that encompass a recognized humanitarian dimension with the aim to demonstrate support for refugees around the world. UNHCR is participating today with the Al Jeri Holding Group in launching the campaign "Together We Bring Back Hope to Refugee Children", believing in the active role that students in all educational



levels play in delivering support to refugee causes.

Dr Hamdan also stated: "The private sector plays a prominent role in the development of the society. In Kuwait, this sector is distinguished with cultural and communal initiatives that urge individuals to engage and interact with all humanitarian issues. The Kuwaiti private sector has been increasingly responsive to humanitarian emergencies and refugee crises throughout the years. Therefore, UNHCR is forging partnerships with private sector leaders to serve refugee issues through initiatives aligned with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Leader of Humanitarian Work and work with this sector to highlight the role of Kuwait as a global humanitarian center.

### 'Humanitarian initiatives'

Noting the role of Al Jeri Holding Group, Dr Hamdan concluded: "We are pleased to cooperate with Al Jeri Holding Group, one of the most important educational groups in the State of Kuwait that possesses a unique record in community and humanitarian initiatives with its ongoing efforts to educate young generations and encourage them to inculcate the values of cooperation and human solidarity along with raising awareness of the challenges facing refugees worldwide."

Through this cooperation, the campaign "Together We Bring Back Hope to Refugee Children" aims at raising awareness of refugee issues in society, especially that over half of the world's refugees are children. Many will spend their entire childhoods away from their homes and villages, sometimes separated from their families. They may have witnessed or experienced violent acts and, in exile, are at risk of abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, trafficking or military recruitment.

UNHCR, however, seeks to focus on the refugee children's resilience which through learning, playing and exploring skills, enables them in finding better ways to deal and cope with various situations allowing them to draw strength from their families and communities by working with national authorities, other international and local organizations.

## KAMCO and Global host job shadow with INJAZ-Kuwait

KAMCO Investment Company and Global Investment House hosted their first joint CSR initiative in collaboration with INJAZ-Kuwait. The job-shadow event consisted of lectures, activities and a certificate distribution ceremony for the attending students.

Economics class students from the Australian College of Kuwait were invited to the job-shadow event that took place at Global Tower's auditorium, during which experts from KAMCO and Global representing different departments explained the responsibilities tied to their positions within the company. The purpose of the on-site visit was to raise awareness amongst the potential leaders of the future about the different departmental duties and responsibilities, and how specific roles operate within each of these investment companies. The presenters used a combination of interactive lectures and activities to engage the students and allow them to ask experienced employees about their daily duties.

Faisal Hasan, KAMCO's Chief Business Development Officer, highlighted KAMCO's long-running partici-

ipation with INJAZ-Kuwait as part of KIPCO's group CSR strategy. In this regard, Hasan said, "As a leading investment company, we consider it our responsibility to take the lead in supporting and educating future generations. It is fortunate, that through INJAZ-Kuwait, we can establish a platform that integrates practical learning methodologies and other necessary tools which reflect real-life experience and make it available to students, with the aim to improve their chances of having a successful future ahead."

"We are pleased that the students had the opportunity to be exposed to some of the most seasoned experts at KAMCO and Global during this first out of many other upcoming joint CSR collaborations between the two companies. This collaborative CSR effort celebrates the joining of Global to KIPCO's family. Both companies share similar values and with combined efforts, we plan to make a bigger and more positive impact towards our society. We will continue to invest our time and effort in corporate social responsibility initiatives that focus primarily on education and local youth development," added Hasan.



## Japanese Society's upcoming beach clean-up campaign

The Japanese Society, in cooperation with Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS) and Kuwait Oil Company, will jointly organize the 18th beach cleaning up campaign, entitled "Operation Turtles" on Saturday, November 10th

at Shuwaikh Beach Park, from 10:30 am - 12:00. The campaign aims at enhancing people's awareness of the importance of environmental protection. The Japanese society would like to invite citizens, expats and activists to participate in this activity.

## Health &amp; Science

# China unveils new 'Heavenly Palace' space station as ISS days numbered

## Symbolizes the country's major ambitions beyond Earth

**ZHUHAI:** China yesterday unveiled a replica of its first permanently crewed space station, which would replace the international community's orbiting laboratory and symbolizes the country's major ambitions beyond Earth. The 17-metre core module was a star attraction at the biennial Airshow China in the southern coastal city of Zhuhai, the country's main aerospace industry exhibition. Outside, China's J-10 fighter jet and J-20 stealth fighter wowed spectators as they zoomed across Zhuhai's sky. Back inside, the country displayed its fleet of drones and other military hardware.

Crowds gathered around the cylindrical space station module representing the living and working quarters of the Tiangong — or "Heavenly Palace" — which will also have two other modules for scientific experiments and will be equipped with solar panels. Three astronauts will be permanently stationed in the 60-ton orbiting lab, which will enable the crew to conduct biological and microgravity research. Assembly is expected to be completed around 2022 and the station would have a lifespan of around 10 years. The International Space Station — a collaboration between the United States, Russia, Canada, Europe and Japan — has been in operation since 1998 but is due to be retired in 2024. China will then have the only space station in orbit, though it will be much smaller than the ISS which weighs 400 tons and is as large as a football pitch.

### Billions spent

The country announced in May that the lab would be open to "all countries" to conduct science experiments. "There is no doubt that China will use its station in a similar way as the ISS partners are using their outpost: research, technology and as a stepping-stone for deep-space exploration," said Chen Lan, analyst at GoTaikonauts.com, a website specialized in the Chinese space program.

Research institutes, universities, and public and private companies have been invited to propose projects. Some 40 plans from 27 countries and regions have been received, according to state media. The European Space Agency has sent astronauts to China to receive training in order to be ready to work inside the Chinese space station once it is launched. "I'm sure over time China will be successful developing partnerships," said Bill Ostrove, space analyst with US-based Forecast International consultancy.

"Many countries, and increasingly private companies and universities, have space programmes, but cannot afford to build their own space station," he said. "The ability to put payloads and experiments on a human space-flight platform is extremely valuable." Beijing is pouring billions into its military-run space program, with plans to send humans to the Moon in the near future. Citing China as a threat, US President Donald Trump has launched plans to create a new "Space Force" to give his country dominance over rivals in space.

### Diverse space market

But China's space program has encountered some glitches. A space lab dubbed Tiangong-1 disintegrated as it plunged back to Earth in early April, two years after it ceased functioning. Chinese authorities denied that the lab — which was placed in orbit in September 2011 as a testing ground for the permanent station — was out of control. A second lab, the Tiangong-2, was launched into orbit in 2016. "Despite a lot of talk of the opposite, the United States remains the most dominant power in space right now," Ostrove said. "The most likely scenario for the future is that China will emerge as one of the major space powers," he said. But Russia, the European Space Agency, Japan and India will continue to play "major roles" in space exploration, while private firms are becoming increasingly important in the sector. Ostrove added. "The



**ZHUHAI:** A partial model of Chinese space station is seen on display at the Airshow China 2018 in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong province. — AFP

space market is becoming more diverse," he said, "so it will be difficult for one or two countries or companies to dominate the field in the way the US and Soviet Union did during the Cold War." — AFP

## British Museum asked to return mammal remains

**SANTIAGO:** Chile announced on Sunday that it will ask the British Museum in London to return the remains of a mylodon, an extinct mammal that lived in Patagonia about 10,000 years ago. Minister of National Assets Felipe Ward will travel in two weeks to London for talks over the remains of the ground sloth that roamed in the southern region shared by Argentina and Chile.

"We hope to have talks with the museum authorities... and seek to repatriate the mylodon's remains: these are bones and skin that are in storage, not even being exhibited," Ward told reporters. The remains of the mylodon were taken to Britain in 1897 for research but were never returned to Chile, according to officials. The mylodon was an ancestor of the sloth that measured about 2.5 meters (more than eight feet) and weighed about 3 tons. German settlers discovered in 1896 remains of the mammal in a cave now known as "the cave of the mylodon," in the region of Magallanes, about 3,500 kilometers south of Santiago.

On the trip to London, Ward will be joined by a delegation seeking the return of a statue important to the indigenous people of Easter Island, part of Chile. They want to sculpt a replacement for the museum and recover the original, which was stolen from the island in 1868 by the English ship Topaze. It is estimated that this moai, as the statues are known, was created between the year 1,000 and 1,600. Chile also plans to ask the Kon-Tiki Museum in Oslo to return a large collection of historical pieces from Easter Island. — AFP

## A machine makes water out of air: Watergen's water generator

**HANOI:** Imagine you could quench your thirst with water that doesn't originate from a river, spring or lake, but comes directly out of the blue sky, from the air that surrounds you. What sounds like a science fiction movie is already a reality, and it is potentially for everyone.

The new technology, developed by Watergen, an Israel-based tech company, is currently being showcased in Vietnam's capital city Hanoi. And this is how the air-to-water magic happening inside the machine works: The atmospheric water generator takes in ambient air through a filter, and cools it at its dew point, extracting water through condensation. The water is then purified, mineralized, and is ready and safe to drink.

### Drinking water for homes, buildings and whole villages

Watergen's medium scale generator GEN-350 can produce an average of 600 liters of clean drinking water per day. It comes with a built-in reservoir and a water treatment system. In Vietnam, with its high air humidity, the machine can extract even more water, says Watergen President Michael Mirilashvili: "Here in Vietnam, in the three locations where we tested the technology, it performed even better than we expected."

A large scale unit can extract up to 5000 liters per day. It is designed to provide water to approximately 2500 people per day, and it can

be installed on a rooftop and connected directly to the building's water grid. A small generator, GENNY, can provide drinking water for homes and offices, it generates 25 to 30 liters per day. The machines only need electric infrastructure to operate, and can be installed anywhere. Watergen wants to take its technology even further: "Our scientists already developed the technology that implements the Watergen core technology inside cars, buses, trains and all kinds of transportation", Mirilashvili says. The running vehicle will generate the power for the atmospheric water generator, to provide drinking water on the go anywhere at any time. Mirilashvili also points out that the use of atmospheric water generators could drastically reduce plastic waste.

### Access to safe water during droughts

In Vietnam, a country still suffering from water shortages and poor water quality, the demand for clean water solutions is increasing, says Ambassador of Israel to Vietnam, Nadav Eshcar: "Vietnam is one of the countries most affected by global warming, suffering from droughts in the South and Central region in recent times. In Israel, we already have solutions, which we are introducing here". Watergen's generator has already been in use in numerous countries around the globe, in India, the United States, Latin America, China, Russia and several African countries, to name a few. It is also being listed as one of the Technology Pioneers in 2018 by World Economic Forum. The water generator presented at the event "Israel in the heart of Hanoi" is a gift from Watergen to the Hanoi People's Committee. It will be on display in Ly Thai To square in the city center for a month, allowing Hanoi's citizens to take a sip from the sky. The exhibition coincides with a celebration of 25 years in diplomatic relations between Israel and Vietnam. — AFP

## Superbugs killed 33,000 Europeans in 2015: Study

**PARIS:** Drug-resistant bacteria killed more than 33,000 people in the European Union in 2015, according to new research published this week warning that superbugs were "threatening modern healthcare." In a study published in the journal *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, an EU-wide team of doctors examined data on more than a dozen combinations of antibiotic resistant bacteria across the continent, and developed a model for infection and death rates of five types of bug.

They found that more than 670,000 people fell ill in 2015 from these five strains, and an estimated 33,110 died as a result. These burdens of these deaths in the EU "was similar to the cumulative burden of influenza, tuberculosis, and HIV" during the same timeframe, the authors noted.

The majority of deaths were thought to have occurred in infants under 12 months and the over 65s. The mortality burden was highest in Italy and Greece, with Italy alone accounting for more than a third of

all EU superbug deaths in the year studied. As consumption of antibiotics soars globally, doctors have frequently sounded the alarm over multidrug-resistant bacteria strains. A team of scientists in Australia warned in September of the spread of a bacteria immune to all known drugs. The superbug, *staphylococcus epidermidis*, can cause severe infections and death and is related to the better-known and more deadly MRSA. Of the more than 670,000 superbug infections in Europe in 2015, close to two thirds occurred in hospital settings, the team behind the *Lancet* study said.

"Our finding that most of the estimated burden was in hospitals and other health-care settings suggests the urgent need to address antimicrobial resistance as a patient safety issue and the need for alternative treatment options for patients with such infections," they wrote. The researchers singled out Italy and Greece, which combined for one fifth of all infections, for particular concern.

