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28 Williams sparks Clippers over Warriors in overtime upset



All schools, public bodies shut as heavy rain forecast

Govt forms fact-finding committee • Oil minister forced to submit probe report

Call to scrap 10-year-old cars rejected

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The ministerial services committee rejected a proposal from the traffic council that called for banning 10-year-old cars from the road, and preferred to wait because the time is "not suitable". Sources said the proposal is one of several presented to the council to deal with the traffic crisis and reduce traffic congestion.

They said the Environment Public Authority presented the proposal to make the air cleaner from emissions produced by old cars, adding that it expects cars in Kuwait's climate to perform well for no more than seven years, because high temperatures do not allow cars to remain in good condition long enough.

Sources said EPA believes vehicular emissions affect the environment, and this is why it wanted to participate in the technical inspection of vehicles to ensure that cars do not have noxious emissions. But the ministerial services committee believes implementing this proposal will constitute a financial burden on citizens and expats.

Amir, Abbas hold official talks



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his accompanying delegation, and official talks were held between the two sides. Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah said that the talks dealt with bilateral

relations and means of boosting them in various fields and expanding cooperation frameworks between the two countries in a way that serves their common interests. The talks were held in a cordial atmosphere amid keenness of both sides to bolster cooperation and coordination at all levels, he added. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The government yesterday decided to suspend work at all ministries, state institutions, universities and public and private schools today as a precautionary measure. The step was taken in line with forecasts by local and global meteorologists that the country will witness unstable weather conditions in the coming hours.

Forecasts indicate heavy downpours and active winds with high speed, the Cabinet said on its Twitter account yesterday. It added the precautionary move was taken to ensure the safety of both citizens and expatriates. The Cabinet appealed to all people to be cautious and follow instructions and guidelines issued by official bodies and Kuwait TV in this matter. It prayed to Allah to protect the country and people from any risks. For its part, the Civil Service Commission announced today will be a day off, in line with the Cabinet's decision.

Earlier yesterday, Minister of Public Works Hussam Al-Roumi told the National Assembly that the government has launched a fact-finding investigation into the heavy rains that lashed the country during the past two weeks. The committee, which has independent representatives, has been given complete authority to carry out its investigation on the results of flooding that caused severe devastation in several areas of the country.

The announcement came during a special debate called by MPs over what they allege is a government failure to face the heavy rains and their impact. But the debate could not be completed as the Assembly could not extend the duration of the session because of a lack of quorum.

Continued on Page 24

Gulf economy recovering, but faces oil volatility: IMF

DUBAI: Economic growth in the energy-rich Gulf will recover in 2018 from a contraction last year but remains vulnerable to volatility in crude oil prices, the IMF said yesterday. The global lender predicted that an overall energy price recovery from 2015-2016 lows would spur the economies of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council to grow by 2.4 percent in 2018 and 3.0 percent in 2019, after a contraction of 0.4 percent last year.

Grouping Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the GCC states together pump over 17 million barrels per day and depend heavily on crude revenues. But "the growth outlook for oil exporters remains subject to significant uncertainty about the future path of oil prices," the IMF said in its Regional Economic Outlook for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

After their earlier extended recovery, oil prices have shed a fifth of their value in just one month, with Brent crude trading Tuesday at under \$70 a barrel for the first time since April.

Continued on Page 24

Al-Kharafi empowers women at Zain

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa hosted its second annual Women Empowerment forum at the Four Seasons Hotel, Kuwait on Monday, gathering 300 female participants from across the group, including CEOs of each Zain operation and their respective human resources heads. The initiative is the brainchild of Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi, who delivered informative keynote addresses on leadership development as well as holding discussions with the participants.

Reaffirming his personal commitment to women empowerment within Zain, Kharafi made two significant 'regional first' announcements - one being the application of flexible hours for working mothers with children up to kindergarten age, and two, the creation of a new position and appointment of Maryam Saif as Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer (CIDO) to drive new empowerment initiatives that define, enhance and continue to cultivate an environment



KUWAIT: Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi delivers the keynote address during the annual Women Empowerment Forum on Monday.

of inclusiveness and equal opportunities in which Zain personnel across all operations may work productively and thrive.

Commenting on the second annual forum and the progress to date, Kharafi said: "We are confident that implementing a series of targeted women empowerment initiatives through awareness, realization and motivation will result in

both the development of more future female leaders and in more females joining the company. I firmly believe that championing gender diversity at Zain will create competitive differentiation, fast-track our strategic ambitions of unlocking the tremendous growth opportunities in the digital arena and at the same time improve the company's bottom line." (See Page 11)

Fewer foreign students coming to United States

WASHINGTON: The number of international students entering US colleges and universities has fallen for the second year in a row, a nonprofit group said yesterday, amid efforts by the Trump administration to tighten restrictions on foreigners studying in the United States. New enrollments for the 2017-18 school year slumped 6.6 percent compared with the previous year, according to an annual survey released by the Institute of International Education. That follows a 3.3 percent decline in new international students tallied in the 2016-17 academic year.

Several factors are driving the decrease. Visa and immigration policy changes by the Trump administration have deterred some international students from enrolling, college administrators and immigration analysts said. A strong dollar has made US college tuition relatively more expensive, Canadian and European universities are competing fiercely for the same students and headlines about mass shootings also may have deterred some students, said Allan Goodman, president of IIE.

"Everything matters from safety, to cost, to perhaps perceptions of visa policy," Goodman said. "We're not hearing that students feel they can't come here. We're hearing that they have choices. We're hearing that there's competition from other countries."

Continued on Page 24

Hamas announces truce with Israel; Kuwait requests UNSC meeting

GAZA CITY: Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip announced an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire with Israel yesterday after a severe escalation of violence threatened to descend into full-blown war. The groups, including Hamas, issued a joint statement saying they would abide by the ceasefire as long as Israel did the same. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office and the military had not commented on the announcement. Israel's hardline defense minister, Avigdor Lieberman, issued a statement saying he did not support stopping the strikes.

Kuwait and Bolivia yesterday requested an urgent meeting of the UN Security

Council to discuss the escalation of violence. Kuwait, which represents Arab countries at the council, and Bolivia asked that the closed-door meeting be held later yesterday, diplomats said.

"Egypt's efforts have been able to achieve a ceasefire between the resistance and the Zionist enemy," the statement by the Gaza groups said. "The resistance will respect this declaration as long as the Zionist enemy respects it." The violent escalation between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza was the worst since a 2014 war. Seven Palestinians were killed in Gaza over the course of some 24 hours as Israeli strikes targeted militants and flattened buildings while sending fireballs and plumes of smoke into the sky.

Sirens wailed in southern Israel and tens of thousands of residents had taken cover in shelters as around 460 rockets and mortar rounds were fired from the Gaza Strip, wounding 27 people, including three severely. A Palestinian laborer from the occupied West Bank was killed when a rocket hit a building in the Israeli city of Ashkelon. Schools were closed in the Gaza Strip and in southern Israel

as both sides warned the other that it would respond forcefully to any further violence.

Egypt has negotiated ceasefires following previous flare-ups, while UN Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladenov has also been seeking a long-term truce between the two sides in recent weeks. Mladenov had earlier called the escalation "extremely dangerous" and said on Twitter that "restraint must be shown by all". After an Israeli security cabinet meeting that reportedly lasted some six hours yesterday, a statement was issued saying the ministers "instructed the (military) to continue its operations as necessary". Netanyahu had cut short a visit to Paris as tensions rose and arrived back home on Monday.

The latest round of violence began on Sunday with a botched Israeli special forces operation inside the Gaza Strip that turned deadly and prompted Hamas to vow revenge. The clash that resulted from the blown covert operation killed seven Palestinian militants, including a local Hamas military commander, as well as an Israeli army officer. Palestinian militants responded with rocket and mortar

Continued on Page 24



HEBRON: Palestinian protesters hold anti-Israeli signs and wave national flags yesterday during a demonstration in this West Bank town against the Israeli air strikes on Gaza. — AFP

Local

Palestinian leader grants Crown Prince highest merit

Speaker, Prime Minister, other officials also decorated



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and members of the Palestinian delegation at Bayan Palace yesterday. — Amiri Diwan photos



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas grants National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem the Grand Collar of the State of Palestine.



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas grants His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah the Grand Collar of the State of Palestine.



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas grants Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah Palestine's Star of Jerusalem.



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas grants Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah the Star of Jerusalem.

KUWAIT: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas decorated His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with Palestine's highest merit of honor at Bayan Palace yesterday. The Palestinian leader also granted National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah the Grand Collar of the State of Palestine. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah was also decorated with Palestine's Star of Jerusalem. Undersecretary of the

Amiri Diwan and Director of His Highness the Amir's Office Ahmad Al-Fahad, Chief of the Amiri Protocols Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah and Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah were also awarded the Star of Jerusalem.

President Abbas had arrived in Kuwait on Monday for official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Upon arrival, the Palestinian President was received by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and President of the Honorary

Mission Amiri Diwan Advisor Ali Fahad Al-Rashed. President Abbas met with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday, and also attended a luncheon banquet His Highness held in his honor at Bayan Palace. President Abbas also received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Speaker Ghanem and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled at his residence at Bayan Palace. President Abbas concluded his visit to Kuwait later yesterday, and was seen off at the airport by Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Crown Prince back home



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has returned home following yesterday a private visit. His Highness the Crown Prince was received at the air-

port by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and several other senior state officials. — KUNA

Italian Week 2018 kicks off next week

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Italian Embassy in Kuwait announced yesterday the Italian Week 2018 will be held on Nov 18-25 to showcase Italian brands and celebrate the friendship between Kuwait and Italy. Italian Ambassador to Kuwait Giuseppe Scognamiglio said in a press conference yesterday that Kuwaitis love Italy and its products. "The success of the two previous editions of Italian Week in 2016 and 2017 led us to repeat and consolidate this important initiative. We especially intend to present to our Kuwaiti friends a rich variety of events, ranging from music to art and design, from fashion to gastronomy, from technology and the promotion of 'Made by Italy' to the wonders of our advanced industries, and from



KUWAIT: Italian Ambassador Giuseppe Scognamiglio speaks during a press conference yesterday.

science to language and culture. We also wish to expand their knowledge of Italy and its distinctions," he said. Activities aim to display the mul-

tifaceted Italian culture, lifestyle, extraordinary taste and industry, and celebrate the countries' strong friendship and excellent relations while exploring the many ways to make them more colorful. To start the event, the Italian air force acrobatic team Frece Tricolori, the world's largest acrobatic formation, will showcase their skills. Three aerial displays will be held for two days on Nov 17 and 18 from 1:50 pm to 2:50 pm along Gulf Road between the Kuwait Towers and Green Island. Scognamiglio thanked Ali Al-Youha, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, as well as the staff of Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre and The Avenues mall, whose valuable collaboration was essential for the organization of Italian Week 2018.



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Italy to Kuwait Giuseppe Scognamiglio visited Kuwait Times recently and discussed matters of mutual concern with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan.



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Germany to Kuwait Karl Bergner, along with Deputy Head of Mission Rudiger Zettel, visited Kuwait Times and held discussions with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan that focused on issues of common interest. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Kuwait reiterates support to UNRWA

NEW YORK: Kuwait has reiterated its support to UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, in a bid to address short- age of funding following US decision to cease financing to the UN

agency, Mishari Al-Muzaini, First Secretary at Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the UN, told UN General Assembly's Fourth Committee that was discussing UNRWA on Monday night. He called on the international community to continue financial contributions to UNRWA to enable it continue services to the Palestinian refugees.

Muzaini, who thanked UNRWA workers for providing services in unsafe environments, said the UN agency has been offering help for over five million Palestinian

refugees for around 70 years. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East provides assistance and protection to Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. "I would like to reaffirm my country's historic and firm support of humanitarian causes, which is a major pillar of Kuwait's foreign policy, and reiterate our support to the UN agency specially in this critical time," said Muzaini. — KUNA

Cabinet reviews preparations to face expected heavy rains

Minister calls for forming fact-finding committee to identify deficiencies

KUWAIT: The cabinet went over the implementations of plans and preparations to face the consequences of heavy rains which are expected starting today, as the Minister of Public Works and Minister of State of Municipal Affairs Hossam Al-Roumi reviewed for the cabinet the efforts put forth to remove all obstacles that impede the flow of rainwater and causing the streets to flood, and so the works and efforts of the emergency teams were presented. This came during the cabinet's weekly meeting held at Seif Palace on Monday under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Response mechanisms have been placed across the country ahead of another anticipated spell of heavy rains today, a government committee tasked with addressing the natural threat has said. The recently-formed coordinative committee for rain emergencies was designed to ensure the safety of the lives of nationals and residents alike, Roumi said yesterday.

Meanwhile, Roumi called on the cabinet to form a fact-finding committee on all the effects and consequences of the rains and to identify deficiencies and faults of which official is responsible for, including representatives of the Department of Fatwa and Legislation, Kuwait University, the Institute of Scientific Research and the Kuwaiti Society of Engineers and the Kuwaiti Lawyers Association. He asked that the committee submit its reports to the cabinet within two weeks.

The cabinet praised efforts of the employees of the Defense Ministry, Ministry of Interior, National Guard, Ministry of Public Works, General Authority for Roads and Land Transport, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Information, General Directorate of Firefighting, Kuwait's Municipality, and various competent authori-

ties. The decisive role of citizens in assisting the security services was much appreciated, as it reflects the high spirits of the people and they wished safety and well-being of the citizens under these conditions, and the cabinet has appointed a committee comprising representatives of the Fatwa and Legislation Department, Ministry of Finance, the Federation of Insurance Companies and other concerned authorities to prepare the appropriate for those affected. The cabinet also decided to pay legal fees under sharia law to the family of the late Ahmad Al-Fadhli who died during the heavy rainfalls last week.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Oil and Minister of Water and Electricity Bakheet Al-Rasheedi went over the successful tasks of the oil sector which was the first to export its first shipment of high quality light oil under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to be engrained as a significant step in the oil sector. This production is due to the development of the Jurassic gas fields in northern Kuwait, where the production capacity of the Jurassic gas amounted to 500 million cubic feet per day and about 175 thousand barrels per day of light oil.

Iraqi President's visit

After the meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh reviewed what was discussed during the meeting. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah noted his works of the Iraqi President Barham Saleh's visit and the delegation accompanying him, which resulted with a very positive outcome, as His Highness the Amir also held talks with Saleh dealing with ongoing bilateral relations between



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

the countries and ways of strengthening and developing them in all fields to better serve the interest of both sides. The cabinet then welcomed the visit of the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the delegation accompanying him, which comes as part of the close relations between the two nations. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah presented an explanation to the cabinet on the result of the recent envoy of the President of the Republic of Niger, which consist of assessments of bilateral relations and how to improve them on all levels and fields along with discussions on recent developments of the political events.

Political issues

The cabinet also discussed political issues focusing on current developments in the political arena at the

Arab and international levels, and in this regard, the cabinet expressed condolences for the victims of the flash floods that occurred in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which resulted in many victims and missing. Deep sympathy was offered to King Abdullah II of Jordan and the families victims. The cabinet also offered strong condemnation for the bombing in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, as well as the attacks in the Somali capital Mogadishu that resulted in the deaths and injury of tens of incnet people. The cabinet assured Kuwait's position against these acts of aggression and terrorism in all its forms and stressed the importance of combined efforts of the international community in facing such actions. The cabinet also expressed sorrow and sympathy for the recent forest fire in the State of California, which resulted in the dozens of fatalities and injuries. — KUNA



Response efforts readied nationwide

Shelters provided around Kuwait in case of flooding

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate		
	School's name	Address
1	Sabah Al-Salem High School for Boys	Sabah Al-Salem – Block 6
2	Sulaiman Al-Adasani High School for Boys	Al-Qusour – Block 3
3	Tulaitela High School for Girls	Al-Qurain – Block 5 – opposite to the co-op society
4	Layla Al-Ghafariya High School for Girls	Mubarak Al-Kabeer – Block 4 – Street 252
5	Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah High School for Boys	Al-Adan – Block 3 – Street 101

Al-Ahmadi Governorate		
	School's name	Address
1	Abdullah Al-Ahmad High School for Boys	Jaber Al-Ali – Block 3 - opposite to the co-op society
2	Al-Sabahiya High School for Boys	Al-Sabahiya – Block 5
3	Fatima bint Asad High School for Girls	Al-Ahmadi – Block 2
4	Hadiya High School for Girls	Hadiya – Block 3 – opposite to the social development center
5	Ahmad Al-Farisi Middle School for Boys	Al-Fintas – Block 3 – area center
6	Abdurrahman Al-Dakheel Elementary School for Boys	Ali Sabah Al-Salem – Block 1 – Street 152
7	Abu Hulaifa Elementary School for Girls	Abu Hulaifa – Block 1 – Kaab bin Zuhair Street
8	Al-Fahaheel Elementary School for Girls	Al-Fahaheel – Block 10 – Behind Al-Daboos Diwaniya
9	Essa Abdullah Al-Houli High School for Boys	Egailah – Block 3 – Mohammad Al-Barrak Street
10	Talha bin Obaid High School for Boys	Sabah Al-Ahmad City – Block 5A
11	Balat Al-Shuhada High School for Boys	Fahad Al-Ahmad – Block 1

Al-Asima (Capital) Governorate		
	School's name	Address
1	Ahmad Shehabuddine High School for Boys	Al-Doha – end of the coastal road
2	Qurtuba High School for Girls	Qurtiba – area center
3	Al-Faiha Middle School for Girls	Al-Faiha – area center
4	Al-Shaya Elementary School for Boys	Al-Shamiya – Block 1 – area center
5	Al-Mulla Suleiman Al-Khanini Elementary School for Boys	Al-Khaldiya – Block 3 – opposite to the co-op society
6	Essa Al-Hamad High School for Boys	Al-Qadsiya – Block 5 – near the co-op society
7	Al-Ahmadiya Elementary School for Boys	Al-Mansouriya – Block 2 – near the co-op society
8	Uqab Al-Khateeb High School for Boys	Jaber Al-Ahmad – Block 2 – near the co-op society
9	Um Habeeb bint Al-Aas Al-Qurashiya High School for Girls	North West Sulaibikhat – Block 1 – Qusai bin Kalab Street
10	Saad bin Al-Rabie Al-Ansari High School for Boys	Al-Qairawan – Block 2 – Street 100

Hawally Governorate		
	School's name	Address
1	Al-Jabriya High School for Girls	Al-Jabriya – Block 3
2	Mulla Hussein Al-Kandari Middle School for Boys	Al-Rumaithiya – Block 2
3	Salah Shehab High School for Boys	Meshref – Block 2 – area center
4	Abu Ayoub Al-Ansari Middle School for Boys	Al-Salmiya – Block 12 – Abu Huraira Street
5	Umra bint Masoud Elementary School for Girls	Al-Salmiya – Block 5 – Hamad Al-Khaled Street
6	Ahmad Al-Rabie High School for Boys	Al-Salam – Block 5
7	Khaleda bint Al-Aswad High School for Girls	Salwa – Block 4
8	Ali bin Abi Taleb Elementary School for Boys	Al-Shaab – Block 6 – Musaab bin Omair Street
9	Jassem Mohammad Al-Ibrahim Elementary School for Boys	Hawally – Block 1 – Beirut Street
10	Houma Elementary School for Girls	Al-Zahra – Block 2 – Street 203
11	Al-Rajaa Middle/High School for Boys	Hawally – Block 5 – Al-Mutasem Street

Al-Jahra Governorate		
	School's name	Address
1	Yousuf Al-Athbi Al-Sabah High School for Boys	Al-Qasr – Block 3
2	Al-Nawar bint Malek High School for Girls	Al-Waha – Block 2
3	Zainab bint Mohammad High School for Girls	Al-Oyoun – Governorate Street
4	Khaled bin Saeed High School for Boys	Taima – Block 6
5	Fatima bint Otba High School for Girls	Al-Sulaibiya – Block 10 – Al-Hajaj bin Yousuf Al-Thaqafi Street
6	Raita bint Al-Hareth High School for Girls	Saad Al-Abdullah – Block 3 – opposite to the Sixth Ring Road

Farwaniya Governorate		
	School's name	Address
1	Mershed Al-Bathal High School for Boys	Al-Rihab – Jordan Street
2	Saleh Al-Ruwaieh Middle School for Boys	Al-Ardiya – Street 5
3	Anas bin Malek High School for Boys	Khaitan – Police Station's Street
4	Al-Farwaniya Elementary School for Boys	Al-Farwaniya – Block 1 – near the educational zone
5	Jleeb Al-Shuyiukh High School for Boys	Jleeb Al-Shuyiukh – Block 4 – near the buses' complex
6	Khawla bint Hakeem Middle School for Girls	Abdullah Al-Mubarak – Block 7 – opposite to the polyclinic

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City skyscrapers pictured at sunset yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

New medications can help tackle spread of diabetes: Kuwaiti doctors

Kuwait ranked second over number of diabetic patients

KUWAIT: Health officials and specialists in Kuwait yesterday hoped new medications help address wide-scale spread of the disease, affecting up to a staggering 19 percent of Kuwait's population, while asserting importance of preventive measures at early age. They warned against neglecting diabetes as around 441,000 people in Kuwait were diabetics in 2017.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) is keen on providing the latest medications for diabetes patients, and Kuwait has witnessed 'a boom' in treatment of the disease, MoH Assistant Undersecretary for Pharmaceutical and Food Supervision Dr Abdullah Al-Bader said. Speaking on occasion of World Diabetes Day, which is due today, Bader said MoH approved new biological medicine as well as drugs to be used once a week "thus preventing the patient from using daily injection." He explained "upgraded insulin were provided which can improve control of diabetes types I and II." Diabetes, said Bader, was a chronic disease thus MoH reduced price to offer efficient and affordable drugs.

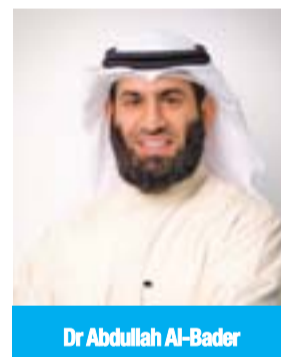
Dr Abdunnabi Al-Attar, head of Diabetes Unit at Amiri Hospital, said treatment of diabetes was a burden on the society and state. "The diabetic is qualified for

other associated diseases like heart attacks, strokes and kidney failure," said Attar who noted there were more than 400 million diabetics around the world. He commended health care for diabetics in Kuwait, and stressed importance of applying preventive measures.



**441,000
diabetic
patients in
Kuwait**

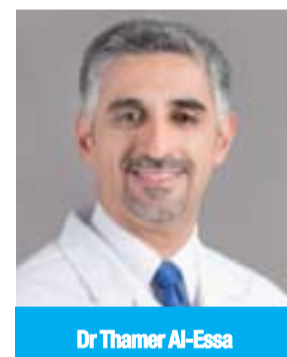
Attar, who said diabetes type II was the most common with an infection rate at around 60 percent, urged people to exercise as a form of prevention. Walking for 30 minutes every day, losing extra weight and eating fibre-rich food are forms of prevention, he said. Attar



Dr Abdullah Al-Bader



Dr Abdunnabi Al-Attar



Dr Thamer Al-Essa

Diabetes Federation pointed out that Kuwait was the world's second country, following Finland, with the number of diabetic patients. Diabetics in Kuwait, mostly type II, are between 20 and 79 years old, Essa said and attributed infection to family history, obesity, and high consumption of food with high carbohydrate and sugar levels. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are among the top 10 Middle

Eastern countries with diabetes, he said. Dr Yusuf Bu Abbas, head of Kuwait obese association, said more than 90 percent of type II diabetes was linked to overweight, affecting people between 15-20 years old and could have harmful impacts on kidneys, eyes, nerves and heart. The World Diabetes Day marks the birthday of Frederick Banting, whose work with Charles Best led to the discovery of insulin in 1921. — KUNA

Dr Aba' Al-Aziri, Executive Director of Medical Sector at Dasman Diabetes Institute, said joint studies with the World Health Organization (WHO) showed diabetes were spreading among age group 18-69 years. She noted that studies showed people should change their life style in order to either treat or manage diabetes. Endocrinologist Dr Thamer Al-Essa said a 2017 study by the International

KIB hosts German Clinic team for employees' check-up

KUWAIT: On the occasion of World Diabetes Day, which is observed around the world on November 14, KIB hosted a team from Salmiya German Medical Laboratory at its head office. During its visit, the team conducted a number of medical examinations for all KIB employees, including diabetes tests, blood pressure check-ups, and additionally offered medical advice and health tips to reduce the risk of diabetes.

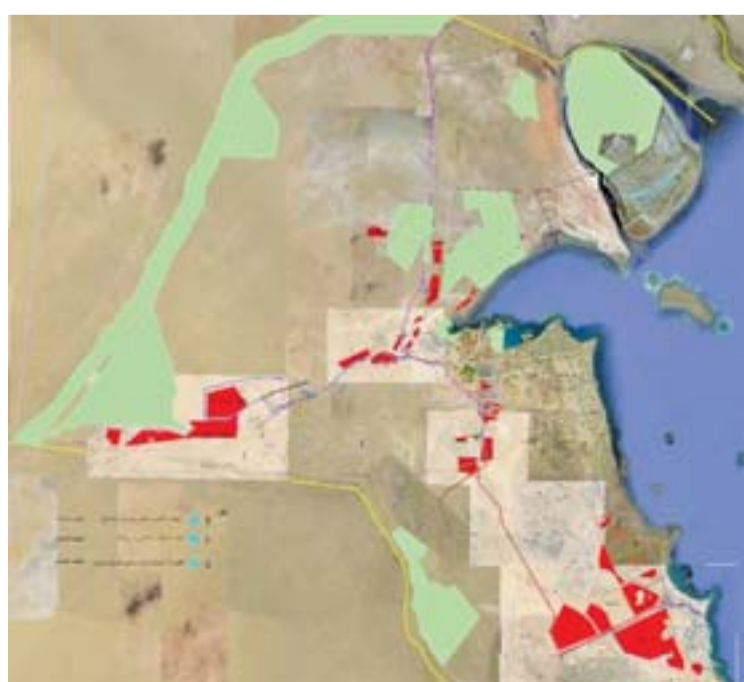
On this occasion, KIB noted that this initiative came as part of its ongoing commitment to supporting its human capital. The bank also lauded its staff's active interest in this important initiative. Accordingly, KIB continues to organize a range of different activities and initiatives that aim at promoting health awareness, healthy habits, and an overall healthy lifestyle for its employees.

This initiative came as part of a long series of activities organized by KIB, aiming at supporting impactful initiatives. For this reason, the bank continues to organize and participate in a number of initiatives that are either community-based, entertaining, or aim at promoting awareness. By doing so, the bank focuses on the importance of human resources, driving organizational results by raising their morale and motivating them to achieve more success.

Municipality sets 18 camping locations of 616 square km

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality announced 18 locations of 616 square kilometers north, west and south of the country for the camping season, which starts tomorrow.

The municipality had also set three locations for public services and security checkpoints around the camping areas, the municipality's Public Relations Director and Spokesman Abdulmohsen Aba-Alkheil said in a statement yesterday. He added that the municipality's official website is now open for filling request forms for camping permits and for paying insurance to receive the permits. Meanwhile, he said that those who want to request a permit must be 21 years of age and above, and are required to pay KD 50 for the permit and KD 300 as temporary insurance money. Each camping permit is for no more than 1,000 meters of land, the director noted. — KUNA



KUWAIT: A map showing the designated camping locations in red. — KUNA

Gulf Bank concludes cybersecurity seminar for bank leadership

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank concluded an intensive cybersecurity workshop involving Gulf Bank's leadership team and Board. The initiative came about as the result of Central Bank's guidelines: ensuring banks are ahead of challenges and changes happening within the digital space that could have an impact on the banking sector and its adequate functioning.

The training saw cybersecurity expert Andrew Beckett, Managing Director and EMEA Practice Head Cyber Risk, Kroll, guide Gulf Bank's leaders through a cybersecurity landscape journey, highlighting practical examples on how this new challenge has affected banks across the world. The emphasis of the training revolved around key steps that all banks in the digital era need to take into consideration. The steps were created to ensure that data integrity and transactions are safe and secure. The training also included regional and global case studies.

Commenting on the importance of protecting the Bank's data and its customer's information, Gulf Bank's General Manager, Human Resources Salma Al-Hajjaj stated, "We at Gulf Bank take Cyber Risk very seriously. This challenge is something that we are addressing effectively to ensure that our data integrity and client transaction are safe from any malicious attempts."



Salma Al-Hajjaj

Local

Handing back Kuwaiti archives step forward: Iraqi official

Looted items returned in ceremony at Diplomatic Institute



KUWAIT: Iraqi Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Hazem Al-Youssefi (center) attends a ceremony held yesterday at Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute to celebrate handing back state TV and radio archives to Kuwait. —KUNA



Items looted from the Kuwaiti national archives during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, are seen after being returned to Kuwait.

KUWAIT: Handing back state TV and radio archives to Kuwait comes as a step within Iraq's determination to make amends and fully restore relations with Kuwait on the backdrop of the 1990 invasion and occupation, an Iraqi senior diplomat said yesterday. Iraq is keen to build bilateral relations with neighborly Kuwait on a sound foundation in lieu of the relationship to return even better, said Iraqi Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Hazem Al-Youssefi. He made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony held yesterday at Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute to celebrate the archives handing in.