In the study period, more than 10,000 people died in Italy from bugs including E-coli and MRSA, something the team said was significant "even if one considers its large an ageing population." In Greece, where most deaths were attributed to a single drug-resistant strain of bacteria, authors said there was an "urgent need" to increase defenses against specific superbugs. — AFP

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

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

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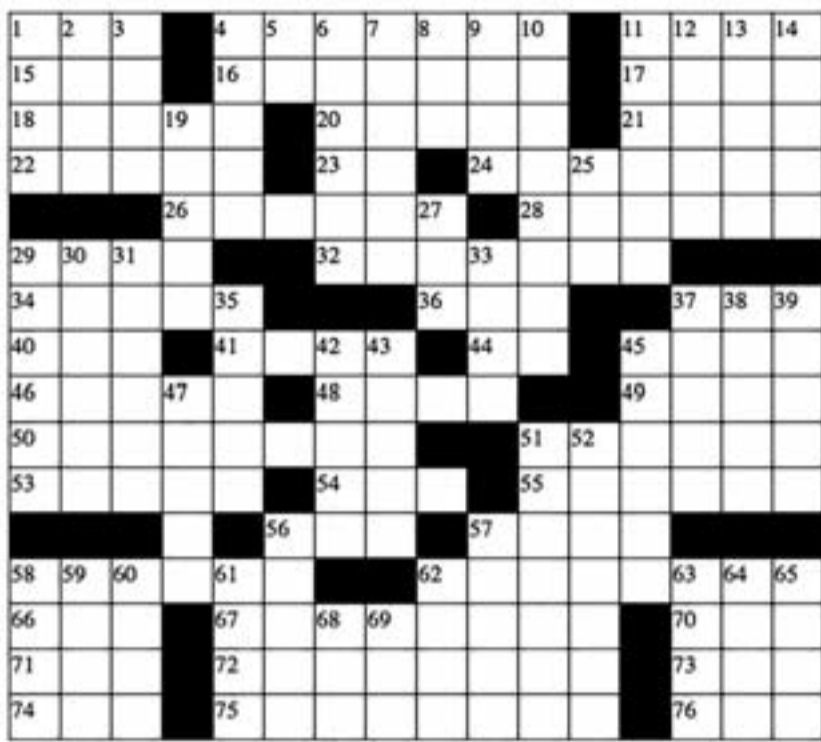
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- ◆ Anal surgeries.

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Stars

CROSSWORD 2054



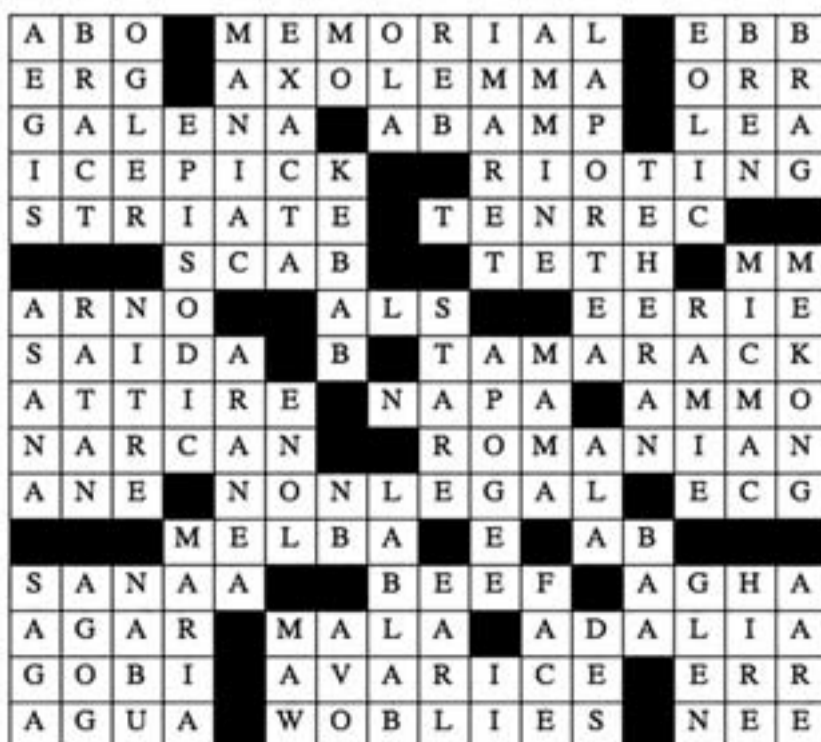
ACROSS

1. The money risked on a gamble.
4. Of or relating to or caused by amnesia.
11. Framework for holding objects.
15. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
16. Minute wingless arthropods.
17. A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
18. Italian lawn bowling (played on a long narrow dirt court).
20. Disposed of as useless.
21. Give over.
22. Goddess of dawn.
23. The fifth day of the week.
24. A Bantu language spoken by the Chaga people in northern Tanzania.
26. (botany) Tissue that conducts synthesized food substances (e.g., from leaves) to parts where needed.
28. Formed or gathered into a ball.
29. Serving as or forming a base.
32. A person who lacks confidence, is irresolute and wishy-washy.
34. (used of opinions and actions) Far beyond the norm.
36. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
40. A unit of heat equal to the amount of heat required to raise one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit at one atmosphere pressure.
41. Hit hard.
44. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
46. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
48. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
49. Wearing or provided with clothing.
50. Deep-rooted coarse-textured plant native to the Mediterranean region having blue flowers and pinnately compound leaves.
53. Having an irregularly notched or toothed margin as though gnawed.
54. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
55. A person who owns or operates oil wells.
58. An archaic name for Easter or Passover.
66. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
67. A quality of refined gracefulness and good taste.
70. A boy or man.
71. A flexible container with a single opening.
72. An official who evaluates property for the purpose of taxing it.
73. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
74. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
75. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
76. A member of a Mayan people of southwestern Guatemala.

DOWN

1. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
2. A body of poetry that conveys the traditions of a society by treating some epic theme.
3. A school teaching mechanical and industrial arts and the applied sciences.
4. Being or given to servile imitation.
5. A form of address for a man.
6. Found in moist places as rounded jelly-like colonies.
7. Someone who etches.
8. A port in southern Lebanon on the Mediterranean Sea.
9. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
10. Pig-sized tailless South American amphibious rodent with partly webbed feet.
11. To an ample degree or in an ample manner.
12. Of or relating to or involving an area.
13. Ask for and get free.
14. Make uniform.
19. Any of numerous plants of the genus Capparis.
25. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
27. Type genus of the family Myacidae.
30. Double star 15.7 light years from Earth.
31. A plaster now made mostly from Portland cement and sand and lime.
33. A small cake leavened with yeast.
35. (sometimes followed by 'of') Having or showing realization or perception.
37. A threadlike anatomical structure or chainlike series of cells.
38. Squash bugs.
39. English psychologist who collaborated with I.A. Richards in designing Basic English (1889-1957).
42. Genus of erect herbs of the Middle East having showy flowers.
43. A formal expression of praise.
45. Of or relating to a directionless magnitude.
47. Ratio of the hypotenuse to the opposite side.
51. The hard cylindrical core that bears the kernels of an ear of corn.
52. Aromatic evergreen or deciduous dioecious shrubs or trees of eastern Asia and North America.
56. Strong lightweight wood of the balsa tree used especially for floats.
57. A member of a nomadic people of the northern Ural mountains.
59. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
60. An narrative telling the adventures of a hero or a family.
61. A collection of objects laid on top of each other.
62. An independent group of closely related Chadic languages spoken in the area between the Biu-Mandara and East Chadic languages.
63. A white crystalline double sulfate of aluminum.
64. God of love and erotic desire.
65. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
68. The rate at which red blood cells settle out in a tube of blood under standardized conditions.
69. (British) Informal term for information.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may find harmony and beauty to be deeply satisfying to you today. You have a deep desire to get along with everyone that crosses your path. You may also find yourself playing mediator to friends that seem to not be able to see eye to eye today. You may find yourself paying much closer attention to your more intimate relationships. You work to find a balance between home and work life. You may be recognized in the work place for the management skills you are exhibiting and find yourself being offered a position in leadership. Aries. Good luck with your career today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are ready to get serious about taking care of you! Meal planning seems to appeal to you. Organized and healthy are a great combination. You feel great about yourself and about who you are. It is time to take the new healthy you to a new level. You have previously made small changes and now you are ready to dive head first into a new lifestyle. Join the gym, take the walk, get up and get going. Changes now will bring great reward in the future. Live out loud!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is a reason they make chocolate AND vanilla. What appeals to one may not always appeal to the other. People are different. They have different options and different outlooks on life. You may find yourself running across someone who could not be any more opposite of you. This person will not be someone whose company you enjoy. You can always turn a negative situation into something positive. Sit and have a talk and really listen to what this person has to say. Sometimes listening to understand rather than listening to respond can shed great light and understanding on a situation.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your way may not be the only way. You may need to put some time, thought, and consideration into the decisions you have to make today. Your first instinct isn't necessarily going to be the way to go this time. Even though you are fully aware of the why's behind your choices others may not understand your choices today. Take time to listen to the opinions of others and take all avenues into consideration. You will make the right choice in the end.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may feel as if you want all eyes on you! You are on top of the world. It seems as if everything is going your way. You are the center of attention. Your hard work and dedication have paid off and you may find others not only admire you but they actually strive to be like you. You are a trendsetter and the person others long to be like. Keep your head high and enjoy the attention.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have a desire to get to the bottom of things. You are inquisitive and curious. Answers are what you seek and answers are what you will get. You may find yourself channeling your inner Sherlock Holmes. Your inner workings are what you desire to understand. You are on a soul-searching mission.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A clean break and a fresh start are in order. Old habits may die hard but putting them in the past is a must. You have a strong need for your independence and freedom. With the new habits and fresh start you will find a new energy in your life. You may feel truly alive for the first time in many years. A new you is emerging and it will be an improved version of your past. You may feel as if though you are experiencing life for the first time. Colors seem brighter and the world seems like a better place to be. You are living out loud!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Intellectual and literary interests seem to be where your focus is now. You may find opportunity seems to fall into your lap when it comes to being able to develop your talents in this area. This a time you will find great pleasure in not only teaching others but also in learning. You may want to teach or take a class. Start a new side business, you may find any marketing efforts that are made will be much more profitable than you would think. Step out on that limb, Scorpio. The risk may be well worth the reward. You will find others looking to you for support and advice and you are just the one to lead them in the right direction.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

People sometimes wonder about the secret to your contentment. It's not something you think about. You just go about each day being helpful and kind. You consider being reliable a part of who you are. You are not working at being happy, but happiness is a by-product of your lifestyle. If you could bottle and sell it, you might become financially rich. But you know that money is not the key to riches. You reap your rewards by continuing to invest in others.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

It is time to get your affairs in order. Focus on your health. Develop new and healthy routines and stick to them. A new and improved you will be the results of these actions. A healthy body will create a healthier mind. Out with the old and in with the new. Treat every day of your life as if the gift it truly is. If you listen to your body, it will tell you exactly what it needs. Aches and pains are there for a reason. Respect what your body is trying to tell you and provide what it is asking for.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Look for a rainbow today. Something good is happening in your life. It may lead to something important in your career or your personal life. Even if the pleasure you derive from it is not permanent, you can find pleasure in the moment. You're getting a break you deserve. Don't discount it by projecting the future. If you take a "live today" attitude, the future will take care of itself-and you. Happiness is a choice. Today you will choose to be happy.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Today spending time really getting to know those around you could be very beneficial to you. You are longing for deep personal relationships and this could be a great way to progress toward the development of just that. You find yourself being very sensitive when it comes to the needs of others. You may find yourself being very understanding today and find it very easy to communicate your ideas and feelings to those around you. Pisces. This is a time of growth for you in many ways. You are well on your way to a new and improved version of you. A sense of pride comes over you today.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Hawaii

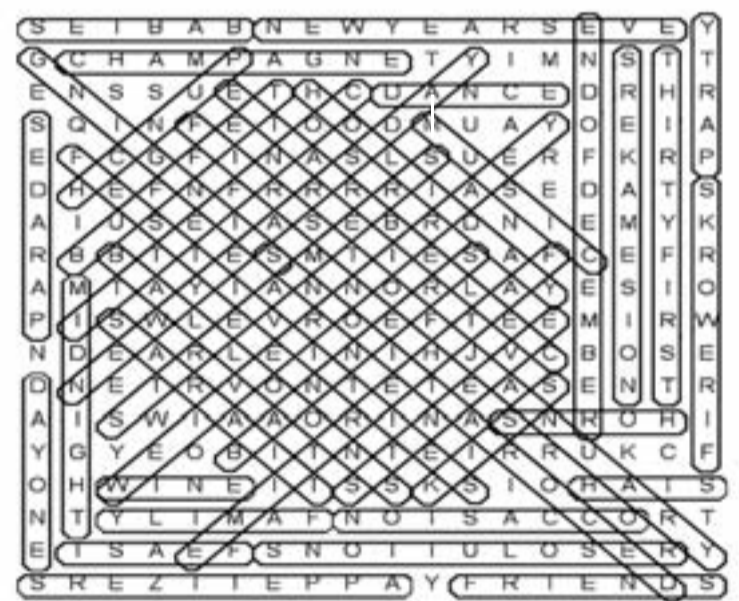
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 48 letters spell a secret message.



- |                  |                |               |                |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| ALOHA            | KAHO'OLAWA     | NIIHAU        | SUGARCANE      |
| ARCHIPELAGO      | KAUAI          | NORTH SHORE   | SURFING        |
| BEACHES          | KAYAKING       | O'AHU         | TOURISTS       |
| CANOES           | KONA COAST     | PACIFIC OCEAN | TROPICAL       |
| COFFEE           | LANAI          | PEARL HARBOR  | UKELELE        |
| GRASS SKIRT      | LIUAI          | PINEAPPLES    | VACATION       |
| HAWAIIAN         | MACADAMIA NUTS | RESORTS       | VOLCANOES      |
| HONOLULU         | MANIOTA RAYS   | SAND          | WAIKIKI        |
| HULA             | MAUI           | SCUBA DIVING  | WAIHEA BAY     |
| HUMPSBACK WHALES | MOLOKAI        | SNORKELING    | WARM           |
| ISLANDS          | NAPALI COAST   | STATE         | WHALE WATCHING |

Yesterday's Solution

Happy New Year



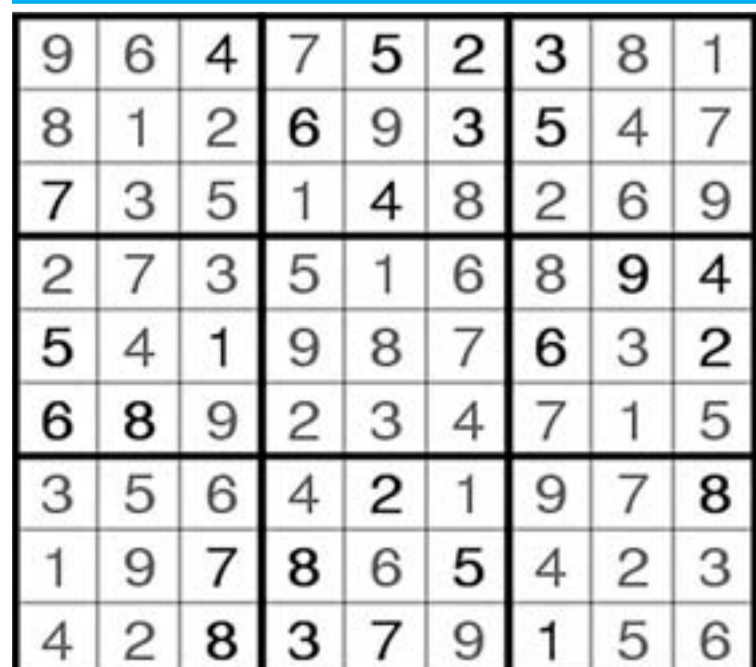
- |            |                  |               |                |
|------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| APPETIZERS | DECORATIONS      | HATS          | PARADES        |
| BABIES     | END OF DECEMBER  | HOLIDAY       | PARTY          |
| BALLOONS   | EVENTS           | HORNS         | PUNCH          |
| BANNERS    | FAMILY           | KISS          | RESOLUTIONS    |
| BUFFET     | FATHER TIME      | MIDNIGHT      | SINGING        |
| CELEBRATE  | FEAST            | MUSIC         | STREAMERS      |
| CHAMPAGNE  | FESTIVITIES      | NEW YEARS DAY | THIRTY FIRST   |
| CONFETTI   | FIREWORKS        | NEW YEARS EVE | TIARAS         |
| DANCE      | FIRST OF JANUARY | NOISEMAKERS   | WINE           |
| DAY ONE    | FRIENDS          | OCCASION      | YEAR IN REVIEW |

The hidden message is: TIMES SQUARE IN NEW YORK CITY

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



# Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2018



Nepal Armed Police dog handlers and their dogs with vermilion on their foreheads and marigold garlands placed around their necks pose for a picture during an event to mark the Hindu Tihar festival — also known as Diwali — at the Armed Police Dog Training School in Kathmandu. — AFP

## Viva Forever! Spice Girls reveal 2019 UK reunion tour

Say You'll Be There: Best-selling 90s girl band the Spice Girls promise to give fans what they really, really want on a UK reunion tour next year. The band-minus pop star-turned-fashion designer Victoria Beckham-released details of a comeback tour, which will see them play Wembley Stadium, Britain's biggest venue. In a video shared on the band's newly created Twitter account, the four remaining members staged a mock news broadcast to confirm rumors of the tour.

Beckham, also known as Posh Spice, later posted a photo of the foursome on social media alongside a statement. "I won't be joining my girls on stage again but being in the Spice Girls was a hugely important part of my life and I wish my girls so much love and fun as they go back on tour," she wrote on Instagram. The pop phenomenon's announcement sparked celebration from fans on social media, including from British singer Adele who shared a throwback childhood photo of herself posing excitedly in front of magazine posters of the band on her bedroom wall.

"This is how I feel right now! I am ready," she added on Instagram. The band's official Twitter account, which promised a "new generation of girl power" was flooded with a frenzy of posts from nostalgic fans. "The Spice Girls performing in my home town! I need to sit down. I can't breathe!!" tweeted Wez from Sunderland. "I'm already packing my Union Jack dress and platform shoes, see you there," another fan, Vicky, added.

Jessica Morgan joked on Twitter: "My life depends on successfully purchasing a Spice Girls ticket." The tour will take in six British cities next year, including Manchester on June 1, the Scottish capital Edinburgh a week later and culminating at Wembley on June 15. Ahead of the announcement, Melanie Brown (also known as Mel B and Scary Spice) left the door open to Beckham's possible involvement. "It's just the four of us that are fully confirmed, but you know, Vic might join us at some point," she told Britain's ITV network.

"She's got a full-on life with all of her work commitments and her fashion line and her kids, so, she's just kind of not committing just yet," Brown added. The group stormed to worldwide fame in 1996 after the release of their first single "Wannabe", spreading their message of girl power, eventually going on to sell 85 million albums worldwide. Only two of their 11 singles failed to reach number one on the British charts, while their first three singles all hit the US top five.

The five-piece split in 2000 but reunited for a world tour in 2007. They got together again to perform at the London 2012 Olympics closing ceremony and also collaborated then for the launch of the Spice Girls musical "Viva Forever!" An expected comeback in 2016 with three bandmates failed to materialize. Tickets for the new tour will go on sale on Saturday.—AFP



In this file photo shoes worn by members of the pop group "The Spice Girls" are displayed during an event in east London, to promote storage solutions by a Swedish furniture manufacturer.



In this file photo former singers from the British Band the Spice Girls, Geri Halliwell, center, and Emma Bunton, right, pose for a photograph.



In this file photo members of the British pop girl group Spice Girls (From L-R) Melanie Brown, Geri Halliwell, Emma Bunton and Melanie Chisholm pose for pictures on the red carpet as they arrive for the premiere of the Spice Girls musical "Viva Forever" in central London. — AFP photos



In this file photo Spice Girls perform during the closing ceremony of the 2012 London Olympic Games at the Olympic stadium in London.

### First moon walk's commemorative plaque sold for \$468,500

A commemorative plaque brought to the moon on the Apollo 11 mission went under the hammer for \$468,500 in Texas, as part of a huge collection that once belonged to late astronaut Neil Armstrong, auctioneers said. The plaque includes a representation of the lunar module that touched down on the moon on July 20, 1969. Once back on Earth, it was mounted on a wooden base before being offered to Armstrong, the first man to set foot on the Moon.

The other two astronauts who took part in the mission, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and Michael Collins, also each received one of these plaques. Armstrong's two sons, Rick and Mark, decided to part with some of the very large collection of their father, who died in 2012. It includes more than 2,000 objects. Just part of the collection was offered at the sale held Thursday through Saturday in Dallas as well as online. Another two sales are planned in May and November 2019 by Heritage Auction, which organized the first.

The souvenir plaque did better than the lot that was expected as the highlight of the sale, an American flag taken during the trip to the moon, but never deployed on site. Larger than most flags brought into space, it was sold for \$275,000, including fees and commissions. That's more than triple Heritage's estimate of \$75,000. Among Armstrong's collection were two batches of fragments of the Wright brothers' plane, whose first flight, in December 1903, is considered modern aviation's maiden voyage.

These pieces were taken by Armstrong on the Apollo 11 mission and thus have a double historical value. They each sold for \$275,000, or nine times the original estimate. In all, the first part of the Armstrong collection selloff has earned \$5.2 million, Heritage Auctions said in a statement.—AFP



## Elsa Hosk to model Dream Angels Fantasy Bra

The Victoria's Secret Angel has been chosen to walk in the special lingerie set - which has been crafted by ateliers at Swarovski - when the show is filmed in New York City on November 8 and she is beyond excited to have been chosen for the honor. Speaking to PEOPLE about her fitting, she said: "It was just a sensation that I've never felt before. My body was violently shaking. And it wasn't because I was nervous, I was just excited. It was a cool feeling that I've never felt before. And it was definitely a moment that I'll never forget." This year's bralette and matching body chain cost \$1 million to create and is adorned with over 2,100 Swarovski Created Diamonds and responsibly sourced topaz set in sterling silver. Elsa - who has been an Angel since 2015 - thinks it is the "most beautiful fantasy bra" that Victoria's Secret has ever created. The 29-year-old Swedish supermodel said: "It's definitely the most beautiful fantasy bra I ever saw, and when I saw it I was like, 'You guys have got to be kidding me.' 'It's just very cool, very simple, modern, and so sparkly - If I would have designed it, it would have looked just like this. I put it on and I was like, 'It looks like someone just made magic and put it on my body.'"

## Ariana Grande apologizes to Ricky Alvarez for giving him worst line

The 25-year-old singer name-checked her ex-boyfriends - Pete Davidson, Mac Miller, Big Sean and Ricky - on her new song and joked with her former flame about the line she gave him. In the track, she sings: "Wrote some songs about Ricky / Now I listen and laugh." And taking to Instagram and responding to Ricky's post, which was a video of him listening to the song, she wrote: "HAHAHAHAHAHAHAH IM SORRY U GOT THE WORST LINE. It was meant v lovingly (sic)." Ariana had previously revealed that Ricky, along with Sean and Pete, had been sent the song to listen to before it was released. She had shared: "They heard it before it came out." Although the song title sounds like it could throw some shade in the direction of her exes, the lyrics suggest the singer has learned important lessons from her past relationships. She sings: "Thought I'd end up with Sean, but it wasn't a match. Wrote some songs about Ricky, now I listen and laugh. Even almost got married, and for Pete I'm so thankful. Wish I could say 'thank you' to Malcolm, cause he was an angel. One taught me love, one taught me patience, and one taught me pain." Ariana also insisted she is going to focus on herself after her most recent break-up. In the new song, she sings: "I met someone else, we havin' better discussions. I know they say I move on too fast, but this one gon' last 'cause her name is Ari, and I'm so good with that."



## Jolie, Pitt's custody battle to go to trial in December



The former couple - who split in September 2016 after two years of marriage - will face one another in court for two to three weeks in December 4. The 'Maleficent' actress is seeking sole physical custody of their six children, Maddox, 17, Pax, 14, Zahara, 13, Shiloh, 12, and 10-year-old twins Knox and Vivienne - but the 54-year-old actor is asking for 50/50 joint

custody. In addition to the custody dispute, the private judge also needs to handle a property settlement agreement as the former couple do not have a prenuptial agreement. Legal documents filed on Monday said Brad and Angelina, 43, want to extend the appointment of Judge Ouderkerk as a temporary judge until June 30, 2019, and he will hear and determine all pretrial issues, requests and motions, as well as the tri-

al. At the judge's discretion, the 'Moneyball' actor and the 'Unbroken' director may be able to appear at the trial - which will take place at an as-yet-undecided location - via a telephone link. It is expected the courtroom will be sealed off to anyone other than the parties involved because of the involvement of minors.