Having newly-elected President Barham Saleh make Kuwait his first destination for an official visit abroad is proof that good relations with Kuwait is in the heart of Iraq's political interests, noted Youssefi, adding that handing back the archives also comes in line with relevant Security Council resolutions. It came "after efforts were exerted, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2107," added the official. Iraqi forces looted Kuwaiti national archives, including those of TV and Radio, during the seven-month occupation of Kuwait in 1990-91. Nasser Al-Hayyen, Assistant Foreign

Minister for International Organizations, said meanwhile that Kuwaiti POWs and the missing during the invasion is the most important issue for Kuwait. "We see the fate of the 369 missing as a pressing issue. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will spare no effort in this regard," he stressed. However, UNDP Resident Representative and Coordinator in Kuwait Dr Tarek El-Sheikh said that such positive step; which Kuwaiti and Iraqi foreign ministries deserve praise for, manifests determination of both countries to turn a new leaf and carry on with the best of neighborly conduct. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Greg Marsden speaks to visitors of his photo gallery at the Memorial Museum in Al-Shaheed Park. — Photos by Ben Garcia

'Toy camera' captures historic events of 1990-1991 Gulf War

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The Memorial Museum at Al-Shaheed Park is displaying photographs by Greg Marsden taken during the 1990-1991 Gulf War. Marsden, a former US military man who also served as a temporary policeman during the transition period, used his 'toy camera' to capture historic events of that time. "I was not expecting these photographs to end up here at the exhibition hall of the memorial museum. These photographs were kept in my house for many years, until I meet a guy from Kuwait recently," he said. "I was just assisting a friend at a Sydney photo exhibit when I met Saad Al-Sarrah, a young Kuwaiti who encouraged me to display my photos in Kuwait. I had casually told him about my war photographs. They were not even displayed in that expo. But I agreed to the idea to display my photos because I haven't returned to Kuwait since I returned to America, and later settled in Australia because I married an Australian," Marsden said.

He said the old photos were kept for many years in his cabinet. "The camera I had used was almost a toy camera. I had received it along with a bunch of letters sent to us by schoolchildren from my state in the US. They were encouraged by the government to send letters of support and care packages to our soldiers, so I got that 'toy camera'.

When I returned home, I almost forgot that camera, because I retired from military service. I studied and eventually got a doctorate and an executive job. I remembered those photos when I met Saad in Australia. I searched for them among my things and I found them," he recalled.

Marsden was in his early 20s during the war. He came back on Thursday to Kuwait after 27 years. "What nostalgic moments when I see Kuwait now! The picture of Kuwait stuck in my head during 1991 was only of ruins and devastation brought by war. Now I see Kuwait as a very amazing place, and to come back here as a professional photographer is very emotional," he said.

Sarrah said Marsden's photographs are memories of war and it is worth the time checking them out and remembering the past. "When I met Marsden, I was amazed because he was narrating some of his experiences during his service in Kuwait. Then he told me about the photos. Of course, I told him to exhibit his photos in Kuwait because we all deserve to see those pictures. He agreed, and there you go. They will be displayed only for two days and some of them will be donated to the museum and others probably will be sold," said Sarrah, who served as the event organizer.

Sarrah was only five years of age during the Gulf War. An event planner at Al-Shaheed Park Museums said she was approached by Sarrah about the photo exhibit. "It was really timely and appropriate because the photos were about the war and we have a memorial museum dedicated for Gulf War POWs and heroes of war. The photos are all captured during those times, so we told him to display them at the memorial," she said. Marsden considers himself as professional photographer and has a street photography workshop scheduled in Kuwait on Nov16-17, before returning to Australia.



Council didn't request hiring expat advisors

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Municipal Council Osama Al-Otaibi denied reports that the council asked the Civil Service Commission to appoint eight expat advisors at the commission. He said the commission's request was for two Kuwaiti advisors, one with a PhD in law and the other with a PhD in media with experience, to help the council with the media. He said there are six secretaries and typists for council members who are expats because Kuwaiti youth do not accept "service help" contracts because of the low salaries.

Kuwait book fair slated for today

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Book Fair, due to open today and held under His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's patronage, is one of specialized cultural events in the region and Arab world, a Kuwaiti official said. The book fair, to be opened by Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri, features around 505 publishers, 35 government departments, nine organizations and 12 reading clubs, said Saad Al-Enezi, Director of the book fair. He added that the book fair, due until November 24, would be an opportunity for writers, intellectuals and cultural officials to meet under one roof. Enezi said book fair, which would include many events, would create an atmosphere of literature, culture and knowledge between publishers and readers, as well as advancing book industry to ultimately impacted tourism with hotels receiving more than 900 guests. —KUNA

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Democrats gain US Senate seat; Republican concedes

Shrinking Sea of Galilee has some hoping for miracle



Combo picture shows (left to right) a photo of Mohammed Hamroush, a 29-year-old member of the Syrian civil defense holding his smartphone as he poses for a picture in front of damaged buildings; Josael Romero, a Salvadorian member of Pueblo Sin Fronteras, standing for a portrait with his cellphone and solar panel charger; Italian cattle breeder Pier Domenico Dotta posing with his smartphone; Cesar Olmos, a 47-year-old house painter; Aicha Younoussa posing with a smartphone; Iraqi Shiite Muslim cleric Sayed Mohammed Al-Talqani; Dina Rasolofu in Antananarivo; Live streamer Qiao Xi, 21 posing for a photo with her smartphone at her agency studio Redu Media in Beijing and Guatemalan migrant, Maria Pineda, 18, heading in a caravan to the US. —AFP

Smartphones: A double-edged sword

A powerful weapon for terrorists

PARIS: Bombs and guns aside, a smartphone can be a powerful weapon in the hands of a terrorist—but it can also provide intelligence services with the tools to track them down. Three years ago to the day, the Paris attacks of November 13, 2015 remain one of the best known examples of a large-scale assault that could not have been planned without phones.

The Islamic State group gunmen and bombers who struck the Bataclan concert hall and other nightlife spots used them extensively to coordinate the carnage, said a former French anti-terrorist official, speaking on condition of anonymity. Just before entering the Bataclan, where they massacred 90 people, the attackers had sent a text message to accomplices in Belgium: “We’re going ahead. It’s started.” But if smartphones have been a “game-changer” for jihadists, their use by the world’s extremists goes much further back than the Paris attacks.

“As of 2003, in Iraq, home-made bombs started being set off by the sending of an

SMS as American convoys drove past. This caught on and was then repeatedly used by Al-Qaeda,” the ex-official told AFP. These days, encrypted apps such as Telegram, Wire and WhatsApp can help jihadists communicate while evading police tracking—or at least complicate efforts to decode their messages. For several years IS has published online tutorials in several languages explaining to jihadists how to choose the best software to evade detection in war zones.

For new recruits in developing countries, where smartphones are more common than computers, there are different strategies still. “Phones are no longer phones—they’re com-

puters,” said Laurent Heslault, director of security strategies at Symantec, a security group. “They are far more powerful than what we had on our desks 10 years ago,” he added. “They have more computing power, more memory and connection capabilities. They are very powerful tools when it comes to communicating.” That has also made it much easier for jihadist groups to recruit new members. Smartphones “enable people to reach out for propaganda” with the swipe of a screen, said the retired official. “Thirty years ago, guys used to exchange video cassettes, then it was CDs. Now it’s online and

can be looked up at any time.” For propaganda-makers, videos of attacks can be filmed and uploaded in the blink of an eye. “You can film attacks, claim responsibility, use (a phone) to take photos and film reconnaissance operations,” the ex-official said.

Flip side of the phone

But the smartphone can be an extremist’s downfall as well as their best asset. Intelligence agencies have grown better at using phones to identify suspects, spy on them—and, in case of capture, lift data for use as evidence in court. That in turn has raised difficult questions for tech giants who promise their users privacy. Most famously, Apple faced a court showdown with the FBI after agents sought access to the data of the attackers who killed 14 people in San Bernardino, California, in December 2015.

Investigators dropped the case after finding a way into the phone without help from Apple, which argued that helping authorities access a phone would set a dangerous

precedent. Further afield, governments have used phone data extensively to pinpoint extremist suspects. The French military intervention in Mali, launched in 2013 after jihadists took over the northern half of the country, started with air strikes whose targets were chosen based on phone data, the former French official said.

“Today all air strikes focus on telephones,” he added. “Even if you keep changing the SIM card the phone has its own identity and once detected can continue being tracked.” And when it comes to police investigations, smartphones sometimes provide more information than their owners. They might allow investigators to work their way back along an information trail, snare other members of a suspect’s network, and track sleeper cells, he added. “Smartphones make you a target,” the expert said. “Because of this jihadist leaders have learned to keep away from them. For the past few years, there’s been a marked return to using human envoys,” he added. —AFP

“Phones are no longer phones”

A global revolution

PARIS: At the sharp end of conflict in Syria, in a schoolchild’s bag in Kenya, whether fighting deadly diseases or studying forestry, the smartphone has become ubiquitous in just over a decade. This year, the number of users is expected to pass three billion, and AFP photographers have sampled how the phones have become a mainstay of lives around the world for people who cannot live without them. Take Moris Atwine, 25. The Ugandan entrepreneur helped to develop a mobile app to aid in the diagnosis of malaria, a worldwide killer, without the need for a blood sample, and transmit the result in seconds.

Qiao Xi, 21, describes her smartphone as her “boyfriend”. From an all-blue studio, the Beijing-based vlogger live-streams songs, dance moves and observations about her daily life to some 600,000 followers on the Huoshan channel. From the frivolous to the deadly serious, Mohammed Hamroush is a member of the “White Helmets” group, which rushes to help the wounded in rebel-held parts of Syria. Hamroush’s smartphone helps the volunteer to track bombardments, get to where help is needed, and allows his worried wife to know he’s safe. Inna Salminen works in far calmer conditions, using her smartphone to survey the forests of Finland, but knows too that the device can be a lifesaver if she gets lost in a remote area. The 27-year-old conservation expert speaks for a whole generation when she describes only having a “hazy memory” of life before smartphones. Aged 13, Imelda Mumbi has no such memory at all. The Kenyan schoolgirl uses her smartphone for fun, of course, but also to help her studies. Imelda counts on Eneza, an interactive educational app which has about three million users worldwide, plugging her corner of Africa into a global network that has grown from nothing in a few short years. —AFP

Smartphones are raising mentally fragile generation

SAN DIEGO: San Diego State University psychology professor Jean Twenge sees smartphones and social media as raising an unhappy, compliant “iGen.”

QUESTION: What is the iGen?

ANSWER: The iGen is the generation born in 1995 and later, and they’re the first generation to spend their entire adolescence in the age of the smartphone. They spend a lot more time online, on social media and playing games, and they spend less time on non-screen activities like reading books, sleeping or seeing their friends in face-to-face interactions. Those children are growing up more slowly. By the age of 18, they are less likely to have a driver’s license, to work in a paying job, to go out on dates, to drink alcohol or to go out without their parents compared

to teens in previous generations.

So iGen’s probably the safest generation in history and they like that idea of feeling safe. Yet, they also have the sense that they are missing out on something. They realize that being on the phone all the time is probably not the best way to live. They don’t like it when they’re talking to a friend and their friend is looking at their phone. Many of them have a recognition of the downsides of that type of living as well.

QUESTION: You have researched the behavior and health of millions of teenagers. What have you observed?

ANSWER: Around 2011 and 2012, I started to see more sudden changes to teens, like big increases of teens feeling lonely or left out, or that they could not do anything right, that their life was not useful, which are classic symptoms of depression. Depressive symptoms have climbed 60 percent in just five years, with rates of self-harm like cutting (themselves) that have doubled or even tripled in girls. Teen suicide has doubled in a few years.

Right at the time when smartphones became common, those mental health issues started to show up. That change in how teens spend their

time is so fundamental for mental health. We know, from decades of research, that getting enough sleep and seeing friends in person is a good recipe for mental health and that staring at a screen for many hours a day is not.

QUESTION: What advice would you give to parents?

ANSWER: Many of the things on which happiness and mental health depend are now under our control. We cannot change the genes we were born with and we are not going to solve poverty overnight, but we can control how we spend our leisure time and we can help our children do the same. The research points toward limiting digital media use to about two hours a day or less. That seems to be the sweet spot for mental health and happiness. So sure, use social media to stay in touch with friends, help plan things, and watch a little bit of video but keep it under that two-hour limit for 13- to 18-year-olds. Then you get all the benefits of social media and this technology without the big downside of it. If you feel your child needs a phone, say for getting back and forth to school, you can get them a “dumb” phone that does not have internet and all the temptations of a smartphone. —AFP



BELGIUM KING'S DAY



Words by H.E. Ambassador Piet Heirbaut

Dear Readers,

I want to thank the Kuwait Times for giving me the opportunity, on the occasion of King's Day, to present my country to you.

In 2017 and 2018 we witnessed a further strengthening of the bilateral relations between our two countries.

In 2018 Belgium was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the period 2019-2020. My country is looking forward to the close cooperation with Kuwait in the Security Council in 2019. Both our countries are staunch supporters of multilateral diplomacy and international dialogue.

2018 was also the year of a very successful world cup for the Belgian National Football team. The red devils took the Bronze Medal in Russia and I met many enthusiastic Kuwaiti supporters of the Belgian team during the summer time.

In September of this year we had the pleasure of welcoming many of you on the occasion of the Belgian week, which included a food festival, a musical concert and an exhibition on the Smurfs.

The celebration of King's Day is the perfect occasion to bring our countries and people even closer together and I am looking forward to continue working with you in the next coming years.

Yours truly,

Piet Heirbaut
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to the State of Kuwait.

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Website : [kuwait.diplomatie.belgium.be/en](#)



Belgium – Your partner in the center of the European Union

A Major logistics hub

Thanks to its location in the throbbing heart of Western Europe, Belgium offers easy access to millions upon millions of consumers. As a result, many international companies have chosen Belgium as their bridgehead for continental Europe and have benefited from two added assets, the country's excellent infrastructures and the high quality of its workforce.

Innovation, the Key of the success of the Belgian Economy

Since the days of the industrial revolution, in which Belgium played a pioneering role, the country has never ceased to innovate. Indeed innovation is the key to Belgium's future economic success in the traditional industrial sectors and in the new high tech industries. Belgium was in the top 3 of the "Innovation Indicator" – an innovation ranking of 35 countries. The list is based on a study conducted by the German Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research (ISI) and the Center for European Economic Research (ZEW).

Universities are without a doubt the main catalysts of fundamental and applied research in Belgium. For one thing, universities have a number of technology transfer offices (TTO's) which are responsible for completing the delicate transition of a given project from the laboratory to a start-up company. Every year Belgian universities are instrumental in setting up dozens of spin-offs, some of which go on to become big players in the global economy.

A showcase of Belgian Know-How is biopharma: around 4200 researchers work in the R&D laboratories of the Belgian Pharmaceutical industry. The companies and their employees benefit from a unique business environment that

has made Belgium the second-biggest exporter and the third biggest producer of medicines and vaccines in the European Union. Looking back over the last fifty years, Belgium has also been at the forefront when it comes to developing and applying information technologies and the Internet and promoting the digital revolution.

A high level education system

According to recent education reports of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Belgium has the third best education system amongst the 35 OECD countries. Thanks to outstanding teachers and a flexible education system, our country has scored considerably better than the world average.

This is also reflected in the performance of Belgian universities at the global level. Five Belgian Universities ranked in the top 250 in the World University Ranking 2018.



With thanks to SEEDIS General Trading and Contracting that has been Automatic Systems agent for more than 10 years and have installed security and movement control systems in Kuwait at Seif Palace, the United Nations House, Bayan Palace, The Arab Fund for Economic Development, Kuwait Finance House, American University of the Middle East (AUM), KNPC, etc...



International

Every breath you take: India capital's smog leaves children gasping for air

Delhi's well-off find ways to keep their kids away from smog

NEW DELHI: Deepa Tampi worries a lot about the air her two children breathe. The garment exporter says she believes her 14-year-old daughter Mahika and 12-year-old son Vihaan both became asthmatic because of high levels of pollution in the New Delhi area. She has banned them from playing outdoors, and has even moved their schools twice in four years so that they can use indoor sports facilities. When there is a toxic haze covering the Indian capital - as has been the case in recent days - she makes sure air purifiers are running at home and in the car, and when the kids do go outside they wear masks.

"Every year, we gasp through the winter months, armed with oral steroids, inhalers and nebulisers," she said. "I have robbed my children of a very simple pleasure in life - being outdoors. Mahika was an athlete and Vihaan loved playing football, but to protect their health, they had to trade these for indoor activities like table tennis and dance." The family paediatrician has suggested they leave the Delhi area because of the kids' asthma, Tampi said, and in the past they have even considered emigrating. But a big change like that is not easy when she is running a business and her husband is a partner at a law firm.

Medical bills

Tampi, who lives in Noda on the outskirts of the city, is in a small minority. She has the knowledge and, more importantly, the money, to reduce the impact of the toxic cocktail of pollution on her kids. That is not the case for most of New Delhi's population of more than 20 mil-

lion, many of whom are worried about where the next day's work or the next meal is coming from. Ravi Shankar Shukla, 35, who is employed as a chauffeur, says his 8-year-old son, who attends a government school in Noida, complains that his eyes smart and his nose gets blocked when pollution sets in, though he never wears a mask.

Rajesh Kumar, 37, who works as a contract employee with a catering firm, said his two children develop a cough from around mid-October, when the pollution levels rise, until the air quality improves in January. "We run up medical bills during this season," said Kumar, who has a 12-year-old son and a 9-year-old daughter. "The school has given masks, but generally kids don't like wearing them as they feel constricted. Besides, they also fear being ridiculed." Doctors say that many thousands of children are becoming victims of respiratory illnesses in Delhi and its suburbs. More than 10 percent of India's schoolchildren suffer from asthma, according to the federal government.

Pollution levels in the city rose to "severe" last Thursday, a day after revelers let off fireworks long into the night to mark the Hindu festival of Diwali. Two federal government pollution indexes showed air at "very poor" and "severe" levels, indicating that prolonged exposure could lead to respiratory illnesses. North Indian cities, including Delhi, top a list of places with the worst air in the world, the World Health Organization said earlier this year. "I am aware of paediatricians in my hospital doubling or trebling the number of the kids they are seeing with respiratory dis-

eases," said Arvind Kumar, a leading chest surgeon in New Delhi, and the co-founder of the Lung Care Foundation.

The foundation runs Breathe Easy Stay Tough (BEST) clubs in more than 30 schools across Delhi to train students and teachers to build awareness about air pollution, its causes and impact, and to provide tips on how to deal with asthma. Kumar says he hears from principals that most children have some kind of persistent cough these days. "Cough is the first symptom of irritation of your breathing tract. When it becomes more severe, then you start developing narrowing, which manifests as breathlessness and then you need a nebuliser," Kumar said. The federal government launched an asthma manual for schools in 11 languages last month after several incidents, including deaths, blamed on a lack of awareness of the illness.

Mala Kapoor, founder and principal of Silver Line Prestige School in Ghaziabad, on the eastern side of Delhi's national capital region, said roughly 10 percent of her students suffered breathing problems during the winter months. The 3,000-pupil school, established in 1989, jostles for air amidst smoke-spewing small-to-medium-sized factories, new high-rise residential buildings, a busy flyover and a rail track.

Kapoor said occasionally students have to be rushed to a nearby hospital if they are having major breathing problems. "This is an example of bad planning," Kapoor said, noting that the school was built before the factories. "I didn't land up in the mess, but the mess was created around me." — Reuters



NEW DELHI: Commuters travel along a highway amidst heavy smog on Monday. — AFP

British PM faces cabinet as Brexit deadline looms

LONDON: Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday faced her divided ministers as negotiators scrambled to secure a divorce agreement with the European Union and anxiety mounted over the risk of a no-deal Brexit. May said Monday her government was working "extremely hard" to save a deal, telling officials of London's financial district that negotiations "are now in the endgame".

A British government source said a deal must happen today if there is any hope of an extraordinary EU summit this month to sign a withdrawal agreement. May's de facto deputy David Lidington told BBC Radio's Today program yesterday that a deal was "not quite there yet" but was within "touching distance". Agreement was still to be reached on a "small number of difficult issues", he added, saying a deal before today was "still possible, but not at all definite".

May addressed City of London leaders on Monday, saying her negotiators were working "through the night" to make progress on the remaining issues. "I will not compromise on what people voted for in the referendum. This will not be an agreement at any cost," she added. But pro-Brexit ministers in the cabinet are worried that May is set to agree to the EU's demands over the key sticking point of the Irish border.

'Completely unacceptable'

At issue is how to avoid border checks between British Northern Ireland and EU member the Republic of Ireland after Brexit enters into force from March 29. London suggests Britain could temporarily stay aligned with the bloc's trade rules but wants to reserve the right to exit the arrangement. The EU appears only ready to accept that if there is a fallback option written into the withdrawal agreement in which Northern Ireland would remain in the European single market while the rest of Britain leaves.

Ministers are set to confront May during a meeting, warning that the EU's demands were "completely unacceptable", according to the Daily Telegraph. Former Brexit minister David Davis, now a strident critic of May's strategy, warned that the government "should be prepared to exit without a deal". Failure to strike a deal by today could push back the signing of any agreement until a regular EU summit on December 13, dramatically curtailing the time May will have to get the deal past a rebellious British parliament before Brexit day on March 29.

In parliament, May will have to satisfy both pro-Brexit and anti-Brexit wings of her party, as well as Northern Ireland's DUP party that props up her government. As a sign of the battles ahead, eurosceptics within her party are demanding in parliament that she lays out "the government's political and legal position" on the various Brexit scenarios. Labor is expected to go a step further and demand the publication of the full legal advice given to the government by attorney general Geoffrey Cox. The deal is meant to finalize Britain's exit bill of around £39 billion (45 billion euros, \$50 billion).

It must also guarantee citizens' rights and launch a 21-month transition during which London would follow EU rules. British and European negotiators will launch more ambitious talks during this transition period on a future trading and legal relationship. Britain will be forced to ramp up its plans for a no-deal Brexit if a deal is not struck this week. Amid the uncertainty, EU nationals appear to be voting with their feet. Official figures released yesterday revealed that the number of EU nationals working in Britain fell by 132,000 to 2.25 million, the largest annual fall since comparable records began in 1997. — AFP

Stigma, separation: The painful choice facing Myanmar's single mothers

THANLYIN: Eight months pregnant, shamed by her family and shunned by the father of her child, Aye Mar has accepted she will have to give up her baby to an orphanage in Myanmar, a country where single mothers are ostracized and deemed a "disgrace". For now, she is taking refuge in a house in a leafy suburban Yangon street, away from the disparaging eyes of her neighbours and the chastisement of her aunts, her only family. Her aunts were "furious" when the 19-year-old told them she had fallen in love with the water delivery boy and become pregnant. "They brought my boyfriend home and asked him to marry me. He said he would but then he ran off," she told AFP.

Her aunts ordered Aye Mar (not her real name) to give up the baby and brought her to the Myint Mo Myittar Single Mothers' Foundation, where she will give birth. "I want to take care of my baby but it is impossible," she said. She is one of more than 100 girls and women to pass through the doors of the centre, which provides a home for those in the last few months of their pregnancy and for 45 days after giving birth. One expectant mother is a 12-year-old rape victim, now six months pregnant. Radiologist Myat Sandar Thant set up the foundation two years ago, appalled by the suicide of a patient who could not face the shame of pregnancy.

Most women arrive intent on leaving their babies for her to hand over to the state-run orphanage system. But the majority end up taking their children home, small victories in the battle against conservative values, which place the weight of responsibility for unwanted pregnancies on women. "When they get here, they see other peo-



YANGON: An unmarried woman seeking refuge at the Myint Mo Myittar Single Mothers' Foundation in Yangon prepares her baby before handing the baby over to a government orphanage. — AFP

ple in the same situation as them and they start feeling better about themselves," she explains. Those who do relinquish their babies are usually forced to do so by their parents or other family members.

Illegal abortions

With only a handful of such organizations across Myanmar, many girls and women opt for illegal abortions. In the country of some 50 million, women's rights group IPAS estimates that 246,000 unsafe abortions are undertaken every year. Myanmar has the second-highest maternal death rate in the region. There are no official statistics on the number of unmarried mothers in a country where data records are patchy and delicate social issues are often swept under the carpet.

But 2014 census data suggests almost 50,000 15-19 year-olds give birth each year. An unplanned pregnancy can

be devastating for single women, who are often shunned by family and community, with little chance of support from the father. "In most communities, pregnant adolescent girls are told to drop out of school," says Yadanar, a youth program analyst at the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) who goes by one name. Family planning clinics are few-particularly in rural areas-or extremely limited in what they can offer. "The services need to be more welcoming to the youth, without any judgment, without stigma, without discrimination, keeping their confidentiality," Yadanar says.

Glimmers of hope

One in six women do not have access to the contraception they want, according to UNFPA. Although sex education is on the school curriculum teachers often ignore it, while many parents avoid 'The Talk' either out of embarrassment or a hope that silence offers protection. A group of tech entrepreneurs are hoping an app for young women, brimming with beauty tips, fashion-and information about reproductive health-might help educate and break down stigma in the country, where smartphone penetration was at 80 percent last year.

The prototype of "Pyo Pyo May", meaning "young lady", was well received during a trial last month in a Yangon park. "I just get sex education from Facebook," said 30-year-old Thazin Oo, too embarrassed to elaborate any further. There are some signs that attitudes in Myanmar are slowly changing. Pop star Athen Cho Swe chose to go public this year after secretly giving birth to a single mother in Bangkok.

She now posts updates for her fans, including a recent, self-filmed video of her playing with her baby girl. "I thought people would criticize me," she told local media in August. "But people love my daughter." Prospects are less rosy for babies born into poorer households. Doctor Myat Sandar Thant has the grim task of handing over unwanted babies born in her centre to a government-run Yangon orphanage. Myanmar's strict adoption regulations mean most infants here will spend their whole childhood in state care. "This is the best that is available in Myanmar," she says. "But the children lose their sparkling eyes." — AFP

Shrinking Sea of Galilee has some hoping for miracle

EIN GEV: It was not so long ago when swimmers at Ein Gev would lay out their towels in the grass at the edge of the Sea of Galilee. Today, they put up their parasols 100 metres further down, on a sandy beach that has appeared due to the shrinking of the iconic body of water. "Every time we come we feel an ache in our hearts," said Yael Lichi, 47, who has been visiting the famous lake with her family for 15 years. "The lake is a symbol in Israel. Whenever there is a drought, it is the first thing we talk about." In front of Lichi, wooden boats with Christian pilgrims aboard navigate the calm waters, among groups from across the world that visit.

The Sea of Galilee, where Christians believe Jesus walked on water, has been shrinking for years, mainly due to overuse, and environmentalists are raising the alarm. Plans are being devised to resuscitate the freshwater body known to Israelis as the Kinneret and to some as Lake Tiberias. For Israel, the lake is vital, having long been the country's main source of water. Israeli newspaper Haaretz provides its water level daily on its back page. Its shrinking has been a source of deep concern. When two islands appeared recently due to falling water levels, it received widespread attention in the Israeli media.

Since 2013 "we are below the low red line" beyond which "salinity rises, fish have difficulty surviving and vegetation is affected," said Amir Givati, hydrologist at Israel's water authority. The level is only around 20 centimetres (less than eight inches) above the record low plumbed in 2001 - except, at that time, 400 million cubic meters (14.1 billion cubic feet) a year were pumped out for irrigation. "This year, we only pumped 20 million cubic meters, but the lake is in a very bad state," said Givati. Added to that is the 50 million cubic meters Israel sends to neighboring Jordan as part of peace agreements.

'Valley of bananas'

Its unique characteristics go beyond its religious significance. It is 200 metres (650 feet) below sea level, located north of the Dead Sea, the River Jordan between them. Both the Dead Sea and the Jordan have also suffered from



EIN GEV: A fisherman returns to the port of Kibbutz Ein-gev, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where Christians believe Jesus walked on water, has been shrinking for years, mainly due to overuse, and environmentalists are raising the alarm. — AFP

overuse. The Galilee covers some 160 square kilometers (60 square miles), roughly the size of Liechtenstein.

At the water ministry, blame for its condition is placed on five years of drought. But "climatic factors alone are inadequate to explain the record shrinkage of the Sea of Galilee," wrote Michael Wine, Alon Rimmer and Jonathan Laronne, researchers at Israel's Ben Gurion University. Irrigated agriculture, pumping and diversions are the main culprits, they say in an analysis. Israel constructed a national aqueduct in the 1950s in the years after the country's birth, when it was on a quest for nation-building and sought to "make the desert bloom", as its early pioneers put it.

The aqueduct carried water from the lake towards the rest of the country. "Lake Tiberias was used as a national reservoir," said Julie Trotter, a professor who specialises in Israeli-Palestinian water issues. A man-made canal supplied water to the west towards the Mediterranean coast and into the Negev desert in the south, she said. That system has not been in place for some 10 years. Now, most homes in the west of the country use desalinated water from the Mediterranean, while farms are irrigated with water that is treated and recycled. But eastern Israel does

not have access to desalinated water, said Orit Skutelsky, of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

Farmers in the region rely on rivers that provide 90 percent of the lake's input. Dozens of pumps remove nearly 100 million cubic meters each year from those sources, whose flow has decreased and is no longer enough to supply the lake, says the researcher. Several kilometers from the beaches at Ein Gev, at the foot of rocky hills, immense nets cover banana trees whose leaves wilt with the surrounding dry vegetation. "We call it the valley of bananas," said Meir Barkan, tourism director for the Ein Gev resort. "When they began planting trees, there was no water problem and the banana is the only fruit that you harvest year-round."