## Rihanna calls for Trump to stop using her music at his rallies



The 'Disturbia' hitmaker was fuming when she realized the US president had been playing 'Don't Stop The Music' at a rally in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Responding to a man, who revealed that Trump was using her music, she wrote: "Not for much longer...me nor my people would ever be at or around one of those tragic rallies, so thanks for the heads up philip! (sic)" And the Barbados beauty is not the first person to stop Trump from using their music as Pharrell Williams' lawyer recently sent a cease-and-desist letter to Trump after he played 'Happy' at a political rally in Indiana last week, just hours after a mass shooting at a synagogue in Pittsburgh. The letter, which was written by attorney Howard King, stated: "On the day of the mass murder of 11 human beings at the hands of a deranged 'nationalist,' you played his song 'Happy' to a crowd at a political event in Indiana. There was nothing 'happy' about the tragedy inflicted upon our country on Saturday and no permission was granted for your use of this song for this purpose. Pharrell Williams is the owner of the copyright in 'Happy,' with the exclusive right to exploit same. Pharrell has not, and will not, grant you permission to publicly perform or otherwise broadcast or disseminate any of his music."

## Demi Lovato's friend Henry Levy is helping her stay sober

It's said the 26-year-old star became friends with the clothing designer a few years ago after they met in rehab, and they were recently spotted spending time together three months after she was hospitalized following an apparent overdose. An insider told 'Entertainment Tonight': "Henry and Demi met a few years ago in rehab. They hit it off immediately and became fast friends. Henry takes his sober life very seriously and, when Demi sadly relapsed, they lost touch for some time... Henry is exactly the friend Demi needs right now. He is a perfect sober friend for her. Her friends feel he is a positive influence on her." 'Enfants Riches Deprime' designer Henry has been opened about his own battles with drugs and alcohol addiction, and it's said the friends have been spending time together to help them both stay sober. The source added: "Henry and Demi have been hanging at Demi's home watching movies. This is such a key time in Demi's sober process and just staying away from the party scene truly helps." The 'Sober' singer is said to have "dedicated herself" to a life of sobriety following several years of struggling with addiction, and is thought to be distancing herself from her old friend group who had "supported her precarious lifestyle" in the past.







These pictures show workers standing on scaffolding during renovation work on the 13th century al-Zahir Baybars mosque in the capital Cairo. — AFP photos



A picture shows the 14th century al-Maridani mosque at al-Darb al-Ahmar area in the capital Cairo, as it undergoes renovation works.



A picture shows a mosque at the Qalawun complex in old Cairo in the heart of the Egyptian capital.

## Egypt struggles to restore Cairo's historic heart

Workers perched on scaffolding delicately repair Cairo's 13th-century al-Zahir Baybars mosque, a vital restoration project in the Egyptian capital's neglected Islamic quarter.

Halted by the popular protests that toppled dictator Hosni Mubarak in 2011 and the ensuing political and economic turmoil which enveloped the country, restorative work on the Mamluk-era mosque picked back up last month. On the other side of the quarter, similar work on the 14th century al-Maridani mosque has just begun.

The capital's Islamic quarter, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979 often referred to as historic Cairo, boasts some 600 listed monuments. But the task to patch up decades of dilapidation is immense, and Egyptian authorities are struggling to come up with the cash after unrest and jihadist attacks have driven away tourists and slashed crucial income. Islamic Cairo is packed with ornate monuments, mosques and mausoleums, and its narrow streets are punctuated with trinket shops, cafes and traditional old homes—an urban fabric layered in centuries of history.

For Luis Monreal, head of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, refurbishing the area is a never-ending project. "It's like painting an aircraft carrier: when you finish one side, you have to start over again on the other," he said. Part of the Aga Khan Foundation, his outfit has

been working on restoration projects in the area since the early 2000s.

### Rapid deterioration

In the immediate aftermath of Mubarak's 2011 fall, many of the area's squat traditional buildings were torn down and replaced with structures of six to eight floors. Meanwhile, rampant theft saw centuries-old objects disappear from mosques. And even if looting and illegal construction have since decreased, according to authorities, the historic heart of Egypt's teeming capital of 20 million is still choked with pollution, its streets cluttered with rubbish.

UNESCO has warned several times in recent years of increasing degradation in historic Cairo, raising the alarm as it has for many other heritage cities across the globe. In 2017, its World Heritage Committee urged Egyptian authorities "to take all needed measures to halt the rapid deterioration" of sites across the quarter. In an October visit to monitor new restoration work, Antiquities Minister Khaled el-Enany highlighted budget issues as one of the central challenges facing the district.

"It's always said that Islamic antiquities are in bad con-

dition. It's a fact," he said, adding that failing sewers and monuments in residential areas had also created issues. The antiquities ministry is fed by revenues generated at Egypt's wealth of historic monuments. And while tourism has picked up since it dropped in 2011, the 8.2 million people that visited Egypt in 2017 are still far behind the country's 14.7 million visitors in the year before the uprising.

With earnings from the sites down, much of the restoration work has been dependent on foreign funding. Kazakhstan is putting up 4.8 million euros to finance work on the Baybars mosque. Meanwhile, the European Union is contributing 1.2 million euros for the al-Maridani mosque, in tandem with the Aga Khan Foundation which has put forward 133,000 euros.

From his renovated home in historic Cairo, architect Alaa al-Habashi said time was of the essence in the push to preserve the area. "It cannot wait... if we want to stay on the World Heritage List there is not a minute to lose," he said. The only way to effectively combat the decay, he said, was "to get citizens involved". From his 16th-century home, known as Bayt Yakan, Habashi runs an art collective and organizes conferences around the "revitalization of the historic city".

'It's like painting an aircraft carrier'

## Indonesian startup uses road safety to drive women's empowerment

Tim Fahima Jachja cannot operate a vehicle and relies on a driver to get around the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, but that did not stop her from putting road safety at the heart of her women's empowerment startup. Since launching in late 2016, Queenrides has attracted 200,000 members to join its website. Aside from reading articles about lifestyle and financial management, members can also gather in person for workshops covering topics like sexual health and family planning.



Queenrides women members take part in a workshop in Indonesia.—Reuters

But road safety has been a focus from the beginning said, Jachja, a mother of two. "When you are safe on the road, you can be the best you want to be," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from Jakarta. Road deaths are high in Indonesia, according to the transport ministry, which counted 162,000 fatalities last year, compared to 136,000 in 2015.

In a country undergoing rapid urbanization as incomes increase, more people are buying vehicles, putting stress on the road network. Many drivers avoid taking tests by paying corrupt officials for driving licenses, said Jachja. The road risks are rising for women in particular, she said, because changing social attitudes mean that more of them are working and commuting. At the same time, relatively few women have taken driving lessons and tests to acquire licenses, she said.

Only about 20 percent of 7,500 Queenrides members surveyed said they had taken a driving test. "This is a major issue - this is a crisis - but people haven't noticed the situation," said Jachja about the number of road deaths in Indonesia. Low-income countries have fatality rates more

than double those in high-income countries, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). There were 104 million registered vehicles in Indonesia, a nation of 238 million people, according to the WHO's latest report on road safety published in 2015.

### Driving safely

As well as enabling its members to exchange views and learn more about road safety online, Queenrides arranges workshops with input from the ministry of transportation and traffic police. Participants have gone on to take driving lessons and tests, said Jachja. That trend could make Indonesia's roads safer, said Liviu Vedrasco, a road safety expert at the WHO in Bangkok. "There are some studies that suggest women are more careful and follow the rules better than men," he noted.

One of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations in 2015 is to halve the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2020, said Vedrasco. As the number of female drivers increases, Indonesia's ministry of transportation has stepped up efforts to reduce crashes involving women by working with outside partners, said Budi Setiyadi, director of land transport at the ministry.

"Queenrides is needed for women riders in Indonesia to be given a good education in driving safely, because women have a primary role," Setiyadi said in an email. "They can educate their children, their families, and the surrounding environment."

### Growing

As more Indonesian women join the workforce and take to the roads, Queenrides can also help them assert control in other areas of their lives, according to Jachja. For example, about 30 members gathered last month in child-friendly cafe in Jakarta to discuss family planning, and strategies for educating their teenaged children about sex. The United States-based Johns Hopkins University sent experts to the workshop part of a program targeting "married women of reproductive age", according to Dinar Pandan Sari of the university's Centre for Communication Programs in Jakarta.

"The fact that in just two years, Queenrides has been able to grow from an idea to 200,000 women joining their movement is remarkable," Sari added. Queenrides teams up with other organizations to provide information on issues like women's rights, while members can also receive financial planning advice from institutions including Indonesia's Bank Mandiri. As Queenrides' membership grows, revenue from advertising on the website should increase as well, allowing the startup to expand its programs, according to Jachja.

She said she aims to attract 5 million members over the next three years, making Queenrides the biggest women's empowerment platform in Southeast Asia. "If you can conquer Indonesia, it is easy to conquer any other area in the world," said Jachja about her homeland, a sprawling archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, and a multitude of languages and cultures. "Conquering Indonesia is like conquering five countries at the same time."—Reuters

## PHOTO FEATURE

### Kurdish Pomegranate Festival, a celebration of local produce



The Pomegranate Festival is celebrated every year in Halabja province, southeastern Sulaymaniyah city in Iraq's Kurdistan region. Halabja is well known for producing pomegranate and harvest season for this fruit starts end of October and early November. According to statistics released by

Kurdistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Halabja has 8,500 donum of pomegranate agricultural land, with an annual production between 20,000 to 30,000 tons. The festival also includes showcasing other local produce such as honey, walnuts and many kinds of berries.—KUNA





# Trump on trial as Americans vote in midterm elections

WASHINGTON: Americans headed to the polls yesterday for a pivotal midterm election seen as a referendum on the first two years of the volatile presidency of Donald Trump. With control of Congress at stake, all eyes are on several dozen close House and Senate races that will decide if Democrats or Republicans control the legislative bodies. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives, 35 seats in the 100-member Senate and 36 governorships are up for grabs as Americans in all 50 states cast their ballots.

Democrats need a net gain of 23 seats to take control of the House for the first time since the Tea Party wave of 2010 and the latest polls give them a good chance to do so. Republicans enjoy a slim 51-49 edge in the Senate and are favored to hang on to their majority since Democrats are defending 26 seats on Tuesday and the Republicans only nine. But with memories still fresh of Trump's upset victory of Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential race much uncertainty remains.

Both parties have pulled out all the stops to drive voters to the polls and Trump embarked on a bruising schedule of election rallies over the past few weeks. "The midterm elections used to be, like, boring," Trump said at a raucous rally Monday in Cleveland, Ohio. "Now it's like the hottest thing." Early voting totals would appear to support this. According to Michael McDonald of the US Elections Project, 38.4 million Americans cast their ballots early compared with 27.4 million in the 2014 midterm election.

Voting in Miami, Eloisa Alvarez said this election was "super important". "I think, like the TV stations have been saying, it's a referendum on the Trump presidency," Alvarez said. Casting his ballot in Chicago, James Gerlock, 27, a Republican, said he wanted to see continued economic growth under Trump. "I am extremely happy with the economy," Gerlock said. "I just love the deregulation and I just want to keep everything moving, because I'm loving it."

Trump has boasted about the economy and hammered away at illegal immigration in the closing days of the campaign as he seeks to hold onto a majority in Congress and push his legislative agenda. He accused Democrats on Monday of seeking to make America "a giant sanctuary city for drug dealers, predators and bloodthirsty MS-13 killers". Democrats have denounced Trump for what they called fear-mongering and decried his deployment of active duty troops to the southern border with Mexico as a "political stunt."

Beto O'Rourke, a Democratic candidate in Texas



MINNEAPOLIS: Voters cast ballots at a polling station yesterday. — AFP

seeking to unseat Republican Senator Ted Cruz, said the state is one of "immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees". "This is our source of strength," O'Rourke said as he cast his ballot in El Paso. "No one from outside can stir paranoia or fear that can change that." The O'Rourke-Cruz race is one of a half-dozen Senate contests that are being closely watched to determine control of the chamber. Other tight Senate races are in Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Tennessee and West Virginia.

Hillary Clinton urged her 23.6 million followers on Twitter to get out and vote. "For the past two years, we've watched this administration attack and undermine our democratic institutions and values," Clinton

said. "Today, we say enough." "But we won't just vote against radicalism, bigotry and corruption today," she said. "We'll vote for fantastic candidates all over the country - including a historic number of women - who want to raise wages, fight for justice, and help more people get health care."

One such race involving a woman is seen as a potential bellwether for how the day may go. Democrat Amy McGrath, a former Marine Corps fighter pilot, is running neck-and-neck against Republican Andy Barr in a House race in Kentucky, a state Trump won by 30 points.

The first results from the day's contests were expected to trickle in after the first polls close around 6:00 pm Eastern time (2300 GMT). Trump has vowed to his sup-

porters at every rally they will "win, win, win." But as he visited Indiana on Monday he conceded the House may slip from his party's grasp. "We'll just have to work a little bit differently," he told reporters when asked how he'd live with a Democrat-controlled lower chamber.

The party of a first-term president tends to lose congressional seats in off-year elections and Trump's heated rhetoric has made even some Republicans jittery. A Florida man and ardent Trump supporter was charged recently with sending homemade bombs to more than a dozen senior Democrats and other high profile opponents of the president. Days later, a gunman walked into a Pittsburgh synagogue and shot 11 worshippers dead. — AFP

## News in brief

### Israeli minister in Oman

JERUSALEM: An Israeli minister has travelled to Oman to propose plans for a railway linking the Gulf to the Mediterranean via Israel at a world transport conference yesterday. Transport and Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz is to make the pitch at the annual meeting of the International Road Transport Union. The "Tracks for Regional Peace" initiative calls for a rail link connecting Saudi Arabia with the Mediterranean Sea. The line would extend from Haifa, Israel's largest port, passing through Jordan before connecting with existing railways in the Gulf. — AFP

### Saudis to build nuke research reactor

RIYADH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Monday laid the foundation stone for the kingdom's first nuclear research reactor, state media said, as the kingdom seeks to diversify its energy mix. The reactor was among seven projects launched by the prince during a visit to Riyadh's King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology, the official Saudi Press Agency reported. SPA offered no details on when the research or non-power reactor - typically used for research, development and education purposes - would be built and at what cost. — AFP

### Lebanon minister apologizes to Egypt

BEIRUT: Lebanon's tourism minister has apologized to Egypt after criticizing the country's cleanliness and living conditions in a newspaper interview. Caretaker Tourism Minister Avedis Guidanian, in the interview published on Monday by the Daily Star, complained that negative media reports about Lebanon were harming his country's image and hindering tourism. "Look at Egypt - is there a place dirtier than it? People are louder than us, there is more traffic than here - people live in graves, OK? But there is tourism, because they know how to sell the country," he said. Late on Monday, Guidanian apologized for his remarks and visited the Egyptian ambassador to Lebanon yesterday. — Reuters

## 'Miracle' as New Zealand baby rescued from sea

WELLINGTON, New Zealand: A New Zealand baby was plucked from the ocean as he floated past a fisherman in a rescue hailed as "miraculous" by water safety experts, who warned the accident could easily have ended in tragedy. Gus Hutt was preparing for an early morning fish when he saw what appeared to be a doll bobbing past him in a rip current at Matata Beach in the North Island's Bay of Plenty.

"I thought he was just a doll," Hutt told the Whakatane Beacon of the incident on October 26. "So I reached out and grabbed him by the arm, even then I

still thought it was just a doll. His face looked just like porcelain, with his short hair wetted down, but then he let out a little squeak and I thought 'oh God this is a baby and it's alive'."

It turned out the "doll" was 18-month-old Malachi Reeve, who had opened the zip of his sleeping parents' tent, then made his way out of a beachside campsite and into the water, where a current caught him. Hutt, a local, said he had altered his usual routine slightly and was about to cast off about 100 m from his normal spot on the shoreline when the object floated by. "He was floating at a steady pace with a rip in the water. If I hadn't been there, or if I had just been a minute later I wouldn't have seen him," Hutt said. "He was bloody lucky, but he just wasn't meant to go. It wasn't his time."

Malachi's parents were alerted and rushed to the camp reception, where mother Jessica Whyte found her boy "purple, cold and looking smaller than usual". But after treatment from paramedics he was given the all

clear and Whyte said he was unaffected by his ordeal. "He's himself. Maybe he'll be more aware of water, not run into beaches. But he's definitely himself," she told the Stuff news website. She said the toddler had been fascinated by the sea the previous day and must have woken up early to explore.

Water Safety New Zealand chief executive Jonty Mills said Malachi's case may have ended happily but it showed the dangers children face around water. "This is a pretty miraculous survival story," he told AFP. "It really is just a matter of luck that the fisherman was in the right place at the right time and was able to pull the child out of the water."

He said seven preschoolers drowned last year in New Zealand and there had been three fatalities involving children under five so far in 2018. "It takes less than a minute for a child to drown," he said. "The only way to keep babies and toddlers safe around water is constant active adult supervision at all times." — AFP

## Kuwaiti sees end to Gulf...

Continued from Page 1

Jarallah also said he hoped oil production would pick up again in fields jointly operated by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, citing ongoing negotiations over the matter. "We hope to solve this dispute with Saudi Arabia so that oil production in the neutral zone can continue," he told reporters after the ministerial talks. The two countries halted output from the jointly run oilfields in the so-called Neutral Zone more than three years ago, cutting some 500,000 barrels per day or 0.5 percent of global oil supply. Jarallah revealed Kuwait has signed a memorandum of understanding with the European Union over cooperation in various fields, including a plan to open a Kuwaiti office at NATO's headquarters in Brussels.

Jarallah said Kuwait still calls on Iran to have normal relations with its neighbors on the basis of clear foundations, mutual respect and non-interference in other countries' internal affairs. He said if Iran observes such foundations and principles, "then there will be no need

for sanctions". Jarallah reiterated Kuwait's commitment to US sanctions on Iran. As for an international effort to bring an end to the war in Yemen, he said: "What is going on in Yemen is painful. Still, there are indications that are hoped to be positive and to put an end to the conflict". He noted recent US statements on the conflict in Yemen reflect seriousness for pushing or resuming negotiations.

Separately, Kuwaiti Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf said yesterday it is significant to fulfill the GCC leaders' goals by creating a robust economic bloc capable of emulating other global entities. Addressing a GCC financial and economic committee meeting, Hajraf said: "The world is the scene of swift economic developments and renewed challenges that ought to be addressed." He said such challenges could be conquered by means of developing uniform visions and promoting Gulf economic cooperation, and meeting the GCC leaders' expectations of economic integration.

"There are great responsibilities and grave challenges that require us to translate orientations into programs of action, rendering ambitions into tangible reality and harnessing energies and potentials to attain the aspired goals," Hajraf added. He spoke highly of the gathering as a platform for sharing views and offering positions in full clarity and transparency with a view to propping up Gulf



Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah.

economic cooperation. The GCC meeting focuses on an array of issues and subjects bearing on the development of financial and economic policies in the region, contributing to beefing up existing cooperation and notching up economic integration, he noted.

## Heads roll over rain deluge; MPs...

Continued from Page 1

Sheikh Jaber reiterated security forces are fully prepared to provide round-the-clock assistance in case of any emergencies caused by the unstable weather, with forecasters warning of the possibility of more flooding in the coming days.

Rainfall in the southern regions measured over 60 mm, more than half of Kuwait's average annual rainfall, while it was recorded at 40 mm in Salmiya and Kuwait City. The government announced a public holiday early yesterday and many private sector companies also remained closed as many employees could not reach their workplaces because of the accumulated rainwater.

Several lawmakers called for strong action against those responsible for the disaster, with MP Faisal Al-Kandari calling on the public works minister to step down, holding him responsible for the failure. He said

Roumi should take political responsibility for what happened and urged the Cabinet to hold an emergency meeting to activate contingency plans. Kandari said that the roads law is clear and that main roads come under the ministry of public works, and the minister should be held responsible. He insisted that no one should blame others.

MP Safa Al-Hashem said that dismissing the head of the roads authority was mandatory after the failure to face the rains. MP Thamer Al-Suwait held the ministry and the roads authority responsible for what happened and for their failure to prepare an emergency plan. He said there is a clear lack of coordination between government agencies, and accordingly there is an urgent need to establish a special unit for managing crises like this one.

MP Riyadh Al-Adasani had called on the public works minister to sack the head of the public roads authority for the losses sustained by the people by the heavy rains and failure to deal with them. He warned that the minister will be held politically responsible if he does not take the necessary actions against senior officials responsible for the disaster. He also called on the minister to initiate an investigation into the contracts awarded by the ministry to main contractors and maintenance companies.

## Qatar hopes GCC crisis will end...

Continued from Page 1

stocks and property. Qatar grew its exports by 18 percent last year and slashed spending by 20 percent under a conservative fiscal policy, while preserving the value of its currency, the amir said, forecasting the budgetary surplus would increase in coming years.

The crisis has thrown into the spotlight Qatar's preparations for the 2022 World Cup. Sheikh Tamim said maintaining the huge expenditures necessary to host international football's showpiece tournament was "not easy" but the government had done so despite the hit state revenues had taken from the sharp fall in world energy prices from 2014. Qatar has previously said it is spending around \$500 million a week to prepare for 2022.

Sheikh Tamim, who has been in power since 2013, also had a warning for the population, saying that the

country's astonishing wealth must be matched by ethics and morality. "The high standard of living of the citizen must be accompanied by a development of values," he said. If this does not happen, a "state of social corruption" could emerge.

Separately, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi said the army will come to the defense of Gulf Arabs if they face any direct threats, a pro-government newspaper said yesterday. Youm7 newspaper also quoted Sisi as saying in response to a question on US sanctions on Iran: "Instability affects us all and any state that has instability affects all of us."

Sisi's Egypt is aligned with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, joining their boycott of Qatar last year and opposing Iran's regional influence. "Our Arab peoples must remain aware and have true consciousness of what the region is going through," Youm7 quoted Sisi as saying. "We stand by our brothers in the Gulf wholeheartedly and if Gulf security is directly threatened by anyone, the Egyptian people, even before their leadership, will not accept that and will mobilize forces to protect their brethren." — Agencies



Sports

# Marchand capitalizes as Bruins dump Dallas Stars in overtime

## Boyle's hat trick boosts Devils past Penguins

NHL result/standings

Eastern Conference						
Atlantic Division						
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Tampa Bay	10	3	1	50	38	21
Toronto	9	5	0	48	39	18
Boston	8	4	2	39	31	18
Montreal	8	4	2	45	40	18
Buffalo	7	6	2	43	44	16
Ottawa	5	6	3	45	59	13
Detroit	4	8	2	37	53	10
Florida	3	5	3	34	41	9
Metropolitan Division						
NY Islanders	8	4	2	45	34	18
Pittsburgh	6	4	3	46	45	15
Washington	6	4	3	50	49	15
Columbus	7	6	1	46	51	15
Philadelphia	7	7	1	48	56	15
Carolina	6	6	2	39	41	14
New Jersey	6	5	1	39	36	13
NY Rangers	6	7	1	38	44	13
Western Conference						
Central Division						
Nashville	11	3	0	47	30	22
Minnesota	8	3	2	40	36	18
Dallas	8	5	1	41	36	17
Winnipeg	8	5	1	41	38	17
Colorado	7	4	3	52	40	17
Chicago	6	6	3	46	56	15
St. Louis	4	5	3	42	47	11
Pacific Division						
Calgary	9	5	1	52	50	19
Vancouver	9	6	0	47	50	18
Edmonton	8	5	1	42	41	17
San Jose	7	4	3	46	43	17
Anaheim	6	6	3	37	42	15
Arizona	7	6	0	37	29	14
Las Vegas	6	7	1	33	39	13
Los Angeles	4	8	1	28	45	9

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).

**BOSTON:** Brad Marchand scored a five-on-three power play goal with 31 seconds remaining in overtime to lift the Boston Bruins to a 2-1 win over the visiting Dallas Stars on Monday. The Stars were whistled for two penalties in an 11-second span during overtime, first for too many men on the ice and then on a cross-check by Esa Lindell against Marchand, and Boston eventually made the play to win. Marchand took a pass from David Krejci after an assist from Torey Klug and beat Dallas goaltender Anton Khudobin low on the glove side for the game-winner. The victory was the first in three overtime games for the Bruins this year. The loss snapped a three-game winning streak for the Stars, who are 3-1-1 so far on their six-game road trip.



**BOSTON:** Sean Kuraly #52 of the Boston Bruins looks for a shot against Anton Khudobin #35 of the Dallas Stars during the third period at TD Garden on Monday in Boston, Massachusetts. —AFP

**Flyers 5, Coyotes 2**  
Claude Giroux scored two goals and Sean Couturier had a goal and an assist as Philadelphia finished a four-game road trip without a regulation loss after a victory over Arizona in Glendale, Ariz. Shayne Gostisbehere had a goal and an assist and Oskar Lindblom scored into an empty net late as the Flyers went 3-0-1 on a Western trip that began with victories in Anaheim and Los Angeles and included an overtime loss to San Jose on Saturday. Alex Galchenyuk and Michael Grabner scored for the Coyotes, who had a five-game winning streak broken.