But without desalinated or recycled water, the farms are a main player in the "competition for resources between nature, agriculture and tourism," said Eran Feitelson, geography professor at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. For Lior Avichai, agronomist at the Zemach Nisyonot research centre, the solution is not to "kill agriculture and the local economy," but to use less water. Authorities propose providing the region with desalinated water via the aqueduct. — AFP

International

Myanmar defiant as Amnesty pulls Aung San Suu Kyi award

The latest in a string of rescinded accolades

YANGON: Myanmar authorities and citizens leapt to the defense of Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday after Amnesty International stripped her of its top award over indifference to atrocities committed against Rohingya Muslims, doubling down on support for the civilian leader in the face of global ire. Suu Kyi's international reputation as a rights icon is in pieces and Amnesty's move is the latest in a string of rescinded accolades.

Canada revoked her honorary citizenship last month and the US Holocaust Museum in March took back an award named after concentration camp survivor Elie Wiesel. Institutions that once showered Suu Kyi with titles are rapidly distancing themselves from a leader they argue is doing little in the face of alleged genocide and ethnic cleansing against its Rohingya minority.

Amnesty's "Ambassador of Conscience Award" was bestowed in 2009 and other recipients include Nelson Mandela, Malala Yousafzai and Ai Wei Wei. "Today, we are profoundly dismayed that you no longer represent a symbol of hope, courage, and the undying defense of human rights," Amnesty International chief Kumi Naidoo said in a letter to Suu Kyi released by the group. "Amnesty International cannot justify your continued status as a recipient of the Ambassador of Conscience award and so with great sadness we are hereby withdrawing it from you."

But domestically, Suu Kyi remains popular across vast swathes of Myanmar and within her party, the National League for Democracy, which won elections in 2015 ending decades of military-backed rule. The stripping of awards not only harms the

immigrants from Bangladesh. Deputy Minister for Information Aung Hla Tun told AFP he was personally sad and disappointed by Amnesty's announcement and said Suu Kyi was being treated "unfairly". Such moves would only "make the people love her more", he added. People on the street in Yangon were defiant. "Their withdrawal is pretty childish. It's like when children aren't getting along with each other and take back their toys," 50-year-old Khin Maung Aye said. "We don't need their prize," said Htay Htay, 60.

More than 720,000 Rohingya were driven over the border to Bangladesh in a crackdown that started in August 2017, and refugees have detailed horrific testimony of murder, rape, torture and arson. The military says it was defending itself against Rohingya militants. UN investigators have called for top generals to be prosecuted for genocide and accused Suu Kyi's government of complicity, though has stopped short of calling for her to be hauled before a court. Suu Kyi became a democracy icon after spearheading the opposition movement to the feared military junta, which resulted in her spending some 15 years under house arrest before her release in 2010.

She has yet to comment on Amnesty's decision herself but has in the past shrugged off questions about withdrawn awards. Calls to revoke Suu Kyi's 1991 Nobel Peace Prize have been rebuffed by the committee that oversees it. Some think, however, that Amnesty's move will be taken more personally because she became a

cause celebre for the rights group during her house arrest. "This is effectively an excommunication of Suu Kyi from the pantheon of human rights champions," Yangon-based independent analyst David Mathieson said, adding that the decision would "sting". —AFP

Europe, then channeled to Lebanon before being transferred to Colombian traffickers. The funds were moved using a centuries-old system of payment dating from the spice trade called "hawala", passing through a tested network requiring ironclad trust. Hawala operators also offer the advantage of leaving no trace of the transactions. A few months after Nouredine's arrest US police detained the suspected head of the network, Mohamad Ammar, in Florida on charges that he illegally moved hundreds of thousands of dollars into Miami banks. Ammar, who regularly shuttled between California and Colombia's second city Medellin, has since admitted his ties to Colombian drug cartels, prosecutors say. Investigators in the "Lebanese Connection" inquiry, also dubbed the "Cedar Affair" after Lebanon's national tree, suspect a main client was a Colombian drug king known as El Chapulin who shipped large quantities of cocaine to Europe. After the drugs were sold, the network used hawala operatives to gather the proceeds, employing well established techniques such as regularly changing mobile phones, coded language and hiding money in cars. —AFP



YANGON: File photo shows Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi paying respects to her late father during a ceremony marking the 71st anniversary of Martyrs' Day in Yangon. — AFP

"We don't need their prize"

Democrats flip Senate seat in Arizona; Sinema bests McSally

WASHINGTON: Arizona Republican Martha McSally conceded her razor-thin US Senate race Monday, providing Democrats with a key pickup in a state that has not elected a member of the party to the Senate in three decades. "I just called Kyrsten Sinema and congratulated her on becoming Arizona's first female senator after a hard-fought battle," McSally said in a video statement posted on her Twitter account.

"I wish her all success as she represents Arizona in the Senate," US networks Fox and CNN called the race in Sinema's favor. She will replace outgoing Senator Jeff Flake, a conservative Republican who is a critic of President Donald Trump. Arizona is a border state with increasing numbers of Latino immigrants. The issue is front and center in statewide elections there, and Trump has triggered a sense of nativism among his supporters.

But Sinema sought to focus on kitchen-table issues like health care, and Democrats' push to preserve protections for people with pre-existing conditions. Democrats, who reclaimed control of the House of

Representatives in the midterms, have now flipped two Senate seats: Arizona and Nevada. Republicans gained Senate seats in Indiana, Missouri and North Dakota. The victory by Sinema, an Arizona congresswoman, will provide Democrats a critical extra vote in the 100-member chamber, which Republicans will still control when the dust settles from last week's closely-watched midterm elections.

With almost all ballots counted from the November 6 election, Sinema had expanded her lead each of the last four days. On Monday evening Sinema was ahead by 38,197 votes, or 1.72 percentage points. Trump weighed in on the Arizona race after the election, crying foul when authorities took days to count ballots and used a procedure that allowed voters to confirm their signatures in cases where there were discrepancies. "Just out-in Arizona, SIGNATURES DON'T MATCH. Electoral corruption," Trump said on Twitter, citing no proof of wrongdoing.

"Call for a new Election?"
We must protect our Democracy!" Flake has repeatedly stated there has been "no evidence" of voter fraud, and offered warm, cross-party congratulations to Sinema on her victory. "It's been a wonderful honor representing Arizona in the Senate. You'll be great," he tweeted. Sinema, who at 42 will be one of the Senate's youngest members, addressed cheering supporters in Phoenix, where she took a moment on Veterans Day to thank McSally—the country's first female fighter pilot to fly in combat—for her service to the nation. McSally had embraced Trump

and his policies during her Senate race, and Sinema appeared to call out Trump's scorched earth tactics in her remarks, as she called for healing after the tense midterm elections.

"Compromise instead of division"
"Arizona rejected what has become far too common in our country: name-calling, petty personal attacks, and doing and saying whatever it takes just to get elected," Sinema said. "It's dangerous, and it lessens who we are as a country. But Arizona proved that there is a better way forward," she added. "We can work with people who are different than us, we can be friends with people who are different than us, we can love and care about people who are different than us." Sinema also paid tribute to Arizona native son John McCain, the senator and 2008 Republican presidential nominee who emerged as a key Trump critic and who died of cancer earlier this year.

"Senator McCain is irreplaceable, but his example will guide our next steps forward," she said. "He taught us to always assume the best in others, to seek compromise instead of division, and to always put country ahead of party." Sinema's race was one of three undecided Senate battles. A fierce fight remains in Florida, where authorities are conducting a recount in the race between Democratic Senator Bill Nelson and his Republican challenger Rick Scott, who is Florida's term-limited governor. Mississippi's Senate race is headed to a run-off, which is expected to be won by Republican incumbent Cindy Hyde-Smith. —AFP

'Lebanese Connection' trial opens

PARIS: Fifteen alleged members of a vast crime ring accused of laundering Colombian drug money through luxury jewelry and using shadowy middlemen from the Lebanese diaspora went on trial in Paris yesterday. The chief defendant is Mohamad Nouredine, a 44-year-old Lebanese businessman with interests in real estate and jewelry. He was arrested in France in January 2016 during police raids that also took place in Italy, Belgium and Germany, after an alert from the US Drug Enforcement Agency. US officials, who have imposed sanctions on Nouredine over his supposed links to Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, suspect the network of operating between South America, Europe and the Middle East since 2012.

They identified France, where several of the defendants reside, as being at the centre of the syndicate's operations in Europe. The proceeds of cocaine sales were allegedly collected in

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Analysis

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N Korea seen as reliant as ever on nuclear arsenal as talks stall

Amid signs that negotiations between North Korea and the US are stalling, analysts say Pyongyang still sees its nuclear arsenal as a key tool in securing its national safety and winning concessions from international rivals. Just as the United States has doubled down on its sanctions on Pyongyang, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has not retreated from his pledge to expand his operational force of nuclear bombs and ballistic missiles, increasing his leverage under any still-elusive denuclearization deal.

A US think tank said on Monday it had identified at least 13 of an estimated 20 active, undeclared missile bases inside North Korea, underscoring the challenge for American negotiators hoping to persuade Kim to give up his weapons programs. As time goes by, North Korea's likely expansion of its arsenal could force Washington to rethink its insistence on full denuclearization, said Moon Hong-sik, a research fellow at the Institute for National Security Strategy in Seoul.

"This is the choice the United States has to make: whether they keep pursuing the ideal of 'complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization,' or take this dilemma into consideration and make a compromise for limited denuclearization," he said. US President Donald Trump met Kim at an unprecedented summit in Singapore in June where they agreed to "work toward complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula."

But with scant sign of progress on negotiations since and recent high-level meetings cancelled, Trump said last week he's now in "no rush" and still wants to meet with Kim for a second time. US officials have said sanctions forced North Korea to the negotiating table and vowed to keep pressure until complete denuclearization. But North Korea has credited its nuclear and missile breakthroughs for providing it the standing to meet the world's largest powers.

Kim's own words suggest Pyongyang will continue with production and development of the nuclear program even as it negotiates with Washington on denuclearization, experts say. "In the 2018 New Year address, Kim Jong Un called for shifting to full-scale production and deployment of nuclear weapons and missiles," said Joshua Pollack, a senior research associate at the US-based James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS). "He's never said or done anything since then to contradict that."

North Korea has not tested a nuclear bomb or ballistic missile since last year, and has said it has shuttered its main nuclear test site with plans to dismantle several more facilities. North Korea recently warned, however, it could restart its nuclear program if the United States does not drop its campaign of "maximum pressure" and sanctions.

'North Korea never promised'

Monday's report by the Washington, DC-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), sparked media coverage calling it a "great deception" by the North Koreans. But South Korea's presidential Blue House said without an actual deal to violate, Pyongyang has broken no promises. "North Korea has never promised to shut down this missile base," Blue House spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom said. "It has never signed any agreement, any negotiation that makes shutting down missile bases mandatory... the fact that such a missile base exists shows the necessity for negotiations to be achieved quickly."

Asked about the report, Trump's national security adviser John Bolton told reporters in Singapore on Tuesday that Trump "has given North Korea an incredible opportunity to walk through a door to a different future if they denuclearize...but they still need to do that." The activity at the missile bases is one of several examples why American officials may be reluctant to lift any sanctions, said Shin Beom-chul, director of the Center for Security and Unification at Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies. "In short, from the CSIS report we can infer that first, North Korea is not sincere enough with negotiating and second, there's no change in their nuclear capacity," he said.

US officials have discussed possible clandestine enrichment sites for nuclear fuel, and in July, analysts at CNS used commercial satellite imagery to conclude that North Korea was "completing a major expansion of an important factory for producing solid rocket motors for... nuclear-armed missiles."

In April, ahead of his meeting with Trump, Kim told a gathering of ruling party leadership the nuclear arsenal represented a "great victory" and announced there was no need for further tests of nuclear weapons or ballistic missiles. In the speech, however, Kim also hinted at nuclear weapons playing an important role long into the future, calling them a "powerful treasured sword for defending peace" that would "reliably guarantee" a dignified and happy life for generations of North Koreans. "Note the description of nuclear weapons as the only firm security assurance," Pollack said. "They are not seeking any 'security assurance' other than the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons." — Reuters



Can Macron's new forum make a difference?

It was billed as a "Davos for democracy". But will the newly launched Paris Peace Forum, the latest addition to international conferencing, have an impact? Conceived by French leader Emmanuel Macron, the Forum is intended to be part of the fight back against nationalism, with its format inspired by the annual business meeting in the Davos ski resort in Switzerland. The event opened Sunday, with speeches by Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and UN chief Antonio Guterres who warned in turn about the dangers of Trump-style populism.

The idea is that the Paris event, which began symbolically on the centenary of the end of World War I, becomes an annual gathering to discuss democracy and international cooperation. "We have put on leaders' agenda the fact that every year, we will talk about multilateralism and our collective interests here," chief organizer Justin Vaissé told AFP. The remaining days - the Forum ran until yesterday - featured round-table discussions on topics from gender inequality to the need for new global environmental accords. One hundred and twenty projects, most of them run by NGOs, were given space in an exhibition area at the entrance to the former slaughterhouse where the Forum was held. They included a project to provide Taekwondo lessons to refugees. Another was based on "leveraging global

citizen solidarity to fight against chronic malnutrition". It gave the event an atmosphere that was somewhere between a trade fair and a think-tank conference. "You can count on my support," Kenyan leader Uhuru Kenyatta told the Kumekucha association, which works to prevent violence in rural communities in Africa, as he visited their stand on Sunday.

Echo chamber?

Given the agenda, it's little wonder that US President Donald Trump decided to snub the Forum after the memorial service on the Champs-Élysées to mark 100 years since the WWI Armistice on Sunday. A host of other leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, opted to attend the opening session, but most of them left shortly afterwards. An absence of nationalist viewpoints among the attendees meant most panel discussions subsequently veered towards consensus - that multilateralism, cooperation and peace were desirable.

But Florent Geel, from the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), argued that the Forum could develop as an important place for networking among like-minded people. "It makes sense to meet up, to discuss the challenges for the planet and connect worlds that don't connect up very easily," he told AFP. But he added that a peace forum should have allowed more space to discuss

the wars underway worldwide, where the main international powers are at loggerheads. "The difficult subjects - Yemen, Syria, Libya, big overlooked humanitarian crises - are not on the agenda," he said.

Or oxygen?

So is the Peace Forum necessary and will it last? Roberto Azevedo, the head of the World Trade Organization, argued that the global system of international organizations like his own, which help produce norms and rules, needed to be celebrated. The Paris Forum, which seeks to highlight their work, could be part of the answer. Multilateralism was like oxygen in the way that it was generally overlooked, he argued during a panel discussion. "Take it away and you will start noticing immediately."

The Forum's ultimate fate might depend on the star-power of its French patron, Macron, who reinforced his reputation over the weekend as a counterforce to Trump-like nationalism. "The old demons are rising again, ready to complete their task of chaos and of death," Macron said during the WWI remembrance service with Trump sitting on the front row. The problem, says Jeremy Shapiro from the European Council on Foreign Relations, is Macron's falling popularity at home and increasing isolation abroad. "He doesn't look quite as shiny and new as he did a year ago," he said. — AFP

Iraq militia leaders plan to call the shots

In May, Hassan Fada'am traded his military fatigues for a suit when he became one of 45 Shiite militiamen elected to Iraq's 329-seat parliament. Fada'am trained as a soldier in Iran and fought against Islamic State in Iraq. Now he's a politician as paramilitary groups backed by Iran have doubled their number of seats in Iraq's parliament. The Faith Alliance bloc that represents them has become the second largest political bloc.

In interviews, eight militiamen who have translated their battlefield success into electoral victories set out how they plan to use this new platform. Six months after the vote, Iraq's new Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi has yet to win parliamentary approval for his government. Yet already one thing is evident, the militia are better placed than ever to influence policies, from domestic security to foreign policy.

Mahdi's predecessor as prime minister, Haider Al-Abadi, has said he fears the militiamen will undermine efforts to unify Iraq. Its young democracy is trying to balance the demands of its Sunnis, Kurds and Shiites after years of sectarian conflict, and the economy is only beginning to recover from the country's war with Islamic State. Abadi tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent militia leaders from standing in the 2018 election. "How can a military outfit have a political opinion? This does not happen in any part of the world. It is prohibited," he said at the time. The militiamen responded by announcing they would quit their military roles to comply with Iraq's electoral code.

Some in Washington are also worried. Republican senators have introduced a bill that would impose sanctions on two Iranian-backed militias in Iraq, Asaib Ahl al-Haq and Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba. Sponsors of the Iranian Proxies Terrorist Sanctions Act include Senators David Perdue, Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio. Iran

is unperturbed. "In the meetings we had with our Iraqi brothers, they assured us that Iraq could not be used by America," said a former Iranian ambassador in the region, now a senior official in Tehran.

Among Iran's Iraqi allies is the Badr Organization, which won 21 seats at the election. For two decades, Badr's leader Hadi al-Amiri led the fight against Saddam Hussein from exile in Iran. A Badr local commander, Karim Nouri, said communication with Iran was ongoing "to keep Tehran's rivals - the United States and Saudi Arabia - in check." He did not elaborate. Hisham Hashemi, a security adviser to Iraq's government, said he believed that Iran was in touch with Shiite politicians "in order to have a means of applying political pressure, to guarantee their loyalty, to make sure they have an armed force loyal to them. They provide advice on PR, propaganda, marketing, media, speeches, social media."

Inspired by Iran, suspicious of America

When Iraq's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani urged his fellow Shiites to join the fight against Islamic State in 2014, Fada'am was among the tens of thousands of Shiites who answered the call. He led the Dawn Brigades, a force of 3,400 fighters. After driving Islamic State from the town of Jurf al-Sakhr south of Baghdad, Fada'am lobbied the local government in his province of Hilla to cancel the property rights of Sunnis in the area, saying they were tied to Islamic State. The Hilla provincial council agreed to his request.

Elected in May to represent Hilla in parliament, Fada'am says he now devotes his time to politics, frequently appearing on talk shows broadcast on Shiite television channels to drive home his anti-corruption message. Visitors stream into his office in Hilla seeking help. Like many parts of Iraq, Hilla lacks basic services. Roads are potholed. Medical facilities are crumbling. He receives hundreds of requests from young people wanting a job in the civil service.

Across town from his office is a hospital run by his followers. It provides free medical care for militia fighters and members of the public. Patients have access to an orderly, well stocked pharmacy. The

rooms are cleaner than most medical facilities in Iraq. "At the end of the day we must switch to politics to rebuild our country. Rebuilding the country and maintaining its security could come only through good politics," said Fada'am.

Another militiaman turned politician, Falih Khazali, fought on the side of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's civil war and lost an eye defending a Shiite shrine near Damascus. These days, he operates from Iraq's second city Basra in the oil-producing south. Posters of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini adorn the wall of his office. He is beginning his second term in parliament, having been elected for the first time in 2014.

"The Americans should not consider Iraq as one of their villages. Iraq is an independent state with an ancient history. The United States must not deal with Iraq on the basis of zero give and 100 percent take," he said. "Iran's role was very effective in arming Iraqi forces and the Hashid (militia) through the government. Only the Islamic Republic of Iran supported Iraq when the state was about to collapse. All others were onlookers."

Like Iran, Khazali is opposed to the American military presence in Iraq. He says he is "pushing for a draft law to force government to reconsider bilateral military cooperation with the United States." About 5,200 U.S. troops are based in Iraq. They will stay "as long as needed" to help stabilize regions previously controlled by Islamic State, said a spokesman for the US-led international coalition.

Unclean water, corrupt officials

Like Fada'am, Khazali is focused on everyday issues that are important to Iraqis: contaminated water, dilapidated infrastructure and corrupt officials. He has opened his office in Basra to anyone who can provide proof of official corruption. He says he has put together a file containing 100 cases. During the first session of parliament in mid-September, Khazali successfully urged the chamber to send a delegation to investigate the "miserable conditions" in Basra, the scene of protests over unsafe water, power shortages, unemployment and corruption. "Fighting

corruption is my primary target now after defeating Islamic State," he said. "Corruption is a second Islamic State if not worse." That's a view shared by others, including Asaib Ahl al-Haq, one of the militias that is faced with possible US sanctions. Asaib militiaman Saad Al-Husseini, from the town of Kut on the banks of the Tigris river, has taken up a seat in parliament. He handled logistics for Asaib during the war against Islamic State, ensuring fighters showed up at their positions and arranging matters after deaths. He says the protests in Basra flow from the failings of successive governments.

"The protests now are a stark evidence that corruption is spreading in all government institutions. The next step should be fighting corruption," he said. "My primary objective after becoming a lawmaker will be helping to legislate to serve people's interests and monitoring the performance of the government in order to stamp out corruption."

Revolutionary Guard II

Some Iraqi politicians and military officers worry that through the Shiite militias Tehran is trying to create an Iraqi version of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, with its parallel security apparatus and vast business empire. Iraqi militias have shares in construction, trade and car import companies. At the Safra border crossing, 90 km north of Baghdad, the Badr Organisation, Iran's closest paramilitary partner in Iraq, collects custom tariffs and taxes on goods transported from the Kurdish region in the north, according to a local councillor and two former senior Iraqi officials. The councillor said at least \$12 to \$15 million goes to the Badr group each month.

Local Badr commander, Imad Jafaar, denied the group was using the crossing to generate funds. Hard currency exchanges along central Baghdad's busy streets pay fees to militias to protect keep their businesses, said three owners of currency exchange businesses and police sources. Cash flows do not stop at business interests. The Iraqi state budget allocated \$1 billion for the militias during the war with Islamic State. A Hashid fighter is normally paid \$600 a month, compared to any army soldier's \$200 salary. — Reuters

Business

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018

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Al-Kharafi spearheads Zain women's empowerment with revolutionary steps

- First to create new role, Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer, to drive empowerment
- First to introduce flex time for working moms



KUWAIT: Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi and the management team pose for a group photo with the female participants of the annual Women Empowerment (WE) Forum at the Four Seasons Hotel, Kuwait on Monday.

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa hosted its second annual Women Empowerment (WE) forum at the Four Seasons Hotel, Kuwait on Monday, gathering 300 female participants from across the Group, including CEOs of each Zain operation and their respective Human Resources heads. The meeting showcased the progress and achievements to date, future plans and strategy, as well as highlighting how the efforts Zain is undertaking are closely aligned to the UN's Women Empowerment guidelines.

The initiative is the brainchild of Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi, who in November 2017 inaugurated the female-focused empowerment initiative, aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering women in the organization to act, lead, develop, and succeed. During the forum, Al-Kharafi delivered informative keynote addresses on leadership development as well as holding discussions with the participants.

Reaffirming his personal commitment to Women Empowerment within Zain, Al-Kharafi made two significant "regional first" announcements, one being the application of flexible hours for working mothers with children up to kindergarten age and, two, the creation of a new position and appointment of Maryam Saif as Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer (CIDO) to drive new Empowerment initiatives that define, enhance and continue to cultivate an environment of inclusiveness and equal opportunities in which Zain personnel across all operations may work productively and thrive. The CIDO will also continue to empower youth and women.

The forum saw all Zain country operation CEOs participating in a panel session that focused on the importance of the Women Empowerment Initiative on each individual operation whereby they all indicated their personal commitments to the initiative. Keynote presenters and coaches also participating at the Forum included Joanna Barsh, Director Emerita at McKinsey Global Consulting Group and renowned author of several top-selling management books, as well as Connie Dieken, the founder of Influence 360°, who was named one of the world's Top 10 Executive Coaches.

Over a year ago, after having collected a heavy baseline of information within the organization on the topic, it was identified that Zain Group's total headcount of women amounted to just 22.6 percent of the total workforce, with the representation of women in leadership roles within the organization standing at just 14.5 percent. This was a red flag to the company's board and management, and it was clear that a formal program to raise the participation of women at Zain at all levels was required and pressing.

Accordingly, Zain's WE program in partnership with McKinsey Global Consulting Group developed a detailed roadmap and program in-line with



KUWAIT: Bader Al-Kharafi delivers informative keynote address during the forum.

Zain's newly formed strategic targets for females, underpinning McKinsey's Four Imperatives for building a successful inclusion and diversity strategy based on Leadership Development, Culture Transformation, HR Policy Transformation and Female Recruitment.

Commenting on the second annual WE forum and the progress to date, Al-Kharafi said, "We are confident that by implementing a series of targeted women empowerment initiatives through awareness, realization, and motivation, will result in both the development of more future female leaders and in more females joining the company. I firmly believe that championing gender diversity at Zain will create competitive differentiation, fast-track our strategic ambitions of unlocking the tremendous growth opportunities in the digital arena and at the same time improve the company's bottom line."

In the lead up to last year's inaugural WE event, a heavy baseline of data was collected and has

continued to be mined during the last 12 months, including a review on all Zain Group-related policies and female-related initiatives: statistics of females in leadership positions, women serving in truly operational leadership roles and identifying common trends and hurdles across all Zain operations. This information was presented and discussed during this year's meeting, resulting in the formulation of women-related empowerment activities and targets set for the next 12 months.

Much progress has been made since November 2017 including a Kick Off Women Empowerment event for ambassadors that was hosted in Bahrain in March 2018 as well as a workshop that focused on strategizing and planning actions plus a Centered Leaders gathering in Kuwait in May 2018.

The WE program has taken measurable steps in raising the profile of women such as the appointment of ambassadors to act as internal change agents

- Brainchild of Bader Al-Kharafi, the initiative's focus is on raising the roles and number of women leaders across all Zain operations
- 12 months on, initiative having a marked impact on multiple levels within the company
- Forum witnesses all Zain country CEOs participate, indicative of the initiative's importance
- Program implemented aligns with the UN's Women Empowerment guidelines
- In a regional first, Al-Kharafi announces the creation of a new position, Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer, to drive empowerment initiatives that define, enhance and continue to cultivate an equitable work environment

across all operations. Zain also implemented two strategic targets: 1. To increase female leadership positions from 14.5 percent to 25 percent by 2020 and 2. To evolve towards a gender diverse workforce.

Further achievements during the last 12 months of the Zain WE initiative include:

- Female leadership, director and above at Zain Group has grown from 14.5 percent to 15.5 percent in one year
- Female recruitment into Zain across all operations grew from 21 percent of total recruitment to 29 percent
- Over the past year, the number of women at Chief level increased from 6 to 11, an 83 percent increase
- 33 high potential female leaders have been identified to form the Centered Leaders program
- 61 Women Empowerment Ambassadors have been onboarded and tasked with action planning

• Zain signed up to the UN Women Empowerment Principles and communicated this to all 6,000 employees

• Introduced a Women Empowerment communications app with 300 employees already using it

• Women Empowerment embedded into the board of director's agenda and placed on CEO Scorecards

• Two talented women from Zain operations sponsored to attend MBA programs at ESADE, Barcelona

• Women Empowerment campaign and initiatives communicated widely across all Zain internal and external platforms including social media platforms

As Women Empowerment is now part of the Zain Group strategy, its action planning and tracking is measured through quarterly senior management operations review, with Bader Al-Kharafi personally overseeing progress.

Al-Kharafi concluded by disclosing his personal views on the impact that women entrepreneurs and leaders are having on businesses of all sizes and on society at large across the region. "The number of women starting their own businesses or taking leadership roles is increasing across the region in all sectors. Women by nature are able to multitask with high emotional intelligence, making them more able to practice positive forms of leadership. Financial independence, economic growth, solution-based innovations, raising an entrepreneurial generation, creation and development is an intrinsic motivator for women and you can observe this on a global scale. Today you find women leading or in key management roles in large conglomerates and start-ups, providing a different and dynamic management approach. This is incredibly inspiring and driving a new generation of future women leaders will impact society positively on multiple levels."



KUWAIT: WE ambassadors, centered leaders and Esade MBA winners present Bader Al-Kharafi an appreciation award.

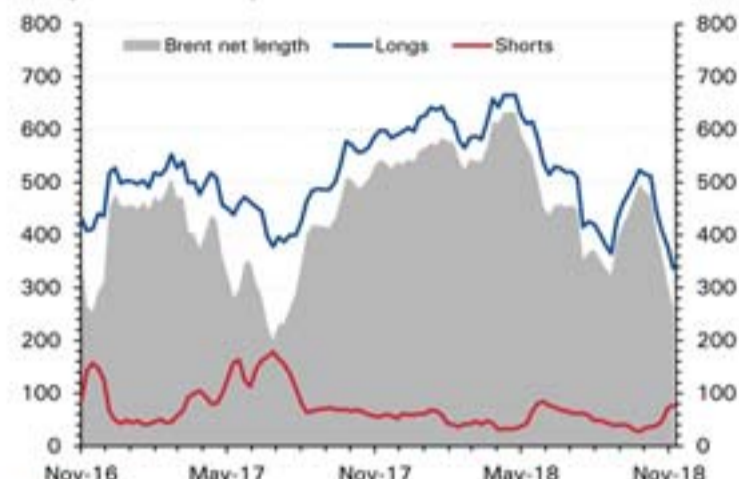
Business

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

Oil prices fall on receding supply shortage fears, weaker outlook

Iran sanctions and record US production impact

Chart 2: Money manager net length (thousand contracts)



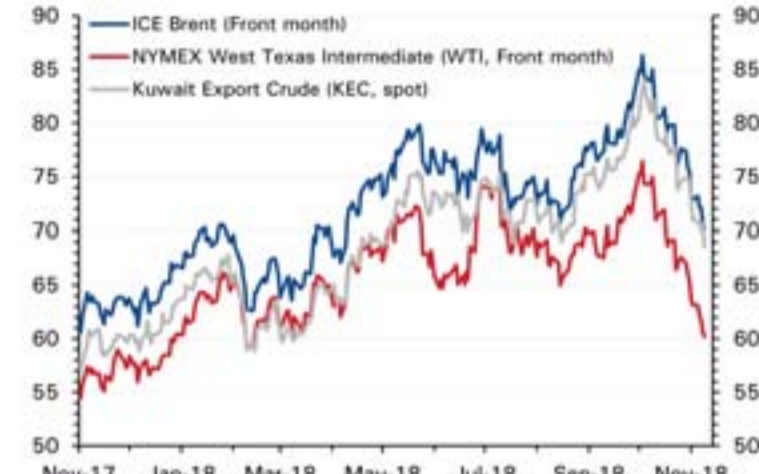
Source: Bloomberg, ICE

Chart 3: Iran crude oil exports (mb/d, excludes condensates)



Source: Bloomberg, based on tanker tracking data

Chart 1: Crude oil prices (\$/bbl)



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC)

KUWAIT: Since peaking at near four-year highs in early October, oil prices have dropped by more than 18 percent, to around \$70/bbl (Brent) and \$60/bbl (WTI), as bullish market sentiments shift perceptibly more bearish on receding fears of a supply shortage caused by US sanctions on Iran, record high US crude production and on a weaker global economic and oil demand outlook. The Trump administration's decision to temporarily extend waivers to eight of Iran's largest customers, including China, India, Japan and South Korea was a significant contributor to the bearish narrative. Oil prices have also been caught up in the broader equity market sell-off.