**Capitals 4, Oilers 2**  
Devante Smith-Pelly finished with one goal and one assist, and Jakub Vrana, T.J. Oshie and Alex Ovechkin added goals as Washington defeated visiting Edmonton. Washington, which still is looking for consecutive victories this season, snapped a two-game losing streak. Goalie Phoenix Copley earned his second win of the season and the second of his NHL career. The rookie finished with 31 saves, including 11 as he blanked Edmonton in the third period.

**Devils 5, Penguins 1**  
Brian Boyle had a natural hat trick as New Jersey broke a three-game losing streak by defeating host Pittsburgh, which lost its fourth straight. Boyle, who

recently announced he was in remission after being treated for leukemia, got his first career hat trick on Pittsburgh's Hockey Fights Cancer night. He scored the final goal of the first period and the only two of the second. Will Butcher had a goal and two assists, Travis Zajac scored, and Jean-Sebastien Dea had two assists for the Devils. Keith Kincaid stopped 35 of 36 Pittsburgh shots. Jamie Oleksiak scored for the Penguins.

as Montreal rallied to beat host New York, which saw its five-game winning streak end. Armia scored the lone goal of the shootout when he ripped a wrist shot over Thomas Greiss to complete Montreal's comeback from a 3-1 deficit. Canadiens backup goaltender Anti Niemi capped a 21-save performance by making five shootout saves. Jonathan Drouin, Max Domi and Artturi Lehkonen scored in regulation for Montreal, which rallied from a 3-1 deficit. Casey Cizikas had two goals for the Islanders, who also got a goal from Valtteri Filppula. — Reuters

**Canadiens 4, Islanders 3 (SO)**  
Joel Armia scored in the fifth round of a shootout



Al-Hammadi with the winners



Shooters stand for the national anthem of China.

## Chinese break two world records on Day 2 of shooting competition

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** China continued its dominance of the 11th Asian Airgun and 8th Shotgun competitions, as Chinese shooters recorded two world records during the second day of competition and only two gold medals went to Thailand, meanwhile Qatar won bronze through its shooter Sarah Ghulam Mohammad.

China now has gold, 4 silver and 3 bronze medals on top of the table followed by Thailand with two, India with 3 silver and bronze, Singapore and Kazakhstan 2 silver and 2 bronze, Bahrain, Taiwan and Qatar with a bronze medal each.

In the women's skeet, Sarah Ghulam won the bronze medal and this was the best achievement in her young career. World champion in 2016 and Jakarta 2018 Thailand's Sutuya Jiewchaloemmit won gold, leaving the silver medal for Kazakhstan's Assem Orynbay. Kuwait was placed fourth in the team's competition for the same event,

as the gold medal went to Thailand, silver went to China and the bronze was taken by Kazakhstan. The women's junior skeet gold medal went to China's Yashu Sun, meanwhile her compatriot Zhengyi Song won silver and the bronze went to Kazakh Zoya Kravchenko.

Chinese shooters had another strong showing as Yuefeng Wang won the juniors 10 meter air rifle gold medal and India's Divyansh Singh took silver and China's Xiangyu Tian the bronze. In the teams category China won gold, India took silver and Singapore took bronze.

World Champion in 2018, and World Cup winner in 2017 China's Mengyao Shi kept the Asian title for the second year running by winning the gold medal of the women's junior 10 meter rifle, as her compatriot Hong Xu won silver, while India's Elavenil Valarivan won bronze.

In the junior women event China took gold, India silver and Singapore bronze. Meanwhile, Secretary General of Kuwait

and Arab Shooting Federation, Director of the Championship Obaid Al-Osaimi said competition of the first day showed very high technical standard, adding that the dominance of the Chinese shooters is normal as shooters from East Asia are World Champions in this category. He said the organizing committee provided all that was necessary to ensure the tournament's success being during actual competition or training.

He said the championship is a good opportunity for Kuwait shooters to gain experience in the Airgun category due to the presence of world champions, and expected Arabs to make better results in the skeet, trap and double trap events.

Technical delegate to the championship Qatar's Abdallah Al-Hammadi lauded Sarah's win of the 8 bronze medal of women skeet. He lauded the preparedness of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Complex, and having Kuwait giving all types of support to make sure the tournament comes on as



Qatari shooter Sarah Ghuloum.

required. China's team director Mo Yong lauded the results of the Chinese ladies in the skeet category, adding that China's level is high in this type of weapons and improve year after year. He said China gives priority to juniors in preparation for clay targets.

## US Olympic moves to disband USA Gymnastics body

**LOS ANGELES:** The United States Olympic Committee said Monday it had begun moves to disband the country's governing body for gymnastics, accusing the sport's rulers of failing to grapple with the aftermath of the Larry Nassar sexual abuse scandal.

USOC chief executive Sarah Hirshland said in a statement Olympic chiefs had started formal proceedings to revoke USA Gymnastics' status as the governing body for the sport in the United States.

In an open letter addressed to US gymnasts, Hirshland said USA Gymnastics had failed to "change its culture, to rebuild its leadership, and to effectively serve its membership." "You deserve better," Hirshland told gymnasts in the letter. USA Gymnastics has lurched from one self-inflicted debacle to the next as it has struggled to rebuild in the wake of the Nassar abuse case, the worst scandal in US Olympic history.

Former US team doctor Nassar was jailed for life earlier this year after abusing more than 250 athletes, including several stars of the United States' gold medal-winning teams at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics.

The beleaguered governing body, which had been accused of covering up Nassar's crimes, has been in a state of perpetual crisis ever since the scandal erupted. Last month, newly installed chief executive Mary Bono resigned after just four days following an outcry by Olympic stars Simone Biles and Alexandra Raisman.

Bono had taken over from chief executive Kerry Perry, who had resigned after just nine months after criticism of her performance by USOC. Perry's departure came after the appointment and swift resignation of elite coach Mary Lee Tracy—who had made comments supportive of Nassar in 2016 when allegations of abuse against him had begun to emerge.

USOC had warned it was prepared to take the ultimate sanction of revoking USA Gymnastics' status as a governing body unless it put its house in order. In January, USA Gymnastics board of directors resigned en masse at the behest of USOC.

In her letter to US gymnasts on Monday, Hirshland said Olympic chiefs had given up hoping that USA Gymnastics was capable of reforming itself in the post-Nassar era. Hirshland said USOC had concluded that "the challenges facing the organization are simply more than it is capable of overcoming in its current form." "We have worked closely with the new USAG board over recent months to support them, but despite diligent effort, the NGB continues to struggle," Hirshland said. "And that's not fair to gymnasts around the country. Even weeks ago, I hoped there was a different way forward. But we now believe that is no longer possible."

USOC's complaint seeking to dissolve USA Gymnastics in its present form will now go before a review panel which will convene a hearing on the case. The review panel will issue a report and give a recommendation which will then go before the USOC board of directors, who will determine whether or not to formally strip USAG of its governing body status.

The move to decertify USA Gymnastics was welcomed by Rachael Denhollander, the first gymnast to come forward with allegations of abuse against Nassar. "After overseeing the abuse of 100's of children by Larry, national coaches and club coaches, it is high time for this organization to end and a new one, truly dedicated to athlete safety, to begin," Denhollander wrote on Twitter.—AFP

## Participants receive their numbers for NBK's Walkathon

**KUWAIT:** The registration for National Bank of Kuwait's (NBK) 24th Annual Walkathon started online through NBKWalkathon.com.

Applicants can receive their assigned T-shirt and number at the NBK's registration point at the Green Island parking on the Gulf Road starting from Thursday 29th of November. The number for each participant will contain a step-counting chip.

"The participation in NBK's Walkathon is increasing year after year, and we are extremely thrilled to take our involvement with this exciting event to a new level. NBK walkathon webpage is now open to register participants till 28th of November 2018," said Talal Al Turki, NBK Public Relations Team Leader.

Al Turki added "NBK's 2018 Walkathon that will be held on the 8th December 2018 aims to encourage each individual to believe in their ability towards making a change "We're Stronger... With Every Step".

NBK will award more than 100 participants in the 23rd Annual Walkathon alongside the grand draw for two new Nissan cars from Al Babbain Group. Ten winners will be selected from each of the 10 categories of participants.



Talal Al Turki

For the first time this year, NBK initiated a racing category for participants aged 60 years old and above and a category for special needs participants to encourage a healthier lifestyle among all members of the society.

It's worth mentioning that, the walk for both the female and male participants will start from the Green Island on the Gulf Road to the Shuwaikh Beach Park, parallel to the Gulf Road, next to KPC building for a distance of 11 Km.



## Sports

# Zimbabwe thrash Bangladesh for long-awaited Test win

## Debutant leg-spinner Mavuta claims 4-21

### Meet Japan's 'Ninja Boy', the prodigy who aims to stun Mayweather

**TOKYO:** Japanese kickboxer Tenshin Nasukawa, who aims to make history by defeating boxing superstar Floyd Mayweather Jr, claims his left-hook is like a "bolt of lightning" that will "change the world".

The baby-faced southpaw with a blond quiff, who is only a few months out of his teens, was barely known outside his home country before the shock announcement of his New Year's Eve fight with the unbeaten Mayweather.

But the 20-year-old from Chiba near Tokyo is considered something of a prodigy in Japanese fighting circles and began learning karate at the tender age of five. Like Mayweather, he has never been beaten, boasting a 27-0 record as a professional kickboxer with 20 wins by knockout. He has four wins out of four in mixed martial arts.

Nasukawa won the world junior karate championship when he was a fifth grader and shifted to kickboxing a year later, according to his official website. He made his professional kickboxing debut at the age of 16 and became bantamweight oriental rules world champion a year later.

Promoters RIZIN said that Nasukawa-or "Ninja Boy" as they dubbed him-had "become one of the most popular fighters in Japan, and perhaps the best combat sports prospect the country has ever seen."

There are still no details as to under what rules the fight will be held-whether kicks will be allowed, for example-but Nasukawa claimed after the bout was announced he had "a punch that boxers don't have".

"I don't care what the rules are. I want to be the man who changes history. I'll do that with these fists, with one punch-just watch," said Nasukawa.

Even Mayweather acknowledged that Nasukawa was "an unbelievable talent", praising his lithe, "gym rat" physique. "He's very special, he's fast, he's strong, I'm older now and when it comes to experience, I have it on my side. He has youth on his side and he's going to bring a lot of excitement," said the 41-year-old American.

Nasukawa now weighs 56.8 kilogrammes and is also giving four inches away in height to Mayweather, who won world titles in five different weight classes.

"Our weight class is different, but it means nothing to me," said Nasukawa. According to his official site, Nasukawa is good with his hands in other areas than punching, saying he is a fan of knitting and sewing-as well as indulging in traditional Japanese "senjo" baths. Despite his tender age, he published a biography last year entitled "Kakusei", meaning "Awakening". However, both he and Mayweather have reportedly received some online mockery for the unusual cross-code fight.

According to US sports celebrity website TMZ Sports, US rapper 50 cent said that Nasukawa looked like an "Uber driver". And in a foul-mouthed tirade on his Instagram account, Irish mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor, who lost to Mayweather in the American's last fight in August 2017, said: "Who's this little prick next to you." — AFP

## GAZOO Racing scoops one-two victory at FIA World Endurance Championship

**FUJI:** GAZOO Racing (GR) delighted an enthusiastic home crowd by recently earning a one-two victory at the 6 Hours of Fuji, the fourth round of the 2018-19 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

A compelling race saw the No. 7 TS050 Hybrid Electric Vehicle (HEV) of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi, and José María López cross the line in front, just 11.440 seconds ahead of team-mates Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima, and Fernando Alonso in the No. 8 TS050 Hybrid Electric Vehicle, for their first win of the season despite starting eighth.

Commenting on the GAZOO Racing team's victory, Akio Toyoda, President, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "We have achieved an excellent result of finishing the FIA World Endurance Championship 6 Hours of Fuji with a one-two finish. I would like to express our appreciation to all the fans that supported us. The 6 Hours of Fuji this year meant a lot to us: a triumphant home return following the Le Mans 24 Hours, a chance to race again after the disappointment of the previous race and the home race of GAZOO Racing. Thank you very much to all team members for this one-two finish, and congratulations on the long-awaited win for all on car No.7! And for the fans who always support us, thank you very much. We appreciate your continued support."