In the futures markets, hedge funds have reduced their 'net long' positions on Brent crude, the difference between bets on higher prices ('longs') and lower prices ('shorts'), for the sixth consecutive week, to 260,048 futures and options contracts, according to ICE data. This is the lowest level since July 2017, indicating that investors are turning increasingly more negative about the oil price outlook.

The precipitous fall in prices, in the case of WTI, by more than 19 percent to its lowest level since March, appears to have prompted OPEC to consider the option of cutting production in 2019, a complete reversal of their current trajectory.

This is a far cry from the state of the market in the run up to oil's peak at \$86 in early October. That rise capped a two-month price rally that was driven primarily by concerns of a global supply shortage caused mainly by the US sanctions on Iran and falling output from Venezuela.

There were also doubts about Saudi Arabia and OPEC's ability to tap into spare production capacity to offset these losses, as shown by the slower-than-expected ramp up in output from OPEC and its allies after they had indicated in late June that they would pump an additional 1 mb/d over the coming months to keep the market well-supplied. The slow pace of supply additions while the price of Brent increased towards its eventual peak even drew the ire of President Trump, who accused OPEC of intentionally "ripping off the rest of the world".

Iran sanctions kick in

On 5 November, US sanctions on Iran went into full effect. In all, about seven hundred Iranian entities, including individuals, banks and businesses, across the coun-

try's energy, shipping and financial sectors were targeted. Henceforth, foreign countries and entities purchasing Iranian crude without special US dispensation or transacting with the Islamic Republic's central bank will be effectively barred from doing business using the US financial system—a penalty that has forced Iran's largest crude customers to pare back purchases and firms such as France's Total to pull out of a planned \$4.8 billion natural gas development project in the country. The international payments enabler, SWIFT, also announced that several Iranian banks will have their access to the platform suspended.

However, in a surprise move on the eve of the sanctions 'snap-back', the Trump administration, announced that eight of Iran's largest crude oil customers, including China, India, South Korea and Japan—but not the EU as a single entity—would be offered temporary waivers to allow them sufficient time to cut their imports down to zero, the administration's stated objective. The EU, for its part, continues to hold out hope that its plans for a special payments vehicle to help Iran bypass the US financial system and continue exporting to Europe and Asia will materialize.

Implicit in the US's softer Iran stance is the Trump administration's anxiety over spiking oil prices and the effect on the US consumer both ahead of and after the US midterm elections. But the markets also took the move as a signal that the projected loss of Iranian crude may not be so severe as to leave the markets short of barrels.

To be sure, Iranian crude exports continue to fall. The most recent figures show the crude exports at 1.6 mb/d in October, a decline of 926,000 b/d, or 37 percent, from the country's peak export volume of 2.4 mb/d in April, the month before the US announced its intention to reimpose sanctions. (Chart 3.) Though the rate of decline has eased somewhat over the last two months—and may continue to do so now that the waivers have been issued—the expectation is that the regime's crude exports will probably fall back over the next few months to the previous sanctions-era levels of around 1-1.2 mb/d.

OPEC finally opens the taps

OPEC has finally increased its output to compensate for Iranian and Venezuelan losses. The group's crude production reached 32.7 mb/d in September, an increase of 630,000 b/d over May's levels. Adding in Russia's output

gain of 390,000 b/d over the same period, then OPEC and its allies are not far off the 1 mb/d they had promised in late June. Saudi Arabia, for its part, ramped up production in September by 500,000 b/d to 10.5 mb/d, close to its all-time high of 10.67 mb/d from November 2016.

Kuwait and the UAE produced around 2.8 and 3.0 mb/d in September, respectively, according to OPEC secondary sources, which brings their respective incremental increases from May to 110,000 b/d and 140,000 b/d. The Saudi energy minister, Khaled Al-Falih, remarked recently that OPEC is in "produce as much as you can mode", with Saudi Arabia looking at possibly 11 mb/d or higher over the coming months. All the indications are that those oil producers with the spare production capacity—Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, the UAE and non-OPEC Russia—intend to increase supplies in the short term.

While a thinning Saudi and OPEC spare oil production capacity buffer—estimated at around 2 percent of global demand, which is low by historical standards—would ordinarily sound the alarm bells as far as the markets are concerned, the focus appears to have shifted to the risk that the market could tip into oversupply.

Oversupply concerns

These concerns were recently aired by both the Saudi energy minister and the Saudi OPEC governor. Both alluded to surging shale-led production in the US and rising US crude stockpiles amid weakening slowing global demand growth. In the US, crude output set another all-time high record in recently, reaching 11.6 mb/d in the week-ending 2 November, according to weekly data from the US Energy Information Administration (EIA). US crude production has now surpassed both Russia and Saudi Arabia as the largest in the world, surging by an incredible 1.8 mb/d, or 19 percent, in 2018 so far. US crude stocks also notched up a seventh consecutive week of increases, to reach 431.8 million barrels.

Oil market already in surplus

In fact, according to the IEA, oil supply has exceeded oil demand in every quarter of this year, with more noticeable stock builds occurring over the second and third quarters of the year. Saudi oversupply concerns, therefore, appear to have some substance.

Moreover, on the current supply trajectory, the situation is not likely to improve in 2019. Not only were oil

demand growth projections brought down this year, by 130,000 b/d to 1.3 mb/d, but the IEA has also cut its forecast for 2019, by 200,000 b/d to 1.4 mb/d.

The agency cited a combination of higher oil prices, downward adjustments to Chinese data and weaker global economic growth, as projected by the OECD and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Higher oil prices combined with significant currency depreciation in emerging markets stemming from rising US interest rates and some capital 'flight to quality'-risks the IMF identified in their October WEO—have raised the domestic cost of oil products in several emerging markets. In India, for example, which has seen its currency decline by almost 15 percent this year against the dollar, the authorities had to reduce domestic gasoline and diesel prices in early October to mitigate the impact on households. Even in the US, higher pump prices for the consumer are beginning to affect demand for gasoline. Gasoline's share of total US oil demand is significant at 44 percent, but according to weekly August and September figures, gasoline demand has been contracting.

Weighing on the outlook for next year in addition to tighter US monetary policy is the possibility of heightened trade friction between the US and China. Oil demand would naturally be impacted were an escalation in trade tariffs to occur and result in slower global economic growth. The IMF lowered its global growth estimate for 2018 and 2019 by 0.2 percentage points to 3.7 percent, in part to reflect these downside risks.

Where now for oil prices?

The balance of risks appear skewed to the downside as far as oil prices are concerned. The markets seem to be attaching greater weight to surging OPEC and US crude production, rising stockpiles and weaker economic growth ahead than they are to the possibility that Iranian sanctions and declining Venezuelan production will lead to a shortage of oil. Prices for future Brent oil deliveries are lower than for immediates, or spot, deliveries. Known as backwardation, this state suggests that traders expect the market to have a surplus of supply.

Of course, if OPEC and its partners were to reverse course in 2019 and cut production rather than increase it, then the landscape could change dramatically. All in all, the only thing certain in this market may be more volatility.

China Oct loan data disappoints, points to further slowing in economy

BEIJING: China's credit growth slowed sharply in October, despite pressure by regulators on banks to help keep cash-starved companies afloat, pointing to further weakening in the economy in coming months. While October is typically a slow month for Chinese credit, growth in key gauges such as total social financing and money supply fell to record lows, reinforcing views that policymakers will need to step up efforts to revive flagging investment.

The weaker trend also suggested overall credit conditions in China tightened last month despite recent easing in monetary policy, including moves by the central bank to bring down market interest rates and four cuts in banks' reserve requirements so far this year.

"October credit data is weaker than expected," said Luo Yunfeng, an analyst at Merchants Securities in Beijing. However, Luo believes the room for further policy easing is limited as Beijing remains concerned about controlling debt and financial risks, which



SHANGHAI: This aerial picture taken at night shows traffic on an elevated intersection in downtown Shanghai. — AFP

were fuelled by past spending binges. Chinese banks extended 697 billion yuan (\$100.23 billion) in net new yuan loans in October, central bank data showed yesterday, much less than expected.

Analysts polled by Reuters had predicted

new loans of 862 billion yuan in October, down from 1.38 trillion yuan in September but well ahead of seasonal norms as lenders began to heed regulators' calls to support smaller firms hit by the economic slowdown, especially those in the private sector. — Reuters

Vietnam's newest airline Bamboo gets license

HANOI: Vietnam's newest carrier Bamboo Airways has been granted a license to fly, officials and the airline said, paving the way for its inaugural flight in a region crowded with competitors.

Run by one of the country's richest men, Bamboo will compete with well-established

heavy hitters such as national carrier Vietnam Airlines and budget carrier Vietjet to serve a mushrooming middle class with growing appetites, and budgets, for travel.

Vietnam's Transport Ministry said Bamboo's official aviation license had been approved and that it would aim to operate 100 routes, including to lesser-travelled destinations in Vietnam and elsewhere in Asia, with plans to eventually fly to North America. "The first domestic flights... are aimed at reducing pressure on aviation infrastructure in major cities, strengthening regional links (and) promoting tourism to Vietnam," the Transport Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The airline is owned by Trinh Van Quyet, who heads the FLC property empire that includes lush beachside resorts, golf clubs and luxury condos across Vietnam, a country still under one-party communist rule. Bamboo has already signed up to buy 20 of Boeing's 787 Dreamliners worth \$5.6 billion and committed a further \$3.2 billion to buy 24 Airbus A321neo planes.

The airline said its inaugural flight, originally scheduled for last month, should take place before the end of the year. "We have conducted a flight test, the results show that the aircraft fully meets technical specifications (and is) ready to go into operation," CEO Dang Tat Thang said in a statement. — Reuters

Hedge funds resume attack on sterling

LONDON: The likelihood of a hard Brexit, where the UK economy crashes out of the European Union without securing a trade deal, is rising once again. And hedge funds smell blood again.

Funds and speculators trading US futures markets are once again turning their guns on sterling, extending their net short position for the second week in a row, something they haven't done for over two months.

The latest Commodity Futures Trading Commission figures for the week ending Nov. 6 show funds increased their net short sterling position by 4,317 contracts to 56,799 contracts. That's a \$4.6 billion bet that the pound will fall.

The bearish turn comes against a renewed wave of negative domestic Brexit headlines for the pound: more government resignations, a cabinet divided more than ever, and growing signs parliament won't back Theresa May's proposed compromise with the EU.

Funds and speculators had gradually scaled back their net short CFTC sterling position for most of last month to \$3.8 billion from \$6.5 billion in mid-September, which was the largest bet against the pound since May last year. But that came to an abrupt halt in the last two weeks.

And if the UK political backdrop deteriorates further, don't be surprised if sterling tests and then breaks below the \$1.2650 low that has been in place since April last year.

There's certainly room for specs to expand their net short position. As

recently as late September it was nudging 80,000 contracts, while in March last year it reached a record 107,844 contracts worth \$8.4 billion.

In September, the pound was as high as \$1.33; in March last year it was as low as \$1.22. It's currently hovering just above \$1.28, so if funds intensify their attack on the pound, that \$1.22 low could soon come back into view.

Currency traders may already be bracing for that lurch lower. Implied one-month sterling/dollar volatility rose above 11 percent on Monday for the first time in nearly two years, and euro/sterling one-month implied vol hit its highest in a year at 8.7 pct.

The difference between sterling/dollar vol and euro/dollar vol is now its widest in over two years.

Sterling is not alone in its struggle against the dollar, which is on the march against all major currencies. But it has the added drag of Brexit, which is infecting the domestic UK growth outlook.

The European Commission last week released its latest 2019 growth projections. Britain was bottom of the 28-strong list of EU nations, alongside Italy, with growth next year forecast to be just 1.2 pct.

Bank of England Deputy Governor Ben Broadbent said on Monday that the effect of Brexit uncertainty on business investment had intensified this year, and that growth in the fourth quarter looks likely to slow.

With less than five months left before Britain and the EU officially part ways, a one-in-four chance remains the sides will fail to reach a deal on the terms of departure, according to economists polled by Reuters last week. Taken together, falling investment, slowing growth and political paralysis paints a pretty bleak picture for the pound. How much of that is reflected in the exchange rate and investor positioning already will determine how much lower sterling goes from here. If at all. — Reuters

Business

Ooredoo successfully concludes 'Business to Digital' forum with Kuwait app market

Largest gathering for application developers in Kuwait



KUWAIT: (From right) Abdulrazak Al-Mutaiwa, Yousef Al-Fadala, Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al-Thani, Mahmoud Al-Marzouq and Ahmad Al-Nama during the Business to Digital forum organized by Ooredoo.

KUWAIT: As part of the Business to Digital forum organized by Ooredoo, a number of entrepreneurs and smart application developers participated in the forum to discuss their experiences and challenges and meet with potential investors at the Kuwait App Market.

Speaking to the application developers, Ooredoo CEO Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al-Thani said that the forum is considered a unique event and a part of the company's vision towards digitalization. He said "Tonight I am proud to see young creative developers like you gathered together to share your experiences. You are all a great example of the aspiring youth that we at Ooredoo are proud to support."

Al-Thani stressed the fact that we are living in a world of mobile apps, where our appointments, our bills, our health, our daily activity and everything is controlled by at least one or two applications that we cannot live without. He pointed out that according to Forbes, in 2017, total number of app downloads were over almost 270 billion and is expected to increase in the upcoming years.

Al-Thani stressed the fact that we at Ooredoo Kuwait - believe in the fact that many applications are essential to our life, and to the life of our customers. This is why we developed the Ooredoo App for our customers. My Ooredoo App is dominating the Kuwaiti Teleco

- Al-Thani: Ooredoo will continuously support the youth in the technology and innovation sectors
- Al-Daihani: The application market is expanding rapidly with 5 new applications per week

App Market and stands #1 comparing to Competition & standing #16 in Kuwait app store ranking.

At the opening of the introductory meeting of developers, Neda Al-Daihani said that the smart apps market is becoming much more prominent to a degree that cannot be ignored. He added that there is around 120 billion us dollars being channeled for investment in this sector worldwide, while the total investment in this same sector in the Gulf region revolved around 100 million dollars during the third quarter of 2018 only.

Expertise exchange

Al-Daihani pointed out that this market is solidly spreading, as there are at least about 5 apps that emerge weekly in Kuwait alone. He added that Ooredoo has managed to gather more than 50 apps during this forum, some of which have already gained investment funds, while some others are still new. He stressed that the aim of the market is that we benefit from each other's experiences.

Jamal Nasrallah, the Chairman of the Board

of Directors of The Kuwaiti Public Relations Society, expressed his gratitude for attending this forum, saying that the role of technology cannot be overlooked in the field of business development. He explained that Ooredoo has proved to be supportive of young people, as it provided them with an opportunity to meet and exchange expertise, which reflects Ooredoo's interest in technological and technical projects. Dr Nasser Al-Manea, developer of "go uni" app, began by saying that his app is concerned with all that is related to university students, starting from taking attendance and absence electronically, up to exchanging books and coordinating duties. He noted that his app is being used by about 30 thousand users from Kuwait and abroad.

The owner of portage app & company said that his app provides car maintenance services on the road, where the company works 24/7. He pointed out that the app makes its services available to people with special needs for free. Form her part, Taibah Al-Humaidhi spoke about her app flowerd, which is the first site specialized in delivering gifts and roses in Kuwait. She

pointed out that this delivery service provides fast delivery within an hour maximum, along with selling flowers and various gifts.

Mohammed Al-Qallaf explained how his app "Ihgizli" works, saying that it offers travel, ticketing services and other similar services.

For his part, Bader Al-Yaqout, developer of 4house app said that it specializes in everything related to the households, starting from selling electronics, up to garden accessories and home equipment. He pointing out that his app is considered the first of its kind.

Abdullah AbuZaid, the owner of site and app "Gazly", said that his app is concerned with fashion and accessories. He added that he started from Kuwait and from there expanded to include the Gulf region. He offers delivery services of all that is related to fashion and accessories from Turkey to the customer directly.

Bader Al-Azmi, developer of app "mobtath" said that the app provides a free service to students who are studying in Britain and to those who wish to study in Britain, through helping them obtaining admission from British

universities, as well as providing an online market for students and tourists in Britain. Sulaiman Al-Salahi, developer of "go diving" app, said that his app is the first of its kind in booking diving trips in Kuwait, the Gulf region and Egypt. Abdulaziz Amir, the owner of the site darebnonline.com, said that he provides training services to the public, as well as his account on Instagram darebni, which contains more than 900 articles concerned with nutritional awareness.

Shaddah Al-Dokhi, developer of 2contact, introduced her app as providing search engine services to facilitate the networking of services of handicraft professionals and offering information about them, as well as availing search engines for looking up and identifying companies and their locations Ayub Oki, owner of emstell Co, talked about his company that provides services for websites and app development in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Britain.

Abdulwahab Al-Hashemi, developer of perfect-fit app, said that his app provides personal trainer booking services in any field of sport. He stressed that his app is the first of its kind in Kuwait. Saad Al-Dosari, developer an app specialized in offering tourism discounts, said that his app is considered the first search engine for tourist discounts for all travel companies in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Al-Babtain presents the future of Ooredoo Business

KUWAIT: The Business to Digital Forum featured various presentations in the field of IoT and ICT. The first presentation was by head of B2B at Ooredoo Abdulaziz Al-Babtain who discussed the future of Ooredoo Business.

Al-Babtain suggested that businesses with Ooredoo are gaining more opportunities to expand in new markets and to even lower their costs. He added that a company does not have to build its own firewall, instead it can now partner in a new and stronger firewall on the cloud that Ooredoo can present to business companies, without being obliged to build their own firewall.

Al-Babtain said that the future is full of new options for businesses. He added that Ooredoo is shifting from an old model to another new model. He stressed that businesses can benefit from utilizing digital technology in data analysis and data security to the maximum degree. Al-Babtain suggested that Ooredoo centres, can provide businesses with cloud services that are secure and beneficial. He elaborated about the example of DDoS. He said that even young tech-savvy can cause damage to big companies and institutions.

Al-Babtain said that at Ooredoo businesses can be protected from such attacks. He added that providing the right kind of protection requires speed and capacity that most business companies lack. He suggested that this is exactly where Ooredoo can step in to serve businesses. Al-Babtain said that Ooredoo can host all your (business)



KUWAIT: Head of B2B at Ooredoo Abdulaziz Al-Babtain during a presentation.

applications and that you (as a business company) do not have to do so. He encouraged entrepreneurs saying: "Just come to us and within a week we can provide you with all the applications you need and they will be up and running as if they are working in your own company premises".

Al-Babtain iterated that business companies need not to risk their business working single-handedly with such applications. He suggested that Ooredoo can provide all those applications for businesses, with less cost and more productivity. Ooredoo indicated that the company is ready to support youth and their projects and also encouraged them to achieve and be innovative. The Ooredoo booth was comprised of state of the art technologies and showed the capabilities of our data center and also showcased the latest B2B offers.

Ooredoo 'Business to Digital' holds a panel discussion



Mijbil Al-Ayoub moderating a panel discussion.

OKUWAIT: The highlight of the forum was a discussion panel by some of the biggest names in the industry who discussed cyber threats. AI techniques and technical defense networks. Moderating and leading this panel was Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Al-Ayoub. The panel was comprised of Bilal Agha; Ooredoo B2B Marketing Director, Nezar Qasrawi; HP Territory Sales Manager, Mohammed Bakry; Cisco Head of Systems Engineer and Shadi Khuffash; Fortinet Regional Telco and MSSP Manager.

They discussed the threats of cybercrime and how it is changing in this modern day. In addition to the discussion of high-speed attacks and the most sophisticated threats today and how they play a dangerous game. There was also the matter of disrupt operations and undermining corporate trusts.

All panel members were in agreement that the digital environment was changing as digitization, intranet and cable systems increased; meaning that the influence of the networks borders was more than ever before and it was sim-

ply impossible to secure all of this.

In order to defend against these constantly evolving threats, security planning must go beyond mere research. AI techniques have led to the emergence of self-learning, self-defensive and capable networks to achieve this. They said adding that these techniques independently detect and respond ongoing attacks in real time, pointing out that electronic immune systems enable e-security to focus on higher-value tasks, and can cope with high-speed threats. It operates in all environments and cyberspace, including Clouds.



Yousef Alshallal with guests during the forum.



KUWAIT: (From right to left) Fajar Al-Matrouq, Fatma Al-Dashti, Jamal Al-Nasarallah and Talal Al-Fadhil during the forum.

Business

KIPCO announces net profit of KD 20.4m for first 9M of 2018

Group performance continues to fare well: CEO-Investment

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - announced a net profit of KD 8.32 million (\$27.4 million), or 3.43 fils per share (US\$ 1.1 cents), for the third quarter of 2018 (the three months ended September 30, 2018). This is a 30 per cent increase over the KD 6.42 million (US\$ 21.2 million) reported in the second quarter of the year and a 2 per cent increase over the profit reported for the same period last year.

For the first nine months of 2018, the company made a net profit of KD 20.4 million (\$67.3 million), or 9.44 fils per share (\$3.1 cents), compared to KD 22.3 million (\$73.6 million) reported for the same period last year. The company also reported a 10 per cent increase in its total revenue from continuing operations during the nine months of 2018, to KD 561 million (\$1.85 billion) from KD 508 million (\$1.68 billion) reported for the same period in 2017.

KIPCO's consolidated assets



Tariq Abdul Salam

stood at KD 10 billion (\$33 billion) compared to KD 10.3 billion (\$34 billion) reported at year-end 2017.

Tariq Abdul Salam, KIPCO's Chief Executive Officer - Investment, said: "Our performance throughout 2018 has fared well despite the challenges that regional economic circumstances continue to present. We attribute our stable performance to internal streamlining and capacity building across the Group, as we draw strength from our long-term strategy of portfolio diversification."

Renault's unstoppable SUV, all-new Duster in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Renault in the State of Kuwait welcomes the all-new Duster - the unstoppable SUV - to its Kuwait line-up. While offering a range of high-quality, new features, the reinvented SUV retains the same level of affordability that the name 'Duster' is celebrated for.

The all-new Renault Duster boasts brand-new exterior styling, delivering a distinctly assertive and robust look, as well as an upgrade in perceived quality with a totally redesigned interior for a comfortable and user-friendly driving experience. The Duster's roominess, affordability and off-road capabilities have long been recognized as the model's strengths and the all-new models continues to carry these desirable attributes.

The SUV's exterior has been given a more robust look thanks to the addition of a wide chrome-finish grille which extends to the head lights positioned at the car's front corners. A front skid plate reinforces the Duster's adventurer credentials and ensures that the vehicle never loses its smart looks. Finished with Renault's signature C-shaped lighting with LED daytime running lights the Duster is a modern SUV with a rugged personality.

Inside, the Duster is equipped with new, high-quality, driving aids



and new equipment, making it a genuine adventure-ready SUV which offers the versatility and comfort for everyday driving. On stepping inside the cabin, the noticeable difference in quality is instantly recognizable - packed with 'Easy Life' features like Hill Descent Control, Multiview camera and Blind Spot Warning, 4x4 monitor, automatic air conditioning, Remote Engine Start (GCC only), seven-inch touchscreen tablet and Renault smart card with keyless entry system - as well as quality trims and materials.

The all-new Duster is available in both 2WD and 4WD specifications and offers among the market's very best off-road capability. With a choice of two petrol engines: 1.6L (4x2) mated to a CVT automatic transmission, and 2.0L with automatic transmission (4x4), the Duster is an SUV equipped for any terrain. Renault Al-Babtain encourages Renault fans to stop by the showroom situated in Al Rai to view the 'best in class' model for themselves.

Ithmaar Holding, Ithmaar Bank report profit

KUWAIT: Ithmaar Holding B.S.C., a Bahrain-based financial institution, and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Ithmaar Bank B.S.C. (closed), a Bahrain-based Islamic retail bank, each announced their financial results for the third quarter of 2018 with both reporting profits.

The announcement by the Ithmaar Holding Chairman His Royal Highness Prince Amr Al-Faisal, who is also the Ithmaar Bank Chairman, follows the review and approval of both Board of Directors of the consolidated financial results for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2018.

Ithmaar Holding reported a net profit of \$11.34 million for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2018, as compared to a net loss of \$16.25 million for the same period in 2017. Net profit attributable to equity holders for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2018 was \$2.73 million, as compared to the \$27.04 million net loss reported for the same period in 2017. The increase net profit is mainly due to higher impairment provision in the previous period resulting from classification of an associate to held-for-sale. This has been reclassified as an associate during 2018. Earnings per share (EPS) for the nine month period increased to US Cents 0.09 compared to negative US Cents 0.93 for the same period in 2017.

The results included a net profit of \$0.51 million for the three-month period ended 30 September 2018, as compared to a net loss of \$14.66 million for the same period in 2017, and a net loss of \$2.12 million attributable to equity holders for the three-month period ended



Ahmed Abdul Rahim



Amr Mohammed Al-Faisal

30 September 2018, as compared to a net loss of \$17.80 million reported for the same period in 2017. EPS for the three-month period increased to negative US Cents 0.07 compared to negative US Cents 0.61 for the same period in 2017.

"On behalf of the Ithmaar Holding Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce that our 2018 results continue to highlight the turnaround in our financial performance," said HRH Prince Amr. "This achievement, which is made all the more significant by the challenging market conditions that characterized much of 2018, is testimony to the strength of the Group's core retail banking business," he said.

"The 2018 results show that total income for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2018 increased to \$334.52 million, a 10.6 percent increase from the \$302.34 million reported for the same period last year. This included total income of \$109.09 million for the three-month period ended 30 September 2018, a 15.7 percent increase compared to \$94.27 million reported for the same period last year. This was mainly due to higher share of profit after tax from associates resulting from reclassification from held-for-sale to associate during the period," said HRH Prince Amr. "As a result, our operating income for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2018 increased to \$211.47 million, a 16.8 percent increase from the \$181.08 million reported for the same period last year.

ing challenges, taking into consideration conflicts, the refugee crisis, high unemployment especially among the youth, uncertain prospects for private sector growth, and volatile oil prices.

In his presentation and subsequent discussion with the audience, Professor Maurice Obstfeld projected that the global economic expansion remains broadly solid for the moment but has become less balanced and may have plateaued in major economies. Global growth, for 2018 and 2019, which the IMF had projected at 3.9 percent earlier this year, is now projected at 3.7 percent for both years. Downward revisions are mainly due to outlook deterioration in some emerging market (EM) economies, after a weaker early 2018 outturn in several advanced economies (AEs).

Financial market conditions have differentially tightened for emerging and developing economies, he said, in a setting of high policy uncertainty - especially on trade and monetary policies.

Beyond the short-run prospects, medium-term global growth will fall (due to lower potential growth, unwinding of procyclical US fiscal stimulus).

Professor Obstfeld documented that EM spreads have widened, and currencies generally depreciated, while capital inflows have shrunk, especially for countries with weaker fundamentals. Past favorable financial conditions have left a legacy of higher corporate and sovereign debt exposures worldwide, but EMs might be especially vulnerable, given the present confluence of pressures, to global shocks - these could come from trade actions, slowdown in China, unexpected financial tightening in AEs, tensions within the European Union, and adverse geopolitical events.

Reflecting geopolitical concerns (including the US secondary sanctions relating to Iran) and supply failures (for example, in Venezuela), oil prices have risen this year despite some softening more recently. This development has helped lift the current and projected growth in GCC countries. For Kuwait in particular, a period of faster growth provides an opportunity to

This included an operating income of \$62.79 million for the three-month period ended 30 September 2018, a 16.6 percent increase compared to \$53.87 million for the same period last year," said HRH Prince Amr. Ithmaar Holding Chief Executive Officer, Ahmed Abdul Rahim, who is also the Ithmaar Bank Chief Executive Officer, said the financial performance of both institutions demonstrate that efforts to turn the Group around are paying off.

"Ithmaar Holding's balance sheet remained stable with total assets at \$7.99 billion as at 30 September 2018, compared to \$8.61 billion as at 31 December 2017," said Abdul Rahim. "Total owners' equity stood at \$187.29 million as at 30 September 2018, a 47.3% decrease compared to \$355.33 million as 31 December 2017, and the decrease is mainly due to the early adoption of the new Financial Accounting Standard (FAS 30) "Impairment, credit losses and onerous commitments" that was issued by the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI)," he said.

"Meanwhile, Ithmaar Bank's financial results show a net profit of BD4.76 million for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2018, a decrease of 17.8 percent compared to a net profit of BD5.79 million for the same period in 2017," said Abdul Rahim. "Net profit attributable to equity holders for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2018 was BD1.56 million, a decrease of 9.9 percent compared to the BD1.73 million net profit reported for the same period in 2017," he said.

"The results included a net profit of BD1.15 million of the three-month period ended 30 September 2018, a decrease of 18.3 percent compared to a net profit of BD1.41 million for the same period in 2017," said Abdul Rahim. "Net profit attributable to equity holders for the three-month period ended 30 September 2018 was BD0.19 million, a decrease of 0.5 percent compared to the BD0.19 million profit reported for the same period in 2017," he said.

Kaspersky Lab starts data processing for European users

KUWAIT: From today, malicious and suspicious files shared by users of Kaspersky Lab products in Europe will start to be processed in data centers in Zurich, initiating the first part of a relocation commitment made by the company in late 2017 under its Global Transparency Initiative. The move reflects Kaspersky Lab's determination to assure the integrity and trustworthiness of its products and is accompanied by the opening of the company's first Transparency Center, also in Zurich.

The relocation of data processing is part of a major infrastructure move designed to increase the resilience of the company's IT infrastructure to risks of data breaches and supply-chain attacks, and to further prove the trustworthiness of its products, services and internal processes.

From November 13, threat-related data coming from European users will start to be processed in two datacenters. These provide world-class facilities in compliance with industry standards to ensure the highest levels of security.

The data, which users have actively chosen to share with Kaspersky Lab, includes suspicious or previously unknown malicious files and corresponding meta-data that the company's products send to Kaspersky Security Network (KSN) for auto-

mated malware analysis. Files comprise only part of the data processed by Kaspersky Lab technologies, yet the most important one. Protection of customers' data, together with the safety and integrity of infrastructure is a top priority for Kaspersky Lab, and that is why the file processing relocation comes first and is expected to be fully accomplished by the end of 2019. The relocation of other types of data processed by Kaspersky Lab products, consisting of several kinds of anonymized threat and usage statistics, is planned to be conducted during later phases of the Global Transparency Initiative.

Today also marks the opening of Kaspersky Lab's first Transparency Center in Zurich, enabling authorized partners to access reviews of the company's code, software updates and threat detection rules, along with other activities. Through the Transparency Center, Kaspersky Lab will provide governments and partners with information on its products and their security, including essential and important technical documentation, for external evaluation in a secure environment.

These two major developments will be followed by the relocation of data processing for other regions and, in phase two, the move to Zurich of software assembly.

CEF, AFESD hold forum to discuss world, Kuwait economic outlook

KUWAIT: The IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance in Kuwait, jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, held a high-level symposium that discussed the world economic outlook and its implications for Kuwait and the region.

The IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) in Kuwait, jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), held a high-level symposium on "The World Economic Outlook, Implications for Kuwait and the Region" on November 12. The event was hosted at the Arab Fund's headquarters. The panel discussion was chaired and moderated by Dr Youssef Al-Ebraheem, Economic Advisor at Al-Diwan Al-Amiri. It included, as the keynote speaker, Professor Maurice Obstfeld, the IMF's Economic Counsellor and Research Department Director, and as discussants Professor Kamiar Mohaddes of Cambridge University, and Dr. Christopher Payne, Economic Advisor to the Governor at the Dubai International Financial Center.

During his introductory remarks and the subsequent discussion, Dr Youssef Al-Ebraheem indicated that the symposium was the ninth high-level forum organized by the CEF jointly with the AFESD, aimed at stimulating an open debate on the evolving economic challenges faced by policymakers in Kuwait and the wider Arab community. He discussed recent global economic developments, and overviewed the key reforms necessary to better prepare the Arab world tackle the result-



KUWAIT: (From left to right) Maurice Obstfeld, Dr Youssef Al-Ebraheem, Kamiar Mohaddes and Christopher Payne during the forum.

accelerate key fiscal and structural reforms, Professor Obstfeld said.

Avenues

He commented that there are abundant avenues to enhance the global trading system to produce higher growth for all countries. One important opportunity is in services trade. Global GDP could be raised substantially through reductions in trade barriers, including behind-the-border barriers. Unfortunately, the political climate may not be so favorable for further trade liberalization, despite the gains it offers. While the recent Pew survey shows that citizens throughout the world broadly favor trade (with even an uptick in sentiment since 2014), AE respondents, in particular, remain skeptical that trade generates jobs and wage growth. This may reflect slower growth in AEs, together with the stagnation of incomes at the lower reaches of the income distribution.

Professor Obstfeld pointed out that should current risks lead to a sharp slowdown, policymakers have less monetary and fiscal policy space to act compared with ten years ago. The lack of monetary space is especially

concerning for AEs, where core inflation rates as well as nominal interest rates generally remain low. This concern highlights the need to energetically undertake structural reforms, enhance financial stability frameworks, and rebuild fiscal buffers. Research for OECD economies shows, he said, that policy responses to crises are more effective when initial public debt levels are lower. A key requirement for a healthy global economy, according to Professor Obstfeld, is to enhance multilateral collaboration among countries - on trade, financial stability, international taxation, refugees, and climate, among other areas of common concern.

Following Professor Obstfeld's presentation, Professor Mohaddes and Dr Payne presented a complementary analysis of the reforms needed in Kuwait and the region to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the world economic outlook, discussing lessons from other countries' experiences in the Middle East and other regions. The floor was then open for discussion with the audience, whose interventions reflected a broad range of interests, including participants from the public sector, the banking and business community, academia, as well as representatives from international organizations.

Business

KAMCO reports KD 1.05 million net profit for first nine months of 2018

Results demonstrate success of our growth strategy: Sarkhou

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment firm with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced its financial results for the first nine months ended September 30, 2018. The Company recorded a net profit of KD 1.05 million, an increase of 6 percent over the prior year's KD 997 thousand for the same period. Earnings-per-share (EPS) reported for the period were 4.45 fils up from 4.20 fils in 2017. Revenue for the period was KD 8.6 million, up by 12 percent from KD 7.7 million for the same period in 2017. Fee income for the first nine months reached KD 6.12 million, a 34 percent increase from KD 4.57 million for the same period last year.

Chief Executive Officer of KAMCO, Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, said, "The consolidated financial results for the nine months witnessed improved growth due to implementing KAMCO's growth strategy and expansion plan,



Faisal Mansour Sarkhou

the future. We are confident and certain about the path we have followed for the company and the opportunities that

both in Kuwait and across the region. We currently have a strong liquidity base and financial profile that harness the full strength of our integrated business model, delivering growing returns on behalf of our valued clients and shareholders. The strength of our operating model and culture is evident in the consistency of our performance over time, and we remain optimistic about

have and will arise as we strive to enhance our offering."

He also said, "During Q3, KAMCO issued a KD 40 million bond with both Gulf Bank and KAMCO acting as joint lead managers and arrangers for the issuance. The transaction was covered in the shortest subscription period for a KD denominated bond in the history of Kuwait's market. We also successfully concluded our purchase of a 69.528 percent majority stake in Global Investment House ("Global"). This transaction was rated as one of the top 5 GCC M&A transactions, as of the end of the third quarter of 2018. We have increased the number of portfolios under management and will continue to seek alternative investment solutions, as well as introduce new product offerings, to help our clients reach their unique investment goals. We will continue to strengthen our investments, despite trading in challenging markets, while optimizing and enhancing

our products and services." In regards to the market during this period, investor interest continued to remain strong in GCC markets during Q3-2018, especially against the backdrop of recent market upgrades announced for Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The aggregate regional index recorded double digit growth for YTD-2018 led by attractiveness of blue-chip stocks across the market. On the economic front, the surge in oil price to a 4-year high has supported the government on the fiscal front, triggering upgrades to future economic growth projections. In addition, the government's support of the private sector coupled with efforts to grow the non-oil economy augurs well for corporate profitability, which remained upbeat for the first nine months of the year. This, along with a strong regional banking balance sheet, provides a conducive environment for accelerated growth in the near term.

Oil demand under growing threat from electric cars, cleaner fuel: IEA

LONDON: Electric vehicles and more efficient fuel technology will cut transportation demand for oil by 2040 more than previously expected, but the world may still face a supply crunch without enough investment in new production, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said yesterday.

Oil demand is not expected to peak before 2040, the Paris-based IEA said in its 2018 World Energy Outlook. The IEA's central scenario is for demand to grow by around 1 million barrels per day (bpd) on average every year to 2025, before settling at a steadier rate of 250,000 bpd to 2040 when it will peak at 106.3 million bpd.

"In the New Policies Scenario, demand in 2040 has been revised up by more than 1 million bpd compared with last year's outlook largely because of faster near-term growth and changes to fuel efficiency policies in the United States," the agency said. The IEA believes there will be around 300 million electric vehicles on the road by 2040, no change on its estimate a year ago. But it now expects those vehicles will cut demand by 3.3 million bpd, up from a previous estimated loss of 2.5 million bpd in its last World Energy Outlook.

"... Efficiency measures are even more important to stem oil demand growth: improvements in the efficiency of the non-electric car fleet avoid over 9 million bpd of oil demand in 2040," the IEA said.

Oil demand for road transport is expected to reach 44.9 million bpd by 2040, up from 41.2 million bpd in 2017, while industrial and petrochemical demand is forecast to reach 23.3 million bpd by 2040, from 17.8 million bpd in 2017. All global oil demand growth will stem from developing economies, led by China and India, while demand in advanced economies is expected to drop by more than 400,000 bpd on average each year to 2040, the IEA said.

The IEA, which advises Western governments on energy policy, maintained its forecast for the global car fleet to nearly double by 2040 from today, growing by 80 percent to 2 billion.

On the supply side, the United States, already the world's biggest producer, will dominate output growth to 2025, with an increase of 5.2 million bpd, from current levels around 11.6 million bpd. From that point onwards, the IEA expects US oil production to decline and the market share of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will climb to 45 percent by 2040, from closer to 30 percent today. — Reuters

Warnings of a 'domino effect' of protectionism as ASEAN meets

SINGAPORE: Asian leaders gathered for a summit yesterday amid warnings that the post-World War Two international order is in jeopardy and trade tensions between Washington and Beijing could trigger a "domino effect" of protectionist measures by other countries.

Malaysian Prime Mahathir Mohamad told a business forum ahead of the summit in Singapore that other developed countries would take a cue from the United States and China if their tit-for-tat tariff war is allowed to spiral.

"The trade tension between the two world powers is bound to create a domino effect that will affect trade reactions and will be a reason for other developed countries to adopt protective measures against developing countries, including the ASEAN countries," Mahathir said, referring to the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Chinese Premier Li Keqiang - for a second day - struck a conciliatory note on the trade spat, saying he was hopeful that the two sides will find a way to prevent it escalating further.

"I still hope we can hold talks based on mutual respect, balance and mutual benefits to resolve the issue. There are no winners in a trade war," Li said before his meeting with the ASEAN leaders. US Vice President Mike Pence will attend the Singapore meetings instead of President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly panned existing multilateral trade pacts as unfair and has railed against China over intellectual property theft, entry barriers to American businesses and a yawning US trade gap.

It was not clear if Li and Pence would meet separately on the sidelines in Singapore, which would be a prelude to a summit scheduled between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the end of the month in Buenos Aires.

Before he arrived in Singapore on Monday, Li said China would further open its economy in the face of rising protectionism, though he did not refer directly to China's bruising trade war with the United States.

"Rival blocs"

Mahathir, a veteran strongman of the region who in May returned to the prime minister's office he had occupied for 22 years, told reporters that the United States is "a colonial power" that uses "economic pressure to cow people". In his speech, he said "the rise of trade protectionism, resurgent nationalistic movements and inward-looking policies" seemed to be emerging even among ASEAN nations. That was echoed by summit host Singaporean Prime Lee Hsien Loong, who told a welcome ceremony for his ASEAN counterparts that "the international order is at a turning point".

"The existing free, open and rules-based multilateral system which has underpinned ASEAN's growth and stability has come under stress," he said, adding that it was unclear if the international order would break up into rival



SINGAPORE: Singapore's Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing (C) speaks during the 17th ASEAN Economic Community Council Meeting on the sidelines of the 33rd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in Singapore. — AFP

blocs. Returning to the theme as the leaders sat down to dinner, he said: "Countries are becoming insular, retreating from multilateralism and globalization, which has been the cornerstone of ASEAN peace and stability." China's Li is expected to rally support at the Singapore meetings for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a free trade pact that will encompass more than a third of the world's GDP.

"Free trade has, in some aspects, prevented war effectively," he said in a speech on Tuesday. "We are willing to

negotiate with all sides to push ahead with free trade internationally, and we're also willing to discuss a fairer system." The RCEP agreement includes 16 countries, including ASEAN nations, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea, but not the United States. The draft of a statement to be issued by RCEP nations later in the week, which was reviewed by Reuters, said the group would instruct "ministers and negotiators to work toward the full conclusion of the RCEP negotiations in 2019". — Reuters

UAE inks deal with Italy's Eni to boost gas output

ABU DHABI: State-owned Emirati energy giant ADNOC signed a concession deal with Italy's Eni yesterday for the production of natural gas from an offshore mega project, a statement said.

Under the 40-year contract, Eni was granted a 25-percent stake in the multi-billion dollar project in the Hail, Ghasha and Dalma fields, ADNOC said in a statement. The project aims at producing some 1.5 billion cubic feet per day of ultra-sour natural gas by the middle of next decade, the statement said. Sour-gas is gas

that contains significant amounts of hydrogen sulphide and carbon dioxide. Most of UAE reserves are sour-gas. ADNOC will retain 60 percent of the project and is looking for another foreign partner to acquire the remaining 15-percent stake.

The new contract comes amid a push by the United Arab Emirates to achieve self-sufficiency in gas production and become a net exporter. At present, the Gulf state imports a part of its gas requirements from Qatar through a pipeline.

Last week, UAE's supreme petroleum council approved investments worth \$132 billion over the next five years to boost oil and gas production. On Monday, ADNOC signed a cooperation deal with Saudi energy giant Aramco aimed at bolstering gas production.

On Sunday, it granted French major Total an exploration and production concession agreement for unconventional natural gas. — AFP

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What's On

Burgan Bank invites its 'Youth' customers for a free coffee at Richards Coffee Bar

Burgan Bank, in collaboration with "Richards Coffee Bar" is inviting its Youth customers to have a free coffee on Thursday, November 15th, 2018. Coffee shops and cafes are still considered one of the large hubs for young coffee lovers fitting in with their current lifestyles. In addition to a wide range of privileges associated with the Youth Account, each "Youth" Account holder will be entitled to a free cup of coffee on that day, all they

have to do is present their Youth ATM card to avail the free coffee. Richards Coffee Bar is situated in Qiblah - Kuwait City.

The Youth Account is designed for the Bank's customers between the ages of 15 - 25 years, and seek to attain an account which represents their current lifestyle and helps in planning a successful financial future. There is no KD limit to open an account, and no minimum balance

required to maintain it. Furthermore, account holders receive free prepaid card and an ATM card which entitles them to discounts at select merchants and restaurants. To request more information, please follow Burgan Bank's official Instagram account @Burganbankkuwait or visit your nearest Burgan Bank branch or contact the call center, or as well as by visiting the bank's website on www.burgan.com.



Continental honors delegates of Shooting Championship

The Kuwait Continental Hotel Management has held a prestigious dinner for the guests of the Kuwait Continental Hotel Group who participated in the 8th Asian Air Ballistic Shooting and Eleven

Shooting Championship held in Kuwait from November 2 to 12. The countries that participated included Syria, Iraq, Japan, India, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The Kuwait Continental Hotel Group welcomed Kamal Hussein, General Manager of Kuwait Continental Hotels, who wished them a good stay in Kuwait as well as winning the championship. On their part, the heads of the participating teams thanked the management of the shooting club and the management of the hotel for this gesture and hospitality.



Boursa Kuwait organizes a dedicated 'Blood Drive' day

Building on its efforts to give back to the community, Boursa Kuwait recently organized a blood drive, in partnership with the Kuwait Blood Bank, whereby a full day was dedicated to this initiative to ensure the maximum number of employee volunteers were able to participate and donate blood. The 'drive' was held at the Boursa Kuwait premises.

The aim of this initiative was to instill the sense of social responsibility among Boursa Kuwait employees, and encourage them to contribute to the wellbeing

of their community through this simple act of charity. The Boursa Kuwait 'Blood Drive' initiative witnessed great interest from voluntary employee donors, demonstrating the altruistic spirit of its employees, and their strong belief in the importance of supporting the provision of adequate blood supplies for those in need. The Blood Drive is one of a series of CSR initiatives that was held by Boursa Kuwait throughout the year, as part of its commitment to playing an active humanitarian role in supporting the community in which it operates.



PAAET organizes vaccination campaign

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) recently organized a winter vaccination campaign at its headquarters in Fahaheel. Speaking on the occasion, PAAET director, Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf thanked the MOH and stressed

that PAAET was always keen on organizing various activities for the best interest of its employees. On her part, PAAET's PR and media office manager and official spokesperson, Fatima Al-Azmi thanked MOH and all parties that participated in organizing the campaign.



Palestinian Cultural Center exhibition

The Palestinian Cultural Center, in cooperation with the Embassy of the State of Palestine in Kuwait, is pleased to invite you to attend our second exhibition of 2018. The motto is "Jerusalem Calls Us" and the exhibition will lovingly display Palestinian embroidery, art, and crafts expressing the Palestinian national identity as well as containing an array of books, ceramics and Palestinian culinary dishes. On the final day, Thursday at 6:00 pm, the Coral Zaman Band will perform a Palestinian Dabkeh. All are welcome to join us in solidarity with Palestine and its righteous cause.

Date: Monday 19th, Thursday November 22nd
Time: 10:00 am - 13:30 pm & 16:30 pm - 20:30 pm
Place: Women's Cultural and Social Society
Khaldiya Block 2, Al-Orouba Street



Birthday Greetings

Happy Birthday Berry!

Happy birthday to Berry, our precious gift from Almighty Allah. May Allah bless you with good health, wealth, love and happiness forever. The best wishes from your lovely parents, Grand Parents and from all family members and friends.



Brazilian music show

The Embassy of Brazil in Kuwait, in partnership with Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamia, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel, Flydubai and Burgan Bank, has the pleasure to inform you that on Sunday, 18th November 2018, 7:00 pm, the Brazilian musician group Reco do Bandolim and Choro Livre will be performing live at the Yarmouk Cultural Center. The show is open to all public and is free of charge.

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

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

مستشفى دار الشفاء Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele: 1802 555 @daralshifa
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DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

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

Academic Certificates - Training

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

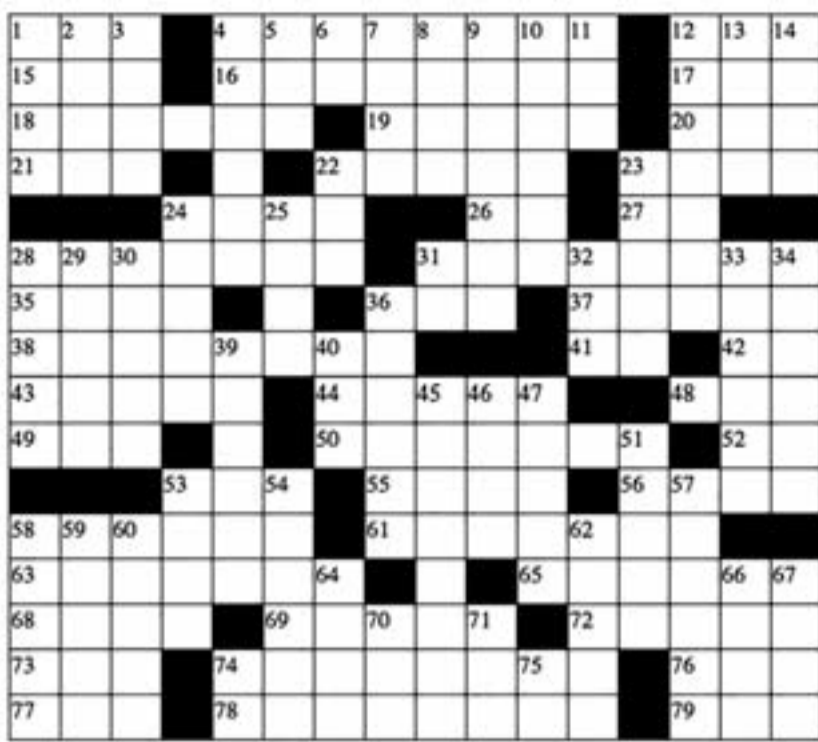
Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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

Stars

CROSSWORD 2060



ACROSS

1. A barrier constructed to contain the flow or water or to keep out the sea.
4. Acting according to certain accepted standards.
12. In favor of (an action or proposal etc.).
15. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
16. Of or relating to or characteristic of Bavaria or its people.
17. Noisy talk.
18. The basic unit of money in Finland.
19. A set of data arranged in rows and columns.
20. A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
21. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
26. 16 ounces.
27. Being nine more than forty.
28. A festival featuring African-American culture.
35. Earn on some commercial or business transaction.
37. Of or in or relating to the nose.
38. One who intrudes or pushes himself forward.
41. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
42. A state in northwestern United States on the Pacific.
43. An offensive name for an unskilled Asian laborer.
44. Any of various plants of the family Cruciferae having edible pungent-tasting leaves.
48. (Scotland) A small loaf or roll of soft bread.
49. To what extent or amount or degree.
50. United States filmmaker (born in 1939).
52. (Sumerian) Goddess personifying earth.
55. Biennial Eurasian plant usually having a swollen edible root.
56. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
58. Lacking motor coordination.
61. Any of various Old World herbs of the genus Anchusa having one-sided clusters of trumpet-shaped flowers.
63. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
65. Similar to the color of a ripe orange.
68. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
69. Genus of large deciduous nut-bearing trees.
72. Of or related to the amnion or characterized by developing an amnion.
73. Of southern Europe.
76. Electrical conduction through a gas in an applied electric field.
77. Remaining after all deductions.
78. (Greek mythology) An Athenian inventor who built the Labyrinth of Minos.
79. Any of various trees of the genus Ulmus.

DOWN

1. Fallow deer.
2. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
3. God of death.
4. A member of the Circassian people living east of the Black Sea.

5. The cry made by sheep.
6. Being one more than three.
7. A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
8. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
9. A biter who takes dainty repeated bites.
10. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
11. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
12. Type genus of the Pyralidae.
13. The basic unit of money in South Africa.
14. (informal) Being satisfactory or in satisfactory condition.
22. Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
23. Of a pale purple color.
24. Declare invalid.
25. A flat float (usually made of logs or planks) that can be used for transport or as a platform for swimmers.
29. Upright deciduous plant with crimson pods and seeds.
30. A mark to indicate a direction or relation.
31. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
32. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
33. New Zealand timber tree resembling the cypress.
34. Any of numerous venomous fanged snakes of warmer parts of both hemispheres.
36. A unit of weight used in some Spanish speaking countries.
39. One appointed to represent a city or university or corporation in business transactions.
40. (computer science) A coding system that incorporates extra parity bits in order to detect errors.
45. Thin epithelial membrane lining the ventricles of the brain and the spinal cord canal.
46. A detailed description of design criteria for a piece of work.
47. Of or relating to any of the group of Sotho languages.
51. State in northeastern India.
53. A monocotyledonous genus of the family Iridaceae.
54. Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus Acacia.
57. Ancient city is southeastern Italy where Hannibal defeated the Romans in 216 BC.
59. Someone given to teasing (as by mocking or stirring curiosity).
60. Having or showing knowledge and skill and aptitude.
62. A mountain range in western Russia extending from the arctic to the Caspian Sea.
64. Something causes misery or death.
66. A young woman.
67. Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
70. (British) A linear measure of 16.5 feet.
71. Aromatic bulb used as seasoning.
74. A bachelor's degree in religion.
75. A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if your sexual needs are one of the issues you seem to place great focus on today. You desire power and control. These desires may lead to greater interest in healing and investing. The great mysteries of life and death seem to intrigue you. You may feel much support and harmony in your life now. Surrounded by friends and loved ones is the place for you. You may find yourself having a great time this evening surrounded by the children and younger people in your life. It seems these younger people look at you with much admiration and strive to be more like you. Continue to set a good example for these children. Aries. Great reward could come from investing in the lives of others.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You know who and what are the priorities in your life. Your sense of appreciation is heightened. This is a time you are able to beam with pride when you look at your life situation. You are highly respected and others admire you for what a success you have become. Be sure to appreciate the fact that others seem to always look to you for advice and guidance. Remember to take time for you. You may tend to take the problems of those you love to personally. You can not carry the weight of the world on your shoulders alone. Spend time this evening to unwind. This could prevent you from becoming overwhelmed.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This seems to be a time of great focus on your relationship. You may find yourself searching for and discovery all of the beauty this world has to offer. You find beauty in your surroundings each today, but today you seem to have a greater appreciation for it. This is a very satisfying experience for you. Peace and harmony are great desires in your world and you are entering a phase where you will feel this way often. You may find that your relationships are the key to your emotional success. You may find yourself surrounded with love and support today. Focus on your loved one today and you may find this is where your needs will be fed.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Things really seem to be going your way. It is your time to shine. You may feel as if the world is revolving around you. Enjoy each breath you take. Live life to the fullest and seek the beauty in all that surrounds you. You are beaming with pride and a sense of accomplishment and others will be drawn to you today. Enjoy this feeling and spread joy wherever you go.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

If an emotional argument is what you are seeking today may just in fact be your day. You may feel a lack of support and blocked at every turn. Use your imagination and ability to think outside of the box to find your answers. Others may see you detached or cool on a personal level today. Your tolerance levels may be low and your temper short. You are drawn now to the unique and unusual in this world. Make your ideas count. Now is a great time to try new things and visit new places.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Out with the old and in with the new. Your focus is on ambition, security, and responsibility are areas in your life where you have placed major focus. There are big decisions in your life concerning these areas that need to be made. Knowing you have fallen short of goals in the past has you extremely determined at this point in your life. The easy way is not always the best way. You may reap great reward from your determination. Remember, you can only count on yourself to accomplish your goals. We live in a "what's in it for me" kind of world.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

If an emotional argument is what you are seeking today may just in fact be your day. You may feel a lack of support and blocked at every turn. Use your imagination and ability to think outside of the box to find your answers. Others may see you detached or cool on a personal level today. Your tolerance levels may be low and your temper short. You are drawn now to the unique and unusual in this world. Make your ideas count. Now is a great time to try new things and visit new places. You should find today as one where you are able to make new friends and have great conversations with everyone you cross paths with.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

All eyes are on you today and that is just what you crave. You have a great desire to be the center of attention. You crave appreciation for your gifts and talents. This will be a time you are able to look back on with pride. You are drawn to romance. This is a great time to spend with a special someone. Share your passion, whether it be cooking a meal together or painting a picture. Involve the one you love in a project tonight. This may bring you closer and the results good be amazing.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If an emotional argument is what you are seeking today may just in fact be your day. You may feel a lack of support and blocked at every turn. Use your imagination and ability to think outside of the box to find your answers. Others may see you detached or cool on a personal level today. Your tolerance levels may be low and your temper short. You are drawn now to the unique and unusual in this world. Make your ideas count. Now is a great time to try new things and visit new places. You should find today as one where you are able to make new friends and have great conversations with everyone you cross paths with.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Details are important today. Be aware of what you say. Be sure anything you put on social media communicates what you intended. Words can be misinterpreted, and you may not have an opportunity to correct a misunderstanding. Written words are a permanent record, and they can come back to haunt you. Relationships can be permanently damaged because the reader did not get the message that was intended. Choose your words wisely today.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be feeling a need for change. A deep desire for emotional security takes hold now and you feel your most content when surrounded by family and those closest to you. Relationships are a priority in your world now. You feel as if things in your life are monotonous and you are ready to spice things up. This may mean a shiny new car purchase, a vacation, or simply surrounding yourself with a new group of friends. Any direction you choose, this will be a time of excitement and give you a fresh start and a more focused outlook. We all need a bit of change from time to time. Keep life interesting and exciting.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may feel an emotional distance to your loved ones at this time. You are deeply focused on your ideas at this time. Personal concerns are trivial to you as your level of thinking and focus deepens to that which is new, edgy, and unusual. An abstract way of thinking. You are fascinated by the more eccentric things in life. You may find that you are surrounding yourself with like-minded individuals as you have no tolerance for those who do not appreciate your points of views on matters. Within the company of these individuals you find your communication skills to be on point today and feel as if you are in your element.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Jewels and Gemstones

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

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

AGATE DIAMOND MORGANITE SPINEL
ALEXANDRITE EMERALD OBSIDIAN SUGLITE
AMBER GARNET ONYX SUNSTONE
AMETHYST HIDDENITE OPAL TANZANITE
AMMOLITE IOLITE PEARL TOPAZ
AQUAMARINE IRONSTONE RUBELITE TOURMALINE
BERYL JADE RUBY TURQUOISE
BLOODSTONE JASPER SAPPHIRE VARSICITE
CITRINE MALACHITE SERPENTINE ZIRCON
CORAL MOONSTONE SPHENE ZOISITE
DANBURITE

Insects

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

ANTS APHID BEDBUG BEETLE BUMBLEBEE BUTTERFLY CATERPILLAR CICADA COCKROACH CRICKET DRAGONFLY
EARWIG FIREFLY FLEA FLIES HORNET LACEWING LADYBUG LICE LOCUST MAYFLY
MOSQUITO MOTH SILKWORM SILVERFISH TERMITE THRIP TICKS WASP WEEVIL WORMS

The hidden message is: GRASSHOPPER

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018



RIP Stan Lee

In this file photo taken on July 18, 2017, Comic-book writer, editor, and publisher Stan Lee places his hands in cement during his hand and footprint ceremony at TCL Chinese Theatre IMAX, in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos

Stan Lee, Marvel legend and father of superheroes, dies at 95

Marvel legend Stan Lee, who revolutionized pop culture as the co-creator of iconic superheroes like Spider-Man and The Hulk who now dominate the world's movie screens, has died. He was 95 years old. Lee, the face of comic book culture in the United States, died early Monday in Los Angeles after suffering a number of illnesses in recent years. "With a heavy heart, we share our deepest condolences with his daughter and brother," said Marvel Comics and its owner The Walt Disney Company in a statement.