Hisatake Murata, Team President, added: "I'm really happy with this perfect result and I am also pleased we could put on such a great spectacle for the fans here at Fuji Speedway. All week they have given us fantastic support, so I hope they enjoyed watching this exciting race. As our home race, Fuji is a very important event

**SYLHET:** Brandon Mavuta and Sikandar Raza shared seven wickets between them as Zimbabwe recorded their first Test win in five years with a thumping 151-run victory over Bangladesh yesterday.

Debutant leg-spinner Mavuta claimed 4-21 and off-spinner Raza's 3-41 as hosts Bangladesh were left chasing 321 runs on the fourth day in the northeastern city of Sylhet. Wellington Masakadza, another debutant, also shone with two wickets as Zimbabwe made quick work of Bangladesh's lower order, dismissing the hosts for 169.

Left-arm spinner Masakadza took the final wicket of the innings, sending Ariful Haque for 38 as Zimbabwe notched their first Test win since beating Pakistan in Harare in 2013. It is also the first time Zimbabwe has clinched an away Test victory since beating Bangladesh in Chittagong 17 years ago in 2001.

"I am ecstatic. I thought the guys went out and worked really hard to apply themselves," Zimbabwe captain Hamilton Masakadza said in the post match presentation ceremony. Zimbabwe sensed a win once Raza claimed three vital wickets in the opening session to reduce Bangladesh's innings to half.

Kyle Jarvis and Mavuta joined the act with Raza in the morning as they chipped in with a wicket apiece to leave Bangladesh 111-5 at the break. Bangladesh resumed play on 26-0 but within half-an-hour had lost their first wicket, with others following quickly.

Play started 30 minutes early to make up for the lost time after bad light brought a premature end day three, with Bangladesh still needing 295 runs on a wearing pitch. The home side-whose best run chase was 217-6 against the West Indies in 2009 — started to throw wickets once Raza reviewed a leg-before appeal against opener Liton Das.

The umpire gave Liton not out but a TV replay indicated the ball would have hit the stump after pitching outside off-ending Liton's innings on 23. One down, Mominul

## Debutant Foakes engineers England recovery in Galle

**GALLE:** England's Ben Foakes made a memorable debut to help the tourists recover from a terrible start and reach 321 for eight wickets on the opening day of the first test against Sri Lanka yesterday.

With England reeling at 10 for two and then 103 for five, even the 200-mark looked difficult but Foakes forged 50-plus stands with Jos Buttler and Sam Curran to drag them back into the contest.

Foakes, replacing the injured Jonny Bairstow in the side, was batting on 87 at stumps, having been impressive with his batting while his glove work remains to be seen. Jack Leach was on 14 at the other end after quite a turnaround by the tourists in the last two sessions.

England had earlier made an unconvincing start to life following the retirement of stalwart Alastair Cook after captain Joe Root opted to bat first to avoid the prospect of having the final innings at a famously spin-friendly venue.

It was the early pace of Suranga Lakmal, however, that undid the top order of a side playing their first test without England great Cook who left the international arena in September. Opener Rory Burns (nine) disappointed on his test debut and Moeen Ali failed to justify his promotion to number three as Lakmal claimed two wickets in two balls. Root denied Lakmal a hat-trick and started the rebuilding job, initially at a run-a-ball rate, with Keaton Jennings.

for us, and the target was always to earn another one-two victory in front of our fans and colleagues. We could achieve that because the team worked hard and performed well, even when faced with difficult weather conditions early in the race, so I am proud of their effort." The achievement marked Toyota's third one-two victory in the 2018 WEC and its sixth win from seven WEC races at its home circuit, while for Mike and Kamui it is their first victory since a memorable triumph at Fuji in 2016. It was a particularly special race for Jose Maria Lopez, who set the fastest lap and earned his first-ever WEC win, having joined the team last season.

The result extends GAZOO Racing's lead in the teams' World Championship to 14 points over its closest rival team. Sébastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima, and Fernando Alonso stretched their advantage in the drivers' standings, with Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi, and Jose Maria Lopez moving up to second, 13 points behind. An action-packed start on a wet track saw Kazuki Nakajima in the pole position No. 8 hold the advantage while Kamui put on an overtaking show in the No. 7, exploiting the advantage of four-wheel drive in the difficult conditions to move from eighth on the grid to second by lap two.

The excitement continued throughout a fascinating first hour. Kamui pitted early to switch to heavy wet tires before a safety car period eliminated Kazuki's lead of over one minute. Soon after, the No. 8 switched to hybrid intermediate tires, leaving the rival No.11 in the lead. Changing weather added to the drama, with bright sunshine drying the track towards the end of the safety car period. That left Kamui Kobayashi on inappropriate tires for the conditions, so he was the first to pit for slick tires after the 30-minute interruption, and he took advantage by immediately setting very quick lap times.

Kazuki Nakajima and the other LMP1 cars did likewise soon after, and when the running order stabilized early in the second hour, Kamui led in the No. 7 with Kazuki close behind and both TS050 HEVs steadily building a gap to the third-placed competitor No.1.

The momentum swung between the two Toyota vehicles, depending on who had the newer tires. After a full course yellow with two hours remaining, Jose Maria



**SYLHET:** Zimbabwe cricketer Peter Moor (R) and Regis Chakabva (L) celebrate after the dismissal of the Bangladesh cricketer Imrul Kayes (C) during the fourth day of the first Test cricket match between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe in Sylhet yesterday. —AFP

Haque dragged a Jarvis delivery onto his stumps for nine before Raza bowled Imrul Kayes for 43 to leave Bangladesh at 83-3.

Skipper Mahmudullah promoted himself to number four but could not rescue his side and perished for 16, giving a catch to substitute fielder Craig Ervine at short leg off Raza. Raza then took a spectacular catch at cover on the stroke of lunch to hand debutant Mavuta his maiden Test

wicket and send back Nazmul Hossain.

"I think the wicket was good, but we didn't apply ourselves with the bat. We were not disciplined enough to restrict our strokes," said Bangladesh skipper Mahmudullah. Mavuta dismissed Bangladesh's last accomplished batsman Mushfiqur Rahim soon after play resume before Zimbabwe wrapped things up. The second Test will be held in Dhaka from November 11-15. —AFP



**GALLE:** England's Ben Foakes (R) plays a shot during the first day of the opening Test match between Sri Lanka and England at the Galle International Cricket Stadium in Galle yesterday. — AFP

Sri Lanka wasted both their reviews inside 12 overs but it was the golden arm of retiring 40-year-old Rangana Herath that ended Root's 62-run stand with Jennings. Herath, given a guard-of-honour by his team mates ahead of his 93rd and final test, yorked an advancing Root to claim his 100th wicket at the venue where he made his test debut in 1999.

Root hit five boundaries in a fluent 35 before paying for his recklessness. Dilruwan Perera (4-70) dismissed

Jennings for 46 and Ben Stokes for seven in his second spell, clean bowling both the left-handers.

Buttler and Foakes sensibly abandoned the ultra-aggressive batting which had cost England dear in the morning session and combined in a 61-run stand for the sixth wicket. Even after Perera dismissed Buttler for 38, Foakes raised 88 runs with Curran, who hit three sixes before falling for 48, while Adil Rashid contributed a quickfire 35 down the order. — Reuters



Lopez in the No. 7 led by around 20 seconds from Fernando Alonso in the No.8 and the pair pushed each other hard.

Jose set what turned out to be the fastest lap of the race on lap 153, and he kept a stable gap at the front until handing the lead to Kamui Kobayashi with just over 30 minutes remaining. Kamui had the honor of taking the checkered flag in the No. 7, with Kazuki bringing the No. 8 home second for a perfect team result.

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC) and the Nurburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate

entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established GAZOO Racing (GR), to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' GR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

The team is determined to repeat that result when WEC heads to China for the final race in 2018 and the fifth of eight races this season, the 6 Hours of Shanghai on Sunday, 18 November.

## Sports

# Huddersfield off bottom of Premier League after beating Fulham 1-0

## Fosu-Mensah's first-half own goal give Huddersfield first home win

**HUDDERSFIELD:** Timothy Fosu-Mensah's first-half own goal gave Huddersfield a 1-0 home win against Fulham and their first Premier League victory of the season on Monday. Fosu-Mensah headed into his own net, under pressure from Town's Christopher Schindler as Huddersfield halted an eight-game home run without a top-flight goal and moved above Fulham and Cardiff at the foot of the table.

The Terriers' winless league run stretched back to April — 14 league games in total—but manager David Wagner was able to celebrate on the night of his third anniversary in charge with a morale-boosting victory.

Fulham's fifth successive league defeat did little to ease the pressure on boss Slavisa Jokanovic, whose side's own run without a league win was extended to eight matches. "I don't care who scored it or how we performed," said Wagner. "People know we can perform better. The pressure was on for both teams but how we fought—we left everything on the grass."

"It was deserved. First half we were clear and second half we were able to keep them away from our goal. "This is huge for us. We have the winning feeling back. For sure it is one of the most important wins we've had in the last three years. Everybody needed this belief back. It's massive for us."

Huddersfield almost halted their barren spell in spectacular fashion when Philip Billing's 30-yard thunderbolt struck the crossbar in the 15th minute. Steve Mounie headed Aaron Mooy's cross tamely over soon

after and Alex Pritchard's brilliant effort from outside the area was expertly clawed away by Fulham goalkeeper Sergio Rico.

But Huddersfield's agonising wait for a goal at home was finally over in the 29th minute, making it 659 minutes in total. Chris Lowe crossed deep from the left and German centre-half Schindler saw his header deflect into the net off Fosu-Mensah. It was the 29th goal conceded this season by Fulham, who did not manage a single effort on target before the break, such was Huddersfield's whirlwind first-half performance.

Fulham boss Jokanovic sent on Kevin McDonald and Cyrus Christie for Luciano Vietto and Fosu-Mensah at the interval and the Londoners began the second half with more intent. Christie's cut-back was cleared behind by Hogg and Mooy headed away the corner.

The Terriers continued to harry and chase and Pritchard fired narrowly off target in the 68th minute. Substitute McDonald had been forced out of the action due to a knock but Fulham began to make a list of it.

Schindler blocked Aleksandar Mitrovic's shot and Andre Schuerle's effort was ruled out for an offside decision against the former in the 74th minute. Schuerle shot off target again, while Town substitute Isaac Mbenza also spurned two half chances when sent through on goal in the closing stages.

Town were not to be denied however—and the first top-flight meeting between the two sides since 1952 ended in their favour. — AFP



**HUDDERSFIELD:** Fulham's Serbian striker Aleksandar Mitrovic (L) vies with Huddersfield Town's Danish defender Mathias Jorgensen (R) during the English Premier League football match between Huddersfield Town and Fulham at the John Smith's stadium in Huddersfield, northern England on Monday. — AFP

## Bale under scrutiny again as Madrid feel the love for Vinicius

**MADRID:** "Bale es fantastico", Real Madrid's interim coach Santiago Solari said, but still took him off in the 71st minute against Real Valladolid on Saturday.

Madrid were drifting towards a 0-0 draw at their Santiago Bernabeu home and, searching for inspiration, it was Bale's number 11 that came up. He departed to whistles from the fans even if Solari, perhaps deliberately, spared him being replaced directly by Vinicius Junior.

Nevertheless, the 18-year-old came on two minutes later and made the difference, his shot deflecting in to give Madrid the lead. "Another day, Gareth will score," Solari said. "And everyone will celebrate."

But those quickest to criticise Bale are circling again ahead of the trip to Viktoria Plzen in the Champions League today. Support for Vinicius has been intense and Bale is seen as the one standing in the way. "Vinicius puts Bale in trouble," read the frontpage of AS on Monday.

One week into his still-temporary tenure at Real, Solari is confronting the familiar problem of how to get the best out of Bale, now the team's most potent threat. This season, free of both injury and Cristiano Ronaldo, he started well, posting four goals and two assists from his first six games.

But an adductor problem last month, combined with the team's crash under Julen Lopetegui, disrupted his rhythm. He has returned but is still not fully fit. His performances have lacked edge.

Still, the number of times Bale has been substituted has been a surprise, not least because his withdrawals have often come in the moments when Madrid should need him most. In his last nine matches, Bale has been



**MADRID:** File photo shows Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale heads the ball during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and Real Valladolid FC at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on November 3, 2018. — AFP

taken off seven times, five of those when his team were chasing a goal. Once, with the game at 0-0 against Atletico Madrid, he was replaced due to injury. The other four — while level with Athletic Bilbao and Valladolid, and trailing Barcelona and Alaves — the reasoning was less obvious.