"We honor and remember the creator, voice and champion of Marvel... Every time you open a Marvel comic, Stan will be there." The New Yorker, known for his distinctive tinted glasses and impish grin, ended up in the comics business by accident, thanks to an uncle who got him a job when he was a teenager filling artists' inkwells and fetching coffee. "I felt someday I'd write the 'Great American Novel' and I didn't want to use my real name on these silly little comics," Lee once said, explaining why he had forsaken his given name, Stanley Lieber.

Lee rose through the ranks to become a comics writer-making millions of superhero fans dream of his fantastic universes and humans with extraordinary powers-and eventually led the Marvel empire for decades as its publisher. From Spidey to Black Panther to the X-Men and the Fantastic Four, Lee collaborated with other authors and illustrators to put his lively imagination on the page. Iron Man, Thor and Doctor Strange would follow-and today, all three heroes have multi-film franchises that rake in hundreds of millions of dollars. "Stan Lee was as extraordinary as the characters he created," said Disney CEO Bob Iger. "A superhero in his own right to Marvel fans around the world, Stan had the power to inspire, to entertain, and to connect."

'The King' and 'The Man'

Lee has appeared in cameo roles in nearly every movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe-including as a bus driver in "Avengers: Infinity War," a film that united many of the indelible characters he brought to life. "I used to be embarrassed because I was just a comic book writer while other people were building bridges or going on to medical careers," Lee said. "And then I began to realize: entertainment is one of the most important things in people's lives. Without it, they might go off the deep end."

Born on December 28, 1922 to Jewish immigrants who migrated to the United States from Romania, Lee got that first assistant's job at age 17 at Timely Comics and began rising through the ranks. After a stint in the US Army during World War II Lee returned to comics, teaming up with illustrator Jack Kirby in the 1960s to invent the Fantastic Four and Spider-Man. It was a partnership for the ages-Kirby, the artist, was "The King" and Lee, the writer, was "The Man."

Together they would pioneer new ways to tell stories, with deeply flawed heroes and serious themes-all while maintaining the wonder of traditional superhero lore. Even villains showed complicated feelings. "When the time came to create a teenaged hero for Marvel Comics, I decided to depict him as a bumbling real-life teenager who by some miracle had acquired a super power," Lee wrote in a 1977 column, "How I Invented Spider-Man." "If you suddenly gained the muscle power of a hundred men and could outwrestle King Kong, it doesn't mean you still wouldn't have to worry about dandruff or acne, right?"

The Marvel Universe

Lee and his collaborators churned out hit after hit and he took over at Marvel in the 1960s, creating the "Marvel

Universe"-all of the heroes existed in the same time and story crossovers were frequent. It's a model now adopted by the Hollywood producers beyond the Marvel Cinematic Universe-which releases its 21st film, "Captain Marvel," in March next year. Lee formally left Marvel in the 1990s but remained chairman emeritus. He was the brand's most recognizable face, giving lectures and speaking at comics conventions. "My father loved all of his fans," his daughter JC told Hollywood celebrity news portal TMZ. "He was the greatest, most decent man."



In this file photo taken on October 20, 2016 Executive Director of the film, Stan Lee poses for photographers at the world premiere of Marvel Studios' 'Doctor Strange' in Hollywood, California.



In this file photo taken on June 28, 2017 executive producer/comic book writer Stan Lee attends the world premiere of "Spider-man: Homecoming" at the TCL Chinese Theater in Hollywood, California.



In this file photo taken on December 2, 2016 US comic-book writer Stan Lee attends a talk show during the Tokyo Comic Con in Chiba, a suburb of Tokyo.



In this file photo taken on August 22, 2017 comic book writer Stan Lee attends the 'Extraordinary: Stan Lee', A Special Tribute Event hosted by Chris Hardwick at the Saban Theater in Beverly Hills, California.



In this April 16, 2002, file photo, Stan Lee smiles during a photo session in his office in Santa Monica.



Stan Lee, center, poses with Hulk actor Lou Ferrigno, right, and Thor actor Eric Kramer on set in 1988.



In this file photo taken on January 29, 2018 comic book writer Stan Lee (left) and actor Chadwick Boseman attend the world premiere of Marvel Studios' "Black Panther," in Hollywood, California.



This photo shows 17-year-old rapper Elevenfinger (second right) posing with students in scout uniforms at a government school in Bangkok. — AFP photos



This photo shows 17-year-old rapper Elevenfinger (center) encouraging students to take part in a rap battle during a music club session at a government school in Bangkok.

Straight outta Bangkok: Thai rappers lay into junta, social conformity

“A country killing the people... doesn't give a damn about its children,” spits 17-year-old Elevenfinger, one of a legion of acerbic young rappers ripping into Thailand's politics, dire education system and calcifying social mores. Thailand's hip-hop scene used to be anodyne, imitating the swagger-and profanity-of its American forefather but not the socially-charged lyrics. But that has started to change as pugnacious, political rhymes replace the bubble-gum verses, taking swipes at the ruling junta and the kingdom's sharp social hierarchies. YouTube videos by teens and schoolchildren in uniform—some as young as 12 — have garnered massive social media followings. “You've built the skytrains but education's a dead end,” says one of Elevenfinger's lyrics-in a video called “Equality” about Thailand's poor education system, which is ranked among the worst in Asia.

“It's like governments don't want people to think,” Elevenfinger, whose real name is Thanayut Na Ayuthaya, told AFP. His videos presaged the extraordinary success of RAD—“Rap Against Dictatorship”—whose lyrical attack on the junta has racked up over 30 million views on YouTube. The song “Prathet Ku Mee” (What My Country's Got?) delivers stinging verses against censorship, corruption and the lack of elections since the military seized power in 2014. “We want people who listen to the song to come out and speak their minds,” said Jacoboi, a co-founder of the group, whose neck boasts a tattoo of unbalanced scales of justice.

‘Not taught to think’

In Thai schools, students are expected to learn most subjects by rote and are taught deference to age, status as well as army-scripted



Students singing along with 17-year-old rapper Elevenfinger's (second right) rap “Equality” during a music club session at a government school in Bangkok.

rules covering everything from the length of haircuts to the educational curriculum. That has cramped their ability to problem-solve, Jacoboi says. “Thais are not taught to think critically.” Like many Thais brought up under that system, rappers usually did not engage in political conversations, he added. But that changed as the country lurched deeper into crisis.

A decade-long power struggle between the deeply conservative royalist elite and a grass-roots movement loyal to billionaire ex-premier Thaksin Shinawatra has seen two coups and countless rounds of bloody street protest. While older Thais have wearied of the conflict, anger at the ageing political class governing their lives has intensified among many young people. And

the ruling generals have provided ample material, as they clumsily try to control dissent.

“The young generation feel frustrated and want to express themselves against hierarchical teachings, social boundaries and the order to be “good,” explains Anusorn Unno, a sociologist at Thammasat University. “And rap has given them the space to rebel.”

‘Break the walls’

At a Bangkok state school around 30 students, aged between 12 and 15, rehearse rhymes in a club founded by Elevenfinger. The session begins with the apprentices taking turns answering a question designed to trigger discussion: “What do you want to see improved in

this school?” Then come the rap battles: covering everything from the mundanities of school life and unrequited love to harder-edged issues like growing up in slums and bullying. “Without rap, I would not be so willing to talk about these things,” 13-year-old rapper named Peachfullz, wearing boy scout attire, told AFP.

Elevenfinger, known for his verses on the social stigma of living in the Thai slums where he was born, started the club a year ago as a way to “break the walls” of Thai education. “I know these students have got something to say. And I want this room to be their safe zone to say whatever they want,” he explained. As Thailand gears up for elections early next year, dissent is spilling out across subcultures from pro-democracy punks to graffiti artists mocking the rich and powerful.

But rap has brought social critiques mainstream. And with the success of RAD's viral anti-junta rap, analysts say the genie cannot be put back in the bottle. Sociologist Anusorn says rap could be a game-changer for Thai society and “take down Thailand's old hegemony and create new cultural possibilities”. In a small recognition of its power, junta chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha backed down from veiled threats about “Prathet Ku Mee” as the RAD video went viral.

But risks remain for rappers who want to denounce the strongmen. Authorities have threatened to probe the musicians for possible violation of laws on spreading “false” information. “I am a little scared of the authorities,” 22-year-old K.J.let, the youngest member of RAD, said. “But I can testify that these are my views on how I see my country. It's my truth. And I will keep on rapping.”—AFP



A 17-year-old rapper Elevenfinger (right) leading a lesson on rap battles during a music club session at a government school in Bangkok.



A 17-year-old rapper Elevenfinger (top center) talking to students during a music club session at a government school in Bangkok.

Surprise giant ‘corpse flower’ blooms at Indonesia farm

An Indonesian farmer was startled to discover a rare “corpse flower” blooming in his plantation on the island of Sumatra. Rosihan Anwar Hasibuan, a local palm oil farmer, said he came across the mystery flower when he was checking on his crops. “I saw a weird object,” he said. “I thought it was a ghost.” The *Amorphophallus titanum* flower is hard to glimpse because it can take up to 10 years to bloom and lasts only for a few days. It is known for its unpleasant smell which has been compared to rotting meat, giving it the nickname “corpse flower”.

Unaware of what it was, Hasibuan resorted to social media for help. “I took pictures and uploaded them to Facebook,” he said, adding that many people replied with the answer. The phallos-shaped flower is the largest in the world, reaching heights of up to three meters (10 feet). Many “corpse flowers” are cultivated in botanical gardens across the world, drawing huge crowds when they bloom, but in their native Sumatra they have faced threats from deforestation. — AFP



Amorphophallus titanum (corpse flower).

NE'EMAH: A new era of Oriental fragrances for our modern world

Mohammed Ne'emah is the fruit of three generations of perfume makers. Rich with this heritage and expertise, Mohammed Ne'emah has set out to establish a new era of Oriental fragrances for our modern world. NE'EMAH, established in 1997, was built upon the uncompromising search of quality ingredients and sophisticated simplicity of fragrance compositions.

Network

NE'EMAH's presence spans the globe from West to

East. Customers can enjoy its scents via the brand's e-commerce site, www.NEEMAH.com in addition to its 10 year exclusive partnership with Sephora in the GCC region. In 2018, NE'EMAH opened its two flagship boutiques in Kuwait's Avenues Mall (Phase 4, Arcades) and Dubai Mall's Perfumery & Co section.

Unique Selling Point

Brand's unique selling point is called, “Journey Through Scents”. It serves as a storytelling approach in

interpreting the brand's DNA in every venture we undertake. The USP portrays the brand values of versatility, purity, and authenticity in every aspect of the fragrance from its inception to creation to going on shelf.

Assortment

NE'EMAH boasts a unisex perfume range using unique ingredients from around the world, combined to create one of a kind unique scents tailored for its clientele. The scents are rooted in the GCC with international

appeal catering to lovers of floral, fruity, spicy, woody, and sweet. The traditional collection represents a range that is proudly symbolic of an age-old tradition of fragrance application. From Single/Blended Oils, Dihn Oudh Oils, Bokhour & Maamoul, and Ambient Sprays.



Lifestyle | Features

Marie Antoinette's exquisite jewels go under the hammer

Marie Antoinette's dazzling diamonds and pearls, unseen in public for two centuries, will go on sale in Geneva today in what is being billed as one of the most important royal jewelry auctions in history. The treasures were secretly whisked out of Paris in 1791 as King Louis XVI, his queen and their children prepared to escape during the French Revolution. They are part of a major collection, held by the Italian royal House of Bourbon-Parma, that is being sold by Sotheby's auction house.

Out of the more than 100 lots, 10 pieces belonged to the ill-fated Marie Antoinette, the last queen of France before the revolution. She was guillotined in Paris in October 1793 at the age of 37. "It is the sale of the 21st century. Because how do you top Marie Antoinette?" Andres White Correal, Sotheby's senior director of jewelry, told AFP last month. The highlight is Marie Antoinette's Pearl, a natural pearl and diamond pendant valued at \$1-2 million (\$70,000-1.75 million euros).

A natural pearl and diamond necklace composed of three rows of more than 100 slightly graduated pearls is expected to fetch \$200,000-300,000, as are a pair of pearl and diamond pendant earrings. A monogrammed ring containing a lock of her hair is valued at \$8,000-10,000. A fine natural pearl and diamond necklace is meanwhile priced at \$40,000-70,000, while a double ribbon bow diamond brooch is estimated at \$50,000-80,000.



In this file photo the 'Queen Marie Antoinette's Pearl' (center) with an estimated value of £767,500-£1,534,000 GBP is pictured with other jewelry during a photocall for the sale of 'Royal Jewels from the Bourbon Parma Family' at Sotheby's auction house in London.

'Imbued with history'

"It is one of the most important royal jewelry collections ever to appear on the market and each and every jewel is absolutely imbued with history," said Daniela Mascetti, deputy chair of Sotheby's jewelry Europe. The jewels followed a winding path highlighting European power dynamics in the 18th and 19th centuries. According to accounts written by the queen's lady in waiting,

Madame Campan, Marie Antoinette spent an entire evening in the Tuileries Palace wrapping all her diamonds, rubies and pearls in cotton and enclosing them in a wooden chest.

They were sent to Brussels, governed by her sister Archduchess Marie-Christine, before being sent on to the French queen's native Austria, and to the safe-keeping of her nephew, the emperor. In 1792, the royal family was imprisoned in Paris. The king and queen were executed the next year, and their 10-year-old son, Louis XVIII died in captivity. Only their daughter, Marie Therese of France, survived. She was sent to Austria in 1796, where she was given her mother's jewels.

She had no children herself, but passed on the jewels to her niece and adopted daughter, Louise of France, Duchess of Parma, who in turn left them to her son, Robert I (1848-1907), the last ruling Duke of Parma. They have been privately owned by relatives ever since. Today's Bourbon-Parma sale also contains jewelry belonging to Charles X, including a diamond tiara; jewels from empress Marie Therese of Austria-Marie Antoinette's mother-and Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I, who died in 1916. The fleur de lys tiara, made in 1912, contains diamonds from the collection of Charles X, Marie Antoinette's brother-in-law, who died in 1836. It is estimated at \$350,000-550,000. — AFP



A model wears The 'Queen Marie Antoinette's Pearl' with an estimated value of £767,500-£1,534,000 GBP on Queen Marie Antoinette's pearl and diamond necklace, together with a Queen Marie Antoinette's diamond brooch (left), a pair of Queen Marie Antoinette's pearl and diamond pendant earrings with an estimated value of £77,000-£154,000 GBP and Queen Marie Antoinette's diamond and woven hair ring, during a photocall for the sale of 'Royal Jewels from the Bourbon Parma Family' at Sotheby's auction house in London. — AFP photos



'Incomparable' pink diamond could smash record at Geneva auction

An exceptionally rare 19-carat pink diamond goes under the hammer in Geneva yesterday, when it could fetch \$50 million (44 million euros), setting a new record for a stone of its kind. The Pink Legacy used to belong to the Oppenheimer family, which for decades ran the De Beers diamond mining company, but auction house Christie's refused to say who the current owner was. Christie's international head of jewelry, Rahul Kadakia, described The Pink Legacy as "one of the world's greatest diamonds". The rectangular-cut diamond has been graded "fancy vivid"-the highest possible grade of color intensity.

Christie's has noted that in the salesroom, fancy vivid pink diamonds over 10 carats are "virtually unheard of" and that only four vivid pink diamonds or over 10 carats have ever been offered at auction. One of them, the nearly 15-carat Pink Promise, was sold last November at a Christie's auction in Hong Kong for \$32.5 million. That amounts to \$2.176 million per carat, which remains the world auction record price per carat for any pink diamond.

Record price possible

Eddie LeVian, CEO of jewelers Le Vian, said that record could fall at yesterday's auction, which is being held at the ultra-luxurious Four Seasons des Bergues hotel on the banks of Lake Geneva. "We've recently witnessed a meteoric rise in the number of the world's ultra-high net worth individuals who view rare, natural fancy color diamonds as investments," Le Vian said in a statement. "I therefore believe the Pink Legacy will beat the current world auction record," he added.

The stone was discovered in a South African mine around a century ago and was probably cut in the 1920 and has not been altered since, Christie's said. "Imagine a domino that you have cut the corners off of," Jean-Marc Lunel, an international jewelry specialist at Christie's, recently told AFP, pointing out that the cut is a "classical so-called emerald cut", which stands out from the typical, more rounded, multi-faceted cuts used today. The classic rectangular cut is traditionally used for white stones, but is rare for pink diamonds. Christie's said the Pink Legacy is "the largest and finest Fancy Vivid Pink diamond ever offered at auction by the company," calling the stone "incomparable." "It is probably the most beautiful (specimen) ever presented at public auction," Lunel said. — AFP

The Pink Legacy, a 18.96 carat fancy vivid pink diamond once owned by Oppenheimer family is displayed during a press preview ahead of sales by Christie's auction house in Geneva. — AFP photos



French fashion giant Jean Paul Gaultier goes fur-free

Animal rights groups hailed on Monday Jean Paul Gaultier's announcement that he is joining the growing ranks of fashion designers to ban fur from their collections. The enfant terrible of French couture announced the decision in a television interview on Saturday, describing the methods used to kill the animals as "absolutely deplorable." "Fur is more sensual than fake fur, but you can find other ways of staying warm," the 66-year-old told Canal+.

Animal campaign group PETA said that "corks are popping" at its headquarters after Gaultier's announcement. "This decision is a sign of the times," its international



French designer Jean Paul Gaultier appears at the end of his Haute Couture Fall/Winter 2018/2019 collection show in Paris. — Reuters

director Mimi Bekhechi said in a statement. "The vast majority of people want nothing to do with items that have come from animals who were caged and electrocuted or bludgeoned to death." Brands have come under increasing pressure from both animal rights groups and shoppers themselves to ditch fur, and Gaultier's move follows similar announcements from brands including Armani and Versace.

Ralph Lauren, Vivienne Westwood and Stella McCartney are also among designers now opting for fake fur or other alternatives. France's leading animal charity, the SPA, said it "hopes Jean Paul Gaultier's example will be quickly followed by other couturiers and brands". "The breeding conditions and slaughter of these animals represents the worst cruelty," said SPA chief Jacques-Charles Fombonne.

PETA activists had targeted Gaultier along with other fashion houses in its anti-fur campaign, invading his Paris store in 2006. French fur-makers expressed disappointment at his announcement. La Fourrure Francaise, an industry body, said Gaultier's decision was "based on false information peddled as much by animal activists as by the fake fur industry". "To allow him to make a clear choice, we would be happy to show Jean Paul Gaultier that the breeding and slaughtering techniques respect all European and French regulations on the treatment of animals," the group said. Since starting out as an assistant to Pierre Cardin, Gaultier has set a pioneering path, introducing older men and fuller women to the catwalk as well as the iconic cone bra immortalized by Madonna. — AFP

Magritte painting fetches \$26.8 million in NY

A painting by Rene Magritte sold for \$26.8 million Monday at a Sotheby's auction in New York, setting a record for a work by the Belgian surrealist. The painting entitled "Le principe du plaisir" topped the price fetched by "La corde sensible", which was sold in February 2017 in London for \$17.9 million. Sotheby's had estimated the painting sold Monday as being worth 15 to 20 million dollars. It said seven collectors—an unusually high number—bid for it. Other paintings on offer on the second night of the autumn art auctions in New York also surpassed their estimated value. "Improvisation on Mahogany" by Russian-born Wassily Kandinsky, fetched \$24.2 million, compared to its pre-sale estimate of 15-20 million dollars.

A painting that was supposed to be one of the main attractions of the auction failed to lure a buyer. It was Marsden Hartley's "Pre-War Pageant", considered to be one of the first totally abstract works in the history of American art. It was estimated at \$30 million, nearly five times the record for that US painter. On Sunday, the Vincent Van Gogh Painting "Coin de jardin avec papillons", estimated at \$40 million, went begging at a Christie's auction of Impressionist and Modern art. The fall art auctions continue through Thursday evening. — AFP



Nigeria's 'Mona Lisa' shown at home for first time since it resurfaced

The Nigerian Mona Lisa, a painting lost for more than 40 years and found in a London flat in February, is being exhibited in Nigeria for the first time since it disappeared. "Tutu", an art work by Nigeria's best-known modern artist, Ben Enwonwu, was painted in 1974. It appeared at an art show in Lagos the following year, but its whereabouts after that were unknown, until it re-surfaced in north London. The owners - who wished to remain anonymous - had called in Giles Peppiatt, an expert in modern and contemporary African art at the London auction house Bonhams, to identify their painting. He recognised Enwonwu's portrait.

"It was discovered by myself on a pretty routine valuation call to look at a work by Ben Enwonwu," said Giles Peppiatt, director of contemporary African art at Bonhams. "I didn't know what I was going to see. I turned up, and it was this amazing painting. We'd had no inkling 'Tutu' was there. How it got there remains a bit of a mystery," Peppiatt said. "All the family that owned it know is that it was owned by their father, who had business interests in Nigeria. He travelled and picked it up in the late or mid-70s." The family put the

portrait up for sale, and it was auctioned for 1.2 million pounds (\$1.57 million) in February to an anonymous buyer. The sale made it the highest-valued work of Nigerian modern art sold at auction.

"Tutu" was loaned to the Art X Lagos fair, held from Friday to Sunday, by Access Bank, the organisers said in a statement. Peppiatt said Access arranged the loan but is not the painting's owner. "Tutu" is referred to as the African 'Mona Lisa' by virtue of this disappearance and re-emergence, and it is the first work of a modern Nigerian artist to sell for over a million pounds," said Tokini Peterside, the art fair's founder. The original Mona Lisa, Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece, was stolen from the Louvre in 1911. The thief, Vincenzo Peruggia, eventually took it to Italy, where it was recovered and in 1914 returned to the Louvre.

The Nigerian painting is a portrait of Adetutu Ademiluyi, a grand-daughter of a traditional ruler from the Yoruba ethnic group. It holds special significance in Nigeria as a symbol of national reconciliation after the 1967-70 Biafran War. Enwonwu belonged to the Igbo ethnic group, the largest in the southeastern region of Nigeria, which had tried to secede under the name of Biafra. The Yoruba, whose homeland is in the southwest, were mostly on the opposing side in the war. Enwonwu painted three versions of the portrait. One is in a private collection in Lagos, while Peppiatt is hunting the third in Washington D.C., the expert said. Prints first made in the 1970s have been in circulation ever since and the images are familiar to many Nigerians. Enwonwu died in 1994. — Reuters



Painting "Tutu" by artist Ben Enwonwu is pictured during Art X Lagos fair. — Reuters

Comic artist draws on history for tales of politically powerful women



A feminist manga-style artist says she will use characters based on an Egyptian pharaoh and a Chinese empress to bring more female empowerment to the male-dominated world of comic books. Queenie Chan is working on a series of non-fiction biographies aimed at children called "Women Who Were Kings", which will be rendered in manga, a comic book genre that originated in Japan. "I'm doing a series of biographies on a bunch of queens from all over the world, and from many different cultures, who achieved political power on parity with what we expect from kings - hence the title," said Chan.

The first completed story focused on Hatshepsut, a female Egyptian pharaoh, and the next will be on Wu Zetian, the first and only female Chinese empress, she said by phone from her home in Sydney, Australia. Manga developed its modern meaning - to describe a whole genre of Japanese animated art - at the beginning of the 1900s when artists in Japan were influenced by imports of political comic strips from the United States and Britain.

Modern manga grew in popularity in Japan after World War Two and then spread overseas, with millions of copies of magazines sold each year, pulling in about \$3.8 billion in 2017, according to the Research Institute for Publications. The genre is afforded unrivalled freedom in Japan and covers a variety of

themes from horror, romance and same-sex relationships to comedy and pornography, but female empowerment is rarely tackled. "It isn't unusual for women to be making manga, but it is unusual to have the theme," said Paul Gravett, an expert and who has written books and curated international manga exhibitions. "The women's position in Japanese society hasn't had the big push of feminism that we've seen in many other countries."

Manga-style artists outside of Japan are also rare, as the industry is dominated globally by male-dominated comics produced by US publishers like Marvel and DC. As a child, Chan used to read pirated manga comics from newsstands in Hong Kong, where she was born, and returned to the medium as a teenager in Australia. Chan purposefully puts powerful female leads in her comics, and her first published work, "The Dreaming", contained nearly all female characters. "In terms of projecting women as powerful - there are many different kinds of power," she said.

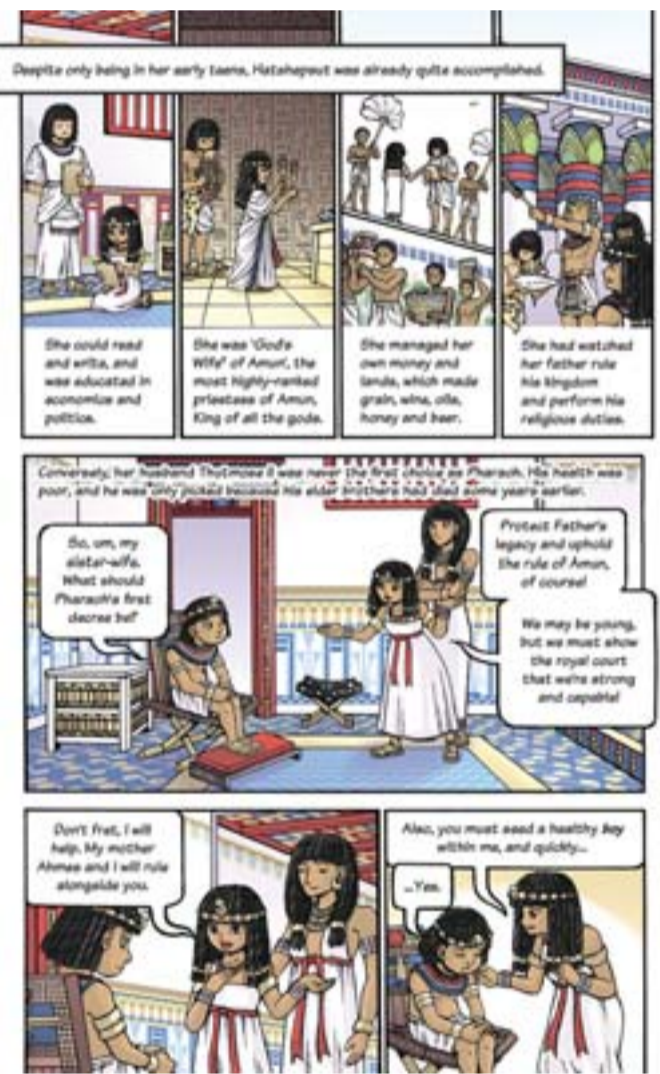
"One kind of power that women are frequently depicted of lacking - because there just aren't any representations of that in popular media - is political, economic and military power." Chan has also published a three-book series called "Fable Kingdom", which is a fairytale-inspired story with a powerful female lead.

"In our society when we talk about the



lack of female representation in boardrooms or politics, it is important for people to have representations of women who can fill that role, Chan told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "You can't be what you can't see. I'm just letting people know that these things exist and have for a long time." — Reuters

Manga-style artist Queenie Chan digitally drawing a picture of Red Riding Hood at her desk in Sydney, Australia. — Reuters



Manga-style art created by Australian comic artist Queenie Chan.

Warhol in New York: A fresh experience for audiences old and new

His Marilyn Monroe paintings and oversize soup cans are cultural icons, but in an exhibition opening Monday, New York's Whitney Museum hopes to paint a new, more complex picture of Andy Warhol. These days, few dare to tackle the king of pop art: he has already been the subject of hundreds of exhibitions and retrospectives. But under the guidance of chief curator Donna De Salvo—who worked with Warhol before his death in 1987 — the modern and contemporary art museum is doing just that. De Salvo believes America's last Warhol retrospective — in 1989 at New York's Museum of Modern Art — changed much of our thinking about Warhol but also left much unanswered.

Now the Whitney, located on the banks of the Hudson River in the city's Meatpacking District, hopes to seduce both experts and newcomers—"no easy task," according to director Adam Weinberg. From Campbell soups to Coca-Cola, Andrew Warhola—to use his birth name—played with the icons of his time, while tirelessly documenting his own life and work, to the point of

becoming a brand himself. Spanning three floors, "Andy Warhol-From A to B and Back Again" will present the silver-haired artist's career as a whole, from his early advertising illustrations to his abstract explorations.

And although the exhibition shows off his love of vibrant, repetitive screen printing, it also presents Warhol as far from a one-trick pony. Even if that style was key to his success, his films, collaboration with graffiti prodigy Jean-Michel Basquiat, and his journey into the abstract—such as his epic 1978 series "Shadows"—all act as proof otherwise. It's a multidimensional experience of a multidimensional artist: a designer, painter, photographer, videographer, producer and magazine editor—not to mention curator of his own exhibitions.

Distinctly political

A significant part of the exhibition—which boasts over 300 works, from 100 institutions and collectors—is dedicated entirely to video, a medium Warhol used to create documentaries, experimental films and even commercials. It portrays a

Warhol in constant creative motion, hungry for experience—and reminds visitors that behind his aesthetics is a distinctly political artist. "The themes that preoccupied Warhol—mass media, celebrity culture, entertainment and politics—these shape our life even more directly than they did during his lifetime, making his work not only more prescient but more relevant," Weinberg said.

At the center of it all are concepts of power and representation: a reflection built on Warhol's experiences in advertising during the 1950s. "Warhol is especially an artist of our time and I would argue even perhaps for all time, especially in this selfie generation where everybody is the star of their own photograph and movie," Weinberg said. He sees the overarching message as one of "a more complex and arguably more powerful Warhol than previously understood." After the exhibit closes in New York on March 31, it will head in May to San Francisco, and then to Chicago from October 2019 to January 2020. — AFP



A woman looks at paintings from the "Flower" series against a backdrop of "Cow Wallpaper" (1966) by late US artist Andy Warhol.—AFP Photos



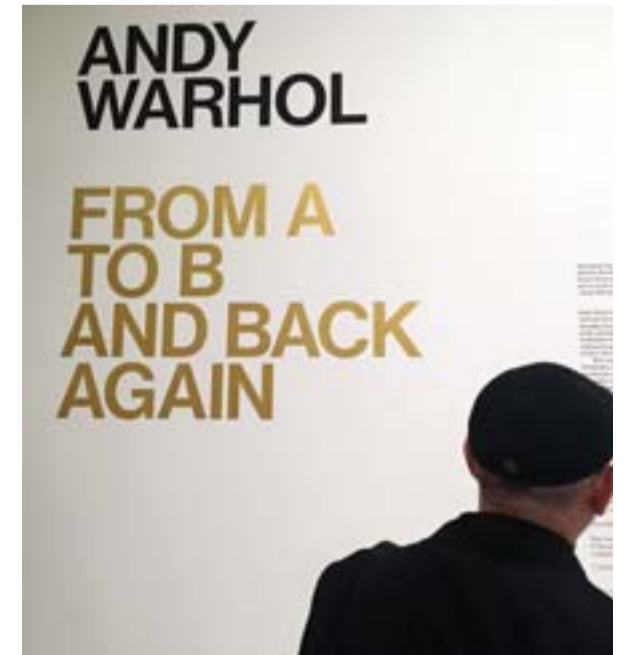
A woman takes a photo of "Campbell's Soup Cans" (1962) by late US artist Andy Warhol.



A man films the painting "Ethel Scull 36 Times" (1963) by late US artist Andy Warhol.



People look at "Mao" (1972) by late US artist Andy Warhol.



A man reads an explanation during a press preview of the exhibition "Andy Warhol - From A to B and Back Again".

Classifieds

Wednesday, November 14, 2018



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STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



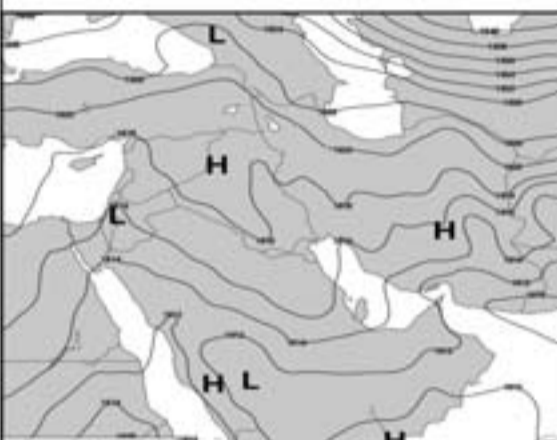
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Clouds will increase gradually and with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered rain later on.

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy to cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 13/11/2018 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	25 °C	19 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24 °C	18 °C			
ABDALY	23 °C	14 °C			
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C			
JAHRA	25 °C	17 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	24 °C	19 °C			
SALMIYAH	24 °C	20 °C			
AHMADI	24 °C	20 °C			
NUWAISIB	23 °C	18 °C			
WAFRA	24 °C	16 °C			
SALMY	23 °C	13 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	11/14	Unstable and Cloudy with a chance for thunder rain	22 °C	16 °C	SE	15 - 50 km/h
Thursday	11/15	Unstable and Cloudy with a chance for thunder rain	25 °C	18 °C	SE	25 - 60 km/h
Friday	11/16	Partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	24 °C	19 °C	SE	15 - 45 km/h
Saturday	11/17	Clouds will decrease gradually with a chance for fog forming at night	25 °C	18 °C	SE-VRB	08 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:48
Sunrise	06:10
Zuhr	11:32
Asr	14:33
Sunset	16:54
Isha	18:14

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	24 °C
MIN. Temp.	18 °C
MAX. RH	99 %
MIN. RH	55 %
MAX. Wind	N 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Agnelo Simeo Dias, holder of Indian Passport No: S3689003, Civil ID No: 285072505392, have changed my name to Agnelo Dias. (C 5433) 14-11-2018

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

Sharing accommodation

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Airlines



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

Flight Schedule

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 14/11/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 14/11/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	341	Sohag	00:05	IRC	6553	ABD	13:55
JZR	406	Kochi	00:10	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	253	Amman	00:40	RBG	218	Asyut	14:25
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	KIS	6033	Mashhad	14:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	IRC	527	Mashhad	14:30
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	RBG	554	Alexandria	14:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:40	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:05
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	CLX	792	Hanoi	15:40
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	743	Dammam	15:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
JZR	502	Lahore	03:35	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	796	Madinah	04:10	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	JZR	261	Beirut	16:40
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	JZR	105	Bahrain	16:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:35	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	KAC	504	Beirut	17:15
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	QTR	1073	Doha	18:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:00
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
BAW	157	London	07:05	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:35	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	253	Amman	18:40
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	JZR	721	Alexandria	19:20
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:45	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:45	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
IRC	6511	Lamerd	09:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:10	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
SYR	341	Latakia	11:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
JZR	122	Dubai	11:20	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	11:55	RBG	214	Sohag	21:30
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
MSC	415	Sohag	12:10	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JAV	622	Amman	22:15
IRC	6552	ABD	13:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:20
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
IRC	526	Mashhad	13:30	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
KIS	6032	Mashhad	13:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
RBG	213	Sohag	13:45	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
CLX	792	Luxembourg	14:10	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
				SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45

Search for bodies, answers after Calif wildfire kills 42



PARADISE, California: A Halloween decoration remains at a burned home after the Camp fire tore through the region on Monday. — AFP

PARADISE, California: The deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history has burned a further 8,000 acres and remained only 30 percent contained, California fire officials said yesterday as search teams resumed sifting through charred wreckage in a hunt for human remains. The "Camp Fire," raging about 280 km north of San Francisco, has expanded to 125,000 acres, more than four times the area of the city, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) said.

The death toll remained at 42 people, the most on record from a California wildfire and 228 individuals were listed as missing. More than 7,600 homes and other structures were destroyed, also an all-time high. Much of the damage was concentrated in Paradise, a Butte County town of 27,000 that was virtually destroyed overnight Thursday, just hours after the blaze erupted. One hundred

fifty search-and-recovery personnel were due to arrive in the area yesterday, bolstering 13 coroner-led recovery teams in the fire zone, said Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea.

The sheriff has requested three portable morgue teams from the US military, a "disaster mortuary" crew, cadaver dog units to locate human remains and three groups of forensic anthropologists. Some 52,000 people remained under evacuation orders, Honea said. In Southern California, two people died in the separate "Woolsey Fire," which has destroyed 435 structures and displaced about 200,000 people in the mountains and foothills near Southern California's Malibu coast, west of Los Angeles. The Woolsey Fire was 35 percent contained, up from 30 percent a day earlier, Cal Fire said.

Nearly 9,000 firefighters have been battling the wildfires. Cal Fire said that 16 other states, including Oregon,

Texas, Missouri and Georgia, have sent fire crews or other resources to combat the fires. Authorities were probing the cause of the fires. A spokeswoman for the California Public Utilities Commission said yesterday the regulator has launched investigations that may include an inspection of the fire sites once Cal Fire allows access.

PG&E Corp, which operates in northern California, and Edison International, the owner of Southern California Edison Co, have reported to regulators that they experienced problems with transmission lines or substations in areas where fires were reported around the time they started. Speaking to KRCR TV early yesterday, PG&E spokesman Blair Jones said prior to the outbreak of the Camp Fire, the site had not been "an area we were looking as a potential shut-off area."

Winds of up to 60 km per hour were expected to continue in Southern California through yesterday, heighten-

ing the risk of fresh blazes ignited by scattered embers. Cal Fire said 57,000 structures were still in harm's way from the Woolsey Fire. Some evacuees in Malibu, a seaside community whose residents include a number of Hollywood celebrities, were allowed to return home Monday but found themselves without power or cell-phone service.

California has recently endured two of the worst wildfire seasons in its history, a situation experts attribute in large part to prolonged drought across much of the western United States. President Donald Trump on Monday night declared a major disaster exists from the fires, making federal funds available to people and local government agencies in Butte, Los Angeles and Ventura counties. The pledge came two days after Trump blamed the brush fires on forest mismanagement, tweeting "Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!" — Reuters

Gulf economy recovering...

Continued from Page 1

The IMF's director for the Middle East and Central Asia, Jihad Azour, said the decline in oil prices will not impact the lender's forecasts because they were based on prices of around \$70 a barrel. "It is clear that oil prices are volatile and becoming more so recently," said Azour, who urged GCC states to consolidate their economic stability.

"If there is one lesson to learn from this it is that countries need to ... use this as an opportunity to increase their (fiscal) buffers, reduce their level of deficit ... and as away to accelerate some of their structural reforms," Azour told AFP. He said that oil prices are forecast to further decline to around \$60 a barrel. Azour said that while GCC states have made some progress in economic reforms and the introduction of value-added tax by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, they still need to do more.

They have to rationalize spending, reduce current expenditures used mainly for salaries and defence, redirect subsidies to serve the needy only and raise spending on the infrastructure and education, he said. The IMF still needs a few months to assess the implementation of VAT in Saudi Arabia and UAE "but based on the feedback we got from authorities it was smooth

and the impact on prices was fairly limited," he added. The IMF called on GCC states, which are among the few countries with no taxation regimes, to impose corporate and personal income tax in order to diversify their revenue sources. Azour said that the IMF has not raised this politically sensitive issue with authorities in the Gulf states.

Sanctions squeeze Iran

Growth in non-GCC oil exporters in the MENA region, which include Iran, Iraq, Algeria and Libya, is projected to slow to 0.3 percent in 2018, from three percent the previous year, and pick up to 0.9 percent in 2019, the IMF said. "This largely reflects the expected impact of the re-imposition of US sanctions on Iran, which is likely to reduce Iranian oil production and exports significantly over the next two years at least," the IMF said. It projected Iran's economy will shrink by 1.6 percent this year and 3.6 percent in 2019.

For oil-importing countries in MENA, growth is expected to continue at a pace of 4.5 percent in 2018, before dropping back to four percent next year, the IMF said. This level of growth is not sufficient to create the required jobs for a region marred by instability and civil strife, it said. Oil revenues for MENA exporters have increased by about \$260 billion (230 billion euros) over the period 2016 to 2018. This has mostly been due to a price rise generated as a result of production cuts in nations belonging to the OPEC cartel, as well as non-OPEC producers. The current account balance will turn from a deficit into a surplus and overall budget shortfalls will decline, the IMF said. — AFP

minister is responsible. Opposition MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri filed on Monday to grill the prime minister over the government's failure to face the rains. The grilling is expected to be debated after two weeks.

In another development, MPs clashed with Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rasheedi over the results of an investigation into allegations made against him and top oil executives during his grilling in May. After the grilling, the government formed an independent committee to study the allegations, and it has completed the probe. MPs demanded the report of the committee, but the minister said it has been referred to a judicial committee formed to study the report and demanded delaying sending the report to them.

But lawmakers strongly rejected this, saying that large parts of the report have already been published in the local media and thus MPs must see it. After Rasheedi insisted on refusing to give the report, the Assembly voted on a resolution asking the minister to submit the report to the Assembly on Sunday. During the session, three opposition MPs - Mohammad Al-Dallal, Adel Al-Damkhi and Mohammad Hayef - resigned from the legal and legislative committee and three members were elected to replace them.

Shiite MP Saleh Ashour criticized their action, saying that the resignation came after pro-government Shiite MP Khaled Al-Shatti was elected head of the committee. Hayef also traded jabs with MP Safa Al-Hashem, the only female member in the house, over merging the women's panel with the human rights committee.

Fewer foreign students coming...

Continued from Page 1

International students have become an important funding source for American colleges as traditional revenue sources, such as state funding, come under pressure. Most undergraduate foreign students do not qualify for need-based financial aid and must pay close to full tuition and fees to attend US schools.

Similar to previous years, the largest numbers of students came from China, India and South Korea, which together made up 56.1 percent of all international students. IIE did not track new international student numbers before the 2004-05 school year, but Goodman said the recent declines in new enrollments were comparable to the period after the Sept 11, 2001 attacks. The annual survey of foreign-student enrollment is funded by the US State Department.

Some immigration policy experts and college administrators attribute the decline to the Trump administration's drive to restrict immigration and an overall sense of a US political climate that is hostile to immigrants and foreigners. "It is not a welcoming environment," said Doug Rand, a former White House official working on immigration issues during the Obama administration. He noted that Trump has moved to restrict the issuance of skilled-worker visas and permanent residency, which many incoming students may apply for in the future. "It's an act of willful ignorance to suggest that our immigration policies aren't having a direct impact on foreign student enrollment," Rand said.

Caroline Casagrande, a State Department official, said the "flattening" in international student enrollments began with the 2015-2016 year, prior to the start of the Trump administration. That year, new enrollments still increased by 2.4 percent compared with the prior year. "The US Department of State is committed to facilitat-

ing the legitimate travel to the United States of individuals who want to study in US academic institutions," Casagrande said during a phone call with reporters. "It's quite frankly unwarranted to say that it is completely the result of a political environment."

Cary Jensen, assistant vice provost for international advocacy and engagement at the University of Rochester in New York, said international students had been receiving more scrutiny from the US government since the Sept 11 attacks, but that "this last year and a half has just taken it to another level." Jensen said a major issue facing American universities was the lack of clarity surrounding the Trump administration's policies, in part due to lengthy court battles over policies like Trump's travel ban on people from several Muslim-majority countries. "That has kind of been the worst part of this, is the uncertainty," Jensen said. "That breeds fear and people tend to overreact."

The administration is pursuing concrete steps to restrict visa policy regarding international students. Last month, it said it would seek to establish a fixed maximum period of stay for international students. Students currently can stay for an indefinite duration of study, and exchange advocates worry such a change would make it harder to recruit students and limit their flexibility once they are in the country.

In August, the administration changed the way international and exchange visitors are found to accrue "unlawful presence," a violation that could result in being barred from the country for up to 10 years. Several colleges sued over the change, arguing it would cause the "banishment of untold numbers of international students and exchange visitors acting in good faith."

The total number of new international students in the United States in 2017-2018 grew by 1.5 percent to a record high of nearly 1.1 million, but it was the smallest year-over-year increase since 2005. The growth in total enrollment was driven by a nearly 16 percent increase in the number of students opting to remain in the United States after finishing their studies for short-term work known as "optional practical training". — Reuters

All schools, public bodies shut as...

Continued from Page 1

MPs are calling for the establishment of an investigation committee into the issue, as several MPs rejected the idea of assigning the probe to the public works committee. Several MPs strongly lashed out at the government. MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said the country did not sink because of rain but as a result of corruption.

Representatives of the meteorological and the fire departments briefed MPs ahead of the debate on the previous rains and about forecasts predicting heavy rains in the early hours of today, that is expected to continue until Friday. A number of MPs called on the government to declare today and tomorrow as public holidays.

Minister of State for Housing Jenan Bushehri told the Assembly that the damage to Sabah Al-Ahmad area, which was almost submerged by floods, will be referred to the public prosecution. Lawmakers are demanding that any investigation should tackle suspicions over public works and road maintenance contracts. MP Hamdan Al-Azemi said the heavy rains prove that the government has miserably failed and although more rains are expected, the government has made little preparations. He said what happened are catastrophes for which the prime

some 160 targets in the Gaza Strip. "What happened was like an earthquake," said Abu Ayman Lemzeni, who lives near the destroyed TV building. At least five of the dead in Gaza were claimed as members of various militant groups. Some 26 other people were wounded in the Palestinian territory, according to Gaza's health ministry.

The escalation came despite Netanyahu's decision to allow Qatar to transfer millions of dollars in aid to the Gaza Strip for salaries as well as fuel to ease an electricity shortage. The agreements had led to calmer protests along the Gaza border after months of deadly unrest. Sunday's special forces operation and resulting clash upset those efforts, leading to questions over the timing of the covert Israeli move. Israel said it was an intelligence-gathering operation and that those efforts must continue to defend the country.

Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza have fought three wars since 2008, and protests and clashes along the Gaza border since March 30 have repeatedly raised fears of a fourth. At least 234 Palestinians in Gaza have since been killed by Israeli fire, the majority during protests and clashes. Two Israeli soldiers have been killed over the same period. — Agencies

Hamas announces truce with Israel...

Continued from Page 1

fire, as well as an anti-tank missile that hit a bus that Hamas says was being used by Israeli soldiers. A soldier was severely wounded in the attack.

Missile defenses intercepted more than 100 rockets from Gaza and most others fell in open areas, though some hit houses and other civilian structures. "Within two seconds (after air sirens) we heard a huge boom, we saw our curtains flying in the air, windows (broken), and only after a few minutes when we went out, we realized that the missile had hit the building next to us," said Claude Bonfio, who lives near a block of flats hit by a rocket in the Israeli city of Ashkelon.

Israel hit back with major air strikes, with targets including Hamas's Al-Aqsa TV station and internal security headquarters in Gaza City. The military said it struck

Sports

Manning silences his critics, influences Giants comeback

Faced mounting calls to be benched in recent weeks

SAN FRANCISCO: Eli Manning shrugged off speculation about his future to lead the New York Giants to a come-from-behind 27-23 victory over the San Francisco 49ers at Levi's Stadium on Monday. Giants quarterback Manning, who has faced mounting calls to be benched in recent weeks, held his nerve to conjure a late game-winning drive and give New York only its second win of the season.

The two-time Super Bowl winner found Sterling Shepard for a three-yard touchdown pass to seal a nine-play 75-yard drive which put the Giants ahead with just 53 seconds remaining. Manning finished with three touchdowns and 188 yards from 19 completions as the Giants improved to 2-7 in the NFC East. San Francisco fell to 2-8 and remain at the bottom of the NFC West. "I'm just happy to be playing football," Manning said afterward when asked about recent criticism. "This is what I love to do. I have great teammates, great support. Hopefully we can keep this feeling going."

Earlier, Robbie Gould had opened the scoring for the 49ers with a 53-yard field goal before the Giants took the lead near the end of the first quarter when Manning connected with Odell Beckham Jr. for a 10-yard touchdown. San Francisco did not have to wait long to regain the lead however, and was back in front in the opening minutes of the second quarter when running back Matt Breida crashed over from three yards out for a touchdown. Once again however, the Giants offense struggled to turn possession into touchdowns and had to be content with an Aldrick Rosas field goal to tie it at 10-10. Gould's second field goal put San Francisco 13-10 ahead at half-time, and the 49ers stretched their lead midway through the third quarter with a second touchdown from Breida.

This time the running back turned receiver, collecting an 11-yard completion from back-up quarterback Nick Mullens to cap a 60-yard drive and make it 20-10.

But just when San Francisco appeared to be taking control, the Giants offense finally managed to string a scoring drive together. Beckham grabbed his second touchdown of the night on a 20-yard pass from Manning and then Rosas added a field goal to tie it at 20-20. Gould's third field goal of the night put San Francisco ahead 23-20 with 2:46 remaining, but Manning produced an ice-cold final drive to hand New York the win.

Concussion case

In related news, the National Hockey League has reached a settlement with nearly 320 former players who filed a concussion lawsuit alleging the league bore responsibility for the effects of head injuries and trauma, a statement said Monday. Under the terms of the deal, the NHL, which is not admitting liability for any of the players' claims, will pay up to \$22,000 per player and will also foot the bill for medical treatment arising from head injuries.

"The NHL does not acknowledge any liability for any of Plaintiffs' claims in these cases," the league said. "However, the parties agree that the settlement is a fair and reasonable resolution and that it is in the parties' respective best interests to receive the benefits of the settlement and to avoid the burden, risk and expense of further litigation." Under the terms of the deal, which follows more than four years of legal wrangling, former players who accept the settlement will receive access to neuropsychological testing.

The league will pay up to \$75,000 in medical treatment costs for any individual who tests positive on at least two of 13 specific cognitive/behavioral assessments carried out by the Sports Neuropsychological Society. Total cash payments of just under \$7 million, or \$22,000 per player, would also be available. The agreement will also see more than \$2.5 million put into a "common good" fund which will be available to all ex-



SANTA CLARA: Eli Manning #10 of the New York Giants passes against the San Francisco 49ers during their NFL game at Levi's Stadium. —AFP

NHL players, including those not involved in the lawsuit. The deal, which was set out in a 56-page document, covers 146 former players represented in the lawsuit as well as a further 172 players who retained legal counsel in the case. The agreement states that the NHL's total payment cannot exceed \$18.9 million. Pittsburgh

Penguins star Sidney Crosby, who missed a total of 100 regular-season games and the 2011 playoffs due to concussion symptoms, is not part of the settlement and said Monday after practice he has not paid close attention to the court case, but stressed the need for league and player agreement and cooperation. —AFP

Irish big enough test without thinking of painful past: Crotty

DUBLIN: Six Nations Grand Slam champions Ireland present enough of a challenge for world champions New Zealand in Saturday's Test for the Kiwis not to be motivated by a painful defeat in 2016, says Ryan Crotty. The 30-year-old inflicted his own pain on the Irish in 2013 in Dublin scoring a try off the last move of the match which was converted to snatch victory after their opponents had led 22-17.

He believes a clash between the top two-ranked teams in the world in the cauldron of Lansdowne Road was more than a player could ask for. "How can you not be excited if you've got this opportunity to play?" said Crotty at a press conference. "It's two of the best teams in the world going at it, over here, awesome atmosphere, awesome stadium great fans. "You don't need to go anywhere else, you don't need to dip into the past to find the desire and the intensity to play and play well."

Hooker Dane Coles, who provided the pass for Crotty to score that day in Dublin, said he and his team-mates did not want to endure what they did in Chicago. "I think we're doing everything in our power for that not to happen again, because we (he and Crotty) were both involved in Chicago and it wasn't a great feeling," said Coles. "We can talk about history and stuff like that, but it's all about this week. "We won't be dipping into the past for extra motivation. "There'll be plenty of motivation just to concentrate on this week and hopefully get the job done."

Crotty, who missed out on the victorious World Cup squad in 2015, and Coles appear to have the same understanding off the pitch as on it. Their teamwork came to the fore when Crotty was asked did the All Blacks have the



DUBLIN: In this file photo taken on November 10, 2018, Ireland's fly-half Jonathan Sexton kicks the ball up-field during the international rugby union match between Ireland and Argentina at the Aviva Stadium. —AFP

same intensity going into this match as they did in 2016 when they came to Dublin a few weeks after the Chicago defeat and beat the Irish. "I hope so," said Crotty. "We're going to need to. If we don't we..." "Come off second best," interjected Coles.

'Outstanding rugby side'

Coles, who was a key member of the 2015 World Cup winning side but injuries over the past couple of years have seen Codie Taylor take his place in the starting XV, says Ireland coach Joe Schmidt has given the Irish a much more formidable array of skills than they had in the past. "They've definitely got a more all-round game," said the 31-year-old.

"They're not the classic team who just scrums and

drives, their skill-sets are huge and we've felt defeat and stuff like that. "They can actually play, the forwards have great skill-sets, massive respect for them. "They've probably added their own little taste to international footy over the last six/seven years." Crotty, who jokes he has had to apologize to every Irishman he has met since he scored that try in 2013, doesn't agree the perception of their opponents has changed since Schmidt took over in 2013 even though their last three matches have been far closer than many of the encounters prior to his era. "They are just an outstanding rugby side," said Crotty. "I don't think they've ever not been seen in that light. "I don't know if the perception has changed but I think the respect is definitely there that they are one of the best teams in world rugby." —AFP

Japan's Ohtani, Venezuelan Acuna voted top MLB rookies

NEW YORK: Los Angeles Angels pitching and hitting star Shohei Ohtani and Atlanta Braves outfielder Ronald Acuna Jr were named Major League Baseball's Rookies of the Year on Monday. Ohtani, a 24-year-old Japanese sensation, became the first player in major league history with 20 home runs and 50 strikeouts as a pitcher in the same season, a two-way effort unseen since iconic Babe Ruth a century ago.

Acuna, a 20-year-old Venezuelan who became the youngest major leaguer when he joined Atlanta in April, hit 293 with 26 homers and drove in 64 runs over 111 games to win the National League award. Ohtani captured the American League rookie award over New York Yankees infielders Miguel Andujar and Gleyber Torres while Washington outfielder Juan Soto and Los Angeles Dodgers right-handed pitcher Walker Buehler lost out in the National.

Attention was upon Ohtani from the moment he arrived in the Angels' pre-season training camp after five seasons with Japan's Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters, helping them win the 2016 Japan Series crown before leaving after the 2017 campaign. Ohtani was attempting something unseen in the major leagues since Ruth in 1919 with Boston, a starting spot in the pitching rotation and as a full-time batter, serving as the Angels' designated hitter.

A torn ligament in his right elbow in June cut short dreams of a full season in both roles, but the work he produced before the injury and in a late-season comeback as a hitter with a brief mound return showed his amazing dual role skill. —AFP

England captain sides with Sri Lanka's suspect spinner

KANDY: England captain Joe Root had words of sympathy for Sri Lanka spinner Akila Dananjaya who will go into the second Test today with his bowling action under investigation by cricket's world body. Root was questioned about Dananjaya as it was announced that England would keep the same team that hammered Sri Lanka in the first Test with Ben Stokes playing as number three batsman and Jonny Bairstow kept out despite being fit again.

Sri Lanka has insisted that the 25-year-old off-spinner Dananjaya is ready to play despite the International Cricket Council reporting him for his bowling in the first Test. "It is an unfortunate thing he has to deal with," said Root. "Ultimately for us we played him at Galle pretty well throughout the last game. "If you see anyone with a question mark by their action, you hope they get through and it doesn't hamper their career. It is never nice to see." Root said the suspect action had not shocked him. "It didn't really stand out to me personally," he added. "It doesn't matter what his action is like, it's how we play him. It's how it comes down to us playing the ball, being skilful enough to react to the delivery on the surface." The match umpires reported Dananjaya's action after the first Test, which England won by 211 runs. He took two wickets for 184 runs. Under ICC rules Dananjaya must undergo testing at an approved ICC centre within two weeks and he is expected to fly to Australia as soon as the second Test ends.

Stokes boosted

"There are no ICC rules saying he cannot play," said Suranga Lakmal, who will captain Sri Lanka in the absence



KANDY: England cricket captain Joe Root delivers the ball during a practice session at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium. —AFP

of injured Dinesh Chandimal. "He can still play and he's in a good mentality, he will still play the next match and correct his mistake." England's unchanged team may mean Root and coach Trevor Bayliss want Ben Stokes to establish himself as a regular number three — a troublesome position for England.

Stokes, who batted number five in the first Test, had been in competition with Jos Buttler for a boost up the order. Moeen Ali has fallen out of contention after scoring just three runs in two innings in the first Test. Stokes has played 64 of his 85 Test knocks at number six. The England coaching staff believe however that his technique is suited to a higher position. Bairstow, England's first-choice wicketkeeper-batsman for the past three years, was believed to have recovered from ankle ligament damage suffered in the one-day series. But Ben Foakes' stunning debut as stand-in made a change difficult. Speaking before the line-up was announced, Root highlighted the need for the team to remain flexible. "I think you have to adjust, to be as adaptable as possible," said Root. —AFP

Former Olympics gold medalists Cameroon among minnows

JOHANNESBURG: Former Olympic Games football gold medalists Cameroon find themselves among minnows this week when African qualifying for the 2020 Tokyo tournament kicks off. The central African country host Chad in Yaounde Friday with the second leg of the first round tie set for N'Djamena next Tuesday.

Cameroon and Chad are far apart when it comes to football achievements with the former qualifying seven times for the World Cup, a record for an African country. Chad are among the weakest football nations in the continent, never making an international impact at national team or club levels. A Cameroon team including Samuel Eto'o won the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games gold medal match against Spain on penalties after a 2-2 draw.

However, poor results in the past two African qualifying competitions have prevented the central Africans being among 13 countries given byes to the second round. In a 2012 London Olympics qualifier, Cameroon lost on penalties to Tanzania, and were ousted by Sierra Leone on away goals in a 2016 Rio de Janeiro eliminator. With the Chad fixtures taking place during an international window, Cameroon can pick young foreign-based professionals as the qualifiers are an under-23 competition.

Ghana, bronze medalists at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, are another country who must compete in the first round, facing fellow west Africans Togo in Kumasi and Lome. Like Cameroon, the fall from grace of Ghana can be traced to early exits from the last two qualifying competitions. They were shocked by Sudan in a 2012 eliminator and eliminated by Congo Brazzaville after a penalty shootout in the last edition.