Those calling for Vinicius to take Bale's spot perhaps overlook the Welshman's 24 goals in 41 appearances last season. Two of them won Real Madrid the Champions League final in May. Vinicius, signed from Flamengo for 45 million euros in the summer, is a pre-

cocious talent but he has fewer appearances for Real in his career than Bale has goals since August.

"Footballers cannot fight against what goes on around them," Solari said. "The media, the fans, they are excited about Vinicius and that is fantastic, but his virtues are as evident as his weaknesses and his age. He has had almost no time to mature."

If Solari believes the excitement around the teenager is worth harnessing, perhaps the Brazilian could slot into a front three alongside Bale, rather than instead of him. — AFP

## Embattled Bayern hunt Thiago replacement

**MUNICH:** Bayern Munich are struggling to fill the creative hole left by Thiago Alcantara's injury as they host AEK in the Champions League today trying to secure a last 16 berth with trouble brewing for head coach Niko Kovac.

Bayern can reach the knockout stages if they beat the Greek champions AEK at Munich's Allianz Arena and Benfica lose at Ajax in the other Group E match. However, Bayern have been struggling for creativity since Thiago tore ankle ligaments ten days ago and Joshua Kimmich, usually a right-back, has struggled to replace him in the central midfield role.

Kimmich lost 14 of his 16 challenges for the ball and several passes went astray in Saturday's lethargic 1-1 draw against Freiburg, which left Bayern third in the league table, four points behind leaders Borussia Dortmund.

Kovac has other central midfield options to replace Thiago against AEK in James Rodriguez, Renato Sanches or Leon Goretzka. However, bigger problems are brewing off the pitch with pundits warning Kovac is in danger of losing his dressing room.

"The coach is measured by results and not everyone is behind Niko

Kovac," ex-Bayern and Germany midfielder Lothar Matthaeus told Sky. German magazine Kicker on Monday claim senior players Thomas Mueller, Mats Hummels, Franck Ribery and Arjen Robben are all unhappy with Kovac's coachings style.

The main problem seems to be rotating Bayern's star-studded squad, leaving Mueller and Hummels discontented with their amount of playing time. Robben was left fuming after being taken off in Saturday's draw against Freiburg, the eighth time he has been taken off in 13 matches this season.

Bayern's attack is failing to fire and Kovac seems to be at a loss for words how to fix the problem.

"We lack the power to punch forward. We can't break through at the moment as defences are closing us down," he lamented. "Things also seem difficult in the middle."

"It's clear to me that from a playing perspective, this is not what we expected. "Everything is now being questioned (by the media) — which I can understand." League defeats to Hertha Berlin and Borussia Monchengladbach have seen Bayern take just 20 points from the first 10 league games—their worst haul since the 2010/11 season, when Dortmund won the title.

Kovac is clearly not the only senior figure feeling the heat. "Don't ask me such stupid questions," fumed director of sport Hasan Salihamidzic, who then stormed off when reporters asked if Kovac's job was safe if Bayern lose at Dortmund on Saturday. A win over AEK, with the bonus of a place in the last 16 would ease the pressure on Kovac before heading to Dortmund for Saturday's showdown. — AFP



Thiago Alcantara



### Matches on TV (Local Timings)

#### UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Valencia C.F v BSC Young Boys	20:55
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
CSKA Moscow v AS Roma	20:55
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Bayern Munich v AEK Athens	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 5	
SL Benfica v Ajax Amsterdam	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 4	
Juventus FC v Manchester United	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Manchester City v Shakhtar Donetsk	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Olympique Lyonnais v TSG 1899 Hoffenheim	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 6	
FC Viktoria Plzen v Real Madrid CF	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	

## Fernandinho the glue binding surging Man City together

**MANCHESTER:** Among a dazzling array of midfield options, it is the often unheralded Fernandinho who Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has relied on most in another stunning start to the season for the Premier League champions.

The Brazilian will face old club Shakhtar Donetsk on Wednesday as City seek to make amends from the only blip of their campaign so far, a shock 2-1 defeat to Lyon in their last Champions League home game.

If any reminder was needed over Guardiola's influence, he was banned from the touchline that night. Since his return, City have won nine and drawn one, a 0-0 stalemate away to Liverpool, of their last 10 games, scoring 29 goals and conceding just two in the process.

Although fulsome in his praise of the maturing centre-back pairing Aymeric Laporte and John Stones, Guardiola's defensive philosophy is dependent on a team effort to keep the ball as far away from City's goal as possible.

"Always we try to convince our players as far away the ball is from our goal, we are safe. It's much, much better. The moment the ball is around our box, anything can happen," said Guardiola this week.

"In 10 years I was always concerned, always focused, maybe more than any other thing, in defending well. "The only difference is we do it far away from our goal." Central to that philosophy is Fernandinho's ability to not just read the game and quickly regain possession, but also use the ball soundly as a springboard to City's attack.

"There is always a relation. When you attack good, you defend well. When you defend well and are solid, you attack better," added Guardiola. Despite turning 33 earlier this year, Fernandinho has started all of City's 14 Premier and Champions League matches this season, while the more creative talents of David Silva, Leroy Sane, Bernardo Silva and Raheem Sterling have had to live with Guardiola's rotation policy.

"Ferna would make any manager the happiest or luckiest in the world," said Guardiola ahead of City's 3-0 win in the Ukraine against Shakhtar two weeks ago.

"He is a joy to have as a player — he is very special. He will always be a special player for me to work alongside." Guardiola knows very well the dual demands of Fernandinho's role having won the European Cup in his days as a player in the same position for Barcelona.

Fernandinho received arguably the highest praise from his manager when he claimed even Guardiola the player couldn't force his way into the current City juggernaut given his form. — AFP

**25** Chinese break two world records on Day 2 of shooting competition

**26** Zimbabwe thrash Bangladesh for long-awaited Test win

**27** Huddersfield off bottom of Premier League after beating Fulham 1-0



## Murray scores 48 as Nuggets trip Celtics

Lowry scores 17 points, dishes out 11 assists



DENVER: Jamal Murray #27 and Paul Millsap #4 of the Denver Nuggets go for a rebound against the Boston Celtics on Monday at the Pepsi Center in Denver, Colorado. —AFP

**DENVER:** Jamal Murray scored a career-high 48 points to outshine Kyrie Irving, and the host Denver Nuggets rallied to beat the Boston Celtics 115-107 on Monday night. Murray missed a chance to become the first Denver player since Carmelo Anthony to score 50 or more points in a game. Anthony did it twice, the last time on Feb. 7, 2011, two weeks before he was traded to the New York Knicks. Murray, whose previous career high was 38 points, led the Nuggets to their fifth consecutive win and their ninth in 10 games to open the season. Irving finished with 31 and Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown had 15 each for the Celtics, who have lost two straight.

### WARRIORS 117, GRIZZLIES 101

Stephen Curry and Alfonzo McKinnie connected on 3-pointers in a 14-point Golden State run late in the third quarter that propelled the two-time defending champions to a victory over Memphis in Oakland, Calif. Klay Thompson scored a game-high 27 points for the Warriors, who won their eighth consecutive contest overall and sixth in a row at home despite losing Draymond Green in the second quarter to a foot injury. Kevin Durant had 22 points, and Curry finished with 19. Marc Gasol flirted with a triple-double for the Grizzlies with eight points and game highs in rebounds (10) and assists (nine). Dillon Brooks had a team-high 18 points, while Jaren Jackson Jr. and Shelvin Mack scored 15 apiece for the Grizzlies.

### HEAT 120, PISTONS 115 (OT)

Josh Richardson had 27 points, eight rebounds and four assists, and visiting Miami snapped a three-game losing streak with an overtime win against slumping Detroit. Goran Dragic contributed 21 points, seven rebounds and six assists for the Heat, while Dwyane Wade added 18 points. Andre Drummond powered for 25 points and 24 rebounds for Detroit, which lost its fifth straight. Wade moved into 30th place on the league's all-time scoring list during the first half, sur-

passing Clyde Drexler (22,195 points). Wade ended the night at 22,211.

### THUNDER 122, PELICANS 116

With star point guard Russell Westbrook out in the second half due to an ankle injury, Dennis Schroder scored nine consecutive Oklahoma City points in the fourth quarter in a win over visiting New Orleans. Schroder finished with a season-high 22 points off the bench — 16 in the second half — as the Thunder extended their winning streak to five after losing the season's first four games. It was New Orleans' sixth consecutive loss after a 4-0 start. Schroder got his chance for a big finish after Westbrook twisted his left ankle with 4:25 remaining in the third quarter. Westbrook rolled over and grabbed his left leg before slapping the floor in pain and frustration. Soon afterward, he went to the locker room, not putting any weight on the leg.

### BULLS 116, KNICKS 115 (2OT)

Zach LaVine's career-high 41st point, a free throw with 0.2 seconds left in the second overtime, snapped a tie and lifted visiting Chicago over New York. The Bulls snapped a four-game losing streak. The Knicks lost for the third time in four games. Antonio Blakeney had 17 points and Jabari Parker added 15 points for the Bulls, who received a double-double from Wendell Carter Jr. (11 points, 13 rebounds). Knicks reserve Enes Kanter had 23 points, 24 rebounds and seven assists—the first sub to produce a game of at least 20-20-5 since Charles Barkley on Nov. 28, 1986.

### RAPTORS 124, JAZZ 111

Kyle Lowry scored 17 points, dished out 11 assists and collected seven rebounds to lead Toronto past Utah in Salt Lake City. Three other Raptors players also scored 17 points—led by Serge Ibaka, who came off the bench to make all eight of his shot attempts before fouling out early in the fourth quarter. Alec

Burks led Utah with 22 points off the bench in his first game back after missing four games with a left hand chip fracture. Utah played without Donovan Mitchell (sprained ankle) for the second time in three games. Toronto played without Kawhi Leonard (jammed foot) for the second consecutive game.

### ROCKETS 98, PACERS 94

James Harden scored 28 points, but his lone block helped Houston secure its third consecutive win, beating Indiana at Indianapolis. Pacers guard Victor Oladipo scored eight points down the stretch, but Harden blocked an Oladipo shot with 28.8 seconds left and the Rockets leading 93-90. Harden later sealed the victory with two free throws with 5.4 seconds remaining. Harden and P.J. Tucker (nine points, five rebounds, two steals) each hit a late 3-pointer to offset the surge by Oladipo, who led Indiana with 28 points. Domantas Sabonis added 17 off the bench for the Pacers.

### MAGIC 102, CAVALIERS 100

Evan Fournier nailed a tiebreaking jump shot at the buzzer to give host Orlando an improbable home win after Cleveland turned the ball over twice in the final 20 seconds. The Cavaliers had a three-point lead with 18.7 seconds left, possession of the ball and the shot clock turned off, but Cedi Osman's bad pass was intercepted by D.J. Augustin, who was fouled and made both free throws. Two seconds later, Kyle Korver turned the ball over, and Fournier made one of two free throws to tie the score after he was fouled at the basket with 13 seconds to go. Nikola Vucevic blocked a shot by Cleveland's George Hill with 2.2 seconds left, setting up Fournier's winner.

### CLIPPERS 120, TIMBERWOLVES 109

Tobias Harris and Danilo Gallinari scored 22 points each and Lou Williams added 20 off the bench as Los Angeles held off a late run from visiting Minnesota.

Derrick Rose scored 21 points for Minnesota in his second start of the season. In his first start last week against the Utah Jazz, the former MVP had a career-high 50 points. Karl-Anthony Towns scored 20 points for the Timberwolves, but just seven after the first quarter. However, he grabbed a game-high 12 rebounds. Minnesota's Jimmy Butler also had 20 points, 16 of which came in the fourth quarter. — Reuters

## India thrash West Indies by 71 runs to clinch T20 series

**LUCKNOW:** Skipper Rohit Sharma smashed a record century to help India beat West Indies by 71 runs in the second Twenty20 international and clinch the series in Lucknow yesterday. Chasing a mammoth 193 for victory, the tourists faltered after losing their openers early to end on 124-9. India took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

Fast bowlers Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Khaleel Ahmed and Jasprit Bumrah along with spinner Kuldeep Yadav took two wickets each. Earlier Sharma hit 111 off 61 deliveries to guide India to 192-2 after being invited to bat first. It was the openers' fourth Test ton—the most by any batsman in the shortest format.

It has been a complete domination by India after they swept the Test series 2-0 and then won the one-day internationals 3-1. The third T20 is scheduled in Chennai on Sunday. —AFP