Guinea were among the African contenders at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, but have not qualified since. They set off on a journey they hope will lead to Japan by travelling to Nouakchott for a match against Mauritania, a rapidly improving football nation. It was also a long time ago that Sudan made their sole appearance, at the 1972 Munich Games, and their 2020 campaign begins away to the Seychelles.

Mauritius, the other Indian Ocean island state competing, visit Kenya, and there are also a number of match-ups between neighboring countries. Violence-torn Somalia make a rare international appearance, but the security situation in capital Mogadishu means the home fixture against Ethiopia has been moved to Djibouti. First legs are scheduled for Wednesday, Friday and Saturday with the return matches on Sunday and Tuesday. —AFP

Sports

Lexus LC 500 steals the show in seventh round of 2018 AUTOBACS SUPER GT500

Ryo Hirakawa and Nick Cassidy of No 1 KeePer TOM'S LC 500 finished first



OITA: Lexus teams have claimed a top-four finish in the GT500 class at the 300-km Autopolis race, in the seventh round of the 2018 AUTOBACS SUPER GT series, which was held recently at the Autopolis circuit in Oita Prefecture, Japan. The No. 1 KeePer TOM'S LC 500 took home victory and the No. 36 au TOM'S LC 500 finished second in the race, followed by the No. 19 Weds Sport ADVAN LC 500 and the No. 38 ZENT CERUMO LC 500. Meanwhile, Ryo Hirakawa and Nick Cassidy of the No 1 KeePer TOM'S LC 500 secured the top spot on the Drivers' Championship standings, climbing steadily through the field from a fifth-position grid start to take the lead in the final stages of the race and triumph as the hard-fought battle came to a close.

Commenting on the stunning achievement, Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "We are thrilled with this outstanding performance by our teams and vehicles at the 2018 AUTOBACS SUPER GT series in Oita. The challenging mountain-top Autopolis

circuit is the perfect proving ground for the Lexus LC 500. This triumph adds to our proven record in motorsports and we remain dedicated to continuously building on the experience gained on the racetrack to not only engineer vehicles with exhilarating performance, but also ignite our customers' emotions. I would like to take the opportunity to thank our loyal fans for their constant support, which inspires our pursuit of delivering amazing experiences to them."

The race's start saw Kazuki Nakajima in the No 36 au TOM'S LC 500 take advantage of the start timing to break into the three rival teams at the front of the grid, including the pole-sitting No. 8, the No. 17, and the No. 100 to move into third position. On lap seven, the No. 1 KeePer TOM'S LC 500, driven by Cassidy passed the rival car No. 100. The No. 36 au TOM'S LC 500 continued to put the pressure on the two leaders until the second hairpin of lap 10, where it came to contact with competitor No. 17 but managed to get past it into second position and then passed rival car No. 8 on the home

straight of lap 11 to take the lead. From there, the No. 36 au TOM'S LC 500 maintained its momentum and opened up a 2.991-second lead over the No. 8 rival car in second place on the next lap and then went on to build a 5-to-6-second lead on the lap after that.

However, due to an accident on the 19th lap, the Safety Car appeared on the track to control the race on the 20th lap, and as a result, the No. 36 au TOM'S LC 500 was deprived of its lead of approximately eight seconds. When the race restarted on the 25th lap, the teams began their routine pit stops and both the No. 36 au TOM'S LC 500 and the No. 1 KeePer TOM'S LC 500 in the lead made their pit stops at the end of the 29th lap. When these two vehicles returned to the race in the same order, they were still ahead of rival teams No. 17 and No. 8 that had finished their pit stop earlier, which meant that the two Lexus vehicles now effectively held a 1-2 lead in the race.

As the race entered its second half, all of the cars had finished their pit stops by the end of the 34th lap except for the Kenta Yamashita-driven No. 19 Weds Sport

ADVAN LC 500, which had made an irregular pit stop on the 15th lap to refuel and change all four tires, but the regulation prevented it from making its required driver change at that point. Now, the No. 19 Weds Sport ADVAN LC 500 was running in front of each of the No. 36 au TOM'S LC 500, driven by Yuki Sekiguchi, the No. 1 KeePer TOM'S LC 500, with Hirakawa in the driver's seat, and the No. 17 rival team, in fourth place.

True to its strategy, No. 19 had a 48-second lead margin when it made its second pit stop on the 41st lap and changed drivers to Yuji Kunimoto, and was subsequently able to return to the race in third position. Then, No. 17 was passed by the No. 38 ZENT CERUMO LC 500, driven by Hiroaki Ishiura, while running in fifth position. The No 1 KeePer TOM'S LC 500 passed the No. 36 au TOM'S LC 500 on the 60th lap of the race to an unchallenged win. For last year's champions, Ryo Hirakawa and Nick Cassidy of the No. 1 KeePer TOM'S LC 500, this was their first win since Round 7 in Thailand in 2017. For Hirakawa, it was his fifth GT 500 win overall, and for Cassidy, it was his third.

Death inflames debate on Muay Thai's young dreamers

BANGKOK: The death of a 13-year-old boy, knocked out during a Thai boxing match, has inflamed debate about whether children should be allowed to take part in a dangerous sport that many of them see as their only chance of escaping poverty. Anucha Kochana was pronounced dead from a brain hemorrhage on Monday after he was knocked out in a match on the outskirts of Bangkok on Sunday evening.

Thai boxing, or Muay Thai as it is known, is a passion in Thailand with millions of boys dreaming of glory in the ring, and a life of riches, for them and their families, that success can bring. But the sport is governed by few rules - children of any age can box in an organized match - leaving them at risk of severe injury, or worse, as Anucha's case has sadly shown. The boy's grieving relatives told media they would not press charges over his death. But legislators appointed by a military government have already been looking to tighten regulations to ban children under the age of 12 from professional bouts. But the effort is opposed by many in the boxing community.

"Those aged 12 to 15 will need to be registered, have the permission of their parents and wear protective gear for professional fights," General Adulyadej Inthapong, the vice chairman of the National Legislative Assembly's committee on sports, told Reuters, referring to the proposed law. Footage of Anucha's last fight posted on social media shows the boy, without any protective gear, getting punched repeatedly in the head before falling down and banging his head on the mat.

Somchart Charoenwatcharawit, president of the Professional Boxing Association of Thailand, said the proposed changes would hurt the livelihood of an estimated 300,000 child boxers under the age of 15. "The new rule ... will hurt the children and their parents who earn tens of thousands of baht from boxing in what is a national sport," Somchart said. He said the referee on Sunday should have stopped the fight when Anucha looked groggy and the match did not meet his association's standards.

The association thinks the minimum age for boys taking part in organized bouts should be 10, he said. Jiraporn Laothamatas, a neuroradiologist and director of the Advanced Diagnostic Imaging Center, has studied the damage that boxing can inflict. Her research has fuelled the push for change but she says even the proposed minimum age of 12 for competition is a compromise that she disagrees with. "If I had my way, the minimum age would be 18," she said, while acknowledging that Muay Thai is an important source of income for many, as well as being culturally important. "The change in the law is being delayed because the industry makes a lot of money from child boxing," she said. "It will take some guts for the government to push it through. —Reuters

Tajjul puts Bangladesh on top despite Taylor ton

DHAKA: Left-arm spinner Tajjul Islam claimed his third consecutive five-wicket haul yesterday to put Bangladesh in command in the second Test against Zimbabwe despite a defiant century by Brendon Taylor in Dhaka. The home side bowled out Zimbabwe for 304 runs in the first innings to take a 218-run lead after they had declared their own innings for a mammoth 522-7 the previous afternoon.

Zimbabwe need only a draw to win their first Test series in seven years, with the visitors having won the opening match in Sylhet by 151 runs, their first Test win away in almost two decades. Tajjul dismissed Regis Chakabva for 10 to complete his haul and Zimbabwe's innings ended immediately, 19 short of the follow-on mark as last man Tendai Chatara was unable to bat due to injury. Zimbabwe edged towards avoiding the follow-on once Taylor hit 110 off 194 balls and Peter Moor added a career-best 83 to rescue the side from a precarious 131-5 in the final session.

Bangladesh had occasional medium pacer Ariful Haque to thank for breaking Moor's 139-run sixth-wicket partnership with Taylor when he trapped the right-hander leg before in his first over. Moor, who was dropped on 75 by substitute fielder Nazmul Islam at cover off Mustfizar Rahman, hit 12 fours and a six in his fifth Test 50, his second successive half-century in the series. Taylor brought up his hundred off Tajjul but off-spinner Mehedy Hasan



DHAKA: Bangladesh cricketers congratulate teammate Tajjul Islam (2R) as they walk off the field after the third day of the second Test cricket match between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium. —AFP

soon ended his innings to put Bangladesh back in control.

Tajjul took a stunning catch at square leg to end the fine innings off Taylor, who hit 10 fours in his fifth Test century — his first ever away from home. Bangladesh also dominated the opening two sessions of the day after Zimbabwe resumed play on 25-1. Brian Chari led Zimbabwe's initial resistance, hitting 53 off 128 balls

before he was snared by Mehedy on the stroke of lunch. Mominul Haque took the catch at short leg that was confirmed by television replay after Bangladesh reviewed the initial not out decision. Tajjul dismissed nightwatchman Donald Tiripano for eight early in the morning but Chari provided some counter-punch, hitting six fours and two sixes in his second Test fifty. —AFP

Djokovic crushes Isner in ATP Finals opener

LONDON: Novak Djokovic sent out a warning to his rivals at the ATP Finals on Monday, brushing aside big-serving John Isner 6-4, 6-3 to launch his bid for a record-equaling sixth ATP Finals title in style. Earlier, in the same Guga Kuerten group, Alexander Zverev made it six consecutive wins against Marin Cilic in a contest at London's O2 Arena featuring scores of unforced errors.

World number one Djokovic, though, was playing a different game, appearing little troubled by the howlers coming off the giant Isner's racquet — breaking his opponent three times and not conceding a single break point on his own serve. In stark contrast to second seed Roger Federer, who produced an error-strewn performance in defeat to Kei Nishikori on Sunday, Djokovic hit just six unforced errors and won 86 percent of points on his serve, making a mockery of the apparent challenging nature of the playing surface. "The match was great, obviously," said the 31-year-old. "I had three breaks of serve of John which is sometimes mission impossible but I managed to be at the right place at the right time. I held serve well, I backed it up from the baseline, I played very solid and didn't give him many opportunities."

Speaking about the court conditions, he said: "It takes a little bit of time really to get yourself adjusted to the surface... it takes a lot of rotation, takes a lot of spin. When you serve well, also it accelerates through the court." With Cristiano Ronaldo watching on, the top seed broke Isner in the fifth game of the first set to establish a stranglehold and never looked like allowing the American eighth seed back into the contest, breaking twice more in the second set to win in 73 minutes.



LONDON: Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns against US player John Isner during their men's singles round-robin match on day two of the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena. —AFP

The Serb is a red-hot favorite to draw level on six titles at the season finale with Federer, who faces an uphill task to reach the semi-finals after his loss in his first round-robin match. Djokovic, who replaced the injured Rafael Nadal at the top of the rankings last week, has stormed up the charts this year following elbow surgery and a period of indifferent form, winning Wimbledon and the US Open along the way. Since the start of Wimbledon he has now won 32 out of 34 matches.

Zverev triumphs

Earlier, Zverev kept his nerve at the key moments to beat Marin Cilic 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/1), recovering from a break down in each set. The 30-year-old Cilic, who has a reputation for faltering under intense pressure, broke

first but the German hit back, going on to edge the tie-break. In the second set, the Croatian again drew first blood but third-seed Zverev, 21, responded immediately and dominated the tie-break to seal the match.

There were a total of 78 unforced errors in the contest — with Australian Open finalist Cilic hitting 46 of those — as both players struggled to adapt to the court conditions. "The court is difficult," said Zverev. "The court is very fast. And it's very high-bouncing as well. So, it's more difficult than in other tournaments, so everybody has to kind of find their rhythm in the first match. "The ATP Finals are contested by the eight players who have accumulated the most ranking points over the season and is in a round-robin format, with the best four players reaching the semi-finals. — AFP

Sports

Women boxers wear masks to beat smog at world championship in India

'My family is worried. We know it is not good for our body'

NEW DELHI: Women boxers training for a world championship starting in the Indian capital this week are wearing surgical masks, scarves and even T-shirts across their mouths as the level of air pollution rises several times beyond the safe limit. The AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships is taking place in an indoor stadium from Thursday through to Nov 24 but teams are complaining about toxic smog hanging over the city, caused by seasonal burning of crop stubble and emissions from vehicles and industry.

The weather, with no wind to blow the pollution away, has aggravated the problem in one of the world's most polluted cities. "My family is worried. We know it is not good for our body," said 27-year-old Bulgarian Stanimira Petrova, a gold-medalist in the bantamweight category in the championships in 2014. "It's difficult. I wear a scarf but I have to get accustomed." On Tuesday, the level of deadly particulate matter PM 2.5 that lodge deep in the lungs was at 407, about eight

times the safe limit, according to a reading by the pollution control board.

Authorities have banned the entry of heavy vehicles into the city and ordered construction work to stop and sprinklers to keep down the dust. But the air quality remains in the severe zone. Seven European boxers whom Reuters spoke to complained that the air left a bad taste and irritated their eyes. Their coaches said they were advised about the poor air but organizers had not given them any protective gear.

Worried parents

Ajay Singh, president of the Boxing Federation of India, said Delhi's air quality was improving as the effects of last week's Hindu festival of Diwali - when tens of thousands of firecrackers are let off, clogging the air with smoke - were wearing off. "I'm confident there will not be any problems faced by the boxers especially with the championship being held indoors.

We have all the necessary standards maintained and precautions taken." Indian Olympic flyweight bronze medalist MC Mary Kom is among those taking part.

French coach Anthony Veniant said he had asked for the tournament to be moved out of Delhi but his request was turned down. "We feel the air is no good. Some of the parents of these players are worried and we tell our players to restrict their time outside," Veniant said. Prolonged exposure to high levels of PM 2.5 and PM 10, another pollutant, leads to respiratory illnesses. Doctors in Delhi have reported an increase in the number of patients with respiratory problems.

Jay Kowli, secretary general of the Boxing Federation of India, said the air quality was being monitored but ruled out any change of location. "Shifting the venue is impossible. Delhi has the best sports facilities in the country," Kowli said. Teams have been hard at training this week. Daniel Nash, the coach for the Swedish team, said pollution was a problem, but he had

asked the boxers to focus on the competition. "I'm telling my players to not let this issue affect their game," Nash said. Contestants just have to deal with it, said Abdul Fkiri, the coach of the Dutch team.

Finnish boxer Mira Potkonen said yesterday she would train indoors to avoid Delhi's notorious smog as other athletes in the Indian capital for the world championships fret about their health. Potkonen, an Olympic bronze medalist, said competitors in Delhi for the AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships would "just need to adjust" to life in the world's most polluted major city. "Let's say if this competition would have been in some other place then I would have gone for a jog outside but now I concentrate on my boxing training," the 37-year-old told reporters in Delhi. "I try not to stay outside for too long. We have an excellent gym in the hotel, the air conditioner and the air in the gym is very good. So we tend to train there as much as we can." — Reuters



Otaibi congratulates the winners of Asian shooting championships

By Abedlatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaj Khalaf Al-Otaibi congratulated all the winners of the 8th Asian Shotgun and 11th Airgun championships. Al-Otaibi spoke following the conclusion of the tournament and said that Kuwait's outstanding performance coming top in the skeet and trap events as well as the double trap, is an evidence of the continued success of the shooting sport. He also lauded the board of directors, workers and shooters of the Kuwait shooting sport club. Al-Otaibi thanked His Highness the Amir, HH the Crown Prince and all government departments who contributed to the success of the championships in which more than 600 shooters representing 35 Asian countries participated.

He also commended the work of the emergency teams that took care of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex ranges, keeping competitions going on without a delay during the heavy rains last weekend. He also thanked championships patron Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, and President of Asian Shooting Federation Sheikh Ali Al Khalifa.



Al-Otaibi said that the Kuwait shooters proved they are still on top of their game in Asia, despite the fierce competition they have faced from China. Al-Otaibi also lauded the performance of Kuwait juniors in the shotgun competitions, showcasing the bright future of the sport in the country. Kuwait skeet and trap teams won

two gold medals, the first team had Mansour Al-Rashidi, Abdallah Al-Torqi and Saud Habeeb, and the second team had Abdelrahman Al-Fuaihan, Khalid Al-Mudhaf and Talal Al-Rashidi. Saad Al-Mutairi won the double trap gold medal and Ahmad Al-Afasi won silver. Sarah Al-Hawal won the individual's silver.

Another injury woe for Atletico's Costa

MADRID: Atletico Madrid striker Diego Costa has been sidelined with a foot injury that could leave him in a race for full fitness ahead of a crucial league clash with Barcelona. Costa hobbled off during a 3-2 league win over Athletic Bilbao on Saturday, which saw the capital side close to within a point of leaders Barcelona.

Atletico defender Diego Godin hit a brace in that win but has been sidelined after he, too, hobbled off before the end with a thigh injury that could rule him out for up to a month. Now Costa has joined the Uruguayan on the sidelines after suffering "an injury to his foot," according to a statement by Atletico on Tuesday. "The striker will go through adapted training sessions and undergo physiotherapy and medical treatment," it added, without giving a timeline for his return to competition. Costa only returned to the competitive fold earlier this month following a two-week absence due to "muscle problems" but played only the first half against Bilbao after complaining of "pains," according to Atletico coach Diego Simeone.

Simeone is also without the injured Thomas Lemar (high) and defenders Lucas Hernandez, Jose Maria Gimenez and Stefan Savic. Atletico host Barcelona on November 24 following the break for international matches, then host Monaco four days later looking to book their ticket for the last 16 of the Champions League.

Meanwhile, Borussia Dortmund midfielder Marco Reus was forced to sit out with a foot injury as Germany were put through their paces in training Tuesday ahead of an upcoming friendly against Russia.



MADRID: Athletic Bilbao's defender Unai Nunez Gestoso challenges Atletico Madrid's Spanish forward Diego Costa (R) during the Spanish league football match between Club Atletico de Madrid and Athletic Club Bilbao at the Wanda Metropolitano stadium. — AFP

The 29-year-old playmaker bruised his foot on his way to scoring a brace for Dortmund in a 3-2 Bundesliga win over defending champions Bayern Munich on Saturday. Reus has a history of sitting out Germany duty due to injury. Torn ankle ligaments ruled him out of their 2014 World Cup triumph in Brazil and a groin injury sidelined him for Euro 2016 in France. For the match against 2018 World Cup hosts Russia, Germany

coach Joachim Loew is already without Schalke striker Mark Uth, who has a leg injury, and Paris Saint-Germain winger Julian Draxler, who drops out because of a family bereavement. Real Madrid midfielder Toni Kroos is expected to join the squad later in the week for next Monday's Nations League home match against the Netherlands in Gelsenkirchen, which the Germans must win to stay in Group One. — AFP

UEFA open to reopening financial fairplay cases

LAUSANNE: UEFA warned Monday that clubs whose finances have already been scrutinized by its Financial Fair Play regulations may not be out of the clear yet, European football's ruling body told AFP. Less than a week after the latest revelations in the Football Leaks series, UEFA suggested it could reopen previously concluded cases should new information arise.

Every club affiliated to UEFA faces an annual assessment against the break-even requirements and many have been investigated and either sanctioned or cleared. But it now seems UEFA may go back over some closed cases. "Should new information suggest that previously-concluded cases have been abused, those cases may be capable of being re-opened as determined on a case by case basis," UEFA told AFP. "FFP relies on the cooperation of clubs to declare a complete and genuine financial position," UEFA said. "It relies on that information being fair and accurate."

The announcement comes after the whistle-blowing website Football Leaks claimed that between them Qatar and Abu Dhabi have injected some 4.5 billion euros (\$5.1 billion) into Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester City respectively over the last seven years. UEFA allows for only a 30 million euros deficit and insists "Financial Fair Play has led to a steep change in the health of the finances in European club football".

"Seven years ago, European clubs had a cumulative debt of EUR 1.7 billion. Last year it was a profit of EUR 600 million," UEFA said in their statement on Monday. Football Leaks, however, has pointed the finger at overvalued deals allowing clubs to inject huge sums of cash that are totally imbalanced. Both PSG and City were fined 60 million euros by UEFA in May 2014, but both were told they would get 40 million euros back if they stuck to the terms of their settlement.

French investigative website Mediapart claims Gianni Infantino — the current FIFA president who was then UEFA's general secretary — "directly negotiated an agreement with Manchester City", bypassing the Financial Control Panel of European football's governing body. FIFA blasted the claims as an attempt to "undermine the leadership" of the global body. — AFP

Ex-England and Chelsea midfielder Joe Cole retires

LONDON: Former England midfielder Joe Cole announced his retirement yesterday after making more than 700 appearances for seven clubs including West Ham and Chelsea. Cole, who turned 37 last week, said his career had been "a dream come true" and he now hopes to move into coaching. His final club was Tampa Bay Rowdies in the United Soccer League, the second tier in the US.

Cole made 716 professional appearances, scoring 104 goals for seven clubs and his 56 England caps spanned across three World Cup tournaments. He made his international debut aged 19 when he was earmarked as one of England's brightest young talents at the Hammers. Cole was part of England's so-called "Golden Generation", playing alongside David Beckham, Wayne Rooney, Rio Ferdinand, Paul Scholes, Michael Owen and Steven Gerrard, plus his Chelsea teammates John Terry and Frank Lampard.

Cole said in a statement: "After 20 years as a professional, the time has come for me to hang up my boots. It has been a dream come true. All of it. "Whatever is next, I hope the next two decades are as special as my last 20 years as a professional have been." Cole joined West Ham aged eight and made 187 appearances, scoring 18 goals, in two spells with the club, from 1998 to 2003 and 2013-14. He burst onto the scene aged 17 in January 1999 and quickly became captain. — AFP

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Williams sparks Clippers over Warriors

Wild overtime thriller upsets the league leaders



LOS ANGELES: Montrezl Harrell #5 of the LA Clippers goes to the basket against the Golden State Warriors on November 12, 2018 at STAPLES Center. — AFP

LOS ANGELES: Lou Williams scored 25 points from the bench as the Los Angeles Clippers upset the league-leading Golden State Warriors 121-116 in a wild overtime thriller at the Staples Center on Monday. Williams reeled off 10 of his points in overtime to secure victory after the Clippers squandered a 14-point fourth quarter lead before digging in for the win.

The 32-year-old veteran was supported by 23 points from the bench by Montrezl Harrell as the Clippers improved to 8-5 in the Western Conference standings. The Warriors remain on top of the West after suffering only their third loss of the season. The NBA champions are 11-3 following the defeat. Kevin Durant led the scoring with 33 points while Klay Thompson had 31, including five three-pointers.

The Warriors had trailed for much of the game, and appeared to be sliding toward a loss before a determined fourth quarter rally transformed the contest. A Williams three-pointer had put the Clippers ahead by 101-87 with 6min 36 remaining before the Warriors came roaring back. Thompson tied the game at 106-106 with 1:27 left on the clock but neither side were able to take a decisive advantage, sending the game into overtime. Williams then took over with 10 points as the Clippers completed a morale-boosting victory.

Timberwolves 120, Nets 113

Karl-Anthony Towns finished with 25 points and 21 rebounds Monday night as the Minnesota Timberwolves halted a five-game losing streak with a 120-113 victory in Minneapolis over the Brooklyn Nets, who lost Caris LeVert to an apparent serious right leg injury. Towns posted his seventh double-double by shooting 9-of-11 from the floor. He had the double-double by halftime, then posted his sixth career game with 20 points and 20 rebounds and the 55th in team history. The Wolves played their first game since trading Jimmy Butler to Philadelphia. Minnesota obtained Dario Saric and Robert Covington, though neither player was active. LeVert, who was injured attempting to defend a fast-break layup attempt by Josh Okogie, was placed on a stretcher and taken by ambulance to a hospital for further evaluation.

Pelicans 126, Raptors 110

Jrue Holiday tallied 29 points and 14 assists, and E'Twaun Moore scored 30 points as New Orleans defeated host Toronto. Anthony Davis added 25 points and 20 rebounds for the Pelicans, who won their third game in a row by giving the Raptors their first home loss in eight games this season. Toronto is 12-2 overall. Pascal Siakam scored 22 points for the Raptors.

Kawhi Leonard added 20 points, Serge Ibaka had 19 points and 14 rebounds, OG Anunoby 17 points and Fred VanVleet and Delon Wright 10 points each.

Thunder 118, Suns 101

Paul George scored 32 points as host Oklahoma City, playing without Russell Westbrook for the fourth consecutive game, beat Phoenix. George, who was 11-of-19 from the floor, including six 3-pointers, scored 21 of his points before halftime as the Thunder built a lead as big as 28 points in the first half. Westbrook is still recovering from a sprained left ankle suffered Nov. 5. Dennis Schroder, filling in for Westbrook as the starting point guard, had 20 points and nine assists.

Mavericks 103, Bulls 98

It took seven tries, but Dallas finally notched its first road win of the season by holding off Chicago. Harrison Barnes led the Mavs to a second consecutive victory and their first road win since last March with 23 points, five rebounds and four steals. Dennis Smith Jr. scored all 11 of his points in the second half to help keep the Bulls, who got within one point three times down the stretch, at bay. The Bulls failed to win consecutive games thanks to an ugly shooting night, dipping to 39.3 percent for the game,

including 8-of-33 from beyond the arc. They turned the ball over 17 times. Zach LaVine led Chicago with 26 points, giving him at least 20 in every game this season.

76ers 124, Heat 114

Joel Embiid posted 35 points, 18 rebounds and three assists, leading Philadelphia over host Miami. Embiid has nine games this season with at least 30 points and 10 rebounds. Nobody else in the NBA has more than three. JJ Redick added 25 points to lead Philadelphia to its seventh win in its past 10 games. Miami — which lost its third straight game, all of those at home — was led by Goran Dragic (22 points, five assists), Josh Richardson (17 points) and Hassan Whiteside (13 points, 11 rebounds).

Wizards 117, Magic 109

John Wall had 25 points and 10 assists, and Bradley Beal added 21 points as host Washington defeated Orlando for its second straight win. The Wizards outscored the Magic 31-20 over the final nine minutes to avenge a loss in Orlando on Friday. Jeff Green scored 18 points on 6-of-7 shooting off the bench for Washington, and Dwight Howard finished with 17 points and eight rebounds in 29 minutes. Reserve Terrence Ross led Orlando with 21 points, and Evan

Fournier scored 20.

Jazz 96, Grizzlies 88

Joe Ingles scored 19 points while Rudy Gobert added 15 points, 16 rebounds and three blocks to lead Utah past host Memphis. Derrick Favors and Donovan Mitchell chipped in 12 points apiece, and Favors added eight rebounds to help Utah notch its third straight win. Mike Conley scored 24 points, and Marc Gasol added 16 to lead Memphis. The Grizzlies held Utah to just 39 percent shooting, but could not overcome their own 4-of-24 outing from the perimeter.

Kings 104, Spurs 99

Bogdan Bogdanovic poured in 22 points off the bench to lead six Sacramento players in double figures in beating visiting San Antonio for the first time in 15 games. The game was tied at 90 with 5:11 to play before the Kings reeled off a 10-0 run that featured 3-pointers by Nemanja Bjelica and De'Aaron Fox and an alley-oop dunk on the break by Willie Cauley-Stein. Fox added 19 points for the Kings, with Buddy Hield scoring 14, Cauley-Stein pumping in 13 points and grabbing 13 rebounds. DeMar DeRozan led the Spurs with 23 points and eight assists, while LaMarcus Aldridge scored 14 points and took 18 rebounds. — Reuters

Qatar considering offers to host WC teams abroad

DOHA: Qatar is considering offers from other countries to host teams during the 2022 World Cup, but no decision has been taken yet, the head of the organizing committee told AFP on Monday. Iran has recently offered to host teams who will play in tiny Qatar in the

World Cup which starts in just over four years time.

When asked whether teams could be based in Iran, chief organizer Hassan Al Thawadi said Qatar had received "numerous proposals from countries with regard to hosting teams" around the time of the tournament. "This is part of the operational plan, but obviously it will have to be done with FIFA," he said. "Nothing is decided on this matter yet and it remains under discussion."

Any move to accept Iran's offer would provide a major boost for the Islamic Republic at a time when the US is trying to isolate the country internationally. It could also prove controversial in the Gulf. Since 2017, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and

Egypt have imposed a sweeping embargo on Qatar, with its one-time allies accusing it of seeking closer ties with Iran and of supporting radical Islamist groups. Qatar denies the charges, accusing its neighbors of seeking regime change.

Al Thawadi said he hoped Qatar's neighbors would lift a ban on their citizens visiting Qatar in time for the World Cup, which kicks off on November 21, 2022. The country's original pitch in its bid to host the tournament included plans to use facilities elsewhere in the Gulf. "I hope the blockading nations can see the value of this major tournament and can allow for their people to benefit from this tournament," he said.

Asked about whether Qatar was prepared to

increase the number of teams at the Qatar World Cup to 48, as mooted by FIFA, Al Thawadi said he was still planning for the usual figure of 32. "Our preparations right now are for 32 teams, the current format. All the preparations are ongoing based on that," he said. "There's a feasibility study undertaken right now for a 48-team competition and then a decision will be taken both by FIFA and ourselves as a host nation," he added. Accommodating another 16 teams would vastly complicate Qatar's task in preparing for the World Cup, which was awarded to the tiny desert state in 2010. FIFA president Gianni Infantino last week all but wrote off the chances of a 48-team tournament in 2022, saying it would be "a difficult challenge". — AFP